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The Freedom of Choice Act and the April 5 demonstration

The April issue of the Workers' Advocate contained appeals for the April 5 demonstration and defending the clinics in Buffalo, as well as material on the Freedom of Choice Act. Below we provide background on the Freedom of Choice Act.

The April 5 demonstration for women's rights in Washington D.C. saw 500,00 people rally behind the pro-choice banner. It was an impressive turnout, and a valuable expression of mass sentiment for abortion rights.

But the official organizers of the action were the bourgeois-led women's organizations. They didn't give the people an alternative for what to do other than applaud big-name speakers and vote for silver-tongued politicians. It was left to our Party and some other activists to call on people to come to Buffalo, New York later in the month to oppose Operation's Rescue's plans to make Buffalo the next Wichita. The national big-names barely mentioned Buffalo, if that, and only by way of exception did individual chapters of their groups deal with Buffalo.

This was no accident. The leadership of NOW, NARAL, and Planned Parenthood rely on police and injunctions and politicians, and they actually don't want to see activists and working people engage in mass confrontation at the clinics. It doesn't matter how many times the police and courts allow OR to blockade clinics for hours, harass patients and medical staff, or even protect OR from angry opponents. At most, the national pro-establishment groups want to see passive escorts, who often are told that there should be no slogans, no confrontation, not even eye contact with the anti-abortion bullies. In Buffalo itself, lawyers for the Pro-Choice Network have lectured university students against coming to defend the clinics, as well as threatening activists that an injunction may be enforced by having the police arrest clinic defenders as well as anti-abortion bullies.

Meanwhile, many of these organizations, especially NARAL, made a big deal of the Freedom of Choice Act pending in Congress. They made sure there were seas of signs promoting this act, but stayed away from anything promoting clinic defense in Buffalo.

So what about the Freedom of Choice Act? If it is passed as it is presently written, it won't hurt. However, it wouldn't make sense to put great hopes in it:

- 1) Congress has dragged its feet for years on it.
- 2) Congress may amend it, so that it may end up enforcing restrictions on the right to abortion.
- 3) Even if passed without amendments, Congressional testimony shows that it will not prevent various restrictions on abortion. It would most likely preserve the present situation, where the states aren't supposed to ban abortion

Continued on page 21

Inside

Against racism and police brutality:	
The left in Seattle debates: resist racism, or rely on police and cover up for mayor . . .	2
U.S. is world's #1 jailer; Des Moines, Iowa; Teaneck, NJ; Washington D.C.; Racist 'Populist Party' denounced in Los Angeles . . .	3
Limits of recycling in a system built on throw-away people	5
United Way: 2000 points of scandal	7
At the workplace:	
More work, less leisure	8
Jamaica: Cane workers strike	8
Yemen: General strike gets results	8
A Detroit murder the news media doesn't care about: remember Jim Buss, killed by Great Lakes Steel's profit-taking	9
More on the material basis for socialism in the modern world (3)	10
Monopoly capitalist groupings in Chicago and the twists of local politics	13
Women and the Bible	20

The left in Seattle debates: Mass resistance to racism, or rely on the police and cover up for the black bourgeoisie

The anti-racist march of January 25 was a major event in Seattle, and was slandered by the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois media. The Feb. 16 leaflet of the Seattle Branch of the MLP vigorously defended the march. (See the Feb. 20 issue of the Supplement, 'Why did the Seattle police attack the anti-racist march on Capitol Hill?' or the March 1 issue of the Workers' Advocate 'Youth confront neo-nazis and cops'.) The events of Jan. 25 are still being debated. The following article is excerpted from the March 24 leaflet of the Seattle Branch of the MLP:

Racist, neo-nazi skinheads in Seattle have committed a number of violent attacks on blacks, gays and other people in recent times. Last December in Seattle, they attacked and knifed Anthony Johnson, a black man, on University Avenue. Three years ago, they brutally murdered an Ethiopian man in Portland. In addition, many more incidents go unreported. The skinheads randomly bully and harass youth hanging out on "the Ave," and especially on Broadway.

Protests are being called against the racists, and it is

important to learn the lessons from the last protest, which was violently attacked by the police.

Lessons of the January 25 march

Full of rebellious spirit, 400 mainly young people marched from the "U" District to Capitol Hill. On Broadway, three skinheads in nazi regalia made the mistake of making a feeble "counterprotest". About half of the protesters ran them off and tried to punish them. But the police intervened to protect the racists, and beat up on five to six marchers. The skinheads took refuge in an apartment building, only to be driven out of town at gunpoint by residents and dumped on the street with the instructions not to return. Later in the demonstration, the mounted police and riot squad themselves rioted. They fiercely beat many people, including shoppers and bystanders, and made 14 arrests.

This march was important in several ways:

- It dealt a real blow to the neo-nazis, and showed how these "anti-government toughs" rely on police protection to survive.

- It showed the effectiveness of mass action. A large amount of initiative was released to take the cause of justice into their own hands. Some may recoil in horror from this, but in fact, it is democracy in action. For when the government and its "democratic" institutions foster, assist and then do basically nothing to stop the skinheads' criminal activities, it's futile to rely on the official judicial system to secure justice.

- It exposed the role of the police, newspapers, and even the mayor's office. The *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* ranted at the protesters as "hooligans" and even "brownshirts." The mayor backed the police repression and slandered the demonstrators. These props of official law-and-order normally prefer to hold up their civilized masks. But militant action rips it off to show the true visage underneath.

A debate within the left

In the weeks since the march, various left-wing trends have been debating such issues as the appropriateness of the marchers' confronting and chasing off the skinheads; how to combat police repression; and whether it is OK to denounce Mayor Norm Rice.

At a public speakout on March 14, a pacifist organization denounced the violence of the skinheads and police, but also said that confronting and chasing off the skinheads was wrong, and was descending to the same level as the

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nazis. We ask them: what is the alternative? To turn the other cheek and get repeatedly beaten up? To rely on the police for protection, when the march just exposed them as full of hatred for anti-racists? Those who equate neo-nazi violence with that of their victims have learned nothing from history. This pacifist view cannot effectively fight the racists.

At the same speakout, a speaker from the United Front Against Fascism stated that in this particular case, it was a mistake to chase the skinheads. In other words, militancy is fine in theory, even excellent, but not when it is actually needed in the real world.

At a rally in February outside the police station, the Freedom Socialist Party called for establishing a community-controlled police review board to deal with police brutality. But experience has repeatedly shown that these boards act as a shield for police repression. Outrage is directed toward them; they call for a series of investigations; people are told to wait patiently for the results; things drag on until the situation cools down; and then

everything is dropped for "lack of evidence"; and the police get off with, at most, a slap on the wrist.

Another view that would restrain the mass movement was seen in a leaflet from All People's Congress, which is associated with the Workers' World Party. They said that it is wrong to denounce Mayor Rice for supporting the police repression. Why? Because he is black, and besides, black mayors don't really control the police. Is there any point in even trying to refute such "arguments"? This "polite," "nice" proposal objectively means to subordinate the mass movement to the needs of the black bourgeoisie, who want to ingratiate themselves with the white corporate elite.

This debate demonstrates that it is not enough for activists to have a general anti-racist stand, but they also need to participate in the struggle of political trends inside the anti-skinhead movement. If the liberal-pacifist-reformist views mentioned above were allowed to spread unopposed, the spirit to sustain future struggles would be undermined. □

Against racism and police brutality

U.S. is world's #1 jaller

Well, the U.S. still leads the world in something—the number of people it locks up in prison. There are 455 prisoners per 100,000 people—a total of 1.1 million inmates in the U.S., which is a 6.8% increase from 1989 to 1990.

The U.S. imprisonment rate is 10 times higher than those of Japan, Sweden, Ireland and the Netherlands. And it far surpasses that of racist South Africa, which has the second highest imprisonment rate at 311 prisoners per 100,000 people.

What is more, the U.S. rate of imprisoning black men is five times higher than that of South Africa. Indeed, it is estimated that one in every four black men between the ages of 20 and 29 is either in prison or on parole or probation on any given day in the U.S.

Most people would admit that this is an indication of the terrible racism and police repression of the American system. But not George Bush. On no, he claims the more people in jail, the better things are. He has proposed a budget of \$2.2 billion for the federal prisons next year, a 44% rise over the prison budget in 1989. □

Beating is a crime, make them do their time

Chants rang out in Des Moines, Iowa February 1: "No

excuse, jail the guilty cops," "Stop police brutality," and "Beating is a crime, make them do their time." About 75 people rallied in front of the state capitol building and marched to Nollen Plaza in downtown Des Moines. The protesters demanded that the cops who beat Larry Milton in December, 1991 be prosecuted. □

Teaneck, New Jersey: Protesters decry acquittal of cop who killed Phillip Pannell

About 150 students walked out of their high school February 12 and marched to the municipal complex in Teaneck, New Jersey. They denounced the acquittal of Officer Gary Spath. He had been charged with reckless manslaughter in the shooting death on April 10, 1990 of 16-year-old Phillip Pannell. Three days later, close to 300 people marched through the rain to denounce the acquittal. Pannell's father, and the parents of several other youth who had been killed by the police in New Jersey and New York City, spoke at the rally.

The trial was stacked against justice from the beginning. The jury that was selected was all white and included people who are related to police officers. Meanwhile, the police intimidated witnesses who were testifying against Spath. In one incident, a black witness was arrested in the courthouse lobby after he had testified against Spath. He was arrested by detectives from the sheriff's department. Its

chief, Jack Terhune, was chief of Teaneck detectives when Spath killed Pannell, and he had helped to take Spath's statement. □

No to racist attacks in D.C.

On March 4, some 40 people rallied in Wheaton, near Washington D.C. They denounced the beating of two black women in the area the night before. They said they came out to show that the community is opposed to racist violence. Many passing motorists honked their horns to show support for the rally.

The women were attacked by two racist men as they walked to a pay phone the night before. One escaped after the attacker threatened "I'm going to kill you over and over again." The other was caught, denounced with racist slurs, and beaten unconscious. Her clothes were ripped off and she was doused with lighter fluid in preparation to set her on fire. The racists ran off, however, when they saw flashing police lights. □

Racist conference denounced in Los Angeles

A protest swelled to nearly 200 people against a conference called by the racist Populist Party in south Los Angeles on February 1. Over half the protesters were from the neighborhood, drawn into the confrontation by chanting, leafletting, and militant picketing by anti-racist activists.

The Populist Party is a reactionary outfit composed of Klansmen and nazis which ran David Duke for president a few years ago. The main guest at this meeting was Joe Fields, a longtime Hitler admirer and associate of Aryan Nation leader Tom Metzger. The populists had also hooked up with something called the Cosmopolitan Brotherhood Association, by which they tried to give a black face to

their segregationist and nazi views.

The protesters came out to make sure these scum could make no headway in the black community. Slogans rang out: "Black, brown, yellow, white workers of the world, unite!" "Nazis, Klan, scum of the land!" and "Racism is the tool of the rich men's rule!" Protesters pushed, shoved and kicked a couple of the racist supporters who tried to enter the building. Picket signs and beer cans were thrown at a few others who were escorted by rent-a-cops.

Then things heated up, when nearly 40 cops showed up to protect the racists. They ordered the crowd to disperse. But about 50 protesters, including supporters of the Marxist-Leninist Party, refused and organized a picket line. Another 50 or so onlookers joined in and began to shout: "Cops and the Klan go hand in hand!" "Racism is the tool of the bosses' divide and rule!" "No KKK in south L.A.!" "Shut it down, Nazis out!" "Get the KKK and their black Uncle Toms too!"

There was pushing and shoving and eventually the cops charged. A couple of demonstrators were hit with batons. But as the protesters retreated, they also managed to hit a cop with one of the wooden street barriers.

The protest continued across the street. And when one of the leading racists tried to get by the protesters, he was pushed, slugged and kicked. The cops got the racist free and again ordered the crowd to disperse. But many militants stayed, and others who had left came back to join in the taunting of the cops and racists. At the end of the conference, a dozen racists protected by 30 cops came out of the hall. They were greeted by a handful of rocks. The cops on horseback charged and at least 12 demonstrators were arrested.

Meanwhile, black city councilman and NAACP star Mark Ridley Thomas showed up to try to stop the protest and preach "common ground." He was punched in the eye by an angry black protester. □

The limits of recycling within a system built on throw-away people

To mark *Earth Day, April 22, 1992*, we are carrying the following article, based on a presentation given at a meeting of friends of the MLP-Detroit in mid-May, 1990.

Today, I want to speak on the struggle in defense of the environment. Now, this is a huge topic covering many different social and economic areas. So I would like to narrow the focus to the trash crisis. But many of the lessons that emerge from this issue are applicable to the general fight against pollution.

It's quite clear to all of us there is a serious garbage crisis. More and more trash is generated in our current throw-away society. Landfill space is running out in the large population centers. So what solution does the establishment offer?

The establishment spreads the trash around

One idea they try is to ship off waste, especially industrial wastes, to poorer countries abroad. Africa has become a number one target to dump wastes, as the countries there have been desperately hit by the economic crisis during the last decade. China was working on a deal to take nuclear waste from Europe a few years ago. Eastern Europe takes in wastes from Western Europe too. The stronger capitalists take advantage of other countries' poverty and in the poorer countries, there are plenty of sleazy capitalist rulers who are willing to sell out the interests of the masses for the sake of a few bucks.

But sometimes, they can't ship these wastes off. Remember the famous garbage barge from Long Island which didn't get any takers.

Then there are the oceans. We all know scandals about hospital waste that's routinely dumped into the oceans.

These days, however, the capitalist authorities have come upon two key solutions: new landfills out west, and trains/trucks to ship garbage from the East and Midwest to these mega landfills. And trash incinerators. Such as the one built here in Detroit. Dozens of these incinerators are being built across the country.

And where are these being placed? In large population concentration areas, especially around where poor people, usually minority people, live. Like the east side of Detroit. Like the city of Vernon south of L.A. Like the south of Chicago. They will spew out new disease-causing poisons into the air. And they leave behind highly toxic ash, which of course is then dumped in landfills, where they can leach into the earth.

Thus for the capitalists, the solution to the trash crisis is to feed more pollution into the air and the earth. Whether in poverty-stricken West Africa or Detroit or Sumpter Township (that's where the ash goes).

There is no reason why the workers and poor should agree to this additional poisoning. It is entirely just that protests have broken out in Los Angeles, Detroit, and elsewhere. These protests have already forced the authorities to agree to some additional controls. It's a scandal that without this mass motion, the government refuses to spend a few more extra dollars to get currently available pollution controls.

But clearly, these controls will only make a small dent into the problem. More than that is needed. What is this more?

Recycling

In the movement, and in contemporary society, we hear a great deal of talk about recycling. This is portrayed as the magic solution that would dramatically attack the trash crisis. I want to go into this.

It is clear that recycling must be part of trash management. But the closer one looks, the more difficulties appear. As we look at them, the outlines of a society that can solve the trash problem will appear.

There are several ways that the idea that the present system can solve the trash crisis simply through recycling comes up:

Just adopt a green life-style?

First is the idea that a bit more care by individuals can make the difference. They tell us: buy biodegradable products, recycle as much as you can.

For one thing, there are millions of people, who even if they were so inclined, can't afford to adopt a green lifestyle. People in the inner cities. Harried working parents, trying to juggle jobs and housework. For such people, as society is currently constituted, packaged foods, disposable diapers, etc. have become necessities. Taking part in recycling projects isn't much of an option to them.

Even those who take the effort can't make much more than the tiniest of dents. It is hard, on an individual basis, to even find out which products are better environmentally, or to penetrate behind the dozens of new environmental claims one faces every time one goes to a store, other than avoiding the most scandalous products. More fundamentally, individual buying and disposal decisions cannot penetrate very deeply into the fabric of the complex economy we live in. Take Eastern Europe, where people were forced by austere economic conditions to recycle a great deal of waste. Or consider many parts of the third world, where bottles, paper, cans, etc. are all recycled heavily. There is no alternative to recycling in these economies, because the goods are so limited. Yet overall, some of these countries

are among the most polluted, with the most polluting economies. The methods of production can be very polluting, despite the recycling.

Even if we do the utmost at home, we can't forget that all this won't affect what goes on outside the domestic economy. Choosing not to use toxic chemicals in our gardens doesn't mean that Dow and Du Pont won't ship these chemicals to the Philippines or Poland.

Even an entire firm may be environmentally responsible (at a certain cost of course)—conserve energy and materials, properly dispose of wastes, manufacture the right kind of biodegradable or recyclable goods. But it may still use tools, machines, etc. from other firms who are not so friendly to the environment.

Current experience of recycling

Now on recycling proper. It turns out that the attempts to recycle under the present system only provide a certain amount of disposal.

Many small-scale recycling efforts have been started during the last twenty years. And now even citywide efforts. But even the best of these can't recycle more than 40%, I believe, of residential trash, although theoretically up to as much as 90% can be recycled with present-day technology.

There's obviously the issue of mass awareness, time to sort, etc. In our capitalist society, how much education is there going to be for the masses, given that literacy levels in society are going backwards? And even if there were greater educational campaigns, can we forget that masses live disorganized, atomized and individualized lives. Recycling would require social cooperation, which calls for organization embracing the masses. These don't exist in present-day society. And then there's the thing I already mentioned—time, a hard-to-find commodity for people struggling to live in this fast-paced society.

But even apart from all that, even if you could have all those things, you'd still run up against PROBLEM NUMBER ONE—the limits of the capitalist economy itself.

Small-scale recycling programs constantly run up against the capitalist market. Only an operation which is profitable succeeds.

They can't find buyers for the recycled materials. It is cheaper to buy non-recycled paper. When the price of paper falls, the value of recycled paper often plummets to zero. Market for paper can become so glutted that dealers can charge \$20 a ton to haul away old newsprint.

There are some exceptions. Aluminum is perhaps one of the key success stories, because oftentimes it is cheaper to recycle aluminum than to produce it straight from ore (a costly, highly electricity-consuming affair).

Many recycling outfits have been forced to shut down. Some have gone to regular curbside pickup. But even some of the best of these have to routinely get subsidized by the government. One of the best of these, the Berkeley Ecology Center, has achieved only a 12 percent recycling rate, despite a goal of recycling 50% of the city's residential

refuse.

Small projects have mainly paved the way for cities granting contracts to waste-hauling private companies. As the trash crisis gets worse, private companies have seen a profit-making opportunity. For example, who does the curbside pickup? The same corporations who are some of the worst polluters such as Waste Management, Inc. Recycling is a small sideline to their incinerators, and waste leaching.

Why do these big corporations make money when smaller efforts fail? There is the large scale of their operations. And when prices fall temporarily, they are able to stockpile for awhile. Smaller operations can't do that. They also make money by getting free labor. Residents do the sorting, cleaning, bundling, etc. Minimum wage labor is often employed. In San Mateo, CA the city provides recycling companies with day-laborers. Also the firms profit by the labors of the homeless and of impoverished scavengers.

Even so, these efforts have so far recovered only a small portion of the trash. On the average, 15%.

Today recycling takes place within the ills of capitalism—polluters running recycling, exploiting labor, etc.

What does all this prove?

All this is why the action of the masses can force some improvements, but only within certain limits so long as the present system continues.

The problem of trash disposal is part of the general picture of production and disposal. It reflects on the ills of society as a whole. You need to hit the end which produces. For a fundamental solution of the trash and environmental problems, there must be a system where the entire economy is geared to cut against senseless excess, against waste, and to conservation of resources. But the profit motive and socially unplanned production goes against all this.

Decisions about what to produce, and how to produce must be taken away from the profiteers and placed in the hands of the working class, ruling and running the economy through its mass organizations embracing everyone. There must be large channeling of research into better methods of production and into the problems of disposal.

It is under these conditions that the masses can participate actively in the disposal end of the trash problem. Recycling will obviously be part of that.

The problem of recycling requires the cooperation of large masses of people. It requires mass initiative and a certain level of culture, leisure, etc. among the masses. The present economic system, with its huge masses of people overworked to the bone, or impoverished in huge inner-city slums, cannot provide this.

Dog-eat-dog competition for profit forces the least environmentally-friendly methods of production. And it is based on exploitation that keeps large masses demoralized as throw-away people. The elimination of the profit system is required for devoting a united effort at the pollution

problem. It requires workers' socialism. □

Related articles in the *Workers' Advocate*:

Stop the destruction of the ozone layer! Vol. 22 #3, March 1992

World bank bigshot says: Dump pollution on poor countries. Vol. 22 #3, March 1992

No to the corporate rape of James Bay: Support the Native people's struggle. Vol. 22 #1, Jan. 1992

No to nuclear plant renewals! Vol. 21 #8, Aug. 1991

No to a new toxic dump near Detroit! Vol. 21 #7, July 1991

Bush's energy plan zaps environmentalism. *Supplement* Vol. 7 #3, March 15, 1991

Earth Day actions. (A brief report, contrasting official Earth Day with the other Earth Day events, where a section of activists denounced corporate greed and

demonstrated at the stock exchanges on Wall Street and in San Francisco, and others denounced trash incinerators in a number of cities.) *Supplement* Vol. 6 #5, June 15, 1990

Earth Day 1990: Tear the green mask off the corporate polluters! The only thing green that all these firms are concerned about is the dollar bill. Vol. 20 #5, May 1990

To fight pollution, fight capitalism! Vol. 19 #5, May 1989

Pentagon and the environment: Creating 'national sacrifice zones'. Vol. 19 #5, May 1989

Protest against incinerator poisoning. (The world's largest trash incinerator in Detroit) 19(5) May 1989.

The Valdez oil spill: Exxon and the government are to blame. Vol. 19 #5, May 1989

No to the nuclear dump at Hanford, Washington! How to solve the nuclear waste problem: Shut down the nuclear plants! *Supplement* V.3 #4, April 10, 1987 □

The United Way scandal: The story of a point of light

To justify cutting social programs in the midst of growing need, Bush claims that private charity will take care of all the really needy. Why, the conservatives claim, social programs are corrupt and create dependency, while private charity and voluntarism is ennobling and will spread "a thousand points of light" across the country.

Let's take a look at one of these points of light: the United Way, which raises funds for a variety of private charities.

The longtime head of United Way, William Aramony, has resigned in disgrace, a year before his scheduled retirement. The United Way may not have solved workers' poverty, but it certainly solved Aramony's, paying him \$463,000 in salary and benefits. Questions are also being asked about what benefits he received from the group of private companies he established, spinoff companies that sold goods and services to United Way. No wonder many businessmen are so enthusiastic about private charity, seeing the plums it spreads before charity executives!

Aramony's bonanza was reportedly the highest of all charity bosses, and it became a public scandal. Worried, about one hundred local United Ways have, in protest, stopped paying dues to the national organization. They are afraid that disgust at Aramony's gluttony would cut contributions.

Are the local United Ways any different?

The local chapters of the United Way tell us that they are autonomous, comprising approximately 2,100 points of

light, and not responsible for the corruption at national headquarters. But look at their own high living! The president of New York's United Way received \$243,000 a year. Meanwhile the United Way for Southeastern Michigan is preparing a six-month public relations campaign to restore the image of United Way. But it is still paying H. Clay Howell, president of United Way for Southeastern Michigan, \$215,000 a year in salaries and benefits. Los Angeles United Way also pays a huge salary to its head, and this was supposed to be a reform in the face of the scandals of the mid-80s.

The national United Way is also trying to clean up its image. Why, it got rid of Aramony, and then eventually got around to cutting off his paycheck. (How long do workers receive paychecks after they are fired?) It has now announced that it won't give Aramony any severance pay. It will, however, pay him a pension (Aramony is demanding a whopping \$4.4 million in pension benefits). Asked how much this will be, a spokesperson replied that pensions are usually based on years on service and the amount of salary. Given Aramony's 22 years as leader of United Way and his almost half a million dollar a year salary, you can imagine what his pension will be. Public relations are one thing, but the money has to keep flowing to the privileged ones.

How to finance a point of light

But, the conservatives tell us, at least the private charities don't tax us and are based on people's good will. But United Way gets most of its money from workplace

campaigns run in cooperation with the corporations concerned. And there is some question about how voluntary some of these contributions are, with most of the money raised through payroll deduction plans enforced by your employer. Your supervisor gives you a card, and you have to turn it back, not to the organization of your choice, not even to United Way, but to your boss. You wouldn't want your company, or your department, or your supervisor to be embarrassed, now would you? Not at a time when it is being decided who to lay off?

Indeed, a class action suit in Los Angeles charges that many employees have been pressured to contribute. They received cards from their bosses with the amount to contribute already filled in. If they didn't sign this pledge and return it, they were told they were not "team players". Some supervisors have complained that they were told to find replacements for, and fire, subordinates who don't contribute to United Way. And other charities complain that they are barred access to workers, while United Way is given a privileged status.

Private vs. public

Private charities run by businessmen do differ from government social programs in some important respects. They are not required to recognize any rights of the recipients. They can force you to listen to religious ranting

In brief

Jamaican cane workers strike

Sugar cane cutters in Jamaica went on strike in early March, halting the industry right in the middle of the harvest. The 8,000 cane cutters demanded a pay increase of 200% and refused to accept the employers' offer of about 50%. The workers are notoriously underpaid and labor under horrendous conditions in the sugar fields. □

General strike gets results in Yemen

Workers in Yemen staged a general strike on March 1. The country's trade union federation called out its 200,000 members to protest declining living standards. As a result, the government agreed to give a general wage increase and freeze the price of food and medicine.

Workers also demanded that the government do something about massive unemployment. The labor market has been flooded by workers returning from Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf sheikdoms. Nearly a million Yemeni workers were expelled from these countries during the Gulf

in order to get a bowl of soup, or have you jump through a hoop. They are not required to give anyone anything, and recipients are supposed to be oh so grateful for every penny thrown to them.

The government programs, however, are supposed to obey certain principles. True, the politicians make these programs as humiliating and meager as possible. But the working people have the idea, so annoying to the conservatives, that it is their right to demand that government programs be fair, non-sectarian, and subject to supervision by the people. And they believe it is their right to be covered by these programs.

No wonder it is a favorite trick of businessmen to save millions by having their favorite politicians cut back on business taxes, and then give back a few dollars to the schools or charities or foundations. The big corporations can pose as the people's benefactors, while handing out pennies.

Private charity cannot replace adequate schools, unemployment benefits, workers' compensation, and other social programs. This, however, does not mean that the working people should not also organize and support their own trade unions, political organizations, cultural groups and a myriad of other organizations. But these should be their own class organizations, and not playthings in the hands of the overpaid charity executives or sectarian church hierarchies. □

war period. The reactionary sheiks suspected them of being disloyal and simply kicked them out. So far the government has done nothing to alleviate their poverty. □

More work, less leisure time

Do you feel like you are working harder and have less time off? Well, that puts you in the same boat with most workers in the U.S.

A recent study of work and leisure habits by the Economic Policy Institute found the average American worker puts in about 140 more hours per year on the job than he or she did two decades ago.

The longer hours are another result of the capitalist takeback offensive against the workers. The study found that workers are forced to slave extra hours and take second jobs, chiefly because real wages have been falling since 1973 while health care and housing costs have been rising. It also found that more women workers had shifted from seasonal to year-round jobs. □

At Great Lakes Steel in Detroit: The death of Jim Buss must not be in vain!

The March 25 issue of Detroit Workers' Voice, paper of the MLP-Detroit, reported on yet another worker murdered by bad working conditions at GLS, part of National Steel. It also contained '15,000 Mexican workers strike maquiladora plants', 'Mexican miners fight for jobs', and brief reports on Lithuanian and Russian workers from the March 1 issue of the Workers' Advocate.

We workers only have ourselves to defend our lives!

Jim Buss died alone in the dark, on the cold steel tracks leading to the #1 caster. During the early morning hours of Monday the 16th, he was cut down when the train he was operating jumped the track. His body was discovered long after he had been killed and almost by accident when it was noticed that his train was stopped and on the ground.

The accidental discovery of Jim's body occurred because he had been working alone, a one-man crew. There had been no co-worker to look out for him. No co-worker because for years now the bosses at National Steel have made a few dollars more on those train runs where they've reduced the four-member crews down to one.

But this is not the first time the greedy owners of our plant have killed someone as a result of reducing the railroad crews. Two years ago, Juan Gomez was killed during the early morning darkness as he entered the coke plant from the parking lot and was struck down by a hot metal train traveling to the BOP [basic oxygen process furnace]. The engineer was unaware that Juan had been struck. As we pointed out at the time in *Detroit Workers' Voice*, Juan's death was not the fault of the engineer, but due to the one-man crew where the engineer was unable to see all sides at the same time (there were other factors also such as no lighting, no bridge over the track, and ice.)

From the beginning the workers on the railroad opposed the one-person crews as being hazardous. In fact, a number of workers have been injured on these jobs. Train engineers on the island and main plant have been complaining about malfunction radios.

No help from the union

These unsafe conditions continue to exist in part because the top union officials won't lift a finger to correct them. Even after the death of Juan Gomez the union bureaucrats did not put up a fight to force the company to put on any more workers on the train crews. In particular the District Director Harry Lester and his flunky Mimmi Rinna have agreed to allow the company to continue in its dangerous crew staffing.

The union officials do not care one ounce for our welfare or safety. On the very morning that Jim was killed, while his cold body lie on the tracks being examined by the police and coroner, Harry Lester, Hugh Lesner, their cronies and [Democratic presidential candidate] Jerry Brown were at the front gate. But were they out there picketing the unsafe working conditions? Were they out there calling on the workers to organize to fight the increasing hazards in the plant? Were they even protesting the fact that Jim buss had been killed so that the National Steel capitalists could have a few more bloodstained dollars? NO!

All the while the news cameras were on, they were grinning and shaking hands trying to get us to vote their politician into office. They knew Jim's body was lying just a few hundred yards from where they were standing. If they had wanted they could have used the opportunity of national news coverage to expose the unsafe conditions we face inside the plant, and still they said nothing. This is proof overall of the union bureaucrats' cynical contempt for us. All we are to them is voting cattle.

There's only us

We only have ourselves to fight for us. Neither corrupt union officialdom, nor the self-serving politicians are going to do it. Only us. We must take to heart the bitter lesson of Jim's tragic death, so that his death is not in vain.

That lesson is that we must get ourselves organized independently of the control of the same officials who are cooperating with the company. For workers not already doing so, one concrete step is to help circulate the *Detroit Workers' Voice* so that the truth can be gotten around. □

More on the material basis for socialism in the modern world (3)

In our February issue, we printed a letter to the Supplement from comrade Fred (Seattle), commenting on remarks of comrade Pete (Detroit), printed in the January issue, and on the May Day speech The technical and cultural basis for workers' socialism in the modern world printed in our issue of July 20, 1991. In this issue, we continue the discussion with remarks by comrade Frank. (Seattle).

A comment on comrade Fred's letter

Comrade Fred raises a number of more difficult issues in his recent letter than that which is dealt with below. (See the February 20, 1992 *Worker's Advocate Supplement*.) The revolutionary movement is going to have to sooner or later solve all of them if it is to succeed. But even if it more or less solves them socialism can still be shipwrecked if we lose our orientation on the question of whom we are going to have to mainly direct coercive measures against during the socialist transition. If we become overly concerned with being robbed by the man with the gun (the "criminal strata" of the so-called "underclass") we risk having our pockets picked by the man with the fountain pen (some "respectable" people with white collars). And we may also alienate a lot of people who are our natural allies in the process.

* * * * *

In the Seattle May Day speech the following was said:

"Another downside to the present situation is that capitalism in decay has given rise to what some call the "underclass", those who have been driven into permanent unemployment and poverty. Functional illiteracy is widespread here, and by many accounts, is growing.

"This is a problem. There is a glaring lack of labor discipline found here, and general backwardness. But this may not turn out to be a horrendous obstacle to socialism. Among other reasons, one of the experiences of recent social revolutions is that mass literacy campaigns have been very successful. For example in China, Cuba, and Nicaragua. Today, introducing individuals of the "underclass" into the workforce may resemble pulling teeth. But if the new society can provide, not only jobs for them, but jobs that carry some dignity, the situation is changed. This factor, in combination with various forms of coercion (discussed later), may enable the 'underclass' to acquire working class qualities without too much disruption." (July 20, 1991 *Worker's Advocate Supplement*, page 27.)

The forms of coercion apparently being alluded to in this quotation are such things as piecework, peer group discipline, rules at the workplace, etc. (Page 30 of the same *Supplement*)

In his critical comments on the Seattle May Day speech comrade Pete writes:

"If the more downtrodden sections of employed workers get short shrift by the speech, the chronically unemployed get positively put down. First the speech points out, '...if the new society can provide...jobs for them,... the situation is changed'.... I agree; this is the main point.

"But the speech goes on and raises the prospect of 'various forms of coercion' to get them to work. This strikes an odd note, considering that the speech paints a rosy picture of software programmers displaying 'tremendous enthusiasm' working for socialism (second column, page 30). If we're going to strike a stern note with respect to the 'underclass,' why not a more realistic assessment of the highly-paid privileged workers, some of whom have dreams of becoming Microsoft billionaires and will have to be coerced to work at all, much less display any enthusiasm?" (January 20, 1992 *Workers Advocate Supplement*, page 5.)

In fact, the speech did only broach the issue of coercion when dealing with the "underclass" and we can accept that it tended to onesidedly stress only the positive role engineers, computer programmers, and other more educated "white collar" workers can play in the first phases of socialist society. It painted a rosy picture if you will. If we want to leave comrade Pete's comments regarding software programmers aside we can find other examples of what he is concerned with. For example, when the subject of present-day lawyers is briefly discussed the only issue concerning their role in the new society which is raised is the issue of finding something useful for them to do. There is no talk of "glaring lack of labor discipline", "various forms of coercion", introducing them into the (productive) workforce "resemb(ing) pulling teeth" etc. (And the fact that the lawyers are "educated" is put forward in a way which can make it appear that we place high value on degrees earned in bourgeois lying and deceit.)

Thus it seems there is a validity to comrade Pete's writing that an odd note was struck in the speech. Comrade Fred doesn't see this validity. That would perhaps be fine were it not for the fact that he then proceeds to put words into comrade Pete's mouth in order to continue the odd note struck in the Seattle speech and to make it more elaborate.

Comrade Fred writes:

"Instead of coercion, you think just offering jobs to the underclass would be sufficient. I think it is a delusion to think that merely offering jobs to the underclass would convert them all to workers. Besides, giving them jobs without educating them would make them merely producing workers, not liberated and ruling workers—hardly a socialist perspective. The issue is not to patronize the underclass but to offer a concrete path to liberation. And that can only be through raising their cultural level and offering them something more than unloading OCRs. And a flourishing transitional society doesn't need simply full employment (that could be reactionary from the economic standpoint), but full efficient employment." (February 20, 1992 *Worker's Advocate Supplement*, page 8)

But comrade Pete didn't write that "just offering jobs" would be sufficient, nor that "merely offering jobs" would convert all of "them" to workers. He quoted from the Seattle speech—"...if the new society can provide...jobs for them,...the situation is changed"—and said, "I agree; this is the main point." And if the reader examines the paragraph cited from comrade Pete's letter (above) he or she will find that comrade Pete doesn't rule out "various forms of coercion" being applied to elements from the "underclass". That's not the issue he's addressing. His point is the odd note being struck in the speech. (And, as we already know, comrade Fred doesn't see the validity of this.) Moreover, comrade Fred makes out that comrade Pete is a narrow or shallow individual who thinks that jobs without education or full (but perhaps "inefficient") employment are all that are needed to liberate the "underclass". I doubt that comrade Pete really fits the shoes which comrade Fred has created for him. If he doesn't then a wrong method is being used.

Lets now move more directly to our subject.

Both the Seattle speech and comrade Pete's letter use quotation marks around "underclass". In my opinion this is as it should be. "Underclass" is a quite unscientific term which was popularized by the capitalist establishment beginning in the late 1970s (the beginning of the Reagan-Bush era). At its very best this term was used to define the more-or-less permanently unemployed people, the people on welfare, etc. in the inner cities, particularly in the ghettos. But very often this word was given a racist connotation and was used as a racist code word. "Underclass" meant lazy black people in the ghetto who parasitized the rest of society by living on welfare, committing crimes, etc. This term was (and is) at times almost a synonym for black "criminal strata". And, very understandably, many black (and other) people see "underclass" as being a racist terminology.

But comrade Fred does not use quotation marks around "underclass". This is an error which ordinarily we might let pass without comment. Because of the context, however, its important to underline that we are not proceeding from

the bourgeois definitions of underclass popularized through their media.

"...But given that a portion of the underclass is the criminal strata, it seems like a prison/labor camp system of some sort would be needed. I cringe at saying this given the horrors of Stalinism, not to mention Texas."

I don't think discussing prison labor camps under socialism is anything to cringe about. They seem logical and several revolutions, including the Bolshevik revolution during Lenin's time, have had experience with them. (I'm unaware of a real summation of this experience however.) It seems the real issues with them are the motivations behind setting them up, whether a proletarian revolutionary attitude is taken toward the prisoners, etc. If we want to cringe (and I don't think that is really necessary, nor, in all likelihood, does comrade Fred) let us cringe at being less than all-sided in our presentation of this issue.

We're avowed exponents of coercion. A real proletarian revolution without civil war, imprisonment, the firing squad, etc. (firm coercion) is hard to imagine in the United States. And another way of saying proletarian dictatorship could be proletarian coercion: over those who act to resurrect the old society, over those who steal from the new society, etc. Such coercion will take many forms and undoubtedly these forms will change a lot with developments in the class struggle during the first years of transition. Further, we believe that in the socialist society we are aiming to build that those who do not work shall not reap benefits from those who do (i.e. they shan't eat). And universally required "work cards" of some type would be the logical tool to use in enforcing this.

Thus there will be people who are coerced to work by economic policy. This will include people who didn't work in the old society as well as people who worked under capitalism but wish to shirk under socialism. When comrade Fred says of coercion, "the term connotes something extra-economic to me", he is ignoring this and a thousand other examples of economic coercion—both under capitalism (i.e. the economic "draft" of youth into the military) and during socialism.

Clearly, in the first years after the proletarian dictatorship is established there will also be people from the formerly oppressed classes who persist in petty criminality. Isolating them and trying to rehabilitate them through work coupled with education (including political education, patient explanations of what the new society is all about and what the alternatives are, etc.) seems the logical and moral thing to do. And rather than the mostly worse than useless prisons of capitalism a prison labor camp system where the product of labor goes to society and the prisoners receive a normal wage (less some deduction for maintenance) also seems to logically follow. The Soviet Union set up a system much like this in Lenin's time (and I believe they even gave prizes and awards to outstanding prisoners).

All agree that the main way we will eliminate the so-called crimes of poverty will be to eliminate poverty. There

will also be issues like replacing the culture of crime with a revolutionary culture. And more mundane things like legalizing drugs (at least for a while) and setting up new-type drug rehabilitation programs. (In this latter regard its good to keep in mind that the majority of drug usage and drug dealing in the United States does not go on in the "underclass" ghettos. It occurs in the mainly white areas and suburbs.)

The masses of urban poor: unemployed and partially employed workers, youth who have never been able to find anything but starvation wage jobs or no jobs at all, welfare mothers who cannot afford to work because of the high cost of child care, those who refuse to work at slavaion wages, disabled people, the homeless, even many of those who go into the drug trade, prostitution, etc.—all of whom the bourgeoisie lumps together as "the underclass"—will undoubtedly passionately embrace the revolution. These people with so little to lose and so much to gain have embraced the great social revolutions of the world and our experience in the revolutionary upsurges of the late 1960s and early 1970s in the United States showed that they have the same potential here.

I said in the beginning that comrade Fred further develops the odd note struck in the Seattle May Day speech (saying only good things about the potential of highly-educated and often highly-paid white collar workers while raising several difficulties regarding the "underclass"). He does this by proceeding from the sentence "But given that a portion of the underclass is the criminal strata." (emphasis added) to his discussion of setting up a prison/labor camp system. The white collar criminals, C.I.A. drug runners and "respectable" drug lords, government and Pentagon mass murderers, slumlords and factory owners who knowingly violate the law and thereby burn and poison people to death every day, the legal abettors and defenders of these crimes, the racist police bullies, etc. etc. are excluded from this formulation of "criminal strata". Yet its clear that these people are criminals which we are going to

have to deal with.

I asserted above that the masses of the urban poor will embrace the revolution. They have everything to gain from it. Not so the bourgeoisie and its highly paid managers, lawyers, spooks, military men, academicians, and other flunkies. And not so whole strata of highly-paid professionals, highly-paid "white collar workers", etc., who identify with the bourgeoisie. Many of these people will passionately hate the revolution, do anything to avoid working for it, and getting them to do any type of socially useful work will definitely resemble pulling teeth. White collar theft on a grand scale, division of the proceeds of this theft, sabotage, wrecking and the like are things which we are going to have to contend with from these strata and things which are going to be extra difficult to uncover. This is because these strata have their class consciousness and organization and their worst elements will tighten that organization against the revolution in the future. Deceit is these people's stock and trade and they will cover up for each other. Yet we may have to continue to employ a lot of them in the occupations they have been trained for (make use of their skills) for a long time. And most of the proletarian supervisors will be very unfamiliar with the work of these occupations. In other words we're liable to be robbed in broad daylight by these people and not even know it if we are not extra vigilant toward them.

Thus when we write of coercion, prison work camps and rehabilitation we have to keep this strata of "white collar" criminals especially in mind. Comrade Fred doesn't even mention them and that is why I say he continues and makes more elaborate the odd note struck in the Seattle May Day speech.

I'm sure that comrade Fred agrees with much that I have written above but, for reasons stated in the beginning, I think its worthwhile to develop this side of things anyway. Otherwise we risk weakening our sharp class perspective.

—Frank, a reader in Seattle □

Monopoly capitalist groupings in Chicago, and the twists of local politics

Politics follows economics, and the political views and stands of the politicians reflect the views and groupings of the ruling class. Behind the clash of Democrat versus Republican stands something more fundamental, the views and interests of the bourgeoisie. It is these class interests that determine the overall framework of the varying stands of the politicians. It is this that sets the mainstream agenda of the two big capitalist parties, and that explains the evolution of this mainstream and the bipartisan shifts in the issues addressed by the politicians.

A group of members and friends of the MLP carried out a study of how the capitalist class divided up into big groupings, groupings which are not identical with the split between Democrat and Republican. Their tentative results are sketched in the article "The monopoly capitalist basis of the American political mainstream" in our issue of Oct. 15, 1989 (Vol. 5 #9). It was based on a speech given at the Third Congress of the MLP in Fall 1988.

More recently a comrade in Chicago wrote to the author of the speech, and asked for information about capitalist groupings in Chicago. The reply may be of more general interest to our readers, so we are printing it below.

Dear comrade,

This is being written in response to your request for information re monopoly interests in Chicago, a request which you indicate is made in the hopes of developing a deeper analysis of local politics. Below appears the limited and sketchy information and analysis we have on this question. But I would also like to discuss the limitations of such research. Our experience suggests that such materials are of only limited value, especially when it comes to local politics, and I have some concern that you may find this a fruitless avenue of pursuit.

To the extent that our work on monopoly groups established a relationship between economic interests and political trends, it was a complex one. Political trends may come into being reflecting or corresponding to more or less definite economic interests. But once they come into being, they tend to take on a life of their own. This is true all the more so because political trends take on the form of parties, machines and politicians, whose immediate aims revolve around capturing the spoils of office. They may enter into alliance—even very intimate alliance—with certain distinct capitalist interests. But the fact that they have ends of their own means that the alliance does not signify a complete identity of interests. Moreover, a political trend that corresponds to the needs of particular economic interests at one time may cease to do so at another. Then, too, there are the vagaries of consciousness. The ability of capitalists to perceive the political trends

which best suit their interests is strictly relative and subject to the influence of tradition, prejudice and individual stupidity, which are not small factors in the consciousness of the bourgeoisie. For all these reasons and more, the relationship between economic interests and political trends is complex and often difficult to dissect.

Further complexities arise in the realm of local politics. The historical development of the state in the U.S. gives us not only the central state apparatus, but layer upon layer of municipal, county and state governments. This had its origins in the jealousies and conflicts among different propertied interests in the original 13 states, each of which wanted to safeguard its prerogatives. It has resulted in a system wherein any Tom, Dick or Harry with money can find some way to further their interests politically. On a national scale, only a handful of monopoly groups have the strength to hold sway politically, and even they can do so successfully only in conjunction with an array of lesser allies. On the municipal and county level much lesser interests have the opportunity to try their hand directly and do so.

Lest us take realtors as an example. No one realtor has the size and strength to play much of a role in national politics. But, organized into a national association, and allied with the mortgage bankers, they do succeed in playing some role, at least where tax law is concerned. Nonetheless, in analyzing the interests at stake in national politics, we are able to avoid giving them a great deal of attention. It is enough for us to note, for example, the depth of support for Reaganism in the sunbelt among lesser capitalist interests tied to the local economy, and that will suffice. But it does not suffice once we want to analyze, for example, the alignment of pro- and anti-growth forces in San Diego County. Once it comes to local

Monopoly Interests In Chicago	14
Summary report, date unknown	15
Financial Institutions:	15
Industry controlled by Chicago Interests:	16
Industry in which Chicago Interests play a minority role:	16
Some corporations omitted from the above	16
The participation of Chicago Interests in national politics—some rough notes	16
A. Some major figures of the 30s-50s	17
B. Some later figures	17
C. National Association of Manufacturers	18
D. The America First Committee	18
E. The Trilateral Commission	18

politics, this motley array of scuzzy little interests has considerably more weight and cannot be so easily factored out.

Indeed, the fate of entire social strata is tied to local politics and this becomes an important theme in local politics. Some years back, when we analyzed the strivings of the black bourgeoisie (largely, actually, a petty bourgeoisie), the question of political office, especially in the major cities, stood out. A continual theme in the journals, conferences, etc., of aspiring black politicians was the large amount of dollars involved in city contracts; and the small share of that going to black contractors. The spoils of office are not limited to cronyism and the rake-off; contracting, too, stands out as a big factor. And, if we look, for example, to the rise of the local Irish bourgeoisie in Boston a century ago, we see the same pattern. The spoils of office brought notoriety and well-lined pockets to politicians such as Curley. They also opened up the local market to Irish construction contractors, etc., allowing the rise of this social stratum and eventually permitting a handful (e.g., Joe Kennedy) to pass through the golden gates into the realm of the big bourgeoisie.

This does not mean that monopoly interests have no role to play in local politics, but even where this role is evident it is not always so evident how this analysis of it furthers our agitation.

New York City, for example, is the seat of very big financial interests. Very little can take place in local government directly against the wishes of those interests. To become mayor, and to function as mayor, requires at the least arriving at some understanding with these interests. Examples can be found in the earlier part of this century of a direct involvement of such interests in municipal affairs, possibly including fights among them on some points. (This was even more graphic with the robber barons who preceded them.) But the overriding theme has been service to the interests of capital in general, regardless of who has held office at a particular time.

A recent example of direct-intervention of big financial interests in municipal affairs was in the fiscal crisis of the mid-1970s. For years, as the economy and tax base had been quietly eroding, New York politicians continued spending for the glitter (and the rake-off). When revenues fell short, they adopted bookkeeping fictions to keep the game rolling. This was by no means limited to municipal politics; the master of this art was Governor Rockefeller, who spent enough building a useless State Mall in [the state capital of] Albany to have rebuilt every public school in the state. How the game was kept rolling was through the issuing of state and city notes, a hidden form of deficit spending. The banks acted as middlemen on the notes and purchasers as well, holding part of them for their trust portfolios. As the gap between fantasy and reality widened, the question of whether these (unsecured) notes were worth the paper they were printed on loomed larger. All this was brought to a head by the impact of the 1973-74 recession and its aftermath.

After seeking and not receiving guarantees, the big banks quietly flushed the notes from their trust portfolios. Then-mayor Abe Beame was a protégé of the head of Manufacturers Hanover, which was still big on local construction and real estate, while the others [other banks] had become increasingly big on Brazil, Mexico, etc. Beame retained the confidence of Manufacturers Hanover alone (but not so much confidence that it prevented Manufacturers Hanover from also flushing municipal notes from its trust portfolio). After a round of consultations among the bankers, the head of Citicorp called up the head of Manufacturers Hanover and told him; tell your boy he's finished. That was the end of Abe Beame's career and the beginning of the fiscal crisis. The fiscal affairs of the city were taken out of the hands of the elected officials and handed over to a consortium of bankers (Manufacturers Hanover included) which had been given extraordinary powers.

Interesting as this anecdote may be, it is difficult to see what it contributes to our analysis. The fiscal crisis was there and would have come to a head in one way or another. The resolution (safeguard the interests of the investors, screw the masses) would have been the same in any event. The striking agitational point—the naked way in which the city's affairs were handed over to the bankers—neatly served the slogan *MAKE THE RICH PAY*, but this did not require any special analysis of the relations among the banks and their particular roles. The point that actually requires more analysis than we had and have has to do with the political economy of the big cities and (outside the Sunbelt) their eroding economic base.

Experiences such as this make me somewhat leery of the notion that analysis of specific capitalist interests can shed more light on local politics. I believe that in most cases it requires considerable effort while offering little fruit.

With this caveat, I pass on to what we know of monopoly interests in Chicago.

Monopoly Interests In Chicago

Our research on monopoly groups went through three stages, generally going from a very crude analysis to a less crude one. At the point where we left off the work, our ideas of how monopoly groups were formed and worked were changing, and undoubtedly would change still more had we the opportunity to go through it again. By the final stage of this work, our attention was increasingly focused on the political role/expression of these interests in national politics. Once we got a handle on this it became the main focus of our attention and a lot of the clean-up work on the structure and holdings of regional groups did not get completed.

In the case of Chicago there was a particular issue: the collapse of Continental Illinois. The subsequent reorganization would undoubtedly provide a revealing picture, but while this was pending we were unable to arrive at a reasonably complete picture of things. The summary

reproduced below is therefore a product of the second, rather than the third stage of the work. To this should be added a general caveat, namely that rapid developments during the 1980s changed the landscape a great deal. Mergers and leveraged buyouts altered not only the details, but sometimes also the structure and even existence of some groupings.

Other changes took place as well. In Chicago, for example, there was the rapid growth of the old commodities market as a center for stock market index futures trading; by 1987 on a good day more paper value of stocks were being traded on the futures market than on the New York Exchange. But we did not have the opportunity to study this phenomenon and see who was involved and what significance it might have for capitalist interests in Chicago.

Our greatest disappointment regarding Chicago was not having found the opportunity to study the University of Chicago and its Business School. The particular question was whether any identifiable interests were linked to the rise of Milton Friedman and the Chicago School.

The University of Chicago was founded with Rockefeller seed money, and strong Rockefeller representation (with Chicago participation) was found when we looked at the Board a decade ago.

From the 1950s onward the Business School emerged as a major right-wing ideological center, with Milton Friedman as the main ideologue and George Schultz as the Dean. This school of thought did not seem to square with the ideological schools linked to the Rockefeller interests on other fronts and in other institutions. Of course, B schools are not generally known as centers of enlightened thought and university faculties tend to be self-perpetuating. We were nonetheless curious whether the Business School had its own Board and endowments, whether these might have played some role in the emergence of its specific role, and if so, what interests would have been involved.

On to a rough overview of our findings re monopoly interests in Chicago.

Once the second-largest city in the U.S. and the largest industrial city, Chicago had an important and diversified economic role. It was a center for steel and steel products. It was a key link between agriculture and urban capital (farm machinery, grain companies, the stockyards, packing houses, the commodities market). It was a key transportation center (the railroads) and a center of commerce, both wholesale and retail (Sears, among others). Certain key sectors (much of the railroads, big steel, Standard of Indiana) ended up in the hands of big finance capital interests based outside Chicago (principally the Morgan and Rockefeller groups). As well, a number of the biggest Chicago-based industrial corporations were obliged to go outside the area for financing and banking services, and ended up with links with outside groups.

But there remained a range of very wealthy industrialists and merchants who both retained separate identities (for example, companies in which the founding families continued to hold 30% or more of the stock into the 1960s and

even to the present day) while banding together on the boards of local banks (and placing much of the family holdings with the trust departments of the banks), developing a myriad of interlocking directorships, and generally showing the features of a monopoly group. Among Chicago financial institutions, First National Bank and Continental Illinois seemed to have central roles in this group.

As well, a number of interests were found that appeared to have no more than arms-length dealings with these banks. This was particularly true of post-war fortunes. The Crown interests (General Dynamics, Hilton) had just enough interaction with the Chicago banks that they are listed as connected. Some others (Pritzker: Hyatt and Marmon Group; Stone: Stone Container) showed not even that much relationship.

A reworking of the list that appears below would probably show a great many differences in detail but the same broad outlines. Some nonfinancial corporations that we formerly labelled as Morgan- or Rockefeller-dominated with Chicago participation we might now label Chicago-dominated. Some of those labelled as Chicago-dominated we might now regard as controlled by smaller independent interests, but with ties to the Chicago banks. There would be changes in the reverse direction as well. Many further changes would be due to the mergers, takeovers and leveraged buyouts of the 80s. Nonetheless the general pattern would remain the same: the core holdings are strongly oriented toward the domestic market, largely in aging industries, with just a few bright stars such as Bell & Howell.

Summary report, date unknown

Established as a link between midwestern agriculture and the rest of the U.S. capitalist system, Chicago monopoly capital has maintained its relative independence from Morgan and Rockefeller. It is the main financial center outside of New York. Monopoly capitalist families like McCormick, Fields, Block, Armour, Wrigley, et. al., built empires in the midwest based in small tool and machinery, farm equipment, food processing, and, although New York owns most heavy steel and railroads in Chicago, some steel and railroads. From this industry and as the regional financial center for surrounding states, Chicago developed large financial institutions, weak only in life insurance and investment houses (its major house was Halsey Stuart which used to actively compete with Morgan—it has faded from view now). Their personal trust holdings in the 50s were twice any city's outside New York (one-fifth of New York's).

Financial Institutions:

First National Bank of Chicago
Continental Illinois Bank
Harris Trust
Northern Trust

Allstate Insurance
CNA
Continental Assurance
Dean Witter Reynolds
American National Bank

Industry controlled by Chicago interests:

Borg Warner
Baxter Labs
Abbott Labs
Marshall Field
Chicago Sun Times
Chicago Daily News
NW Industries
Deere
Sunbeam
Inland Steel
Carson Pierie Scott
Inryco
International Harvester
Commonwealth Edison
Esmark
FH Prince
National Can
Sears
Field Enterprises
Hart Shafner Marx
Zenith
US Gypsum
Illinois Power
Beatrice Foods
Chicago NW RR
Walgreen
Jos Ryerson
Consolidated Foods
Jewel
TransUnion
Ball
Clark Equipment
Hormel
Illinois Tool
Masonite
Morton Norwich
Rohr Industries?
Whirlpool
McGrow Edison
Chicago Rock Island Pacific RR

**Industry in which Chicago interests
play a minority role:**

Standard Oil of Indiana
Atlantic Richfield
Texaco
Bell & Howell
Burlington Northern

Kraft
Dun & Bradstreet
International Minerals & Chemicals
UAL
Caterpillar
General Dynamics
Illinois Central
Pillsbury
Bethlehem Steel
FMC
Quaker Oats
Kellogg
Pullman
Santa Fe
Woolworth

**Note: some corporations omitted
from the above lists**

Tribune Corp. — Certainly a key holding historically. How it got skipped is a mystery to me.

R.R. Donnelly — Ditto

G.D. Searle — Was a maybe. Controlled by Searle family, some interlocking directorships. Now moot; sold to Monsanto.

Cummins Engine — A story in itself. An old-time Fortune 500, looks like typical Chicago company, but over years went from weak Chicago presence on board to none. Strong Rockefeller presence on board, strong personal ties with Rockefeller family, Trilateral Commission etc. Company HQ recently moved to Britain to prepare for European integration.

**The participation of Chicago interests in
national politics—some rough notes**

The relationship of monopoly interests to political trends is a complicated one. Political trends may arise corresponding to more or less definite interests, but once they have arisen they tend to take on a life of their own. There are also the practical considerations; owning a piece of an official in office, for example, can be worth considerably more than one out of office, whatever the respective parties and politics may be. As for monopoly capitalists, there is no basis to assume that they are infallible in identifying their own best interests; tradition, habit and sheer prejudice weigh heavily in the equation. And there is no accounting for the vagaries of individuals. What we have looked for is tendencies: what sort of interests are most consistently involved (through financial backing, directorships, personal participation) with certain organizations and campaigns?

In the case of the Chicago group it looks something like this: from the 1930s through the 1950s elements of the Chicago group were heavily involved in the more-or-less traditional right-wing unilateralist politics of the industrial bourgeoisie in the Midwest (National Association of Manufacturers, America First Committee, the MacArthur

campaign). From the 1960s onward some prominent figures associated with Chicago interests were involved in more mainstream multilateralist (roughly, Rockefeller Republican) politics. In 1973 several figures from the Chicago group became founding members of the Trilateral Commission, but most left in 1977.

The general impression, then, is that during the peak of multilateralism in the 1960s and 1970s there was some inclination in that direction, which began to reverse in the Carter years. This corresponds to our general impression of what was taking place with big industrial interests in this period.

While this is probably the most significant political motion during this period, it is not the whole story.

A significant counter-example may be the Field family and the Field Foundation launched by Marshall Field III. The Field Foundation is sometimes referred to by secondary sources as an East Coast foundation. Apparently this is because it has "Eastern liberal" politics. For example, it was a financial backer of the Nuclear Freeze movement. Field has an interesting history on other counts as well; the *Sun-Times* was launched on the eve of World War II, apparently in direct competition with the *Tribune*. I suspect there may have been a sharp political contrast at that time, but have not had the opportunity to look into it further. I am also curious about what Field's relationship was with the Chicago banks at that time. In more recent times all seems to have been copacetic. In any event, this might help to explain why throughout the periods we studied there was always a *Sun-Times* editor on the Trilateral Commission. (Note that during the early 80s Field Enterprises liquidated its holdings: we don't know what the money is doing now.)

There are some major gaps in general assessment. By the late 1970s a series of institutions such as the American Enterprise Institute had become ideological centers for the shift to Reaganism. Many major capitalist interests can be found associated with the ideological center of their choice in this period. But participation from the Chicago group is very nearly nonexistent among the institutions we studied. Perhaps what we saw in the Trilateral Commission was all there was, or perhaps we missed some institutions. In any event, I am not satisfied that we know the whole story.

Furthermore, in Illinois politics there seems to be a certain continuum from Stevenson to Simon the local basis (and backers) of which we simply don't know.

The information presented here therefore should not be taken as providing a basis for explaining Illinois politics.

Some details follow.

A. Some major figures of the 30s-50s

For several decades (Colonel) Robert R. McCormick and (General) Robert E. Wood were the most visible figures of the Chicago group.

McCormick and Medill were founding families of International Harvester, both invested in the *Chicago Tribune*, the Medills predominating. Robert R. McCormick,

a Medill on his mother's side, was publisher of the *Tribune* for about forever. Two of his cousins (both Medill-Pattersons) became the publishers of the *New York Daily News* and the *Washington Times-Herald*. McCormick has about the same style in politics that the *Tribune* has in journalism. In 1932 he was among a section of rabid protectionists who threw in with the Roosevelt coalition, but toward the end of the decade he became rabidly anti-Roosevelt. McCormick, apart from taking right-wing stands on about any question imaginable, also engaged in a number of adventures at floating right-wing candidates (in fact, it appears he aspired to be such a candidate himself), including promoting MacArthur for the presidency.

Wood's career is even more interesting; in many respects Wood embodied the convergence of isolationism with colonialism. In 1900-02 Lieutenant Wood took part in suppressing the Philippines; in Panama from 1905 to 1915 he rose to chief quartermaster and director for the Panama Railway Company; during World War I he rose to Brigadier General and at the war's end became Acting Quartermaster General of the U.S. Army. Retiring from the army, the general held vice-presidencies at Montgomery Ward and Sears respectively before becoming president of Sears in 1928. In 1939 he became chairman of the board and remained so for the next two decades.

His business career notwithstanding, the general did not neglect public duty. He served for over a decade as a member of the executive committee of the National Association of Manufacturers and in the late 1930s was chairman of the America First Committee. In 1948 he played a key role in the MacArthur movement. In the late 1950s and early 1960s both Woods and Sears gave money to the American Security Council (ASC), a purveyor of blacklists that later evolved into a lobby for the defense industry. The president of the ASC was Wood's former personal assistant, who left the one post to found the other.

The general was succeeded at Sears by his son, Arthur. Another son, J. Howard, eventually succeeded McCormick at the *Tribune* and became a director of the Hoover Institute as well.

B. Some later figures

Robert Taft was followed as leader of the Senate Republicans in the late 1950s by Everett Dirksen, a career politician from Illinois. Dirksen had taken unilateralist positions and was elected leader with the support of the Senate unilateralists. As majority leader, however, he conciliated with the Eisenhower administration to such an extent that the diehard unilateralists set up their own shadow caucus, electing an Arizona Republican named Goldwater as shadow leader.

Dirksen was succeeded by his son-in-law Charles Percy. Percy had been vice-president of Bell & Howell during the war and president thereafter, in Bell & Howell's biggest growth years in the defense game boom. As a senator he gravitated toward the Rockefeller Republican wing of the

party. In point of fact, his daughter Sharon married a Rockefeller.

Percy was followed as president of Bell & Howell by Peter G. Peterson, who later became chairman. Peterson left Bell & Howell for the Nixon administration, where he served as Secretary of Commerce, and then moved to a second career on Wall Street. On Wall Street he was a professional manager and not a representative of Chicago interests, but he did retain some Chicago seats. Peterson took part in the Trilateral Commission and became head of the Council on Foreign Relations.

C. The National Association of Manufacturers

The NAM was just what the name suggested; its charter originally excluded banking and commercial interests from participation. It was an interest group for industrial capitalists. Relatively small-scale interests may have predominated for the earlier part of its history and certainly played some role throughout. But it was relatively easy for major groups such as the DuPonts, the Mellons and Chicago to gain sway when they wished.

This took place in the 1930s, when such interests, alienated from the White House, took major positions on the executive committee of NAM and sought to develop it as an organizing center. It was at this time that Gen. Wood was brought onto the executive committee, a particularly impressive feat considering that by the NAM charter at that time Sears and therefore the general were expressly barred from membership.

Participation in NAM by elements of the Chicago group was not limited to Wood alone. Other Chicago figures found on NAM boards at various points in the past included figures from Armour, Ball and R.R. Donnelly. Up to the late fifties (at which point our data ends) there was generally one or more Chicago figures prominent in NAM. Who this was, however, changed over time. Throughout the 1940s Charles S. Davis, president of Borg-Warner (and uncle of Mrs. Barry Goldwater, for whatever that's worth), sat on the executive committee of NAM. In the late 1950s that seat was held by G.P.F. Smith, the lowest-ranking Borg-warner vice-president. This shift toward lesser officials was a general trend among big corporations and was followed a few years later by disaffiliation from NAM by a number of bigger outfits. We do not know, however, whether Chicago outfits were among them.

D. The America First Committee

The American First Committee was a late 30s fight against U.S. involvement in the European war. It was strongly midwestern-based and to some extent expressed the traditional isolationism of midwestern agrarian and industrial interests. Intermixed with this were strong pro-fascist leanings; right-wing preachers like Gerald L.K. Smith were America Firsters, as were much of the Catholic Church hierarchy, accompanied by such notables as the Buckley

family. Elements of the Chicago group participated heavily and Wood served as chairman.

Figures from the Chicago group had taken part in NAM side by side with representatives of other big interests, such as the DuPonts. But there seems to have been little Chicago participation in the Morgan-DuPont Liberty League in the mid-30s, and there was certainly little or no participation by those interests in the America First Committee.

E. The Trilateral Commission

The U.S. section of the Trilateral Commission was founded in 1973 with 59 members. Four were from the Chicago group. A fifth was from a Chicago-linked company and a sixth was an Illinois politician. During the entire period from 1973 to 1980 40% of the founding commissioners from the U.S. left the commission for one reason or another (a large number left to take up posts in the Carter administration, for example). In 1977 three of the four from the Chicago group left the commission. These were the only U.S. commissioners to leave in 1977. The commissioner from the Chicago-linked company left in 1979. Subsequently two other Chicago figures were added to the Board. One was little more than an errand boy. The other, a major figure from the past, was nominated to the Commission's Executive Board. A number of other figures with some relationship to the Chicago group were added as well. (The number of U.S. commissioners grew from 59 to 80 in this period.)

One of the 1977 turnovers seems to have corresponded to a turnover in personnel at the *Sun-Times*. The other two cannot be explained from such an angle.

It looks rather like a walkout of Chicago group participants took place in 1977, but if so it was a walkout of some, not all.

Chicago-related participation, Trilateral Commission, 1973-1980

1. Chicago Group—Core companies—founding members

Hewitt, William A. chairman Deere & Co., director Continental Illinois, member, Chase Int'l Advisory Committee	73-
Perkins, John H. president Continental Illinois	73-77
Wood, Arthur M. ex-chairman Sears, director Continental Illinois	73-77
Dedmon, Emmett vice-president Field Enterprises, editor, Sun-Times	73-77

2. Chicago Group—Related companies—founding members

Morgan, Lee L. 73-79
 chairman Caterpillar,
 director First National Bank

3. Chicago Group—later additions

Ingersoll, Robert 77- (exec. committee, 78-)
 ex-chairman Borg-Warner,
 director, First National Bank, etc. etc.

Hugo, James F. 78-
 Dedmon's successor at Sun-Times
 (later hopped to Tribune Corp.,
 became publisher of the New York
 Daily News and provoked the strike;
 now unemployed)

4. Also of interest

Anderson, John B. 73-
 House of Representatives

Peterson, Peter G. 73-
 chairman Lehman Brothers,
 director First National Bank
 (past president and chairman
 of Bell & Howell)

Schacht, Henry B. 76-
 chairman Cummins Engine

Brimmer, Andrew 77-
 past governor of Federal Reserve,
 token on a dozen boards including
 Harvester and UAL

Thompson, James R. 77-
 Governor of Illinois

Women's oppression blessed by Bible

The following leaflet was sent in from Los Angeles:

There are those who, to this day, maintain that their "holy bible(?)" is the font of all human knowledge and wisdom. This book, they assert, represents the revealed truth of an all-knowing, all-seeing and merciful god. This is remarkable, to say the least, given the fact that in addition to being full of historical and scientific inaccuracies and distortions, a common theme that runs throughout the bible from beginning to end is the acceptance, and even the promotion of, the subjugation and oppression of women and working people in general.

As a response to several requests by pro-choice activists for some verbal ammo to fire back at O.R.'s [Operation Rescue's] holy hypocrites, we present a few sample quotes that expose the utterly sexist and exploitative character of this allegedly "divinely inspired and infallible" book.

From the outset, the bible consigns woman to the role of the subservient, baby-making property of her husband. It also casts a curse upon childbearing and menstruation to further humiliate, humble and ultimately control women.

Genesis 3:16: I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and they conception; in sorrow, thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

Leviticus 12:2-8: If a woman have conceived seed, and born a man child: then she shall be unclean 7 days. She shall touch no hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purifying be fulfilled. But if she bear a maid child, then she shall be unclean 2 weeks.

Leviticus 15:19-28: And if a woman have an issue (discharge), and her issue in her flesh be blood, she shall be put apart 7 days: and whosoever toucheth her shall be unclean until the even. And if any man lie with her at all, and her flowers (menses) be upon him, he shall be unclean 7 days.

In Exodus 20:7, we find women included on the list of "things" (i.e., property) belonging to one's neighbor that we shalt not covet, including his house, his wife, his manservant, his maidservant, his ox, his ass, nor any other thing that is his.

I Timothy 2:11-15: Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For

Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing.

I Corinthians 11:7-9 For a man...is the image and glory of god: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.

This "enlightened" tome of male chauvinism and patriarchy also justifies infanticide, the rape of women, slavery and vengeful mass killing without mercy.

Isaiah 13:16 Their children also be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses shall be spoiled and their wives ravished (i.e., raped).

St. Luke 12:47-8 Here we are told that the servant (slave) who willfully disobeys his master "shall be beaten with many stripes." While the slave who unwittingly distresses his master, "shall be beaten with few stripes," but assuredly beaten. For additional instructions on how to buy, sell and punish slaves, see Exodus 21.

I Peter 2:18-19 Servants be subject to your master with all fear. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward god endure grief, suffering wrongfully. See also Ephesians 6:5 and I Timothy 6:1 for more on how slaves must honor and obey their masters.

Imagine the needless, untold suffering of women fostered by the biblical injunction found in Exodus 22:18 Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.

Deuteronomy 20:16 The cities of these people, which the lord thy god doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth: but thou shalt utterly destroy the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites.

Obviously this all-knowing, merciful god finds genocide to his liking!

Everywhere, slaves and the poor are counseled to submit to their "masters," both in heaven and on earth. Nowhere will you find these people encouraged to throw off their chains to end their oppression and poverty. Whose interests are served by this ideology anyway?!

Fight for liberation here and now!

Not for pie in the sky, in the bye and bye after you die!!!!

□

outright, but can pass restrictions under the name of this or that pretext.

What's In the bill?

On its surface, the bill is quite simple and powerful. Its heart, section 2, reads as follows

(a) In general. — Except as provided in subsection (b), a State may not restrict the right of a woman to choose to terminate a pregnancy —

(1) before fetal viability; or

(2) at any time, if such termination is necessary to protect the life or health of the woman.

(b) Medically Necessary Requirements. — A State may impose requirements medically necessary to protect the life or health of women referred to in subsection (a).

But look a bit closer. Let's start with the context this act appears in.

The Webster decision, and the state by state battle

With the Supreme Court's Webster decision of July 3, 1989, abortion rights are being restricted piecemeal. States are not allowed to directly say they oppose all abortions, but must impose restrictions in the name of regulating abortions. The Webster vs. Reproductive Health Services decision caused mass outrage at the time because it was regarded as reversing the 1973 Roe V. Wade Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion. But it didn't directly say that Roe V. Wade was reversed. Nor did it allow states to directly say they were opposed to all abortions. It forced the states to find pretexts to regulate abortion, and then the search was on to regulate abortion to death.

In fact, the original Roe vs. Wade decision didn't just prevent states from banning abortions outright. It also put some obstacles in the path of states from passing regulations which, in the name of safety or other measures, were actually designed to prevent abortion. It allowed the states to regulate abortion for certain reasons, but took some care to ensure that the regulations actually had the purpose of, say, safety, and weren't simply a ruse to make abortion difficult.

For example, on the same day that the Court decided Roe vs. Wade, it also ruled on Georgia's anti-abortion laws in a companion case, Doe vs. Bolton. Among the many restrictions imposed by the state of Georgia was that abortions had to be performed in full-service hospitals, accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals (JCAH). As well, there had to be a special hospital committee on abortion to give advance approval, and the committee and its personnel had to be approved by the JCAH. The Court struck all this down. It not only denied the part of the Georgia law that prevented abortion for anything but rape, incest, jeopardy to the life of the mother, or that the fetus would have a serious defect, but

it also struck down provisions regulating abortion in the name of safety. It denied that only full-service hospitals could comply with health and safety requirements, and it found no justification for requiring an advance-approval committee, noting, among other things, that no such approval was required for any other surgical procedures.

Thus the significance of Roe vs. Wade was not just putting abortion under an abstract right to privacy, but also in preventing states from infringing too far on this right on the pretext of safety.

Since the Webster decision, the Supreme Court, on the contrary, has followed the path of allowing restrictions on abortion in fact, so long as they were hidden in the name of something else. As a result, there is a struggle state by state over abortion laws.

It is possible that the Supreme Court may go further and utilize its upcoming deliberations on the harsh abortion restriction law in Pennsylvania to directly strike down Roe vs. Wade. It may allow states to directly ban abortions, or it may even declare that abortion is murder, thus mandating a national abortion ban. But it should be noted that at the present, even without a new Court decision, Roe vs. Wade is essentially dead already.

Not as strong as Roe vs. Wade

Now, one question to be asked is this, will the Freedom of Choice Act restore Roe vs. Wade? Let us assume for argument that it is passed, and that it is passed without crippling, anti-abortion amendments. Will it reverse the Webster decision and compel the states to allow abortions?

There is good reason to believe that it won't. True, if courts read the bill's words as they are written, it seems clear enough. But remember that this bill will be interpreted by the same Supreme Court that passed the Webster decision. If this Court could allow abortion restrictions without directly overthrowing Roe V. Wade, could it allow abortion restrictions without directly overthrowing this act?

The Congressional testimony on this bill contained wildly varying opinions. Various liberal organizations insist that the bill will enforce rights. However, they will not be the

What's In the bill?	21
The Webster decision, and the state by state battle	21
Not as strong as Roe vs. Wade	21
Fetal viability	22
Medical restrictions	22
Amendments?	22
Dragging their feet	23
A typical "socialist" reformist on the Freedom of Choice Act	23
What should be done?	23

ones interpreting the bill, but the courts. The *Congressional Quarterly*, discussing the recent debate on this bill, referred to the varying opinions on this bill, and included a reference to a legal study of the bill done in 1989:

"...a 1989 opinion from the Congressional Research Service (CRS) concluded that the Supreme Court would most likely interpret the Freedom of Choice Act so that it remained compatible with existing policy, particularly on the parental notification issue. 'Even when the language is plain, the courts frequently look to the background of a statute's enactment, predominantly its legislative history, to ascertain whether that background in fact supports the supposed obvious meaning,' said the opinion by CRS' American law division.

"Thus, in the absence of explicit bill language to the contrary, said CRS, the court would be unlikely to upset the current framework of abortion law, which allows states to require parental involvement." (Feb. 29, p. 468)

Note that the *Roe vs. Wade* decision had explicit language against some abortion restrictions, but that the Freedom of Choice Act has no such language. Therefore, the bill might be interpreted to allow restrictions.

This of course would be an outrage. In any world of honest and straightforward dealing, the language of the Freedom of Choice Act is clear. But we are dealing with Congress, and we are dealing with the Supreme Court, and we are dealing with a federal judiciary where the absolute majority of judges have been appointed by Reagan and Bush according to the conservative "litmus test". Congress is used to talking in order to hide its real thoughts, and the Supreme Court has already passed the Webster decision. So in the political cesspool called the judiciary, this bill might be interpreted as allowing restrictions.

Moreover, the courts could point to the Congressional debate to back up such an interpretation, certainly in regard to parental notification and perhaps in regard to other restrictions as well. The Congressional debate shows that few politicians are willing to speak against parental notification, and many speak for it. Even if the bill is not amended, the courts wouldn't have much trouble finding some pretext to talk of a "congressional intent" to allow notification.

Thus the Freedom of Choice Act might well simply preserve the present situation. States would be prevented from banning abortion outright. But there might still be a state by state battle over whether various parental notification measures, waiting periods, restrictions on where abortions can be performed, etc. were legal. This would be preferable to an outright ban on abortion, but it would be an unsatisfactory and painful situation, as it is now.

Fetal viability

Take the question of fetal viability. There is no question

that the Freedom of Choice Act allows restrictions in the name of fetal viability. Thus states would be allowed to ban third trimester abortions, and many already do.

But, among reasonable people, viability doesn't apply until the third trimester, perhaps the 24th to 27th week. This is how the *Roe vs. Wade* decision regarded the matter.

However, here again one has to recall who will be interpreting this bill. It is the conservative judges and legislators. And already there is movement to play with the term viability. Minnesota, for example, defines 20 weeks as the time of viability. Missouri doesn't allow abortions after 20 weeks unless there are tests to determine the fetus' age and viability. And the anti-abortion fanatics occasionally find miracle babies to prove that viability really occurs even earlier.

The possibility exists that states will give their own definition of viability, or require viability tests. These tests will be a further barrier to abortions, complicating matters and adding expenses. As well, they allow the possibility of harassing doctors and nurses, and charging them with murder, if the viability tests for any particular fetus are ruled inadequate.

And won't the present Supreme Court agree with this? It hasn't wiped out the 20 week viability definition. It is likely to leave it to the states to define viability. Nor is it likely to find the Freedom of Choice Act any obstacle to viability tests.

Medical restrictions

The Freedom of Choice Act also accepts restrictions in the name of medical requirements (safety, etc.) This would be a reasonable provision, if interpreted by reasonable people.

But even at the time of *Roe vs. Wade*, and again today, many harsh restrictions on abortion have been done in the name of medical necessity. Abortions have been restricted to hospitals, for example. Also many states have passed "informed consent" bills that require one or two day waiting periods for abortions, require anti-abortion lectures, etc. The Freedom of Choice Act does not provide any obstacle to harsh interpretations of the medical requirements. It is far weaker than *Roe vs. Wade* (and *Doe vs. Bolton*) in this regard.

Amendments?

So far, we have been discussing the bill as it reads presently. But the bourgeois-led women's groups, and the reformist groups, have been promoting this bill as a real possibility. And if we are concerned with what Congress may actually act on this year, it should be borne in mind that there may well be amendments. There are likely to be battles over anti-abortion provisions. A parental notification provision, for one thing, is quite possible.

Dragging their feet

Moreover, the politicians have dragged their feet over this bill for years. Back in 1989 it was promoted as the answer to the Webster decision, but Congress did nothing. Now it is being promoted as the answer to upcoming Supreme Court decisions. And Congress has still to act.

The Democratic Congressional leadership isn't enthusiastic about this bill. Senate Majority leader Mitchell doubts that it should be passed at all, saying that it really should be a constitutional amendment. (It has no chance as a constitutional amendment.) And the House leadership says it is for the bill, but it just isn't the time.

And if somehow it does pass, it faces a certain Bush veto.

Let us be clear. There's nothing wrong with supporting a bill that won't pass at present. We should rally not around the miserable consensus of Congress, but around progressive goals. We shouldn't tailor our agitation to what the politicians are going to do, but should instead expose the politicians.

But when we are told that the Freedom of Choice Act is the next step, that it will save abortion rights, that it is the realistic thing to do, then it is legitimate to point out that this bill is mostly hot air from the Democratic leadership.

A typical "socialist" reformist on the Freedom of Choice Act

Reformists like the Trotskyists of the ISO go along with the bourgeois-led women's organizations in their expectations for this bill. In the March 1992 issue of their paper, *Socialist Worker*, they have an article headlined "Support the Freedom of Choice Act... a first step in reversing a decade of setbacks". And they say in boldface that "Legislation to guarantee the right to legal abortion in the U.S. would be a huge step forward for women's rights."

ISO admits that "The very same legislators who have allowed countless restrictions on abortion, including parental consent and notification laws, are now being asked to pass a law which would allow unlimited access to legal abortion for all women up until the point of fetal viability." And they admit that the "pro-choice politicians" in Congress "routinely vote for parental consent laws and for the Hyde Amendment, a law passed through Congress every year since 1977, which bans federal funding for poor women's abortions." They even differ from some unnamed "women's and pro-choice organizations" for a "strategy ... involv(ing) lobbying and campaigning for politicians who declare themselves 'pro-choice.'"

But, without blinking an eye, they conclude that "The question is...how best to pressure Congress to pass the Freedom of Choice Act." And they saw the significance of the then-coming April 5 demonstration to be "the beginning of a massive nationwide campaign ... to pressure Congress to pass the Freedom of Choice Act."

ISO may differ from some groups on how to pressure Congress for the Act. But it agrees with centering the movement on pressuring for this act. And it is not at all clear who it disagrees with anyway. After all, it praises the April 5 demonstration as the correct way to pressure Congress for the Act. When it praises this demonstration, it points out explicitly that it was called by NOW, and backed by Planned Parenthood, NARAL, and the ACLU. But when it criticizes lobbying and backing bourgeois politicians, it doesn't name who does it. But isn't this also NOW, NARAL, Planned Parenthood, etc.? Wasn't it their conception to use this demonstration to kick off their campaigns for backing various politicians? And don't they not only refuse to organize mass participation in clinic defense and other struggles, but actually oppose such participation?

But don't say ISO restricts itself to the Freedom of Choice Act. Why, ISO even admits that the Freedom of Choice Act is not enough. "For example, the Act says nothing about abortion funding, currently denied to millions of poor women across the U.S." And ISO has its solution: another act of Congress. It goes on to say: "A second bill, the Reproductive Health Equity Act has been introduced, which would restore federal funding for abortions for Medicaid recipients, Native American women, and for women in the military, the Peace Corps and in federal prisons."

What should be done?

Centering the movement's expectations on these bills, whether through lobbying or demonstrations, is a mistake. The big demonstrations are valuable and necessary, but they should be used to encourage the activity at the grassroots. For example, the MLP contingent at the April 5 march promoted confronting Operation Rescue later in the month when it tries to make Buffalo into the next Wichita. This was one of the ways our contingent provided ways for activists to do something besides wait for the next pronouncement from Congress or the next time NOW or NARAL's leaders get around to calling a demonstration.

The movement must be built on the basis of the independent activity of the working people. It must look not toward big-names, but toward the activists who come out to defend clinics, to the women and men workers who bear the brunt of the capitalist offensive right at the workplace, and to the oppressed in general. It must expose the politicians as much as possible, and measure itself by how much it brings the people into motion.

Mass activity is the only thing that will put a spoke into the anti-woman offensive of the bourgeoisie. This will also bring pressure for better court decisions, better legislation etc. But such pressure is only one aspect, one byproduct of a movement that must be based on far more profound aims. An effective movement cannot be built up on the basis of expectations in the bourgeoisie and their politicians and judges and police. It must be built on the basis of

bringing forth from the masses of working women and men, from the activists for women's rights, faith in their own role, knowledge that matters depend on whether they take politics into their own hands, and doesn't center on this or that bill or court injunction.

An effective movement cannot be built up on the basis of expectations in the next congressional bill. It is not honest to suggest that simply a few more demonstrations will compel Congress or the courts to act, thus hiding the actual class offensive of the bourgeoisie. It is not honest to

exaggerate the significance of this or that half-hearted liberal bill. Such activities simply prepare the movement to be a fringe of NOW and NARAL. What is needed is for the working class, students, minorities, and all progressive people to take politics in into their own hands. They must learn how to build up action in the workplaces, communities, schools and elsewhere. They must build up an atmosphere of hatred for the politicians, of contempt for the paltry nature of their promises, and of fervor to unite into a class movement of the oppressed. □