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Africa in the stranglehold of debt

Zambia: A growing economy gets wrecked

In the April 15 issue of the *Workers' Advocate*, we began examining the African debt crisis. There we looked at the crisis from the standpoint of sub-Saharan Africa as a whole. This time we discuss the crisis from the angle of a single country: Zambia in southern Africa.

This is one of the countries that has been hit the hardest. Zambia is also useful to examine because it shows how even a favorable economic situation can turn into its opposite within a couple of decades.

At the time of its independence from Britain in 1964, Zambia had what appeared to be good prospects for a newly independent African country. As one of the world's top copper producers, Zambia could expect income to finance economic development projects. It also had healthy agricultural potential. In one report made a decade later it

was estimated that the country had the agricultural capacity to support five times its population. Moreover, the party in power, Kenneth Kaunda's United National Independence Party (UNIP), enjoyed popularity due to its role in the anti-colonial struggle.

Still, development was by no means going to be easy. The colonial economy had consisted of an enclave of copper mining, a small commercial farming sector controlled by white settlers, and largely undeveloped rural regions where subsistence farmers predominated. What little infrastructure there was in the country had been set up to support the mining sector. The fruits of mining had been monopolized by British companies. In addition Zambia was landlocked, and contradictions with colonial and racist regimes on three sides created additional problems.

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All out against Operation Rescue!

From the June 30 issue of Detroit Workers' Voice:

Operation Rescue (OR), the right-wing anti-abortion fanatics, are gearing up for another summer of clinic blockades and harassment of women. They have threatened a national effort to shut down clinics in six cities in the period from July 8-18. But pro-choice fighters are also getting organized. Activists from Cleveland, Buffalo, Detroit and other cities are planning to rally on Saturday, July 10, in Cleveland (the closest city in the Midwest which OR has threatened to blockade).

Last summer OR brought people from around the country to shut down the clinics in Buffalo. But pro-choice activists from all around the Midwest joined forces to successfully keep the Buffalo clinics open and to give the anti-abortion thugs a major set-back. This summer, OR is mobilizing bigots from many cities to descend on Cleveland.

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All out against Operation Rescue!

Continued from the front page

Pro-choice activists must again come out from all over the Midwest to come to the assistance of the women in Cleveland.

However, a campaign of rumors is spreading aimed at discouraging people from coming out to defend the Cleveland clinics. Different stories are being spread such as that the police may refuse to "protect" clinics where pro-choice activists appear. And there are other rumors that police might arrest anyone — antis or pro-choice activists alike — who show up at the clinics. We have heard all of these kinds of stories on previous occasions. And we've found they can be swept away by bringing out masses of people to defend the clinics. When hundreds of people came out to defend the clinics in Buffalo last summer all such threats simply evaporated.

Pro-choice activists know that the police can never be relied upon to protect the clinics anyway. Only when masses of people rally to shout slogans and keep the anti-abortion bigots away from the doors, or to remove them if they sitdown at the doors, can the clinics be kept open. This is what made for the success in Buffalo last summer. The police have only belatedly acted when they were given

no other choice by the militant defense of clinics by the pro-choice activists.

But the victory in Buffalo didn't come without debate among pro-choice activists about whether to defend the clinics at all and over what attitude to take to the police and other questions.

Apparently similar debates have begun in the Cleveland Pro-Choice Access Committee, a coalition that was recently formed to defend the clinics. Already we have been told that a spokesperson from Cleveland NOW, which is a member of the coalition, has discouraged activists from Detroit from going to Cleveland. But since NOW leaders have rarely dirtied their hands in the hard work of clinic defenses, we shouldn't bow to their baton, or we would end up giving up the key part of the struggle — the day-to-day battle to keep the clinics open.

Don't expect Clinton to help

In practice, the main interest of groups like NOW, NARAL, and Planned Parenthood is not clinic defense, but lobbying. Instead of rallying pro-choice women and men around the country to come out and defend the clinics against OR these groups are rallying around the halls of Congress, singing sweet lullabies about things like ensuring Clinton's health care plan covers abortion. After all, now we have a Democrat in the White House!

But wait a minute. The latest reports are that President Clinton is wavering once again. When asked whether abortions would be covered under a *national health care plan* at a town meeting in May, he was reported to have said that, "I don't think a decision has been made about that."

So much for relying on Clinton and the Democrats. They are a party of the wealthy capitalists just like the Republicans. They are not likely to fight to fund abortions for poor and working people unless the masses take to the streets in struggle. We must carry out mass protests to demand that abortions be included in any national health care reform. And we must keep up the fight to keep the clinics open. Stand up against OR's blockades and harassment! Defend a woman's right to choose! □

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Transit Workers Union medical changes and Clinton's "managed care" go hand in hand

The following article is from the June 16 issue of the New York Workers Voice, paper of the MLP-New York. Note that Clinton's overall health plan is usually called 'managed competition', not simply 'managed care'. The article below points out that the plan involves competition among insurance companies and other companies to set up health care plans for large groups of people. The Clinton administration prefers that these group plans should be 'managed care' plans, such as HMOs. So 'managed care' is a feature of the Clinton administration's present idea of 'managed competition'. A more detailed explanation of some health terms can be found in the May 20 issue of the Supplement.

In recent months, transit workers have been hit with three major changes in their health plan. Changes in the prescription plan, the dental plan, and major medical/hospitalization come less than a year after first time ever co-payment fees were imposed on GHI subscribers. At the heart of these changes is the spiraling cost of medical care, combined with the Transit Workers Union [TWU] leadership's unwillingness to fight the TA at the last contract round for payments sufficient to meet our health needs. As a result, union officials have adopted a three-pronged program:

- * benefit cuts through co-payments
- * cost-cutting by searching around for more cheaply run programs
- * subtle pressure to join a health maintenance organization (in this case, HIP) through cutbacks in GHI reimbursement.

If these features seem familiar, they should. They are some of the main features of the Clintons' "managed care" proposals floating out of Washington. In the operation of the Health Benefit Trust to "cut medical costs," we can get a feel for how "managed care" will operate.

Months before the contract was signed last May, TWU and Transit Authority [TA] officials had agreed on a level of health benefit funding for this contract; notably, this was a level that was too low to sustain our benefits. So costs were pared by instituting GHI co-payments. As any transit worker with a family knows, these co-payments can easily add up to significant amounts of money. These co-payments served two purposes: (1) by making workers pay to use their medical plan, our managers saved the Health Benefit Trust money; and (2) the constant out-of-pocket expenses push workers to switch over to the cheaper HIP program.

Still, these savings were apparently not enough, and so

the TWU has been searching for other ways to cut expenses. One answer has been to put the medical system up for bid, in the hopes of finding lower cost carriers. Now, in principle, there is nothing wrong with this. But, in fact, lower costs often translate into lower service or benefit levels. This is certainly true of the prescription plan, which seems to have a million hurdles, a million things that you can do wrong and not get full (or any) reimbursement. And any transit worker who opted for Dental Plan "B" will find that the number of subscribing dentists is much smaller than before.

By and large, the costs of "reducing the cost of health care" — to the Health Benefit Trust, that is — are being borne by us. And much the same lies in store for us from the Clintons' managed care proposals.

For example, one Clinton proposal is for considering any health benefits above a very minimum level to be "taxable income." What is this but a sneaky way of imposing new costs on any worker with decent medical benefits? Just as GHI co-payments force us toward HIP, so taxing benefits will force people toward accepting a lower level of benefits, and toward cheap Health Maintenance Organizations. There is nothing wrong with a good HMO. But there is everything wrong with cut-rate HMOs, based on a minimum plan of service and grudgingly authorizing any treatment.

Another part of the Clinton plan is to lower costs by encouraging "competition" among insurance companies who would bid to provide coverage to large groups of people. Thus, supposedly, they would have an incentive to hold down doctor, hospital and drug costs. But we can see just from the last few months, that the "low bidder" will also try to find other ways to cut costs, such as reducing service and insured medical treatment. The horror stories heard in other industries where insurance company adjusters, rather than medical personnel, determine the "appropriate" level of medical care is the logical culmination of this type of cost-cutting.

Across the country, tens of millions lack any health insurance whatsoever. Tens of millions more face cuts in their coverage or are unable to change jobs for fear of losing coverage. People are calling out for a radical overhaul of the health system. But transit workers' own experience clearly shows that the Clinton plan of "managed care" is no such thing. We cannot allow medical costs to be cut by cutting our medical care or by shifting more costs onto us. □

More public clinics close in Chicago: Fight back against health care cuts!

From the June 4 issue of Chicago Workers' Voice:

Masses of poor and working people are starting to get angry because of continuing cuts in public health care. About 5 thousand people protested plans by the city of Chicago to close four of its neighborhood health clinics with a march from 35th and Michigan to Daley Plaza on May 14th.

People have every reason to be angry. Over the last four years the Daley administration [Daley, a Democrat, is the mayor of Chicago] has cut the budget of the Department of Health by 33%. Staff in the city clinics has been cut back. Several clinics have already been closed or privatized, including the TB center on the West Side. Mental health centers have also been closed. The lead abatement program has been abandoned. The W.I.C. program has been cut back to the point where 100,000 eligible mothers and children are not enrolled.

So why would Daley cut the Health Department budget year after year in spite of the obvious serious health care needs of the masses of poor people in Chicago? Is Daley just a hard-hearted racist who only cares about the welfare of his rich business associates? That he certainly is. But there is a lot more to this than just the evil character of one man.

Ever since the late '70s the federal, state and local city governments have been imposing one cut after another in

all the social programs that give some benefits to the poor and the workers. From top to bottom, Democrat and Republican, the government of the rich has been on the offensive against the workers and the poor. Reagan and Bush cut gaping holes in the "safety net". In Illinois, Thompson [former governor of Illinois, a Republican] and now Edgar [present governor, also Republican] have been cutting welfare and school funding. Cook County has been cutting staff at Cook County Hospital.

None of this is going to change without protests and struggles by the masses of the poor and working people who are being victimized. We need a militant movement to fight the cutbacks in health care, the cutbacks in education, the cutbacks in welfare, and all the other attacks of the rich on the poor. The masses need their independent voice. These attacks are coming from Democrats and Republicans; we can not look to politicians of the rich for solutions to our problems.

Just replacing Daley with another politician, even one who appears to have sympathy for the needs of the masses, will not get rid of the government structure which has caused these problems. Even supposing we got someone in office who did want to help the people, that person would never be allowed to do anything serious to help the people. The people must be their own saviors; we can not put our fate in the hands of the professional politicians. □

The North American Free Trade Agreement and the workers' struggle

Below are the notes used for the speech at the MLP May Day meeting in Chicago this year:

On May 1, 1886 workers in the United States launched the movement for an 8-hour work day with strikes and demonstrations across the country. This movement sent ripples of excitement around the world and inspired the workers of many countries so that the fight for the 8-hour day became an international fight. Out of that movement came International Working Class Day — May First. A day for strikes, protests and demonstrations and meetings celebrating two important ideas: that the workers are a class with their own interests; and that there is an international working class to be united around those common

class interests in order to do away with the exploitation, wars, and suffering that capitalism and imperialism bring. These ideas continue to be confirmed even as the rich insist that *everything has changed* and *socialism is dead*.

For today's meeting I want to narrow down our focus a bit and discuss an issue that has importance for the workers' movements in the United States and Mexico, and for our Party's work in Chicago — the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). At the moment the NAFTA is scheduled to go through Congress, although it is not entirely clear that the agreement as it is will be approved. However, the issues raised by the free trade agreement will remain even if the NAFTA itself is amended or stopped in Congress.

I'm going to concentrate on the NAFTA as it affects the US and Mexican working class because that is the area where we have the most experience. By doing this I don't mean to belittle in any way the significance of solidarity with the Canadian workers and their struggles.

On the one hand, we have U.S. imperialism with its long history of exploitation in Mexico: from the mines at Cananea in the 1880s to the Ford Motor Plant in Puebla and the maquiladora plants on the border today, the hand of the US rests heavy on Mexico. Mexico is a capitalist country, but it is a dependent capitalist country and the US is the dominant economic force acting on Mexico. It was President Reagan who first proposed the idea of a free trade agreement with Mexico about 10 years ago with an eye towards US interests in its backyard.

US imperialism wants NAFTA to serve as a formal guardian for its "special relationship" with Mexico — to deepen Mexico's economic dependence on the U.S. and to have an even freer hand to exploit the Mexican workers. To this end the NAFTA extends the special privileges foreign manufacturers have in the border maquiladoras into the interior; for the first time it opens the door for penetration into insurance, banking and government contracts; and, perhaps most important in the long run, it gives the US more opening into the oil industry. The US has hopes that the NAFTA will strengthen it in its economic competition with the other big imperialist powers. It's worth noting that the NAFTA may also be a forerunner to some kind of a Panamerican Free Trade Treaty. Mexico has already negotiated agreements with several Latin American countries from which the U.S. will also benefit through the NAFTA.

So what does the NAFTA mean for US workers? While the US capitalists who support NAFTA are promising that it will benefit workers and capitalists alike, it seems obvious that they plan to use NAFTA to more easily close down plants in the US in order to increase their profits. At the same time they can use the threat of shutdowns as a club against the US workers, driving down the salary and benefits of their workers in the US. This has been the trend in the United States for some years, and the NAFTA simply reinforces that trend.

In Mexico the ruling party, the PRI, and the Mexican capitalists who support the NAFTA, hope to put off the economic, social and political crises that might threaten their rule. There are promises of change, and prosperity, and this is not to mention the fact they plan to fill their own pockets with even more wealth. The NAFTA continues and formalizes the policy begun by the Mexican government in the 1980s, at first under pressure from the US and International Monetary Fund and World Bank, to relieve the debt crisis. This is a policy of privatization, austerity plans, and openings for foreign investment. The PRI prepared for this free trade agreement by instituting a series of reforms: changes in the Mexican constitution and laws including more restrictions on trade union activity, and ending the agrarian land reform act. So far this has

brought booming profits for the biggest Mexican capitalists, like the Vitro glass company and financiers like Carlos Slim, and it has brought big opportunities for foreign investors. The PRI is heavily committed to this so-called modern reformed economic policy. They are depending on financing their budget deficit through the sale of securities to foreigners and then to paying off the securities with dollars raised from an expected big increase of exports of manufactured goods. And while the sale of securities has been booming, the big increase of exports has not yet materialized and awaits the NAFTA. Furthermore, many financial experts are predicting that Mexico will have to devalue its currency to achieve the increased exports which will in turn send the securities market crashing down.

At any rate, even if the NAFTA itself is derailed, it seems likely that there is no turning back for the PRI, which will attempt to continue the same policies anyway.

Meanwhile the PRI has tried to convince the Mexican workers that some of this wealth will trickle down to the masses. They even used some of the money from selling off the state enterprises to fund public projects in some poor areas. But there is a limit to how many state enterprises can be sold and so far the economic reform has mainly meant growing poverty for most of the Mexican masses. The PRI promises that NAFTA will bring one million new jobs in the next ten years, but even if they come close to that figure, there are more than 5 million unemployed and at least 14 million underemployed workers in Mexico right now. Furthermore, it is low wages that attract the U.S. capitalists to Mexico in the first place, so the Mexican workers can only expect that everything possible will be done to keep their wages and working conditions attractive under the NAFTA too. The Mexican workers cannot expect the NAFTA to provide answers for their problems.

Some people have said that the conditions in and around the maquiladora plants are a preview of the effects of NAFTA itself on the Mexican workers. This doesn't seem too far fetched an idea so I thought I would give comrades some idea of just what the maquiladoras are. The maquiladoras began in the 1965 when the Bracero program ended. The Mexican government set aside a 12.5 mile wide strip along the border in which foreign companies could set up factories or assembly plants and import capital goods and raw or partly finished materials duty free. Mexican laws restricting the percentage of foreign ownership of enterprises were waived as were sections of the labor code protecting trade union activity. In 1965 there were a small number of maquilas employing 3,000 workers. In 1982 there were 300 maquilas. In 1986 there were 1,000. There are now some 1,900 maquiladoras in the border region, more than 80% are US-owned companies, with a total of 850 different companies, including GM, Pepsico, Stepan, Zenith, DuPont, United Technologies, Ford, Eaton, Baxter, etc. More than half a million workers are employed at any given moment — two thirds of the workers are women between the ages of 17-24 (thought to be more manageable). Wages now average from 27 to 47 per week. 6.2

million people live in the region. Towns around the maquilas are filled with shanty town settlements, with no sewage systems, streets or even electricity. In many cases the workers may pay one-third of their salary to share a room with 5 to 6 others. The shanty towns suffer from abysmal health conditions: for example, in Ciudad Juarez a study in 1988 showed that 35% of all 8-year-olds had hepatitis at that moment, and 90% of the adults over 35 reported having had it at least once.

Working conditions are so bad that there is a turnover in many factories of more than 180 percent a year despite the desperate need for employment. Physical and verbal abuse are common in the plants, and reports of sexual abuse including rape by supervisors are common. Long hours on assembly lines, exposure to toxic chemicals, and many, many injuries are the norm. The pollution of the border region by these plants is now infamous. Companies like GM and Stepan have been found to be dumping toxic chemicals at 53,000 and 61,000 times the permissible level in the U.S. (and in violation of Mexican law as well).

This is just a brief snapshot of the maquiladora region. Conditions in the interior are not much better. Wages in union shops in the interior such as Ford are higher than the maquiladoras but conditions for the workers remain difficult. The recent Ford strike in Mexico shows the treatment workers can expect from the US capitalists, the Mexican government, and the Mexican-government-run unions, and their commitment to keeping Mexican labor attractive.

Given all this, it's no surprise that there is considerable opposition to the NAFTA in both Mexico and the US. Workers in both countries are wise to be skeptical. There is organizing against the NAFTA going on, such as the Chicago conference this weekend. There are good things happening in the movement against NAFTA: contact between workers and activist organizations in all three countries [Mexico, U.S., Canada]; joint demonstrations on the border with Mexico against maquiladora owners polluting and their mistreatment of the workers. Workers in the US learning something about conditions in Mexico. Mexican workers getting to know something about workers' struggles in the US. Demands for higher wages in Mexico. Certainly the whole trend of economic integration codified in NAFTA cries out for a united workers' movement from Canada to Mexico.

However, not all those opposed to the NAFTA are friends to either the Mexican or the US workers, and the tasks that face the Mexican and US workers go beyond calling for the defeat of the NAFTA.

Consider the AFL-CIO line: Some years ago the AFL-CIO launched a campaign to *Buy American* and *Keep jobs in the U.S.* This campaign directed its main fire at the Japanese: for example, union locals organized events where Toyotas and Hondas were smashed to pieces with sledgehammers. The vilest kind of chauvinism and racism was promoted, which created the conditions for the murder of Vincent Chin. Now around the NAFTA, although trying

to look better by actually mentioning the problems of the workers in Mexico, again the AFL-CIO's main emphasis is to protect American jobs from foreign competition.

Fair trade, not free trade has a nice sound to it, but the trade union bureaucrats are joining with the section of U.S. capitalists who are calling for a protectionist reindustrialization economic policy: more tariffs, subsidies to certain industries, trade wars, and greater use of technology, automation and speedup etc. Of course this policy of reindustrialization still leads to job eliminations, and other cuts in labor costs — a fact they don't care to discuss. The AFL-CIO is aiming everything at defeating the NAFTA as if that would save the US workers. This is a method of limiting and tying down the workers. The fact is that the capitalists are using two main methods of increasing their competitiveness and protecting profits. They are shifting jobs to lower wage areas — whether inside the US or abroad, and they are investing in new high-tech reindustrialization. This will continue with or without the NAFTA itself.

In the U.S. this problem of the inherent chauvinism and class collaboration pushed by the AFL-CIO and the Democratic Party is a key problem holding back the workers' movement. The workers' struggles are small, scattered, there is little solidarity among workers in the same city, let alone with workers from other countries. These days the workers can't even imagine, let alone organize for, a revolution, for a socialist alternative.

One reason, not the only one, for this is that in the U.S. the workers have become another interest group in the Democratic Party's coalition of interests. And many have come to believe that they share some fundamental interests with their own bourgeoisie. Only a small percentage of the U.S. workers are in trade unions, but far from being the fighting vanguard of the class against the rich, the trade unions, as they are today, perpetrate the idea that workers have common interests with U.S. capitalists and US imperialism, and that US workers should support policies that will make the US capitalists stronger. They promote racism and suspicion towards workers in other countries. We can see this now only in their stand towards the NAFTA but also with regard to imperialist wars, whether in Central America or the recent war with Iraq. These policies not only divide US workers from the international class, but also translate into disaster for the economic struggles of the workers inside the US too. The trade unions preach narrow limited actions and accommodation.

The work of the Marxist-Leninist Party and any genuinely militant workers and activists should be to encourage, support and participate in the struggles of the working class, while drawing out the class interests of the workers on the issues of the day so that the workers can build organization and action independent of the capitalists and their flunkies. In this way the slogans of *Long Live May First—International Working Class Day* and *Workers of All Countries, Unite* can become the slogans of a living, revolutionary working class movement. □

Italians say no to the 'partyocracy' system

Italy rocked by political crisis' appeared in the June 1 Workers' Advocate. The following article provides background information on the crisis.

Italy's leading parties routinely demanded bribes from businessmen in exchange for public contracts. Some state enterprises were run as virtual fiefdoms, with public monies regularly funneled into party coffers. Thus IRI, Italy's largest enterprise, was the preserve of the Christian Democrats, while the energy monopoly ENI was the preserve of the Socialists. Other state enterprises such as railways and electric utilities were parceled out among the parties, with the reformist "Communists" getting their own small share. [The article in the June 1 *WA* described a bit more of record of the CP of Italy, which long ago abandoned communism for reformism, and which changed its name a while ago to the Democratic Party of the Left.]

The top party leaders are now being investigated, though they haven't yet been arrested and charged. This includes Bettino Craxi, former prime minister and leader of the Socialist Party. The heads of three major parties have resigned, along with five cabinet ministers, and there have been seven suicides so far.

A special case is the "grand old man" of Christian Democracy, Giulio Andreotti, who has been prime minister seven times. He was recently angling for another comeback until his Mafia connections suddenly hit the front page.

Since World War II the Mafia has worked hand in glove with the Christian Democrats in southern Italy to keep the PCI out of power. The Christian Democrat politicians who controlled the police, the judiciary and the bureaucracy turned a blind eye to Mafia activities while the Mafia made sure that Christian Democrats got the votes they needed to stay in office. And whenever someone was about to blow the whistle on this cozy arrangement, they suddenly turned up dead. Mafia informants have recently begun to talk about Andreotti's personal role in these affairs. Andreotti and other Christian Democrat leaders are also being charged with funneling illicit kickbacks to their party.

Despite being left out of the juiciest kickback schemes, PCI bureaucrats also got in on some of the action. Recently Renato Pollini, former administrative secretary of the PCI, was arrested for taking kickbacks from the state railway enterprise and sharing out the proceeds with the Socialists and Christian Democrats.

All in all, some 2,000 politicians so far have been put under investigation. This includes one-sixth of the members of parliament. The last administration, headed by Giuliano Amato, was forced to resign in April because so many of its individual cabinet members had come under the cloud of investigation and were compelled to leave office.

Members of parliament tried to block the investigations as they unfolded. There have been attempts by parliament to decriminalize bribery — in effect to excuse the corrup-

tion of the past and to legalize it for the future. But this was countered by massive demonstrations outside Milan's justice building, where the investigations are centered. Parliament also insisted on maintaining the list of construction companies favored to obtain public works, enterprises which have a cozy connection with the ruling parties. They have also tried pressuring prosecutors and magistrates in Milan and elsewhere to ease up on the investigations.

But so far none of this has worked. People are tired of the political parasites.

Italian voters signal desire for change

In mid-April, Italians voted in a referendum which included eight questions. The voter turnout was massive.

They voted by huge majorities to abolish subsidies to political parties (90.3%); to scrap the patronage-awarding ministries of State Industry (90.1%), Tourism (82.2%), and Agriculture (70.1%); and to end the central government's power to appoint the chairmen of Italy's savings banks (89.8%).

Italians also voted to restrict criminal penalties on drugs for personal use by 55%.

The main question on the ballot was a reform of the voting system itself. An 82.7% majority voted to change the present system.

The question asked was whether to change the system of representation in Italy's Senate, the upper house of parliament. The proposal was to change from a proportional system of representation where seats are divided according to how many votes a party gets to a winner-take-all system (as in the U.S.).

The question was posed this way by its sponsors because they want a more stable bourgeois order. They told the voters that the change would take power away from the bosses of the old parties who play a major role in handing out party nominations to candidates.

What impact the reform will actually have is questionable. But voters basically sent the message they want a change. It is likely that the new system — which is also expected to be implemented in the lower house of parliament — will lead to a domination of politics by the parties which dominate the three regions of Italy today: the Christian Democrats in the south, the Democratic Party of the Left in the middle, and the Northern Leagues in the north.

Some observers fear that this could end up fragmenting the country. In recent elections there has been a surge of support in northern Italy for the Northern League, which is a reactionary anti-immigrant organization. The Northern League, based in Milan, wants northern Italy to be free of taxation from Rome, to cut itself free of poor, southern

Italy, and to block workers from southern Italy from coming north. In a winner-take-all system Northern League candidates would not be offset by representatives from

parties which have a scattered, but nationwide, following.

The voters wanted a change, the bourgeoisie wanted a new stable political system. But the result may backfire. □

Strikes in brief

Coal miners strike at Buck Creek

About 100 miners struck the state of Indiana's largest underground mine in the town of Sullivan March 31. Buck Creek Coal has failed to negotiate a contract with the United Mine Workers since the miners voted to join the union in October of 1991. The miners have had enough. When the picket lines went up, over 300 strikers and their supporters shut down the mine. Coal trucks honored the picket lines.

However, the Buck Creek Coal bigshots quickly began to employ scabs, and the mine is said to be working at 25% capacity.

One of the main issues in the struggle is safety. The miners are pressured to work unsafely. The mine lacks adequate ventilation and dangerous levels of methane gas are allowed to accumulate. Two of the managers who run Buck Creek Coal were recently indicted by a federal grand jury on charges they violated the Mine Safety Act and contributed to the 1989 explosion at the Pyro Mining Company's William Station mine in Union County, Kentucky. That explosion killed 10 miners. And now these villains are gutting the safety standards at Buck Creek Coal. □

Coal miners fight for union recognition

On May 4, nonunion miners at Wolf Creek Collieries Co. struck the Zeigler-owned mine in Martin County, Kentucky. They are protesting the cut of medical coverage for retirees and disabled workers. This struggle occurs during a United Mine Workers (UMW) organizing drive at Wolf Creek and across the Tug River at Marrowbone Mine in West Virginia — both owned by the Zeigler Coal Co.

The Wolf Creek mine is one of several nonunion mines bought by Zeigler last year from the Shell Corporation, which had bought them from the A.T. Massey Coal Co. Other Zeigler mines are organized by UMW and are among the ones targeted in the May 10 strike. As soon as Zeigler bought the Wolf Creek mine, it started major benefit cuts.

During the organizing drive at Marrowbone, four miners who led the organizing drive were fired. In response, 400 Marrowbone miners struck on March 24. After 10 days, the company backed down and rehired the four miners. A majority of the miners signed union-recognition cards and an election will be held at the end of May. □

Breaking the pay ceiling in Ford's Mexican plants

Ford workers in three different regions of Mexico agreed to support each other in a series of strikes aimed at breaking the government's mandated 9.9% ceiling on salary increases.

During February and March, workers in the Hermosillo and Chihuahua plants struck for an 18-35% wage increase (\$10 more per week for each worker). These assembly plant workers make an average of \$80 per week.

As the news of these strikes spread to Los Angeles, California, labor and community activists picketed a local Ford dealership.

At the three plants in Mexico — Hermosillo, Chihuahua and Cuautitlan — union officials accepted the 9.9% increase (as mandated by the government) but also accepted an additional 5.6% negotiated under the table. The workers' struggle benefited them to the tune of a 15.5% pay raise! □

Victory for Plastonics workers

After 23 weeks on strike, on April 14 a "Back to Work Rally" was held for Plastonics workers in Hartford, Connecticut. The workers ratified their first contract between Plastonics and their representative union, the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU). As the victorious workers entered the Plastonics plant they were greeted by applause and cheers from supporters.

Their new three-year contract includes a wage increase of 65 cents for the first year and 25 cents for each subsequent year. Their current average hourly wage was \$6.50. The company was also forced to establish a health and safety committee. Plastonics was fined \$62,000 by OSHA for health and safety violations. Plastonics is currently under investigation for violation of air pollution rules. □

Philadelphia oil workers fight for contract

On April 6, over 200 Chevron refinery workers in Philadelphia surrounded the car of the chief Chevron negotiator as he tried to leave after a day of negotiations.

In September of 1992, workers at the Philadelphia plant voted in the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW) as their union. Ever since, they have attempted to obtain a union contract to no avail. The company is stonewalling. The April 6 demonstration against the company negotiator

was the third demonstration held within two months.

The Philadelphia plant is one of eight refineries that line the Delaware River. Five of these plants are organized by the OCAW.

Chevron is asking for pay cuts ranging from 10 cents to \$1.05 an hour. The workers have had enough. They want their union contract, and they are stepping up the fight to get it! □

Textile workers in contract fight

On April 23, more than 100 textile workers from plants in North Carolina and Virginia converged on the U.S. district courthouse in Greensboro, North Carolina. Workers came from plants in Eden, North Carolina and Fieldale, Virginia to hold a press conference announcing a campaign to fight for a contract for all Fieldcrest Cannon workers.

The workers' last contract expired April 20. It affects 4,200 workers at nine Fieldcrest plants in Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina and Virginia. The workers have rejected the company's latest contract offer. This is their first contract rejection in 40 years.

At the press conference, Fieldcrest workers vowed to fight for a contract. They held banners and wore stickers claiming, "8 is enough! No 12-hour shifts!" and "Subcon-

tracting? Not my job!"

Workers report that they are forced to work 27 days straight and then they get a Sunday off. They are against forced overtime. Other issues for the workers include wage increases, changes in contract language, and job security.

As workers put it, "There's going to be a war!" "We're going to have to shut this place down!" □

Pratt & Whitney workers rally vs. plant closing

More than 400 workers rallied May 1 in a field facing the large aircraft engine plant of Pratt & Whitney in Southington, Connecticut. They chanted "No layoffs!" and "Downsize Bob Daniell!"

Daniell is the chairman of United Technologies Corporation (UTC) which owns Pratt & Whitney and is presently downsizing it. UTC raked in profits of \$4.875 billion in 1991 and \$5.117 billion in 1992. But it is wiping out 11,000 jobs across the country this year in a productivity drive aimed at squeezing still more profits from the remaining workers.

As part of this drive, UTC announced plans to close two and a half of its five Connecticut plants and to consolidate the work at nonunion plants in Maine and Georgia. □

Justice for the Minnesota 8!

Thirty people picketed the Hennepin County jail in Minneapolis to demand justice for the Minnesota 8. These are black men who have been accused of shooting white cop Jerome Haaf to death. These men had never been identified by any of the witnesses who were present when Haaf was killed. The community believes the Minnesota 8 are being used as scapegoats.

One of the men, Larry Flournoy, was put in solitary

confinement after he identified some abusive guards to a black radio commentator. He has been in prison since October 29 being held on \$3 million bail. No trial date has been scheduled. Another man, A.C. Ford, also at the Hennepin jail, fired his court-appointed lawyer for not representing him properly. But the state is denying payment to the new lawyers he got. □

Correction:

In the *Notes from Germany* in the May 20 issue of the *Supplement*, we made a mistake in transcribing the notes sent in to us by our correspondent. As a result, expressions appeared such as 'the trade union at IG Metall' which left it unclear that IG Metall, which is referred to repeatedly, is the name of the national metalworkers' union; this was our error, not our correspondent's. However, it should be noted that the sentence "Union representatives rejected an

offer by IG Metall to go ahead with the 36-hour week with 1.4% reduction in wages as 'outrageous' " is correct. The point is that the local or lower union representatives rejected the concessions to the companies offered by the national leadership of IG Metall. IG Metall workers took various actions, until the IG Metall leadership was able to gain control and impose a settlement in mid-May. □

Zambia

Continued from the front page

A decade of growth

Kenneth Kaunda and his party embarked on a development model based on nationalist and state-capitalist economic ideas then popular across the third world. These ideas suggested that through state-sponsored industrialization and production oriented to the home market, a third world country could find its way to a prosperous and industrial independent capitalist development.

Kaunda nationalized the copper mining industry and promoted a plan of "import substitution" industrialization. During the then-worldwide economic expansion, Kaunda was able to finance some modernization projects. Funds also went into health care and education.

Within a few years, Zambia enjoyed one of the highest rates of economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa. And although those at the top benefited most, there was a general improvement in people's education, health, housing, etc. A sizable working class emerged. So did a native bourgeoisie and various professional classes.

Kaunda's reformist model included a social contract formed on a nationalist basis between the black capitalist class and the better-off workers. Trade unions had been an important element in the anti-colonial coalition forged by UNIP. The unions were given junior partner roles in the government and state enterprises. And subsidies for maize flour, the principal food item, were vital to keep the urban working class tied to the government. The roots of this policy dated back to colonial days when the administration sought to keep wages low for the benefit of the foreign mineowners' companies.

However, the Zambian model had several big flaws.

Resting on shaky foundations

Above all it relied on the fortunes of a single commodity — copper. Economic development and government spending were mainly fed from earnings coming from high copper prices in the world market. As well, much of the new industry, while substituting for imported consumer items, remained dependent on raw materials and machinery purchased abroad with copper earnings.

Nationalization of big industry and mining allowed the concentration of resources and it proved essential to create a native industrial sector. There had been no black capitalists who could command such resources. On the downside, though, it spawned a huge state and party bureaucracy. An elite of businessmen and bureaucrats benefited heavily, and corruption grew.

Meanwhile, agriculture languished. Despite official rhetoric, it was largely neglected. Little was spent on improving rural infrastructure. What support was given by government went to commercial farmers, especially large

ones. The government's subsidies to farming and its policy of cheap maize flour for consumers also rested on the good fortunes of the copper-based economy.

While Kaunda and UNIP's monopoly over Zambian politics gave the regime initial stability, it also ended up sealing the regime from criticism and opposition. Though initially press and civic freedoms existed, Kaunda set up a one-party state in 1973 and tightened control over the people.

These underlying weaknesses could not be ignored for long.

The downswing of the world market wreaks havoc

Though the Zambian bourgeoisie had taken control of the commanding heights of the local economy, it had no control over the ups and downs of the world market. And Zambia, as a poor, commodity-producing economy, would find out that it remained at the mercy of much larger global economic forces.

In 1975 the copper boom came to an end. This was a huge disaster since Zambia's economy was overwhelmingly dependent on copper earnings. In 1979, for example, copper would account for 40% of GDP and 93% of export earnings. Over the years, 49-70% of government revenue came from copper earnings (depending on the price of copper each year).

At the same time, Zambia was hit by a second whammy. The price of oil rose sharply in the world market, spurred by OPEC's price hike. The country's import bill grew.

The Zambian government believed that it was faced with a temporary disorder. This was not its shortsightedness alone. It was generally expected that the copper price would recover. Thus Kaunda took out loans from the International Monetary Fund. Unlike many other third world countries, Zambia's loans were not taken out to fund new development projects, but simply to continue existing levels of government spending.

But copper prices did not recover. And that trend has remained to this day. There are too many producers of the metal, and demand for it has slowed due to technological changes and slower global growth.

Soon Zambia's loan bills came due. And here Zambia was hit by its knockout punch. Kaunda had to take out new loans to make interest payments on his old ones, but this only made things worse. By now interest rates in the West were higher than ever before.

By the late 80's Zambia's economy would be a wreck, with a foreign debt of \$6 billion, inflation running at 100%, and the people's income much lower than it was in the early 60's.

Restructuring and austerity — the IMF baton

Desperate to maintain good relations with the IMF, Kaunda opened up Zambia to IMF "structural adjustment"

plans, slashing the government budget and devaluing the currency.

Clearly the Zambian economy needed restructuring. Copper could no longer ensure economic well-being. And an industrial sector dependent on high copper revenues faced the need for change.

Meanwhile, the long neglect of agriculture had to be turned around. Among other things, the government's bill for maize subsidies had shot up dramatically over the years — to 10-20% of the annual budget. This money went to subsidize fertilizer and transport costs for commercial maize farmers, and to pay for keeping consumer prices low. The government sold maize to consumers at a price lower than it paid rural producers. Meanwhile, imports of food had also grown. The system of government controls on maize prices and marketing was also a mess. What maize was being produced could not be harvested properly because of problems with transport and bureaucracy. And despite the subsidies, farmers in certain regions could not produce maize at a profit.

But the IMF acted as if Zambia simply had an ordinary budgetary problem. It refused to acknowledge that the debt crisis it faced was extraordinary. It demanded draconian austerity measures, whose burden would fall on the workers and the poor. Moreover, the IMF was on a binge of "free market" ideology, claiming that all ills would be cured simply by releasing the forces of the market from state intervention. Never mind that Zambia as a country could attest to how it was trampled by the uncontrolled forces of the international market.

Most of the IMF advice only turned things worse.

Take the advice to devalue the currency. In theory, it was supposed to increase exports by cheapening the price of the country's goods on the world market. After devaluation Zambian copper would cost less on the world market, and this would supposedly stimulate sales of copper exports and increase foreign exchange earnings.

But this scheme didn't work. For one thing, there was a glut of copper on the world market, so there wasn't much room for sales to grow. Secondly, other copper exporters were devaluing at the same time, pressed in many cases by the IMF with similar arguments. Thus Zambia could not gain any comparative advantage with devaluation.

Devaluation only worsened the crisis. Any copper Zambia did sell fetched a lower price than before, so foreign exchange earning actually declined. With the devalued currency, workers' wages were worth less — this at a time when the government was cutting subsidies for consumer goods.

Some of the advice given was simply unreal. For example, Zambia was urged by the World Bank to diversify its agriculture into coffee and sugar. Never mind that these products were already glutted on the world market.

Zambia could not avoid painful times. Yet forgiving the crushing debt burden could have given it some breathing room. But this the Western financiers and governments were not willing to do.

The workers rebel

The political result of austerity and restructuring was to destroy the social contract developed after independence.

The austerity program hiked up the price of food, fuel, and other consumer goods. It also added to the already bad unemployment — because of the layoff of tens of thousands of public sector employees.

The working people turned to strikes and protests.

In October 1984, there was a strike in the financial sector. A few months later, in January 1985, hospital workers walked out. In June, miners went on strike. Frederick Chiluba, chairman of the Zambian Congress of Trades Unions, the union movement connected to the ruling party, declared that economic recovery shouldn't be "paid in blood by sacrificing workers." ZCTU withdrew from the boards of state corporations.

The strongest clash took place in December 1986 when Kaunda removed a subsidy on maize flour. 10,000 workers rioted in the Copperbelt. The government met the protests with repression. Strikers were killed, and union leaders arrested. But the mass outcry was so strong that the government was forced to back down. The maize flour subsidy was restored.

The Zambian government recognized that there were political limits to what austerity measures it could implement. But the IMF was unsympathetic. The bankers in Washington believed that repression would keep the masses in check.

The movement forces a political change

But the withdrawal of the maize subsidy would not win back the loyalty of the masses for Kaunda. Austerity and economic crisis provided the basis for a movement to emerge which demanded an end to corruption, economic mismanagement, and one-party rule.

In June 1990, the masses rebelled again. Poor people rioted in the capital, Lusaka. Troops killed at least 15 people. This was followed, in 1991, by another wave of strikes. Kaunda jailed Chiluba, the trade union leader.

As a bone to the opposition, Kaunda announced he would end one-party rule. He agreed to allow opposition parties to run in the elections scheduled for October 1991. Galvanized by the economic disaster, a number of different forces united in a coalition ticket headed up by Chiluba. Kaunda was soundly defeated. About 80% of both the urban and rural voters threw their support behind Chiluba.

Kaunda is gone, but the economic torture continues

But a change in ruling parties did not change economic realities. Chiluba came to power as champion of the working people against Kaunda's austerity, and the masses expected him to lower the price of maize. But drought, combined with Zambia's tight economic situation, prevented

this.

Meanwhile, Chiluba, like Kaunda, was concerned about getting back in the good graces of the IMF. Kaunda had finally fallen behind on loan payments, and Chiluba was determined to start them up again, to get some aid out of Western countries.

Chiluba soon launched new austerity measures, new currency devaluations, and a privatization program. The Western powers applauded but responded with a pittance in aid. Some strikes have broken out against the new regime, but workers remain hemmed in by the hard economic realities.

The struggle by the working masses succeeded in forcing some change. The regime was forced to curtail censorship and open up the political system. Thus the government cannot pass outrageous policies without public outcry, as the Chiluba regime found out recently when it tried to purchase a fleet of Mercedes Benzes. He had to give that up.

But the economic reality for the population remains grim. The struggle of the working people has been reduced to a question of how to make sure that the constraints of austerity are not borne by the masses alone, or more precisely, that they are not flouted outrageously by those at the top.

Hazardous storage at Michigan nuclear power plant

Protests have erupted outside of the Palisades Nuclear Power Plant in Convert, Michigan.

On April 24, about 100 people came out to denounce Consumers Power Company's decision to move 10,368 spent fuel rods from a temporary pool, which is almost full, to permanent casks close to Lake Michigan.

On May 7, the day the company began moving the hazardous waste, a dozen activists came out to protest. The demonstrators also denounced the Nuclear Regulatory Commission which OK'ed the plan, once again acting as a rubber stamp for the utility companies.

The activists raised concerns that the storage casks have not been tested. This is the first time the concrete-and-steel casks have been used so it's really an experiment in the storage of this highly toxic waste. Only computer simulations were done. And these were conducted by Consumers Power, the same company which owns the Palisades Power Plant.

Activists also denounced the casks being stored only 150 yards from Lake Michigan. The Great Lakes system contains 90% of the fresh water in North America. So this experiment could have terrible repercussions if the toxins seep into the ground and then the water system which borders several states and Canada.

The protesters also pointed out that no environmental

The overall picture is harsh. The per capita GNP in 1989 was \$390, 2% below 1965. As many as 80% of the people are estimated to be in utter poverty. Since 1973 the diet of the people has deteriorated. Today there is a higher incidence of ailments like anemia, malnutrition, malaria, and diarrhea. And an epidemic of AIDS is ravaging the country, infecting a significant percentage of youth as well as a large part of the workforce and army. Meanwhile, health and education spending have been slashed.

Yet still the country has a total foreign debt of \$7.2 billion (1990 figure). That amounts to 261% of its GNP. In per capita terms, Zambia owes \$892 per person, higher than Brazil (\$774). In 1990, it had to spend 12.3% of its meager export earnings to service its debt.

The overwhelming part of Zambia's debt is owed to rich governments and multilateral institutions like the IMF and World Bank. It is within their power to forgive this debt, but they refuse. Egypt, Poland, and Russia have had debts forgiven — for geopolitical reasons — but what do the rich countries care about poor blacks in Africa? They still demand their pound of flesh — from lands where there isn't much flesh left.

This is the insane system of production and exchange for profit that they call the greatest achievement of humanity. □

impact study has been done on the potential dangers of storing these casks so close to Lake Michigan. Even the Michigan Attorney General pointed out, *"It is ironic that the federal government requires an environmental impact statement when building a new post office but not when Consumers Power Company starts storing nuclear waste on the shores of Lake Michigan."*

The protesters tried to block Consumers Power in the courts. But U.S. District Judge Robert Holmes Bell, in Michigan, said he didn't have jurisdiction and sent the case to the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati. Meanwhile, Consumers Power went ahead and transferred the spent rods.

The activists also expressed frustration in appealing to various politicians for help. Senator Levin's office spoke of the need to "balance business and environmental interests." (Obviously his balance tilted in favor of Consumers Power Company continuing to reap profits unabated by concerns for the environment, because he did nothing.) Senator Riegle's office and various state senators also did nothing.

The politicians are nothing but agents of the big capitalist corporations such as Consumers Power Company. We cannot wait for the Democratic politicians or judges or laws to come to our aid. We need more mass actions. □

Government exposes Inuit people to nuclear radiation

Crimes by the U.S. military-industrial establishment during the cold war keep being revealed. These crimes were not just against the people of other countries. The following story reveals another instance of crimes against American citizens.

During the 1960's the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) dumped 15,000 lbs. of radioactive soil at Cape Thompson, 250 miles north of Nome, Alaska, and kept it secret. This was part of an alleged experiment to study the effects of nuclear contamination on the tundra. That the Inuit people from the nearby village of Point Hope travel over this land and eat its products (caribou, berries, etc.) either was of no concern to the military geniuses who devised this scheme or else the Native people were being included in the experiment. (If the latter seems far-fetched, it's good to recall the well-known CIA usage of human guinea pigs for LSD experiments at about this same time as well as the military's intentional exposure of up to 60,000 soldiers to mustard gas during World War II so as to study its effects.) In either event the lives and health of the Native people were not considered as being worth anything.

Both Democratic and Republican administrations kept this planned nuclear pollution secret. Not one military official, AEC official, or government official ever thought it worth his while to tell the Innuits what they were eating, breathing, and sleeping on. And the Native people would still not know were it not for the efforts of a University of Alaska researcher.

Some might think the government has mended its ways since the end of the cold war, but an important further fact belies this. The University of Alaska researcher made the above information public last summer. But the government didn't use the occasion to make a clean breast of what it had been doing around the Inuit village of Point Hope at all. It kept silent on the fact that it had dumped a large amount of the explosive nitromethane near the village

airstrip in 1963 and that it remains there till this day. This material was apparently originally intended to be used as part of a plan to blast harbors in the Arctic with nuclear bombs. Its present existence only became known because of several months more work by the same researcher. So those in the know in Washington went right on secretly gambling with people's lives. But, hey, they're only Eskimos anyway... so what the heck!

Meanwhile Alaskan Indians near Fort Yukon have discovered that the Air Force has 10 nuclear generators at a station near there. This information only came out because of the danger a wildfire posed to the generators last fall. The Air Force has been trying to quell protests by the Native people in the area with claims that the generators are safe. But if they are so safe why did it have to inform the Nuclear Regulatory Commission when a wildfire came near them? Aren't there often wildfires in central Alaska? And is not Alaska also known for earthquakes?

All of these recent revelations have given rise to protests by the Native peoples. In October the Alaska Federation of Natives passed nine resolutions demanding immediate cleanup and investigations and Indian people in the Fort Yukon area are demanding that the Air Force's nuclear generators be removed. Clearly more protests are needed. As of November, Congress had only earmarked a minuscule \$1 million for cleanup and nothing had actually been done with even that. More, the Native peoples and other Alaskans are going to have to organize their own independent investigations of what has been done (and is being done) to them by the military-industrial establishment. Like the criminals they are, government officials have only made admissions when they have been caught. In order to defend their lives and safety it's going to have to be up to the people themselves to dig up other crimes.

(This article was contributed by comrade Frank, a reader in Seattle.) □

Workers fight environmental racism

Interstate Nuclear Services (INS) in western Massachusetts is a laundry that cleans radioactive garments from nuclear power plants and the military. INS is now being challenged by a group of former workers.

Calling themselves Independent Labor Action (ILA), dozens of former INS workers are charging the corporation with racism. The former and current work force of INS is comprised primarily of African-American and Latino workers. ILA claims that INS exploits people of color and that

its daily operations endanger the work force, the public and the environment.

Company abuses and government neglect have caused many workers to suffer radioactive contamination, bodily injuries and cancer. The ILA is demanding a permanent shutdown of the Springfield, Massachusetts plant and a comprehensive health study of past and present INS workers along with substantial compensation for workers who have suffered injuries. □

Prostitution in the Soviet Union: 1917-1932

The Bolshevik revolution and the emancipation of women: part 3:

The following article gives the views of a study group in Chicago of comrades and friends of the Marxist-Leninist Party. Parts one and two appeared in our issues of May 20, 1992 and December 20, 1992.

The elimination of prostitution was a declared goal of the Bolshevik Revolution. It was a relentless struggle which took various forms as the social and economic conditions changed. There were major gains made, and very innovative methods employed, but it was not to be a lasting accomplishment.

The social basis of prostitution

The Bolsheviks viewed prostitution as a consequence of exploitative economic and social relations. The prostitute was a displaced worker or helpless dependent. The foundations for this view may be found in Engels' *The origin of the family, private property and the state*, Bebel's *Women and socialism*, Lenin's *Fifth International Congress Against Prostitution* (1913), Clara Zetkin's *My Recollections of Lenin: An Interview on the Woman Question* (1920) and various writings of Alexandra Kollontai.

In his study of the evolution of social relations, Engels regarded the emergence of blatant "market" prostitution as a consequence of capitalist commodity production and the bourgeois marriage of convenience. He went further, regarding bourgeois marriage itself as an arrangement in which "two prostitutions make one virtue" (p. 70), for bourgeois marriage is *de facto* prostitution, in which the woman "only differs from the ordinary courtesan in that she does not let out her body on piece-work as a wage worker, but sells it once and for all into slavery" (p. 79). However, "we are now approaching a socialist revolution in which the hitherto existing economic foundation of monogamy will disappear just as certainly as will those of its supplement — prostitution" (pp. 82-3).

Bebel added that in bourgeois society prostitution is an institution similar to the police, the army, the church, and capitalist enterprise, and that like all other "social institutions," came the so-called regulation, or shameful system of police supervision of prostitutes" (Halle, p. 219).

Lenin stated the matter succinctly: "[Prostitution] is supported precisely by the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie" (p. 32); "[Prostitutes] are pitiable double victims of the accursed system of bourgeois society. Victims, first, of its accursed system of property and, secondly, of its accursed moral hypocrisy" (p. 100). There were many schemes to combat prostitution in Europe in the years preceding the October Revolution. It was almost fashionable. This moral

hypocrisy outraged Lenin. As far as he was concerned, these reformers had two "methods": religion and the police. He scathingly termed them "acrobats in the field of philanthropy and police defenders of the mockery of poverty" (p. 32). On the other hand, he scolded Zetkin for not opposing the schemes of her German communist comrades to "organize the prostitutes as a specific revolutionary guild contingent and publish a trade union paper for them" (p. 100). This he called a "morbid deviation"; and while springing from commendable social sympathy and indignation against hypocrisy, in the end was no better than "the literary vogue which made a sweet madonna out of every prostitute" (p. 100).

Since Kollontai was instrumental in drafting the legislation on prostitution, her views on the matter should be included. She had a different slant on prostitution, stressing its psychological aspects; e.g., her famous definition that it "suffocates the love in human hearts; from it Eros flies in fear of fouling its wings on a filthy bed". She felt that in addition to freeing women from bourgeois property relations and integrating them into the workforce, a profound reshaping of the human psyche was necessary. She attributed prostitution not just to bourgeois marriage but to monogamous marriage *per se*, which failed to satisfy people's sexual and emotional needs, and viewed prostitution as a squalid outlet for marital incompatibility. Prostitution damaged all women; it "allowed men with startling naivety...to ignore women's physical experiences in the moment of the most physical act." But what was even more radical was that prostitution damaged men as well as women. Prostitution "distorts our ideas, forcing us to see in one of the most serious moments of human life — in the act of love, in this ultimate accord of complex spiritual feelings — something shameful, low, coarse, and animal." "The normal woman seeks in sexual intercourse completeness and harmony, whereas the man, reared on prostitution — which destroys all the complex vibrations on the sensations of love — follows only his pallid, monotonous physical inclinations, leaving sensations of spiritual hunger and incompleteness on both sides" (*The Sexual Crisis*, 1911, in Porter, p. 187). Kollontai's views were very controversial;

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she was even accused of promoting prostitution.

At any rate, the matter of prostitution was complex. Generally, it was seen by the Bolsheviks as a social abnormality, similar to poverty, alcoholism, or crime, caused by class inequalities and the social relationships created by the capitalist order. As such, they had high hopes of eradicating prostitution. Lenin did not, however, view the problem as easily solvable after the Revolution: "The question of prostitution will confound us even in our country of many a difficult problem. Return the prostitute to productive work, find her a place in the social economy — that is the thing to do. But the present state of our economy and all the other circumstances make it a difficult and complicated matter" (p. 100). His words were prophetic.

Prostitution prior to the October Revolution

It was common currency that prostitution in Czarist Russia was more widespread than in any other European country. It was an institution condoned by both state and church. This account may be exaggerated, but a visitor to Moscow expressed the situation thus: "The new brothel was formally opened by the police officer, and was hallowed by a religious ceremony in...which the premises were blessed by a Russian Orthodox priest" (Mace, p. 75). Brothels were regulated by police inspection, prostitutes were issued special passports ("yellow tickets"), and subject to regular physical exams. "Houses of Patience" were provided for Czarist officers, and brothels were maintained at the rear of the army (Winter, p. 182). But while houses were protected and higher class "call girls" tolerated, poor streetwalkers were harassed, beaten, imprisoned and forced into brothels. The yellow ticket relegated the prostitute to a ghetto and usually barred her from any other employment for life. She could be set free only if she were seriously ill and obtained two medical certificates (Halle, p. 222).

A profile of prostitution is given by Halle. She states that, according to official inquiries from 1897 to the beginning of World War I, four-fifths of all prostitutes came from conditions of extreme poverty. Only 8.4% of the female population at this time were self-supporting; and of this number, women factory workers made only one-third to one-half as much as their male counterparts, who themselves did not make a living wage. Even so, the rising class consciousness in the factories enabled these workers to resist prostitution much more than domestic servants, seamstresses, etc. who made up two-thirds of the total. Of the factory workers, most prostitutes were former cigarette makers, precisely the most miserably paid (pp. 220-21).

Prostitution (and venereal disease) increased alarmingly during World War I, due to general war conditions, economic crisis, army widows, abandoned spouses of the new "free" marriages, and destitute peasant women flocking to the cities. There was also a serious problem of abandoned children (*besprismoye*) forced into prostitution.

Ending legalized prostitution had been a strong theme

of the social-democratic women's congresses, led by Kollantai and Inessa Armand; and appealing to the working woman's fears of slipping into prostitution had evidently been an effective rallying point for the Bolshevik program. After the February Revolution, the Kerensky government did abolish the yellow ticket; but since it took no other measures to help the victims, the result was chaos. Visitors to Moscow reported a lurid and horrifying spectacle as prostitutes openly flooded the streets: "in jewels and expensive furs, walking up and down, and crowding the cafes," — "women and girls, hardly more than children, carried on with painted faces, half-drunk eyes, and cigarettes dangling from their hands." Finally, "indignant citizens formed local committees and raids on brothels took place. The women were arrested and thrown into special labor camps — and still prostitution continued" (Porter, p. 162).

The October Revolution and the civil war periods: 1917-1922

Immediately after the October Revolution, it looked like "prostitution vanished overnight from the streets" as the bourgeoisie fled (Porter, p. 362). This is not quite true, but certainly during the Civil War, prostitution decreased immensely due to the nationalization of hotels, cafes, dance halls and bathhouses, a cashless economy, the absence of foreigners, and the prohibition against alcohol. The Bolsheviks had immediately put an end to police regulation and persecution of prostitution; but there were great discrepancies in the manner in which prostitutes were treated. And while the appearance of prostitution seemed to have "vanished," the prostitutes themselves did not. There was obviously a need for a real plan.

The First All-Russian Congress of Worker and Peasant Women declared in 1918 that the Russian woman, as a free and equal citizen, must no longer be subject to prostitution. In 1919, Kollantai was instrumental in creating a Commission to Combat Prostitution under the venereal section of the Commissariat of Public Health (most prostitutes were found to be tubercular or venereally diseased). This floundered but another Commission was set up in 1920 under the Commissariat of Public Welfare, which Kollantai headed. Her book *Prostitution and ways of fighting it* set forth the official view. Prostitutes would be taken to the Commissariat of Labor where they would be encouraged to attend courses of study, helped to get jobs, or sent to recuperate at sanatoria. Only if a woman was repeatedly found guilty, would she be sentenced to a term of hard labor at a regular work camp: "Let there be no special measures for the struggle with prostitution. Professional prostitutes must be treated like the rest of the work deserters apprehended for failing to contribute productively to the collective" (Farnsworth, p. 194). Procurers and madames were also prosecuted for "evasion of compulsory labor". Zhenotdel workers went out on the streets to set up meetings to help the women find work and medical

attention, and also to raise their self-esteem (Porter, 362-3).

This was about as much as could be done in this period. As the Civil War drew to a close, the Commission lapsed, and the number of prostitutes again increased due to conditions similar to the end of World War I.

The NEP period: 1922-1928

During the NEP years, prostitution (and venereal disease) again became a serious problem, due to the dismissal of women from jobs, the recirculation of money, abolition of the prohibition against alcohol, the reopening of bars and dance halls, and the presence of foreigners. The housing shortage is also cited as a major factor. The social basis for prostitution changed somewhat. There were now more part-time prostitutes, working women supplementing their income or lured by increased consumer expectations. The sites of prostitution changed from the streets to hidden spots, for example, hotels for foreigners which could not be patrolled. The American journalist Louise Bryant wrote in 1923: "Prostitution is practiced by Soviet employees in order to obtain, for the sale of caresses, boots that go up to the knees; prostitution is resorted to by mothers of families, working women, peasant women, who sell their bodies to the manager of the rations division in order to obtain for their children a full bag of precious flour. Sometimes the girls in the offices associate with their superiors, not for manifestly material gain, but in the hope of advancement" (Mace, p. 79). There were disturbing statistics. An inquiry in 1926 showed that prostitution was flourishing not only among bourgeois "remnants" and Nepmen, but among working class men, in direct proportion to their salaries. For example, the range was 29.6% who resorted to prostitutes among the lowest paid unskilled workers, up to 46.9% among the highest paid metal workers (Winters, p. 192). There was obviously a need for a new approach to prostitution.

In 1922 The Central Soviet for Combatting Prostitution was established in conjunction with the Commissariat of the Interior. Thus began a "war on prostitution" with the stipulation, however, that "under no circumstances must it degenerate into a war against prostitutes" (this seems to have been Kollantai's formulation). The government recognized that social conditions had changed, and that the matter had to be handled differently: "Unemployment struck at women first, and prostitution grew. We now found we could not treat the problem as we had treated it during the period of War Communism. To punish prostitution by forced labor when there is unemployment is absurd...if the Government cannot assure to all women the work they need to make a living, it cannot punish them for earning a living as best they can—in this instance by taking their own bodies to market" (Halle, p. 184). The policeman was directed to treat prostitutes with utmost respect: "[He] must observe all the rules of politeness toward her and permit himself no rudenesses" (p. 184).

The goal of the Commission was two-fold: prevention and rehabilitation. The Venereal Section of Public Health set forth the goals: protect women from dismissal from work, establish coops to employ untrained women, increase women's trade education, establish homes for unemployed women and girls, develop welfare work among destitute children, and increase propaganda about prostitution as "non-socialist" behavior. Effective propaganda was done through traveling exhibits in the countryside and "Health Theaters" in factories, clubs and the army. Strong attempts were made to re-educate men, as well as women. More combative measures included: strict supervision of places of temptation, more severe prosecution of abettors of prostitution, and free treatment for venereal diseases (Halle, pp. 226-28). The rhetoric was that of war: the Militia for Combatting Prostitution destroyed 2,228 "nests of vice" in the year 1924-5 (Halle, p. 228). "Social guardianship sisters" (social workers) patrolled the train stations rescuing naive peasant girls before they could be lured into prostitution. There were anti-prostitution weeks and days throughout the USSR, and the public generally was drawn into the fight.

New laws regarding prostitution were added to the Criminal Code, which already mandated penalties for sexual crimes against women such as venereal infection and rape. These new laws were: 1) for forced sex with a woman who was materially dependent, such as wives or employees, not less than three years imprisonment; 2) for physical or mental compulsion to practice prostitution, solitary confinement of not less than three years; 3) for procuring or maintaining brothels, imprisonment not less than three years and partial or total confiscation of property. For forcing underage or dependent women into prostitution, five years (p. 232). The tactic of public trials was also used widely and successfully. Procurers were prosecuted relentlessly and male clients received extreme moral approbation for committing "anti-woman" social crimes; but prostitutes were at all times treated sympathetically as victims.

The Prophylactoria

The most effective rehabilitative measure was the Prophylactoria, which were set up in 1923/24 in major cities and towns. These were combination medical centers, work training sites and homes for prostitutes, although women were encouraged to live off the premises in order to get used to "going to work." No total figures are available, but the number was inadequate (five in Moscow), and women could be brought in from the villages only if there was room. Juvenile prostitutes were rehabilitated in children's homes run on similar principles to the Prophylactoria, but with increased emphasis on education. Like the Aboritoria, the Prophylactoria were showcases of socialist methods and were toured by many foreign visitors. The following picture is taken from the accounts of three American women sociologists, Halle, Winters and Field who visited the Moscow Prophylactoria in 1930-32.

While entrance to the Prophylactoria was voluntary, considerable persuasion was exerted by Red Army personnel and militia who scoured the streets for practicing prostitutes. The intake procedure was very thorough, and the women were charted carefully all through their stay and afterwards as well. The typical woman was from peasant origin, illiterate or semi-literate, unemployed for over a year or never employed, unmarried, from 18-25 years old, venereally diseased and childless. (This is somewhat misleading, since such children who were not aborted were probably abandoned or left with peasant relatives). The women were trained in factory skills and the work ethic, manufacturing simple textile items. They were paid trade-union wages on a group basis, to encourage responsibility and cooperation, and charged for room and board. They had considerable freedom in their living arrangements and were not forbidden to associate with men. The word "prostitute" was taboo; women were addressed as "comrade," and every effort was to help the women view themselves as displaced workers and regular citizens. Only 3-4% of those accepted were considered "incurable", and left or were dismissed (Halle, p. 238).

The women were given total health care; 90% of the women suffered from venereal diseases, hence the name "prophylactoria". In addition, they were given literacy and basic education classes, moral and political education. Great emphasis was placed on cultural activities: music, drama, poetry, dance, and cinema. The women formed performing ensembles and put out their own newspaper. An interlocking system of sponsorship existed in order to emphasize the individual's role in the collective society. For example, a large factory might sponsor a prophylactorium and provide eventual employment, while the prophylactorium itself might sponsor a collective farm and provide lectures and entertainment to these workers.

Women remained for approximately one year, and then were placed on probation in factory positions, where their past remained anonymous though their behavior was monitored by Factory Committees. Each was assigned an "after-care sister" who helped with housing and basic needs and generally gave support. The success stories regularly returned to the Prophylactoria to encourage other women. Beginning in 1931, Conferences of Former Prostitutes, Now Workers were held which were great celebratory occasions.

Industrialization and collectivization: 1928-1932

With the introduction of the Five Year Plan and almost full employment, the attitude of the government toward prostitution became more severe. Prostitution and venereal disease were at a new low, and the government now had hopes of dealing the final death blows. It boasted that there was no more organized prostitution in the USSR and no more brothels. Because prostitution itself was not an offense, only statistics related to venereal disease were kept, but as an example, a health census in 1931 recorded only 400-700 prostitutes in Moscow, as opposed to 3,000 in

1928 and 20,000 in 1913 (40,000 in St. Petersburg) (Halle, p. 253).

In 1930 there began a step-up in the war against vice centers: the "social guardians" and voluntary workers' brigades monitored night shelters, public lavatories, back alleys and other dark corners where street prostitution still lurked. The campaign against alcohol increased, attempts were made to remedy the housing shortage, and Turkish baths were closed.

By this time, most Prophylactoria were closing as having outlived their function (4 out of 5 in Moscow). The women in these facilities were now largely rural girls; 25% were now under 16 years of age. The original criterion that women had to be diseased to enter was seen as no longer relevant, and plans were made to open new institutions for "non-diseased" women or women on the verge of prostitution. Employers were prohibited to discharge single women with children.

By 1932, the emphasis definitely was swinging toward punishment, called "measures of social defense." Because of almost full employment, prostitution was thought to be an intolerable remnant of capitalism. Along with the rhetoric of having established "socialism," there was propaganda regarding prostitutes and their male collaborators as "enemies of the socialist regime". Harsher criminal laws were instituted against the male participants: customers were liable to fine or imprisonment rather than mere moral approbation. Names of male offenders were published in the papers. Procurers (*kots* - tomcats) were sent into administrative exile. But the prostitute herself was also treated less tolerantly. Women were classified into two categories: "unhealthy minds" and "parasitical elements" (formerly called labor deserters). The former were regarded as carriers of an "anti-social disease" and underwent compulsory psychological treatment. The latter were regarded as "two-time losers", and along with kulaks, speculators and other profiteers, as traitors or counter-revolutionaries (Winters, p. 193). These recalcitrant prostitutes were sent to harsh labor camps, at worst, to the dreaded Solofki prison camp in Siberia for "political and habitual criminals." Some were even executed.

Summary

The fact that prostitution stubbornly continued to be a problem seemed to baffle the experts. Sociologists, criminologists and psychologists carried on fierce debates whether the tendency toward prostitution in women was inborn or conditioned. There was also a debate on whether prostitution was really a "capitalist survival" or whether the demand for it might be a concomitant of prosperity, and there were stern moral warnings to the new more affluent proletarian citizen not to indulge in this anti-socialist behavior. In the explanation of the New Family Policy of 1945, the government declared: "By the victory of socialism the economic roots of prostitution in our country have been completely eliminated: the absence of unemployment, the

progress in woman's material independence, the collectivization of the village, the large-scale participation of women in social and productive work, equal pay for male and female labor, the rise in women's cultural and political standard — all this destroys every excuse for prostitution" (Schlesinger, p. 345).

But in reality, the Soviets only succeeded in accomplishing a part of the remedy for eradicating prostitution, i.e., full employment for women. But even here, women's jobs generally remained at a lower-paid and lower-status level. And promised social services did not materialize to free women to become full participants in society. The bourgeois foundation of marriage was not transformed, and in fact, was strengthened. Therefore, the hoped-for new, equal and respectful relationships between men and women did not come about. The emergence of a privileged bureaucracy perpetuated class inequities and resulted in much cynicism. In addition, the priorities of the society were such that ordinary consumer goods were never produced in sufficient quantity nor made available to the ordinary citizen through regular means. And the housing shortage was never adequately dealt with.

Although Soviet Russia did not succeed in eradicating prostitution, the experience of the Bolshevik Revolution — both its successes and its failures — do highlight certain lessons for revolutionaries who want to bring about the full emancipation of women.

First of all, it shows that Marxism is correct to hold that prostitution is linked with poverty. The more desperate the poverty, the more severe the problem of prostitution. (Witness the dire poverty of Haiti, the Philippines and certain other countries where today prostitution exists on a tremendous scale.)

Thus, steps taken to eliminate poverty actually go quite far in eliminating prostitution. The key thing here is not just legislation for equal rights and equal pay for women but a mass movement of working women actively fighting for liberation. Thus includes a direct assault on prostitution itself by women and men activists — an assault on the institution and not on the prostitutes themselves who are and must be recognized as victims — but who must struggle in every sphere for the liberation of women.

Finally, transformations in the economy in the direction of socialism also greatly undermine prostitution (e.g.,

eliminating the market economy, guaranteeing full employment, expanding social services to ensure that the survival of women and children does not rest with their individual families, producing consumer goods that the masses need and want, etc.). The more the Bolsheviks were in the process of building socialism, in the process of transforming the capitalist economy to a socialist one, the more success they had in abolishing prostitution. □

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Population, technology and environmental devastation

Below are remarks by comrade Joseph of Detroit:

Comrade Fred of Seattle replies in the May 20th *Supplement* to the exchange concerning overpopulation between Steve Peterson of Los Angeles and Don Smith of Earth First! that appeared in the Supplement of Dec. 20, 1992. In that polemic, Comrade Peterson expressed the view that "a specific economic, political and social order are chiefly responsible for the ills which plague humankind and 'the rest of creation' ", (1) while Earth First!'s Don Smith held that overpopulation was the issue and stated that "We can produce enough food to feed the masses in the US and in the world for that matter. But do we really want to?". (2)

In his reply, Fred restates some of the issues and seeks to go deeper into a number of points raised by the exchange between Peterson and Smith, such as the role of technology and the need to preserve biodiversity. Further discussion of these points is quite welcome, and a number of comrades expressed a desire for a more thorough treatment and careful treatment of various issues after the original polemic appeared in the Dec. 1992 Supplement. But in the course of his elaboration Fred expresses a number of views that I think are mistaken.

Straddling

Is it really true, as Fred maintains, that "the combination of the current production and population is wreaking havoc." (3) Capitalist production is indeed wreaking havoc, but is that havoc simply due to the level of production and the overall number of people?

It seems to me that the world today has sufficient resources, the productive forces already have the potential to expand sufficiently, and the possibilities for scientific and technological research are so extensive, that it is technically possible to provide a good life for its people and to do serious work to protect the environment. Therefore, as has been said in the past, "the root problem [behind pollution] isn't technology—it's the fact that the use and development of technology take place within an economic system where profitability, and not benefit to society, takes priority. Environmental crisis is inherent within the capitalist system." (*To fight pollution, fight capitalism* in the May 1, 1989 *Workers' Advocate*) The world is not being ravaged by the level of production in and of itself, but by the exploiting social system carrying out that production, by capitalism and imperialism, by the local exploiters and by the world market. It is not being ravaged by the needs of the people in and of itself, but by a system of class division between rich and poor which not only ensures misery for the majority of people on this planet, but rapes the planet

itself. Socialist revolution will not solve the problems of poverty, local overcrowding, and environmental degradation overnight, but it will allow the tremendous human and material resources that exist to be brought to bear on them.

Peterson aligns himself with this analysis. Fred however wants to position himself somewhere between Peterson and Earth First! on this issue. Actually, he agrees with Peterson on a number of points, from the status of women having something to do with population to the need for a change in social system to deal with the environment, but nevertheless he thinks Peterson, and presumably the past *Workers' Advocate* articles on this issue, are simplistic. And he is irritated at any reference to the anti-people ideology that results from ignoring the role of social system. He thinks that only smug people could see anything wrong with Earth's First! no-babies graphic, which declares "more wilderness, fewer people", and he doesn't seem to see any significance in Don Smith questioning why anyone would want to abolish mass hunger.

The alternative

It seems to me that, insofar as Fred differs with Peterson, it is because he has a more technocratic approach in his reply, and downplays the role of the change in property relations with respect to social issues. (By this I don't mean excitement or enthusiasm over new developments in science and technology, and he does not spend time describing future technical possibilities in his reply, but an approach that reduces social matters to technology.) He unwittingly has a tendency to adopt the viewpoint of the enlightened planner, deciding the optimum level of population and the best regulations for cost-accounting, rather than seeing the role of the qualitative change in economics and politics which is to be brought about by socialist revolution.

Fred thinks that this gives a more concrete analysis than Peterson, whose "talk about profits, capitalism, socialism" is "barren rhetoric" due to its supposed lack of any ideas on how to organize the socialist economy differently from the present economy. (4) Perhaps this is why Fred avoids direct references to profit-seeking and property relations and the clash of class interests in his reply. (5) He concentrates instead on the level of technology, attributes social changes to advanced technology, and describes change in terms of the method of calculating costs in deciding on economic projects.

The role of changing the social system, in his reply, tends to be reduced to whether a social system prevents or facilitates the spread of high technology, and whether it has somehow obtained enlightenment and correct priorities.

Technology

He is correct, I believe, to feel that more argumentation about technology is useful on the environmental issue. But his approach to this, it seems to me, is flawed.

For one thing, instead of dealing with the devastation caused by technology in the pursuit of profits, Fred has a tendency to make the problem into backward technology. He lists some problems with technology in general, but repeatedly returns to the issue of primitive technique. For example, he writes: "One of the greatest sources of manifold environmental devastation—primitive agriculture—could be eliminated if the backward regions were advanced to modern levels of productive technique." (6) And he also erroneously attributes the destruction of the rain forests simply to "primitive agricultural technique". (7)

No doubt primitive technique is a problem. However, the particular catastrophe facing the world today is the rapid and massive environmental problems caused by modern methods. For example, modern finance and trade result in the massive stripping of forests around the world. And it's not just primitive methods used to chop down the trees, transport them, or process them.

In fact, productive technique and technology affect the environment through the intermediary of the social system. Even the devastation by primitive techniques often takes place when the old social system, in which these techniques were one component part, is disrupted by contact with a more developed, still-exploiting system. Old technique driven by a modern world market can be devastating indeed.

Environmentalism and technology

If the main feature of the present environmental crisis was really primitive technology, then there would be little argument among environmentalists over technology. Just about everyone would be technology fans and science enthusiasts. It is because technology—modern, advanced technology—appears to be the cause of massive pollution, that technology and science are suspect in certain circles. And they have just as much justification to say "modern technology is wreaking havoc" as Fred does to say "the combination of the current production and population is wreaking havoc." On the surface, this is what appears to be happening.

This argument over technology is why it makes a lot of sense for Fred to bring up the issue of technology for further discussion and point to the need for future progress. But by seeing the environmental problem mainly as backward technique, he doesn't even pose the issue correctly.

Nor does he point to the driving forces behind technology but simply repeatedly stresses the necessity for the "rapid application and development of technology" (8) But so long as the present, rapacious profit-seeking system exists, this development is two-edged, and could give rise to

new environmental catastrophes. The social system affects not just how fast technology is developed, but what is developed, what is used, and to what purpose. Fred barely refers to this in his paean to high technology.

The status of women

Fred tends to attribute to technology other things which are really social factors. For example, Fred tends to put productive technique rather than the social system as the basic factor behind the attitude towards women and sexual relations. He says things like "Generally, advance of productive technique work in the direction of undermining provincial, ignorant, and prejudicial attitudes toward sex." (9) This is a surprising way of putting things at a time when a wave of increasingly provincial and ignorant attitudes on sex are overwhelming the politics of this country although technology is increasing at a faster and faster rate.

True, the economic base of society establishes the stage upon which the class struggle gets fought out and the various political and cultural ideas arise. But nevertheless, it is the social factors that predominate in the question of the status of women, position of sex, etc. Productive technique has to act on the social factors before it affects the attitude towards sex and other matters.

On socialism

One of Peterson's strong points is that he directly relates the issue of pollution to social system. But Fred directly rebukes him for putting the social system in the forefront. He refers to Peterson's "talk about profits, capitalism, socialism, etc." but says that "without any ideas of how a socialist economy might organize differently, condemnation of profit-seeking is barren rhetoric." (10)

To rebuke someone discussing the environment for raising the issue of profit-seeking is surprising from a communist. Communism is marked by putting its finger on the sore points of today's exploiting society.

Actually, Fred has it backwards. It is barren rhetoric to talk about changing priorities without dealing with the profit-motives underlining these priorities, without dealing with the property interests affected by these priorities, without dealing with the general features of the social system that underlies the priorities. So long as hostile class interests exist and dominate society, fighting for the environment will often seem like running harder and harder to stay in the same place. So long as they exist, one form of pollution will barely be mastered before the environment is threatened by a new one.

And is socialism really a blank sheet of paper for the circles around our party? The *Workers' Advocate* has carried articles on socialism and women, and health care, and jobs, on the prospects of socialism in the light of modern technical and cultural development, etc. It has been working at the analysis of the history of the Soviet Union,

and it has carried a special collection on Marx and Engel's conception of socialism. It would be surprising for Steve or anyone else to think that it is forbidden to mention socialism unless he includes a treatise on economic planning. And it is hard to see what sense it makes for Fred to appeal for environmentalists to "confront the issues of social system, of socialist alternative", when he rebukes Peterson for precisely doing this. (11)

Perhaps the issue is that Fred disagrees with the some of the analysis of socialism given in articles in the *Workers' Advocate* and thinks that he has an alternative and superior view. It is his right, indeed his responsibility, to develop better views when he sees what he believes to be a weakness. But then he should argue for his views directly, and not rebuke activists for daring to talk about socialism. Fred did put forward certain ideas about socialism and property relations in Feb. 1992. (12) I wrote several months later objecting to some of Fred's analysis, and giving some alternative reasoning on this subject. (13) Fred hasn't replied yet in the *Supplement*. But he is apparently chiding Peterson on these issues.

As far as the environmental issue is concerned, I can't see how anyone can avoid profit-seeking when discussing this without losing all sense of reality. Even the liberals have to refer to this, but they think that the present system can be saved with simply a change in government regulations and heightened awareness.

More on priorities

Fred's reply takes a different tack however. He avoids talk of profit-seeking, class interests, etc. and instead puts forward priorities, such as biodiversity. And he says that "A socialist society would require fundamental political economic changes so that environmental costs, as well as labor costs, are taken into account for economic decision making." This involves "restrictions on human production and consumption where necessary." (14)

But why would this new priority be established? What would change so that the future society will adopt this priority? He has nothing to say about this. There is no elaboration of what fundamental political and economic changes are required. There is just a suggestion that society should do this because Fred thinks it's advisable.

Peterson suggested why current society doesn't follow this priority, the profit motives in a class-divided society, and he believes that removal of this motive will open the way to environmental protection. Fred, who worries about the barren rhetoric of talking about profit-seeking, replaces this by simply stating that the future society will do the things he likes. And he seems to think that this is more concrete than Peterson's approach, because he has a suggestion for how the future society should calculate costs.

Cost calculations in socialism

So presumably a particular planning method, an alterna-

tive method for calculating costs, is an example of concrete ideas about how a socialist economy will organize differently.

Very well. But here we have cost calculations in the future society, cost calculations as the way to ensure protection of the environment. It seems that, while Fred talks in his reply of revolutionary change, this picture of the future society seems to preserve some of the key features of present-day capitalist society. Apparently the future society will decide what projects to undertake by balancing costs and projected income and seeing if there is a positive balance. It will still presumably be run according to money, or a money-substitute that serves as the unit in which the cost-calculations are made.

But if the environment is to be protected, it won't simply be by adding environmental costs to a balance-sheet calculation. This is a reform that may be of some use under capitalism (like requiring an environmental impact statement, for example). And it will also play a certain role during the period of transition to the classless society, when money and capitalist-style calculations are still to a greater or lesser extent in use. Then again, it can be a two-sided sword. An energy tax, for example, is another way of bringing the cost of fossil fuels more into line with their environmental costs. Of course, Clinton's proposed energy tax won't be used to fund environmental concerns, but to go into the general government revenues in the name of reducing the deficit. But nevertheless such a tax, especially if it's heavy, will tend to reduce energy use. True, it will weigh especially hard on the poor, who may freeze in winter. (But hey, that will help reduce population, won't it?) But this shows that the marketplace forces don't become friends of the environment who will automatically implement reasonable steps if one simply finagles a bit with the cost figures and accountant's rules.

It is not concern for the bottom line, but direct and conscious action for the environment, that is needed for a real solution to environmental problems. It is likely that, once freed from slavery to the financial balance-sheet, the natural love of humanity for the land and the earth's creatures will flourish. Instead of only calculating environmental costs, they will regard improving the environment as one of their passions, along with others such as lavishing attention on children, being involved with music, art, science, and contact with other peoples, or their favorite sports or recreations. They will do it to the maximum extent that their resources allow, not to the minimum extent forced by cost-benefit analysis.

Well, perhaps Fred didn't really mean that there should be an accountant's balance sheet, but simply that environmental issues should be considered when making decisions about production. But in that case, all he did was to repeat in an exceptionally confusing and obscure fashion his hope that the environment will be considered in the future society.

But even so, by discussing current and future societies simply in terms of their view of "saving labor", he laid

emphasis on their similarity, that they produce things with the use of labor. This obscures any difference between societies other than a hope for better priorities. It ignores the concrete economic features that distinguish different societies, and the particular sore points of present-day society.

Who will bring an alternative society?

But there is another question about socialism as well. Who will bring it about? Who will champion the new priorities? And this question ties directly into the question of the attitude to the masses.

Fred brushes aside the anti-people ideas put forward by Earth First!'s Don Smith. Yet these are central to Don Smith's argument. Don Smith at one point questions why anyone would want to produce enough food for the present population. He says that the thought of more people "nauseates" him. He then says that "the problems of feeding, clothing, sheltering, educating, training, moving, caring for, governing, etc. the masses are, albeit important, secondary to doing our part as a species in maintaining nature's integrity rather than destroying it." (15) He ends up saying that of course ending poverty should be done as well as preserving nature. It's only that there must be "a drastic decrease in human population". (16)

How can a new society be brought about with this attitude of contempt for the people who are struggling for their existence, their rights, their livelihood? Isn't this just as important a question to elaborate as the attitude toward technology, which Fred argues on at some length?

The achievement of a classless society, and hence the ending of the environmental crisis, are dependent on the development of the movements of the oppressed. Indeed, even the question of population levels affects the environment first and foremost by what it means for the development of the struggle to transform society.

Peterson raises a number of questions about what Earth First!'s demand for less people means. Anyone who studies the history of this century and of the social ideas put forward in the name of science—from social Darwinism to eugenics—will have a lot of questions about the demand for less people. Who will be eliminated, or declared as primitive people holding back progress, if the present governments accept the demand to drastically reduce population?

But faced with the propagation of diehard, anti-people views, Fred sees only an interesting discussion about optimum population levels. After all, shouldn't there be a "transition from blind to conscious factors [in] determining population level"? (17)

Determining population levels

Fred's view is that to be opposed to the anti-people ideology promoted by Don Smith means to ignore a serious consideration of population levels.

Oh really? Let's look at the polemic between Peterson and Don Smith. Peterson raises briefly two concrete points concerning the population explosion:

- 1) it's related to the status of women;
- and 2) it's related to poverty.

These points are hardly a detailed investigation of the laws of population. But they suggest a number of interesting and profound issues:

- a) there are objective laws concerning the level and rate of growth (or decay) of population;
- b) these laws are connected with the social and economic status of the people, and hence with the social and economic system they live upon; and
- c) the present explosive growth in world population is only a phase related to the present difficult and turbulent period of transition from one system to another.

What does Don Smith suggest concerning the laws governing the level of population? You think from Fred's comment about the smugness of those who are shocked by Smith's anti-people attitude, that Smith was full of profound ideas that would be important for any serious study of population. But surprise! surprise! Don Smith has nothing to say about the laws of population growth in his replies to Peterson.

Meanwhile Fred doesn't have much more to say about the laws of population growth beyond what Peterson had said. He agrees with Peterson about the status of women affecting population growth, elaborating it in his own way. He agrees with Peterson about poverty, elaborating this too in his own way, which lays stress on "persons living under primitive agricultural conditions". (18) But he doesn't develop any overall picture of population trends in relation to the social system and prospective world developments.

In fact, the rate of population growth (or decline) depends on the social and economic system of a country or an area. If you want to know what the future population is going to look like, you have to study the actual laws governing population closely. You have to see what types of social conditions give rise to population increase. As well, you have to know how the world economic and social system itself will evolve, because that provides the basis upon which the different laws of population take place.

So, to see where the world is going, it would make sense to study more thoroughly the laws governing population changes, which are only briefly referred to by Peterson and Fred. I haven't made such a study. Fred hasn't either. But the real problem is that he doesn't seem to recognize a need for that. Instead technology and setting priorities seems to be what is on his mind. He even talks of the world's inability "to control itself". (19) The impression created is of some agency deciding the optimum level of population, and then bringing it about with advanced technology, especially reproductive technology.

More on population plans

Is such planning of population possible?

True, various governments have influenced the rate of population increase in their country. But it is surprising how much population resists the devices and intentions of the planners, especially on a world scale. It reacts to social and economic conditions in its own way. Woe to those who try to influence it directly, rather than realizing it reacts to changes in the social and economic conditions of the people. To make a real dent directly on the population, increasing or decreasing it, separate from what the social and economic conditions would otherwise dictate, seems to involve ugly coercion, as in the present Chinese plan. (And, let it be added, the real outcome of this plan is not yet clear.) Government action can however enhance or accelerate trends that are based on new social realities.

And what about a socialist society? Having children is a question that affects people most intimately. Their children's welfare is something that motivates many people to actions they wouldn't take on their own behalf. It is hard to believe that when the workers and working people raise up to overthrow the old order, and when people grow up in a new society where they are used to having full rights, that they will allow themselves to be dictated to on this matter. Instead the new economic and social conditions of socialism will give rise to different tendencies in regard to population levels (and in migration of peoples from one area to another), reflecting the people's deepest feelings, expressed in their reproductive action. What this will be, I'm not sure. What they will regard as an optimum population, I'm not sure. It is far too easy on this question to be moved by what one is accustomed to; and it's hard to get an idea of what the future psychology of the people will be.

Undoubtedly Fred too believes that planning will take place by consent and consciousness of the whole people. But you would hardly know it from his approach to population planning in his reply.

The Soviet model

One final consideration about socialism and the environment. In dealing with different social systems, Fred tends to contrast not capitalism and socialism, but the Soviet and Western models. For example, he says "I must admit that the track records of both the Western and Soviet models are not such to inspire confidence in the possibility of humankind giving rise to a society that would use technology for environmental goals." (20)

By the "Soviet model" he presumably means the revisionist, state-capitalist societies, such as Russia. He is presumably not referring to the Soviet revolution, but to the bureaucratic society Soviet Russia became. Nor is he referring to his own idea of socialism. He is contrasting, not capitalism and socialism, but two varieties of capitalism. But this isn't made clear to the reader. No contrast is drawn between socialism and the Soviet model.

This I believe is a mistake. The bourgeoisie propagates that the "Soviet model" is indeed socialism and Marxism and the sorry result of eliminating capitalist private interests. If this were true, it would indeed be barren

rhetoric to talk of socialism as the solution to anything. In this case, socialism would be a monstrosity, and I for one would not advocate it, and it is hard for me to believe that Fred or anyone else around the MLP would either.

The key to socialist agitation about the Soviet model is the anti-revisionist critique. It means showing the Soviet model was not socialism, but a class-divided society. It means showing that the Soviet model did not abolish capitalism, but only adjusted the methods of exploitation of the workers and of dictation by the ruling class. It means showing how its state capitalist nature was manifested in its sorry environmental record.

Moreover, it means showing how this model is a travesty of Marxist-Leninist socialism, and of its ideas of revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Soviet model was not socialism with a bunch of bad priorities, but a pattern of society that differed economically, politically and socially from socialism, and thus inevitably differed in its priorities and its tyranny from socialism. It is no wonder that at one time the Soviet model could be taken up, to this or that extent, by a number of bourgeois ruling classes in the third world looking for the path to development, since they realized that this model did not mean abolishing a privileged ruling class.

The economists and theorists of "the Soviet model", as difficulties mounted, thought they could improve their system with different accounting methods and different priorities in the planning by their ministries. This didn't work. The logic of class relations ultimately proved more powerful.

In our contrast of economic systems, it is the real class relations that must be put to the fore. This will also bring out the qualitative changes communist revolution will bring as it moves society from the realm of class divisions, personal enrichment, and production for profit, to socially-directed production for the benefit of all. □

- (1) Page 8, col. 1, *Supplement* of Dec. 20, 1992.
- (2) Page 9, col. 2, Dec. 20, 1992.
- (3) Page 14, col. 1, May 20, 1993.
- (4) Page 14, col. 2, May 20, 1993.
- (5) There is, however, one reference to "narrow capitalist interests" prejudicing the expansion of scientific research, page 15, col. 2, May 20, 1993.
- (6) Page 14, col. 2, May 20, 1993.
- (7) Page 14, col. 1, May 20, 1993.
- (8) Page 14, col. 2, May 20, 1993.
- (9) Page 15, col. 1, May 20, 1993.
- (10) Page 14, col. 2, May 20, 1993.
- (11) Page 15, col. 2, May 20, 1993.
- (12) See the Feb. 20, 1992 issue of the *Supplement*.
- (13) See the issues of May 20 and July 25, 1992.
- (14) Page 15, col. 2, May 20, 1993.
- (15) Page 9, col. 2, Dec. 20, 1992.
- (16) Page 11, col. 1, Dec. 20, 1992.
- (17) Page 15, col. 1, May 20, 1993.
- (18) Page 15, col. 1, May 20, 1993.
- (19) Same as (18).
- (20) Page 15, col. 2, May 20, 1993. □

Bulger-Kelly machine instigated the racial fight at South Boston High

From the May 11 issue of Boston Worker, voice of the MLP-Boston:

The racial fight among 150 students and white men outside South Boston High did not just happen. It was the direct result of an intense campaign of white racial hysteria organized by the Kelly, Ciccone, Dapper O'Neil wing of the Bulger political machine that dominates South Boston with a heavy hand. This machine is not confined to South Boston. But it is strongest there. This is the machine that organized the most violent racism of the anti-busing movement 20 years ago.

In the last 5 years as blacks began moving into the projects in South Boston, the racist political hacks have held repeated meetings in an attempt to whip up racial hostility against blacks and poison relations between black and white neighbors and black and white students. At the same time the South Boston Tribune has carried weekly columns by Ciccone and Kelly blaming blacks for crime in South Boston.

Then on Thursday April 29, a fight broke out among black and Latino students at Andrew Station. Some weapons were found on the students involved in the fight. (Surprise, surprise, as if no one knew that even in white suburbs a large number of students today carry weapons.) But Kelly and Bulger seized on this event as an opportunity to whip up hysteria to a fever pitch. They called a meeting at the veterans hall on Monday May 3 where the crowd was whipped up into a racial frenzy against "outsiders" (i.e. blacks and Latinos) who were supposedly the source of crime in South Boston and were supposedly bullying the white teenage boys of Southie.

Who are Kelly and Bulger to talk about crime?

The racist politicians have no shame. Here you have Bulger, whose brother is one of the biggest organized crime figures in New England, talking about blacks bringing crime to South Boston. Kelly himself was arrested in his youth for larceny by force. He carried out some of the most violent attacks on blacks and pro-integration whites during the anti-busing movement. Yet he has the nerve to complain about blacks being criminals and uncivilized. The fact is that there are only 300 black students at South Boston High. Blacks are less than 2 per cent of the South Boston population. The statistics for murder, rape, larceny, and car theft in South Boston have actually declined since blacks moved into the projects. The talk about crime and public safety is just a trick to whip up fears and justify attacks on black residents and students.

How the media and the machine stir the pot

In the wake of this meeting the capitalist news media jumped into the picture, not only reporting on the racist meeting, but repeating the charges of black on white crimes and assaults without even bothering to corroborate the facts or get the black students' and public housing residents' side of the story. At the same time they printed every bigoted statement they could get from a South Boston resident.

[Boston Mayor] Flynn and Roach also played a tacit role in helping Bulger build a racist hysteria. They refused to denounce the ethnic cleansing motivation behind Bulger and Kelly's meetings. Instead they negotiated more "public safety" measures to appease the hysteria. And in that way they encouraged it. Meanwhile, Kelly and other South Boston Information Center activists spent 3 days touring the neighborhoods, talking to youth, telling them to protect the old people from the blacks. This they called "calming things down". With such "calming down" is it any wonder that on Thursday, May 6, tensions rose to the boiling point.

Why now?

The fact is, however, that despite this incident, the relations between black and white students in South Boston schools have been much better than Kelly or Bulger would like. The integration of the projects has also gone much smoother than they would like. (And what they would like is to drive the black, Latino, and Asian residents out.) They see their little base of docile, white patronage voters slipping away throughout the city. And so they have escalated their racist agitation in hopes of using racial hatred and fear as a glue to hold their base together. And this despicable racist manipulation is tolerated by the rest of the capitalist establishment because they find racism very useful for dividing and blinding the workers.

Stand up to the racist agitators.

In the current worldwide economic crisis the ruling classes and political elites in every country are increasingly resorting to racism, nationalism and religious bigotry to divide the working people and hang on to or increase their power. This is what is behind the neo-nazis in Germany, the ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, and the massacres of Muslims in India. It is the same thing Bulger and Kelly are up to in Boston. All who value equality and the unity of the working people should stand up to this ruling class racism every time it rears its ugly head. □