

4th National Conference of the MLP, USA Fall 1990

Editorial

The mid-term elections demonstrated that the Republicans and Democrats have really nothing to offer the working people but war, racism, anti-woman bigotry, S&L ripoffs, and unemployment. Signs of disillusionment with the capitalist politicians are seen everywhere.

The Marxist-Leninist Party (MLP) is working to turn the mass discontent to militant action and the building up of an independent working class movement. Important in this is inspiring the masses with an alternative to this capitalist hell — workers' socialism, which shows that there can be a future without exploitation and without capitalist bureaucrats and politicians riding on their backs.

This fall the Party held its Fourth National Conference. It concentrated on the collapse of pro-Soviet revisionism and fake "socialism"; the theory of socialism and the history of the Soviet Union; and the struggle for women's rights. It also reviewed other issues, including the situation in the Party, and the state of the world revolutionary movement.

The collapse of revisionism

The MLP has long criticized the fraud of socialism in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and China. In the last year or two, the decay of revisionism has given way to the collapse of the revisionist regimes in Eastern Europe, the disintegration in the Soviet Union, the crisis in China, and so forth. One regime after

another has tumbled into openly "free market" economies, and there is a growing abandonment of communist pretensions. These events have shaken up the world, and there are many changes that must be dealt with by the workers' movement. The conference discussed the repercussions of these changes, from the change in the international balance of power among the imperialists to the mood of liquidationism within various revisionist and trotskyst groups.

Socialism is the goal of the working class

The MLP firmly holds that workers' socialism remains the goal of the working class movement. It contrasts workers' socialism to revisionist state capitalism, and it seeks to clarify the conception of socialism.

The conference devoted much time to discussing the Party's ongoing study of the history of the communist movement in the Soviet Union. It looked further into the problems of the 1920's and early 1930's. And it also considered certain theoretical questions with respect to the transition from capitalism to socialism that are raised by this history, for example, with regards to the economy, to the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and to party building.

The struggle for women's liberation

Several points of the agenda were

devoted to the women's movement. The conference summed up the recent abortion rights struggles, especially the militant defense of health clinics. It also discussed the experience of the women's movement of the 1960's and 70's, the struggle which arose between the different trends, and the class stands that these trends represented. And it debated some theoretical questions that had come up in the party-wide study of Marx, Engels and Lenin on the struggle for the complete liberation of women.

The conference emphasized the importance of developing agitation on key issues of concern to working class women; the work to drive a wedge between the bourgeois feminists, who are holding back the movement, and the masses of working women and activists; and encouraging especially those struggles that impel the working masses into militant independent action.

Other mass movements

The conference considered the movement against the war drive in the Persian Gulf. The whole party has been active in this struggle, and the discussion emphasized the importance of directing the fire of this movement against imperialism.

The conference also talked over our experience in the struggle of the New York transit workers and other economic resistance of the workers. In this, it noted the value of combining non-party forms of agitation and organization with party forms. Where there is actual mass motion, non-party forms can at times help to activate militants and draw broader sections of the masses into

action independent of the union bureaucracy. But these forms need to be combined with direct Party agitation, and work for pro-party forms of organization, in order to guide the movement in a truly independent direction and to build up the influence of the Party itself.

It also pointed to the need both to encourage mass motion and to criticize the reformist trends, and such criticism inevitably requires hitting at the revisionist and Trotskyst groups that tail behind the reformists.

Build the party of the working class

The conference reviewed some problems of party work in the current situation. Internationally, it reviewed the situation among the forces of workers' communism around the world. The collapse of revisionism, the degeneration of Albania and the parties which trail in its wake, and experience of the present mass struggles show the necessity to build up the trend of workers' communism. It is this trend which seeks to carry the struggle against revisionism through to the end and to take account of the experience of the working class. This trend is today weak and scattered, and it is necessary for the communist activists to strive hard to seek theoretical clarity, to immerse this trend in the ongoing struggles, and to forge fraternal collaboration between the groups and activists in different lands.

And the conference passed six resolutions on the current tasks of the class conscious workers and activists. ■

U.S. imperialism, get out of the Persian Gulf!

The blockade of Iraq, the positioning of American bases in the Middle East, and the chorus of Bush and Congress in favor of U.S. hegemony in the region show that the American government is out to strengthen its imperialist hold on the Middle East. The buildup of nearly a half million U.S. troops in the Persian Gulf and the shouts of Bush to prepare for an offensive show that the American bourgeoisie is prepared to plunge the region into an all-out shooting war. The working class and all progressive people must oppose the present aggression and the threatened war.

This is imperialist aggression and it would be an imperialist war. It would be a war for the profits of the oil monopolies. It would be a war to shore up medieval-style kingdoms, like Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. It would be a war for U.S. domination in the region, for the spread of American military bases, and to establish that U.S. imperialism is still the policeman of the world, marauding and dictating wherever it wishes.

Such a war would mean death, destruction and continued plunder for the peoples of the Middle East. At the same time, it would mean stepped-up oppression at home. The working people in the

U.S. are being asked to risk their sons and daughters, to pay the price of increased taxes and more cuts in social programs, to suffer price gouging at the gas pumps, and to be victimized by a new racist crusade directed against Arab residents in the U.S. And for what? So that a few capitalists can reap obscene oil profits and the imperialist system can maintain its plunder of the Gulf region.

Workers, youth, and all progressive people should join together to denounce and oppose this present aggression and threatened war. And we should direct the struggle first and foremost at our own bourgeoisie, and its imperialist system which stands behind the war drive.

Support the oppressed toilers

Opposition to U.S. imperialism does not mean, however, to defend the Iraqi regime or support its invasion of Kuwait.

The regime of Saddam Hussein is a capitalist tyranny which stamps down on all democratic rights, savagely represses the Kurdish people, and tramples the working people. It has received aid and support from the imperialist powers in the past, including the Reagan and Bush administrations, and still seeks such an accommodation today.

Its invasion of Kuwait was not to liberate the Arab toilers from the rich Kuwaiti despots nor to break the hold of imperialism on the region. Rather, it was launched to liquidate the huge debts Iraq owed from the reactionary war with Iran, to grab a greater share in the imperialist oil profits, and to push Hussein's regime forward as a regional power.

The U.S. working people cannot take either side in this war. Rather, we must stand up against our own imperialist rulers and give support and encouragement to the struggle of the Middle Eastern masses. We must support the struggles of the toilers and the migrant laborers against their own despots as well as Israeli Zionism and U.S. imperialism. We must support the liberation movements of the Palestinians, Kurds and other oppressed peoples of the region.

Base the anti-war movement on the masses

To build up the movement against the imperialist war, we cannot look for support from Congress against Bush. Congress has backed the war buildup, and the Democrats have joined the Republican chorus in praise of imperialism. Both of these are parties of imperi-

alism who, despite some wrangling over tactics, agree that the bottom line is to protect the oil profits and "vital interests" of U.S. imperialism in the Middle East.

Nor can we look for help from the United Nations. This forum is a grouping of governments and diplomats who can only reflect the current world balance of power among the exploiters and imperialists who rule today. The United Nations has sided with the U.S., given the green light for aggression, and put an "international" gloss on this rotten military adventure of U.S. imperialism.

Nor can we expect much from what is referred to as "the Arab solution." We should indeed demand that the imperialists get out of the Middle East, and that the people of the region should be allowed to deal with their own problems. But we must place our support firmly behind the Arab and other toilers of the region, and not behind the local elites and repressive ruling classes who regard their conferences and wishes as the Arab solution. The U.S. aggression in the Middle East is, in fact, either supported or even spurred on by various Arab

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The present recession and the prospects for mass struggle

Recession is here. This downturn may deepen into a big crisis, or such a crisis may emerge somewhat later. In either case a deep economic crisis seems inevitable. The measures taken by the capitalists throughout the 80's to fend off recession have prepared conditions for a deeper crisis, for example by undermining the financial stability of the system.

Can the bourgeoisie use a new war to get out of crisis? That is, can another round of vast arms spending stimulate the economy? But the Reagan-Bush administrations have already done this for the last decade and helped pile up a federal debt that itself threatens a crash. The capitalists may desire a war in the Persian Gulf or elsewhere for other reasons, but it doesn't look like it will get them out of their economic troubles. On the contrary, it may deepen them.

Meanwhile the ongoing capitalist offensive of the 80's is continuing into the 90's, and it has been marked by a wage-cutting drive, and repression of workers' struggles.

Social benefits have been slashed in virtually every sphere, while the multimillionaires have been granted one tax break after another. While unemployment has mounted and homelessness has become a national scandal, the so-called "safety net" has been cut and torn. While the economic infrastructure of the country has decayed, the ruling class has played with speculation and real estate deals, with junk bonds and banking deals, with mergers and leveraged buyouts.

The takeback offensive has hit oppressed nationalities especially hard. Meanwhile a climate of open racism has also been encouraged, and a growing wave of racist attacks has been taking place across the country.

A reactionary drive against women has focused on removing the right of

abortion.

And militarism is resurgent with a huge increase in the military budget, and a series of imperialist outrages from El Salvador and the contra war against Nicaragua, to the invasions of Grenada and Panama. And now there is the ongoing brinkmanship in the Persian Gulf.

Although the workers and poor have been hit hard by the takeback offensive of the 1980's, strong resistance has yet to break out on a large scale. There are a number of reasons for this.

Not all sections of the workers have been hit equally hard. The bourgeoisie used certain special social programs to temporarily cushion the shock for some categories of workers until anger had subsided and the threat of mass action has passed. Some of the historically militant sectors of the working class have been dispersed, and many young workers have been forced out of major industries. They have been pushed into unorganized sectors where it is most difficult to launch struggles. Masses of workers have been pushed into small plants and into the service sector, and many are either working part-time or outright unemployed. All this has acted against the outbreak of united resistance.

The top trade union leaders have joined wholeheartedly in the concessions drive. The pro-capitalist stand of the trade union officials has served to blunt the struggles that have taken place, and it has hindered the workers from rendering real aid to those struggles that gained mass sympathy. Overcoming this treachery requires a high level of rank-and-file initiative, which has still not emerged on a large scale.

The black bourgeois leadership has similarly acted to block militant mass struggle against the racist offensive.

Reformist and pro-capitalist leaders of other mass political or social movements that have arisen, such as the anti-war movement and the women's movement, have also held the masses back from challenging the bourgeoisie. The strategy of looking towards the bourgeois liberals — and generally Congress, the Democratic Party, the trade union officialdom, and some religious figures — has served to undermine these movements and keep them from penetrating deeply among the working masses.

Nevertheless the elements for a new upsurge of struggle have accumulated in the course of the 1980's.

Although they have been sporadic and scattered and lasted only for a time, a variety of struggles against the capitalists and the government periodically broke out. There were a number of important strikes, while the sweep of the economic cutbacks involved wider and wider sections of the workers. The financial scandals and general decay have begun to shake the confidence of the masses in the stability of the present system and cause a generalized worry and discontent.

There were also a series of other political and social movements. The anti-nuclear energy and anti-draft movements were followed by the anti-nuclear weapons struggles and the movements against intervention in Nicaragua and El Salvador. The anti-apartheid movement made its mark for awhile. The resurgence of racism was met by numerous anti-racist struggles, including some local rebellions. The pro-choice movement stirred wide masses of people, while clinic defense against the religious fanatics brought a number of new people into militant struggle. There were also other movements, such as defense of the environment against corporate polluters. Taken all together, these movements

have involved hundreds of thousands of people. The real-life experiences gained in them are a preparation for bigger struggles to come.

Furthermore, the Democratic Party "honeymoon" of the 80's with the Reagan-Bush administration shows signs of breaking down. In the last decade, the Democratic Party not only gave the capitalist offensive their uncomplaining endorsement but generally rubber-stamped the Reagan-Bush policies. With an economic crisis developing and with the crisis in the Persian Gulf threatening to explode in their faces, the bipartisanship of the 1980s will come under increasing strain. The capitalist parties will squabble more and more over how to carry out the offensive and how to restore mass confidence in the system as it sickens. These disputes can provide opportunities for the masses to come out in struggle. The workers should not side with any of the gangs of bourgeois thieves but instead utilize these opportunities by putting forward the workers' own independent stand.

The masses are increasingly left with little choice but to stand up and struggle to defend their own interests. But to take such a bold step does not happen easily. They must grasp that neither Congress, nor the pro-capitalist trade union officialdom, stands on their side. They need confidence in their ability to take matters into their own hands.

The Marxist-Leninist Party must continue to encourage the path of mass action and militant organization. The seeming omnipotence of the bourgeoisie is dispelled through actual experience. The Party's job is to find ways to draw the working class, youth, and all oppressed people into such struggle, utilizing whatever openings, large or small, that present themselves. ■

On the pro-choice movement

The current anti-abortion crusade in the U.S. is directed first and foremost at working and poor women. It is they who will suffer from back alley abortions.

Nor is the anti-abortion drive just about taking away abortion rights. It is an offensive to degrade women, to justify stripping them of rights won in struggle. And in this too working women will suffer most.

The anti-abortion movement is also a pro-rich, pro-war movement to recruit mindless foot soldiers for the whole reactionary offensive against the working class at home and for imperialist adventures abroad.

The working and poor women and the working masses in general have the most stake in the fight for abortion rights and against the anti-abortion crusade.

It is only on the basis of mobilizing the working masses that the fight for abortion rights and women's emancipation can move forward.

The fight to defend abortion rights has been particularly intense over the past two years. Thousands of women and pro-choice men came out to confront the anti-abortion fanatics and defend the health clinics. Hundreds of thousands participated in mass demonstrations for abortion rights.

The clinic defense movement and the larger pro-choice movement have been a blow to the anti-abortion drive. Faced with mass resistance the bourgeoisie has combined the tactics of frontal assault on abortion rights with chipping away at women's rights and piecemeal harassment. At present the capitalist government and the anti-abortion movement are regrouping for another offensive.

The bourgeois women's organizations such as NOW and NARAL have held back the pro-choice movement of the last two years from developing as a militant struggle of the working masses. They opposed giving a militant reply to the forces blockading the women's health clinics, and they even publicly denounced

the militants. They sought to stop the masses from confronting the capitalist establishment, and instead channel them into supporting the police, the courts, repressive laws, and capitalist politicians, mainly Democrats but also some Republicans. This is because the leaders of NOW and other pro-capitalist women's leaders are aspiring to positions in that same establishment for themselves. Even when they called some big demonstrations in Washington D.C. their message was to rely on the establishment, not on mass initiative, while in the past year they have more and more opposed even the mildest demonstrations.

These policies of the bourgeois women's organizations have resulted in frittering away a good deal of the pro-choice movement that had blossomed. NOW's policy of non-confrontation has helped give space to the anti-abortion movement to regroup. And their preaching of faith in police and courts and politicians has taken pressure off the government apparatus, giving it a freer hand to attack abortion rights from above. In order to preserve the gains of struggle, there has to be a determined struggle against the influence of NOW and the bourgeois women's organizations.

The militant clinic defense movement had emerged despite the opposition of the bourgeois women's organizations,

and it had pushed forward the whole movement. In many areas clinic defense organizations emerged to organize the defense of the clinics when NOW would not. These organizations attracted new activists who wanted to go beyond what was acceptable to the NOW leadership, and who carried out militant defiance of the enemies of women's rights. These activists often became disgusted with NOW's opposition to militancy and mass action. This provided the opportunity to build up an anti-establishment trend among the pro-choice movement, but in itself was not yet recognition of the reasons for the treachery of NOW and other bourgeois women's groups nor of the need to consciously build up a mass trend opposed to the bourgeois trend.

Yet none of the major clinic defense organizations saw the need to speak to the masses about the differences between them and the bourgeois women's organizations or even to look closely into this themselves. Many of the reformist left groups that generally dominated the leadership of the clinic defense organizations directly tried to find ways to accommodate with and conciliate NOW. Such reformist groups promoted the view that NOW and the pro-capitalist trade union officialdom and community leaders could be persuaded or pushed or forced into

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governments.

To fight this war drive we must, rather, look to the masses — in the Middle East and in the U.S. We must direct our efforts to building a movement in the U.S. among the workers, the poor, the youth, and the dissenting soldiers and sailors. It is the masses who reap no benefits from this war buildup and are suffering from it. It is the working people who have the most interest in fighting against the war drive and who are most suspicious of the profit-grabbing system that stands behind it. ■

4th National Conference of the MLP, USA

The collapse of revisionism will unleash a new struggle for socialism

Over the last few years, the world has witnessed the collapse of Soviet revisionism. Revisionist regimes have fallen in most East European countries. And the rule of the Soviet revisionists is tottering. This is a major world event, and the lessons drawn from it will influence for years on end workers and activists all over the globe.

The collapse of revisionism has intensified the ideological campaign of the bourgeoisie about socialism. What hasn't socialism been blamed for? Whether it is tyranny in the revisionist countries or high taxes in the West, every blemish and crime of capitalist society is being blamed on "socialism" and "collectivism." Today the revisionist parties are joining this chorus of the Western bourgeoisie, jettisoning the communist labels they misused for so long, and singing the praises of Western capitalism.

What collapsed was not socialism, but another form of capitalism. The fall of Eastern European revisionism has shown the inner workings of revisionist rule. It has confirmed the stand of the anti-revisionists who have long opposed the revisionist regimes as state-capitalist regimes of exploitation. It has shown that behind their hollow facades these regimes were a bureaucratic tyranny hated by the masses. A class of privileged bureaucrats ruled, while the working class remained exploited and at the bottom of the heap.

In Eastern Europe a bureaucratic form of capitalism has fallen. A free-market form of capitalism is being established, and this is proving no salvation for the working people. So far, it has brought them the "shock therapy" of mass unemployment, impoverishment, the gutting of social programs, etc. It has brought a revival of bigotry of all sorts — national prejudices, anti-semitism and religious intolerance, anti-women oppression, etc.

The new order has not only pressed the workers economically, but it has left them at the bottom of the heap. A new ruling class is being formed. Many of the old state-capitalist bureaucrats have become the new capitalist directors, and new exploiters have rushed in to make

their fortune.

The workers who fought against the old regimes now face the first steps of struggle against the new Western-style capitalist order. The ideological confusion and intense prejudices against Marxism in these countries, the view that the hated old order was socialist, and the general lack of organization and political experience, will make these steps slow and halting, with many zigzags and reverses. But the path is being cleared for the workers' movement to rise again in these countries.

Socialism remains the path of liberation for the working class and oppressed masses.

Socialism is not monopoly capitalism with an increased role of the government. It is neither state capitalism, nor the welfare state, nor the state sector in a mixed economy.

Socialism is the struggle of the working class to do away with class society, in which a privileged minority rules and exploits the majority. Socialism is the rule of the working masses on the path of transition towards a communist, classless society. Such a society is the emancipation of the masses from the tyranny of money and the profit system.

Socialism is not just a moral utopia. It has been made possible and necessary by the development of large-scale production. This has resulted in the development of a disciplined working class, and it has provided possibilities of liberation for the masses. Yet under capitalism it has also brought devastation, environmental pollution, weapons of mass slaughters, etc. Only socialism can utilize the gigantic forces unleashed by modern, scientific large-scale production in the interests of humanity as a whole.

The workers have risen up for socialism in the past, and shook the capitalist world. The goal of eliminating capitalist exploitation and the tyranny of money, the goal of eliminating fratricidal divisions between working people and uniting toilers around the entire globe, has inspired the working class to heroic revolutionary efforts. Although the past

attempts to build socialist societies were strangled and failed, this doesn't mean that the working class will give up now. Agitation for socialism remains an essential task of any movement wishing to arouse the deepest revolutionary enthusiasm of the toilers.

The international trend supporting Soviet revisionism has been broken up and thrown into disarray. It is dropping the communist and Leninist labels in one country after another. The largest pro-Soviet revisionist parties are declaring themselves social-democratic. The old pretensions are dead.

This does not mean that the revisionist trends are gone and the struggle against them can be forgotten. They still maintain influence as large reformist groupings. Their new views reinforce the bourgeois campaign against socialism and revolution, while some remnants still try to hang onto the old system. But the struggle against revisionism will have to adjust to the new developments, both ideological and political, in the revisionist and opportunist world.

The collapse of revisionism has profound implications for the world balance of powers. It has smashed up the old alignment among the imperialist powers. The world used to be dominated by the rivalry of the two imperialist superpowers, the U.S. and the USSR, and their blocs, although there was a tendency for the other major imperialist powers in the Western bloc to flex their muscles. The collapse of revisionism has left U.S. imperialism dominant, as the remaining superpower, but the trend continues towards a multi-polar world, marked by the rivalry of several great powers. And there are also attempts by smaller capitalist powers to assert themselves.

The collapse of revisionism and the end of the cold war has affected those regimes and movements which sought to play one superpower against the other. Yet as the new world situation emerges, it will tend to bring the class and liberation struggles out of the shadow of the old U.S.-USSR rivalry.

Despite the chatter about a new world

order and peace dividends, we still live in the era of imperialism. There are new threats of instability, and there will be new rivalries and conflicts to determine the pecking order in the new situation. The events in the Persian Gulf war are a prime example.

The Marxist-Leninist Party has from the outset opposed Soviet revisionism. The activists who founded the Party and its predecessors did so because they were convinced of the harmfulness and bourgeois nature of the revisionist and opportunist trends. Since then the Marxist-Leninist Party has stood intransigent against the revisionist system and supported the oppressed working class in these countries. We have opposed the reformist treachery and petty-bourgeois democratic illusions promoted by world revisionism, and also its bureaucratic tyranny over the masses. Today we welcome the fiasco of revisionism and work for a renewal of workers' communism.

In the anti-revisionist struggle, the Marxist-Leninist Party has not stood still. We have dealt with the changing issues brought to the fore by the problems in the revolutionary movement, from petty-bourgeois nationalism to capitulationist views of united front tactics. We are criticizing the different opportunist trends that have come to the fore, including trotskism. We have subjected the experience and views of the struggles of the past to critical analysis.

And we have been emphasizing the need for a deeper analysis of socialism, distinguishing it from fashionable ideas that have been proven wrong. We are devoting attention to the study and assessment of the history of the proletarian revolution in the Soviet Union and its attempts to carry out the transition to socialism. This effort eventually failed, strangled from outside and corrupted by revisionism from within. Yet this revolution was one of the most profound moments of working class history, and it must be closely studied by the working class as it prepares for its future assaults against capital.

The working class needs its own voice

The mid-term elections this year saw grave discontent with the capitalist parties. The politicians told the masses to do nothing but be passive and vote, while the people were cynical about the mud-slinging campaigns, the empty promises, the rampant corruption.

What is the alternative?

The working class needs its own voice, its own political organization. The more the workers seek to rise in action for their general class interests, the more the need for an overall political organization becomes evident. To stand up as a political force in its own right, to challenge bourgeois rule and not just individual acts of oppression and exploitation, the working class needs not only economic organizations and broad organizations devoted to particular fronts of the struggle, but to build up a revolutionary party itself. This is why activists founded the Marxist-Leninist Party, and seek to build it as a contingent of world workers' communism.

Unlike the bourgeois parties that tell the people to trust in the rulers, the proletarian party calls on the workers to

take matters into their own hands. On one front after another, the masses wish for a stand that expresses their point of view and their militance. In the last period, among the national political forces, it has been the Marxist-Leninist Party that has fought to develop this independent stand in the mass movements. In the pro-choice movement, for example, the party gave a national aspect to resistance to the line of pro-establishment reformism. In the economic movement, the Party has encouraged every tendency to break free of the labor bureaucrats and has sought to give a broader sweep to the scattered fights against the capitalist offensive.

This is a time when few new activists and workers have come forward to take up the tasks of party-building themselves. Yet the party's work has found sympathy among the working masses, and it has maintained links with them. The maintenance of the party during this period has been essential for maintaining a national voice of the working class, to carrying out vital ideological and theoretical work to provide new orientations for

the revolutionary movement, and to preserving that link with the experience of past struggles that is vital for a conscious approach to the new struggles that are coming.

Actions may be small at present. But actions in working class neighborhoods,

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organizing a really big movement in favor of the rights of working women. This was a harmful fantasy that flew in the face of the actual experience of the women's movement.

The experience of the pro-choice movement has aroused a greater consciousness among wide masses of working women of the need to fight for their rights. Moreover, the massive growth of the female labor force, and the devastation wreaked by the capitalist offensive, has made the fight for equal pay, for child care, and other rights for working class women all the more pressing. New

work place struggles that take place despite the pro-capitalist labor officialdom and independent of the bounds they set, anti-racist struggles, clinic defense actions, etc. maintain the class struggle.

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battles over women's rights are bound to break out.

We must continue to improve our agitation for women's rights, including around issues of particular concern to working women. We must link up with the struggles that break out, and pay special attention to seeking out those issues on which the struggle has the strongest tendency to go beyond the bounds set by the establishment women's groups. And we must organize the working masses, and all progressive defenders of women's rights, into a trend consciously distinct from the pro-establishment movement, and imbue this independent movement with confidence in its own strength.

4th National Conference of the MLP, USA

Build the world movement for workers' communism

All around the world fuel is accumulating for the new outbreaks of the class struggle.

The economic and financial impasse in the U.S. and other imperialist heartlands is tightening the squeeze on the workers and poor. The impoverishment of the less developed countries is reaching desperate levels, while proletarianization is increasing the ranks of the working class. The collapse of revisionist state capitalism in Eastern Europe and elsewhere is bringing the role of capital into the open with austerity governments and the so-called "shock treatment" of unemployment and poverty. Meanwhile imperialism and capitalism are preparing new disasters, from slaughter in the Persian Gulf to ecological calamities.

There have been powerful revolts in a number of countries, including Korea, Nepal, Palestine, El Salvador and South Africa. The times cry out for the development of a world movement of the oppressed.

Yet the revolutionary movement is disorganized and disunited. Everywhere the mass struggles face the forces of reformism and accommodation, the influence of bourgeois and other non-

working class theories, the siren songs of petty-bourgeois nationalism, liberalism and above-class democracy, and of benevolent despotism. The revisionists have helped spread these influences, but their collapse does not automatically create a revolutionary trend.

There must be dedicated work to build up revolutionary organization. In the first place, the communist forces of the working class must be built up. The class conscious workers bring organization to the masses and give them revolutionary perspective. There are already activists fighting to develop such forces among the workers in some countries. And the conditions will inevitably give rise to such forces elsewhere.

The Marxist-Leninist Party, USA is part of these world forces of workers' communism.

Workers' communism — because that is its class foundation, where it centers its focus. Not on the liberals, not on the trade union bureaucrats, not on the reformist leaders, but on the rank and file, the growing army of wage slaves around the world.

Communism — because the communism of Marx, Engels and Lenin is the

only direction out of this capitalist hell. The communist theory that sheds light on the path of the class struggle, on how to build the working class party and the solid organization for the struggle and overthrow of the capitalists. The communist society that is the highest creation of the transition to socialism. Not the fake socialism of the fat bureaucrat that we see disintegrating in the state-capitalist countries of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, but the socialism of the workers, of the masses, where the needs of the majority are supreme, not the profit and privilege of the few.

Today the forces of workers' communism are still weak, small, scattered. Last year the Central Committee of the Marxist-Leninist Party decided there was a need for an initiative to provoke thought, discussion, and debate among these forces about the needs of the times. And so was born the January 1, 1990 editorial of *The Workers' Advocate* entitled "Tasks of workers' communism during the collapse of revisionism, a platform of struggle for the consideration of fighters against revisionism, revolutionary activists and class conscious workers around the world." It has received some interest

from activists of other countries, and it has also been useful for explaining the significance of the present period to the workers in this country.

The world is going through important changes. The collapse of the old revisionist order is not just producing oceans of hateful puss but is clearing away the old corruption. And economic evolution is transforming the technical side of production and emphasizing its social aspect on a scale larger than ever.

The revolutionary movement must purge itself of all the old revisionist, reformist, nationalist muck, of everything that doesn't conform to the needs of the class struggle and the truth, of everything that is holding back the emerging workers' communism. This will not be swift nor easy, and it will require the active collaboration of communist activists around the globe. But this work with pave the way for the new revolutionary movement that will raise the working class to its feet and allow humanity to tackle the immense problems facing the world. ■

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They provide the opportunity to maintain the links of the progressive activists with the masses. These links cannot be maintained by hoping that some day the big reformist organizations, labor bureaucrats, pro-establishment leaders, and bourgeois feminists will advance the struggle. Rather let a spirit of contempt against reformism and class collaborationism develop among the activists and the working masses as a whole! It is the revolt of the working class and oppressed masses against their oppressors, and their dedication to building their own political trend to revolutionize the world and purge it of exploitation and corruption, that carries the seeds of future victories.

The voice of the workers and activists is smothered in the bourgeois papers. It is through writing, distributing, and studying its own leaflets and newspapers

that the working class develops its own press. This press, along with struggles and demonstrations, give the working class and progressive activists their voice. In the last period, *The Workers' Advocate* and the party press in general has been particularly important in maintaining a voice for class struggle. And they have provided a national and world context for local struggles.

The bourgeois campaign against socialism shows also the importance of the theoretical front of the class struggle. Without the spread of revolutionary theory among the masses, the mass movement cannot develop into a consistent, class-wide assault on the exploiters. It is vital that the party function as a center for work on the problems facing the revolutionary movement such as the nature of revisionism or the evaluation of how current world events bear on the theory of socialism. The Marxist-Leninist Party has devoted much attention to both

the experience of the mass upsurges of the past and the fight against the ideological offensive launched by the bourgeoisie around the collapse of revisionism. This concentrated work is essential to aid the theoretical initiative of the masses of workers, activists, and youth.

The building of the party in these days of a continued low level of mass struggle and revolutionary atmosphere requires patience and clear-sightedness. Exaggerating the immediate prospects, or belief in the reformist organizations are equally fatal. As well, while enthusiastically linking up with local struggles, party organizations must avoid overextending themselves, or developing their work one-sidedly. There must be a realistic assessment of the nature of each struggle, and its objective role, rather than being carried away with the belief that the extent of the struggle will be determined solely by the efforts of the Party. It is steadfast work to remain linked with the

masses and to take up necessary tasks facing the revolutionary movement that will prepare the best conditions for future upsurges.

Around the members of the Marxist-Leninist Party are sympathizers, activists, and workers. Some support the idea of building a party of workers' communism while others wish to work with it on some fronts of the class struggle. Without such circles no working class party could exist. All class conscious workers and activists should lend what support they can to the maintenance of communist organization. Arm-in-arm with these class conscious workers and activists, the Marxist-Leninist Party will maintain a revolutionary press, communist work in the mass movement, and the championing of the class struggle in all fields — economic, political and theoretical. ■

Women's rights....continued

'Pro-family' Bush disowns disabled children

The Bush administration loves to chatter about concern for "family values." Talk is cheap. The truth is that Bush is slashing the meager benefits for disadvantaged families.

Take what the Bush administration is doing to Social Security benefits to poor children with physical or mental disabilities.

One of the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) programs under Social Security is supposed to help poor families with disabled children. Nine months ago, in February, the Supreme Court ruled that for 16 years the government had violated the law by arbitrarily restricting the definition of disability. It had been automatically excluding children

with Down's syndrome, muscular dystrophy, AIDS, cystic fibrosis, and other serious chronic illnesses and birth defects, thus denying benefits to hundreds of thousands of children. Despite the court ruling, not one of these children has yet gotten assistance. The Bush administration won't pay, and the legal system won't enforce a decision on behalf of the poor.

The situation faced by these families is desperate. This case involves only poor families. In most states, if they were covered by SSI, they would also be eligible for help from Medicaid with medical expenses. Cut off from both SSI and Medicaid, the families suffer. Even if they eventually get back payments, the

children may have suffered from years without proper medical attention.

Nevertheless Bush's officials have made it clear that they will do all they can to avoid helping the disabled kids. By May they had only got to the point of saying that they would have new regulations by August 31 to judge who is disabled. August 31 came and went, and the regulations are nowhere to be seen. Meanwhile, they are using an "interim standard" for new and pending cases. This standard specifies that those denied benefits would not have the right to appeal to an administrative law judge or the federal courts.

Why all the stonewalling? A White House official puts it this way: "Nobody in the administration wants to hurt poor and disabled children, but we don't want to give them a financial windfall either." (*New York Times*, Nov. 19) For the poor to have medical care is, in their eyes, a frill, a windfall. Even looking over the records is too much for Bush's officials. They say that they want to locate children eligible for benefits under the court system. But they refuse to simply pull up

the Social Security records of those who were unjustly denied assistance in the past, saying that this is "inordinately burdensome" and "extremely costly."

Oh yes, Bush is pro-family — but not your family, or workers' families, or poor families. He is pro-family — so long as it doesn't cost anything. ■

Justice for janitors

A janitors' strike was launched on October 31 against building cleaning companies in Washington, D.C. Some 6,000 people have jobs cleaning Washington's commercial office buildings.

For the last two years, the Justice for Janitors campaign has fought for union recognition, decent pay and job rights for janitors, many of whom are women and undocumented immigrants. In this latest action in Washington, D.C., workers and supporters have held rallies outside the struck buildings daily. ■