

A Socialist ACTION



Gorbachev cracks down. See pages 8-9.

Vol. 9, No. 4 APRIL 1991 50 CENTS

Cuts in schools, services accelerate war at home



Brian Palmer/Impact Visuals

New York students protest budget cuts at March 19 rally outside State Capitol

Money for human needs —not war!

Now that the U.S. capitalist class has ground the Iraqi people into the earth, we can expect it to turn its attention back to grinding down its enemy at home—those in this country who must work for a living.

We are already witnessing an increase in the ruling-class attack on public education. In California, for instance, lay-off notices have gone out to tens of thousands of teachers. The public school system—having already suffered years of cutbacks and generalized neglect—is facing a further qualitative reduction in the quality of education served to the children of working people.

Less teachers means larger classes, which in turn can only result in a higher proportion of our kids condemned to functional illiteracy or to becoming dropouts from the public school system.

The rationalization for the cutbacks in public education is based on the recession and the resulting decline in federal, state, and local tax revenues. Thus, another consequence of the budgetary rationalization for the attack on the schools is higher taxes.

Here too, the intended victim again will be working people. This is built into the basic structure of how public education is financed. In most cases, a major portion of the

cost of education comes from two sources—taxes on workers' homes and sales taxes. These are part of the essentially regressive tax system that increasingly loads the tax burden onto the backs of working people.

We can be sure that the intention of those in power is to give us a little of both—less education and more taxes.

How to fight back

This attack is symptomatic of the general assault on working people. In addition to the uninterrupted, decades-long attack on wages, we have also been victimized by systematic cuts in social benefits and an equally systematic shifting of the tax burden from the rich to the poor.

Moreover, the strategy of the ruling rich is to sucker their victims into accepting higher taxes or reduced social services for working people. The trick is to get us to call for cutting benefits or raising taxes for *some other section* of the working class ("Not us, do it to them!"). If we fall for that one, we are doomed to defeat.

No, the principle of class solidarity, upon which the best traditions of the working class in every country are based, remains the best strategy to this day. The labor movement—especially the teachers' unions—must mobilize workers and their natural allies for mass action in the streets around these central slogans: We will not be divided! An injury to one is an injury to all! Tax the rich, not the poor!—the editors

(See related stories on pages 4 and 5 concerning the cutbacks of school programs in California and New York.)

GI resisters face gov't reprisals Dozens already in prison

By JOSEPH RYAN

Exploiting its lightning-quick victory over Iraq, the U.S. military is now on a campaign to punish American soldiers who resisted fighting in the Gulf War. Hundreds of GIs are being victimized, to eliminate an important legacy of the Vietnam Syndrome—political dissent among rank-and-file soldiers.

During the Vietnam War, there were many GI defense cases: Fort Hood Three, Presidio 27 and Fort Jackson Eight, to name but a few. Unlike then, however, today's GI resisters don't have the benefit of an ongoing antiwar movement. The war against Iraq is over. But for these men and women, the war has only just begun.

When the Gulf crisis began in August 1990, thousands of GIs protested by applying for conscientious objector (CO) discharges from the military. The Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors (CCCO) estimates that between 3000 and 5000 GIs applied for CO status during the six-month build-up in the Gulf.

Thousands of other GIs applied for hard-

ship or medical discharges, refused orders, or voiced their political opposition to the war in one form or another.

Hundreds of GIs put themselves in legal jeopardy when they acted according to their conscience and refused to be deployed with their units to Saudi Arabia. They now face charges of being Absent Without Leave (AWOL), missing a troop movement, attempting to avoid hazardous duty, and desertion. Approximately half of those facing charges are Black or Latino.

Dozens have already been quietly court-martialed and imprisoned, receiving sentences ranging from three to eight months in the brig at hard labor, forfeiture of pay, and bad-conduct or dishonorable discharges. Over 100 are "fugitives" hiding out from U.S. military authorities, and many more are in military stockades awaiting trial.

Reportedly, 100 resisters are in the brig at the U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) base at Camp Pendleton, Calif. Twenty-four are incarcerated pending court-martial at the USMC's Camp LeJeune, N.C., base. Others are languishing in different military prisons

(continued on page 14)

'From sea to shining sea'



Fightback

By
Sylvia Weinstein

On March 3, the Los Angeles "boys in blue" were trying to beat Rodney G. King, a black motorist, to death. Not only was King handcuffed, but he was attached to an electric stun gun. Twelve Los Angeles cops stood by watching while three police officers hit the victim over 56 times with their clubs.

They hit him so hard that fillings flew out of his teeth, his eye socket bone was fractured, his cheek bone was fractured, his skull was fractured in eleven places, his facial nerves are probably permanently damaged, and he suffered a broken leg. Medical reports say that he will

never fully recover and may possibly have brain damage.

While this was just cop business-as-usual, something new was happening. This vicious atrocity was being recorded by a bystander with a video camera. He sent it to a local TV show in Los Angeles, and CNN, the television news network, played it for the whole world to see.

Watching the video was like watching wild dogs tear apart a helpless victim. But the dogs do it for food—the racist cops were doing it for fun. When tapes were released to the public, they revealed that even when the cops radioed for an ambulance, they were laughing and

making racist innuendos.

The Black and Latino people of Los Angeles were outraged. They suffer at the hands of the cops all of the time, but more often than not the forces of law and order cover it up, and the victims are lucky if they don't get sent up for "assaulting an officer." But police brutality is so common, the cops do get caught once in a while.

When people demanded action from L.A. Police Chief Daryl Gates, he excused it as an "aberration." But they know better. They are victims of an organized system of racist brutality against the Black and Latino communities.

New York's "finest"

This mad-dog system is not just relegated to the city of Los Angeles—it's par for the course, from West to East, from sea to shining sea.

Across the continent in New York City, the city's "finest" were also having their fun ("partying," one of them said). On Feb. 5, Federico Pereira, a 21-year-old cook who worked in a fast food restaurant, was murdered by N.Y. cops. There was no video this time, but there were three witnesses to

the killing.

One of the witnesses said that Mr. Pereira was lying on the ground, handcuffed to one of his legs, which was bent back at a 90-degree angle and attached to one of his wrists. He was being hit and kicked by plainclothes officers. At one point, one of the cops stepped to the curb and cleaned blood off of his boots and went back to beat up his victim.

Another of the cops, Officer Paparella, straddled Pereira, entwined his fingers under the suspects neck, and lifted his head back into what was referred to as a "camel clutch," while jamming his knee into Pereira's back. When he dropped him to the ground, Pereira was motionless. He was pronounced dead at the hospital.

One of the witnesses, Ronald Harmon, had his car tires slashed and his dog poisoned. Harmon was punched in the head by a cop who took him to the station house and "questioned" him for seven hours. Thomas A. Stickel, Harmon's lawyer, said that his client had been coerced into saying that he had seen the victim "swing" at the cops—which he now repudiates. Other cops are accused of terrorizing and

otherwise harassing the other witnesses, too.

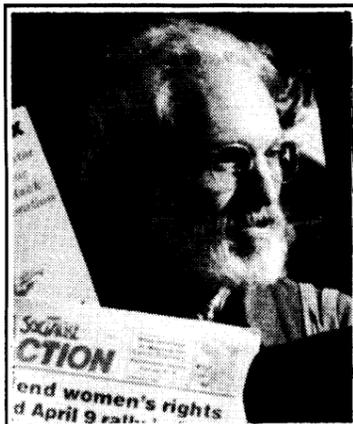
The cops' version of the killing is that their victim was "thrashing about in a cocaine-induced mania, banging his head against the sidewalk as officers tried to subdue him."

Cops are noted not only for their brutality toward the Black and Latino communities. They have a long record of brutality towards workers who are on strike. The history of the labor movement is covered with the blood of workers.

It is the job of the cops to protect the wealthy from their victims when they fight back. The cops often just want to let the workers know who's boss and what they can expect if they get uppity.

The "new world order" is not only for foreign countries but for the Black, Latino, and working-class communities of the U.S.A. The capitalist class wants everyone to know that they are prepared to use whatever methods of violence and terror are necessary to stamp out resistance to their exploitation. The government views the working class of this country as it does the people of a colonial country. ■

Cover-up of a slaughter



Behind the Lines

By
Michael Schreiber

Dear editor,

Please do a story on the actual number of Iraqi dead and why the D.O.D. still has this information classified. Is it too embarrassing? Does it make us look like high-tech cowards? Is that what the yellow ribbons really mean?

David McLaughlin
San Francisco, Calif.

How many of the people of Iraq were killed in the 100-day bombing campaign by U.S.-led forces? "A very, very large number," Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf crowed soon after the ceasefire. He was referring to Iraqi troops, of course, and ignoring civilian deaths. But *how many*? No comment, said the general.

The U.S. government's campaign to destroy the Iraqi army and regime has been portrayed as a "clean" war. And yet the evidence is rather messy. The warplanes incinerated thousands of Iraqi men, women, and children. They were "just sitting ducks," one U.S. air squadron commander said of the Iraqi troops who were slaughtered on the highway while trying to withdraw from Kuwait.

And so it was understandable that Gen. Schwarzkopf would remain tight-lipped. But other officials tried to give reasons for their silence. "No one had any time to stop and count [the Iraqi dead]," one Bush administration official explained.

And now that the war was over,

the officials shrugged, let the Iraqis count the bodies. When reporters pointed out that the Geneva Convention's statutes require the victor in a battle to catalogue the enemy dead, they were told that the Saudi Arabian military had been assigned to the job—so stop asking.

Politicians won't "squeal"

Our "public servants" have been even more arrogant in denying our right to know the truth. Senator Joe Biden (D-Del.), speaking on the Phil Donahue television show in mid-March, admitted that the Pentagon had given him a count of Iraqi deaths. But he refused to say another word, because the matter was "classified."

Instead of open inquiry into how many Iraqis died, most of the news media were satisfied to give us conjectures from a handful of "experts" with computer models. Early accounts gauged that about 25,000 to 35,000 Iraqi soldiers had died. Civilian deaths were not even guessed at.

But other reports crept through. One "senior military official" told the *Los Angeles Times* on Feb. 28 that close to 10,000 men from one Republican Guard division alone were probably "destroyed" in the final days of the war. No prisoners were taken, he said, and no one was known to have escaped.

Finally, on March 23, another "senior military official" came through with a much higher

estimate than previously admitted. He said that over 100,000 Iraqi soldiers might have been killed by allied air and ground attacks, including as many as 25,000 in the last four days of the war.

Other non-governmental sources include civilian deaths in their estimates. The Red Cross and the Red Crescent say that between 100,000 and 200,000 Iraqi troops and civilians were killed. And the Iraqi-American Association estimates 400,000 casualties (dead and wounded).

The dying is still not over. Many of the wounded are expected to die; medicine and antiseptics are in severe shortage due to U.S.-imposed sanctions. According to a United Nations health team, disease epidemics "could cause more deaths and casualties than the fighting and bombing."

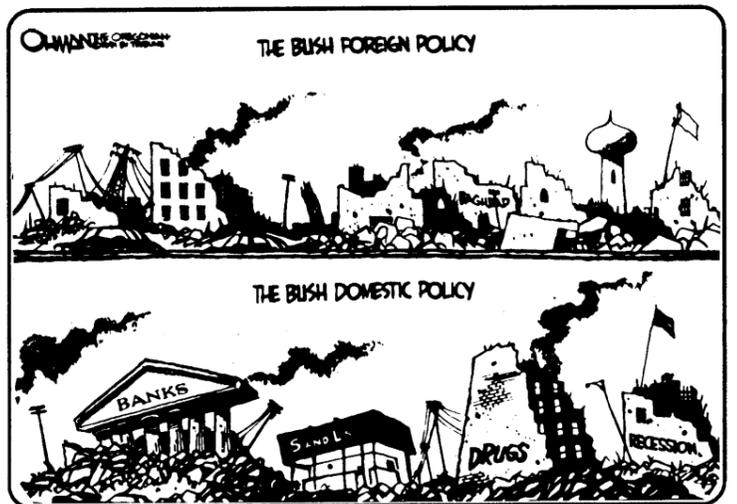
A new type of coverup

The U.S. government's coverup, of course, began at the very start of the war, when Baghdad and other cities were attacked from the air. The United States claimed that "surgical strikes" were being conducted against "military targets" only. The bombs were landing, they told the American people, with an accuracy rate of 80 percent.

Now the line has changed. The U.S. Air Force admits that most of its bombing runs were wildly inaccurate. In fact, only 30 percent of the bombs hit their target! The U.S. government has also been forced to acknowledge that many civilian buildings were destroyed (9000 Iraqi homes were demolished, according to the United Nations).

A new type of coverup has been set in motion, however. Now we are told that civilians weren't killed on purpose but because the United States did not have enough high-precision "smart" bombs, which could have avoided civilian targets. "Give us more money for weaponry," says the Pentagon, "and we promise to be more accurate in the next war!"

Unfortunately, the government is still withholding the truth. Fragmentation bombs were dropped on



some neighborhoods. These weapons are used to kill people, not to disable "military targets."

U.S. planes attacked a bomb shelter and university classrooms. One bridge was hit at three in the afternoon, when 400 civilians were crossing it. Were these just examples of "collateral damage?" Or were they examples of a systematic terror campaign against the Iraqi people?"

"Nowhere to Hide"

The tragic results of the U.S. bombing are shown in a new video, "Nowhere to Hide." In mid-February, the filmmakers accom-

panied former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark on a tour of Baghdad, Basra, and other Iraqi towns. Their film documents bomb strikes against a baby's milk factory, a soft-drink bottling plant, a hotel, a public market, buses and trucks on the highway, and numerous private homes.

Two U.S. networks refused to honor their earlier commitments to televise "Nowhere to Hide." But the 28-minute film, in VHS format, can be ordered for \$25. For more information, call the San Francisco-based Emergency Committee to Stop the U.S. War in the Middle East at (415) 821-6545. ■

Socialist ACTION

**Closing date:
March 31, 1991**

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Socialist Action (ISSN 0747-4237) is published monthly for \$8 per year by Socialist Action Publishing Association, 3435 Army St., No. 308, San Francisco, CA 94110. Second-class postage is paid at San Francisco, Calif.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Socialist Action*, 3435 Army St., No. 308, San Francisco, CA 94110.

RATES: For one year (12 issues)—U.S. 2nd Class: \$8, 1st Class: \$18; Canada and Mexico 2nd Class: \$12, 1st Class: \$16; All other countries 2nd Class: \$15, 1st Class: \$30. (Money orders, checks should be in U.S. dollars.)

Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of *Socialist Action*. These are expressed in editorials.

Aftermath of the Iraqi defeat: What are the consequences for the Arab revolution?

American imperialism's victory over the Arab people cannot be underestimated, at least in terms of its most immediate consequences. The U.S. ruling-class victory is of such scope that it could afford to allow the Kurds in northern Iraq and the Shiite majority, which is strongest in the south, to begin a struggle to overthrow the Saddam Hussein government.

In other circumstances, such an uprising would arouse the greatest fears in the hearts of ruling classes everywhere. The Kurds are a greatly oppressed people, who suffer ruthless repression in Turkey and Iran, as well as in Iraq. And the Shiites constitute the most exploited and largest component of the Muslims in the Middle East and North Africa. The capitalist world knows that a successful uprising in Iraq could trigger wider revolts throughout the region. And the logic of these nationalist revolts would tend to challenge the capitalist system itself.

Up until March 26, U.S. imperialism seemed confident it could keep the revolt from getting out of hand and becoming a new threat to its domination. But soon after Kirkuk, a major city in northern Iraq (historically a part of the Kurdish nation, Kurdistan), fell to the Kurdish insurgents, the U.S. position shifted dramatically, as we shall see.

Open door to revolution

While history teaches that defeat in war opens the door to political and social revolution, the specific circumstances of this defeat is for the present not favorable for revolutionary forces.

Having dealt a decisive blow to Iraqi military power and having established an army of occupation in the Gulf region of formidable size, fire-power, and mobility, the U.S. military forces are in excellent position to intimidate and overwhelm any revolutionary risings in the areas that threaten to get out of control.

Given current military and political advantages, U.S. imperialism was able to momentarily grant insurgent Kurds and Shiites a long leash. Their rebellion objectively served the immediate prime aim of American imperialism—to dismember the military and political power of Iraq and force the overthrow of the Saddam Hussein wing of the Iraqi ruling class.

This would complete the intended warning to all potential opponents of imperialist interests of the grave consequences they can expect to suffer if they dare to defy and upset the New World Order.

Imperialist interests were briefly served by the intervention of the Iranian ruling class, which has jumped on the bandwagon of the American victory. Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani has followed, from the beginning of the U.S. invasion of the Persian Gulf, a consistent course of seeking whatever advantage could be gained for his regime and the Iranian capitalists.

From the outset, the Iranian rulers maneuvered between the Hussein regime—their foremost adversary in the Arab world—on one side and the "Great Satan" headquartered in Washington, D.C., on the other. And now they seek to improve Iran's position in the Gulf by buying influence with the insurgent forces by aiding their struggle to overthrow Saddam Hussein.

(The U.S. media reported that Iran was a major supplier of weapons, supplies, and moral support for both rebel groups seeking Hussein's overthrow.)

But imperialism will keep a loose rein on Iran, as it did with the Kurd and Shiite rebels, only so long as this serves its immediate interests. When any of these forces overstep limits unilaterally set by Bush and Co., or when it suits the latter for any other reason, they will speedily rein them in or crush them.

In the first period after Iraq's defeat, the U.S. rulers viewed the insurgency with equanimity and only showed their fangs by shooting down a couple of Iraqi warplanes to let all sides know they are in the driver's seat. Nevertheless, the Bush Administration has permitted the Hussein government to use its formidable helicopter gunships to great effect in dealing effective blows against the rebels—despite a much publicized warning that they would shoot them down.

And at the end of March, the U.S. appeared ready to finalize a peace treaty imposed on Iraq that will permit the Iraqi rulers to also use their warplanes to put down the struggles of the Shiites and Kurds for democ-



Shiites demonstrate in Basra during uprising that followed Iraqi defeat in Gulf war.



'...having established an army of occupation in the Gulf region, the U.S. military forces are in excellent position to intimidate and overwhelm any revolutionary risings in the areas that threaten to get out of control.'

racy and self-determination.

This cynical American about-face from their basic rationalization for invading the Persian Gulf ("to defend democracy and the right of self-determination for little Kuwait") can now be clearly seen for what it was—pure baloney.

Contradictory results

A United Nations delegation, sent to Iraq to determine the extent of war damage, found that the destruction wreaked by the U.S. bombardment was catastrophic, having blasted the country "back to a pre-industrial society."

Clearly, this slaughter will have two contradictory results: On the one hand, it will instill fear in the hearts of all of U.S. imperialism's potential and actual adversaries. This is the intended result, and it puts the American rulers in position to effectively police the world in defense of its class interests in the first place and those of the

world's capitalists in the second.

But on the other hand, when the initial shock of the American victory wears off, the outrage evoked by the merciless and wanton slaughter of hundreds of thousands of Iraqis will continue to boil beneath the surface, especially in the colonial world, multiplying the force of new revolutionary explosions certain to come.

Although the Bush administration and the American ruling class is euphoric over their victory, they are far from oblivious to the precarious position of world capitalism. They show this deep concern by taking care to warn the members of their class not to get carried away by their intoxicating victory. The editorial mouthpieces for the highest echelons of America's capitalist class have been reminding their constituents that the economic, financial, and political problems besetting their world order have not gone away.

The best-informed of America's rulers,

moreover, understand that the adventure in the Gulf is only a step toward preparing for the coming outbreak of deep crises in every corner of the world capitalist structure.

And as if to punctuate their sobering editorials, the headlines hitting the front pages of the nation's press tell of the ongoing critical developments threatening to upset the equilibrium of world capitalism.

Not the least of these ominous symptoms of decaying capitalism in America and the world are the additional billions voted almost weekly to bail out the bankrupt savings and loan industry. And evidence that the deterioration of the system worsens is registered by the \$70 billion "loan" requested by U.S. Treasury officials just last month to back up the nation's tottering banking system.

The New York Times wishfully reported on March 27: "A taxpayer bailout of the banks can be avoided if Congress approves the administration's proposed banking legislation and if the economy avoids a complete collapse." [emphasis added].

Police violence at home

And no less disconcerting to the American rulers is the thunderous outcry against the inhuman beating of a helpless Black motorist after he was arrested for speeding. This atrocity, caught on the video tape of a bystander and repeatedly shown on television (see story on page 16), has compelled media editorialists across the country to condemn both this police lawlessness and the attempt by their apologists to portray it as an exception.

Virtually the entire world was made an eyewitness to this graphic example of police methods.

But there are two major factors which compel them to make the record against police brutality: First, is that the sections of the working class most subjected to police terror see the video images as indisputable evidence that this kind of thing goes on in the ghettos of America all the time!

Second, the ruling class knows that the connection between the police terror and its counterpart in Iraq, and before that Panama, Grenada, the Dominican Republic, Vietnam, and Korea—to name only the most outstanding cases of world imperialist brutality—is all too obvious.

Reactions by the American people to these and other such events in the current period of continuing "prosperity" will be qualitatively more explosive when the coming wave of new taxes, intensified inflation, and increasing unemployment reduces mass toleration of social injustice to the vanishing point. ■

Public education under attack in Calif.

Massive education cuts signal war against teachers, students

By CAROLE SELIGMAN

SAN FRANCISCO—There is a war on against the youth of California. It takes the form of enormous cutbacks of the public education system—kindergarten through the 12th grade—cutbacks to the state university and college systems, and cutbacks to state-funded pre-school and childcare programs.

Thousands of teachers in every school district in the state have been notified that they may be laid off for the next school year. In San Francisco, some 1300 teachers have received these notices.

Local school boards are meeting in California towns and cities to plan the cuts they will inflict on the children. These include gutting sports programs, the arts, instrumental music, remedial reading programs, classroom aides, and more. California's student/teacher ratio (class size), which is now the *worst* in the country, will get even worse if Gov. Pete Wilson gets his way.

The drastic nature of the proposed cuts, coming in the wake of the \$1.5 billion-a-day U.S. war against Iraq, is an upsetting contradiction to many of the teachers who face unemployment and parents who face a decline in the quality of their children's education.

San Francisco antiwar groups, who are co-sponsoring an April 6 protest demonstration against the U.S. occupation of Iraq, point out that the \$25 million proposed cut in the city's school budget is the equivalent of 24 minutes of the Gulf war!

Proposition 98

Gov. Wilson is trying to suspend Proposition 98, the legislation that guarantees that the schools receive a certain percentage (41 percent) of the California budget. This legislation was put on the ballot through a massive petition campaign spearheaded by the California Teachers Association (CTA) and approved by the voters in 1988.

The governor, faced with a deficit in the California budget, wants to suspend this guaranteed minimum school-financing plan and force the teachers and kids to pay for the deficit. Governor Wilson has gone out of his way to attack teachers, claiming that they are overpaid. In the bankrupt Richmond school district, he is trying to get the teachers to give up their collective bargaining agreement as a trade-off for a state-funded bail-out required to keep the schools open.

Wilson and state legislators are playing a series of political games with the budget. Bandied about are proposals to increase fees for the universities and colleges, taxes on everything not already subject to the state sales tax (like food items), and an increase in the state income tax.

Working people will be forced to pay first for the Gulf war through next year's income taxes and then pay more again through new state taxes for the social services being slashed. No politicians are calling for the obvious solution: Tax the rich! A hundred percent tax on all war industry profits! Tax the oil companies, in whose interests the war was fought!

Many teachers and parents have com-



Teachers, parents and students will have to mobilize to protect public education.

mented that the governor's proposed across-the-board cuts for social services needed by working people include no reductions for prisons and other aspects of the "criminal justice" system.

Always money for jails

At a recent Socialist Action forum in San Francisco, the Rev. Ellis-Hagler, a leader of Boston's Black community, reported that the United States has the highest percentage of its population in prison of any country in the world, with 426 incarcerated for every 100,000 people. The rate for African Americans is 3109 for every 100,000.

One out of every four Black males in the United States is under control of the criminal "justice" system (in prison, jail or on parole). This is four times apartheid South Africa's rate of incarceration of Blacks! It seems that the ruling class believes prisons to be a better alternative to quality public education.

Because the school cutbacks affect the entire working class of California, large mobilizations of teachers, parents, and students could be mounted which would defend public education and win the support of the

majority of people in the state.

Each school could be an organizing center for such mobilizations. Meetings of parents, teachers, students, and the community could be organized at each school site to discuss and organize such mobilizations.

This perspective is, unfortunately, at odds with the view put forth by teachers' union leaders. They seem to expect help and support from Democratic Party legislators who support some combination of retaining Proposition 98 with support to new taxes on working people.

The lion's share of organizing by the teachers' unions thus far centers on lobbying legislators through visits, letters, or petitions—with only limited efforts to mobilize those most directly affected by the proposed cuts.

The demonstration planned for April 3 in Sacramento (scheduled to accommodate the Rainbow Coalition's schedule for Democrat Jesse Jackson) hopefully will mobilize a large outpouring of support for funding public education. But holding it on a school and work day will surely cut down its potential size.

While Jackson has spoken in defense of the schools, he has not offered an indepen-

What if the union...

By LITA BLANC

SAN FRANCISCO—On March 19, the auditorium of Lincoln High School filled with most of the 1300 San Francisco teachers who had received layoff notices the previous Friday.

The meeting had been planned by the United Educators of San Francisco (UESF), not as an open forum in which to discuss strategies for fighting the cutbacks, but rather as a meeting to inform teachers of their legal status.

Although Joan-Marie Shelley, president of the UESF, made a brief announcement about the April 3 protest march in Sacramento, she requested speakers to limit themselves to specific questions about the layoffs.

The school district sent out layoff notices to all teachers who had been hired since June 1983 with the intent of actually laying off at least 500.

Certain teachers with credentials in "priority" programs such as bilingual and special education, math, and science were supposedly going to be spared—regardless of seniority. Needless to say, there was great anxiety among those present over who was actually going to get the axe.

Teacher after teacher went up to the microphone with questions which revealed the impending tragedy if the budget cuts are allowed to go through.

"Is there any way to know where I rank among the 1300 teachers who got layoff notices?" one asked. "If I lose my job, I will have to put my house on the market," said another. "I just completed my two-year probationary period and am supposed to be granted tenure. Which will come first, tenure or layoff?"

Most moving of all, was the teacher who asked what he could do for his friend who had received a layoff notice and was in an intensive-care unit, dying of AIDS. Layoff for his friend could mean suspension of all disability and medical benefits.

Can nothing be done? What if the union stressed united action of all teachers against the layoffs? What if the union said, "Our unity is our strength! All teachers should go to Sacramento on April 3 to show that we will not be divided, one against another."

What if the union organized mass membership meetings to involve all the teachers in a democratic discussion about how to protect public education in California? It seems to me that these would all be positive steps. ■

dent perspective or program for mounting this defense. His affiliation to the Democratic Party precludes such a defense.

Gov. Wilson is hoping that a divide-and-conquer strategy of splitting off support for Proposition 98 from the other public employee unions will work. "Equal sacrifice" is the governor's phony rallying call, and it has had some success with some unions—such as the Service Employees International Union, which calls for suspension of Proposition 98.

What's needed is a true united front of all public employee unions and all those who rely on public services to fight together against the cutbacks.

These services are rights, not privileges. We paid for them. We want them. Our children need them. Join the fight for No Cutbacks! ■

The following statement was issued by Joni Jacobs, Socialist Action candidate for Mayor of San Francisco, Calif.

The right of San Francisco's children to free public education is under attack. Last month, 1,638 teachers and school staff received lay-off notices. School closures are planned, along with the elimination of most extra-curricular programs.

Governor Wilson says that with a projected \$10 billion state budget deficit, California's public schools must bear their "fair share." He intends to slash public school funds by \$2 billion, declaring an all-out war against the teachers' unions and our youth.

Yet in this era of so-called "budget

No Cutbacks! Tax the Rich!

deficits," the government just spent \$46 billion to put an emir back on the throne of Kuwait, and more than \$300 billion to bail out the S&L's which were raped by the rich and greedy.

Working people will pay for the war against Iraq and the S&L bailout through higher taxes and lower living standards. Yet the profits of the oil companies and banks that benefited from these expenditures go untouched. Meanwhile, our children must beg for school funding.

Quality public education is a democratic right as fundamental as freedom of speech,

assembly, and religion. But public education isn't our birthright. It was a victory won in a struggle to end the oppressive system of child labor. Working people, organized in their labor unions, fought to put their children in quality schools rather than in work houses and factories.

The only way to save quality public education is how it was won—through the joint, mass, independent action of everyone affected by the proposed cutbacks. Organized to fight for our own interests, we parents, teachers, students, and tax-

payers can force the government to fund our schools.

Neither the Democrats nor Republicans can be entrusted or relied upon to save our schools. Both parties put the profits of the banks and oil companies before the needs of our children. Both parties treat public education as a political football, endangering our children's futures in the process.

We need a government that taxes war profits 100% to pay for vital social programs. We need a government that values our children's futures more than it values the profits of the oil companies.

It's better to vote for what you want and not get it than to vote for what you don't want and get it. Vote to put human needs before profits. Vote for Socialist Action.

30,000 protest Draconian budget cuts in New York

By CHRIS BUTTERS

NEW YORK—Cutbacks and layoffs instituted by Democratic Party governors and mayors are as much a part of the capitalist class's war against poor and working people in the 1990s as the shooting wars waged by Republican presidents.

Nowhere is this clearer than in New York State, where Governor Mario Cuomo and New York City Mayor David Dinkins have instituted massive cutbacks and layoffs to make up budget deficits.

In Albany, Cuomo has announced layoffs of 10 percent of the state work force and massive cutbacks in vital social services. This is to cover a projected shortfall of \$6 billion. In New York City, Mayor Dinkins has announced similar measures to fill a \$3 billion deficit.

Democratic Governor Cuomo may criticize cuts in federal aid to the states by Republican presidents. Dinkins may blast cuts in aid to New York City by both Republican Bush and fellow Democratic Governor Cuomo. But all are united on one thing—given the deepening economic crisis, the profits of the banks and corporations are sacrosanct. It is the working people, not the rich, who must pay.

Marching on the Capitol

On March 20, over 30,000 demonstrated in Albany to protest Governor Cuomo's proposed \$4.5 billion program of cutbacks. The protest demonstration, initiated by the state legislature's Black and Puerto Rican Caucus, was backed by New York's largest labor unions (District Council 37 of AFSCME, Local 1199 of the Health and Hospital Workers, and District 65 of the United Automobile Workers). It was the largest demonstration to date on this issue.

While the banks and corporations pay the lowest tax rate in modern state history, Cuomo has proposed to resolve the deficit through means of layoffs, cutbacks, furloughs, "wage deferrals," and increased taxes on poor and working people.

This is happening in the context of a drive by the banks and corporations to resolve their profit crisis through speedup of workers at the point of production, giveback union contracts, layoffs, and union busting.

"Tax the rich! No Cutbacks, No Layoffs!" Dennis Rivera, president of Local 1199 of the Health and Hospital Workers Union, told the crowd, as it gathered on the steps of the Capitol.

"These cuts will bring catastrophic devastation to neighborhoods," said Paul Webster, spokesman for the New York Black and Puerto Rican caucus. Among the areas that are to be cut the deepest are programs in healthcare, housing, education, and transportation. These will fall hardest on New York's Black, Latino, and other oppressed minority populations.

"This is the largest protest in American history against an American governor by people of color," claimed Shakoor Aljuwan, coordinator of the rally. "Not even during the height of the civil rights movement did any mass of people march against the governor."

DC 37 members, who recently received a measly 2.25 percent wage increase, were there. Public Employee Federation members, who have been forced to take a "wage deferral" (i.e., a pay cut of 10 percent) were present.

Black and Latin youth marched; many of them will be forced to leave school if required to pay the proposed \$500 per semester increase at state schools. Seniors, AIDS activists, and antiwar activists also added their voices.

Pandering to big business

While the federal government is bailing out the savings and loan bankers to the tune of \$300 billion and paying for the massive war budget, federal aid to New York City is being slashed. In response, Cuomo has chopped off \$4.6 billion in aid to New York municipalities, wreaking further havoc on New York City's tottering schools,



Dennis Rivera, president of Local 1199 of Hospital Workers, addresses Albany, N.Y. anti-cutbacks rally.

No Cutbacks, No Layoffs!

healthcare, and transportation system.

Speakers at the Albany demonstration did not just confine themselves to calls for increases in federal aid. Particular emphasis was placed on Cuomo's pandering to big business in the form of slashed taxes for banks and corporations.

According to a study released by State Senator Franz Leichter's office, income from 1980 to 1988 rose 68 percent for the state's richest 5 percent, while their tax bills fell 27 percent. During the same period, middle-income residents took a 26 percent fall in income and a 14 percent increase in taxes.

Meanwhile, the Fiscal Policy Institute reported that overall state tax breaks for corporations and wealthy individuals totaled 3.2 billion in 1990.

Reinstitution of previously cut taxes on the rich would result in the state recouping \$7 billion in revenue. But seriously taxing the rich at a time of economic crisis for the banks and corporations would betray the very forces who are the Democratic Party's most important backers. Instead, Cuomo has proposed a highly regressive sales tax on cigarettes and gasoline.

In New York City, Dinkins has sought to fortify the city's credit rating by cuts in family-planning clinics, the child welfare administration, and cuts in programs that treat children with drug problems. At the same time, he has called for 6000 new police on the streets.

Dinkins has outlined a \$60 billion capital program for his administration, which will enrich underwriters and institutional

investors as it further crowds out money for social services. Dinkins plans to triple interest costs during his administration. This amount is more than all the city funds spent last year for medical assistance, public assistance, child welfare, homelessness and AIDS put together!

A labor-community coalition

Earlier in the week, on March 16, over 250 activists attended a conference at the headquarters of District 65 of the United Automobile Workers to discuss building a "labor-community coalition" to fight budget cuts in the city and state.

The conference was attended by representatives of numerous antiracist, labor, community, abortion rights and antiwar organizations.

An important feature of the coalition, according to co-chairperson Miriam Thompson of Local 259 of the United Automobile Workers, is a campaign for tax justice. Emphasis is on progressive taxes, instead of the present system in New York State, where a worker who makes \$27,000 and a real estate magnate who makes \$27 million pay the same income tax!

Included in the proposal are calls to tax the rich (those with incomes over \$100,000), eliminate tax exemptions for luxury development, and tax elite nonprofit organizations like Columbia University.

The proposal has recently won a hearing in the New York City labor movement. It has been endorsed by Local 1150 of the

Communications Workers of America and a local of the United Automobile Workers union.

Bob Fitch, a consultant with Local 1180 of the Communications Workers of America, motivated the proposal for a tax justice campaign. "Wall Street profited hugely from the '80s," he pointed out. "New York City real estate values increased 400 percent. The Dow Jones rose 300 percent. The permanent government had a party, and now they want to pass the bill on to workers and the middle class."

"We need tax alternatives," he said. "We will be told that there are no realistic alternatives—that our ideas are impractical, impolitic, unachievable. But we say, if the Wall can fall in Berlin, if apartheid can be smashed in South Africa, the rich can be taxed in New York City."

Union tops' dead-end strategy

Key to building such a community-labor coalition in the 1990s, Fitch argued, is a strong and militant labor movement—which breaks with the dead-end strategy of business trade unionism.

Pointing to the failure of the New York City labor movement to stop cutbacks and layoffs during the city's fiscal crisis in the mid-1970s, Fitch argued that, this time around, organized labor must build bridges with other unions and the communities they serve.

Rarely has the labor movement had a better opportunity to build such bridges than in the recent period. The explosive *Daily News* strike, happening in the context of the massive cutbacks and layoffs demanded by the Cuomo and Dinkins administrations, raised the burning need for concrete solidarity within the labor movement.

The contracts of two important municipal workers unions expired during this time (District Council 37 of AFSCME and Local 237 of the Teamsters). But so far, the response by organized labor to the crisis has been strikingly similar to that of 1975.

An important call for a one-day strike by New York City labor with the *Daily News* strikers was passed overwhelmingly by the Delegated Council of Local 1199 in November. But it was scuttled in the Central Labor Council.

DC 37's leader Stanley Hill, who still points with pride to the union's collaboration with the bankers in bailing the city out of the last budget crisis, pointed to DC 37's recent settlement as a victory. Buying into the logic of the capitalist austerity drive, he recently wrote, "It was the best we could get under the circumstances."

Ironically, the labor top's strategy of business trade unionism sold short even its own members. In addition to dividing the struggle for a decent contract from the struggle against cutbacks city-wide, the 2.25 percent wage increase is far short of the current 6 percent inflation rate.

What about their "promises?"

It seems a long time since Cuomo declared in his inauguration speech that the 1990s were going to be "the Decade of the Child" in New York State. Many who supported Dinkins and Cuomo in the last election were some of their most vociferous opponents in Albany on March 2.

But in instituting these cutbacks, these politicians have not betrayed their program. Nor have they "forgotten" their promises—as some would have it. In 1989, even as Dinkins was making his biggest pledges to working people who supported him, banker Felix Rohatyn was moving to endorse him on the grounds that Dinkins was the candidate best able to lure working people into accepting the sacrifices ahead.

In Albany, on March 20, a popular sign carried by demonstrators was "Who Elected Wall Street?" But in a sense, whenever we vote for Democrats and Republicans—the twin parties of the "permanent government," as Fitch put it—we are electing Wall Street.

Taxation policy regarding the poor and the rich is but the tip of the iceberg. Intimately linked with the question of taxation is the whole system of production for profit, in which every day the poor grow poorer and the rich grow richer. The problem is the capitalist system.

Labor and the oppressed need their own party. We must mobilize independently of the Democrats and Republicans if we are to effectively fight the forces behind the cutbacks and layoffs—let alone build a positive alternative to war, racism, unemployment, and union-busting. ■



George Cohen/Impact Visuals

Nov. 14, 1990, solidarity rally for striking Daily News workers. The ranks took strike more seriously than the bureaucrats.

Daily News strike ends; mixed result for workers

By GERRY FIORI

NEW YORK—On March 12, a tentative agreement was reached at the New York *Daily News* between the unions of the allied Trades Printing Council and the paper's new owner, British newspaper magnate Robert Maxwell. Once ratified by the union memberships, it will bring an end to the over four-month-long strike.

The proposed contract would be for three years, with no pay raise in the first year and wage reopeners in the other two. Eight hundred of the 2300 unionized workers at the paper will lose their jobs and one of the three printing plants will be closed, but the "permanent replacement" scabs hired by the *News* management during the strike will be removed and the question of "management rights" on the shop floor (the immediate cause of the strike) will be dropped for now.

Upon hearing of the agreement, strikers walking the picket line celebrated with champagne in plastic cups, while their union leaders hailed it as a great victory. It will now be necessary in the strike's aftermath to assess the validity of these sentiments.

Role of union bureaucrats

The result at the *Daily News* represented a partial victory. It was the best outcome possible, given the no-win strategy pursued by the bureaucrats heading the striking unions—aided and abetted by the New York City Central Labor Council.

The rank and file were the ones who successfully built the strike and made it as effective as it was. They used flying pickets (which enforced the boycott on the scab

News by preventing its being sold at newstands), allied themselves with other workers in struggle in the city, mobilized tens of thousands in solidarity demonstrations, and got out the striker-produced *Real News* to tell their side of the story.

Their unity, militancy, and sense of organization upset the plans of the Tribune Co. (the Chicago-based former owner of the *News*) to stage a repeat of the 1985 *Chicago Tribune* strike by provoking a walkout in order to bust the paper's unions and set up a non-union operation.

The fact that any new contract was won at all was solely due to the fact that the strike survived in the later months on the momentum built by the mobilization of the striking ranks and the support they won from the city's workers, who correctly saw the *News* strikers' fight as their own.

The union bureaucrats, on the other hand, searched for a "white knight" to buy the paper, promoted a Corporate Campaign-style boycott based on moral appeals, perpetuated illusions in capitalist politicians as "friends of labor," and reined in their members in the face of anti-strike injunctions against mass picketing at the *News* plants.

They also connived with the Central Labor Council to thwart attempts at sympathy strikes by the city's transit and hospital workers. Finally, they let it be known from the start that they were willing to accept for the *News* workers the same concessionary terms imposed on the *New York Post* workers in their contract signed shortly before the *News* strike.

This dead-end strategy continually acted to sabotage the efforts of the ranks, who were

not able to develop an alternative leadership of their own. As a result, the strike eventually shifted from a mass class-struggle fight to a process of closed-room dealing.

The mobilizations in the street ceased, the *Real News* was no longer published, and the circulation of the scab *News* increased from 25 percent to 50 percent of pre-strike figures.

The bureaucrats are now touting the virtues of Robert Maxwell as the "savior" who will act in partnership with the unions to make the *News* a successful paper again.

Maxwell, however, is no better than any other boss. Known as "Mad Max" and "Cap'n Bob the Pirate," he is a corporate raider in the mold of Rupert Murdoch, Carl Icahn, and Donald Trump, with a reputation in Britain as a notorious union-buster.

Given the present state of the *News*—with reduced circulation, lack of advertising, and a massive debt—Maxwell will undoubtedly press for further concessions in the near future.

Thus, the present *News* contract represents at best a temporary respite (under rather onerous terms) in a fight which will no doubt continue at a later date. What could have been a significant victory is instead a fairly hollow one.

Lessons to be learned

The *Daily News* strike must also be seen, however, in the context of the current state of the labor movement. Strikes have been primarily defensive in nature, attempting to preserve previous gains or even the existence of unions, rather than to make new gains.

In the past decade, the strikes which have attained national significance (PATCO,

Continental, Hormel, International Paper, Pittston, Eastern, Greyhound, etc.) have all involved the new norm for capitalism's anti-labor strategy: either union-busting through permanent replacements (and continued operation under non-union conditions), or closing down operations entirely.

Of these strikes, only Pittston can in any way be called a victory. Through the militancy of the union ranks, with the active solidarity of the whole of the United Mine Workers, the Pittston miners showed that it was still possible to go on strike and return to work afterwards under union conditions in a company still in business.

The Pittston strikers did give concessions in their contract, in terms of hours and jobs, which were important givebacks. The issue of court-levied fines was never resolved.

However, and more important in this situation, they preserved their union and with it the means to fight in the future. They showed by their example that strikes are not obsolete today, to be replaced by consumer boycotts and legal maneuvering, which was a conclusion being drawn by many workers after a decade of defeats.

In this context, the strike at the *Daily News* can be seen as the closest thing to a Pittston that has occurred in recent years. Although the concessions made in this strike were severe, and the future security of the remaining workers' jobs uncertain, the fact remains that the *News* strikers defeated the Tribune Co. in their stated aim of operating the paper non-union while avoiding a situation like that of the Eastern strike where the destruction of the company, destroyed thousands of union jobs as well.

Further, by their example, the striking ranks have demonstrated important tactical methods that can be utilized in the future.

Finally, there are a few long-term lessons that class-struggle fighters can learn from this strike. The main ones are the need for a strategy of mass picketing to shutdown production and the extension of strikes in order to maximize labor power.

The thousands of workers who attended rallies at the paper's headquarters could have instead been mobilized at the printing plants to prevent scabs, printing paper, and ink from coming in. Other unions could have been called out to strike in sympathy (for which there was significant sentiment).

The monthly *Real News* could have been developed into a daily in order to provide a tool for organizing the strike and a working-class source of information to counter the capitalist-owned media. Above all, what was needed was the will to rely solely on the organized power of the working class to conquer all obstacles.

The labor movement in this country still has a long way to go before it can successfully halt the employers' offensive and begin to counterattack.

There will be more defeats and semi-defeats before the business unionist bureaucrats are ousted and the unions are transformed into fighting organizations. The labor movement will then go on to organize the unemployed to prevent scabbing, fight the threat of plant closures with the demand for nationalization under workers' control, and form a labor party based on the unions.

To learn the correct lessons of present-day strikes and to successfully apply them will help to hasten that day. ■

S. African mineworkers solidarize with Mark Curtis defense campaign

The following is a letter from the National Union of Mineworkers of South Africa expressing support for the release of political activist Mark Curtis.

Curtis is a member of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) who was framed-up and convicted of rape and burglary charges in Des Moines, Iowa. He is currently serving a 25-year prison sentence.

We thank you for the information regarding the victimization of Mark Curtis. Once again the slogan of "An injury to one is an injury to all" applies.

We confirm our support for the campaign for the following reasons:

Mark Curtis was severely beaten and framed up on a false rape charge by the Des Moines police because of his political activism and involvement in the United Food and Commercial Workers Union.

The case is another example of police brutality against unionists and political activists. Rape charges are fabricated against political activists as part of the harassment and intimidation by the police.

The young Black "alleged" rape victim is a clear example of how the police treat Blacks and foreign migrant workers with racist contempt.

This case is a complete miscarriage of justice by the court, which often proclaims itself to be the custodian of justice.

The 25-year sentence passed by the court makes a mockery of justice. What should have been on trial is police brutality, harassment and violence against political activists, unionists, Blacks and migrant workers.

Our trade union represents mineworkers from South and Southern Africa. A large number of our members are migrant workers as the result of the inhuman policies of this

racist government.

We live in a country which is the focus point of the international community because of the system of apartheid. Apartheid has caused incalculable damage to the lives of its victims. The majority of the people in South Africa are denied their basic human rights.

The South African government uses the most brutal form of repression in trying to destroy any opposition to its inhuman policies. The fact that the state of emergency was lifted proves that no force can stop the march of people to freedom and justice.

As victims of apartheid and state repression we express our full support to the campaign for the unconditional release and dropping of all charges against Mark Curtis.

Our members give their support to the Mark Curtis Defense Committee and hope that in the end justice will prevail.

We urge you to intensify this campaign at all levels. The perpetrators of injustice should not be allowed to rest. All organizations believing in justice must support this campaign.

In conclusion, I wish to remind all those

fighting and believing in the innocence of Mark Curtis of the words of Pastor Niemoller:

"First they came for the Jews and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew. Then they came for the communists and I did not speak out because I was not a communist

Then they came for the trade unionist and I did not speak out because I was not a trade unionist

Then they came for me and there was no one left to speak out for me"

The growing support for the Mark Curtis Defense Committee illustrates the justness of your cause.

We finally wish you success in your campaign and believe that Mark Curtis must be released soon and charges dropped against him.

"AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL"

Yours faithfully,
Jesse Maluleke
CAMPAIGNS COORDINATOR

Nat'l rail strike looms as workers tire of delays, company tricks

By BILL REGAN
and ART LE CLAIR

After over three years of fruitless negotiations, unions representing more than 200,000 railroad workers have set an April 17 deadline for a nationwide walkout if a new contract is not agreed to before that date.

Contract talks became stalled last year when negotiators for the major freight carriers refused to discuss anything until the issue of a "more acceptable and cost effective healthcare plan" was resolved. The carriers want rail workers to pay at least 25 percent of the costs of their medical plan. Members of the involved rail unions have had a fully paid health plan since 1955. They say they are unwilling to give it up.

The dispute was submitted to a Presidential Emergency Board under the provisions of the National Railway Labor Act (NRLA). The board's subsequent report, including recommendations for resolving the logjam, have been declared totally unacceptable by all the unions.

Included in the Presidential Emergency Board's recommendations are lump-sum payments instead of wage increases and agreement with the health-insurance premium co-payments sought by the carriers.

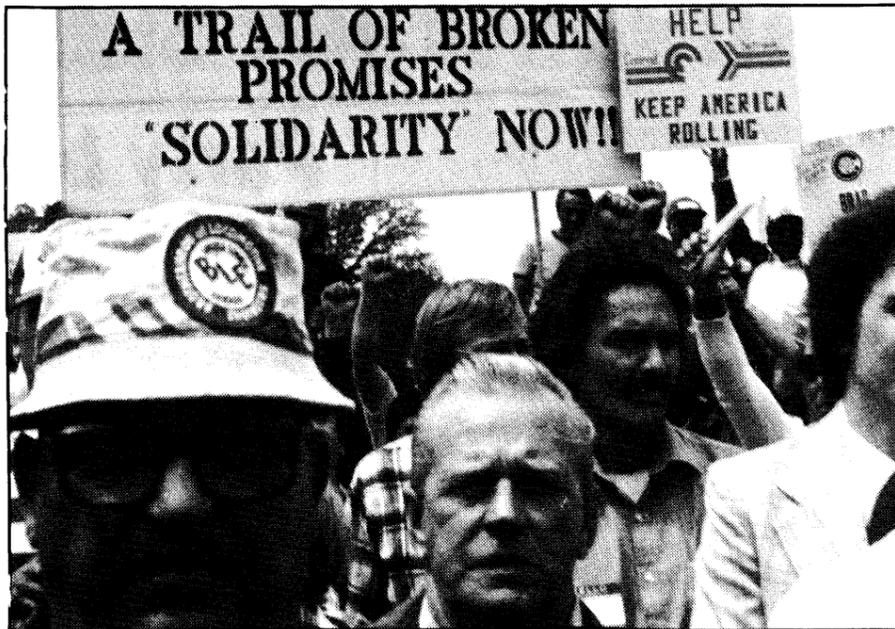
Endless series of delays

April 17 marks the end of a 60-day extension of a 30-day cooling-off period. The mutually agreed-to extension was the result of the war in the Persian Gulf. This "cooling-off" period is part of the endless series of delays in the collective bargaining process established under the NRLA.

The purported purpose of these built-in delays is to protect the railroads from preventable strike actions and to protect rail workers from being locked out prematurely by the carrier. In reality, these mechanisms are designed to prevent unions from conducting timely and effective job actions to pressure the railroads into bargaining in good faith.

Not only that, the delaying action allows the carriers to engage in a war of attrition with rail workers. The railroads are more

Bill Regan is president of Local 987, Brotherhood of Maintenance and Way Employees. Art Le Clair is vice president of Local 791, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.



Railworkers are tired of delays and trickery around negotiations.

than confident that they can hold out longer than the workers and their families.

The rail carriers have mastered this strategy over the years. It has become an accepted fact that once a labor contract expires, it will be at least three to four years before a new one can be "negotiated." This is also the case in the airline industry, where workers are also forced to live under the terms of the Railway Labor Act.

The fact of the matter is that the carriers don't really have to negotiate at all. They only go through the motions, drag their feet, utilize the delaying mechanisms of the NRLA, and when a "crisis" (strike) occurs, they let Congress implement its own settlement.

This usually amounts to enacting into law the recommendations of the Presidential Emergency Board. It is no coincidence that the findings of any such board are generally favorable to the railroads.

Given organized labor's miserable track record over the last decade, it would be understandable if rail workers hesitated to use the strike weapon. But that is not what is taking place!

Railworkers say, "Enough!"

One 33-year veteran locomotive engineer states, "I don't know what's going to happen if something isn't done soon. People are

mad as hell. I've never seen anything like this in all the years I've been working."

He went on to say, "At this point, I don't even care anymore. I say they either give us a decent contract or we strike them. If we lose, we lose. But it sure beats the hell out of laying down for them."

An assistant conductor with 10 months' service chimed in, "I agree. Maybe I've got less at stake than the others because I've only been here since June, and I gotta tell you, I never thought I'd ever make this kind of money, but everybody is mad. People are disgusted. How much bullshit do they expect us to take?"

Although rail workers sometimes feel that they are in the back waters of the labor movement, many have paid close attention to developments in recent years. People still talk about the show of solidarity in the lengthy Guilford strike, in which all the craft unions stuck together. (Guilford Transportation Industries operated the Maine Central, Boston and Maine, and Delaware and Hudson Railroads).

Perhaps the most significant lesson was learned during the machinists' strike against Eastern Airlines. One provision of the Railway Labor Act allows for the use of secondary boycotts. The machinists at Eastern considered taking advantage of the vague language in the Act and shut down

Amtrak and all commuter rail operations up and down the East Coast.

Two years ago, at the beginning of the Eastern strike, a special meeting was held in Boston. Representatives of all the rail unions talked with leaders of the Eastern strike about the situation. The machinists came to ask for cooperation and support if and when they made their move to shutdown Amtrak.

The response was overwhelming. Immediately, plans were drawn up to effectively shut everything down. Contingency plans were developed to aid the workers in defeating Amtrak's known desire to derail the strikers at Eastern. As soon as an Eastern mechanic showed up with a picket sign, Amtrak would have gone down.

When news of the meeting spread through the shops, one apprentice jumped up onto a work table and shouted, "People are pissed-off and ready to rock n' roll. Get ready, Mr. Claytor!" (W. Graham Claytor is the president and CEO of Amtrak.)

"Don't ask for permission"

Unfortunately, the machinists' union sought legal guidance as to the legitimacy of their shutting down railroads under the secondary boycott aspect of the NRLA—instead of just doing it. They were then derailed when a temporary injunction was issued to prevent them from carrying out their threat.

Afterward, Bill Connolly, chief shop steward of Local 1726 at Eastern Airlines in Boston, spoke about the outcome: "You know, some supporters had told us, don't ask permission, just do it. Set up your picket lines and let the chips fall where they may. Well, they were right. If I had it to do over again, I wouldn't hesitate. I'd shut them down, from Maine to Miami!"

Although not a party to the current national negotiations, Amtrak is at pretty much the same point as the freight carriers. Management has continued to make offers that are so ridiculous that no one can possibly accept them—or they make no offers at all.

At the local level, the bosses have stepped up petty harassment campaigns against union members and their representatives. They laugh when asked about their failure to comply with standing labor agreements.

In Boston, an organization made up of officials and rank-and-file activists has been formed in response to the arrogant behavior of company officials. Amtrak Workers United (AWU) has been able to bring together representatives from all 16 unions on the property.

AWU is now solidifying relations with officials on Amtrak's North Side Commuter Rail operation, formerly run by Guilford. As a strike is likely to hit Amtrak sometime after the national strike begins, closing ranks with these brothers and sisters is invaluable.

By SUZANNE FORSYTH

On March 20, in a decisive—but paradoxical—victory for workers' and women's rights, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the 1964 Civil Rights Act prohibited all employer "fetal protection" policies. The class action suit, *Automobile Workers v. Johnson Controls*, was the first before the Supreme Court to challenge a "fetal protection" exclusion policy.

The country's largest automobile battery manufacturer, Johnson Controls Inc., effectively barred "all women except those whose inability to bear children is medically documented" from jobs involving high exposure to lead. The case directly affects an estimated 25,000 women working with lead in manufacturing, and indirectly up to 20 million workers dealing with hazardous substances.

Justice Blackmun's majority opinion declared that federal law does not permit an employer to take fetal welfare into account in deciding whether to permit a pregnant or "potentially pregnant" woman to take a job.

Citing the Pregnancy Discrimination Act (P.D.A.) of 1978, an amendment to the Civil Rights Act, Blackmun stated: "Johnson Controls has attempted to exclude women because of their reproductive capacity. Title VII and the P.D.A. simply do not allow a woman's dismissal because of her failure to submit to sterilization."

Among plaintiffs in the UAW's suit were Mary Craig, who chose to be sterilized rather than lose her job; Elsie Nason, a 50-year-old woman who was transferred to a lower-pay-

Supreme Court rules:

'Fetal Protection' no excuse for sexual job discrimination

ing position; and Donald Penney, who was denied a leave of absence in order to lower the lead level of his blood while attempting to conceive a child.

Another Johnson Controls worker, Gloyce Qualls, a Black woman who submitted to sterilization, was quoted in *Newsweek* as saying, "I had no choice. I had bills to pay. I had to live."

Hypocrisy of "fetal protection"

Before the Civil Rights Act of 1964 became law, Johnson Controls did not employ any women in battery-manufacturing jobs. Today, only 13 of 280 of these positions are held by women. At \$20 an hour, these jobs are among the highest paid in Bennington County, Wisc., where the plant is located. Fetal protection policies "protected" women right out of higher-paying jobs in industry—where they are already grossly underrepresented.

Fetal protection policies have come about at a time when women's reproductive rights are increasingly threatened. These regulations must be viewed in conjunction with the government's overall attempts to control

women's reproductive decisions.

Interestingly, exclusionary policies are not found in female-dominated, lower-paid jobs, such as electronic and semi-conductor production or clerical work, though known reproductive hazards from chemicals, low-level radiation, and VDTs exist.

Exposure to lead affects the neurological development of fetuses and young children and, because it remains in the bloodstream, an unborn child can be harmed even after exposure is discontinued. Evidence is accumulating that lead affects men's sperm and the health of their offspring as well.

Workplace safety for everyone

The United Auto Workers Union (UAW) has maintained that employers must make the workplace safe for all workers and not discriminate against women. The Court's decision illuminates the fact that workers are having to choose between their jobs and their own health and ability to conceive and bear children.

While employers claim concern for future generations, their cynical bottom-line is the

dollar—the enormous cost of potential lawsuits on behalf of children with birth defects caused by toxics in the workplace.

Unfortunately, this decision does not force bosses to clean up workplaces, it only allows women equal opportunity to hazardous working conditions.

Exposure to lead can cause damage to the brain, central nervous system and kidneys, anemia, and high blood pressure leading to heart disease and strokes. These are the risks Johnson Controls and other workers' still face in addition to their reproductive health.

Why don't employers substitute safer substances, institute stricter protective measures, or research and develop new methods of operation? Denise Zutz, Johnson Controls spokesperson, speaks for all employers, protesting, "We don't know how to make it any safer, and if we did, it would be fabulously expensive." (*Newsweek*, April 1, 1991)

Despite this victory against sexual discrimination, the Court's decision at best amounts to assuring women's "right" to risk reproductive damage. There isn't much choice involved when the alternatives are unemployment or low-paid "women's work."

The Supreme Court decision implies that by complying with federal law, corporations may be protected from lawsuits involving birth defects. The Court declares that if employers fully inform women of the risk, the basis for liability "seems remote at best."

Clearly, unions and women's organizations must continue to struggle for a real solution—the right to safe jobs at living wages that give workers the ability to support themselves and bear healthy children. ■

By GERRY FOLEY

The confrontation in the Soviet Union—growing since the attempted military coup in Lithuania in January—has now reached a new peak. At the end of last month, the Gorbachev leadership openly used troops to try to intimidate a demonstration in support of Boris Yeltsin, the main all-Union representative of the opposition.

A few days before the March 28 pro-Yeltsin rally, Gorbachev decreed a ban on demonstrations in Moscow. The prohibition also came just in time to prevent any street protests against the price rises scheduled for April 2. Ironically, Yeltsin is a champion of the Shatalin 500-day program for rapid privatization, which logically calls for still more rapid and drastic price rises.

Yeltsin has tried to argue that transition to the market can be painless. Gorbachev's advisors have realistically explained that, since the market reforms require higher prices and unemployment, they can only be imposed by a strong government. There is thus a contradiction between Yeltsin's defense of the movement for democratic rights and his economic program.

This contradiction has been pointed up by the confrontation over the ban on demonstrations in Moscow. It is being sharpened by the spread of strikes, still mainly in the coal mines, demanding Gorbachev's resignation because of falling living standards under his market-reform-oriented government.

Thus, in *The New York Times* of March 28, Serge Schemann quoted a striking miner in Novokuznetsk, a coal-mining center, as saying: "We fight for Yeltsin. But we don't believe he can change anything quickly. It took centuries to build capitalism, and he's talking of 500 days. But we have to get rid of the Communists. It's our only chance."

What does it mean to "get rid of the Communists" without restoring capitalism? It doesn't seem that any major force in the Soviet opposition movements has yet thought that through. But the pressure of the events is more and more forcing the participants in the struggles to do so.

The miner's statement goes against the hitherto prevailing view in the anti-totalitarian movement that Stalinist totalitarianism was the political expression of the collectivist economy. In fact, the concrete experience of the struggle against the totalitarian bureaucracy is proving that the opposite is the case.

There is a basic contradiction between a collective economy and the bureaucracy, and the historic reason for totalitarianism is the bureaucracy's need to cover that up—to obscure the fact that while talking about defending socialism, it is actually pursuing its selfish parasitic interests.

In a fundamental sense, *perestroika* was designed to provide a new, more credible basis for the rule of the bureaucracy. The Moscow demonstration showed its failure.

Yeltsin: anti-totalitarian "hero"

The opposition movements in the Soviet Union up until now have had an anti-totalitarian character. That is, they have been directed against the all-embracing control of the bureaucratic state and single party, against the suppression of all political and social organizations independent of the Stalinist party-state, against a controlled press.

This explains why they include such a wide and contradictory spectrum of political and social programs.

The anti-totalitarians call themselves "democrats." But that is not a very precise term, because experience has not yet clarified what democracy means concretely in the USSR, and it is still clearer what they are against than what they are for.

Politics in the USSR and its constituent republics has continued to focus around the fight for the right to organize, to express political opposition to the ruling bureaucracy, and for political representation genuinely chosen by the people and able to act in accordance with its mandate.

Yeltsin, an *enfant terrible* of the bureaucracy turned populist politician, has emerged as the hero of the anti-totalitarian opposition on the all-Union level. He denounced the power and privileges of the bureaucracy. On that basis, he won 80 percent of the vote in Moscow in the election for the all-Union Congress of People's Deputies (the new broader assembly of delegates from which

Put on the defensive, Soviet bureaucracy shows its teeth

Party bosses threaten military repression



Referendum vote was no victory for Gorbachev

the Supreme Soviet is elected). He later was elected president of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation.

Then, Yeltsin took up the defense of the national-democratic movements challenging the central bureaucracy. His support for the Lithuanian government undermined Gorbachev's sanctions against the national-democratic regime, following the Lithuanian declaration of independence last March.

Yeltsin came to the aid of the elected Lithuanian government again in January, when Gorbachev and the Stalinist colonialists tried to overthrow it through a military coup. The anti-totalitarian opposition in Moscow brought out hundreds of thousands of people in defense of the rights of the Lithuanians.

In power, Yeltsin could turn out to be no less of a Russian chauvinist than the ruling bureaucracy. He argues that Russia has been exploited by the Soviet Union, and that it should put its own economic interests first.

But in the present situation, he, along with the anti-totalitarian opposition in Russia, has a vital interest in defending the movements of the oppressed nationalities.

Gorbachev's parliamentary model

It was the rise of the national-democratic mass movements among the oppressed peoples that first breached the armor of the totalitarian system and first threw the ruling bureaucracy on the defensive.

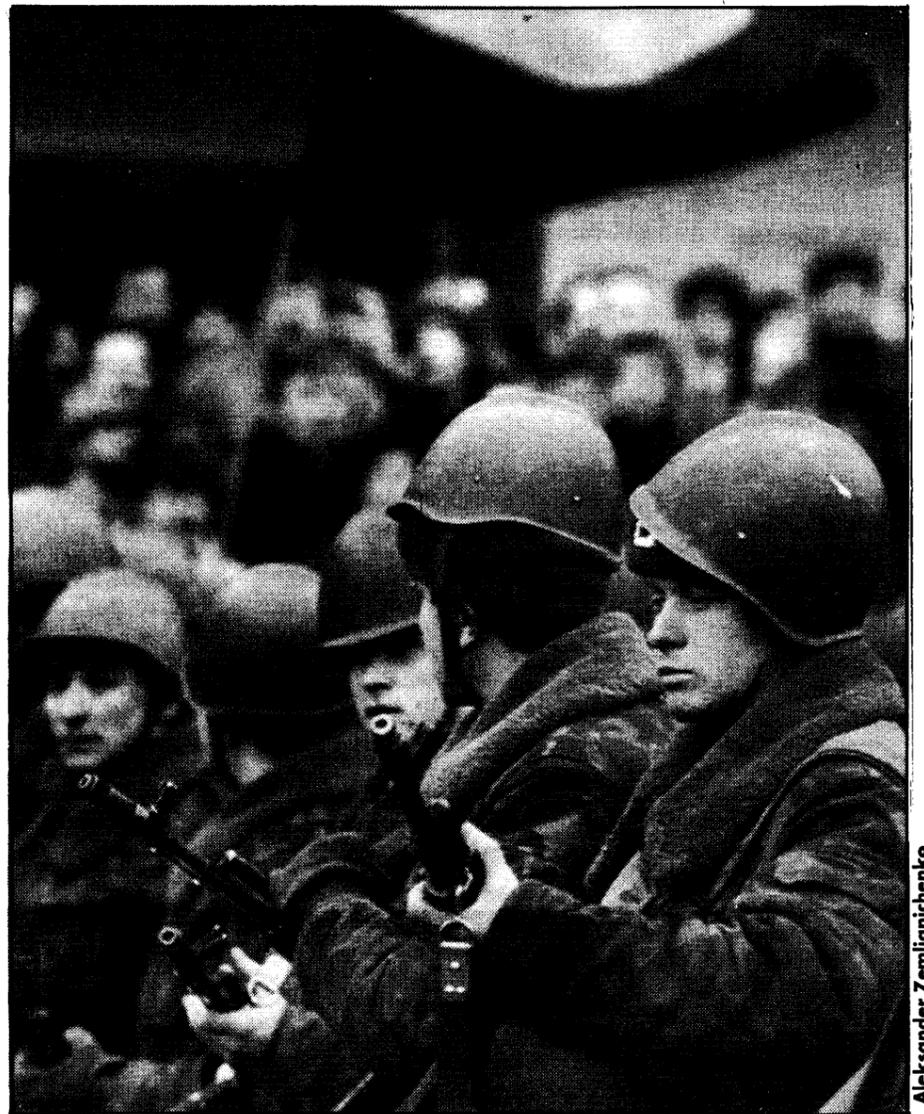
Gorbachev's "pluralist" electoral system was designed to maintain the grip of the totalitarian machine by more subtle trickery. Only a mass movement could break through the hurdles. The first ones arose among the oppressed peoples—first in Armenia, then in the Baltics, in Moldavia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia.

In all these republics, except Azerbaijan, the national-democratic movements won control of the Supreme Soviets away from the Communist Party. Only in Azerbaijan did such a movement suffer a severe defeat, because it succumbed to anti-Armenian chauvinism and, as a result, could be politically isolated.

From the very start, Gorbachev tried to block the development of these movements by repression. But he was restrained by the need to maintain his image as a democratizer.

This program of *perestroika* and *glasnost* involved, insofar as possible, replacing the old blatantly totalitarian methods with more political, "legal" ones, explicitly modeled on the "respectable" (apparently democratic but actually antidemocratic methods) of capitalist parliamentarianism.

For example, the new law on "anti-state" activity was defended by arguing that it was similar to the American Smith Act used to prosecute opponents of the system (including the Communist Party), and that all



Soviet troops in Vilnius, Lithuania. Gorbachev threatened same crackdown in Moscow if demonstration wasn't called off.

governments had the right to "defend themselves."

The totalitarian regime had been unable to stamp out the feelings of the peoples subjected to domination of the Great Russian chauvinist bureaucracy, especially among those forcibly incorporated into the Soviet Union relatively recently—notably the Baltic peoples and the western Ukrainians.

Moreover, combined with national oppression, the bureaucracy's mockery of democracy was especially blatant. Forced assimilation was carried out in the name of internationalism. Many of the basic works of national history and literature were banned.

Any Communist Party leaders who tried to defend the rights and cultures of their peoples, such as Berklavs in Estonia in 1959 or Shelest in Ukraine at the end of the 1960s, were purged. All this was imposed by Moscow, and so the remedy seemed simple—self-government, a break from Moscow.

At the same time, in order to maintain an appearance of continuing the national policy of the revolutionary Soviet government under Lenin, the Stalinist regime also fostered the development of national intelligentsias, even if in a thwarted and mutilated form, with institutions of their own, unions of artists and writers and literary-political publications.

National movements—a standoff

It was on the basis of these institutions that the national-democratic movements, such as the People's Fronts in the Baltics, developed.

Thus, the moment the Kremlin pulled back from the use of direct and thoroughgoing repression, national-democratic move-

ments developed explosively.

In the Baltic countries, in a matter of months, they won the active support of the overwhelming majority of the oppressed nationalities in those republics. The fight for democracy, not only among the oppressed nations but in the Soviet Union as a whole, came to focus on them.

Although Gorbachev was forced to back off in the face of the mass national movements, he would not give an inch on the foundations of the Stalinist central state—a universal Soviet citizenship (depriving the smaller peoples of any possibility of defending themselves against being overwhelmed by Russians), a single all-Union army, maintaining Russian as the language of "inter-ethnic" communication, and keeping control of the essential economic levers in Moscow.

Unable to break the national movements, the Kremlin had to accept the development of a free press in the Baltics. It is obvious the Kremlin has no intention of reconciling itself to this, since the Baltic independent press is an example for the whole of the USSR and, in fact, some of it is in Russian. Attacks on printing plants have been central features of every attempted Soviet crackdown in the Baltics.

Working class—a "mighty force"

The national-democratic movements, especially in the Baltics, served as ice-breakers opening up the way for the rise of independent movements throughout the Soviet Union, including the independent workers' movement that appeared with the coal miners' strike in the summer of 1989.

The fate of all these movements was

Aleksander Zemlianichenko

linked. In his speech to the congress of the Ukrainian national movement, Rukh, last October, the organization's chairman, Ivan Drach, pointed to this.

"It is quite clear today," he said, "after so many years of the *perestroika* fakers, after verbal sleight-of-hand about new approaches or the 'human factor,' after the real political problems were shouted down with empty noise and furious attacks on 'extremists,' 'destructive elements,' and 'separatists,' that the *perestroika* government is seeking only to maintain itself in the saddle and put a bridle back on the working people.

"After all that, in 1989, a real *perestroika* started, which came as a surprise to the authorities although not to the democratic forces—the emergence in the political arena of such a mighty force as the working class. The miners' strikes, which were highly organized and determined, really shook the party-state power."

Gorbachev attempted again and again to set limits for the national movements. Amendments were proposed to the Soviet constitution to make it easier for Moscow to intervene in the republics. There was the special plenum of the CPSU on the national question in September 1989.

One after another, the laws adopted by the Supreme Soviets of the republics were struck down by the USSR constitutional court.

However, once the oppressed peoples had gained a measure of independence, they could not be stopped halfway. After living decades in a Stalinist straightjacket embroidered with invocations of internationalism and the brotherhood of the Soviet peoples, they were not going to be satisfied with any "renewed Union" offered by the heirs of the Stalinist state.

They would not think about any new relationship with the Soviet Union or any of its parts except the basis of independence. That has not meant a course toward national self-sufficiency or dependence on the West. That is indicated, among other things by the multiplication of treaties between the republics. In fact, the Soviet Union of Lenin's day de-

about what privatization concretely meant for the struggle against the bureaucracy.

The best example was the line of the "independent" CP. It was excommunicated by Gorbachev for going too far in its pretense of independence from Moscow, but continued to follow essentially the same strategy as its estranged big brother. To those who demanded the rooting out of the bureaucracy, it replied, in effect, "what bureaucrats? There's nobody here but us entrepreneurs." The way to eliminate bureaucracy, it said, was to privatize the state enterprises.

Many anti-totalitarians have thought that "radical" market reforms meant radical opposition to the bureaucracy. But then they started seeing bureaucrats turning up as "entrepreneurs."

That is logical enough, because the rise of the bureaucratic caste—for which the way was opened by the weakening of working-class institutions resulting from the civil war and the ruin of the economy—meant individuals enriching themselves at the expense of the masses (in the name of "socialism"). By converting themselves into entrepreneurs, they are only continuing the process.

In his speech to the October 1990 congress of Rukh, Drach presented some clear conclusions about this: "We are making every effort to prevent the reform of national ownership, when the party top echelon and its Siamese twin—organized crime—wants to convert it into their own private property."

Despite some anti-Bolshevik and religious rhetoric in Drach's speech, he sounded like the real Bolsheviks on some essential questions:

"In the so-called 'regulated socialist market' program, the government has camouflaged a still more cruel exploitation of the working people. There is only one innovation. Today everyone is going to be forced by 'economic conditions' to snatch their miserable morsels from the mouths of their neighbors. Treacherously, they [the party-state] are planning a war of all against all....

"All of this is to prepare the conditions for



Alexandra Avakian

Yeltsin's contradiction is that he—like Gorbachev—supports the economic program that has led to an increase in the crisis.

ried out without his personal approval. The participation of USSR military formations in the *coup d'etat* was planned and coordinated in advance with the approval of the center."

The defeat of the coup attempt was followed by a rapid increase in political tensions. The Baltic movements won overwhelming victories in referenda for total independence.

Preparing for the referendum

The next test of strength was Gorbachev's attempt to get a mandate for maintaining a "renewed USSR" through an all-Union referendum on March 17. The proposal was worded in as sugar-coated way as possible:

"Do you consider it necessary to preserve the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as a renewed federation of equal sovereign republics, in which the rights and freedoms of people of any nationality will be fully guaranteed?"

The runup to the vote was marked by some very threatening statements in the party press. The March 8 issue of the Soviet CP daily *Pravda* carried a speech by I. K. Polozkov, chairman of the Russian Communist Party, now apparently the leading spokesperson of the conservative wing of the CP.

Although Polozkov claimed to be speaking in defense of socialism against such figures as Yeltsin, he adopted blatantly reactionary language.

"A great world power stands on the brink between existence and nonexistence," he said. It was being endangered by "these 'citizens of the world' who through the mass media they control are not bringing us the greatest achievements of world thought and culture. Their aim is to contaminate Soviet man, to deprive him of his national pride and honor.

"Today, we can see clearly their penchant for rallies, for whipping up hysteria, for all forms of theatricalism, going so far as to reduce the law making process to a well directed TV spectacle." Polozkov concluded by calling for "a broad union of all healthy forces to save the fatherland."

Polozkov said that the "counterposition" of conservatives and Gorbachevites in the CP was "a played out game." He said the difference was now between defenders of socialism and capitalist restorationists, who formed an "antipresidential [i.e., counter to Gorbachev] bloc."

Three days later, *Pravda* carried an article praising the military takeover in Poland in December 1981 and clearly suggesting that such a step might be necessary in the USSR.

The new draft Treaty of Union published in the days before the referendum included some sweeteners. But it also reconfirmed all the basic positions from which Gorbachev has refused to retreat, which taken together maintain the basic structures of the Stalinist state.

Gorbachev's referendum—a defeat

Moscow and its press pulled out all stops to assure a "yes" vote. This was the last chance to avert chaos, they said, even civil war. Furthermore, it would assure satisfaction of all democratic aspirations. For example, the March 14 *Pravda* trumpeted:

"By saying 'yes' to the Union, you will be voting for overcoming the crisis, stabiliz-

ing the economy. ... Saying 'yes' to the Union, you will be taking a stand for avoiding unemployment, strengthening the social protection of the underprivileged."

Nonetheless, Gorbachev suffered a stinging defeat. This was played down by the U.S. capitalist press, which generally sees Gorbachev as the best alternative possible in the USSR, despite Yeltsin's more radically pro-capitalist statements. But in the circumstances, it was quite clear. The majority for the Union was provided by those areas where the bureaucracy can still rig the electoral process.

In Moscow, the "yes" vote got only 50.2 percent. In Leningrad, where only 60 percent of voters went to the polls, there was a bare majority for the proposition. In Kiev, capital of Ukraine, the "yeses" were only 44 percent. At the same time, the Ukrainian legislature's declaration of sovereignty, which calls for an independent army and currency, was reconfirmed by 83 percent.

The six republics with national-democratic governments boycotted the vote altogether, and the Kremlin could only set up polls there on army bases and in big factories directly controlled from Moscow.

This new defeat for Gorbachev prepared the way for the confrontation in Moscow on March 28, when perhaps half-a-million people defied the ban on demonstrations declared by the chief of the bureaucracy and stood up to 50,000 troops.

A parasitic caste

So far, every time the bureaucratic regime has tried to reassert control, its grip has further weakened. Gorbachev has suffered the same fate as all previous bureaucratic liberalizers. Once the masses have gotten the slightest opening to express themselves and mobilize, to gain some political experience, they have begun very quickly to rise up against the bureaucracy in general.

This reflects the fact that the bureaucracy is essentially parasitic and rules on the basis of false pretences that cannot stand up once the masses have free speech and freedom to organize.

Today, for a number of reasons—the prolonged stagnation of the nationalized economy, the fact that the regime has ruthlessly suppressed all socialist critics of the system while tolerating pro-marketeteers—opposition to the bureaucracy has tended to take on pro-capitalist expressions.

At the same time, given an opportunity to gain concrete experience in struggles, the masses have been learning that the market schemes offer neither economic solutions nor democracy.

It is not automatic that mass forces will start calling explicitly for socialist democracy. That depends on the emergence of a conscious socialist leadership, a revolutionary socialist party. But the conditions for that are becoming more favorable.

Like any revolutionary situation, the breakdown of the bureaucratic order involves the danger of violent clashes. But it also offers great hopes, perhaps the greatest of our time.

It is not just the Soviet masses who are learning in practice that they need economic democracy. They can show working people throughout the world how they can liberate themselves—not through the "free market" but by taking democratic control of all the forces that shape their lives. ■



Alexandra Avakian

Rally in Moscow calls for Gorbachev's resignation.

veloped out of treaties among the republics.

The struggle for national rights has led to advances in consciousness. When the Lithuanians declared independence last March, they found that they got nothing but words from the Western capitalist governments. The only effective support they got was from the other movements of oppressed people in the USSR and the Russian anti-totalitarians.

In the confrontation in Vilnius this January, the national-democrats found that their struggle required throwing out a program of price rises because it threatened to alienate and divide the masses.

And it was not just the price rises they jettisoned. At the same time, they dumped the whole perspective of compromise with Moscow defended by the market-reform premier, Kazimiera Prunskiene, a recent crossover from the Communist Party; and the "independent" Communist Party of Algirdas Brazauskas.

It was reportedly the "hard-line nationalists" who voted down the price rise proposal in the Lithuanian Supreme Soviet.

The meaning of privatization

The likes of Prunskiene and Brazauskas offered the oppressed nations valuable lessons

a transition, more accurately a return from the present weak dictatorship to an open dictatorship."

The coup attempt in Vilnius

Within a few years of launching *perestroika*, Gorbachev found that his promises of liberalization had opened a Pandora's box. In the past months, he has been making desperate attempts to get the lid back on, naturally starting with the national movements.

The aborted *coup d'etat* in Vilnius this January was the opening shot, and was recognized as such by the anti-totalitarian movements, as shown at the time by the mass mobilization in Moscow in its defense and by support offered by Yeltsin.

The anti-totalitarian movement in the Soviet armed forces, *Shchit* ["Shield"] issued a widely publicized report on the coup attempt that clearly exposed the involvement of the Soviet military and other repressive forces, such as the KGB and the MVD. It put responsibility for the attempt squarely on Gorbachev:

"The president of the USSR could not have not known about the planned coordinated actions of the Soviet army, MVD, and KGB. Such actions could not have been car-

Capitalist restoration in East Germany no success story

'After the anti-socialist revolution there could be a social revolution...'

By GERRY FOLEY

The shiniest example so far for the heralds of the "end of socialism" has been the reunification of Germany under capitalism. It removed one of the most developed of the noncapitalist countries, the world's tenth largest industrial power.

It offered the spectacle of large sections of an industrial working class voting for a right-wing free-enterpriser party, the Christian Democrats, who got nearly 42 percent of the vote in the former East Germany in the Dec. 2, 1990, elections for the now all-German parliament. It conjured up a vision of a capitalist great power dominating East and Central Europe.

One index of how quickly the fruits of this apparent capitalist triumph have proved sour is that in less than four months (according to a poll conducted by the very pro-free enterprise German weekly *Der Spiegel*) support for the Christian Democrats in the former East Germany has fallen to 34 percent, while that for the Social Democrats—the big losers of the first all-German elections—has risen from 23.4 percent to 33 percent.

Another sign is cries of alarm from the pro-capitalist politicians themselves, such as Alfred Gomoka, the Christian Democratic premier of the new federal state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. He was quoted in the March 11 *Der Spiegel* as saying that the mood in the five states carved out of the old East Germany "could very quickly turn into social disturbances."

Peter Radunski, former national administrator of the Christian Democratic party and now Berlin senator for federal affairs, warned that by the fall of this year unemployment in the Berlin area could be higher than it was the year before the Nazi seizure of power. In that case, he said, "it's going to get hot."

So, more than 787,000 people (out of a total population of around 16 million) are already unemployed in the former East German territories. The German minister for labor, Norbert Blüm, predicts that the jobless total will rise to 3.6 million by the fall, that is, about half of the economically active population of the old East German territories.

Blessings of capitalism

The head of the West German political police, the Office for Defending the Constitution (Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz), Eckart Werthebach, was quoted in the March 11 *Der Spiegel* as complaining about the weakness of his service in the old East German territories. "We are not nearly so much in the know there as we should be," he said.

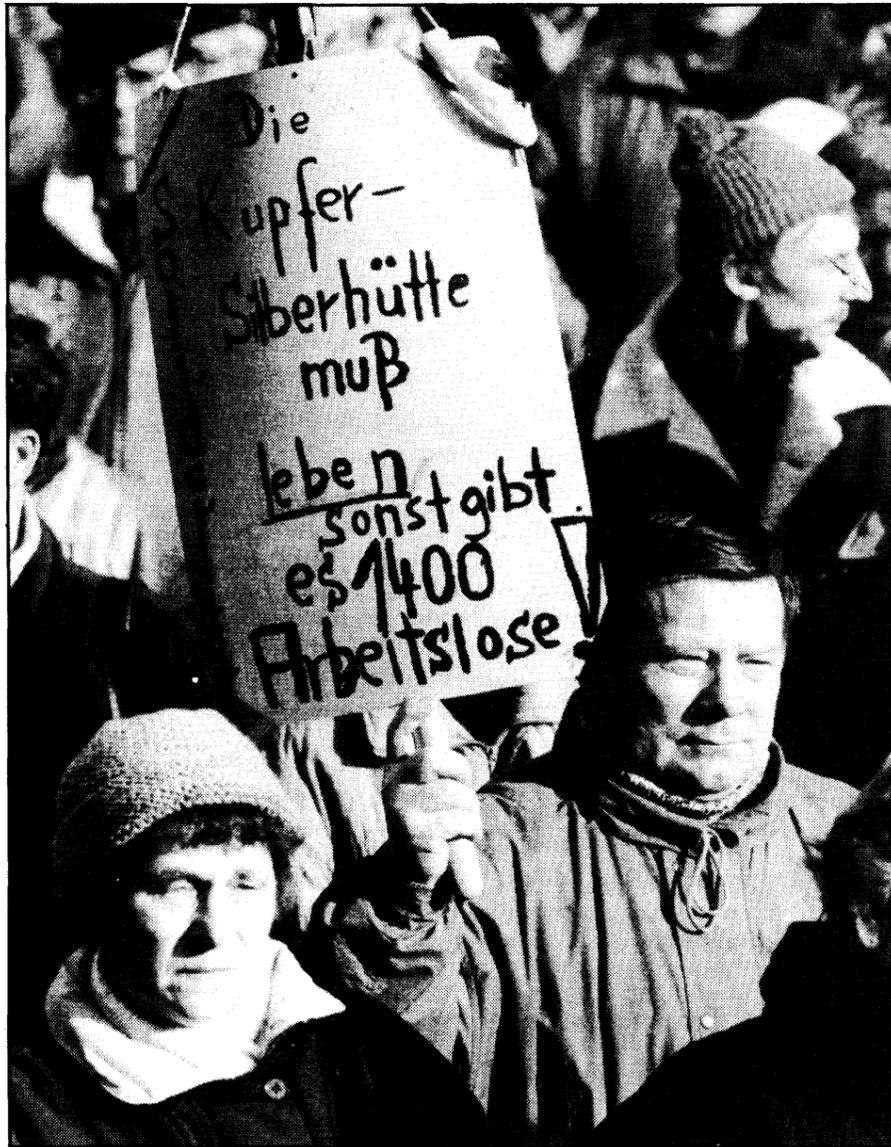
The only political threats that he talked about were the neo-Nazis and the antiforeigner rabble-rousers of the Republican Party. But it is hardly likely that the West German political police force is concerned only about them.

Moreover, to judge from a statement by the manager of an East German brewing enterprise, Jürgen Funk, quoted in the *New York Times* of March 12, the administrators of the imploding industries are carrying out an important part of the neo-Nazis' program: "First we got rid of the foreigners, then the old people, and now we are encouraging masses of early retirements." This is another of the blessings of capitalism—the elbowing out of the vulnerable.

Working mothers are being especially hard hit. *Los Angeles Times* staff writer Tyler Marshall noted in an article published March 16 that whereas day-care centers were a free service in the old East Germany, they now charge up to a third of the average woman's income per child. The middle-aged and elderly are also getting a rude introduction to life in a market economy.

The *Los Angeles Times* staff writer referred to drastic rent increases for pensioners, such as one 72-year-old woman with a monthly income equivalent to \$400, who found her rent hiked from the equivalent of \$40 to \$940.

In the March 18 issue of *International Viewpoint*, members of the East German



Demonstrators in Saxony: Sign says: "The copper-silver foundry must live or else 1400 people will be out of a job."

'Increasingly, the question is being raised of whether the unification is going in fact to strengthen West German capitalism or undermine it.'

group of the Fourth International, the world socialist organization founded by Leon Trotsky, wrote:

"People over 45 who lose their jobs will have practically no opportunity to get re-hired; the re-introduction of capitalism literally makes them into a 'no future' generation. After putting most of the immigrant workers from other 'socialist' countries on the dole, it is women who are now bearing the brunt, especially in the southern regions of Saxonia and Thuringia, with their highly vulnerable industries relying on manual labour and on women."

Migration and rip-off

Another aspect of the capitalist principle of the "survival of the fittest" is that in the context of a law-of-the-jungle economic system regional disadvantages tend to be perpetuated and to grow worse.

Commentators in the capitalist press have begun to compare the old East German territories to chronically underprivileged regions, such as southern Italy, which suffer a steady drain of the population to the better-off areas.

It is estimated that since the currency union between East and West Germany in July 1990, 110,000 Easterners have moved West, and the migration is continuing. According to John Tagliabue in the *New York Times* of March 11, some 8000 to 10,000 are leaving Saxony, the industrial

heartland of the old East Germany, every month for the West.

Commentators in the Western press have given various explanations for the capitalists' reluctance to invest in the former East Germany, which is particularly striking in view of the lengths to which the German government has gone to sweeten the pot.

An article in the March 11 *Der Spiegel* stressed: "If you take all the incentives for private investments in East Germany, the German Economics Institute estimates that they amount to 700 individual measures. Never was it so favorable for investing in Germany."

It is estimated that big companies with a 50 percent tax burden get back 49 million marks from the state for every 100 million that they invest.

In the *Washington Post* National Weekly Edition, Marc Fischer cited other factors: Western companies did not want to assume the ecological liabilities of the Eastern enterprises, the backwardness of the infrastructure, hopeless unprofitability, and so on.

The article referred to a case suggesting that the West German capitalists were taking maximum advantage of the opportunity to loot the public coffers, specifically the holding company created to privatize the East German enterprises.

The Carl Zeiss optical company was divided by the border. The Eastern enterprise

fired all but 5000 of its 69,000 workers, and even then the Western company claimed it was unprofitable and refused to buy until the state holding company, Treuhand, settled the obligations to the laid-off workers and other debts amounting to the equivalent of \$1.3 billion.

The article indicated that the cost of privatizing the East German economy was beginning to weaken the West German economy, since the German Federal Bank "expressed its concern about inflationary pressure and the soaring deficit by raising its interest rate half a point."

Furthermore, "the combination of a deepening recession in many Western countries and the gulf war's drain on resources and attention have made the Treuhand's job even harder."

So, the lack of investment is endangering the whole operation of absorbing the former East Germany into the German capitalist economy. The German minister of public works, Adam Schwaetzer, was quoted in the March 11 *Der Spiegel* as saying that "all that we can do," in terms of modernizing the infrastructure, "is no help if the economy does not get moving."

However, investment in the former East Germany should create a sharp increase in productivity. It is clearly capital-poor, and not entirely because of the inefficiency of the bureaucratic economy. It was largely a backward region in Germany before the Second World War, and it was incorporated into a generally backward and capital-poor part of the world economy.

Furthermore, it has a well-educated workforce used to a lower standard of living than in West Germany. The failure of the capitalists to respond to this opening indicates a fundamental weakness.

Disillusion, anger, protests

Increasingly, the question is being raised of whether the unification is going in fact to strengthen West German capitalism or undermine it. That depends to a considerable extent on whether the East German workers can spit out the bitter fruits of capitalist restoration and wage joint struggles with working people in the other part of the German capitalist "miracle land."

The economic disappointments of the working people in the former East German territories inevitably go hand in hand with political disillusion; they have not gained control of their fate but have become helpless victims of forces they cannot control.

The owner of a small but profitable concern in the old East Germany, who might be expected to be a pioneer of capitalist restoration, was quoted by Marshall as saying: "We wanted this country to be the same as West Germany, but that hasn't happened. We're completely second-class people. They talk of democracy, but what do we decide? Nothing."

In the old East German territories, protests have been growing rapidly. On Feb. 19, the workers at Elektro-Physikalische Apparate Werke, the six largest producer of circuits in Europe, occupied the factory to protest against projected lay-offs. On Feb. 27, on the same grounds, workers in the Ermic electronics factory in Erfurt staged an occupation.

That same day, 50,000 people demonstrated in the streets. In East Berlin, Schwerin, and Halle, thousands of workers blocked streets; and in Magdeburg, 10,000 people occupied the down-town area. In Rostock, 5000 people came out, and in Leipzig, one of the main centers of the uprising against the Stalinist bureaucracy, 10,000 people demonstrated.

Engineering workers in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern staged warning strikes. The state minister of the economy, Kajo Schommer raised an alarm: "After the anti-socialist revolution, there could be a social revolution, controllable by nobody."

There is obviously no lack of discontent with the results of capitalist restoration in Eastern Germany. The problem is finding an alternative to Stalinist bureaucratic management and the capitalist market. That requires party and trade-union organizations that can apply a program in the interests of the working people, a revolutionary Marxist approach.

Elements for that exist, although they are still small and relatively isolated by the discredit the Stalinist regime cast on socialism and Marxism. With the rapid disillusionment in the benefits of capitalism, however, interest in alternatives can also be expected to expand. ■

By HAYDEN PERRY

Five years of subnormal rainfall have confronted California with a possible catastrophe more widespread and lasting than the earthquake of October 1989.

From the housewife who is told not to flush her toilet so often to the farmers who find the balance of power between rural and urban interests shifting against them, everyone is affected.

Westerners have thrived for years in a land of little rain—less than 20 inches a year. They have learned to move water from where it falls in abundance to parched earth and thirsty people hundreds of miles away.

This is not a new-found science. Four thousand years ago, the great civilization of ancient Egypt was built on controlled water and irrigated fields. We have improved on the Egyptians with electric pumps and reinforced concrete, but the social engineering behind our vast water projects has remained on the primitive level of human exploiting human.

Robbing the Owens Valley

Capitalist enterprises have maimed and killed people to keep water for themselves and deny it to others. Movie-goers remember the early westerns where the "baddies" dammed up the river and left the honest folk down stream with a dry creek bed.

A later movie, "Chinatown," depicted the sophisticated water swindle perpetrated on the people of Los Angeles in 1904.

By the turn of the century, Los Angeles was low on water. Local sources were no longer adequate for a city of 200,000. Water had to be brought in from outside. Since the city was surrounded by semi-desert on three sides, "outside" had to be a long way off.

Business interests, led by Harrison Gray Otis, publisher of the *Los Angeles Times*, scouted water in the Owens Valley, 250 miles to the northeast. Since the water was already irrigating the fields of local farmers, it was necessary to use stealth and chicanery to get it away from them.

In 1905, strangers appeared in Owens Valley ready to go into the ranching business. They offered good prices and bought dozens of farms. This seemed strange to the rather naive folk of the valley. It became alarmingly clear when the new owners voted to sell their water to the Los Angeles Water District.

Soon Owens Valley water would be flowing south, leaving only a trickle for the local farmers who had not sold out. As in the western movies, the farmers fought back, dynamiting the aqueducts; but there was no happy ending for them.

Meanwhile back in Los Angeles, the citizens were persuaded to vote huge bond issues for the project. The conspirators even partially drained the local reservoirs to convince Angelenos there really was a water shortage. But when, on Nov. 5, 1913, Owens Valley water finally poured into the Los Angeles basin it did not go to the city at all.

Instead, it was directed to the nearby San Fernando Valley, where it served to water the arid acres there. This desert property had been bought up by Otis and his friends for \$5 an acre. With water now available, the property was now worth as much as \$1000 an acre. To make millions for themselves, these water imperialists cheated the people of Los Angeles and turned fertile Owens Valley partially back into a semi-desert.

The Central Valley Project

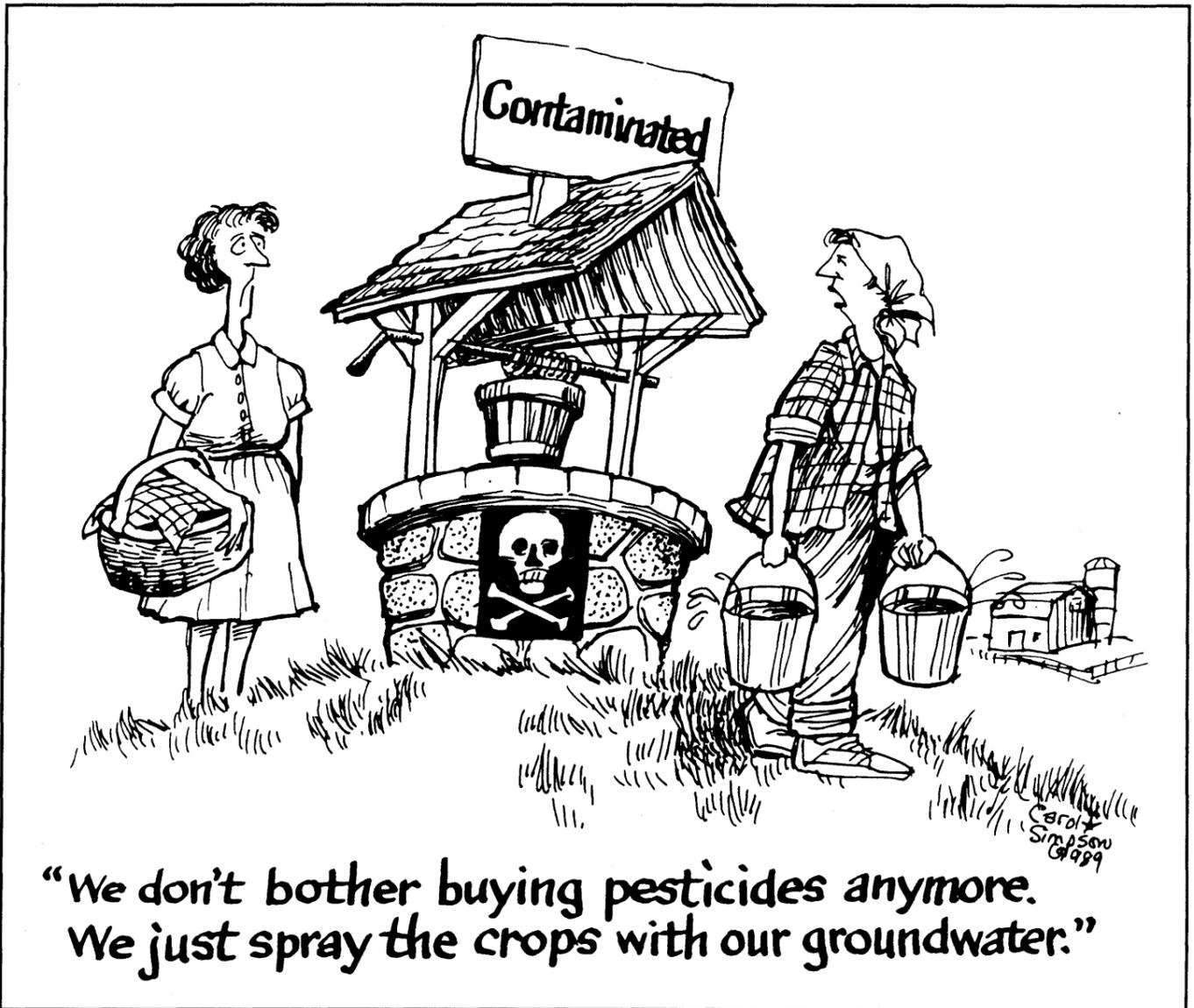
The Owens Valley rip-off was a small operation in the context of the millions of acres available for cultivation in California. The center of the state comprises some of the richest agricultural land in the world—once the irrigation pumps are turned on.

The federal government, through the Army Corps of Engineers, built dams and diverted rivers all over the West. But California needed a large-scale, centralized plan of water resource development. In 1933, the legislature passed the Central Valley Project Act that authorized construction of dams, power stations, and canals to deliver water to millions of acres of undeveloped farmland.

To the surprise of many, intense opposition to this logical scheme of balanced development came from "farmers," not by farmers in coveralls toiling in their fields, but by "farmers" sitting in office towers in San Francisco.

They were executives of Standard Oil, Southern Pacific, and other corporations who held 2.5 million acres in factory farms. They had secured their own water supplies and did not want more farmers moving in to compete with them.

Agri-business hogs water while Californians are forced to ration



These agri-business interests found a powerful ally in the Pacific Gas and Electric Co., which did not want to see state-owned power plants threatening their monopoly. Together, these interests managed to tangle and hamstring the Central Valley Project for 25 years until they had assurances they would get all the water they wanted on their terms.

Polluted ground water

In years of normal rainfall, little thought was given to conservation. Water from federal and state projects was sold to farmers at prices far below cost. City dwellers did not get such price breaks. Their demand for water increased, as millions of new residents flocked to the Golden State.

There were signs of strain on the water system even in the wet years. Agri-business flooded its fields and washed fertilizers and pesticides into streams and ponds, poisoning birds and fish. Polluted irrigation water also settled into the ground, contaminating the well water that supplies rural communities.

Ground water has also become an evermore dangerous source for cities, as industrial pollutants and seepage from gas stations poison the wells they rely on. This puts greater demands on state and federal reservoirs. All these problems are ignored by water authorities intent on satisfying the demands of agri-business.

Then came the drought, and the reservoirs began drying up. Since 1987, not enough rain has fallen to replace the water taken out. Water authorities report that normal runoff from three California rivers is 15.7 acre-feet a year. Last year it was only 4.2 acre feet. The 12 major reservoirs usually hold 17.2 million acre-feet. Today they have only 7.4 million. An acre-foot is about 326,000 gallons, enough to supply a family of 5 for 18 months.

As reservoirs turn to mudflats, alarmed state and municipal authorities are rationing water. Los Angeles householders must cut their consumption by 25 percent. In another community, Orange Cove, consumers will be limited to 10 gallons a day. This depends on a somewhat unrealistic honor system, as Orange Cove officials have not put meters on residents' homes. "Water is so plentiful, we will let people use all they wish," they said optimistically some years ago.

This has been the philosophy of the

California Department of Water Resources, which allocates much of the state's water. As one drought year followed another, they actually increased the flow of water to the agri-business-owned farms. "Drought" was a forbidden word around Water Project headquarters. "Next year will be wetter," they said. "No need to plan ahead."

Agri-business has been equally profligate in its irrigation practices. Farms consume 85 percent of the state's water and pay only \$12 an acre-foot for water that costs the urban consumer \$280.

While cheap water has been plentiful, agri-business has wasted it with no thought for the future. Half the water has been lavished on cotton, rice, and alfalfa—as well as on pastureland. These are the thirstiest crops around. It takes 2564 gallons of water to produce a dollar's worth of alfalfa. Pasture takes 12,500 gallons. On the other hand, fruit trees absorb only 429 gallons and grapes 365 for a dollar's worth of product.

With the drought in its fifth year, the water authorities have finally cut allotments to agriculture as well as urban districts. But water legislation has been so entangled with exemptions and "special rights," that some corporate farmers can still take all the water they want—even more than they need.

When Gov. Pete Wilson was asked whether he would cut through this thicket of special privilege, he was evasive. Perhaps the \$350,000 campaign contribution he got from the corporate farmers has made him hesitate.

"Water marketing"

The lopsided distribution of water to corporate farms that don't need it all has led to a new concept, "water marketing." Let the corporate farms sell their surplus water on the open market, with the state arranging for storage and delivery. The Water Project suggests a top price of \$450 an acre-foot. Since they paid only \$12, it would give the agri-business a nice profit. But municipalities that are clamoring for more water are bidding the price as high as \$1000 an acre foot.

Even with super profits to be made at these prices, many corporate farms are reluctant to engage in water marketing. They don't want any state interference in their control of water supplies. They also sense that agriculture's dominance in California is be-

ing threatened. The millions of new Californians are going to the cities while urban sprawl is paving over more and more fertile farm land.

The ruling class in California is letting market forces dictate the rate and direction of change. When land is taken out of production, no provision is made for thousands of stranded farm workers or for the economy of rural communities.

When profit is the engine of water distribution, it will run uphill to where the power and money is. Wealthy communities can buy water to maintain lush gardens, while poor towns must limit their dishwashing and toilet flushing.

History tells us that this drought will end—but other dry years will follow. Despite this, experts say, there are enough water resources to sustain an acceptable lifestyle if it is developed in the interests of all the people. Reserves must be built up in wet years for periods when the rains fail.

Allocations to agriculture must be balanced with the needs of urban consumers and the natural environment. Wasteful irrigation practices that destroy the fertility of the soil must be halted. But nothing will change so long as food production is in the hands of corporations that grow crops for profit and not for human needs.

International Viewpoint

A biweekly magazine published under the auspices of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. One year sub:\$47. Send to: 2 rue Richard Lenoir, 93108, Montreuil, France

Dividing the spoils of World War I— How oil companies gobbled up Iraq

By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

Last month, in Part I, we described how the large oil companies conspired prior to World War I to take over the land of Iraq. Part II concludes the story below.

In the summer of 1914, the world seemed more at peace than it had been for years. To all appearances, the Great Powers had put aside their main disputes. Britain and Germany, Europe's two great industrial rivals, were beginning to work hand in hand in their colonial exploits.

Ships of the British navy were making courtesy calls at German ports. Work was underway on a joint British-German railroad line stretching from Europe all the way to the Persian Gulf. And the British had allowed the German Deutsche Bank a share in their Gulf oil concessions.

But this peace was an illusion. Behind the scenes, battles continued to rage among the great capitalist monopolies. These struggles, for new areas of investment and sources of raw materials, could not be contained within the channels of diplomacy and commercial pacts.

War would decide which of the capitalists—those headquartered in London, Berlin, Paris, or New York—would come out on top.

On Aug. 4, 1914, British First Lord of the Admiralty Winston Churchill flashed an order to the fleet: "Commence hostilities against Germany." In the British press, yesterday's partners, the Germans, now became "barbaric hordes." Today's allies, the French, were labeled "patriots." The Allies were teaming up, the newspapers said, to fight for "the freedom of nations."

But the exact opposite was true. All of the big powers had declared war with great hopes of increasing their domination over the nations of Asia, Africa, and Eastern Europe. Soon they would set their sights on one area in particular, the valley of the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers.

This land, now called Iraq, was the gateway to the oil fields of Persia—and was thought to contain huge oil reserves of its own.

Oil made the difference

For four years, the battle lines advanced and fell back. Dray horses were replaced by trucks, and the cavalry by tanks and aircraft. Soon, oil took first place as a coveted strategic commodity.

Germany was the most industrialized country in Europe, with an extensive system of railroads. But the mechanized units of Britain and its allies gave them an advantage in speed and mobility. Abundant petroleum supplies made the difference.

Eighty percent of the oil for the Allies came from their silent partner, the United States. By 1916, however, German U-boat attacks had disabled scores of oil tankers crossing the Atlantic. In December 1917, French Premier Georges Clemenceau urgently cabled President Wilson for more oil, declaring that "a failure in the supply of gasoline would cause the immediate paralysis of our armies" in the coming spring offensive.

The American oil companies quickly stepped up their deliveries. And with them came weapons and ammunition—all financed through loans at interest from American banks. The Allies could see that for future wars, they would need a safer and less expensive source of oil. For this, they looked to increase their control in the Middle East.

The European powers had to contend with two important forces in the region. First was the imperial government of the Ottoman Turks (an ally of Germany in the World War), which controlled most of the Middle Eastern lands. Second were the peoples of the Middle East—including Arabs, Kurds, Armenians, and other oppressed nationalities struggling for self-determination.

Britain's wartime objectives in Iraq, the southeastern portion of the Ottoman Empire, were described in a 1915 report prepared by the de Bensen committee, a British government group. Three goals were emphasized:

1) The province of Basra (the lower portion of Iraq) would be incorporated into Britain's possessions. This would serve to maintain British supremacy in the Gulf and

to protect the overland routes to India.

2) All of Iraq (including Bagdad province as well as Basra) would be preserved for British commercial interests. Britain would likewise control the territory's petroleum reserves.

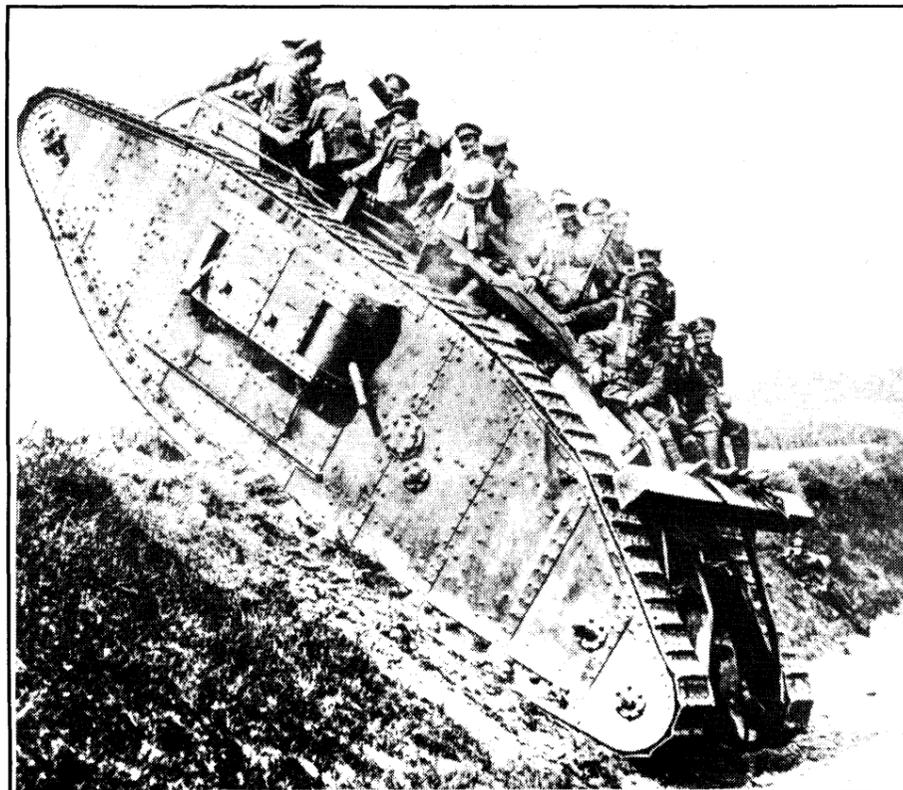
3) The Arab peoples of the region would be denied self-determination.

The Allies' secret treaties

In several secret conferences, Britain and its allies sharpened their plans to carve up the Middle East. The word "oil," though not often mentioned in the meeting rooms, was constantly in the thoughts of the diplomats.

The Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916, a product of some of these meetings, was revealed to the world after the Bolsheviks found a copy in the Tsar's archives following the revolution. It awarded Britain a wide land bridge connecting the Mediterranean with the Persian Gulf. Britain's claim stretched from Palestine in the west to Bagdad and Basra in the east.

France, for its part, would receive the territory immediately to the north—Syria, south-eastern Turkey, and Mosul (an oil-producing province with a Kurdish majority, today in



'Britain's mechanized units gave it an advantage in speed and mobility. Oil made the difference.'

northern Iraq). And the Turkish portion of Kurdistan would go to Russia.

In the meantime, Britain was attempting to draw smaller players into the war against Ottoman Turkey. On the one hand, the Zionists were assured by Foreign Secretary Sir Arthur Balfour that "His Majesty's Government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people."

On the other hand, Sir Henry McMahon, the British High Commissioner in Egypt, promised Hussein, the Sharif of Mecca, that Britain would back the formation of an "independent" Arab state. Sir Henry was quick to single out Iraq, however, for the use of "special administrative measures" in which Britain would "safeguard our mutual economic interests."

To further complicate the matter, pledges were given to the Kurds and the Armenians to support their demands for independent states. After the war, all of these vows to the oppressed nationalities of the Middle East were quickly proven worthless.

The war in Iraq

At the end of September 1914, the India Office, which organized British affairs in the

Gulf region, recommended that additional troops be sent to southern Iraq. It was necessary, said the officials, to protect the Anglo-Persian oil installations at Abadan and also to "encourage the Arabs to rally to us and confirm the local sheikhs of Mohammerah and Kuwait [who were long-standing British puppets] in their allegiance."

The troops arrived on Oct. 23. This was several days before Ottoman Turkey had entered the war, and so the British fleet prudently waited for the war declaration before opening its bombardment of the Turkish batteries. Soon the Turks were in retreat, and the oil facilities were secure.

The British (two-thirds of the 160,000 "British" soldiers were colonial troops from India) fought their way up the Tigris to try to capture the rest of Iraq as well. But they were stymied, losing 15,814 dead in battle and 12,807 dead from disease.

Finally, on March 11, 1917, the British-Indian army captured the city of Bagdad. Sir Mark Sykes (co-author of the Sykes-Picot Agreement) was assigned to write a high-sounding call to the Arab leaders of the region, appealing to them to collaborate with the British.

Sykes's proclamation made vague gestures

toward the formation of an Arab Middle Eastern federation, which would be under the leadership of Hussein of Mecca.

Meanwhile, in London, the government sat down to decide the future of the captured Iraqi provinces. Sykes's declaration to the Arabs was quickly tossed into the rubbish. In fact, the ministers' decision was quite similar to the recommendations of the 1915 de Bensen Committee. Basra province would be placed under direct British rule. Although Baghdad province would be granted an Arab government, it would be under British "protection."

In August 1918, Foreign Secretary Balfour addressed the prime ministers of the Dominions. Britain, he declared, must become the "guiding spirit" in Iraq, for that was the only way to provide the most important natural resource that Britain lacked—oil. To make certain this would happen, British troops in Iraq marched northward into the oil-rich province of Mosul.

The conflict over Mosul

On Oct. 30, 1918, the Ottoman Turks signed an armistice with the British. The Turks expected to be able to keep Mosul (which they had never considered part of Iraq). But the British ignored the cease-fire, marched on Mosul city, and expelled the Turkish garrisons. Soon the British set about to construct oil pipelines, railroads, and refineries in the area.

Most of the population of Mosul were Kurds, and the British toyed with the idea of sponsoring an "autonomous" Kurdish state as a British protectorate. But during 1919, there were several uprisings against the British occupation of Mosul; talk about Kurdish "national rights" was quickly put aside.

Britain found it more difficult, however, to ignore France's claims over Mosul. The Sykes-Picot Agreement had made it clear that Mosul would be in the French sphere of influence. Now Britain wanted to undo the treaty.

To make matters worse, Syria (including Palestine and Lebanon) was also in dispute. Britain had placed Prince Feisal, the eldest son of Hussein, on the throne of Syria as a counterweight to Arab demands for complete independence. But France also claimed Syria as its share of the war booty.

The Grand Alliance of the World War quickly began to unravel, and there was talk of a new war between Britain and France. Finally, after frantic negotiations, another agreement to divide up the Middle East was confirmed at San Remo, on the Italian Riviera, in April 1920.

The agreement was helped along by use of the term, "mandate." This smokescreen for imperialism, embodied in the Covenant of the League of Nations, allowed the Allied Powers to exercise "temporary" control over the colonial nations as their "sacred trust of civilization."

Thus, Britain was given mandates over Mosul (which was added to the southern provinces of Iraq), Palestine, and connecting territory (to be called Trans-Jordan). France was given most of Syria (including Lebanon) as its mandate.

In accordance with the terms of the San Remo Agreement, Britain pulled back its troops in Syria and refused to interfere when a French air squadron brought "civilization" to Damascus by strafing the defenders of the city. "King" Feisal's army was scattered, and the would-be monarch soon fled for British Palestine.

France, of course, was unhappy about giving up potential control over the rich oil reserves of Mosul. And so, the 25-percent share of the Iraqi oil concession that Britain had seized as "enemy property" from the Deutsche Bank was now awarded to France. In return, France agreed to construct pipelines and railroads to transport Iraqi oil across Syria to the Mediterranean.

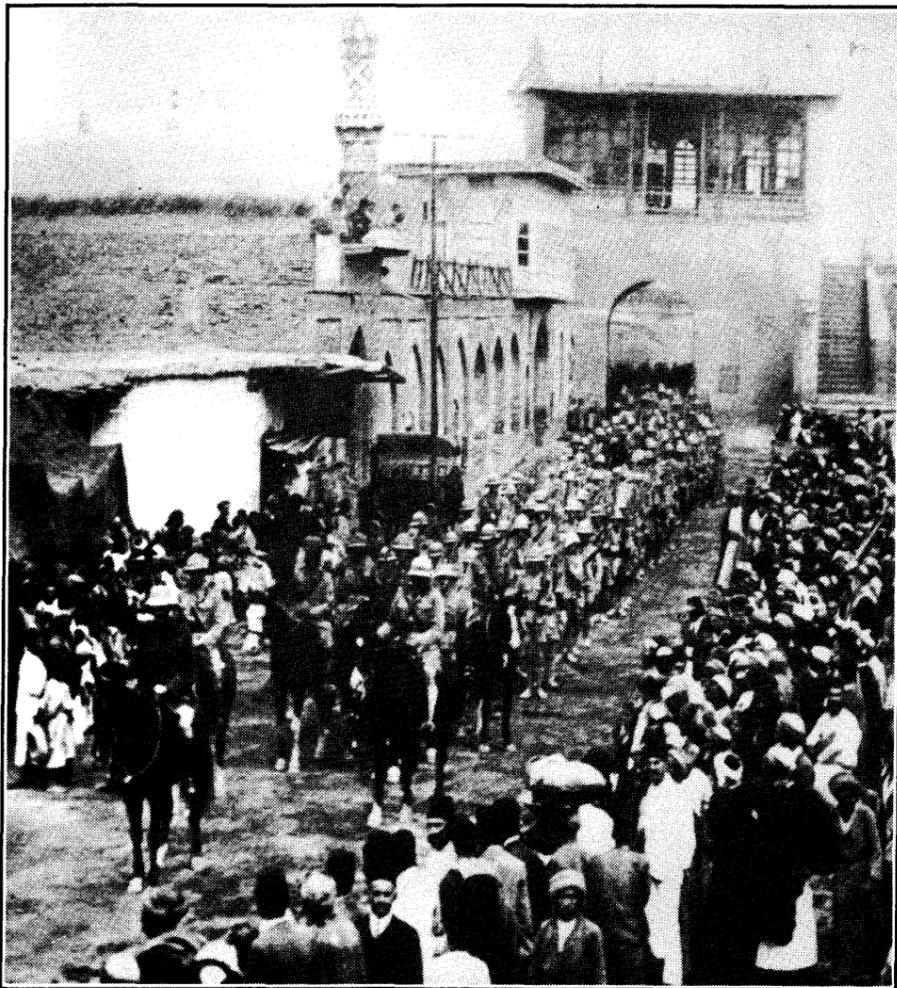
Thus, at the conclusion of World War I, British capitalism seemed to have come out the victor in Iraq. Its main rival, Germany, had been defeated. France had been placated. Turkey was fighting just to preserve its own territory against the Allied occupation forces.

But then, two new forces rose up to counter Britain's objectives. One was the people who lived in Iraq, who fought for their independence. The other was the American capitalist class, who wanted a piece of Iraqi oil profits. Each of these stories will be taken up in turn.

The Iraqis rise up

Although the Turks had been vanquished, fighting still raged in Iraq. Armed revolts took place against the British occupation—

(continued on next page)



British troops enter Baghdad in March 1917.

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principally among the Kurds in the north and the Shi'ites in rural areas of the south. The San Remo Agreement served to fan the flames; in June 1920, the Arab tribes arose in full rebellion.

By mid-August, Arab calvary had wiped out British-Indian military outposts throughout the country. One group in Baghdad proclaimed a provisional Arab government.

"What do these people want?" cried the Colonial Office diplomats, as if they had never before considered the question of complete independence.

Back in London, the government's policies came under increasing attack. How much longer," demanded *The Times*, "are valuable lives to be sacrificed in the vain endeavor to impose upon the Arab population an elaborate and expensive administration which they never asked for and do not want?" (Aug. 7, 1920)

The Royal Air Force was called in to crush the rebellion with explosive bombs and mustard gas. British artillery demolished entire villages. Livestock was slaughtered. Suspected rebel "ringleaders" were shot without trial. By early 1921, about 1000 British and Indian soldiers were dead or missing. The Iraqis had lost perhaps 9000.

Britain, however, was paying a heavy price for its colonial wars (Fighting had flared from Ireland to Egypt to the Crown Jewel itself—India.) The British army was no longer a strong and reliable fighting force. Soldiers were organizing antiwar demonstrations; they demanded to be sent home. In January 1919, some 5000 British troops mutinied in Calais to be demobilized.

As Britain withdrew its troops from the Middle East, it placed its interests in the region more and more under the guard of soldiers from India. But these colonial troops (many of whom were Islamic) could not be counted on to coerce fellow Moslems. A less risky alternative had to be found.

The solution that Britain chose for Iraq was to set up a nominally "independent" Arab government under British "supervision." In 1921, the British assigned Feisal to be titular head of state in Iraq. (After being expelled from Syria, Feisal was last seen sitting on his luggage in a railroad station in Palestine—a "king" without a kingdom.)

Despite the new monarch, however, real authority lay with the British High Commissioner.

By 1925, a treaty between Iraq and Britain had been prepared. Nationalist demonstrations against the treaty took place outside the Iraqi Assembly building. Not until the High Commissioner had delivered an order to Feisal empowering him to dissolve the Assembly, was a slim majority of the delegates persuaded to ratify it in emergency session.

The treaty severely limited Iraq's sovereignty. It stipulated that the king would agree to be guided by the High Commissioner "on all matters affecting the inter-

national and financial obligations and interests of his Britannic Majesty."

Enter the Americans

In the months prior to the San Remo Agreement, geologists were swarming up and down Iraq in the search for oil. They were employed by the Turkish Petroleum Company (TPC), which was owned by a consortium of capitalists based mainly in London. The British government also had a quarter share in the concession, and now the French were added as shareholders.

In the meantime, the British had not permitted American corporations to resume their prewar oil exploration in either Iraq or Palestine. Nor had they bothered to inform the United States about the British/French talks.

And so, when the San Remo Agreement became known, the United States charged that it was being excluded from the Middle Eastern oil monopoly and thus cheated of the fruits of the Allied victory.

The newspapers in this country self-righteously unmasked the British/French accord as nothing less than "imperialism." The State Department, too, took up the crusade for big business, invoking the cherished principles of the "Open Door." And Congress retaliated by passing the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, which prohibited drilling rights on public lands to foreign concerns whose governments denied similar access to Americans.

Government officials, among them Commerce Secretary Herbert Hoover, pointed out that their case would be stronger if the major American oil companies would form a united front to demand admittance into the Iraqi oil concession.

This was soon accomplished, but the Americans still seemed at a disadvantage since the new Iraqi government, which had nominal authority to grant oil rights in its territory, was effectively a colony of Britain.

Soon, however, the U.S. negotiators were armed with a secret weapon. This concerned an agreement that an American, Rear-Admiral Colby M. Chester, had made with the Ottoman government in 1909. Chester had been engaged to build a railroad from eastern Turkey into Mosul. In return, he was to receive the mineral rights for land up to 20 kilometers on each side of the tracks.

In late 1922, the Ottoman-American Development Company sent a delegation to Turkey to seek a renewal of the Chester concession. If approved, the British and French shareholders of the Turkish Petroleum Company could lose their "legal" claim to the oil fields of Mosul, which had been based on little more than a pre-war promise from the Ottoman government.

The U.S. State Department's Allen Dulles remarked gleefully, "The information we have is sufficient to knock the case of the Turkish Petroleum Company into a cocked hat."

Bush throws Kurds to Saddam

By GERRY FOLEY

Once again, the U.S. government has betrayed the Kurds in Iraq. This time, Washington has been up front enough to say explicitly that it is opposed in principle to separatist movements.

"The Bush Administration," reports *The New York Times*, "said it had decided to say out of the rebellions because neither group [the Shiites and the Kurds] was strong enough to rule Iraq, and if they succeeded in their regions, the country would be fractured." In plain language, that means that Washington favors Saddam crushing the Kurds.

In the 1970s, the CIA supported the Kurdish rebellion in Iraq, essentially as a pawn against Arab nationalism. The insurgents were also backed by the Shah of Iran as a means of putting pressure on Iraq. When Saddam Hussein granted the Iranians' border claims, they dropped the Kurds forthwith, leaving them to the tender mercies of the Iraqi dictatorship.

Washington also washed its hands of the matter. Its current position confirms that it never wanted a Kurdish victory.

The stubbornly independent mountain people suffered one of the worst defeats in their history. They were subjected to brutal repression, and even a genocidal policy of "population transfer," the forcible moving of Kurds to the Arab south and the settlement of Arabs in the Kurdish north.

Rebellion is chronic in all the major Kurdish areas. At the first opportunity, the Kurds renew their fight for nationhood.

Their objective is often concealed for tactical reasons. The Kurdish people is divided among four states.

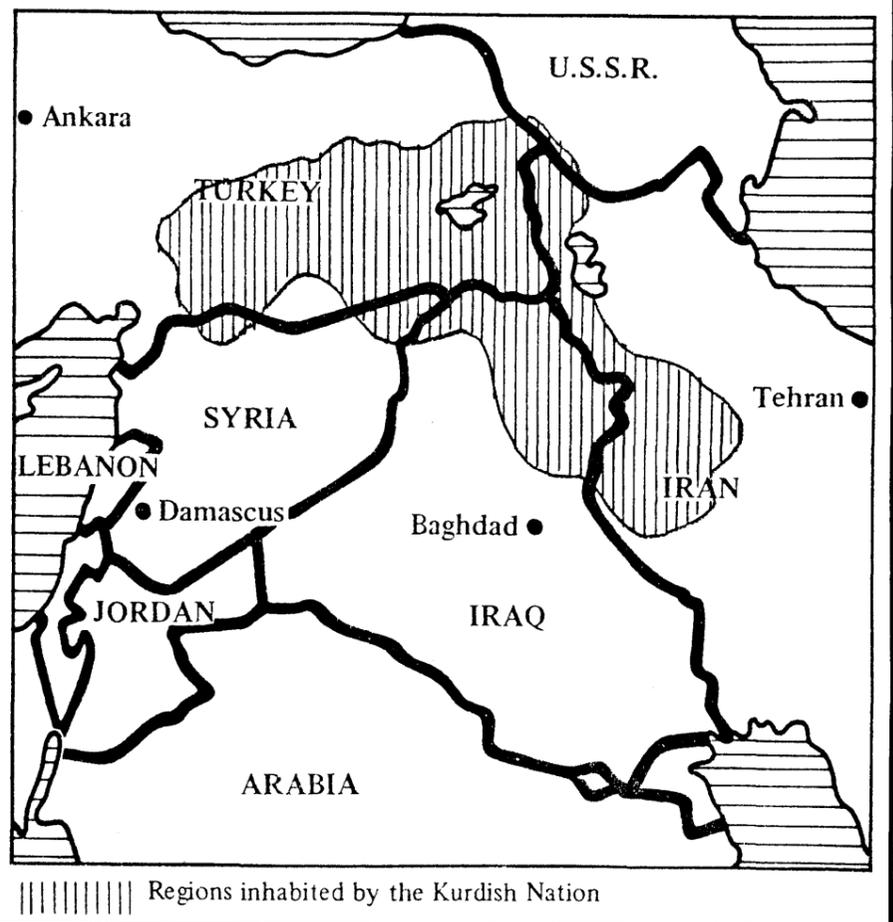
In Turkey, the regime denies even the existence of Kurds. But this nonexistent people is banned from speaking its nonexistent language. In the Shah's Iran, it was illegal to publish in Kurdish. The Islamic Republic has made the Kurdish countryside a desert.

During the Iran-Iraq war, Turkey even bombed Kurdish targets in Iraq to show that it was prepared to move in to suppress the Kurds if the Iraqi regime lost its ability to control the area.

So, the nationalist leaders often say that they do not aspire to independence and unity, only to autonomy or democracy within the frameworks of the states in which they live. That, however, has not reassured the oppressor states in the slightest. They have continued to repress all Kurdish national activity and to try to destroy the Kurdish nation.

Thus, defeat of the Kurdish uprising in Iraq will certainly mean new massacres and genocidal outrages. That is proved also by the slaughter recounted by refugees from the fighting in the Shiite areas of the south.

Washington's avowal that preservation of an established state is more important for it than the human rights of an entire people also exposes its claims that it went to war to rescue the Kuwaiti people. The Kurds in Iraq are far more numerous than the Kuwaitis, and they have suffered brutal repression not for months, but for decades.



The British took the threat seriously. But they had another reason to include the United States in the TPC; they realized that American money and machinery would be useful in developing the oil fields.

Thus, in December 1922, the British offered the Americans a 24 percent holding in the Turkish Petroleum Company. But the State Department advised the oil company negotiators to hold out for better terms.

Finally, on March 14, 1925, King Feisal ratified the concession of the Turkish Petroleum Company. This was seven months before the treaty was signed between Britain and "sovereign" Iraq. The High Commissioner was still pulling the strings.

The Chester concession had been knocked out of the ring. Now the way was clear for the U.S. corporations to come into the TPC.

As soon as the Americans were let through the "Open Door," of course, the portals were slammed shut. The San Remo agreement had provided that the Iraqi government would receive 20 percent of the TPC profits. But the Iraqis were now denied their share, and received a far smaller amount in royalties.

The oil companies' final agreement, in 1927, went far beyond their dicker over

Iraq alone. At one point, the negotiators drew a red line on a map, which purported to envelop all the lands of the old Ottoman Empire. Within this area, the companies agreed not to compete with each other for oil concessions.

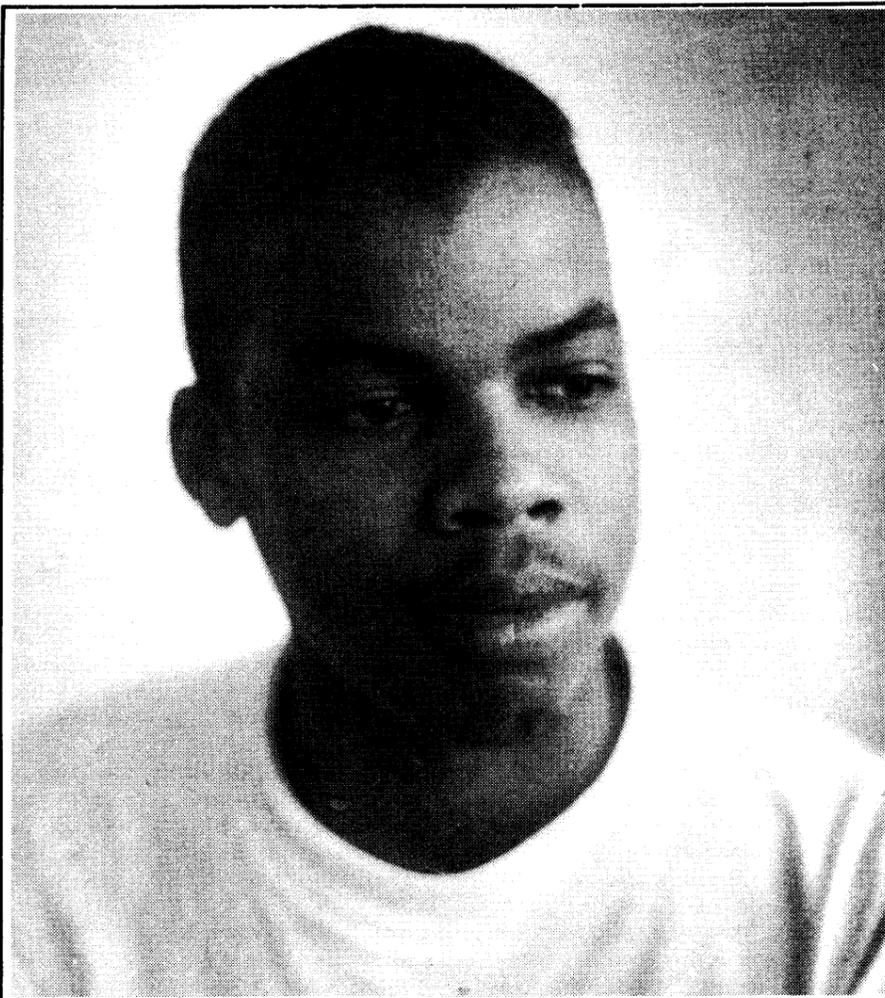
Thus, in the Red Line Agreement, the major American, British, and French oil companies portioned out the oil riches of the Middle East among themselves.

The following year saw another series of secret meetings, in which the oil companies agreed to build a cartel on a world scale. Prices would be fixed at high levels, refineries and tankers would be shared, and smaller companies would be frozen out.

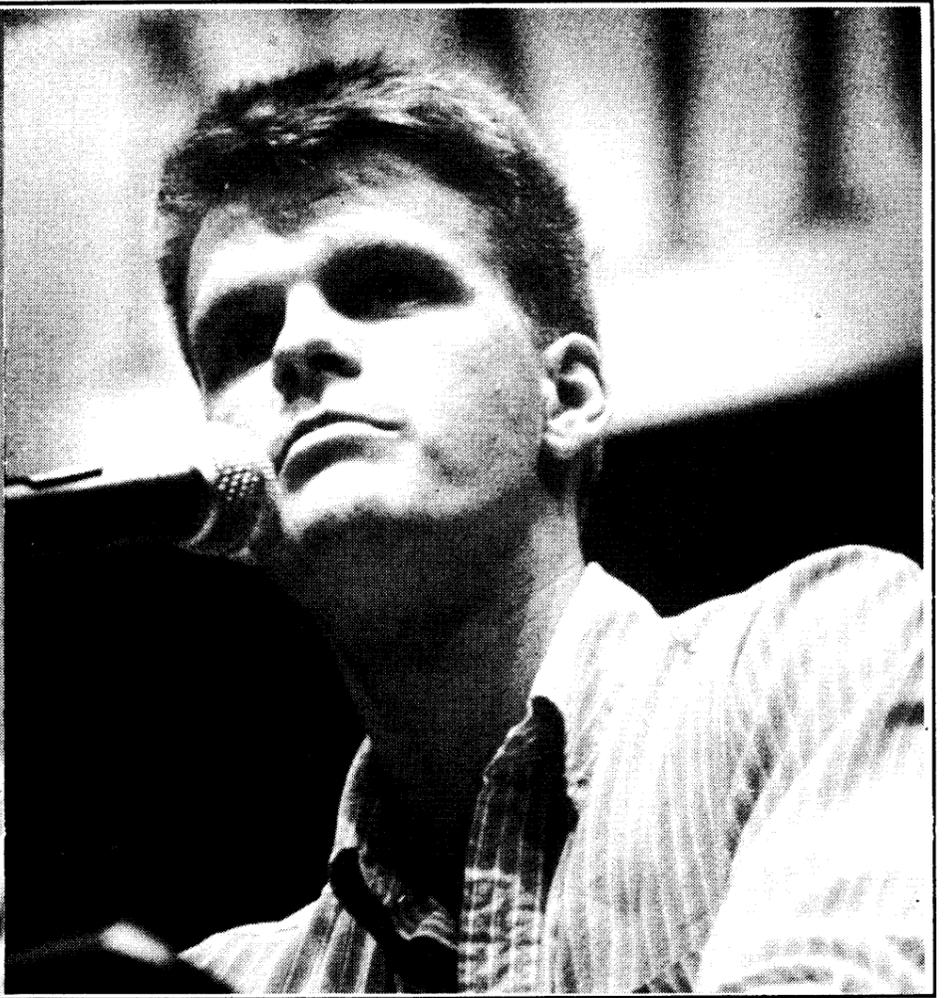
The Great War of 1914-1918 was the first of this century's oil wars. In its aftermath, a handful of governments and capitalist monopolies were able to tighten their grip over most of the world's resources and peoples.

But the story doesn't end there. In less than a generation, another world war would be fought. Again, oil would be deemed a strategic commodity, "as necessary as blood itself." Again, whole nations would be subdivided.

And even now—there is no peace. ■



Tahan K. Jones



Erik Larsen

Joseph Ryan/Socialist Action

... GIs face gov't reprisals

(continued from page 1)

in the United States, Germany and Saudi Arabia.

The Marine Corps has come down hardest on the resisters.

Darwin Alrola, a U.S. Marine reservist, was sentenced to eight months in the brig and a dishonorable discharge. Marine Greg Dawson was sentenced to nine months in the brig. Corporal Erik Hayes was arrested while sleeping in his university dorm, sentenced to eight months in the brig, and given a dishonorable discharge.

One of the most outspoken marines against the Gulf War was reservist Erik Larsen. On March 21, he turned himself in to authorities in Hayward, Calif. He was handcuffed and immediately shipped 3000 miles away to Camp LeJeune, N.C.

Larsen, considered AWOL from the Marines since his unit was activated on Feb. 9, was a highly visible opponent of the Gulf war. He went on a 22-city U.S. speaking tour, appeared on numerous TV and radio shows, and appeared at antiwar rallies in Germany, Italy and England.

During the past six months, Larsen condemned "Bush's war for gasoline under a dollar a gallon" and was wildly cheered at antiwar rallies. But things are different now.

"It is a delicate time for my client," said Larsen's attorney, Robert Rivkin. "He said a lot of things already that the Marines didn't like."

The OUT NOW/Larsen Defense Commit-

tee justifiably fears that the 23-year-old Marine will receive extra punishment "because of his high visibility."

Another resister who fears retribution from the Marine brass is Cpl. Tahan K. Jones. This 21-year-old Black marine was in the same unit as Larsen. Jones, too, was an outspoken opponent of the war in the Gulf. He spoke at antiwar rallies and teach-ins, linking his opposition to the war with the oppression of Blacks in the United States.

He has announced that he will turn himself in as soon as his legal defense is properly organized. (See interview with Tahan Jones in March 1991 issue of *Socialist Action*.)

Resistance in Germany

The Army had the largest number of resisters, and hence, will have the largest number of court-martials.

In San Francisco, Calif., Ellenora Johnson, a 13-year U.S. Army medical clerk, was sentenced to three months hard labor with no prison time (the hard labor to be worked off after her normal duties), fined \$2500, and given a bad conduct discharge. Johnson, a Black woman, had refused to join her unit in Saudi Arabia because of her opposition to war on religious grounds.

Stephanie Atkinson, a Philadelphia Army reservist, was given an "other than honorable" discharge after spending several days in the Fort Knox brig. Undoubtedly, in the coming months the number of soldiers and

reservists who'll be court-martialed will mushroom.

In Germany, the scene of some of the largest demonstrations against the Gulf War, over 40 GIs applied for CO discharges. The Military Counseling Network (MCN), which advises American soldiers in Germany, states they received requests for CO information from over 400 GIs.

The German peace movement made serious efforts to support the American GI resisters. A German letter writing campaign to American soldiers, commanders, and Congress members was organized to support the conscientious objectors. More than 150 prominent German citizens in Bremen and 100 in Berlin placed advertisements in newspapers announcing their willingness to house AWOL American soldiers.

The military authorities acted swiftly to put a lid on the growing GI antiwar movement in Germany.

On Dec. 28, 1990, the army shackled and forcibly deployed Specialist David Carson and seven other GIs, all with pending CO applications, to Saudi Arabia. They now await court martials.

In another case, Sgt. Derrick Jones went AWOL to consult with a civilian lawyer after his commander refused to process his CO claim. In taped negotiations with his commander, Jones was promised that if he returned to base he wouldn't be deployed to Saudi Arabia. Escorted by his lawyer, Jones returned to his base, was immediately arrested at the gate by MPs and was on a plane to Saudi Arabia within five hours.

GIs aren't the only ones, however, who have been threatened and victimized. The wives of American service members and other military dependents who opposed the war and set up support groups in Stuttgart, Frankfurt and Nuremburg, were harassed by the MPs.

One outspoken spouse of a GI stationed in the Gulf, Annette C., had her apartment searched by MPs. She was told her husband would face difficulties in Saudi Arabia because of her actions. Furthermore, she was threatened with expulsion from Germany for "defaming the military."

Resisters need solidarity

During the six-month prelude to the start of the air/ground war in the Gulf, a gigantic antiwar movement was organized in the United States and around the world. One of its first manifestations took place in the armed forces. By early December 1990—three months into the military buildup—over 1000 GIs had applied for CO discharges.

The military tried to downplay the significance of this "problem" by treating all CO applications with skepticism. But they also attempted to avoid creating any controversy; a graphic example being the Marine Corps' discharge of Jeff Paterson in lieu of a court

martial for his refusal to board a plane for Saudi Arabia.

But as Cpl. Tahan Jones told *Socialist Action*, "That was then, this is now. They're gonna try to hang us now."

One obstacle that the resisters face today—besides the qualitative one of a demobilized mass antiwar movement—is that they are geographically scattered and are deliberately being isolated by military authorities. Moreover, they are short of money.

Defense of the resisters is being organized by a diverse number of groups through a cooperative network.

The San Francisco-based Mobilization to Bring the Troops Home Now! recently voted to contribute the remainder of its bank account to help pay the legal costs for defending Ellenora Johnson, Tahan Jones, and Erik Larsen. In addition, the money the Mobilization raises at an April 6 antiwar demonstration will be donated to these three GIs.

Groups like the War Resisters League (WRL), Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors (CCCO), American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), OUT NOW Newsletter, and others are actively seeking funds to pay the legal costs necessary to keep the military from lynching hundreds of other GI resisters.

Significantly, Amnesty International (AI) has joined the campaign to protect military COs. The War Resisters League reports that AI recently recognized Sgt. George Morse at Fort Riley, Kan., as a "prisoner of conscience"—their first recognition of a political prisoner in the United States since 1987. The War Resisters League is correctly urging AI to recognize the cases of all GI resisters.

The GI resisters need our help. They resisted serving in the Gulf, refused to fight for oil profits, and helped spearhead the movement to stop the war. They now need the help of the many thousands who wildly cheered them at antiwar rallies.

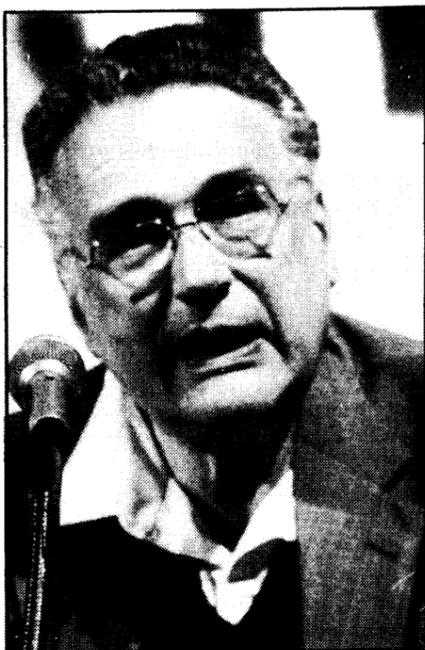
At a press conference to announce he was turning himself in, Erik Larsen stated, "The war is over and now it's time for me to take responsibility for my actions."

Larsen and the hundreds of other resisters must not be left to take this responsibility by themselves.

For more information on the status of the GI resisters, the following organizations should be contacted: War Resisters League, 339 Lafayette St., New York, N.Y. 10012 (212) 228-0450;

Correction

In the article in the March issue of *Socialist Action* titled, "Canadian Senate reverses anti-abortion bill," the vote was reported as 1140 to 131. It should have read, 140 to 131.



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Labor and the fight against 'replacement workers'

The top leadership of the labor movement has decided that their number-one political campaign in 1991 is the adoption of anti-scab legislation by the U.S. Congress. From Lane Kirkland, the head of the AFL-CIO, to every president of major unions, the call is out for the political action committees to mobilize the rank and file to lobby their congressmen and women to get a veto-proof bill passed.

H.R. 5, introduced by Democratic Congressman Bill Clay in the House of Representatives, and its companion bill, S. 55, introduced by Senator Howard Metzenbaum in the Senate, will amend the 1935 National Labor Relations Act (also known as the Wagner Act) "to prevent discrimination based on participation in labor disputes."

The 1935 law recognized the right of workers to organize trade unions, to engage in collective bargaining, and to strike when negotiations failed. That law, like most labor laws, was adopted by Congress after workers began to stand up to the antilabor policies of the employers backed by the city, state, and federal governments and their courts, cops, and hired thugs.

It is not surprising that in 1934 three major strike victories shook the country and led to the massive battles that eventually created the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO).

The Wagner Act was not passed by Congress because they believed workers had the right to form unions. It was legislated to curtail and control a fighting labor movement that had forced the bosses to the bargaining table.

As soon as the employers and their servants in government and the courts could weaken gains won by labor, they did so. That's the significance of the 1938 Supreme Court case known as the "Mackay-Radio Decision." It ruled that even though workers had the right to strike, employers could permanent-

ly replace them if they struck. Despite that antilabor ruling, workers continued to strike and made some gains. By the end of the war and the outbreak of a massive strike wave, labor was at one of its strongest points in American history. Unfortunately, at the same time, the labor bureaucracy was also consolidated in the new CIO along the same business unionist lines of the older AFL. The two federations merged in the 1950s.

Decline of the unions

From the 1940s to today, the organized labor movement has declined in both numbers and influence. Its top leaders are tied more and more into the Democratic and Republican parties—parties representing the interests of big business. The rank and file has little say on how the unions are run. There is a facade of internal democracy.

The employers have seen the decline, and have sought blood to raise their profits. The 1980s can accurately be called a decade of union-weakening and union-busting attacks.

The Reagan administration led the national assault with its firing of the air traffic controllers in 1981. But employer after employer in industries from meatpacking to the airlines have stepped up their drive against labor with two and three-tier contracts, hiring of part-time employees, fewer benefits, and forcing workers to pay more for their own healthcare (if they receive any at all).

When workers go on strike, "replacement workers" (i.e., scabs) are immediately brought into the plants. With few exceptions, the unions have lost every battle.

This "antilabor climate" is the argument used by labor officials to push for anti-scab legislation. None of the labor federation presidents believe the rank and file can stop scabbing. Since they've never relied

Which Side Are You On?

By
Malik Miah



on the membership before, that's not a surprise.

Labor's flawed strategy

On the face of it, pushing Congress to adopt anti-scab legislation sounds like a good response to union-busting. Unfortunately, the labor leaders view political lobbying as key to their overall strategy. There are two major flaws in this policy.

First, as I've already briefly explained, labor laws in general are antilabor. They are on the books as a way to control labor—to tie us up in red tape to weaken our ability to settle differences "one-on-one" with the employer. The laws are aimed at keeping production going at all costs; not to provide us a living wage and a fair deal.

That's what the NLRB and the "amendable" contracts for rail and airline workers under the Railway Labor Act (adopted in 1926) are all about. Any positive features of these antilabor laws are byproducts of labor's victories won when the unions were on the rise. But once the unions stopped fighting back, the government and courts began to take away and grind down those gains.

Second, the anti-scab legislation strategy miseducates workers about who our friends are. Our allies are

co-workers in strikes and struggles for a better life—here and abroad. Labor solidarity is how strikes and other battles for social justice are won.

Congress is made up of the two parties of the rich, even if a few Democrats claim to be "pro-labor." The labor movement has no independent voice in congress. We need a union-based labor party to fight for our interests in Washing-

ton. What the AFL-CIO unions should do is use our resources to campaign for active solidarity, so when workers go on strike, employers think twice before using scabs to cross our picket lines. When there is no production, and profits dry up, that's when employers sit down and talk. It's the only winning strategy to defeat the employers' use of scabs. ■

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Dennis Sweetenham 1941—1991

By TINA YOUNG

Dennis Sweetenham, a member of the Cleveland branch of Socialist Action, passed away on Monday, Feb. 28.

Dennis was born April 7, 1941, in Detroit. Deeply affected by the emerging civil rights movement, he began to develop a social consciousness in high school. Dennis did so well in high school that he won a four-year scholarship from the Ford Foundation to the college of his choice. A high school teacher pointed him towards Oberlin College.

Dennis loved Oberlin and had many fond recollections of his years there. He studied physics and became a socialist. His dedication to the socialist cause was a driving force for the rest of his life. He was part of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee and the civil rights movement.

Upon graduating from Oberlin in 1962, Dennis moved to Cleveland, where he joined the Young Socialist Alliance and the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). As a branch leader, he took on many assignments throughout the 1960s. He also participated in the movement against the Vietnam War.

In 1969, Dennis moved to Berkeley. He later lived in Toledo and Columbus, Ohio, before returning to Cleveland.

Within the SWP, Dennis argued against the party leadership's abandonment of key portions of their revolutionary program. For this, he was undemocratically expelled in January 1984. He immediately joined Socialist Action.

Dennis's love for the outdoors as an avid bicyclist, birder, and cross-country skier led him to develop a particular interest in environmental issues.

As the first US troops began to arrive in the Persian Gulf last summer, Dennis began



Photo courtesy of Sweetenham family

to play an active role in the new antiwar movement. He was a leader of the Cleveland Campaign for Peace in the Middle East, serving on its steering committee and chairing its finance committee.

Dennis also worked with the defense committee for the Oberlin students who were arrested last April 13 when the cops attacked a peaceful demonstration for accessible education and against racism on campus. It's fitting that Dennis' last public speech was at a Feb. 3 antiwar rally in Finney Chapel at Oberlin College.

A meeting to celebrate Dennis Sweetenham's life will be held in Cleveland on Sunday, April 14, 2:30 p.m., at the Unitarian Society of Cleveland, 2728 Lancanshire Road, Cleveland Heights.

For more information, call (216) 429-2167. Those friends who are unable to attend may send a message to the meeting. Send it to: S.A., P.O. Box 6151, Cleveland, OH 44101. ■

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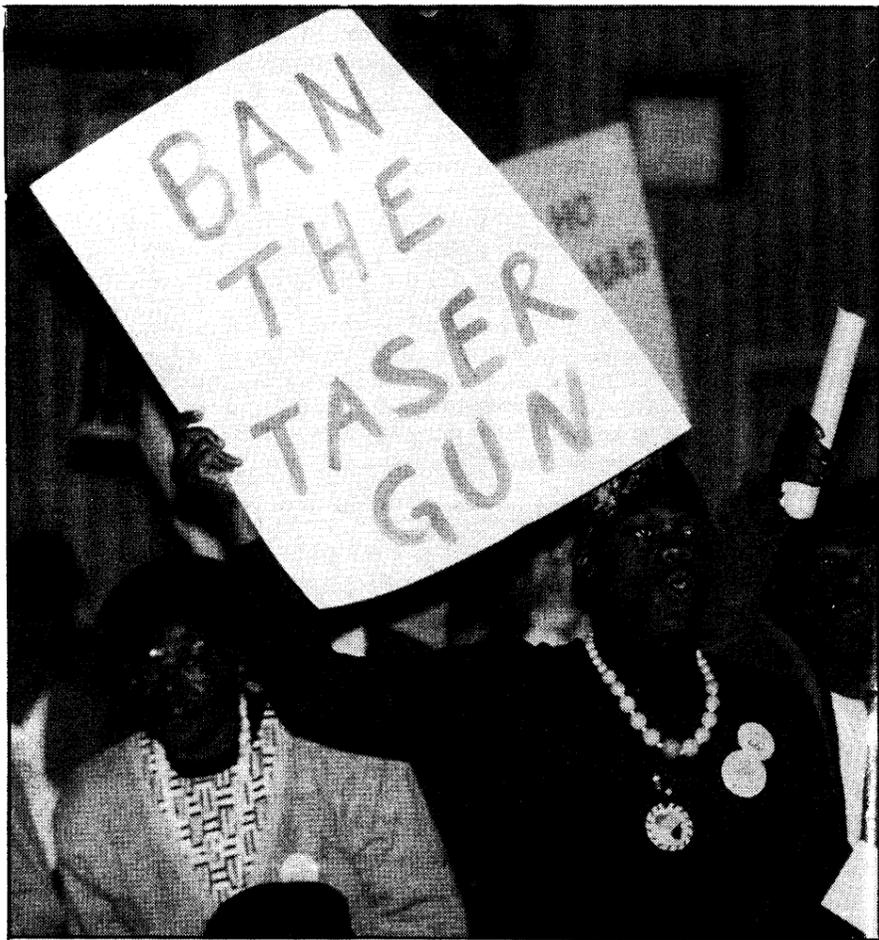
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Black community enraged by L.A. police atrocities



By MALIK MIAH and KATHLEEN O'NAN

LOS ANGELES—Outrage! That's the generalized sentiment in the Black community here. Anger and disbelief is evident among other working people, too. The March 3 brutal beating of Black motorist Rodney King by at least four L.A. police officers (21 were present along with four California Highway Patrol and two school district cops) has led to worldwide condemnation of the L.A. Police Department (LAPD) and calls for Police Chief Daryl Gates to resign.

King, 25, was arrested on a minor traffic violation (later dropped) and suffered a vicious beating. He sustained fractures of the leg, cheekbone, skull, and eye socket, as well as internal injuries. The only reason his case hasn't been swept under the rug is an accident. An amateur photographer's now famous videotape caught the beating and opened a window into the world of cop violence and racism.

The cops used a stun gun to shock King, and then beat and kicked him so viciously it could have easily led to his death. After the beating, King was left on the side of the road for an ambulance to pick him up. The cops stood around gloating over their great physical effort.

Over the police radio back to the station the cops spoke of playing a good game of "hardball." Nurses at the hospital reported that the cops used racist remarks directed at King. The other cop "onlookers" ignored pleas by residents and others to not "kill him." They assumed that if a complaint was filed, their "word" would be the law (as usual). It was simply a typical day of "work" for the cops.

Paul DuNard, president of the Lynnwood School District teachers union, showed the video to his mostly Black seventh-grade class. Their response: "So what?" The students pointed out that such cop violence happens all the time.

In fact, the day after the video was made public, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) in Los Angeles received 175 telephone calls recounting similar violent episodes.

Across the country, in virtually every

Black community, the sentiment about cops and racism is similar. Cops don't ask you your occupation if you're Black. They assume the worst. Many Latin, Asian, and white workers have suffered similar assaults.

Real face of police

The real face of the L.A. Police Dept. (and all police departments) is now visible. So visible that Mayor Tom Bradley, two city councilmen, and other leading politicians have condemned the racist assault, hinting they'd be happy to see Gates go.

The NAACP, the ACLU, and a cross-section of Greater L.A., among others, are demanding the immediate prosecution of the cops and action against Gates. Several protests have been held outside Parker Center, police headquarters.

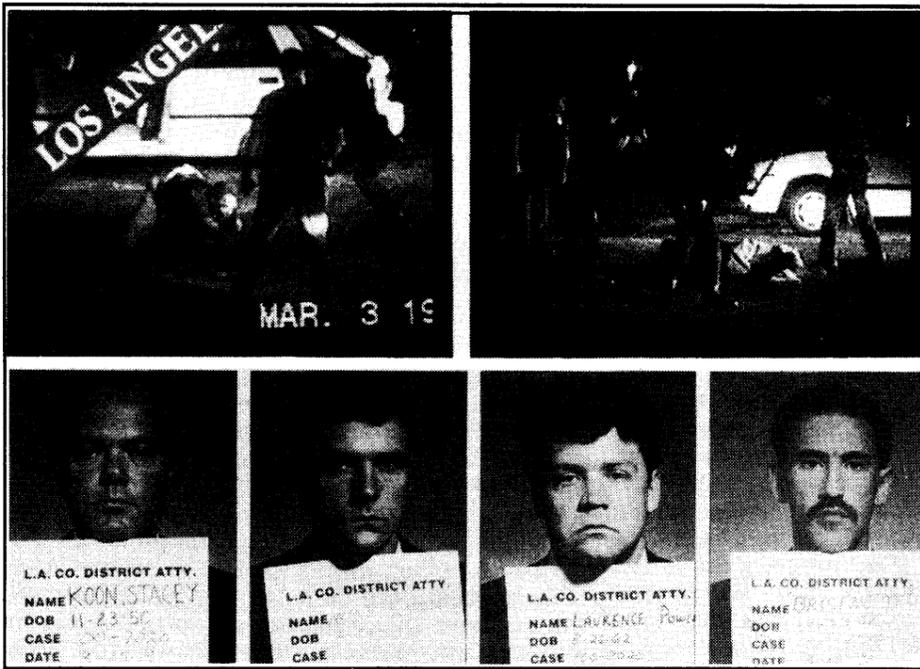
So far, only four L.A. cops have been charged with the beating. They face maximum sentences ranging from four to seven years. A trial is set to begin May 13. The other cops have not been charged.

And Police Chief Gates has defiantly defended his department and refuses to resign. As a civil servant, Gates can't be fired by the mayor. A pro-Gates organization, Citizens in Support of the Chief of Police, has also been formed.

King and his wife have filed an \$83 million claim against the city—\$1 million for each of the 56 videotaped baton hits and kicks plus punitive damages. The claim could be raised as more facts come out.

The NAACP is organizing an April 6 march and rally to demand an end to cop violence and the resignation of Gates. The rally will begin at noon at Olympic and Broadway. A rally will take place at the Parker Center at 2 p.m. Speakers include L.A. NAACP President Attorney Joseph Duff, L.A. Congresswoman Maxine Waters, and Jesse Jackson. For more information on protest activities, contact the NAACP at (213) 296-2630.

Others who have spoken out against cop brutality include Bill Robertson, secretary-treasurer of the L.A. County Federation of Labor; Local 660 of the Service Employees International Union; the L.A. and San Fernando Valley chapters of the National Organization for Women; the League of United Latin-American Citizens (LULAC);



Richard Perry/SYGMA

LAPD officers Stacey Koon, Timothy Wind, Laurence Powell, Ted Briseno. What about the other 21 cops who watched?

the L.A. Coalition Against the U.S. Intervention in the Middle East; and Young Koreans United.

Twenty church leaders have also condemned the attack and called for Gates' resignation.

Attack is no aberration

Those defending Gates and the L.A. police department are claiming this beating is not the norm. They've called it an "aberration." California Gov. Pete Wilson and Presidents Reagan and Bush have both praised Gates in the past.

But the beating of King, as the Lynnwood students said, is typical. "When they come up to you, the first thing they think is, you're a drug dealer," Jerome Macon, a 25-year-old Black supermarket employee told a reporter. "They see you have a beeper and they smash it. But people are too scared to press the issue. I see it a lot. They make people pull off their socks and shoes and they make you sit in the dirt, faced down, while they frisk you and find out your name. It's crazy."

He and other Black youth say there is no point in reporting harassment to the cops since they'll do nothing, or worse. The LAPD uses an internal investigation department to review complaints against themselves. Not surprisingly, of 172 citizen complaints concerning use of excessive force last year only five were sustained.

Long history of racist violence

In 1979, for example, the cops shot Eulia Love in a dispute over her gas bill. In the early 1980s, the LAPD used the chokehold that led to 20 Black suspects dying. Gates explained that "Blacks have smaller windpipes than normal people."

Gates is not unusual in his actions. Other top cops do the same. He's only more arrogant in saying so publicly. "Drug dealers should be shot," says Gates. And, "Gays are evil, gays do evil."

Even Black Los Angeles police officers have faced racist harassment by their fellow cops. "These things go on all the time: monkey hunt, tar buddy, gorillas in the mist," said Janine Bouey, referring to racial epithets used by white police officers.

Cop terror against Blacks and other working people is not new. It is their job to protect the property of the "good citizens," which doesn't include most minorities or workers.

Civilian boards no answer

Some here and across the country are now calling for a police review board to oversee

the LAPD. After the King beating, the U.S. Justice Dept. announced that it is reviewing approximately 15,000 allegations of civil rights violations by police that it has received over the last six years. Even Gates has called for a citizens' panel to review "use-of-force" tactics by the cops. He's assigned a senior commander to investigate.

In San Francisco, where a police review board is made up of civilians not affiliated with the cops, the police can still do what they want.

For example, the S.F. review board found the department used unnecessary force against United Farm Workers Union leader Dolores Huerta at a protest where she suffered six broken ribs and a ruptured spleen when police thrust their batons into a crowd of demonstrators. The police chief, Frank Jordan, refused to discipline the police officer involved, arguing that the cop acted as he was trained!

Civilian Review Boards are not the answer. Cops must be brought to justice. The most effective response is the immediate prosecution of all cops committing violence against Blacks and other workers. Not only the four L.A. cops should go to jail. The 23 "onlookers" should be fired and arrested as well.

Supreme Court coercion ruling

The March 26 Supreme Court ruling that allows the use of coerced or involuntary confessions also shows the true face of American justice. That ruling reverses a 1967 court decision that said the use of coerced confessions was illegal and would generally result in the reversal of a conviction.

The cops now have a green light to whip any suspect and force a confession for any "crime" they choose.

Joseph Rauh, a lawyer and civil libertarian, called the Supreme Court ruling a "horror." He said: "When they have five witnesses, they don't beat a prisoner. It's when they don't have the witnesses that you have coercion."

Steven Shapiro of the American Civil Liberties Union added: "Even with a dozen eyewitnesses, you can never, never be sure that the presence of the coerced conviction did not play a pivotal role in the conviction by its emotional impact."

The LA. cops will surely try to take full advantage of this new court ruling. Only through a vigorous public campaign demanding "Justice Now!" will the police pay a price for their criminal activity. And then a blow will be struck against racist violence. ■