

NO CUTBACKS! TAX THE RICH!

Recession and budget crises continue to wrack the country. And it is the working class and poor who are being forced to foot the bill.

Every day there is another plan to lay off workers or to cut social benefit programs or to raise taxes. But what about the capitalists? It is their system that caused the crisis, yet are they apologetic? Heavens no, they are still pigging out. While their workers are laid off, top executives are grabbing obscenely high pay. While Medicaid and welfare are cut, the rich are getting enormous tax breaks.

The workers and poor have paid enough. It's time to make the capitalists pay for the crisis.

Tax cuts for the rich

Everyone knows about the incredible handouts to the corporations — from the hundreds of billions to bail out the S&Ls and the commercial banks to the sky-high budgets for the monopolies that produce military hardware. But look at another example — the huge cuts in the federal income tax for the wealthy.

In 1978 and again in 1986 there were major revisions in the tax code. And the chief beneficiaries were the wealthiest people.

According to a report from the Citizens for Tax Justice (CTJ), each of the richest taxpayers — those with incomes averaging \$549,000 per year — have received an average giveback of \$82,196 a year compared to what they would have paid under the pre-1978 tax code. "The cost in 1990," the CTJ report charged, "of the tax cut for these extremely wealthy people is a staggering \$84.4 billion."

That by itself is over a fourth of the federal budget deficit, which is running at about \$318 billion this year. And we are not even talking about the loop-holes and writeoffs by which the wealthy avoid paying much of the taxes they owe.

No help from the Democrats

Obviously the government deficits are going to get bigger and bigger unless the rich are taxed. But don't expect much help from the Democrats to do this.

Oh yes, some of them have been mouthing off about "equality of sacrifice" and "fair taxes" of late. And in May the House and Senate Majority leaders Richard Gephardt and George Mitchell

even proposed a "tax fairness" bill. But this bill would only raise \$20 billion more in taxes from the richest families, and supposedly give that back to the middle class and poor through various tax credits. In short, it would not even restore taxes on the richest people to their previous levels — remember they get a \$84.4 billion tax break according to the CTJ.

Nor is even this small measure likely to pass. Powerful Democrats — like House Speaker Thomas Foley, Senate

Finance Chairman Lloyd Bentsen, and Ways and Means Committee Chairman Dan Rostenkowski — oppose it. That is not too surprising, since it was leading Democrats who actually co-authored the 1986 tax cut for the rich along with Reaganite Republicans. And it was the Democratic-controlled Congress that voted for it.

Build the working class movement

The Democrats, for all their whining over "fairness," represent the capitalists

just as surely as the Republicans. The working class movement will get nowhere unless it frees itself from illusions in the Democrats and launches mass struggle based on its own class program.

Today state and municipal workers, hospital workers, teachers, welfare recipients, homeless people and the unemployed are going into action to defend jobs and basic social programs. But the capitalist politicians are trying to split them up by making each sector compete over who will get some inadequate crumbs and who will get cut back further.

It is essential to break out of the confines of the capitalist debate over the budget crisis. It is time for the working class to stand up in its own right and make the rich pay for the budget crisis.

More articles on budget crisis, see p. 2

Students and workers shake S. Korea

Sparked by the police murder of a student activist, a storm of revolt swept across South Korea in May. Workers joined student protesters in the largest series of demonstrations since 1987, when dictator Chun Doo Hwan was forced to give up power. Chun's successor, Roh Tae Woo, is being forced to maneuver to hold on to power. But the students and workers are keeping up their struggle.

Police beat student to death

Students had planned a series of protests this spring to rally opposition to Roh Tae Woo's repression. Roh reacted savagely, arresting student activists and trade union leaders. But the protests mushroomed in size after Roh's plainclothes police killed a student protester.

The murdered student, Kang Kyong Dae, was a 20-year-old freshman at Myongji University in Seoul. On April 26 he was demonstrating against the arrest of a campus leader. Plainclothes members of the police "White Skull Squad" attacked the demonstration; four of them



Students in fierce street fighting against S. Korean dictatorship

ganged up on Kang and beat him to death with iron pipes.

The very next day, large demonstrations were held across the country to protest the murder. Some 5,000 students marched off the campus of Yonsei University and clashed with riot police in downtown Seoul. Similar clashes took place in Kwangju and Taejon. Protesters chanted "Bring down Roh Tae Woo" and "Dissolve the Democratic Liberal Party (Roh's party)."

Following this, student activists vowed

to overthrow Roh's government. Leftist political clubs based on the campuses began forming links with workers' organizations for huge protests in May.

A militant May 1st

On May 1, International Workers Day, militant workers joined student activists in powerful demonstrations. About 50,000 workers stayed off the job, and many of them joined the protests. Thousands marched off the campus of Yonsei

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Who could celebrate this? Outrages in 'Free Kuwait'

George Bush waged Operation Desert Massacre — killing over 100,000 people, devastating Iraq, and bringing new misery to the Kurds — all in the name of a crusade to "Free Kuwait." The slogan was always a contradiction, because Kuwait and freedom were no bedfellows. And since the war's end, this is being proved over and over again.

In Kuwait City on May 19 the emir's system of justice went on display as the first trial of alleged collaborators with the Iraqi invasion took place. Twelve defendants, completely shackled, were herded into a courtroom and locked inside a metal cage. Before arriving they had not been allowed to see a lawyer. A few volunteer lawyers tried to provide some defense during the trial, but they had nothing to work with: the charges were not specified and no witnesses were produced. Hence, the lawyers had no one

to cross-examine. As well, the defendants were not allowed to present witnesses in their own behalf.

The judges questioned each defendant for a few minutes. Some of the defendants explained that they had only confessed under torture from police. The judges paid no attention and laughed at the lawyers when they protested against the proceedings.

Then the judges announced their verdicts. One young man got 15 years in prison for the crime of wearing a T-shirt with a picture of Saddam Hussein on it. This was actually a popular clothing item in Kuwait before the Iraqi invasion, when the emir supported Saddam Hussein. But apparently this youth made the mistake of wearing his T-shirt on the wrong day.

Another young man got 13 years for having a rifle on the day the Iraqis withdrew; he explained that he only fired

it off to celebrate the Iraqi withdrawal, but that didn't matter to the judges. Another man was convicted for the "crime" of having a key chain made of bullets.

For those convicted, there is no appeal. Four of the defendants had their cases continued, which means they were returned to jail. There they will face further torture before they return to the courtroom.

Revenge against Palestinians

The real crime these defendants were guilty of is being Palestinian. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians lived and worked in Kuwait before the invasion. Under the emir's rule, they had jobs, but nothing else; they were not allowed to become citizens. Most Palestinians shed

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Court bans abortion advice to the poor

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A tyrant falls in Ethiopia

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U.S.-Mexico trade pact

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Make the rich pay for the budget crises!

New Yorkers march against budget cuts

Tens of thousands of New Yorkers flooded the streets of Manhattan April 30 to protest outside Governor Cuomo's office at the World Trade Center.

The crowd included city workers, unemployed, college and high school students. Chants of "Tax the rich!" echoed off the buildings. And people shouted "Who elected Wall Street?" — decrying the fact that Wall Street financiers had, the day before, lowered New York City's rating to one notch above junk bond level — driving up the interest rate the city has to pay on its debts.

A militant contingent of students from City University of New York (CUNY) loudly brought up the end of the march. But when they started burning pictures of Governor Cuomo at the rally site, police waded through the crowds and dragged off a number.

Why are people so mad? Governor Cuomo and Mayor Dinkins have laid out a plan to eliminate tens of thousands of jobs and to gut virtually every program that assists poor people, workers, children and seniors. They say these cuts are needed to close a budget deficit totaling around \$10 billion.

But then Dinkins found plenty of

money to increase the police department (at a cost of over \$200 million), and to add an additional \$500 million to the capital budget to build more prisons. It is also interesting to note that this year's New York City budget is actually higher than last year's due to an \$800 million increase in debt service. Debt payments make up more than 10% of the total city budget. In effect, the city government is more and more being run simply to collect taxes and funnel them in quarterly payments to the rich.

The city and state budgets are by, and for the capitalist class. There are no new taxes on capitalists at all. Cuomo won't raise them, claiming that higher taxes on corporations, banks and the wealthy might drive them out of the state. Meanwhile Dinkins has granted a new package of real estate tax abatements to the commodities exchanges. And what remains? The workers and poor are supposed to fight each other over the crumbs that are left. The people of New York refuse to "share the pain." They are fighting back.

(Based in part on May 13 "New York Workers' Voice," paper of MLP-New York.)

CUNY students' battle continues

During April, the students at the City University of New York (CUNY) occupied buildings at 11 campuses. They were protesting budget cuts and tuition increases that could force tens of thousands of students out of school. After three weeks, city police drove protesters off several campuses and the protest ground to a stop.

But several hundred students now face disciplinary hearings which could result in suspension or expulsion from school. As well, thirty students from Lehman

College were charged with criminal contempt and trespassing. They face possible prison sentences up to one year in jail.

Protests are emerging at the hearings. In some cases, students are defending themselves on the grounds that they were right to break the law since they were fighting a greater evil — the budget cuts. They have also exposed how the state underfunds the schools for working people and oppressed nationalities.

Illinois mental health workers picket

About 1,500 workers spent their lunch hour April 6 picketing their places of employment throughout Illinois. Protests against Governor Edgar's proposed budget cuts took place at more than 20

state mental health facilities. Edgar's 1992 budget calls for the elimination of 700 jobs and 370 patient beds.

At the end of May, parents groups held a rally defending programs for

disabled children that will probably be cut by the new state budget. As well, students have protested tuition hikes.

Thus anger is growing at Governor Edgar's proposals to slash health care, education, workers' compensation, and other programs. And a movement against the cuts may be starting.

So all of a sudden, the Democratic Party has come into action. They claim that their program is more "palatable" than that of Edgar and the Republicans. But they too are concerned with making cuts, just not so fast as to provoke a movement. They too are concerned with maintaining the bond rating of the state and paying off the Wall Street bankers. But the Democrats want to borrow \$600 million now and pay this off over a longer time with higher taxes and more gradual cuts. Of course they also talk of raising

taxes on people making more than \$75,000 a year, but who can believe them? After all, the Democrats have for years backed measures to shift the tax burden onto the workers and poor. Indeed, Illinois ranks as the sixth highest state for taxes on the poor according to the Citizens for Tax Justice. The poorest 20% of Illinois families have to pay some 16.5% of their income in state taxes.

The Democratic Party program is a dead end. What we need is a broad movement of mass struggle against the cuts. We will never get such a movement if we get involved in fighting for the legislative program of the Democratic Party.

(Based in part on May 29 "Chicago Workers' Voice," paper of MLP-Chicago.)

School cuts denounced, and rightly so!

On May 21, a couple hundred people protested the proposed closing of 60 Chicago schools and other education cutbacks at the first public hearing on the school budget cuts. They denounced School Superintendent Kimbrough and the School Board for not caring about the education or the safety of their children. They demanded that all the schools be kept open.

The Board members attempted to stop the protesters from speaking. They declared that the meeting was for people to present ideas on saving money, not for them to protest school closings. But

speaker after speaker rose to protest the proposed closings.

Mr. Kimbrough makes \$60,000 more a year than Mayor Daley. But he called any suggestions that he take a pay cut "insulting." Instead, he is talking about increasing property taxes and adding new taxes — such as on junk food — to avoid some of the cuts. Of course the proposed tax on pop, potato chips, etc., would hit the poor the hardest.

Only a sharp mass fight against the school cutbacks can provide us any relief.

(Taken from May 29 "Chicago Workers' Voice," paper of MLP-Chicago.)

Abandoned houses seized by homeless

Shouting, "No housing, no peace!" and "Engler says cut back, we say fight back!" over 40 activists for the homeless marched through northwest Detroit June 1. They seized a HUD-owned house, cut the lock, and turned it over to a single mother and her four children who had been living in a shelter.

The action was organized by the Detroit/Wayne County Union of the Homeless. Along the route the activists leafletted the people of the neighborhood, explaining their intentions. They found unanimous support among the neighbors. This action was aimed at

kicking off a movement to occupy abandoned houses.

It is estimated that there are 36,000 abandoned houses in Detroit. But in past years, attempts to occupy empty city-owned houses were met with arrests by Mayor Coleman Young's police force. Now the activists are seizing federally and state-owned houses, hoping that loophole will prevent the mayor from having them arrested. But they admit that they know that all the federal or state agencies need do is ask Mayor Young to clear the houses with his police, and he will do it.

The Workers' Advocate



Monthly Theoretical-Political Newspaper of the Central Committee of the Marxist-Leninist Party, USA

Letters:

The Workers' Advocate
P.O. Box 11942
Ontario Street Station
Chicago, IL 60611

Orders and Subscriptions:

Marxist-Leninist Publications
P.O. Box 11972
Ontario Street Station
Chicago, IL 60611

From distributor: 25c

Via 1st class mail (U.S., Canada, Mexico): \$1.00 for single copy
Subscription: \$6.00 for 6 issues; \$11.00 for 12 issues

ISSN 0276-363X

El Estandarte Obrero



Spanish supplement to THE WORKERS' ADVOCATE, Voice of the Marxist-Leninist Party of the USA

By mail: \$0.50 for single copy
Subscription: \$3.00 for 6 issues

From vendor: \$0.25
\$6.00 for 12 issues

ISSN 0276-4954

Order from: Marxist-Leninist Publications P.O. Box 11972
Ontario Street Station Chicago, IL 60611



Homeless activists prepare to seize abandoned house

Nurses rally at USC

Over 100 students marched through the University of Southern California

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The complaints about 'political correctness'

A CRUSADE TO DEFEND RACISM

The Supreme Court recently ruled in favor of a government rule that staff at medical clinics receiving federal funds cannot advise clients on the choice of abortion and in fact have to go against their personal and medical opinions to do propaganda against abortion.

Bush supports this gag rule. And yet it is the same Bush who spoke at the University of Michigan May 4 denouncing "the notion of political correctness." This notion, he explained, "declares certain topics off-limits, certain expressions off-limits."

Who is fooling whom?

Lately there's been a great deal of noise about "political correctness," or PC, in the media. As the example above shows, this campaign is sopping wet in hypocrisy. What's this controversy all about?

PC is a buzz word of the right wing which refers to the supposed demand for "political correctness" that's said to be coming from radicals on university campuses across the U.S. The mainstream liberals have also jumped on the bandwagon. These people all claim that there is a belligerent atmosphere on the campuses to stifle free speech, promoted by left-wing students and faculty, by anti-racist and women's movement activists. They claim that the left has become the New Thought Police and the New McCarthyites of the 90's. Allegedly these fanatics are politicizing the hitherto objective, free-of-politics university campuses.

The crusade against PC was launched by right-wing ideologues some years ago. Author Allan Bloom complained that demands for diversity in teaching, such as calls for including contributions from non-Western thinkers in basic college courses, amounted to *The Closing of the American Mind* (the title of his heavily-promoted book). Conservative activists have been going around campuses across the U.S. demanding student and faculty resolutions against PC. Throughout this spring, major newspapers, magazines and TV shows picked up the crusade. Lurid headlines like "Watch what you say: THOUGHT POLICE" and "The chilling of intellectual life" adorned the front pages of *Newsweek* and *New Republic*.

What's really at stake?

If you try to follow this discussion in the media, you won't get very far. Sure, there are examples dropped about this or that incident of supposed intolerance. A few of these may be true, but most are a wanton distortion. The real issues are obscured, and the advocates of supposed PC are never given a chance to air their views.

At its core, this crusade is about racism. It seeks revenge against anti-racist struggle. In recent years a new generation of students have come forth to launch anti-racist movements. What have they protested?

In many cases, they have confronted a virulent racist atmosphere that's been spread across many campuses. An atmosphere of racist graffiti, slurs, intimidation, and assaults.

The movement has also protested "subtle" forms of racism which have become fashionable. This includes increasing promotion of the lie of "reverse discrimination," the idea that today it is really whites who are discriminated against because of affirmative action. It also includes pseudo-science claiming to prove blacks are inherently deficient.

The anti-racist movement has also pointed out institutionalized racism in the university. This takes various forms. It includes low numbers of minority

faculty. It includes ever harder financial restrictions on minorities, because they are a big part of the poor. It also includes the content of education itself, which still finds many ways to glorify white superiority and demean the peoples of color in the world.

Thus students have demanded more courses in black studies. Meanwhile activists have also called for attention to women's studies. They have been critical of course requirements on "Western civilization" at some campuses. The movements on these issues have been quite inspiring. They show that students are not about to just accept the status quo and be spoon-fed whatever the powers-that-be decide. Of course in any movement, there are diverse views and various kinds of slogans have been advanced. There have been some instances where nationalists have argued in favor of a narrow African exclusiveness to oppose the current racist biases.

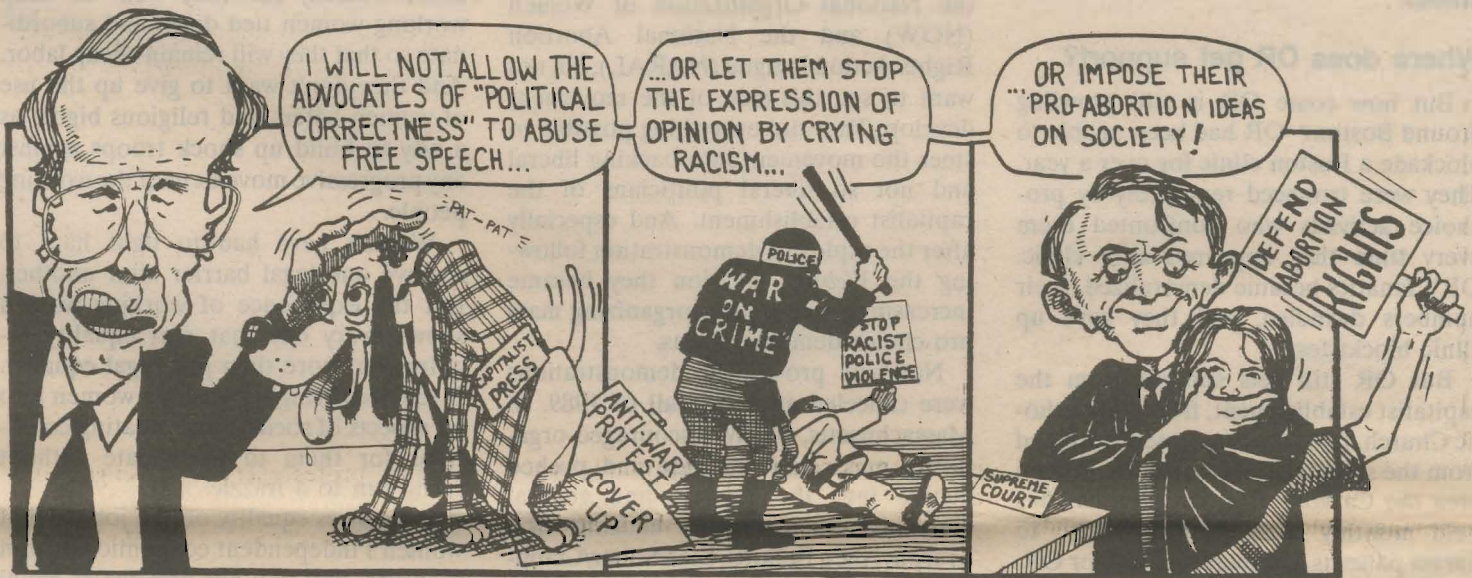
But these tangential assertions aren't really the issue. The crusaders against PC are upset with the whole movement. Thus, you never see the crusaders against PC taking part in the anti-racist outcry. For example, where was Bush when black students were being assaulted and ridiculed? He was busy organizing his racist campaign theme around Willie Horton.

This is not a campaign for free speech. It's for the god-given right to be racist and to suppress any challenge to tradition in the university, no matter how backward. The self-righteous professors and liberal commentators have some gall when they declare that the university is some arena detached from politics. If so, why have students been mounting campaign after campaign over the years against such things as: university complicity in the U.S. war machine, university support for the CIA, institutional racism, the close connections between capitalist corporations and the campus, etc. The

campus in the U.S. is an institution of capitalist society. It has never been free of politics. The crusaders against PC are upset not because the mass movement is raising politics, but the wrong kind of politics for them.

Unbounded hypocrisy

The hypocrisy of the crusaders against PC is amazing. Bush rails against PC but backs a gag order on family planning clinics. The same media which thunders against PC was the media which licked the boots of General Schwartzkopf, agreed with military censorship, and blacked out news of the anti-war movement. The same university administrators oh-so concerned about PC have no qualms about giving honorary degrees to Bush and his cronies, the paragons of Western civilization who find glory in bombing 100,000 Iraqis for the sake of preserving the gold-plated toilets of the emir of Kuwait.



Protests in California against cutbacks

Recently, a number of protests have taken place in the Bay Area of San Francisco against California Governor Wilson's proposed cutbacks:

- April 23: 100 San Francisco State University students carried out a militant demonstration against budget cuts. Students occupied the administration building lobby. Governor Wilson has proposed to cut \$402 million from the California State University system, including the elimination of over 200 classes at San Francisco State. Protests will continue.

- April 25: 60 students at the University of California at Berkeley held a rally, march and sit-in against budget cuts and a proposed \$650 per year fee increase. They demanded that administrators meet with them and reveal details about the \$295 million in cuts within the UC system that are being planned.

- April 25: 1,000 teachers, parents and students rallied in Fremont, California against the proposed cuts in funding for education. Governor Wilson has proposed suspending Proposition 98 — a

measure voters passed in 1988 that would guarantee that public education would receive 40% of the state general funds.

- May 2: 40 UC Berkeley protesters demonstrated against the new UC policy of closing its libraries to the public.
- May 8: Alameda teachers demonstrated against cutbacks in education.
- May 13: Bay Area families on welfare demonstrated at the state capitol in Sacramento against Governor Wilson's proposed cuts in AFDC and assistance to the homeless.

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Defend women's rights!

On alert against clinic blockades in Boston!

The holy bullies of Operation Rescue (OR) are trying to renew their practice of blockading abortion clinics in the Boston area. OR is calling on its supporters to sign up. If they get 300 takers, they will try to blockade a clinic on June 1. *The Boston Worker*, paper of the MLP, called on people to be ready to confront OR on Saturday June 1.

The anti-abortion movement is not about concern for life. The major leaders of the anti-abortion movement, from Bush, to Boston's Cardinal Law and OR's Randall Terry, were enthusiastic supporters of the Persian Gulf slaughter. No, the anti-abortion movement is about humiliating and putting down women. It is about building an unthinking base of supporters of the capitalist establishment. It is about giving a "right to life" cover for wars and for plans to impoverish the masses.

Where does OR get support?

But how come OR is still prowling around Boston? OR had been unable to blockade a Boston clinic for over a year. They were trounced repeatedly by pro-choice activists who confronted them every time they appeared at a clinic. OR's fanatics became demoralized, their numbers dwindled, and they gave up clinic blockades.

But OR still gets support from the capitalist establishment, from the Catholic Church, from the Supreme Court, and from the state legislatures. In the Boston area the Catholic Church hierarchy has held monthly clinic "prayer vigils" to harass patients and recruit goons for OR.

Yet this too is not the full story. One has to look at what happened to the mass actions that were demoralizing OR.

The pro-choice movement in Boston

The pro-choice struggle of 1989-1990 was the largest movement for women's rights in recent years. It struck serious blows at the religious fanatics and

women-haters.

The strength of the movement was the thousands and thousands of ordinary women and men who took to the streets and who repeatedly confronted OR holy bullies. When the Supreme Court's *Webster* decision gave the green light to restricting abortion rights state by state, this further enraged the masses. The sight of tens of thousands of women taking over the streets the day after the *Webster* decision make the capitalist establishment stop and think. The sight of OR's holy bullies being driven away from clinics by large numbers of angry people also worried them. Police action at the clinics was more to protect the anti-abortion movement from fiasco than to protect women's rights.

So the pro-establishment groups that dominated the pro-choice movement, like the National Organization of Women (NOW) and the National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL), did not want to see this side of the movement develop. They did everything possible to steer the movement into backing liberal and not so liberal politicians of the capitalist establishment. And especially after the explosive demonstration following the *Webster* decision they became increasingly opposed to organizing mass pro-choice demonstrations.

National pro-choice demonstrations were canceled after the fall of 1989. In Massachusetts, NOW discouraged organizing mass clinic defense and pushed people into the primary and general elections for governor, backing first Murphy, then Bellotti, then Silber/Clapprood, even though the Democrat Silber was actually anti-abortion and just as anti-poor as the Republican Weld.

And what did all this get women — nothing!

It actually wound up giving the anti-abortion fanatics a breathing space to organize their clinic prayer rallies and reorganize their forces.

And what of the politicians, in whom so much faith was put? Whether they

Pings to protest the plan to eliminate the nursing department.

The University has formed a committee to study whether USC should continue to support the department. ■

NURSES Continued from page 2

(USC) campus April 29. They held a rally at the office of Provost Cornelius

Detroit homeless sit in at state building

For three weeks in May homeless activists occupied the lobby at the state building in Detroit. Their demands included: no more cuts in human service programs; maintain and expand the emergency needs program, Medicaid and service provider grants; and an emergency moratorium on evictions.

As many as 65 people sat in during

the early days of the protest. On May 23, the last 10 occupiers left the building. They were greeted by a picket of 125 people. Among the picketers were state workers from the building. They denounced Governor Engler's threat to lay off another 3,000 state workers to cut the budget deficit. ■

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Until the recent change the Salvadorans were forced to pay \$75 every six months for TPS and another \$60 every six months for work permits.

This is one more example in a long history of U.S. government mistreatment

of the Salvadoran refugees. These refugees are mostly poor workers or peasants fleeing the U.S. supported death-squad war. The Kuwaitis, on the other hand, are mostly rich and support U.S. imperialism.

(From the May 29 issue of the *Chicago Workers' Voice*, paper of the MLP-Chicago.) ■

won their elections or lost them, they did nothing to defend women's rights. Weld, for example, was the darling of Massachusetts Choice. And, as governor, he has been the architect of cutbacks that are driving poor and working women back decades. Meanwhile the liberal

Democrats have gone along with every cut that the Republicans have proposed.

For upper class women, the policy of playing games with the capitalist politicians may make some sense. But for working and poor women it is a disaster. ■

Communism and women's liberation

The experience of the struggle for abortion rights shows that every mass mobilization of women comes into conflict with the interests of wealth and capital. They are employing more and more women, but they want to keep working women tied down and subordinate so that they will remain cheap labor. And they don't want to give up the use of women-haters and religious bigots as a way to build up shock troops against any progressive movement of the working people.

Women have had to fight hard to remove one legal barrier after another. But the experience of working women shows every day that real equality requires far more than just legal equality. It requires bringing working women into all aspects of society, and creating conditions for them to participate without being run to a frazzle.

It requires equality on the job, so that women's independent economic position is secure, and also her prestige as equal builder of all the good things of life. Without this, she will never achieve full equality in the family.

It requires extensive day care facilities, good schools, and proper medical care for children, to prevent an intolerable double burden on parents, a burden that still falls overwhelmingly on women. And there must be attention to the problem of household drudgery.

It requires eliminating the status of all workers as exploited beasts of burden for the enrichment of their capitalist employers. Without this, even equality would simply be equality of inadequate wages, exhaustion, and occupational illnesses.

The early years of the first workers' revolution of this century in Russia brought the elimination of legal humiliations and restrictions on women. The right to vote, the right to divorce, the

end to humiliating illegitimacy laws, etc. were brought about at one stroke. And beyond legal equality, a policy was set for on the job day care, the spread of contraceptive information, socializing some of the household drudgery, and other measures to improve the condition of working women.

Due to the economic backwardness of Russia, reinforced by the devastation brought by long years of war, these measures could only begin to be introduced. And then the revolution stagnated and evolved back into state capitalism, with a bureaucratic elite in control. But not before the radical sweep of the Russian revolution had shown that it is workers' revolution that is wholeheartedly in favor of women's rights. For the capitalists, the inequality of women is profitable. But for a liberated society, the highest participation of women is not just a moral ideal, but a necessity.

The technical and economic developments in the U.S. today provide the economic basis for vast improvements in the situation of women. There is hardly a job which some women haven't penetrated. And there are the resources for a universal system of day care centers, medical clinics, good schools, etc. But so long as the economy is run for profit, these possibilities remain dreams for the future. Nor can women find reasonable jobs, when all workers are being burnt up in productivity drives, pushed to the wall with wage cuts, and idled by layoffs. Over a decade of cutbacks, and still there is no end.

To use the vast resources of the present economy for the benefit of working women and men will require liberating society from the selfish control of capital. ■

LIBERALS Continued from page 5

minimum wage would do far more good.

But the conservatives are against child care programs or a higher minimum wage. And they are for using tax cuts as an excuse for cutting social programs yet further. Any alliance with the Schlaflyites will mean sacrificing social programs as well as women's rights.

Why?

Aren't the liberals supposed to be the people's champions against the clinic bombers, religious fanatics, and Schlaflyites? How could these opposites end up negotiating a prenuptial contract?

It seems that both liberal and conservative are wooing the same capitalist class. Both of them are appealing to the brutal prejudices and savage self-interest of the exploiters. That is why some liberals find it so easy to talk about the working people and women's rights as narrow "special interests." ■

Clinic defended despite police

Clinic defense continued in Chicago on June 1. The anti-abortion crusaders brought as many as 20 adults and a dozen children including pre-teens. They were opposed by as many as a dozen determined pro-choice activists. The activists had to deal with harassment by the Chicago police, who were called in by the anti-abortionists. Four squad cars showed up. They left behind a hostile cop who made threats and tried to get people's names on "contact cards," and later called back the squad cars.

Nevertheless, the pro-choice activists drowned out the shouts of the anti-abortion crusaders. No one was turned away from the clinic, and a number of patients told off the anti-abortionists. ■

Supreme Court bans talking about abortion with the poor

Can employees of federally financed family planning clinics tell the truth about abortion to their patients? On May 23, the Supreme Court said no. It upheld regulations instituted by the Reagan/Bush administration in 1988 which ban the employees of such clinics from even mentioning abortion. This reversed 17 years of practice under the Title X financing program. Today, even if a woman asks about abortion, the clinic must say nothing except that abortion is not "appropriate." It can only recommend medical assistance connected with childbirth.

This is an outrageous gag order that hurts working class and poor women who rely on the clinics. Some 4,500 clinics serve about four million women a year. Some clinics say they will refuse federal funds rather than abandon abortion counseling, but they will be pressed for funds and will likely have to cut health services or increase fees. In other cases, clinics will abandon abortion counseling altogether. The right to abortion will become an empty phrase, and the number of women maimed in back-alley operations will mount.

A number of small protests denounced the Supreme Court decision. For example, 30 people rallied outside the Federal Building in Chicago on May 30, and the next day 60 protested in Detroit.

Making a mockery of *Roe v. Wade*

But the effect on women is no big deal for Chief Justice William Rehnquist, however. According to him, poor women dependent on clinics will be "in no worse position" following this ruling than before the government began funding the clinics. That is — they will have no access to necessary medical information and treatment. Why, just because a poor woman may lose her only source of medical advice, that has nothing to do with her rights, say the wealthy hypocrites.

The Supreme Court hasn't yet denied constitutional protection to the right to abortion. Oh no. All it says is that the government can stop anyone at a clinic with some government money from mentioning abortion, or setting out a brochure, or providing accurate medical information. It says the government can mandate lies about abortion, and it can refuse to provide necessary funds to allow abortions. But, since a woman can go to the moon and get an abortion, her constitutional rights are secure.

You have free speech — so long as you agree with Bush

The ruling also shows how hollow is the supposed constitutional protection of the right to free speech. Rehnquist says that the gag order doesn't restrict freedom of discussion. No, he said in his decision, "this is not a case of the Government 'suppressing a dangerous idea,' but of a prohibition on a project grantee or its employees from engaging in activities outside of its scope." (*New York Times*, May 24) But the "activity outside of its scope" being prohibited is, of course, the expression of "a dangerous idea."

Rehnquist says that gagging the employees doesn't violate free speech but "merely requires that the grantee keep such activities separate and distinct from Title X activities." What double talk! You can talk about abortion — but not at the clinic, not with the patients who need the information.

Rehnquist states that the government may "make a value judgment," fund it, and not fund competing opinions. Since

he is writing in the context of a gag order on employees, what he is saying is that the government may "make a value judgment" and ban the expression of opposing views. If you work at a place getting federal funds, you have no right to disagree with the "value judgments" of the Bush administration — not at least while on the job.

And in discussing these "value judgments," Rehnquist explicitly raises the question of funding the advocacy of "political philosophy." The government may fund its own viewpoint, and gag its opponents.

In dissent, Justice Blackmun says that "Until today the Court never has upheld viewpoint suppression of speech simply because that suppression was a condition upon the acceptance of government funds." Here Blackmun puts his finger on a key point. Unfortunately, however, Blackmun is wrong about how pure the Court has been before. For example, in

Liberals find common 'family values' with anti-women bigots

Democratic Congresswoman Pat Schroeder of Colorado is supposed to be a champion of women's rights. But for someone claiming this title, she has found some strange allies lately. Schroeder and a number of other liberal Democrats are making deals with Phyllis Schlafly and other right-wing bigots in the name of "family values."

It's well known what Phyllis Schlafly and her ilk regard as "family values." They campaign against abortion rights. They persecute gays in the name of "traditional values." And they think women should be confined to the household as obedient servants to their lords and masters, their husbands.

Nevertheless, Schroeder and other liberals want to find common ground with the Schlaflyites. Perhaps Schlafly and co. have reconsidered their bigotry? Not a chance! Perhaps Schlafly and co. will now oppose Bush's slashing of social benefits, which has brought misery to working class and poor families? Be real! It is Schroeder and the Democrats who want to purchase Schlafly's support by backing measures tailored to the conservative agenda.

What about the right to divorce?

Despite her flirtation with Schlafly, Pat Schroeder may still be pro-choice on abortion, but what about the right to divorce?

Schroeder now says she is in favor of an extended waiting period for making a divorce final. William Galston, issues director for Democrat Walter Mondale's 1984 presidential campaign, suggests a nine-month wait. According to Schroeder, a waiting period will improve family life because "where children are involved, you shouldn't be able to just check out and not even think about it." (*New York Times*, May 1)

So Schroeder thinks the people don't take their children or their marriages seriously. Schroeder is echoing the Bush-Schlafly lie that the problems of the poor are due to their lack of moral character. Making divorce more difficult will not improve the social conditions that wreak havoc on families. Nor will it solve personal difficulties between spouses. But it will make bad family relations even worse for many parents and children. It will increase the number of hidden affairs, and it will provide a lot more business for lawyers. And in cases where

the name of the Hatch Act, the government has suppressed federal employees who denounced the party in the White House. The courts saw nothing wrong with this. The courts have also upheld a series of laws aimed at banning "subversives" from union positions. The courts have also upheld the wide use of security clearances and other political background checks as a condition of employment.

Bush and the thought police

The court decision exposes the hypocrisy of Bush's whining about "political correctness." For Bush, it is intolerance to oppose racist insults and intimidation; why, "political extremists roam the land, abusing the privilege of free speech" by challenging racism. (Bush's May 4 speech at Ann Arbor)

Meanwhile it is actually the likes of Bush and his Supreme Court who are playing "thought police." It is Reagan

women and children are seriously abused there may be tragic consequences.

And women's rights in general?

Meanwhile other Democrats in this "pro-family" alliance are condemning the very thought of defending abortion rights or women's rights in general. Representative McCurdy of Oklahoma claims that in the past the Democratic Party wasted too much effort fighting for women and against anti-gay bigotry.

Oh really? And wasn't it the Democratic-controlled House that for years stood against abortion rights? And hasn't Congress helped Reagan and Bush dismantle one social program after another, including those which are especially important for women?

But so what? McCurdy thinks such matters only concern "the agenda of narrow and special interests. You had the formation of women's groups [oh, horrors! — ed.], and organizations like the Gay and Lesbian Alliance [oh, tremble!], and the pro-abortion and anti-abortion debate [have to cover both sides!]. The interests got so narrow, and the agenda got dictated by those narrow interests, and we lost sight of the broader principles and objectives."

For McCurdy, women, a "mere" half

'Informed consent' law is enforced ignorance

On May 29, the Michigan State Senate passed a bill forcing women who want abortions to wait 24 hours after seeing a doctor. It also requires the doctor to recite to the woman a list of horrible things that will allegedly result from abortion. The bill now goes to the House.

Backers of this so-called "informed consent" bill claim they just want to give women the facts. Oh really. It's just an accident that the extra visit to the clinic will be difficult for many poverty-stricken and disadvantaged women. And that the only medical procedure requiring such consent will be abortion. And that doctors will be directed to present only scare stories about abortion.

For example, women have to be shown pictures of a fetus at the same state of development as their own. Doctors must

and Bush who gagged doctors and nurses at health clinics. It is the Supreme Court which said that the government may enforce its "value judgments" on the speech of anyone who has any connection to the government or anything funded by the government — that is, the whole country. It is Bush, and his flag-waving chauvinists, who sought to impose cheer-leading for war on the whole country.

Fight the assault on women's rights

The government assault on abortion rights must be fought tooth and nail. This fight cannot be based on constitutional quibbling or legal maneuvering through the courts. The courts can interpret the Constitution to mean anything they please. Without mass protest, there won't even be the right to talk about abortion.

the population, are a narrow, special interest group. They are not on the high road of "broad principles and objectives" like the PACs, banking executives, oil men, and lobbyists that the Democratic Party listens so intently to.

A few crumbs

But don't think that this holy alliance with the right-wing bigots is heartless. One of their proposals is to increase how much you can deduct from your taxable income for each dependent under 18. It is presently \$2,150, and they want it increased to \$3,500 or \$4,000.

This may provide a bit of relief for some families. But it won't mean much for the poorest families who already pay little federal income tax, but lots of user fees, sales taxes, Social Security taxes, and other taxes. It will provide the least money for those who are poor and are in the lower tax brackets, while providing much more money for those who are in the higher tax brackets.

For working class families, it wouldn't even make up for the devastation of child care services. For the unemployed, it provides no money at all. For the poorest families, a mere \$1 increase in the

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also tell women they may suffer all kinds of psychological damage if they abort. They aren't directed to tell women about the studies showing how safe abortion is, or how well women have fared, or the psychological problems connected with being forced to bear an unwanted child.

This is not surprising though, considering the bill was drafted with the help of anti-abortion leader Barbara Listing, president of Right to Life of Michigan. Its whole purpose is to harass women and make it as difficult and unpleasant as possible. While religious fanatics thrust pictures of aborted fetuses at women trying to enter health clinics, the new bill will order her doctor to do the same.

This bill is not informed consent but enforced ignorance.

Hope for an end to the era of civil war

Mengistu falls in Ethiopia

Peace may finally be at hand in Ethiopia and Eritrea after decades of war. The war regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam has crumbled. A victory has been won by popular, rebel armies. But both Ethiopia and Eritrea face huge hurdles ahead.

Relief for millions facing famine is an urgent necessity. Reconstruction from the ruin of war will not be easy. The new forces in power have promised a democratic solution to the grievances of the nationalities and a broad-based government — both of which are essential if the people here are to find peace. But those who thwarted hopes before are still around. The chauvinists of the ruling Amhara nationality are still raising Mengistu's cry of "One Ethiopia" — they refuse to recognize the right of self-determination for Eritrea or other peoples. Meanwhile, the U.S. government — which has in the past brought more than enough tragedy to the people here — is now posing as friend but already acting as the new imperial overlord.

The people would like to rebuild their lives without repression. The youthful rebels who have fought with arms against tyranny would like to devote their energies into reconstruction. But things will not just be smooth sailing. Hopefully the problems of immediate relief, freedom from repression, and national harmony can get settled without falling backward. But as soon as that is done, class issues will begin to come more and more to the fore. The workers and poor will have to organize themselves to fight for their own interests.

Mengistu flees as his war regime crumbles

On May 21, Mengistu decided to flee Ethiopia. Rebel armies were closing in on Addis Ababa, the capital. He had bankrupted the country and bled the people dry with his long wars against the oppressed peoples of Ethiopia and Eritrea.

For some time now, a rebel victory has been inevitable. Most of Eritrea had been freed by the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF). Recently they took Asmara, the capital. Meanwhile, the northern province of Tigray had also been liberated some time ago by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). The TPLF is grouped with its closest allies in the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). This spring EPRDF launched offensives into two western provinces. Their success put them in striking distance of Addis Ababa. In the meantime, smaller armed groups have also taken over other parts of the country.

The rebel armies did not have the weapons and air force which Mengistu did. But they had support from the people among whom they have long been organizing. And they had the idealism of people with a just cause. In the end, this proved more powerful than tanks and bombs.

Mengistu only stayed in power this long because of massive military backing from the Soviet Union. Moscow had poured in \$10-14 billion. But with the collapse of the Soviet economy and Gorbachev's decision to cut Soviet imperialist losses abroad, Moscow's aid had dried up. Mengistu looked around for new patrons. He received some military aid from Israel, and he hoped for favors from Washington as he prepared his regime to become a new friend of the U.S. in the Horn of Africa. He jumped on the Bush bandwagon against Iraq during the recent war.

Despite his difficulties, Mengistu kept pressing the war. But this only further

isolated his regime. Recent months saw a rise in strikes by workers demanding economic and political rights. Even among his supporters, Mengistu's hold was slipping.

Eventually he was urged by outside powers to leave. Mugabe of Zimbabwe sent an envoy and offered him refuge there. The U.S. and Soviet governments also told him that his time was up. As rebel armies marched near Addis Ababa, U.S. imperialism wanted to see if it could work out a compromise with the EPRDF which would preserve some of the old Mengistu regime. But as the Ethiopian army began to dissolve, Washington conceded to EPRDF taking over the capital. It still remains the U.S. goal to have a government which would reconcile the old regime and the armed opposition, and towards this end it has adopted a carrot-and-stick policy towards the EPRDF.

Mengistu thwarted the hopes of an earlier revolution

The Soviet-backed Mengistu was only the latest tyrant here. Prior to him, there was the U.S.-backed Emperor Haile Selassie.

Selassie ruled for decades until 1974. His reign meant the harsh oppression over the peasants by the landed aristocracy, the domination of the Amhara elite over the other nationalities, and repression against the students and workers. Since the early 1960's he waged war against Eritrea's desire for freedom. And in return for U.S. military and police support, Selassie allowed Washington a military outpost.

But the 1960's were turbulent years. Radical students organized in schools and universities. Teachers too were restive. Workers organized into unions and launched strikes. In 1973-74, strikes and protests by workers and students grew into a powerful upsurge which shook the emperor's rule to its foundations. In this situation, the Derg, a military clique led by Mengistu, seized power.

The Derg posed as a revolutionary force, but it quickly dashed the hopes lit by the struggle against Selassie. The Derg reneged on promises of democratic rule, suppressed the left, and consolidated its dictatorship. It escalated the war against Eritrea.

Mengistu and the Derg also proceeded to declare a "Marxist-Leninist" regime, receiving the eager support of the Soviet Union, Cuba and Eastern Europe. The Derg's socialism was fake. It was in reality a despotic, state-capitalist military dictatorship. Bureaucrats and military officers exploited the workers and peasants in place of the old landlords and capitalists.

Today much is being made in the U.S.

media about how a Marxist regime has fallen. But there was nothing communist about Mengistu's regime except labels and trappings. Selassie the feudal emperor ruled with democratic trappings. Mengistu the state-capitalist military man ruled with Marxist-Leninist symbols. Selassie had as much connection to democracy as Mengistu did with Marxism-Leninism.

Mengistu was one of several military tyrants in Africa who took on "communist" trappings in the 1970's. At that time lining up with Soviet imperialism was fashionable among petty-bourgeois military cliques seeking a popular cover for their tyranny. As Soviet imperialism has retreated, the attraction of revisionist "Marxism" to the African elites has waned. One after another, these regimes have been giving up the symbols of "socialism" for the current fashion of today — the dollar and the free market. Mengistu too was doing that before his regime fell.

What now?

The EPLF is victorious in Eritrea, and the EPRDF in Addis Ababa. So much of the country is under the control of armies that have backing from the people. There are differences among these groups, but there do appear to exist conditions to ensure peace, relief for starving people, and the end of tyranny. What will come afterwards is another question.

Whether peace will come in the long-running wars depends on whether the grievances of the oppressed nations can be settled democratically without renewal of strife. The first issue facing democratic reform is ensuring the right of self-determination for all nationalities and working out a voluntary union of all those who want to stay together in a federal Ethiopian state. On that basis, democratic governments ensuring political rights to all the people could begin to be built.

So far the EPRDF provisional government appears to be committed to this. It has promised a referendum in Eritrea to let the Eritreans decide on independence. Eritrea has won this right with considerable sacrifice. Meanwhile, EPRDF also recognizes that it cannot rule alone. There are other forces which have been fighting against the Mengistu regime and have popular support. While the EPRDF has popular support in Tigray and several adjoining provinces, in many other areas its support is much weaker, or other organizations dominate.

Chauvinism threatens to block progress

The search for a broad-based demo-

cratic government will not be easy. In particular, supporters of the old regime and Amhara chauvinists generally are rearing their heads. They are outraged that a Tigrayan-based force has triumphed in Addis Ababa and that Eritrea is free and has been promised a referendum on independence.

The chauvinists have already launched demonstrations against EPRDF in Addis Ababa, and clashes have ensued. The protesters shouted "No to America," giving the appearance they are against U.S. imperialism. But this is simply a cover for Amhara chauvinism. They are not anti-imperialist; rather they feel betrayed by the U.S. because they were hoping for Washington to keep the EPRDF and EPLF at bay. They had hopes that U.S. imperialism would broker a deal preserving Mengistu's regime and keep the rebels from full victory. But the U.S. couldn't deliver that and was forced to concede to EPRDF taking Addis Ababa and also to a referendum on Eritrea. The real nature of these demonstrations was seen in their cries of "One Ethiopia" and their derogatory slurs against Tigrayan rebel soldiers.

U.S. imperialism no friend

At the same time, the U.S. role is part of the problem, not the solution to Ethiopia's ailments. In the name of a broad-based government, the U.S. has been pushing for a compromise regime between the rebels and remnants of Mengistu's apparatus. If EPRDF allows the U.S. to force it into deals with the fascists and chauvinists — say, at the cost of backtracking on self-determination — they will have taken a giant step backward on democratic change, or even a renewed civil war.

Unfortunately, EPRDF top leaders seem to be taking a soft approach to U.S. pressures. The U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Herman Cohen, who has been mediating peace talks in London, has been acting like a typical colonial consul. He made loud statements saying the U.S. asked the EPRDF to enter Addis Ababa, and that the U.S. agrees to a referendum on Eritrea. Who the hell is Washington's envoy to decide what will or will not happen in Ethiopia and Eritrea? EPRDF leaders have clarified that they didn't wait for U.S. invitation to come into their own capital city — after all they were on the edge of the city and the old regime had collapsed — but still, they didn't condemn the U.S. official for posing as the new imperial overlord.

U.S. imperialism is no friend of the Ethiopian and Eritrean peoples. It backed Haile Selassie's forced grab of Eritrea and propped up his tyranny from the end of World War II to 1974. It only opposed Mengistu because he was tied to the rival Soviet superpower. And recently it had been trying to preserve much of Mengistu's regime from complete defeat.

Today the U.S. has conceded to an EPRDF takeover and even appears to be wooing them. Although Washington is somewhat worried about the Tigrayan-based group's pro-Albanian past, it thinks it can win it over — or at least play with it until a suitable pro-Western capitalist replacement is found. Thus, Washington offers the carrot and holds up a stick, preying on Ethiopia's desperate food and economic situation: you go along with us, you get aid; otherwise you don't. Mr. Herman Cohen has made this plainly clear.

The U.S. government keeps a vigilant eye on the future. What will be the social



Inside the compound of the presidential palace rebels took on May 28

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Bangladesh: how the people toppled Ershad

This is the second in a series of articles on the revolutionary movement in Bangladesh. They are being written by a contributor to "The Workers' Advocate" who visited the capital city Dhaka in the spring.

Bangladesh makes world news whenever people there are victimized by one calamity or another. Witness the recent cyclone. The images from this country which appear in the newspapers or TV are constantly those of human frailty, sorrow, and despair.

But there is more to Bangladesh than the image of an "international basket case" — which is how Henry Kissinger sneered at the country's emergence in 1971. The Western media prefers to emphasize such a picture — it reinforces the racist portrayal of people in the Third World as beggars and Western imperialism as selfless humanitarians. But the people of Bangladesh are not just victims; they are also actors on the stage of history. And right in their midst there do exist the social forces which can begin to break the cycle of victimization and oppression in which Bangladesh is caught.

Just last year, the people rose up and brought down the military dictator Ershad. Even though a civilian government of the wealthy elite is now in power, the forces released by the movement against Ershad are far from spent. The exploited and working people have expectations and their own demands which go beyond the removal of Ershad. Having tasted the success of mass struggle in the ouster of Ershad, the toilers can be expected to make themselves heard again in the coming months and years.

To get a better picture of what awaits Bangladesh, it is worth reviewing how Ershad fell.

How Ershad ruled

General Hussein M. Ershad came to power on March 24, 1982, ousting a short-lived civilian government of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). He railed against chaos and corruption and promised to restore democracy. But from the outset, he also insisted that the "democracy" he would restore would have to provide a permanent place for the military in civil administration. His models of democracy were the despotic regimes of Turkey and Indonesia.

Ershad's rule not only brought repression and brutality, but it also took corruption to new heights. And at the apex stood the general himself, his wife, his mistresses, and his closest cronies. Meanwhile, Ershad set himself up as the paragon of virtue and religious purity. He was going to steer Bangladesh towards an Islamic state. This was religious hypocrisy taken to new extremes. In reality it was just an attempt to use religion to back up his tyranny.

The element of personal rule was big in his system. But the dictatorship remained in its essence the power of the military and the wealthy capitalist-landlord elite. The top officers and bureaucrats, their businessmen cronies, and the landed elite all looted the country together. And the armed power of the police and military was there to ensure that the people would be kept quiet. Many of the repressive laws used by Ershad had been established by the previous bourgeois regimes, civilian and military alike.

Despite ruling on behalf of the elite, Ershad refused to allow any share of power to the bourgeois opposition. Instead of sharing power, he would periodically raid them for any turncoats willing to join him — and many did.

Meanwhile, the conditions of the masses grew worse and worse. Despair continued to drive more of the rural poor into the cities, but jobs remained



Students face off against police in '83. Campaign against Ershad's education plan marked the start of struggle against his tyranny

scarce. The cost of living soared. Even the middle class found it harder to live. Only the rich few prospered.

Tyranny in the Third World gets its backing from foreign imperialism, and Ershad in Bangladesh was no exception. His big-power patrons abroad included the U.S., Britain, Japan and Saudi Arabia. Relations between the U.S. and Bangladesh military grew tighter than ever before.

Confronted by repeated waves of struggle

After Ershad took power, the displaced bourgeois parties grumbled; but they were reluctant to launch any mass movement against him. If things had been left up to them, there would never have been a popular challenge to Ershad.

During the decade, they congealed into two main political blocs, one headed by the conservative BNP and the other by the social-democratic Awami League, but neither had the heart for mass struggle. The reformist left-wing parties, despite claims to be communist and socialist, joined one or the other of these bourgeois blocs. The Islamic fundamentalists were also in the opposition.

It fell to the students of Bangladesh to come forward to spearhead the mass resistance to Ershad. Students here have a long tradition of struggle against tyranny. In 1983 and 1987 they initiated militant campaigns to oust Ershad.

The students were able to play this role against Ershad, despite the fact that the main student organizations are connected to the bourgeois opposition blocs. In each round of struggle, the student groups were willing to go beyond what the parent parties wanted. This took place largely because these groups were closer to ordinary people and more susceptible to mass sentiments and pressures. But the student groups' ability to play an independent role only went so far, because, after all, they were the youth groups of the bourgeois parties and did not break out of their orbit.

Both in 1983-84 and 1987, Ershad proved successful in defeating the mass movements. He used a combination of repression, bribery, and maneuvers with the opposition politicians. These successes made Ershad think he was invincible. But such delusions could not last. Each month the corruption mounted. The hypocrisy grew. Conditions kept getting worse. And popular outrage grew. 1990 proved to be the fateful year.

The upsurge of 1990

The year opened with several battles between Ershad and the people. A new wave of anger against the government was mounting. Then the Persian Gulf crisis broke out.

Ershad forced the burden of the oil price increase onto the masses. Bus and train fares shot up. The cost of living skyrocketed. Meanwhile, the flight of

75,000 Bengali workers from Kuwait and Iraq meant a sharp drop in the money the emigrant workers send home. To add insult to injury, Ershad loyally signed up with George Bush and the king of Saudi Arabia and deployed 6-7,000 troops to join the U.S. presence against Iraq.

These were highly unpopular moves. The clamor for democracy and change rose up with force. An explosion of mass struggle broke out between October and December.

As in years past, the students spearheaded the campaign. Nearly all the student organizations united into the All Party Students Unity (APSU) which became the practical leader of the movement. General strikes which shut down the cities, militant marches and rallies took place day after day. Ershad responded with police and paramilitary force. Many demonstrators were killed. But the killings only enraged the people further.

Besides the students, the 1990 movement also saw the growing involvement of other organized sections of the people. The Workers and Employees Unity Council revived its campaign for jobs, a living wage, and trade union rights. Professionals also joined the movement: doctors, journalists, lawyers, cultural workers, teachers, etc. Ershad had managed to impel most of the middle classes into struggle against him as well.

As in the past, the political parties trailed along. Once the struggle had broken out, they sought to take the center stage. And they would have been successful in striking some deal with Ershad had it not been for the students and others who played a decisive role in preventing any curtailment of the struggle to oust Ershad.

Besides the bourgeois parties and the reformist left, Bangladesh also has a revolutionary left. These forces are still small, but their strength has grown in the course of the bitter clashes of the last decade. They focus their work on building up the revolutionary movement of the workers and peasants, independent of the bourgeois parties. In the recent campaign against Ershad, these left forces were active in All Party Students Unity, the Workers and Employees Unity Council, etc. Despite their minority role, they were able to play a role in blocking maneuvers that would have curtailed the movement.

As militancy grows, the establishment cuts off struggle

With each passing week, the struggle grew more militant and determined. The urban poor vigorously joined in the struggle. Trade union activists discussed launching a campaign of indefinite strikes. Rural masses began to stir as they heard the news from the cities. Meanwhile, students launched a campaign of militant action against government ministers and other wealthy cronies of the president. A number of their

mansions were put to the torch.

Ershad continued to think repression would put down the movement. But this had proven to be a hollow threat. His curfew orders at the end of November were violated by thousands upon thousands who poured into the streets in defiance. Ershad's declaration of a state of emergency also proved useless. Ershad even tried making some promises of reform, but it was too late.

The country was heading into a potentially revolutionary situation. In this situation, the military establishment decided that Ershad had to go. The same conclusion was arrived at by Ershad's imperialist patrons in the U.S., Britain and Japan. Together they got Ershad to step down. And with the collaboration of the bourgeois parties, they agreed to make the Supreme Court Chief Justice a caretaker president to organize national elections.

The masses celebrated the fall of Ershad on December 3 with great joy. And they were right to be in enthusiastic spirits. With their struggle, they had succeeded in bringing down the hated dictator. The 1990 movement had shown the power of militant struggle.

But the military establishment, the imperialist powers, and the bourgeois parties also heaved a big sigh of relief. They had cut short the struggle before it went into who-knows-what revolutionary direction. All along the bourgeois parties had worked hard to make sure that the movement would not grow towards revolutionary conclusions. They were happy to have the movement end with promises for elections, because that had in fact been their maximum program.

Revolutionary activists I spoke with in Dhaka pointed out that in the final analysis, the movement of 1990 had been limited to an urban, bourgeois upsurge. Once an upsurge was clearly in the making, the bourgeois parties had worked to contain the movement as much as possible. Their calls for general strikes — the most common method of struggle used by the movement — were meant to be civic shutdowns; they did not want the industrial workers to take strike action. They also worked to restrict the movement to the cities and prevent the countryside from being awakened. The revolutionary left had worked to spread the movement wider and champion the demands of the toilers. But since bourgeois domination did not break down and Ershad fell so quickly, the bourgeois parties were largely successful in their endeavor.

Elections bring a lull in the struggle

After the fall of Ershad, the bourgeois parties focused the entire attention of the country onto the election campaign. And the reformist left went along with this, helping the bourgeois politicians take attention off the masses' demands.

Thus there has been a lull in the mass struggle since December. There have been some exceptions to this. The students have kept up the demand for justice against Ershad and his cronies. Ershad has been under house arrest, and several others of his collaborators have been put in jail. Were it not for mass pressure, the government would have let Ershad go.

In late February national elections took place. The wealthy politicians spent tons of money, made wild promises, but remained bankrupt on any serious issues facing the Bengali people. The BNP scored an upset victory over the Awami League and came out on top. With parliamentary support from the Islamic fundamentalists, they had the majority to form a new government. It is headed by

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DOWN WITH RACISM!

Latinos rise against racism in Bush's backyard

While George Bush gloats about his "new world order," anger against it is building up in his own back yard.

During the second week in May, Latino youth demonstrated, overturned police cars, and battled squads of riot police in the Mount Pleasant area of Washington D.C. — just two miles from the White House. The mass anger burst out against the police shooting of a Salvadoran immigrant named Enrique Gomez. Witnesses say he was unarmed and handcuffed at the time of the shooting.

The fighting quickly spread from the Latino neighborhood to nearby black neighborhoods. Some 2,000 police were deployed to put it down. But demonstrations and battles with the police went on for over three days. Twenty police cars were burned, at least thirteen cops were injured, and scores of people were arrested.

Such anger doesn't come from just one brutal incident. Thousands of Latinos are crowded into the Mount Pleasant neighborhood. Most are refugees from U.S.-backed death squad regimes in El Salvador and other Central American countries. But once in the U.S. they have found they face racism, harassment by immigration police, massive unemployment, minimum wage jobs and police brutality. During the street fighting, people shouted that the American government was just as bad as the regimes they had fled. And slogans went up on the walls supporting the guerrillas fighting the regimes in their home countries.

The outburst in Washington has the capitalist establishment worried. The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) was called in to investigate — looking for ties with radical political organizations and how activists spread the protest from one neighborhood to

the other. The Civil Rights Commission launched an investigation of the situation in other Latino communities around the country.

Meanwhile, the city authorities frantically organized commissions and community meetings to cool things off. But many community members walked out of one, chanting "You insult us" after the district's City Councilman suggested that the problems of Latinos in D.C. are caused by Latino political fragmentation.

This theory of fragmentation is popular among some officials. What they mean is that Latinos do not have any clout because they don't elect Latinos to office — thus the problems and the unrest. Never mind that most of the refugees and immigrants can't vote anyway. Never mind that having the vote and electing "your own" officials doesn't mean an end to racism or police brutality. The African American community in D.C. can sure testify to that fact. These city officials are telling the Hispanic community to just "get with the program" or their problems will be considered their own fault. No wonder people walked out of the meeting.

The struggle was not limited to the Latino community, as the national news media tried to portray it. The fighting quickly spread to the black communities neighboring Mount Pleasant. The majority of the people arrested were black. In fact there was also a small number of whites participating in the actions. The rapid spread of the struggle shows the deep anger that is building up against racism and poverty. People are tired of being treated like dogs. More outbursts are inevitable. What is needed is to organize the anger and turn it into a sustained and organized mass movement against the racist system. ■



Latino youth regroup during the rebellion in Mount Pleasant

How the civil rights bill crumbled

As we go to press, the House of Representatives is preparing to vote on a new civil rights bill.

Last year the Democrats put up a bill which would have made it somewhat easier for people to bring lawsuits against job discrimination, reversing some of the Supreme Court's recent racist rulings. But Bush vetoed the bill. And the Democrats were not able to pull together enough votes to override Bush's veto.

This year Bush is again threatening to veto the new bill. But instead of taking Bush head on and exposing him for the racist he is, the Democrats are repeatedly rewriting the legislation to appease every criticism.

Indeed, they have so watered down the bill that there is some question whether it will help or harm those opposing racial discrimination. The Congressional Black Caucus is so uncomfortable with the Democrats' bill that they are putting up their own. Similarly, women's advocates are criticizing it.

Now the Democrats are banning quotas

For example, the Democrats have added in an explicit ban on the use of quotas to remedy job discrimination. Although the Supreme Court had already ruled against quotas, this writes the ban into law for the first time.

Since today opposing "quotas" has become the codeword to oppose using statistical evidence to show discrimination and to fight any specific measures against discrimination, a ban on "quotas" could be used to ban any number of actions against job discrimination. The Democrats know this, and they wrote into their bill a clause that explicitly leaves it up to the Supreme Court to decide which affirmative action plans are to be banned in the name of opposing quotas.

At a time when the Supreme Court is making one racist ruling after another; at a time when the whole purpose of putting up another civil rights bill is to reverse racist rulings of the Court; it is outrageous to give the Court sweeping powers to interpret which measures

against race and sex discrimination it considers to be legal. Talk about letting the fox guard the hen house.

Racist Democrats

What stands out in all the maneuvering is that the Democratic leaders are rewriting the bill not to appease George Bush but to win over other Democrats. They have admitted that they hope more-or-less openly racist Democrats will back the civil rights bill on the grounds that they are voting to ban quotas.

But this is not fighting the racist campaign, it is helping it along.

This just goes to show that if you lift the "human rights" clothing of the Democrats, underneath you'll find another white-sheeted racist. ■

Marchers denounce L.A. cops

About 600 protesters marched through downtown Los Angeles May 11. They rallied at Parker Center police headquarters demanding the ouster of Police Chief Daryl Gates.

In front of a marble monument to L.A. police, the protesters displayed the names of more than 250 people who had been brutalized or killed by police since 1978. And speakers gave accounts of their own beatings by the cops.

While marching, MLP supporters and other activists shouted slogans such as, "Hey hey, ho ho, the racist scum has gotta go! The fascist pigs have gotta go! The capitalist police state's gotta go!" And "Cops are the tool of the rich man's rule!" This attracted the attention of passers-by and shoppers in the downtown area. Many welcomed the anti-racist literature handed out by the MLP supporters.

But monitors for the NAACP and Rainbow Coalition tried to intimidate and prevent the MLP supporters from shouting slogans. They complained "you're turning our silent march into a militant street protest!" Do they think they own the movement? What better confirmation that they do not want a

militant mass movement? They wanted their own silent march, meaning, never mind about the ordinary people on the streets who might be interested in what they were doing and who might support their action. No, they are not interested in building a movement. They have their own movement that turns actions like the May 11 protest into an electoral gimmick for Democratic Party candidates.

They would be satisfied with pitiful tinkering with the LAPD. Take, for example, the recommendation by NAACP Los Angeles branch president Joseph Duff. He suggests that police officers be given "courtesy cards" (business cards) to be given to every civilian they encounter. Such cards could contain a statement saying that the department "operates on a principle that there is a primacy to the value of human life and human dignity which must be protected and served at all times." This is supposed to change the racist attitude and behavior of cops towards blacks and other minorities? Who are they kidding. The respectable black leaders are merely seeking palliatives, and not a cure, for the chronic problems of police brutality and racism. ■

Border patrol abuses immigrants

At a press conference on April 16, immigration rights activists denounced the physical abuse of immigrants by the INS Border Patrol and other immigration agents in the border region.

Earlier this year, a Salvadoran refugee was detained in Harlingen, Texas and beaten by an official in the local INS office. In Corpus Christi two Guatemalan immigrants have filed a federal lawsuit charging that while they were being held by Border Patrol agents they were both beaten and tortured with an electric cattle prod. The Houston-based Immigration Law Enforcement Monitoring Project received 32 complaints of INS abuse during 1990. Other Texas organizations such as the South Texas Immigration Council and Proyecto Libertad also

report large numbers of complaints.

The Border Patrol regularly forces immigrants back across the border without offering them the immigration hearing that they are allowed by law. INS agents are also accused of entering and searching homes in poor neighborhoods in the border cities without warrants.

These complaints from Texas, along with reports from California and Arizona of immigrants being beaten and even shot by INS agents, show the true face of the U.S. government's "kinder, gentler" policies towards the immigrant workers.

(From the May 29 issue of the *Chicago Workers' Voice*, paper of the MLP-Chicago.) ■

INS discriminates against Salvadoran refugees (again)

In May the INS announced that it is lowering the fees it charges Salvadoran refugees who file for Temporary Protective Status (TPS). However, it is still charging the Salvadorans much more than it is charging Kuwaiti refugees applying for the same status.

Temporary Protective Status allows refugees from wars and other emergency situations to stay temporarily in the

United States and to obtain a work permit for up to 18 months.

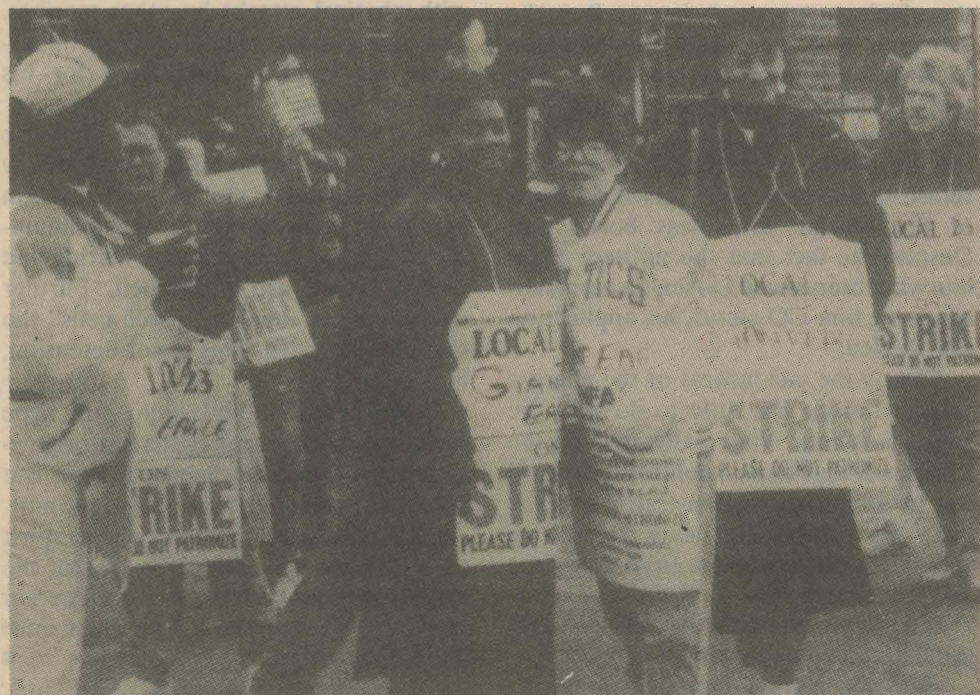
The fee for Kuwaiti applicants is a one-time \$50 fee for both TPS and work permit. But Salvadoran refugees are being charged a one time fee of \$75 (or \$225 for a family of three or more) plus \$60 every six months for a work permit.

Continued on page 4
See REFUGEES



Strikes and workplace news

Pittsburgh grocery workers continue strike



Over 4,000 grocery store strikers and their supporters marched through downtown Pittsburgh May 4. They are continuing their strike in the face of stepped up attacks by the Giant Eagle chain. As of May 1, the company cut off health benefits to the strikers (only 20% of the strikers had health benefits before the cutoff). Giant Eagle has also hired the notorious strike-breaking firm, Nuckols and Associates, Inc. They are driving the delivery trucks since Teamsters have been honoring the picket lines.

Unfortunately, the strikers are also having to struggle against their own

union leaders. The United Food and Commercial Workers hacks have refused to spread the strike to the Giant Eagle warehouses and to franchise-owned Giant Eagle stores. And on May 3 (a day before the march and rally), the union bureaucrats announced they were abandoning one of the strikers' key demands — the demand that all the Giant Eagle stores stay open. This demand stems from the fact that Giant Eagle commonly closes a union-organized store and then reopens it as a nonunion franchise. To abandon this fight is to stab the strikers in the back. ■

Strike ends at New York apartment buildings

The strike by 30,000 building workers at 4,000 apartment buildings in the New York City area ended after 12 days on May 3. The tentative agreement reached by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and the real estate representatives sent the striking doormen, porters, elevator operators and concierges immediately back to work.

And what have the workers gained? They successfully resisted the employers'

demand for a two-tier wage system and the shifting of full-time to part-time positions. But union leaders abandoned other key demands — such as for a seven-hour work day and for a 5% raise. The agreement contains less than a 4% raise and no retroactive pay.

It is not clear whether the rank and file will be given a chance to vote on the settlement. ■

5,000 rally for aluminum strikers

Over 5,000 workers rallied in Cottageville, West Virginia at the end of April. They came to support aluminum workers who have been on strike against Ravenswood Aluminum Corporation (RAC) since November 1, 1990. Workers

came from Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Connecticut and from all over West Virginia. The 1,700 strikers face professional strike-breakers who have turned the company into an armed fortress. ■

Back to work victory for injured postal workers

On March 19, Detroit injured postal workers won a significant victory when management agreed to bring back some 20 injured laid-off clerks, with 75% back pay for 5 months.

The clerks were involuntarily sent home last October on the pretext of "no work available." They were denied work because they had light duty medical restrictions, such as needing a chair with a back. Most were injured on the job, but their workers' compensation claims were still pending. There was, of course, plenty of light work. But the Postal

Service is cutting the work force, and has been targeting the injured for removal.

How did the injured get their jobs back?

Local leaders of the American Postal Workers Union (APWU) take full credit for this victory. But what did the union leaders do? Very little. They filed a class action grievance and then let it sit.

If workers had been satisfied with the APWU's course, who knows when and how the grievance would have been settled? But this time around, the work-

ers didn't leave things just in the hands of the union hacks. They began to organize a rank-and-file movement. And this made all the difference.

After the October layoff, they banded together to form Injured and Handicapped Postal Workers United (IHPWU). And they launched a fight for the rights of the injured of all crafts.

Over several months the IHPWU carried out a campaign of leaflets, meetings, and pickets to demand jobs for the injured. The campaign targeted not only the USPS but also the APWU leaders,

who were doing next to nothing for the laid-off clerks. IHPWU pressure also resulted in the rich man's press, the *Detroit News* and *Free Press*, covering this struggle, at least for one day.

Eventually the class action grievance was settled. It has to be said that it was the workers' own action, the IHPWU campaign, which succeeded in pressuring the USPS and the APWU to reach an agreement to return the injured clerks to work.

(Based on May 19 issue of the *Detroit Workers' Voice*, MLP-Detroit.) ■

ETHIOPIA Continued from page 6

policies of the new regime? Will it guard privilege or will take some radical steps? These worries exist because some of the groups which have triumphed over Mengistu, like the EPLF and EPRDF, claim to be revolutionary-democrats and, until not too long ago, claimed to be interested in radical programs aimed eventually towards socialism.

Were the socialist hopes of the past wrong?

The ease with which the leaders are claiming to have grown beyond their Marxist past shows these forces weren't really working class communists. At the same time, among Eritrean and Ethiopian leftists, there have been sincere socialist and communist leanings. Many were attracted to Marxism because they wanted to see progress for the toilers.

At the moment, a working class government or socialism aren't immediate prospects facing Ethiopia. Ethiopia has been thrown backwards by 17 years of Mengistu's regime. After the 1974 revolution there were conditions for some radical changes, but these were set back. The working class movement which was quite strong then has been disorganized, and political development has been cut short by war and repression. The armies now in power are largely peasant-based, and the leaderships are vague on what comes next.

The immediate problems facing the people are quite rudimentary: ending the years of civil war, which depends on respect for the self-determination of the nationalities; setting up a democratic system; famine relief; and elementary reconstruction. This requires surmounting the war cries of Amhara chauvinism and the attempt to preserve the remnants of the Mengistu regime. But alongside these questions are sharp social issues — which

may come up soon, or may come up later, after conditions stabilize. The peasants flocked to the armies now in power not just because of national, but also economic grievances. How will these grievances of the peasantry be dealt with? After the heavy hand of Mengistu's state-capitalist dictate is lifted, will the rural poor just be left to the tender mercies of the free market? What conditions will workers face? How will the unemployed fare? The new governments may proclaim democracy and speak for all the people, but the people are divided into rich and poor. No government can balance for long between contending classes.

Although there isn't a question of the working class being able to establish its own power immediately, this doesn't mean there is no room for communist activity. Those who have had socialist and communist leanings were right to hope for social change in favor of the toilers. They were right to reject capitalism. Those activists committed to the working class should not turn their backs on that vision even though many of their leaders and comrades may do so in present-day conditions. They cannot simply serve as loyalists of a government that wants to balance between the separate classes, no matter how popular it may be. They have to organize the workers and poor as an independent force.

Even in the elementary democratic tasks of today, there are questions of what policy will guide the changes and there are questions of ensuring the best possible democratic conditions for the workers. The workers need democracy to breathe freely, but above all they need it to have the conditions for organizing their class struggle, both for immediate reforms as well as for eventually winning emancipation from capitalism. Communist activity is needed to organize the workers as an independent class. ■

FREE TRADE Continued from back page

mass struggles in Mexico and those in the U.S.

The Mexican workers have already been fighting to resist the austerity drive of the U.S.-backed Mexican capitalists. Free trade will only intensify the contradictions.

The U.S. workers must support them. We have to link arms with the strikes and other mass struggles against U.S. imperialism and the Mexican capitalists. We have to demand that Mexico's roughly \$100 billion foreign debt be abrogated. We have to support the mass actions against the dictatorial PRI government. And we have to stand up for full rights for the immigrant Mexican workers in the U.S. who are so mistreated by the capitalists.

Today, the workers' movement in the U.S. is emerging against the cutbacks and capitalist concessions drive. It is essential that we build up this movement and unite it with the Mexican workers who are fighting a similar battle against the same enemy. ■

MARXIST-LENINIST BOOKS AND PERIODICALS

■ CHICAGO
1631 West 18th Street (one block east of 18th St. 'L' on Douglas line)
Phone: 243-5302
■ OAKLAND
3232 ML King Way (old Grove St.),
Oakland, CA 94609
Phone: 653-4840

Support our GI resisters!

No parades to glorify mass slaughter!

All across the country, businesspeople, government officials, pro-war veterans organizations, and the mass media have been organizing victory parades for soldiers returning from the Persian Gulf war. The "heroic" victory being hailed is the massacre of 100,000 Iraqis to make the Middle East safe for Big Oil and gold-plated emirs and princes.

But not all the pro-war hoopla has gone as planned. In San Francisco there was big hype predicting a gigantic turnout for a May 18 parade. But the event fizzled. Only perhaps 10,000 people showed up along the two-mile parade route, with many of them being from the Presidio military base area. Even the bourgeois press, such as the *Oakland Tribune*, whined that the attendance was "dismally less than the half a million projected."

Meanwhile, a few hundred anti-war activists held a spirited counter-demonstration. They shouted slogans against the war and in support of GI war resisters. One such anti-war soldier, Jeff Paterson, climbed atop an army truck

and was arrested. Protesters also threw dummies along the parade route to symbolize the victims of the U.S. war machine.

In Chicago, the powers-that-be went all out, holding a three hour pro-war parade on May 10. The day before, however, 200 people declared "No Heroes Welcome" at a rally and march outside the Federal Building. At the parade itself, about 50 "mourners" protested a block north of the reviewing stand.

There were also counterprotests in Seattle on May 15 and Honolulu on May 11.

Anti-war sentiment has also greeted Bush as he makes the college commencement circuit. On May 4th, 100 activists at the University of Michigan walked out of ceremonies as George and Barbara were given honorary degrees. Later in May, at Bush's alma mater, Yale, protest messages on a variety of issues were worn by students on their graduation caps, as the president of death was met by anti-war banners and hecklers. ■

GI resisters defy death threats and torture

The military continues to take revenge on anti-war soldiers and sailors.

Two marines, Erik Larsen and Kevin Sparrock, have even been charged with desertion during wartime. This could bring execution. A military spokesman

refused to rule this out, saying only that the Marines probably would not seek the death penalty.

A glimpse at the case of Erik Larsen shows what the Marine Corps is up to — persecuting dissenters. ■

From the charges, one might think Larsen ran away in the heat of battle. But his desertion charges are based on his missing the deployment of his unit to Arizona for training, a unit that was never even sent to the Gulf.

And this isn't all. Larsen had applied for conscientious objector status prior to the deployment to Arizona. But the ruling on it was purposely delayed by the Marines until after deployment. Seeing that the Marine Corps was toying with his request for CO status, Larsen was, in essence, forced to abandon his beliefs or refuse deployment. And Larsen's distrust of the Marine brass was borne out. Despite the fact that the military chaplain who interviewed Larsen recommended giving him CO status, his application was denied.

Clearly the viciousness of the charges against Larsen has little to do with the actual incidents. What really concerns the Marines is that Larsen denounced the oil war at numerous demonstrations in the U.S. and Europe. The death threat is to intimidate other soldiers from doing the same.

Indeed, dozens of other GI resisters are also being abused by the military.

Anti-war marine Doug DeBoes was

sentenced to 15 months in prison on May 1.

Marine reservist Sam Lwin, who is awaiting court-martial with many others at Camp LeJeune, North Carolina, reports that soon after he applied for CO status he was called up for active duty. His commanding officer threatened him with physical attacks by other marines. Once in custody, Lwin was further threatened and publicly humiliated for his anti-war views.

And look at the conditions for those awaiting trial in the military brigs. Any political dissent or violation of rules can land them in six-by-eight-foot maximum-security cells where reading, writing and even exercise are prohibited. Further violations put them in "psych cells" the size of a dog cage. This is not detention, but torture.

Today, the TV and radio still hype the glory of destroying civilian infrastructure and massacring fleeing troops. But the real "hometown heroes" are the anti-war GIs, the GI resisters whose spirit has not been broken in the face of the military's dungeons and torture. The war may be over, but the GI resisters must not be forgotten. ■

Navy frameup fails

In early May, the Navy abandoned its case against two anti-war sailors, Abdul H. Shaheed and James Moss. They had been charged with urging mutiny and sabotage aboard the *U.S.S. Ranger*, while serving on this aircraft carrier during the Gulf war.

The Navy had concocted this frameup in order to punish these sailors for

opposing the war. The Navy argued that since these two black sailors were Muslims, they must be acting at the behest of Saddam Hussein's call for a "holy war." This was bigotry, not evidence. The Navy had no case. By dropping the charges, the Navy is admitting as much. ■

Outrages in 'Free Kuwait'

Continued from front page

no tears over the fall of the emir. Some had sympathized with Saddam's invasion, while others disagreed with it. Many had helped Kuwaitis survive during the occupation.

Since the Iraqi withdrawal, many Palestinians have been forced to leave Kuwait. Those remaining are subject to arbitrary arrest and torture. Thousands are languishing in the emirate's jails, and an unknown number have simply been murdered. In most cases, the charges of "collaboration" are as ludicrous as the ones brought up in the trials.

The emir's repression is also directed against foreign workers of other nationalities. Some of those scheduled to go on trial are workers from Egypt. The emir's soldiers have gone on a binge of rape of immigrant women workers. And the repression even affects Kuwaiti citizens, as the emir closes down opposition newspapers, arrests those involved in any political demonstration, and carries out a reign of terror even against the bourgeois opposition.

The ugly result of Bush's war of "liberation"

This is the glorious outcome of Bush's war to "liberate" Kuwait. The billionaire king is back on his throne, his oil profits intact, and the working people are turned over to his tender mercies.

Some American liberals are complaining that the martial-law atrocities are "raining on our parade," that the emir's repression is spoiling the glory of the American victory. But actually it reveals the truth about this so-called victory and what it was a victory for. These atrocities are not an accidental by-product or

"collateral damage" of the war. They were planned and carried out by the U.S. military, by the same Pentagon that masterminded the "brilliant strategy" against Saddam Hussein. U.S. Army planners worked out the plans for the emir's martial law. American soldiers are standing guard at the detention centers where Palestinians are tortured and murdered. The kangaroo-court trials are given security by American soldiers and watched over by legal "observers" from

BANGLADESH Continued from page 7

Mrs. Khaleda Zia, widow of the late General Ziaur Rahman who was president of the country between 1975 and 1981.

The new government will have to deal with the expectations among the masses raised during the 1990 movement. One striking feature of the situation in the country is that since the people tasted their power of struggle, and a victory wrought by their hands, there are widespread hopes that things can change today.

What is more, the masses have definite demands they want addressed. APSU has a platform of struggle demanding serious educational reforms. The trade union council has its platform for jobs, a living wage, and an end to repressive laws. The alliance of peasants and farmworker organizations have their demands. So do doctors, teachers, and other professional groups.

In the opposition, the BNP postured about these mass demands, but without committing itself to anything. Mrs. Zia's government is one based on the bourgeois-landlord elite and beholden to

the U.S. government. And the Bush White House has refused to condemn even these farcical trials.

Nevertheless, the first trials were a big embarrassment for Bush. So when the trials resumed two weeks later, under U.S. advice, the courts had made some changes. This time there was a witness, a policeman, but he referred to anonymous secret sources as the basis of the charges. And he also showed the most elementary lack of familiarity with the

imperialism. It is impossible to meet the mass demands without cutting into the interests of the wealthy, so it is not likely that the BNP government will be forthcoming towards the demands of the masses, especially that of the toilers. But in an atmosphere marked by the triumph of a mass upsurge, these expectations and demands will impel whole sections of students, workers and peasants into action.

New political realignments will undoubtedly take place. The old blocs formed in the common struggle against Ershad, such as APSU, cannot be expected to last in the coming conflicts pitting the different classes. Most of the pro-BNP forces in the mass coalitions will no doubt side with their government instead of the masses. Meanwhile, activists under reformist influence will in turn have to decide where they stand on the division between renewed mass struggle and mere parliamentary complaints.

In the coming period, the work of the revolutionary left will prove to be more necessary than ever. There are several groups of activists. Prominent among them is the Democratic Revolutionary Front (DRF). The DRF groups together organizations of students, workers, peas-

ants, and political activists around a revolutionary democratic program. In the post-Ershad period, DRF has been active making sure that the banner of struggle for the mass demands is not taken down. They are demanding that the struggle for democratic rights not just end with Ershad's removal but proceed to abolish all the repressive laws established during the last 20 years.

DRF and its constituent groups have persevered in work among the mass movements to promote a spirit of independence from the bourgeois parties. This work will see its fruit in the renewal of mass struggle. A core of revolutionary activists determined to push things forward in the aftermath of the victory over Ershad — even in the face of the rigging up of a new electoral government — can make a serious difference.

Yesterday the whole people united against a tyrant. But with the fall of that enemy, the class struggle will now come out from behind the shadow of tyranny. More and more the class demands of the toilers will stand out in sharper relief.

In the next article we will look closer at the workers' and toilers' movements. ■

Students and workers shake S. Korea

Continued from front page

U. and took over streets in downtown Seoul, where they fought 4,000 riot police. Street fighting also occurred in other cities.

Protests of tens of thousands took place the next two days, and again on the weekend, May 4-5. 15,000 demonstrators took over Seoul's main railway station. Thousands of commuters were trapped by the action, but many of them applauded the protesters.

Death of worker adds fuel to fire

The police took their revenge on the workers on May 6, when they murdered a trade union leader. Park Chang Soo was the leader of the Hanjin Heavy Industries Union. He had been arrested on April 21 and charged with organizing illegal labor protests. (The South Korean labor code, like the repressive U.S. code, bans secondary strikes and boycotts.) While in jail Park went on a hunger strike to protest the murder of Kang Kyong Dae. Police guards beat him, and he was then sent to a hospital. But there Park fell to his death from the hospital rooftop, apparently thrown by police guards.

The next day Park's union struck hundreds of companies. A big battle took place between Park's supporters, who were guarding his body, and 1,000 riot police who were sent to recover his body for a government-whitewash autopsy.

The next few days strikes went on in Pusan and Incheon. Then on the weekend of May 11-12, some 300,000 people demonstrated nationwide. On May 13, in Seoul, demonstrators attacked the headquarters of the Democratic Liberal Party and virtually destroyed it. The next day came the funeral procession of Kang Kyong Dae. About 60,000 people joined the procession through the streets of Seoul. The march attempted to go into central Seoul, past the home of President Roh, but was blocked by riot police. Fighting broke out, and Kang's funeral had to be postponed. In the next few days more attempts were made to carry through the funeral procession, but each time the march was attacked by police.

Kwangju uprising anniversary

During the weekend of May 18-19, South Koreans marked the anniversary of the 1980 Kwangju rebellion, which Gen. Chun Doo Hwan had suppressed by massacring 2,000 people. Hundreds of

thousands demonstrated across South Korea. In Seoul 15,000 protesters fought riot police in a daylong battle, with both sides swinging clubs. Similar fighting occurred in Kwangju.

The burial of Kang Kyong Dae finally took place on May 20. In the meantime, Roh Tae Woo has made some moves to placate the opposition, but the student and worker activists reject these half-hearted policies. More actions are planned for the June 1 weekend.

Roh maneuvers to stay in power

As the demonstrations mounted, Roh Tae Woo moved to cool things down. But he always took minimal steps, just enough to make it look like he was responding to events. After the death of Kang Kyong Dae, the policemen who murdered him were arrested, and the Home Minister in charge of the police was fired. But Roh resisted the demand to disband the plainclothes police squadrons that are regularly used as agents provocateur. And he refused to arrest the chief of police and Home Minister.

The liberal opposition to Roh demanded that he fire his prime minister. Roh refused to do this until the height of the demonstrations, on May 20. And a few days later he appointed a hardened reactionary to fill the post.

South Korea has the longest-held political prisoners in the world. Some of them were rounded up in anti-communist raids in the 1950's and have been in jail ever since. Last month, Roh released scores of political prisoners and dropped charges against many who had been arrested this spring. But he still refuses to scrap the draconian National Security Law. Under this law, for example, a trade union leader recently was sentenced to two years in prison for writing articles exposing some of the occupational diseases that plague the severely exploited Korean work force; two writers were sentenced to a year in prison for publishing a book about the 1948 Cheju massacre, when American and South Korean military forces killed more than 40,000 civilians; and people are still given long prison terms simply for visiting North Korea.

Far from giving up this law, Roh is actually proposing to toughen it, giving him a freer hand in suppressing student demonstrators. And while releasing some political prisoners at the height of the demonstrations, at the same time Roh ordered the arrest of more union and campus activists.

Roh is a little slicker than his predecessor, Gen. Chun. He is willing to maneuver a little bit and to cut himself loose from the most hated police bureaucrats. But the S. Korean regime remains essentially what it was under Gen. Chun and previous dictators — a military-dominated despotism, a dictatorship of big capital over the working class and poor peasantry. Any democratic reforms that have been won in recent years — such as the right to have trade unions — have been partial, and even then, won only through arduous struggle.

Liberals try to pimp off the movement

The real nature of the regime is covered up by the S. Korean liberals, who are trying to use the present mass movement to propel themselves into office. Kim Dae Jung, leader of the main opposition party, the New Democratic Union, issued some statements during the recent upsurge criticizing Roh's administration and calling for reform. But in contrast to the mass movement, which was demanding "Bring down Roh Tae Woo," Kim refused to call for Roh's resignation. And he called on the students to dampen their militancy and to keep their demonstrations within respectable, polite bounds.

Kim and the other liberal leaders are quite willing to use the mass movement to gain popularity. But at the same time

Kim wants to appear respectable to the big capitalists of S. Korea and its imperialist allies, the U.S. and Japan. Kim wants to present himself as a realistic bourgeois alternative in next year's presidential election.

U.S.-style democratization in action

The S. Korean regime is a showcase of the "progress" and "democratization" which the U.S. government promotes as its dearest ideal. Over the past few decades S. Korea has undergone rapid modernization, and the rural population has been largely transformed into an urban proletariat. Our American rulers would have us believe that this has meant the advent of "democracy" in S. Korea. But modernization has taken place through superexploitation of the workers and under a savage police state, and any democratic reforms have come only through the mass struggle.

Meanwhile, modernization has also meant the creation of a huge, modern working class. In the past few years the workers have learned to flex their muscles, to build trade unions in the midst of brutal repression and to carry out long-lasting, militant strikes. Student activism has made links with the workers. It is this developing class struggle which is the hope of the Korean people. ■

350,000 workers strike across Albania

In Tirana, May 29, a rally of 10,000 people supporting striking miners clashed with police. The police tried to disperse the rally with water cannons, but the demonstrators responded by throwing rocks.

The miners' strike began in early May, when 4,500 chromium miners walked out of the mines demanding better working and living conditions. The miners live in workers' hostels where eight miners share a single room. One of their key demands is for better water supplies.

In mid-May the strike expanded into a general strike of all miners and other

workers, with some 350,000 on strike. This severely hurt the crisis-ridden Albanian economy, which relies heavily on exports of chromium and other metals. To dramatize their demands, 100 miners barricaded themselves inside a mine and launched a hunger strike.

The Gorbachev-style revisionist (phony socialist) administration headed by Ramiz Alia offered better food and transportation to the miners, but refused to meet their key demands. The miners are continuing their struggle and drawing support from other workers. ■

Polish workers' patience running out

Workers organized a number of strikes and protests in Poland during May. These indicate that workers' opposition to the harsh policies of Lech Walesa's government is beginning to gel.

Garbage collection workers in Warsaw carried out a one-week strike and won a big increase in pay. Bus and trolley drivers also struck against the city government. And on May 22 the Solidarity trade union organized a nationwide day of protest against government policies that are driving down workers' living standards.

Of course the main leader of Solidarity, Lech Walesa, is now president of the government. And Walesa is continuing the "shock therapy" transition to private-market capitalism initiated by his predecessor, the Solidarity administration of Tadeusz Mazowiecki. But the workers who allowed these pro-capitalist elements to rise to power cannot live with their policies.

There are other indications of a changing mood among the Polish masses. When the Solidarity leaders came into power, they brought the church with them as their close ally. The church

sponsored a number of reactionary legislative measures which passed, including one that requires religious instruction by priests in public schools. But recently there have been setbacks to the church's drive for a Catholic state.

Anti-abortion bill defeated

The church-sponsored anti-abortion bill was so hated that the legislature actually voted it down. The deputies felt the pressure of the overwhelming popular opposition to this bill. But they still sought to appease the church with a non-binding anti-abortion resolution.

Walesa came under fire for his parochial anti-Semitic remarks during last year's election campaign. And now the church has backed off from its scheme to have Catholicism declared the national religion.

These developments do not mean that the government is backing off from its "shock therapy." But they indicate that the Solidarity leaders who have taken over the government may be wearing the end of the patience extended to them by Polish workers. ■

MAY DAY MARCH IN CHICAGO



On May 4, activists marched in Chicago celebrating International Workers' Day. They denounced Bush's "New World Order" and called on workers to take to struggle. The march was organized by the MLP, which also sponsored May Day events in Boston, Seattle and San Francisco.

What will U.S.-Mexico free trade mean?

Can two wrongs make a right? It is not likely. Yet that seems to be the premise behind George Bush's push to create a U.S.-Mexico free trade agreement. He hopes to jump start the recession-plagued U.S. economy by pulling the crisis-ridden Mexican economy into a free trade zone with the U.S. and Canada.

But, once you strip away all the sweet promises of economic growth, what is mainly being put together is a drive against the working class in all the countries.

The U.S. is sinking in its world competition with the developing trade bloc in the Pacific Rim, centered on Japan, and with the European Community, whose largest economy is Germany. So Bush is trying to put together a trade bloc of his own in the Western hemisphere. He wants to protect U.S. imperialism's traditional spheres of influence. He is out to lock-in recent changes in Mexico — including an opening up to U.S. investments, privatization of industry, and an austerity drive against the working masses — and spread them through the rest of Latin America. And he hopes that cheap Mexican labor and the driving down of the standard of living of the workers in the U.S. will allow the U.S. to win out in the global competition.

As Karl Marx, the founder of scientific socialism, once put it: "What is free trade in the present state of society? It is the freedom of capital...It is the freedom which capital has to crush the worker."

Cheap labor

In May, Congress gave Bush the green light for a free trade pact with Mexico.

Mexican and U.S. workers, unite! Reject AFL-CIO chauvinism!

The AFL-CIO bureaucrats have been creating a fuss that Bush's plans for a free trade agreement with Mexico will cost jobs in the U.S. And they are also posturing against the extreme exploitation of Mexican workers by U.S. auto, electrical, textile and other monopolies.

But if the AFL-CIO hacks are so concerned about the Mexican workers, then why haven't they gone all out to support their strikes and other mass struggles against the capitalists? Why haven't they fought for full rights for the Mexican immigrant workers in this country? Why, in their campaign against free trade, are they uniting with U.S. winter vegetable and citrus fruit growers, who are some of the worst exploiters of Mexican immigrant workers?

The fact is that the AFL-CIO leaders are completely imbued with good old American chauvinism. While wringing their hands over the plight of Mexican workers, their real complaint is against those dirty foreigners taking American jobs. Why, the union hacks go so far as to complain that free trade will "increase illegal immigration by bringing to the border people who, after a short time in the maquiladora, will continue on into the United States." (*Exploiting Both Sides, U.S.-Mexico Free Trade*, pamphlet, AFL-CIO, Feb. 1991) Run the immigrants out of the country, that's how the AFL-CIO hacks want to help the Mexican workers.

But then the AFL-CIO hacks are not really for a fight to defend the U.S. working class either. They do not disagree with the U.S. capitalists' "competitive" drive. They simply want it oriented in another way. As their friend Senator Donald W. Riegel Jr. (D.-Michigan) put it: "We don't need to industrialize Mexico. We need to reindustrialize the United States." (*Washington Post National Weekly*

Edition, April 29-May 5) What the hacks want is temporary tariff protections while massive investments are made to revitalize the U.S. manufacturing industry instead of Mexico's. This has taken place in some work places, with the support of the union leaders. What it has meant is massive robotization, speedup, and concessions. But this didn't save jobs. Instead it resulted in massive job elimination, overwork for the remaining workers, and a lowering of the standard of living.

It voted to allow Bush the "fast track" in which Congress cannot amend, but only vote up or down, any trade agreement negotiated by the Bush administration. An agreement is expected by the end of the year.

In the Congressional debates there was a lot of talk about free trade expanding exports, but this is not the heart of the matter. Although trade between the U.S. and Mexico has almost doubled in the last five years because of already lowered tariffs, this has hardly touched the U.S. trade deficit. At least 40% of U.S. exports to Mexico are simply returned to the U.S. as finished products. Exports to Mexico represent only about 7% of total U.S. exports. And despite the relative surge in trade, it did nothing to head off the economic crisis that is gripping the U.S. today. Now, some capitalist analysts say, the export growth has gone about as far as it can — the Mexican upper crust is saturated and the working people are too poor to buy much even if tariffs are further reduced.

No, the heart of the free trade talks is not exports. Rather it is cheap labor. This was made crystal clear by Bush's top negotiator, U.S. Trade Representative Carla A. Hills. Testifying before Congress she declared, "It makes sense for U.S. companies to have those lower-skilled jobs where the wages are less." (*Congressional Quarterly*, Feb. 23) And the wages are less in Mexico.

According to the Department of Labor, average pay in Mexican manufacturing is only \$1.99 an hour. That compares to \$13.85 in the U.S. and \$13.53 in Canada. And the pay is much lower in the maquiladora export sweatshops — averaging only about 98 cents an hour.

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What the AFL-CIO leaders end up "protecting" is not the jobs of the masses of U.S. workers, but only a thin upper stratum.

Of course restructuring and retooling the U.S. will go ahead in one form or another. It is not the job of the leaders of the working class to help buy the tools for the capitalists. No, their job must be to organize for the class struggle against the capitalists, a struggle that is bound to intensify as the capitalist competitive drive unfolds.

But the AFL-CIO leaders want to avoid the class struggle at all cost. What they are actually dreaming of is going backward. They would like to return to a distant time when the U.S. was the uncontested top dog, and when a section of workers got larger scraps from U.S. superexploitation of the workers all around the world.

But the old days are gone and the rest of the world may not exactly be lamenting their passing. The issue today is to go forward to unite the U.S. workers with their class brothers and sisters in Mexico and throughout the world. The issue today is solidarity in the common struggle against the imperialists and capitalists. ■

The low pay has U.S. capitalists licking their chops. As a top AT&T executive, William Warwick, put it: "The labor rates in Mexico are competitive with anybody in the world. It's lower cost than Singapore and competitive with Malaysia and Thailand. It's important to have that competitive advantage." (*Washington Post National Weekly Edition*, May 13-19)

Mexican capitalists' austerity drive

The pay was not always this low in Mexico. But since 1976, the Mexican capitalists have been driving down wages as part of a general austerity program against the masses.

The official minimum wage, for example, has been driven back to the level it was in 1960, less than half the level in 1977. It is now equivalent to about 59 cents an hour. And some sources say more than one-half of the labor force is working below the minimum wage. (See *Distorted Development, Mexico in the World Economy*, by David Barkin, page 81 and 102, 1990)

Faced with economic crisis and a growing foreign debt burden in the mid-1970s, the PRI government launched an austerity program. It held down factory wages; it cut agricultural price supports, thus driving many small farmers off the land; and it cut subsidies to the masses. But the crisis deepened with the collapse of oil prices, Mexico's main export, in 1982. Backed by the U.S. and other Western imperialists, the PRI stepped up cutbacks and layoffs and began a program of opening Mexico to foreign investment and privatization.

When President Salinas de Gortari took office, after a scandalous election of voting fraud and repression of the opposition, he pushed this program to the hilt. In the last few years, steel workers, copper miners, bus drivers, brewery workers, silver miners, auto workers, teachers, and others have struck, blockaded highways, occupied factories, and held mass marches to fight the massive layoffs, cutbacks and atrocious working conditions. But the PRI government repeatedly called out the army to crush them. And the CTM, the Mexican Labor Confederation which is affiliated to the PRI, has organized scabs and goon squads to attack the protesters.

The Mexican capitalists and the U.S. imperialists have been dancing with joy over this program which they say has led to a "freer" Mexican economy. But, as the *Washington Post* admitted, "For the average Mexican, the transition to a freer economy has been accompanied by a collapse in purchasing power, that today is about 45% lower than in 1981." (*National Weekly Edition*, May 13-19)

Free trade pact to lock in the changes

The fact is that one of the main purposes of the proposed free trade pact is to lock in the changes that have so harmed the Mexican working masses.

Business Week, a major mouthpiece of the American capitalists, emphasizes that a free trade pact is "insurance against any future reversals of Salinas' pro-U.S. attitude. The purpose of the trade pact 'is primarily to stabilize Salinas and cement the structural changes going on in the Mexican economy,' says James K. Galbraith, an economist at the University of Texas." (May 27)

And the Mexican capitalists agree. "Policies in Mexico have always changed when presidents did, but free trade gives a sense of permanence to the very sound policies of this administration," says Rodolfo Figueroa, a Grupo Chihuahuas executive. (*Wall Street Journal*, May 24)

Even with growth, no rise in wages any time soon

Of course Salinas and Bush like to claim that the changes will bring economic growth and then the benefits will eventually trickle down to the working masses. But when the capitalists are talking to each other, they more soberly predict that wages are not likely to rise any time soon.

For example, the low-wage maquiladora sweatshops provide Mexico with its second largest source of income, after oil. After quadrupling in size in the last 10 years, they employ 500,000 workers. Yet unemployment in Mexico is at least 13.5%. There are one million new job-seekers every year in the country. And these figures do not count the huge population that, unable to find jobs, is barely scraping out an existence of subsistence farming when crop prices are too low for them to sell.

As *Business Week* admits, "even thousands of new jobs with U.S. companies would barely begin to absorb the surplus. And with so many available for work, Mexico's low wages won't rise dramatically any time soon." (May 27)

Driving down pay in the U.S.

But then the capitalists are not really interested in higher pay for Mexican workers. When Bush declares that "open markets will enhance the global competitiveness of the United States," he is really talking about making Mexican and U.S. workers compete over who will take the lowest pay, with the fastest speedup and the worst working conditions.

Under the theme of making the U.S. "competitive," the capitalists have been on a terrible takeback drive against the U.S. workers. Since 1973, the real weekly earnings of U.S. workers have fallen. And since 1979 the capitalists have eliminated some 2.4 million manufacturing jobs and another 200,000 jobs in mining. They have used direct wage cuts. They have broken up national contracts and forced workers from different plants to compete over who will give the most concessions. They have broken unions and shifted production to lower-paying non-union plants. And they have cut jobs through speedup and robotization, and by shifting production out of the country.

The plans for a free trade pact with Mexico simply aim at stepping up this program. Even if the number of jobs eventually shifted to the low-paying sweatshops in Mexico is not enormous, the capitalists hope that the threat of shifting jobs will be enough to pressure U.S. workers to take more concessions. What they are freeing, with free trade, is competition and most of all competition among the workers to drive down living standards on both sides of the border.

Unite against the capitalists

Whether Bush and Salinas manage to negotiate this particular pact, free trade is actually the direction things have been moving in both the U.S. and Mexico at any event.

If there is any advantage to free trade it is this — it makes the struggle between the workers and the capitalists clearer and more open.

The first product of the debate over free trade has been the wealth of literature now coming out in the U.S. about the plight, and to some extent about the mass struggles, of the Mexican workers. The U.S. workers are starting to learn that, despite the disparity in wages and conditions, they face many problems in common with the Mexican workers and have a common enemy to fight.

What free trade means most of all is the need to build solidarity between the

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