

National Jan. 26 actions called to protest U.S. war in Mideast

By JEFF MACKLER

NEW YORK—On Dec. 1, some 400 anti-war activists from across the country met here at a national conference at Riverside Church to plan a unified national mobilization against the U.S.-led invasion of the Gulf region.

The conference, which was initiated by the Campaign for Peace in the Middle East, voted overwhelmingly to organize a mass nationwide march in Washington, D.C., on Saturday, Jan. 26, with a simultaneous march in San Francisco. Building actions for the demonstrations will take place on Jan. 19 in cities across the United States.

The body adopted three demands for the Jan. 26 demonstration: "Bring the Troops Home Now," "No War in the Middle East," and "Money for Human Needs, Not War."

A significant factor in the Dec. 1 conference was the participation of students representing statewide, regional, and national coalitions across the country which had been instrumental in organizing many of the student teach-ins and campus activities.

This highly authoritative conference included official representatives of coalitions from virtually every major city in the United States. Newly formed antiwar coalitions from Georgia, Florida, Indiana, Mississippi, Ohio, Kansas, Tennessee, Washington, and other states were also represented. All had previously organized protests on Oct. 20.

Representatives from over 100 organizations active in the new antiwar movement also attended. These included SANE/Freeze, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Fellowship for Reconciliation, War Resisters League, Rainbow Coalition, American Friends Service Committee, Democratic Socialists of America, Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, Mobilization for Survival, U.S. Student Association, Student Action Union, Pledge of Resistance, MADRE, Fund for New Priorities, Socialist Action, Socialist Workers Party, and Workers World Party.

Counterposed dates debated

The conference debated counterposed motions for demonstrating on either Jan. 19 or Jan. 26. The motion for the 19th was backed by supporters of the New York-based Coalition to Stop U.S. Intervention in the Middle East. A week or two prior to the Dec. 1 conference, this coalition unilaterally called for Jan. 19 marches in Washington, D.C., and San Francisco.

The Jan. 19 date was rejected in part for fear it would conflict with planned actions the same weekend celebrating the birthdate of Martin Luther King and also because most campuses would not be in session.

The conference decision to back the Jan. 26 date was a conscious effort to have the broadest possible initial call for one unified action, rather than a call issued by only one wing of the new movement.

After considerable debate, the proposal for unified action was adopted with only a small handful opposing. Gabriella Gemma, of the Coalition to Stop U.S. Intervention in the Middle East, indicated that she would take the decision of the Dec. 1 meeting back to her coalition for consideration.

The conference considered other demands for the demonstration and rejected them, in-

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Thousands will protest against U.S. war plans in nationally coordinated demonstrations on Jan. 26.

UN vote provides cover for U.S. war against Iraq

By MALIK MIAH

What an irony. On the same day that 34 countries signed the Charter of Paris that supposedly ends an "era of confrontation and division" in Europe and the world, President George Bush pressed those same countries to back Washington's war preparations in the Persian Gulf against the Iraqi and Arab people.

"Success here [Paris]," Bush said, "can be neither profound nor enduring if the rule of law is shamelessly disregarded elsewhere."

Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev agreed: "We're ready to show patience in the quest for a political solution." But, he added, the Soviet Union is ready to support a U.S.-sponsored United Nations resolution backing military actions against Iraq if it becomes necessary.

And that is just what happened. On Nov. 29, the UN Security Council, in a 12-2 vote (with 1 abstention), voted to authorize the use of military force against Iraq if Iraqi troops do not withdraw from Kuwait by Jan. 15. This vote gave Washington the UN cover it had pressed hard to obtain in its war

against Iraq.

Only Cuba and Yemen voted against the U.S.-sponsored resolution; China abstained. The day after the UN vote, Bush announced that he would dispatch Secretary of State James Baker to discuss—not "negotiate," Baker insisted—with Saddam Hussein.

Despite the media hype portraying Baker's efforts as a quest for a "peaceful solution," by year's end the U.S.-led force will number over 500,000 men and women who will be poised to attack Iraq when Bush gives the signal.

End of Cold War?

The "hot" situation in the Middle East puts a lie to the Charter of Paris signed Nov. 21 by Gorbachev and Bush and their allies. There can be no peace in the world as long as there is oppression and exploitation.

After the signing of the Charter of Paris for a New Europe, President Bush said, "The cold war is over. In signing the Charter of Paris we have closed a chapter of history."

The charter promises that the 34 signers will pledge a "steadfast commitment to democracy based on human rights and fun-

damental freedoms, prosperity through economic liberty and social justice, and equal security for all countries."

What are these "fundamental freedoms"? They include a concept of democracy practiced in the capitalist countries, including the right "to own property ... and to exercise individual enterprise."

"We stress that economic cooperation based on market economy," the document continues, "constitutes an essential element of our relations and will be instrumental in the construction of a prosperous and united Europe.... We reaffirm the need to continue to support democratic countries in transition towards the establishment of market economy and creation of the basis for self-sustained economic and social growth."

Collapse of Stalinist regimes

By the "end of the Cold War" Bush means that the market economy (i.e., capitalism) has won out over socialism (the planned economy). Yet this is a false presentation of what is occurring today around the world.

What is happening in Eastern Europe and

(continued on page 14)

And where are George Bush's kids?



Fightback

By
Sylvia Weinstein

The American parents of some 300,000 women and men know where their children will be this Christmas. They will be 6000 miles away in the desert of the Middle East waiting for George to give the go ahead to murder women, men, and children of Iraq and in the process kill thousands of American troops. No one expects this war to be an easy one.

George tells us that Saddam Hussein must be taught a lesson for his invasion of Kuwait. George says he just doesn't like invasions.

But on Dec. 20, 1989, George invaded Panama, killing thousands of innocent civilians in his phony "war on drugs." Previous to that he and Reagan invaded Grenada to "protect American students." For years he armed Contra thugs and caused the death and destruction of tens of thousands of Nicaraguan people—mostly unarmed peasants and children. All in the name of "democracy and the American way of life."

In El Salvador he and his predecessors have armed and supported a military junta which has targeted workers, peasants, and their children, as well as nuns and priests. There is not a country in Latin America which does not bear the imprint of U.S. whips on the backs of the poor and impoverished. All for the "American way of life"—that is, to preserve the American way of life for the rich of this country, certainly not the life of American working people.

Shifting excuses

George Bush has come up with a lot of excuses for his actions in the Middle East. After he tried "the American way of life" excuse, he shifted to "stop Hussein, the second Hitler." Then he shifted to the "saving our jobs" excuse.

(I'm sure that this one was designed to arouse the hopes of unemployed "hard hats" The president desperately needs a home team to beat up on the antiwar sentiment that is sweeping this country—like they had at the beginning of the

Vietnam war. Not this time Georgie!

In the Nov. 28 issue of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, it was announced that the National Organization for Women (an organization with 300,000 members) has demanded the "immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from the Persian Gulf!" They know whose children will be dying if a shooting war breaks out.

Along with NOW a broad coalition of Jewish, Protestant, and Catholic leaders have also opposed the use of military force in the Persian Gulf, citing the fact that if a shooting war should develop, "certainly more civilians would be killed than combatants."

It will not be the children of the rich who will be dying on some hot and sandy desert. Which takes me to what George and Barbara's sons have been doing to defend "our" way of life. Well, they're doing just fine, according to an article in the Nov. 12 issue of *The Nation*.

"Silverado Kid"

You remember Neil Bush—the "Silverado Kid" of the Silverado Savings and Loan scandal? He makes John Dillinger, the notorious bank robber of the '30s, look like a boy scout.

Dillinger pulled a gun to get the loot, Neil uses his dad's pull for the same ends. Dillinger was gunned down on the streets by the FBI, Neil has yet to get a slap on the wrist! He'll get off scot-free, because that's the way it is in America; rich kids get to play monopoly with real money that belongs to other people. But don't worry, the taxpayers will make things right.

Let's turn to another chip off the old block—Jeb Bush. Jeb, who works for the Republican Party in Miami, went into partnership to purchase a Miami office building, using money borrowed by an associate from a Florida savings and loan called Boward Federal. When Boward Federal went under, the government bailout took care of

more than \$4 million to make good the loan.

Jeb and his partner, Armando Codina, negotiated a settlement with the regulators in which they repaid \$505,000 and retained control of their office building, while passing on to the government a \$4.6 million second mortgage. Now, maybe that's the "jobs" that "big-daddy Bush" is talking about fighting for in Iraq.

Texas oil profits

And George Bush, Jr? He really lucked out. He is the eldest son of the president. He is also the director, a large stockholder, and the \$120,000-a-year consultant to a Texas oil company whose potentially lucrative drilling rights in the Persian Gulf are being protected by

American troops.

By mere chance, George Jr.'s firm is the Harken Energy Corporation of Dallas, which has been granted the exclusive right to explore, produce, and market almost all of Bahrain's oil and gas by Saudi Arabia's royal family. (Bahrain is a small island nation just off the eastern coast of Saudi Arabia.) But I don't think the Bahrain people got to vote on this.

Among the three top stockholders in Harken is a Swiss company controlled by South African businessman, Anton Rupert, and an unnamed Saudi investor who holds 17 percent of the common stock. The first three wells will be drilled by Bass Enterprise Production Company of Ft. Worth, Texas. They recently received \$2 billion in

federal assistance to buy out the American Savings and Loan of California.

Mission to Nicaragua

We should take a look at the exploits of another of Bush's sons, Marvin Bush. (Are George's daughters getting equal opportunity in the rip-off business?) Marvin was sent on a mission last May 15 to Nicaragua. He handed a consignment of medicines to Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo, spiritual father of the Contras and later of the Chamorro coalition.

It was reported by Ernesto Salmeron, Chamorro's own Minister of Health, that 1300 children had died in the first eight months of this year from preventable diseases. This delivery of medicine to save lives would seem to be a good thing; no?

But according to Alberto Sequeira, who works for Cofarma, the Chamorro government's pharmaceutical agency, fully 75 percent of the medicines were either out of date or second-hand. Sequeira told of opening containers which contained used urine receptacles. When questioned about this, Marvin Bush refused to discuss the matter and gave an untraceable outfit in Hartford, Conn., as the financier of the trip.

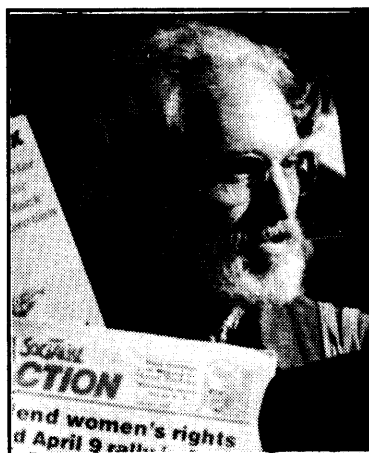
This is the real reason U.S. troops are in the Middle East: to preserve the "American way of life" for the likes of Neil, Jeb, George Jr. and Marvin Bush.

THEY ARE NOT WORTH DYING FOR!



BY AUTH FOR THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

Disease is on the rise in 'wealthy' America



Behind the Lines

By
Michael Schreiber

As people celebrate the New Year, the Grim Reaper has many reasons to smirk. Not only does the possibility of war loom ever closer in the Middle East. But misery, disease, and death have intensified here in our own country.

Diseases that seemed about to be eradicated—measles, syphilis, gonorrhea, and tuberculosis—now are on the increase. Cancer has reached epidemic proportions. And a second wave of the AIDS epidemic is spreading among women and small children. Oh, the Reaper has many reasons for glee.

After a decade of decline, death and sickness from asthma has risen sharply among children—especially among low-income Black children. Between 1979 and 1987, for example, hospitalizations of children for asthma increased nearly 5 percent a year.

Why, in this "wealthiest" of nations, are our children stalked by death? Has that Devil Saddam Hussein released some kind of germ-warfare device on our little

ones? Or is the answer closer at hand, found in the daily cycle of malnourishment, pollution, stress, and inadequate medical care confronting many families?

Consider this: The cost of healthcare increases about 17 percent a year, more than three times the country's general inflation rate. At the same time, an estimated 32 million to 37 million Americans cannot afford health insurance.

Racism also plays a role in the the Reaper's grand design. One in every 11 Blacks did not receive healthcare because they could not afford it, compared to one in 20 whites. The effects are startling:

A study in the current issue of the *International Journal of Epidemiology* shows that thousands of Blacks die from diseases (such as appendicitis, asthma, gallbladder infection, and hernia) that could be cured by routine medical care. Between the years 1980 and 1986, almost 80 percent of the deaths from those treatable diseases were among Blacks!

Black people are one-and-a-half times more likely to die than whites of the same age, and infant mortality among Blacks is twice that of whites. Last year, for the fourth year in a row, Black life expectancy went down.

What's the answer to America's crisis of disease and death? President Bush (interviewed while perched on his indoor bicycle) expounds on the ideas of "home healthcare," "neighbor helping neighbor," and "old-fashioned charity."

Charity sounds nifty in this season of sidewalk Santas and pie-in-the-sky preachers, but I've got a more realistic idea for Mr. Bush. I suggest he give this country a New Year's present by withdrawing all the troops from the Middle East and dismantling the entire military apparatus. That would save billions, if not trillions, of dollars.

Our servicemen and service-women could then be used to save lives. The troops could be mobilized to help rebuild our ravaged inner cities, construct hospitals and clinics, and provide healthcare free of cost to the general population.

Some of those warships could be recommissioned as hospital ships for every city with a harbor. Other ships and planes could carry free food and medical care to other countries.

Just imagine that new kind of New Year—a time in which disease is indeed on the wane, poverty and starvation are unknown, and war has been abolished. We'll wipe that smirk right off the Old Reaper's face!

That wonderful New Year is what socialists wish to hasten. Join us!

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The national elections last month demonstrated a glaring contradiction in American politics. Millions of people expressed deep dissatisfaction with our politicians, they wanted to "throw the rascals out," but they voted nearly all the rascals in again.

The new Congress will be almost identical with the old. The Republicans lost only one seat in the Senate. The Democrats gained only nine seats in the House.

Voters have long suspected that their representatives are more concerned with getting re-elected than with solving national problems. The recent budget crisis has turned suspicion into certainty—shift the blame was the name of the game.

With the election in mind, the "friend of the rich" Republicans played the "tax and spend" Democrats. Meanwhile, the Democrats assumed the mantle of "champion of the poor," which fitted badly as they put new taxes on workers' gasoline, beer, and cigarettes and called for sacrifices by veterans and the elderly.

President Bush set the tone for the game of political one-up-manship. Facing a 1990 deficit of \$220 billion, he set his first priority on a capital gain tax cut for the wealthy. When tax increases became inevitable, he told Congress to draw up the budget—and

American voters 'sit out' election with no choices

take the blame.

When 176 Republicans voted down his compromise package, he flipped and flopped, changing his mind on taxes five times in three days. "In the resulting chaos in Washington," *Time* magazine reported, "the entire government seemed to be a Bush League of stumblebums who couldn't manage their basic business."

This is the administration that is plunging us into a war in the desert with no discernable end!

Big business buys services

When all is said and done, the most absorbing concern of Congress members is three own political futures. It takes millions of dollars to run for Congress. These millions have to come from people who have millions. The S&L scandal demonstrates how big business can buy the services of even the most eminent Senators.

The eyes of legislators glaze over when topics of homelessness or healthcare are raised. But they respond immediately when

General Motors or some other big contributor demands action on special legislation to benefit them.

No wonder average citizens feel they are ignored by the politicians they've put in office. Democrats are no better than Republicans. The S&L crooks bought politicians of both varieties.

Both parties are concerned merely with preserving the status quo that rewards them so well. Party lines are strictly drawn only when the spoils of office are to be divided. Chairmanships of key committees and other political plums go to the majority party. This is how the two parties keep their members in line.

Bernie Sanders, the avowed socialist elected from Vermont, says he will have to join the Democratic caucus to play any role in Congress. How much "socialism" will he be able to espouse then?

The Republicans and Democrats are unable to point to differences on major policies. There are none. Campaigns have degenerated

into negative mud-slinging contests to see which candidate can be made to appear more loathsome.

Here is the dilemma of the voters in 1990. They have no real choice. Both candidates appear loathsome to them. They would like to vote "none of the above." In desperation, they vote to limit their terms in office. Or more often, they simply stay home—along with 65 percent of the qualified voters.

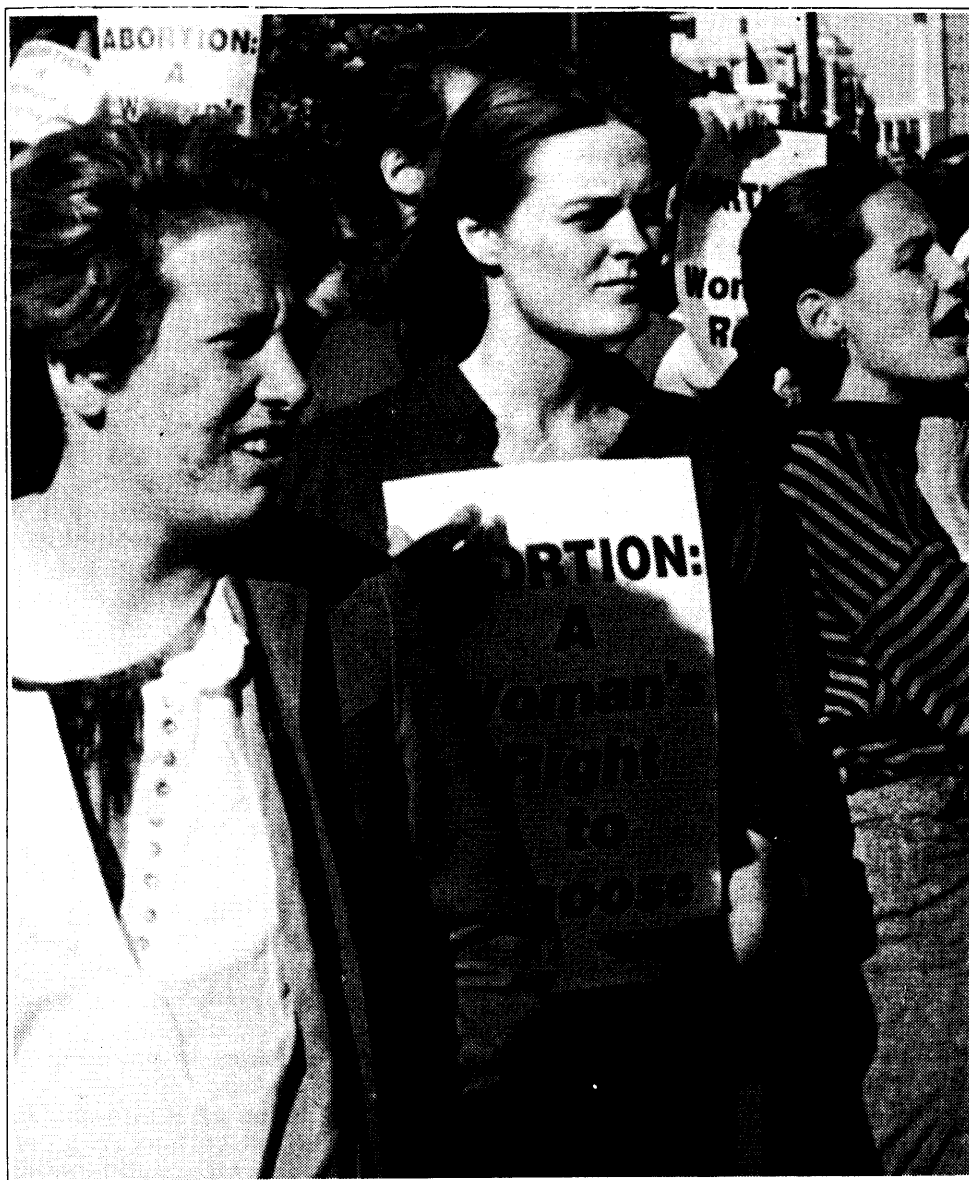
Build a labor party!

Voting for "sincere" candidates who promise to "represent all the people" will never serve the poor when their parties are on the payroll of the rich. The American capitalist class has two parties. The working class has none.

This situation cannot last forever. Too many desperate people with too many unmet needs are seeking a way out. Minorities, welfare mothers, the sick and indigent, and the homeless have already turned their backs on the two old parties.

They have only to realize the need to build a party of their own. The labor movement, with the right leadership, could form the framework for such a party. With a labor party, the vast majority of the American people will find the way to exert their overwhelming power and end the disgraceful charades American elections have become. ■

D.C. area clinic defenders defeat blockaders in weekend showdown



Joseph Ryan/Socialist Action

By JULIA STEINBERG

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Abortion rights supporters won a major victory Nov. 16 and 17, when Operation Rescue (OR) was unable to shut down abortion clinics in this area.

The much-heralded "D.C. Project II" only mustered around 700 anti-abortion activists, well below the 1000 to 1500 that OR had announced would participate. The number was also substantially less than last November, when 1500 protesters were successful in shutting down several clinics for extended periods of time.

Clinic defenders, organized by the Washington Area Clinic Defense Task Force (WACDTF) and the National Organization for Women, confronted anti-abortion protesters on both Friday and Saturday.

Over 300 blockaders were arrested on Friday, and the clinic was open by 10 a.m. But by the afternoon, all those arrested had been released, enabling them to participate in Saturday's blockade.

Saturday morning, over 500 pro-choice activists were on the street by 5 a.m. Clinic defenders came from as far away as Florida; Richmond, Va.; Philadelphia; and New York City. A sizeable contingent came from Baltimore, including approximately 50 students from UMBC, John Hopkins University, and Towson State University.

When Operation Rescue attempted to blockade the Capitol Women's Center, they were met by abortion-rights supporters firmly in control of the door. Approximately 250 blockaders were arrested, but clinic services were not substantially disrupted. Patients waited in "safe houses" and were escorted to the clinics.

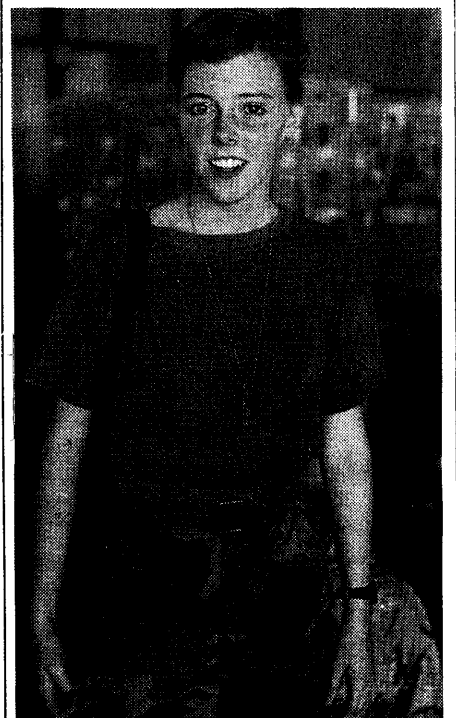
OR's response to a well-organized pro-choice clinic defense appeared to be one of disorientation. A contingent led by Randall Terry (OR's founder) sat down in front of the Greater Washington Health Center—which is regularly closed on Saturdays. After realizing that they had been sitting at a closed clinic for over two hours, Terry and the others moved to the Capitol Women's Center, which had already been hit that morning.

By the time the blockaders arrived at the Capitol Women's Center, all the patients had gotten in. Alerted by a phone call from escorts who had remained on the site, abortion-rights activists meeting for a debriefing following the morning's events immediately jumped back into cars to return to the clinic to reinforce the defense lines.

The events of the weekend showed abortion rights activists that we cannot depend on the police or politicians to defend the clinics for us. OR members were released quickly from detention, enabling them to rejoin the blockades.

Despite a permanent injunction that prohibits OR from impeding access to abortion clinics and that imposes fines upwards of \$1500 for individual leaders and \$50,000 for

N.O.W. calls for 'U.S. Out Now!'



Woman GI in Saudi Arabia

The National Organization for Women (NOW) has gone on record calling for the immediate withdrawal of American troops from Saudi Arabia.

A resolution passed by the NOW national board of directors on Nov. 18 states that the troop buildup in the Gulf "is designed to protect U.S. oil interests and seeks to deflect the attention of the people of the U.S. from our domestic crisis and the Savings and Loan scandal."

It also points out that lives should not be lost defending the regimes of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, which "subjugate and systematically oppress women, denying them basic human rights of self-determination, freedom of speech, association, transportation, and dress, enforcing these restrictions with physical punishment and executions."

In a statement to the press, NOW President Molly Yard said, "Our government has ordered American servicewomen to submit to Saudi Arabia's misogynist traditions. No American servicewoman or man should be asked to shed blood in defense of countries with such appalling records in human rights." ■

'How we beat Operation Rescue'

The following interview with WACDTF leader Diana Cerkanowicz, was conducted by Julia Steinberg on Nov. 19.

Socialist Action: What is your assessment of this weekend?

D.C.: I feel it was a very successful weekend for abortion rights activists. We were able to really throw a wrench in their game plan, and they were not able to pull off their 100 people in jail for 45 days.

They were not able to shut down any clinics. They repeatedly violated the civil injunction, and I think we have more than enough information to prove that in court.

S.A.: You obviously learned a lot from D.C. Project I, last year. How did WACDTF prepare for D.C. Project II?

D.C.: We did a lot more training, a lot more intelligence gathering. We had followers. We had shadowers. We had people at ev-

ery Metro station monitoring their movements. We had infiltrators. We knew the clinic providers a lot better and we had a year's worth of experience under our belt. All this combined made us much more effective.

S.A.: How did the providers [of birth-control services] respond to word of D.C. Project II?

D.C.: I'm not the best person to talk to since I don't work directly with them. But from talking to our provider-relations committee, I got the impression they took the threat much more seriously this year. They worked much more closely with us this year.

Over the year, whenever there has been a hit, we've sent them letters; we've held meetings. They've come to realize over the last year that we're not there to engage in fisticuffs with the "antis," that we're there to non-violently ensure that the clinics remain open and patients are seen. ■

the organization for each violation, blockaders were only charged with incommoding traffic and fined \$50 each.

Although clinic defenders were outnumbered, OR was unsuccessful in its goal of denying women in Washington, D.C., access to abortion and other health services.

As a WACDTF statement explained, "Because of our firm commitment, we proved once again to OR and to the Washington metropolitan area that women will not be bullied and that we will band together to ensure women's rights to the healthcare facilities that they deserve." ■

How the U.S. 'set up' Iraq to invade Kuwait

By RALPH SCHOENMAN

This is the final article in a three-part series.

During the 1970s, the regime of Saddam Hussein approached the Kuwaiti emir on several occasions with the goal of reaching a settlement to its longstanding dispute over Kuwait.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iraq visited Kuwait City in 1972 with a specific proposal wherein Iraq's claim to its former district—i.e., Kuwait—would be abrogated in exchange for "border adjustments." Specifically, the Iraqi minister asked that Iraq be allowed to gain access to its former islands in the Gulf.

On May 16, 1978, the Iraqi Minister of Internal Affairs went to Kuwait to discuss the border issue, notably because the border was "creeping north," in the words of Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz. Several committees were established but nothing was ever agreed.

Iraq pushed to invade Iran

With the revolution in Iran and the overthrow of the Shah, Saddam Hussein formally replaced al Bakr as President of Iraq.

According to authoritative Kuwaiti sources, at a secret meeting in Kuwait in late 1979, U.S. Secretary of State Zbigniew Brzezinski proposed to Saddam Hussein that he invade Iran and detach Khuzistan, thereby giving Iraq access to the Gulf through the Shatt-al-Arab, the narrow waterway between Iraq and Iran. The U.S. goal was to contain and roll back the Iranian Revolution. Hussein was the ideal candidate to help in this effort.

The Khomeini regime had betrayed the aspirations of the national minorities of Iran—from the Turks and the Kurds, to the Arabs of the south—continuing the policy of Farsi (Persian) domination.

Iran's Admiral Madani, the governor of Khuzistan, began to suppress the Arab minority in general and the oil workers in particular. It was assumed, therefore, that an Iraqi invasion would be seen by the Arab minority as an army of liberation from Farsi domination and that the seizure of the oil fields of Khuzistan would be facilitated by the population.

In fact, the Arab minority in Khuzistan consisted of the oil workers at the great refineries of Ahwaz and Abadan. They were among the most militant and radicalized sector of the Iranian workers.

It was the protracted general strike of the oil workers, over the objections of Ayatollah Khomeini himself, which had broken the back of the Shah's regime. Khomeini had feared that the oil workers—radical and secular—would displace the Mullahs of the Islamic Republic and overthrow the capitalist order.

Nonetheless, when Iraq invaded, the oil workers and the Arab minority perceived the invasion as an attack on the revolution itself. They resisted.

The secret meeting in Kuwait promised Saddam Hussein the financial support of the Kuwaiti and Saudi regimes for his invasion. When Saddam Hussein invaded Iran, Iraq had some \$80 billion in hard currency reserves. The resistance of the Iranian population resulted in a protracted eight-year war, during which Iraq was armed by the United States and Western Europe and bankrolled by the rulers of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

Kuwait moves its border

Meanwhile, as Saddam Hussein was doing the bidding of the United States' and Kuwait's rulers through the war against Iran, the Kuwaitis were steadily encroaching north, notably into the area overlapping the great Rumaila oil reserve of Iraq.

Iraq's Foreign Minister, Tariq Aziz observed in a document dated Sept. 4, 1990:

"It should be noted that for the entire period ... [when] Iraq was preoccupied with its internal problems and regional affairs, including, most recently, the eight-year-long war between Iraq and Iran, the rulers of Kuwait were taking advantage of the situa-



'When Saddam Hussein invaded Iran, Iraq had some \$80 billion in hard currency reserves. The resistance of the Iranian population resulted in a protracted eight-year war, during which Iraq was armed by the United States and Western Europe and bankrolled by the rulers of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.'

tion to advance northwards, where they established control posts, military installations, farms, and oil facilities."

These encroachments were not haphazard. The floating border enlarged Kuwait by over 900 square miles until the southern tier of the Rumaila oil reserve was under Kuwaiti occupation.

The Kuwaiti sheikh then purchased the Santa Fe Drilling Corporation of Alhambra, Calif., for a sum of \$2.3 billion. Santa Fe Drilling was noted for its sophisticated "slant" drilling equipment, wherein oil drilling proceeded not vertically but horizontally. For years, Kuwait proceeded to drill deep into the Rumaila reserve in Iraq, extracting billions of dollars of Iraqi oil.

Iraq pressed to repay debt

But the dispute between Iraq and the Kuwaiti emir did not center solely on territory or physical possession of the oil reserves. Having fallen \$80 billion in debt, Saddam Hussein was now pressed by his feudal paymasters in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia for repayment with interest. The principal source of hard currency earnings, petroleum, was highly susceptible to price fluctuations pegged to production quotas.

Iraq and other OPEC members began to argue for production quotas which would enable producing states to exercise some modicum of control over price structures.

Although billions of dollars are earned from crude oil, these earnings pale before the profits made from refined products and from the distribution and processing of petroleum. Virtually every commodity has a petroleum or distillate component, from plastics to synthetics. Petroleum-based manufacture is monopolized by the imperialist states.

Hussein is no longer needed

With the end of the Iran-Iraq war, Saddam Hussein found that his erstwhile allies among the Emirates, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt no longer were willing to hold to OPEC decisions on production. Even when decisions were taken to fix production levels, the Emirates, and notably Kuwait, would

flood the market. Protests from Iraq, Libya, Iran and others were met by increased naval activity in the Gulf by the United States.

In February 1990, Saddam Hussein spoke at the Amman Summit on the relationship between oil production and the U.S. armed presence in the Gulf. Noting that the original pretext for the presence of the U.S. fleet, namely the Iran-Iraq war, was absent and yet the fleet remained and was being steadily augmented, Saddam Hussein began to sense that his usefulness to the United States was nearing an end.

He said the following:

"The continued presence of the American fleet in the Gulf is due to the fact that, as a result of developments in the international political situation ... the Gulf has emerged as the most important spot in the region, and it may even be the most important spot in the world....

"If the Gulf people and the rest of the Arabs along with them fail to take heed, the Arab Gulf region will be ruled by American will. Should weakness remain among us and we fail to heed what is now happening, matters will get to the point where the United States will dictate the quantity of oil or natural gas to be produced by each state, the quantity which can be sold to this or that state; and prices will be fixed—all on the basis of a special outlook which has to do solely with U.S. interests and in which no consideration is given to the interests of others."

Within days of this speech, the Western press began to carry stories about Saddam Hussein's missiles, chemical weapons, and nuclear potential. The Israeli press openly speculated about pre-emptive strikes on the model of the Israeli attack on Iraq's nuclear power plant in 1981.

"Immediately thereafter," said Tariq Aziz, "the rulers of Kuwait—together with the Emirates—came up all of a sudden with calls for increases in their production quotas. Without waiting for discussion, they flooded the oil market with a huge surplus. Prices dropped from \$21 per barrel to as little as

\$11 per barrel, which meant a loss of earnings amounting to billions of dollars under the trying circumstances for us brought about by the huge costs of the war."

Iraq sent envoys to Kuwait, the Emirates, and Saudi Arabia—their recent financial sponsors. They met with no response.

At the Arab Summit Conference in Baghdad on May 28-30, 1990, Saddam Hussein stated during a closed session:

"War is at times waged by troops, and harm is inflicted by explosions, by slaughter, and by coup attempts; at other times, it is inflicted by way of the economy. To those who have no intention of waging war against Iraq, I say this is a kind of war against us."

At the end of June, Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Saadoun Hammadi carried personal appeals from Saddam Hussein to King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, and Jaber al-Ahmad and Sheikh Zayed of the Emirates proposing a solution based upon standard production quotas—as had been set by OPEC on numerous earlier occasions.

Iraq proposed that quotas should allow crude oil to market at \$25 a barrel, a price which would permit reduction of the deficits arising from its war with Iran.

Price increases in crude oil bring billions in additional earnings to the producers. Consequently, the insistent lowering of their own earnings could only be construed by Iraq as a political decision aimed at destabilizing the Iraqi economy and the regime itself.

Economic war against Iraq

Iraq was rebuffed. Saddam Hussein now appealed for a meeting at the summit between the heads of state of Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the Emirates. This request was refused. A meeting was then proposed by Iraq between the oil ministers of the Gulf states.

The four oil ministers met on July 10, 1990. An agreement was reached to establish production quotas which would allow the price to float upward gradually. The day after the meeting had been concluded, however, the Kuwaiti oil minister announced to the press, after conferring with the Emir, that Kuwait would increase production substantially by October 1990.

On July 16, 1990, Saddam Hussein made a speech in which he asserted that the deliberate flooding of the market had caused the price of Iraqi oil to drop from \$28 to \$11 per barrel, a loss to the Iraqi economy of \$14 billion in a matter of months. He accused the United States of orchestrating an economic war against Iraq and issued a warning that Iraq could not afford to accept passively an effort to undercut its economy.

"Iraqis, on whom this deliberate injustice has been inflicted," Hussein said, "believe firmly in defending their rights and in self-defense. Better to be deprived of life than the means of living. If words fail to provide us with protection, then deeds are badly needed to restore rights to those whose rights have been usurped."

Iraq was now assailed for bellicose and menacing declarations. Hussein prepared a statement in which he pointed out that great harm was being willfully and deliberately inflicted on Iraq's national economy. Almost pleadingly, he sought the motives for this sustained provocation:

"It is a treacherous stab in the back of Iraq, a country which emerged from a long, costly war and which incurred heavy debts which it had to repay in order to proceed with its development program. We have to feed a people which has suffered a great deal, which sacrificed the flower of its youth in defense of the Gulf region."

The Iraqis were incredulous that, having undertaken a war at the behest of U.S. imperialism with the explicit mandate of insulating the feudal families of the Gulf from radical challenge, their own government should now be targeted. Saddam Hussein summoned the Saudi Oil Minister, Hisham an-Nazer, on July 9, declaring: "I revolt from the idea that Iraqis should go hungry and Iraqi women should go naked from destitution."

Iraq's detailed memorandum

On July 15, Tariq Aziz delivered a detailed memorandum to the Secretary-General of the Arab League in Tunis. The document set forth the chronology, facts, and figures of a deliberate "conspiracy on the part of the rulers of Kuwait to destroy the Iraqi economy."

For the first time, the Iraqi government of Saddam Hussein delineated the process

(continued on next page)

Gorbachev's invaluable assistance

Throughout the nearly 30-year preparation for direct U.S. intervention in the Gulf, the role of the Soviet Union was viewed as a critical factor in facilitating U.S. plans.

Under the heading, "U.S. Officials Satisfied with Soviets' Gulf Role," the *New York Times* (Sept. 20) disclosed that "10 days after the summit meeting [between Bush and Gorbachev] in Helsinki, Bush officials are satisfied with Soviet cooperation in isolating Iraq."

The *Times* article notes that there has been strategic planning between the Soviet Union, the United States, and Israel:

"U.S. officials noted with particular enthusiasm the warming in Moscow's relationships with Israel and Saudi Arabia. 'We've been exceptionally pleased with the Soviet role,' said a senior State Department official. 'Without the current Soviet position, the whole color of the Gulf problem would be totally different.'"

U.S. officials cited the visit to Moscow of Israeli cabinet minister Ariel Sharon "for several days last week," as evidence of an understanding having been reached about the current crisis.

Michael Mandelbaum, director of East-West studies at the Council of Foreign Relations, concluded that "the Soviet Union had done much since the summit meeting, besides restoring relations with Saudi Arabia. The most important contribution the Soviets have made is ... that for the first time in 40 years, we can conduct military operations in the Middle East without worrying about triggering World War III."

On Oct. 28, the *Los Angeles Times* carried a story about the meeting between Soviet President Mikhail

Gorbachev and Spanish Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez. "The Soviet leader," the *Los Angeles Times* said, "left no doubt about his condemnation of the Iraqi aggression. 'We must maintain firmness,' he said."

Gorbachev made a particular point of assuring his host that he was completely aligned with the imperialist powers.

"There is no need to panic," Gorbachev is quoted as saying. "The alliance against Iraq is controlling the situation. Saddam Hussein is not going to divide us. If he thinks like this, he is very wrong. We are not going to give up on our principles on this issue."

After receiving a \$1.5 billion loan from Spain, Gorbachev informed the assembled Spanish journalists:

"In the last five years, we have started a process of change that has taken other countries centuries to accomplish. We have to change our way of life, our economic system, our political processes, and to make these changes, we have to change ourselves."

The next day, according to the *Los Angeles Times*, Gorbachev announced a series of economic measures sharply devaluing the ruble and allowing "100 percent foreign ownership of companies in the Soviet Union" as part of "his plan to convert this nation of 285 million residents to a market-based economy over a period of about two years."

The pending war in the Middle East is directly linked to the alliance between the Soviet leadership and U.S. rulers.

The worldwide resistance to the pending slaughter will challenge the right to rule of Bush and Gorbachev themselves, whose predatory role will become as transparent as that of their clients, the corrupt feudal emirs and sheikhs they seek to maintain in power at the cost of many lives. ■

(continued from previous page)

through which the border was inched northward and the Rumaila oil reserve pillaged.

Taken together, it was, the memo stated, "an attack upon Iraq by the government of Kuwait which is, in reality, a double attack. It has involved encroachment upon our territory and our oil fields, theft of our oil wealth which, it now becomes apparent, is a deliberate attempt to cause a collapse of the Iraqi economy. The effects of this aggression are no less adverse than those of military aggression."

A final meeting was requested by Iraq, which occurred on July 30 in Jeddah, between Saddam Hussein and the Crown Prince of Kuwait. Kuwait would agree neither to production quotas nor to cease pumping oil from Iraq's Rumaila reserve. It would not forego any of Iraq's debt.

Tariq Aziz concluded:

"It was inconceivable that a regime, such as that in Kuwait, could risk engaging in a conspiracy of such magnitude against a large, strong country such as Iraq, if it were not being supported and protected by a great power; and that power was the United States of America."

The entrapment of Hussein

The ruthlessness and practiced duplicity of British imperialism, in the course of forging the Empire, earned its rulers the nickname "Perfidious Albion," meaning "treacherous England." Events in the Persian Gulf prove U.S. rulers to be their worthy successor.

On Sept. 18, 1990, the Foreign Ministry of Iraq published verbatim the transcripts of meetings held between high-ranking U.S. officials and Saddam Hussein just days before Iraqi troops entered Kuwait on Aug. 2.

James McCartney, columnist for Knight-Ridder newspaper's Washington bureau, acknowledges that these transcripts are "not disputed by the State Department." On July 25, U.S. Ambassador April Glaspie, informed Saddam Hussein in her official capacity, "We have no opinion on ... conflicts like your border disagreement with Kuwait."

Glaspie repeated this several times. To make sure the point was taken, she added, "Secretary of State James Baker has directed our official spokesman to emphasize this instruction."

Indeed, Baker's official spokesperson,

Margaret Tutweiler, and Assistant Secretary of State John Kelly, "both did exactly that. A week before the invasion both repeated publicly that the United States was not obligated to come to Kuwait's aid if it were attacked." (*Santa Barbara News-Press*, Sept. 24, 1990).

McCartney is incredulous in reviewing the heavy-handedness with which the message was conveyed to Saddam Hussein. "At one point in the conversation, Glaspie said: 'I have direct instruction from the President...'"

Two days before Iraqi troops entered Kuwait, Assistant Secretary of State John Kelly appeared before the House Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee, where Rep. Lee Hamilton, (D-Ind.) asked him "if the United States was committed to come to Kuwait's defense."

Later, Hamilton recalled Kelly before the Sub-Committee to remind him of their colloquy:

"I asked you if there was a U.S. commitment to come to Kuwait's defense if it was attacked. Your response over and over again was: 'We have no defense treaty relationship with any Gulf country.'"

Columnist James McCartney, like Hamilton, concludes that the United States had, with deliberation, given Saddam



Andy Hernandez/Newsweek

'State Dept. officials led Saddam Hussein to think he could get away with grabbing Kuwait... Small wonder Saddam concluded he could overrun Kuwait. Bush and Co. gave him no reason to think otherwise.'

Hussein "a green light for invasion. George Bush ... left the door open and Saddam Hussein walked through. And much blood may be shed as a result."

A similar conclusion was reached by the *New York Daily News*, but with a most revealing twist. In its lead editorial on Sept. 29, ("Assessing Iraq: The Blame Can Wait"), the editorial states:

"State Department officials ... led Saddam Hussein to think he could get away with grabbing Kuwait." Reciting the uncontested facts, the editorial continues, "Small wonder Saddam concluded he could overrun Kuwait. Bush and Co. gave him no reason to think otherwise."

The newspaper concludes, coldbloodedly, that, embarrassing though this revelation may be, the crisis was going to get "tighter and tougher" and "when the smoke clears in Baghdad, there will be plenty of time to examine Bush's Iraq policy, preferably with tweezers and a microscope."

That's for after the war. For now, "George Bush deserves plenty of credit for his impeccable handling of the Persian Gulf crisis. He may also deserve credit for allowing the crisis to happen in the first place."

In this vein, General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, head of the U.S. Central Command and now commander of all U.S. forces in Operation Desert Shield, was reported to have anticipated Iraq's occupation of Kuwait with uncanny precision:

"Only two weeks before the invasion, officials said, Schwarzkopf convened his top

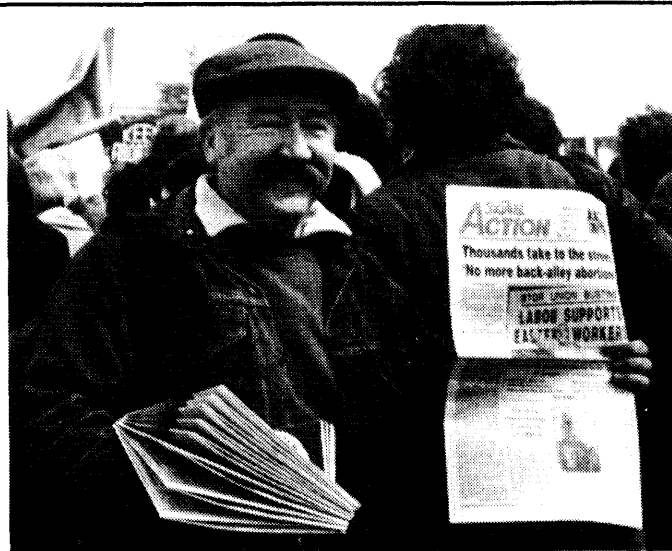
commanders for an exercise that simulated 'exactly the contingency of an Iraqi attack on Kuwait.'

"The similarities were eerie,' one source said. He added that 'when the real event came, the only way they could tell real intelligence from the practice intelligence was the little 't' in the corner of the paper - 't' for training.'" (*New York Daily News*, Sept. 29)

Professor Michael Clare of Hampshire College also makes reference to a National Security Council White Paper, prepared in May 1990, in which "Iraq and Saddam Hussein were set forth as 'the optimum contenders to replace the Warsaw Pact' as the rationale for major military expenditure." (quoted by Daniel Sheehan at Sept. 14 Berkeley antiwar teach in)

It is evident that Saddam Hussein was deliberately squeezed, with the intent that he should resolve the crisis facing him by reclaiming Kuwait. It is ironic that, alone among Iraqi rulers, from the Ottoman Empire to the present day, he had acquiesced in the colonial severance of Kuwait from Iraq—and even served, in the war with Iran, as the guarantor of the Emir's rule.

From King Faisal I, King Ghazi and Nuri es-Said to Abdul Karim Qassim, each ruler of Iraq has reflected, however reluctantly, Iraqi national indignation at the deliberate amputation of Kuwait. Only the post-Qassim regimes, in all of which Saddam Hussein had a part, conceded Kuwait's severance and Iraq's indispensable access to the Gulf. ■



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Gorbachev tightens control as consumers tighten their belts

By CARL FINAMORE

President Mikhail Gorbachev won virtual unanimous approval from the Supreme Soviet in late November for a "law-and-order" government. The new decree significantly increased the emergency powers already granted him only a few months ago.

With his credibility virtually exhausted, Gorbachev hopes that approval of more centralized authority by the Soviet parliament, itself suffering a badly tarnished democratic image, will boost his stalled efforts to foist unpopular pro-capitalist market policies on to an increasingly rebellious population.

Mass protests and strikes have consistently forced the government to withdraw perestroika "reforms" of higher food and consumer goods prices.

Gorbachev urged stiffer enforcement of government policies to deal with this public opposition, which he described as a "crisis of power." He also warned against accusing the military brass of planning a coup. "We must not discredit the military now, because we need them to maintain stability in the country," he told the Supreme Soviet.

Pro-capitalists defend Gorbachev

While most Soviet citizens have everything to fear from an even more centralized executive authority, most capitalist market reform advocates think Gorbachev acted too slow and promised too little.

"One after another, the legislators called for more drastic measures—an anti-crisis committee, a state of emergency, a nationwide food-rationing program, or even a dictatorial 'committee of national salvation' that would rely on the army and police," *The New York Times* reported (Nov. 19, 1990).

One of the most prominent of these so-called radical, neo-liberals is the pro-capitalist mayor of Leningrad, Anatoly Sobchak. He previously lambasted the government during the 1989 national miners' strike for lacking the nerve to "shut down the mines and fire the personnel." Today, Sobchak is being strongly considered by Gorbachev for the future post of vice-president.

Russian Republic president, Boris Yeltsin, has criticized the Supreme Soviet resolution expanding executive authority, but only because it places too much power in the hands of Gorbachev, his chief rival. He agrees with strengthening the central government through the formation of an "anti-crisis committee" composed of representatives from the Soviet Republics.

Yeltsin's plan differs only by suggesting the president's individual powers be shared by a larger group—which, of course, includes Yeltsin himself.

Gorbachev, Sobchak, Yeltsin and other prominent capitalist market reformers share a common diagnosis that the prescription of higher prices and unemployment is a bitter pill to swallow for millions of people. Experience throughout the world has shown that this "shock therapy" can only succeed if accompanied by a skillful combination of deception and repression.

A substitute for workers' power

The deception originally began through a massive public-relations forgery, which painted the capitalist-oriented Soviet parliament as a democratic institution through which the Soviet people could express and fulfill their needs. On the contrary, the Supreme Soviet has merely displaced the Communist party as a more credible instrument to deceive the people.

Not one of the 750 People's Deputies, for example, supported the 1989 national miners' strike. In fact, a unanimous vote was taken urging the 500,000 workers to immediately return to work. The parliament correctly saw the independent political action of the strikers as a challenge to their power.

How fast and how far this working-class challenge actually develops will decide whether the Soviet people actually uproot the horrific, decrepit Stalinist system of bureaucratic privilege or simply see it replaced by an even older, more decadent system of money privilege.

The democratic facade of glasnost is beginning to crumble in the face of stubborn resistance by the Soviet people to the devas-



"Experience throughout the world has shown that this 'shock therapy' can only succeed if accompanied by a skillful combination of deception and repression."

tating consequences of five years of capitalist market reforms. The discussion over increasing government authority, whatever the wording of the final resolution, indicates that the "democratic" market reformers are prepared, as necessary, to abandon the pretenses of glasnost in favor of the police nightstick.

Capitalist reforms cause shortages

Learning to deal with shortages is nothing new in the Soviet Union. Through the Black Market, bribery, or the extensive system of *blat* ("who you know"), the average person could obtain items for special occasions. For most things, however, it was normal to wait several hours outside state stores which still only offered an extremely limited selection. A recent survey by *Moscow News* in the capital city of Moscow concluded that an average of 50 out of 1200 basic consumer products were readily available in state stores.

But today, these same state stores are almost completely empty, leading one frustrated Soviet shopper quoted in the Western press to sarcastically commend Gorbachev for being the first Soviet leader to eliminate long lines. Behind this humorous comment lies the deep anxiety and anger of millions of Soviet people who are asking the question—why?

Why are the shortages so acute, especially when the country experienced a bumper food crop season?

The answer lies in the nature of the pro-

jected market reforms. Simply put, the reforms have compounded mistakes of Stalinist bureaucratic mismanagement, which remain widespread, by making it profitable to withhold production from the state. Products end up on the private market, where exorbitant prices fetch a hefty profit for a new class of enterprising and aspiring entrepreneurs.

And this price-gouging experience is the same wherever and whenever capitalist market reforms have been implemented without democratic control by the working class—whether in the Soviet Union, China, or Eastern Europe.

Food or profit?

There is ample evidence to refute the claims of Gorbachev and other perestroika advocates that even more capitalist market mechanisms are needed. In fact, the shelves are empty in state stores precisely because of the reforms.

In September, for example, Gorbachev sent a telegram to regional leaders ordering them to guarantee that farmers deliver grain to the state. "Many state and collective farmers are unjustifiably curtailing sales to the state, violating contract discipline," it said. (*The Washington Post Weekly Edition*, Sept. 10-16, 1990.)

Ivan Silayev, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Russian Federation, described a similar situation of shortages and provided a frank explanation: The Russian

Federation raised the purchase price of meat and "having calculated its future profit, farmers in the countryside simply stopped autumn meat sales." (*Moscow News*, No. 40, 1990.)

None of this should surprise Gorbachev. Several years ago at the beginning of the market reforms, he noticed this hoarding tendency and the even worse variant of shifting production away from mass consumer items.

Gorbachev told a Siberian audience in 1988 that "it's no good at all that many enterprises, profiting by their cost-accounting rights, have been trying to improve their finances solely by increasing the output of expensive goods. But little is being done to expand the production and assortment of inexpensive commodities. There are some who have simply cut down the output of cheap goods in popular demand." (*Moscow News*, No. 38, 1988.)

According to historian Richard Smith, this exact pattern recently emerged in China where peasants began to grow more profitable cash crops such as tobacco and fruit and slowed their traditional production of cotton and grain. As a result of capitalist market reforms, Smith says, China has ceased to be an exporter of grain and instead has become one of the world's biggest grain importers.

Stephanie Baker, reporting from Czechoslovakia, writes along similar lines. "The current shortage of potatoes demonstrates the changing way of thinking. There isn't an actual lack of potatoes in the country, but farmers are hoarding them until November when the prices, and hence the profit, will increase." (*Guardian*, Oct. 10, 1990.)

But does this same pattern apply to the current crisis in the Soviet Union? Yes it does. Gorbachev correctly stresses that there is enough food and fuel to get through the winter. He points out that the problem is not shortages but chaos in the distribution system. Of course, Gorbachev fails to define "chaos" and fails to point the finger at the capitalist-oriented profiteers he sponsors.

But the truth is apparently so observable that it is being readily reported in the Western press and, therefore, hardly capable of escaping the notice of the Soviet people.

Gorbachev's claim that there really are no shortages "is basically true," comments *New York Times* reporter Bill Keller (Nov. 17, 1990). "Although state food stores, which once supplied essential food at controlled prices are emptier than ever, there is ample food in the more expensive [private] farmers' market."

The solution of this crisis will not come from Gorbachev, the Soviet parliament, or any of the advocates of perestroika—who all seek to legalize and expand the hated privileges of an elite section of the population at the expense of the majority.

The only possible solution representing the interests of the majority requires the working class in the Soviet Union—and in China and Eastern Europe—to democratically and efficiently control the direction of their respective national economic plans and to insure the most egalitarian allocation of its achievements.

Confronting the austere realities of the capitalist reforms is expanding the political consciousness of the population and increasing the size of independent organizations of the working class. A further deepening of the crisis can only accelerate this process, setting the stage for major political battles in the period ahead. ■

**Gorbachev's
USSR:
Is Stalinism Dead?**

*A collection of essays in defense
of socialist democracy*

Edited by Carl Finamore

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Behind the U.S. assault on Iraq

There's a lot more than oil involved in Bush's gambit in the Middle East. Can an antiwar movement be organized in time to stop the impending cataclysm?



Wally McNamee/Newsweek

By NAT WEINSTEIN

The U.S.-led imperialist invasion of the Persian Gulf is being relentlessly escalated by President George Bush.

His decision to double U.S. armed forces to nearly half a million soldiers, sailors and marines in the Mideast by the end of 1990 has been judged by most observers to be a commitment to a shooting war that will be very difficult to avoid—unless Iraq capitulates.

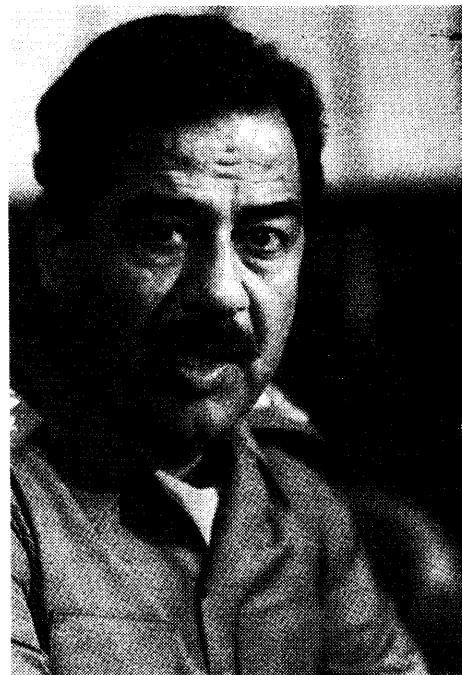
It's no accident that this decision, including cancelling plans for rotating troops previously scheduled to stay in Saudi Arabia no more than six months, was made in the immediate aftermath of the November elections. And despite Bush's attempt to minimize the outcry against his giant step toward Armageddon in the Gulf, protests have erupted nevertheless—and with surprising speed. His timing, moreover, has been perceived as an attempt to maneuver around American voters.

Fear of the political consequences of Bush's military buildup has been smoldering within the ruling class itself. A division has existed, almost from the outset of the U.S. intervention into the Gulf region, between those who want to start shooting now and those who think it necessary to wait "until the sanctions can take effect." The U.S. rulers had hoped that with enough time the blockade would force Iraq to capitulate.

But those on both sides of the "war-now-or-later" debate have sensed that opposition at home was growing faster than expected and that the sanctions are just as damaging to the American-led military alliance as it is to Iraq.

Even before the Nov. 1990 election both sides were advising Bush to give more credible reasons for spilling American blood before taking the leap. Among these were the editors of *The New York Times*, a major mouthpiece of American capitalism, who had been beating the drums to "stop Saddam Hussein."

On Nov. 13, Secretary of State James A. Baker dug down and came up with the missing "credible reason." He said it could be boiled down to one word: "jobs!" One sharp-tongued critic summed up the incredulous reaction of most Americans. She quipped: "What's that supposed to mean? Is he plan-



'... Hussein's action, irrespective of his motives, serves the objective interests of the masses of super-exploited and oppressed peoples in the Gulf.'

ning to put unemployed 'hardhats' to work pouring concrete over the Saudi desert?"

Now that the "jobs" rationale has fallen flat, President Bush "discovered" that the Iraqis are "closer" to building a nuclear arsenal than previously believed. This is despite solid evidence to the contrary, including renewed Iraqi invitations to inspect its potential for nuclear capability—not to mention regular official U.N. inspections which have led virtually all experts in the field to certify that any such potential is at least 10 years away.

Pointing to other disquieting reports of the growing public opposition, the *Times* pub-

lished a piece by Jason DeParle with the unusually frank headline: "War, Class Divisions And Burden of Service." It candidly described how the working class bore the burden of the Vietnam War and are now fated to fight and die in the Persian Gulf while the rich will again be allowed to evade military service.

The article notes that of the 535 members of Congress, only two had children deployed in the Gulf region. Moreover, the reporter cites former Navy Secretary James Webb as saying that if the military top ranks had their children proportionately represented in the Gulf, "Instead of being 'Hey, those are our boys,' it'd be, 'Hey, that's my kid.'"

Most readers will draw the more far-reaching conclusion of class privilege symbolized by President Bush's son's escapades looting the public treasury—while the sons and daughters of the working class sit in the Saudi desert awaiting the slaughter.

Such instances of frank acknowledgement of class injustice, wherein the poor serve as cannon-fodder for the wars of the rich, doesn't drop from the sky; nor is it motivated by altruism. It only reveals the uneasy concern of the rich and powerful that this consciousness is widespread among the working class and will blow up in their collective face once the body-bags start being shipped home.

But to understand why the American ruling class has been ready, nevertheless, to risk the catastrophic consequences of a shooting war—if Iraq refuses to "say uncle"—it requires a close look at the underlying forces which are pressing them toward disaster.

How imperialism conquers

For well over 100 years the Middle East, along with virtually all regions of the planet which had not yet entered the age of industrialization, has been colonized by the developed Western capitalist powers. This was accomplished by the flood of cheap commodities dumped into the backward countries which drove goods produced by the lower technology out of the market place, completely destroyed the indigenous productive forces, and led to the total domination of the neo-colonial economies by foreign capital.

Unlike the imperialism which preceded

capitalism, the economic conquest of the underdeveloped countries generally comes first, and is followed by military and political conquest. In the course of this process, their natural resources are appropriated and their toiling masses subjected to super-exploitation. The living standards of their subjugated victims, with the exception of a small minority who were coopted to serve as the conqueror's local agents, were driven down to a level of impoverishment very often lower than that of chattel slaves in ancient society.

Under modern imperialist domination, the normal process of development of these vassal nations was blocked and their pre-capitalist economies warped and twisted to fit into the world capitalist economy.

To this day, semi-feudal social relations are intertwined with the worst horrors of modern capitalism in the neo-colonial world. The result leaves the majority of the earth's population plagued by the evils of both pre-capitalist society and modern capitalism, but benefiting from neither social order's advantages.

Background to Iraq's occupation of Kuwait

The Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein has clearly embarked on a course in opposition to the interests of U.S. and world capitalism. Iraq's aim in reclaiming Kuwait is to win a larger share for the Iraqi ruling class of the super-profits extracted by foreign capitalists from the oil-producing countries of the Persian Gulf.

Confronted by the American military colossus, Hussein has been compelled to play a dangerous game. To strengthen his hand he has risked inciting the Mideast's impoverished masses to rise up against the foreign oppressor and its puppet regimes—setting in motion a revolutionary force he knows will not be easy to halt (and which can overwhelm the Iraqi rulers as well). Hussein's action, irrespective of his motives, thereby serves the objective interests of the masses of super-exploited and oppressed peoples in the Gulf region who yearn to break free of foreign domination.

This is a marked shift in policy for Saddam Hussein. From 1980 to 1988 he had served the interests of American and European capitalism by waging a reactionary war against the Iranian Revolution.

The great mass of poor workers and farmers in the Mideast had welcomed the Iranian Revolution as a powerful blow struck against the tiny minority in whose hands was concentrated the region's wealth. Imperialism, fearing that the Iranian Revolution also threatened the kings, emirs, princes and military dictators installed by them as their puppet rulers in the Arab world, welcomed Saddam Hussein's assault on Iran.

Hussein's poison gas attacks on Iranians and Kurds—on both sides of the border between Iraq and Iran—didn't stop the American ruling class from supplying the Iraqi capitalist dictatorship with all the military and financial help they needed to defeat Iran.

But history has often demonstrated that reactionary puppet rulers of colonial and dependent countries can come into sharp conflict with their neo-colonial masters when they and their people are squeezed beyond endurance. Malcolm X, himself a revolutionary Black nationalist, insightfully noted this phenomenon when he said: "When the puppet starts talking back to the puppeteer, the puppeteer is in trouble."

Furthermore, when it can be shown that a physical struggle by a nationalist movement or regime is objectively directed against imperialist domination, consistent fighters for human rights everywhere must give such national mobilizations unconditional support.¹

At the same time, we place not an iota of political confidence in the Saddam Husseins of the neo-colonial world. Only a revolutionary workers' movement can lead masses in a consistent struggle against the foreign oppressor—as well as against the oppressive regime at home.

Kuwait and self-determination

Did Iraq violate the right to self-determination of the Kuwaiti people?

The imperialist hypocrites, who arbitrarily carved up and re-carved the Arab world—distributing and redistributing the new "coun-

(continued on page 8)

... Behind U.S. assault on Iraq

(continued from page 7)

tries" among themselves, appointing sheiks, princes, emirs, kings, and Zionist "democrats" as puppet rulers—say yes. The Arab masses say no. We say no.

We do not recognize the "right" of oppressors to self-determination—whether a minority or majority. (For example; South African whites are a minority which oppresses the Black majority; Israeli Jews are a "majority" which oppresses the Arab "minority.") Moreover, both these ruling nationalities stand at the head of oppressive settler-states which had been carved out of much larger populations by murderous force, backed up by all the might at the disposal of the imperialist powers.

It is obscene for white South Africans or Israeli Jews to demand for themselves "rights" which negate the rights of their subjugated victims. In the case before us, moreover, only the briefest review of economic, social and political realities in Kuwait reveals the absurdity of any "right" to self-determination for the Kuwaiti sheiks.

Self-determination, Kuwaiti-style

Throughout its rule, Kuwait's al-Sabah monarchy, foisted upon the indigenous population by British imperialism, has denied political rights to the majority of its people.

In Kuwait, 91.4 percent of the population is denied any citizenship rights. All immigrant Palestinians, Lebanese, Iraqis, Iranians, Jordanians, Pakistanis, Sri Lankans, Filipinos, and others are forever prevented from becoming citizens; even the children of foreigners born in Kuwait cannot become citizens. Of Kuwait's approximately 3 million people, only 8.6 percent, or some 260,000,

masses, including in Kuwait, have lost nothing by Iraq's takeover of what most Arabs believe, in any case, is Iraqi territory.

Imperialism's need for cheap crude

A major provocation causing Saddam Hussein to invade Kuwait was the Emirate's dumping of huge quantities of oil on the market in conjunction with Saudi Arabia. This reduced the price of oil to levels greatly harming nations like Iraq whose chief export is oil. Kuwait added insult to injury by slant-drilling into deeper levels of Iraq's Rumaila oil field—stealing millions of barrels of oil, which provided a large portion of what was being dumped on the market by the Emir at bargain prices.

Hussein's takeover of Kuwait, it is clear, was an attempt to strengthen the bargaining position of the crude oil producers by gaining control over the enormous oil reserves, which in Kuwait had been at the service of imperialism.

While a major share of the world's oil supplies is owned by the oil-producing colonial countries, a much larger share of oil profits goes to the giant oil companies and other corporate entities. The imperialist corporations have a virtual monopoly on the refineries and other industries which turn crude oil into various fuels, lubricants, plastics, fertilizers, paints and a multitude of other derivative products.

The industries which consume the variety of products refined from petroleum by the oil corporations are financially connected to the latter by a vast network of overlapping ownership.

Hence, while every capitalist is in competition with every other capitalist, in spheres

of the developed industrial powers. Therefore they have opposed regulating production so as to raise the poorer oil-producing nations share of total profits coming from oil.

Obviously, American corporations and their capitalist government, mainly on the other side of the exchange relationship between sellers and buyers of crude oil, have long ago won the position of leadership of the buyers. Thus their strategy is to unite the buyers and to divide the sellers—if necessary, by force.

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Iraq's challenge to imperialism was the final straw tipping the balance away from the latter's reliance on the Zionist army as its front-line military force and strategic base for military action in the region. Imperialism has been forced to establish firmer points of military support in the Arab world in its struggle to maintain its domination over this portion of its colonial domain.

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inhabitants have citizenship rights.²

These "foreign" workers, some of whom are third-generation residents of Kuwait, represent more than 80 percent of Kuwait's work force. Only 10 percent of non-Kuwaiti Arabs are allowed to attend public school. Non-Kuwaitis are denied medical care provided to citizens.

"Foreigners" in Kuwait cannot own property, not even homes. They are also barred from participating in political activity and are not allowed to join trade unions. The monarchy did set up a parliament for which only 6 percent of the population could vote. It was dismissed, however, by al-Sabah six years ago and since that time he has ruled by personal decree.³

The fate of many foreign workers in Kuwait is very close to outright slavery. Domestic servants, almost exclusively women without citizenship, are literally robbed, beaten and killed at the whim of their royal "employers." "Children are taught to discipline—to insult, pinch slap and pull the hair of—servants who displease them.

Many servants have to carry buzzers so that they are on call at all hours. They are not allowed to do their own shopping or cooking, and eat only what is left after their employers and guests have been fed.

"Now and then the *Kuwait Times* reported spectacular cases of servants thrown from rooftops, burned or blinded or battered to death."⁴

The country's great oil wealth is controlled by a royal family and a small circle around them. As late as 20 years ago, all Kuwaiti investment was controlled by a mere 18 families. And the profits from these billions of dollars, virtually all invested in the United States and other imperialist countries, are used exclusively for the benefit of these families.

It can hardly be disputed that the Arab

of production such as this they all have a common interest in keeping down the cost of crude oil. This is true even when the oil corporations also reap a giant share of the profits derived from the sale of oil as it comes out of the well.

There is a good economic reason for the otherwise anomalous opposition by the imperialists to the rise in price even when it affects their own share of crude oil. A much bigger portion of their profits comes from the labor-intensive productive process, which adds much more surplus value to the raw material as it goes from one stage to another in the process of production.

Therefore, the industrial capitalists in the imperialist countries have little interest in artificially forcing up the price of oil as it comes from the well, which they must share with the capitalists of the oil-producing countries.

A price rise resulting from attempts by some of the oil-producers in the Persian Gulf to restrict the amount of oil placed on the market, increases the rate of profit on their end, but reduces it on the other. This is, of course, to the great disadvantage of the capitalists in the major industrial countries.

(Big oil corporations, however, did not hesitate to raise gasoline prices refined from crude oil purchased at half the price before the crisis.)

OPEC was the organization through which the oil-producing countries have attempted to control the supplies of oil reaching the market (and thus keep the price from being depressed by the monopolistic action of the industrialized countries). But the OPEC members have been unable to stick together.

The rulers of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait have material interests much closer to those of the imperialists because of the billions of dollars they have invested in the economies



Bill Gentile/Newsweek

like Vietnam to gain its objectives in the current confrontation?

Imperialist stakes in the conflict

One obvious factor is the ominous reports of the precarious position of the American and world capitalist economies. The rise in the price of oil, as everyone expected, sent inflationary shock-waves throughout the U.S. economy—not excepting agriculture, transport, electric power or any other sphere in the entire array of commodity production.

Economists fear that such a rise in the price of oil will tip the American economy into a recession, whose depth is said to depend on how high the price will go. This is, by all indications, not an exaggeration. If anything, their fears are understated.

Moreover, leaving aside which side ultimately comes out on top, the costs of this military adventure and its impact on the national treasury alone can tip the American economy into a ruinous crisis.

But what if imperialism doesn't come out on top? Or, what if the carnage of a shooting war leaves oil fields and the physical equipment necessary for extracting and shipping Arab oil devastated? The impact of this outcome can be far worse than the modest rise in the crude oil price that the occupation of Kuwait was designed to achieve.⁵

Moreover, military action, even when successful, can add qualitatively higher additional monetary costs to the production of oil—not to mention the cost in terms of human lives.

Bush's "New World Order"

There is another, more compelling, motive behind the American ruling class' decision to risk a catastrophic military confrontation—aside from the hope that the massive mobilization of awesome military power will force Iraq to capitulate. This derives from a number of related concerns deeply disturbing the American capitalist class—giving new urgency to its role as world cop:

• Israel, which had been the main instrument of imperialist domination of the Mideast from the day it was carved out of Palestinian territory, has gradually been



emirs fear the wrath of the people who rattle at seeing their rulers in an alliance with imperialism and Israel.

The U.S. ruling class has already signaled all sides in the Mideast that this is its intention. It is thus no surprise that its Zionist mercenaries have reacted as if struck with a hot iron.⁶

But the support American imperialism gains from sheiks, princes and military dictators is far outweighed by the increasing hatred of the Arab masses directed against the imperialist invaders and its puppet henchmen of all stripes.

• The decline in American capitalism's competitive economic position is modified by its undiminished military power. As long as the United States possesses the capability to force economic concessions from its imperialist rivals—not to mention from the colonial world and the so-called "socialist"⁷ countries—it will not hesitate to use it to bolster its position in the economic struggle.

In the final analysis, this is what world

Bombing on Iraq

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• The unfolding economic crisis in the United States will ultimately bring the rest of the world down with it, sharply intensifying economic competition between the world's capitalists. War, after all, is only economic competition by other means.

And despite the illusion created during the Cold War that inter-imperialist conflicts are a thing of the past, new line-ups and new wars between imperialist camps cannot be excluded. Furthermore, if the bureaucratized workers' states are overthrown, even a third inter-imperialist world war cannot be excluded.

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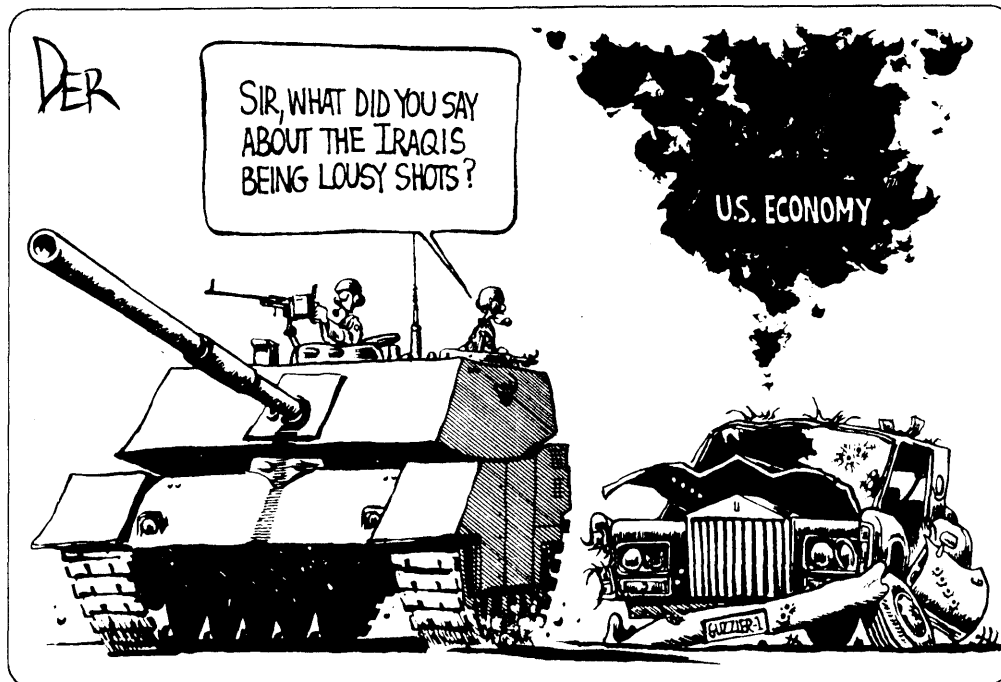
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Already, world capitalism is witnessing the harbinger of coming events in the militant upsurge of French high school students—hundreds of thousands have been marching in the streets of France since early November 1990. They are demanding smaller classes, more teachers, guards for schools (the demonstrations were triggered by the rape of a high school woman), and withdrawal of French troops from the Persian Gulf. "Money for schools not the Gulf war!" was one of the slogans carried in these mass youth demonstrations and marches.

The ruling classes of the world certainly remember the 1968 general strike by 15 million French workers who occupied all of industry and brought the economy to a grinding halt. It was triggered by French college and university students.

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We can say with certainty, there will be no disarmament, no "peace dividend." On the contrary, the message of nearly half a million troops being sent to the Persian Gulf is a *promise* that opposition to the interests of American imperialism—anywhere in the world—will be met by merciless, bloody repression by the self-appointed U.S. policemen of world capitalism.

Bush himself has summed it up by advancing, as a rationale for war in the Gulf, the goal of establishing a "New World Order!" Curiously, this slogan was first made famous by Adolph Hitler to justify his program of "unifying" Europe through military conquest.

Mikhail Gorbachev:
"champion of world peace"

The Herculean problems Mikhail Gorbachev faces in the Soviet Union led him to actions earning him the Nobel "peace" prize. Because of the enormity of his domestic crisis, this "champion of world peace" is compelled to provide aid and comfort to a U.S.-imposed "new world order" if he hopes to get maximum financial assistance from it for the Soviet bureaucracy's attempted transition to capitalism. Thus, Gorbachev has sanctioned the U.S. invasion of the Persian Gulf.

It is no accident that American promises of food-aid to help ameliorate the economic crisis in the Soviet Union have come in the wake of Soviet Stalinism's service to imperialism.

It would be hard to come up with a more satiric joke than the awarding of the imperialist peace prize to Mikhail Gorbachev. The Soviet president's blessing of the American capitalist-led assault on the Arab people, at the very outset of the U.S. invasion, removed a major obstacle standing in Bush's road.

Without Soviet approval, the United

the first place for the oppressed and exploited masses in the Middle East, as well as for all the world's ordinary people who have nothing to gain and everything to lose from such a war.

The key idea in an effective strategy against war in the Mideast is to find the way to move the largest numbers of people into effective action around issues they deeply feel. To do this requires beginning with an accurate assessment of the level of consciousness of the great majority—not that of the more conscious minority.

We can be absolutely certain that the main concern most deeply felt by the American people, and which is most capable of mobilizing the largest numbers in action against the American invasion of the Persian Gulf, is concern for the lives of their sons and daughters in uniform sent there to kill and be killed for an unjust cause.

Vietnam and "Out Now!"

As we might have expected, the same political forces we saw during the anti-Vietnam War movement are arraying themselves across the political arena today.

The ultra-lefts with their "more revolutionary," "anti-imperialist" slogans are as frenzied as before—when they called for "driving the GIs into the sea!"

And the liberals, Stalinists and other reformists are up to their old tricks, "demanding" negotiations; that is, that Iraq negotiate with imperialism, which this slogan presumes is imperialism's right!

When a thief holds a gun to a victim's head and demands "your money or your life," the victims are entirely within their rights to negotiate their way out of a bad situation—if resistance is not possible, or may be insufficient to save both their lives and their property. But only the victims have the right to determine whether to negotiate or resist!

Witnesses to the crime objectively become

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Nations window-dressing would have been impossible. Even now, Bush's campaign to get approval for military action from the U.N. General Council would have been impossible without Gorbachev's help.

And without that, the lineup behind President Bush's adventure would have begun to crumble before it could gather momentum.

Even countries, like England and France, having the most to gain by the defeat of Iraq and the suppression of revolution in the Mideast would have soon lost heart as its "Arab face" began to melt away. American imperialism, thus stripped naked, would have been facing the world virtually alone in its criminal assault. The price that it would have had to pay for a shooting war would surely have been prohibitively high without the "peace prize"-winner's political support.

And even with Gorbachev's help, it will yet prove to be disastrous for American and world capitalist stability. So great is the likelihood of disaster, that Bush may not be able to follow his course through to the end.

This possibility is signalled by increasing warnings coming from "responsible" bourgeois commentators in the mass media that the American people's alleged support for a Gulf war is already evaporating and would go up in smoke soon after the killing starts.

No one can know, however, what the American capitalist rulers will do. So far, they are convincing the world that they are ready to go over the brink. This is not likely to force Hussein to capitulate. And if he stands firm, President Bush has only a choice between evils—and an unpredictable ultimate outcome.

We can only do whatever we can to block the cold-blooded course of the American ruling class toward a new Vietnam.

If President Bush is forced to retreat from the Gulf conflict, it would be a victory in

accomplices if they call for a negotiated settlement of the dispute. Such a call by bystanders implicitly places the robber and the victim on the same moral plane—placing such a witness, even if he or she has genuine sympathy with the victim, objectively on the side of the robber.

The demand for negotiations, however, is perceived differently by ordinary people. They may be led to view this demand as directed against the arrogant "non-negotiable" stance of their government. They also may be led to believe, falsely, that calling on "the hawks" to negotiate is a step toward forcing the withdrawal of American troops.

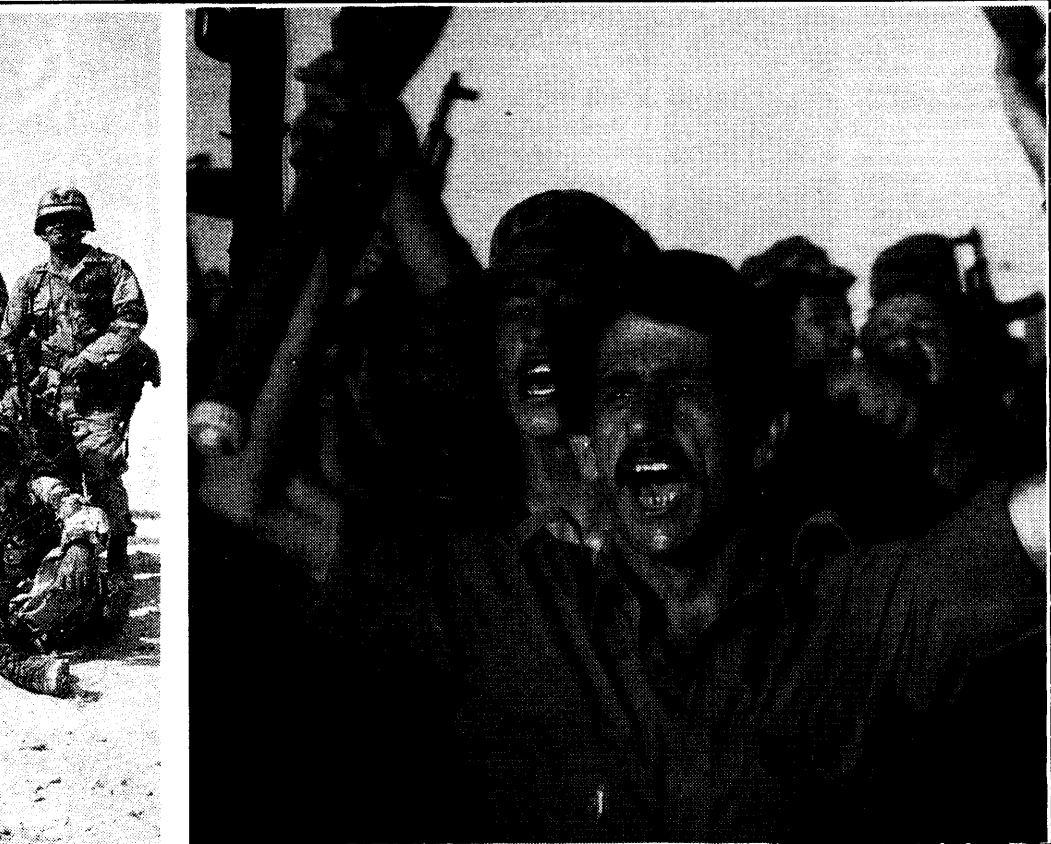
This seems entirely logical. But, even leaving aside for the moment, the impropriety of witnesses to a holdup calling for negotiations, it is not the *demand* to negotiate, no more than negotiations itself, that can compel the American rulers to withdraw from the Persian Gulf. Only the mobilization of real forces against the criminal U.S.-led assault upon its Arab victims can have this effect.

It is the large numbers of people making visible their outrage in protest meetings, marches and other demonstrations in the streets of America and worldwide which is a first step toward compelling the American rulers and their cohorts to withdraw from the Persian Gulf.

Furthermore, there is no iron wall between peaceful protest and revolutionary action. On the contrary, the road to revolutionary action—that is, to remove the criminal ruling minority from power in a final resolution of the crisis of modern society—is precisely through *mass, peaceful, protest action*.

It is through such action that masses can gain confidence in their capacity to change the course of events. It is this sort of self-

(continued on page 10)



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entile/Newsweek



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(continued from page 9)

confidence that is indispensable for revolutionary action by working people.

The "Out Now!" demand is not only most effective for mobilizing the largest possible numbers in opposition to imperialist intervention, it retains its full force even during periods when the United States government may be compelled to negotiate its way out of a losing war!

The logic of "Out Now!"

Moreover, the slogan "Bring the Troops Home Now!" is much more than a tactic designed to mobilize the largest numbers in action to stay the bloody hand of imperialism—as important as that is. It also puts American people marching against the war on the side of our sons and daughters sent into the Persian Gulf to kill and be killed for oil and profits.

As masses of the American people march and demonstrate to bring U.S. troops home, it will serve to unleash a similar demand by the troops themselves! No one should underestimate the revolutionary potential of this interrelationship. This is why the ruling class fears the "Vietnam syndrome."

The rulers of America have good reason to fear it. They are fully aware that the roar which came from millions on the streets of America demanding that their boys be brought home made it easy for GIs in Vietnam to also make their natural feelings known.

The troops, themselves, could also say no to war with the confidence that the majority of the American people were on their side. And this they did in many ways, from putting flowers in the barrels of their rifles to open opposition to the most aggressive gung-ho officers. And if the war had persisted, even more dramatic action by our troops threatened to erupt.

This interaction between millions of people at home and their loved ones in Vietnam ultimately proved to be irresistible.

Beware trick slogans

In the current Mideast war crisis, the reformists and liberals are shamefully outdoing their predecessors in the anti-Vietnam War movement. Today they are including slogans designed to put faith in that thinly disguised instrument of world imperialism, the United Nations.

The demand calling for the UN to replace the U.S. in the Persian Gulf is pure hypocrisy. It would really amount to no more than putting a UN label on American armed force. It's as if no one can remember that the infamous assault on Korea from 1950 to 1953 was essentially carried out by U.S. troops marching under the banner of the United Nations. The entire operation was financed by the U.S. rulers and the human cost for working people amounted to 38,000 dead GIs and nearly 3 million dead Koreans.

The briefest glance at the history of the United Nations will show that it never lifted a finger to defend the victims of real aggression; for example, when Israel invaded and annexed Arab lands in 1948, 1967, 1973 and 1980, or when the U.S. invaded the Dominican Republic in 1965, Grenada in 1983 and Panama in 1989. Nor did the UN act in the interest of the victims of imperialism when they sent a "peace-keeping" armed force to the Congo in 1961 which resulted in the murder of Patrice Lumumba, the head of the Congo's legitimate government.

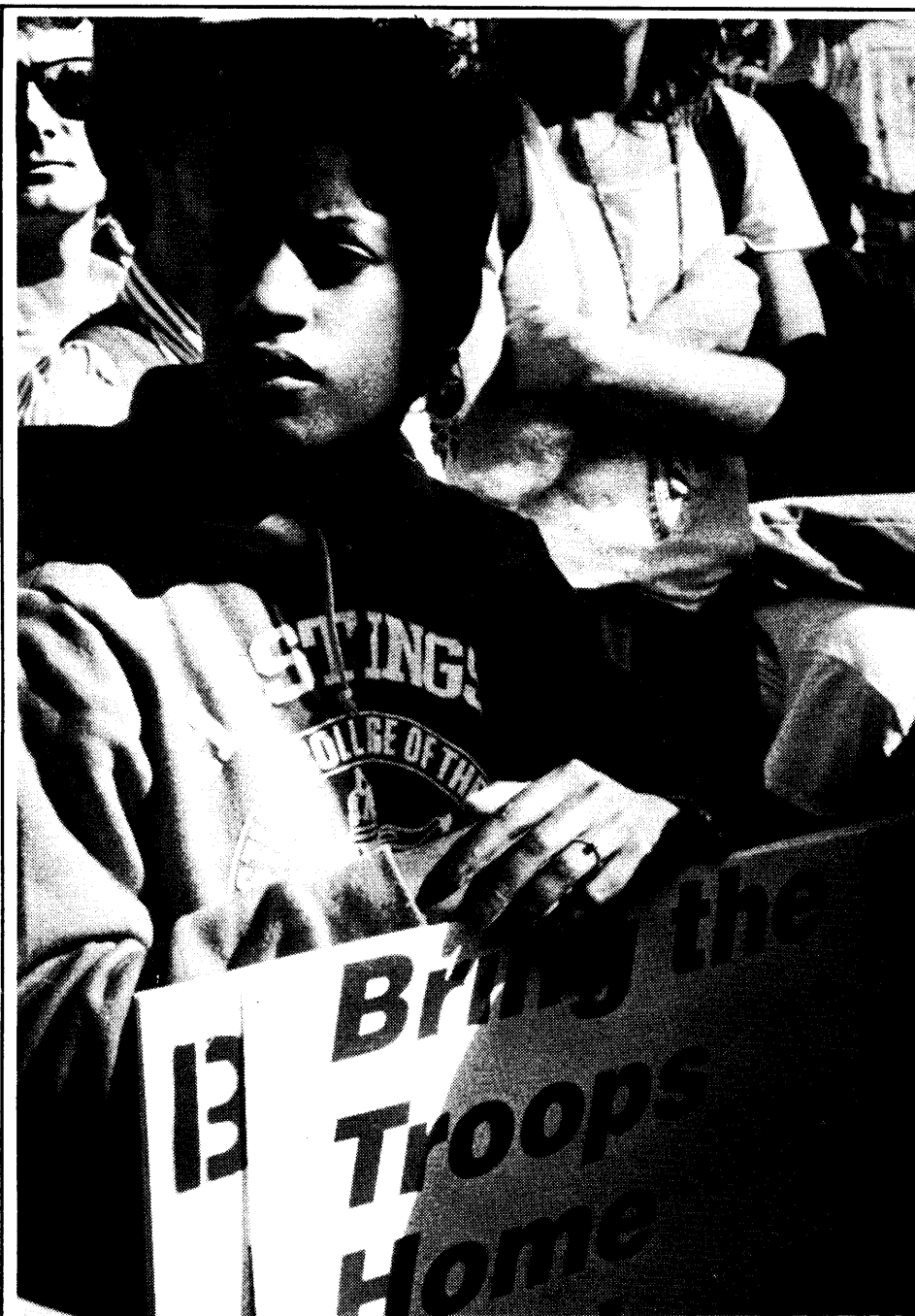
Two other trick slogans

Another two of the more insidiously deceptive slogans being advanced today are the demands for "withdrawal of all foreign troops from the Persian Gulf," and for "self-determination for the peoples of the Middle East."

Both these demands help the criminals conceal their crime. The first by legitimizing the imperialist pretext for intervention—equating the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait with the imperialist invasion of the Persian Gulf—and the second by equating the right to self-determination of invader and invaded—legitimizing the Zionist demand for recognition of "Israel's right to exist!"

The latter demand is the basic rationalization for the crime committed against the indigenous peoples of Palestine, who Zionists forcibly expelled from their land.

Certainly all peoples, Jews no less than



Joseph Ryan/Socialist Action

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any other, have an inalienable right to exist, but the inherently undemocratic, oppressive, clerical, Zionist settler-state has nothing to do with the Jewish people's right to exist. It has to do with the "right" of the Zionist rulers of Israel to negate the rights of all other peoples in the region!

Contrary to the Zionist thesis, the biggest threat to the rights of Jews, no less than it is to the Arab people, is the Zionist state. Socialist Action remains firmly in support of the Palestinian people's demand, "For a democratic secular Palestine!" This demand is in the best interests of all people in Palestine, the vast majority of Jews included.

There is no violation of the Jewish peoples' legitimate rights by the restoration of the property and political rights of Palestinians who have been driven from their land and/or made second-class citizens—no more than when a thief is denied his "rights" when forced to return what has been stolen. Nor is it a violation of the Jewish people's right to live in a democratic and secular society where all inhabitants, regardless of religion or nationality, are equal.

The only forces that gain from the Zionist state are the Israeli capitalists and their American imperialist sponsors who use the Jewish people as a mercenary military force and staging ground against revolution in the Middle East.

Who are the hostages?

The outcry by President Bush and other representatives of the ruling class against hostage-taking is also the most cynical hypocrisy.

Isn't the imperialist blockade holding the entire population of Iraq hostage? Isn't the encirclement of Iraq's population by threatening armies, fleets and air armadas a far greater assault on innocent children, women and men?

Moreover, isn't it self-evident that even

the threat of bodily harm to hostages held by Iraq comes not from Saddam Hussein but from the massive mobilization of military forces on Iraq's borders by the most powerful nation on earth, armed to the teeth—with poison gas, biological weapons, and an atomic arsenal capable of destroying all life on the planet many times over?

Furthermore, isn't it false to draw an equal sign between the act of the criminal and retaliation by his victim? Isn't Iraq the victim along with the other oppressed and super-exploited peoples of the Middle East—despite the reactionary character of Saddam Hussein's capitalist regime?

And the biggest mistake that can be made by anyone who wants to stop the sacrifice of countless human lives, American and Arab alike, would be to put an ounce of confidence in the politicians of either of the two capitalist parties to bring our sons and daughters home alive and well.

This time, neither Democrats nor Republicans have so far attempted to portray themselves as "peace" candidates. These fakers did this in the Vietnam days, but only after the overwhelming majority of Americans had shown their determined opposition to the war. We can be certain that a wave of capitalist "doves" will "see the light" as mass public opinion turns decisively in favor of unconditionally pulling out of the Gulf region.

But the sole aim of capitalist "peace candidates" will be to attempt, unjustifiably, to gain the confidence of the people. But their cynical aim has been, and will continue to be, to channel opposition from the streets into the halls of Congress and salvage as much as possible for their class when the tide of public opinion turns against their criminal goals.

Until the working class in this country has taken the road of independent political action, the best political option open to the opponents of capitalist war and economic

crises is to take the road of independent mass political action.

Electoral action is only one aspect of political action. Its primary function is to use the electoral process to educate and mobilize the working class and its natural allies for mass action at the factory gates and in the streets of America for its own class interests.

This, in the final analysis, is the nitty-gritty substance of independent working class political action.

Tactical perspectives ahead

The response by the American people within weeks of the U.S. invasion of the Persian Gulf has been much greater than what occurred after years of a shooting war in Vietnam.

Shortly before this writing, most potential activists had settled down to watchful waiting in the vain hope that a peaceful resolution could be found. Now that the American rulers are doubling their forces—escalating their threat to unleash carnage in the Persian Gulf—a renewed wave of activists has begun to go into action.

It's not hard to predict that if a shooting war begins there will be an explosion of mammoth protests in short order.

But the most conscious sectors of the American people have an enormous responsibility to continue to mobilize, to the extent of their ability, against such a catastrophe—to stop it, if possible, before it begins. Our efforts will have the effect of warning the warmakers of the consequences to them of a decision to carry the logic of their intervention to its most horrendous conclusion.

And even though we have not yet heard a call to "nuke Iraq" from any significant sector of imperialism, the logic of President Bush's course leading to such a calamitous act of desperation "to save American lives" cannot be excluded.

A warning message to U.S. warmakers

The Nov. 23 *New York Times*, reporting on President Bush's just concluded Thanksgiving Day tour of U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia, saw fit to note an event which contradicted the article's headlines implying alleged GI support for the invasion.

The *Times* writer reports that while he was interviewing troops who had just heard the president explaining what they were doing in Saudi Arabia, "...a truckload of soldiers slowly pulled past. Two of the soldiers started shouting at a group of reporters:

"I want to go home! This isn't our war! What are we doing here! Why are we over here? We aren't supposed to be here—this isn't our war!"

This is the real voice of GIs in the Persian Gulf. It can only get louder. But our sons and daughters over there need our help. Only mass action can stop the American ruling class from following its invasion of the Persian Gulf through to the end.

And even if we are not able to prevent this awful crime, we will have set in motion the only force that can bring it to an end before too many lives are sacrificed on the altar of capitalist greed. ■

1 Before Japan began its war of conquest against China in 1937, the Kuomintang government had come to power by bloody suppression of China's millions of workers and peasants who had been fighting for social, economic and political justice. Despite this, the Kuomintang regime's military resistance to Japan was objectively in the interests of China's oppressed and exploited masses.

2 The statistics here are derived from an article by Germaine Greer, which originally appeared in *Independent Magazine*. It revises statistics which appeared in an earlier *Socialist Action* piece.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 There are limits imposed by capitalist market mechanisms which limit how far a monopoly, however perfect, can artificially force up the price. That limit is imposed by competing commodities—in this case, coal, gas and other forms of energy.

6 Leon Trotsky warned, many years before the Zionists achieved their objective, that a Jewish state in Palestine would prove to be a deathtrap for the Jewish people—besides being a reactionary "solution" to the centuries of persecution suffered by them.

7 The countries that the capitalist world call "socialist" or "communist" are more scientifically defined as degenerated or deformed workers states. Cuba is an exception. It is not ruled by a privileged bureaucratic regime that can be removed only by political revolution.

8 "Ten Days that Shook the World," by John Reed. A chronicle of the October 1917 Russian Revolution—which is the literary allusion upon which is based the winged aphorism, "500 days that may shake the world."

Socialist Action's request to the Fourth International to be its sole fraternal and political representative

Aug. 23, 1990

To: United Secretariat
Fourth International

Dear Comrades:

On June 10, 1990, the Barnes leadership of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party (SWP) sent a "Letter to International Executive Committee of Fourth International [FI]" ending their fraternal links with our world movement. It brings to a close the first phase in the degeneration of the SWP.

Socialist Action is the only political party in the United States which is fraternally and politically linked with the Fourth International. We request to be recognized as the only political formation in this heartland of world imperialism which is the legitimate continuity of the party of James P. Cannon and Leon Trotsky as well as the continuity of the Fourth International, the world party of socialist revolution.

The following is our explanation of why such recognition of Socialist Action is an appropriate and necessary response to the blow struck our world movement by the Barnes group's defection.

The formal termination of their affiliation with the FI, signed by SWP leaders and their international supporters, is the logical result of the Party's break at the beginning of the 1980s from the historic program and theoretical conquests of the world party of socialist revolution.

In the summer of 1981, leaders of Socialist Action—who were at that time in the SWP—warned that the Barnes leadership faction had secretly decided to dump the theory of Permanent Revolution along with the Transitional Program and method, and had embarked on a course away from the Fourth International. That warning/prediction was for the most part confirmed before that summer was out. It has now been completely fulfilled.

The gravity of the SWP's defection cannot be overstated, as the briefest review of our history will show:

The unique contribution of the SWP to founding the FI

The FI was founded by Leon Trotsky in 1938 with the invaluable assistance of the American Trotskyists, then organized in the SWP. Ten years earlier, James P. Cannon had been won over to the program of the Left Opposition when he was a delegate from the Communist Party of the United States to the Sixth World Congress of the Comintern [Third International]. There, because of several lucky accidents, he received a copy of Trotsky's "The Draft Program of the Communist International: A Criticism of Fundamentals."

Cannon describes this turning point in his life in "The History of American Trotskyism." He wrote: "So, lo and behold, it was laid in my lap, translated into English! Maurice Spector, a delegate from the Canadian Party, and in somewhat the same frame of mind as myself, was also on the program commission and he got a copy. We let the caucus meetings and the Congress sessions go to the devil while we read and studied this document.

Then I knew what I had to do, and so did he. Our doubts had been resolved. It was as clear as daylight that Marxist truth was on the side of Trotsky. We made a compact there and then—Spector and I—that we would come back home and begin a struggle under the banner of Trotskyism."

Cannon and a small band of Trotskyists were soon expelled from the [Communist] Party [CPUSA] after declaring their support of Trotsky and the Russian Opposition on all the principled questions.

A week later they came out with the first issue of *The Militant*. This fact alone—the first clear declaration of support from leaders of Communist Parties outside the Soviet Union—constituted a small but not insignificant victory for the future of the world revolutionary movement.

Cannon's "public faction" began the long uphill struggle under the most unfavorable circumstances to win over the best elements in the Stalinized CPUSA. When Hitler came to power in 1933, it registered the death of

the Comintern.

Partly for this reason and partly because of the sharpening of the class struggle in the United States, the propaganda phase of the public faction, whose name was the Communist League of America (CLA), was brought to an end. The American Trotskyists turned their face toward the newly combative American working class.

Trotskyist leadership and the American class struggle

The CLA jumped with both feet into the middle of the burgeoning working class upsurge, beginning the second phase of its goal of reconstructing the party of revolutionary Marxism in the United States.

Of the three historic strikes in 1934 which marked the opening of the semi-revolution

ted to carry out his attempted destruction of American Trotskyism *without a fight*. And that fight is far from over!

It is necessary to briefly explain the material cause of the degeneration of the Barnes leadership.

First and foremost the ground was prepared primarily by the effects of the prolonged period of capitalist expansion, the resulting stability in the imperialist centers, the uninterrupted treason of reformist misleaderships of the mass workers' movements and the concomitant failure to solve the subjective problem of the socialist revolution, the crisis of proletarian leadership.

This objective process affected the entire workers' movement—especially in the metropolitan centers where decisive sections of the working class were able to maintain



'The Fourth International was founded by Leon Trotsky in 1938 with the invaluable assistance of the American Trotskyists, then organized in the SWP.'

of American workers of that period, one was led by Stalinists in San Francisco, Calif., but two were led by proletarian revolutionists in Minneapolis, Minn., and in Toledo, Ohio.

The latter two political currents, the Trotskyist Communist League of America and the fresh new group of worker militants of the American Workers Party, fused to form the Workers Party of the United States in December of the same year.

This fusion with revolutionary worker militants was followed by further acquisitions, culminating in a fusion with the left wing of the Socialist Party [SP]. The Trotskyists, who had entered the SP to merge with the leftward moving wing of the party were expelled from it and formed the Socialist Workers Party on New Year's Day 1938.

The same year Leon Trotsky, who looked to the SWP as his own party, asked it to submit his Transitional Program to the founding conference of the Fourth International. The newborn International adopted it as its basic programmatic document.

This thumbnail sketch shows the weighty contribution made by the SWP to the formation of the Fourth International, and by the same token shows what could be lost by the Barnes-led SWP's defection from Trotskyism.

The objective cause of the SWP's degeneration

But as you well know, there is another side to this sad story: Barnes was *not* permit-

ted to carry out his attempted destruction of American Trotskyism *without a fight*. And that fight is far from over!

It is necessary to briefly explain the material cause of the degeneration of the Barnes leadership. First and foremost the ground was prepared primarily by the effects of the prolonged period of capitalist expansion, the resulting stability in the imperialist centers, the uninterrupted treason of reformist misleaderships of the mass workers' movements and the concomitant failure to solve the subjective problem of the socialist revolution, the crisis of proletarian leadership.

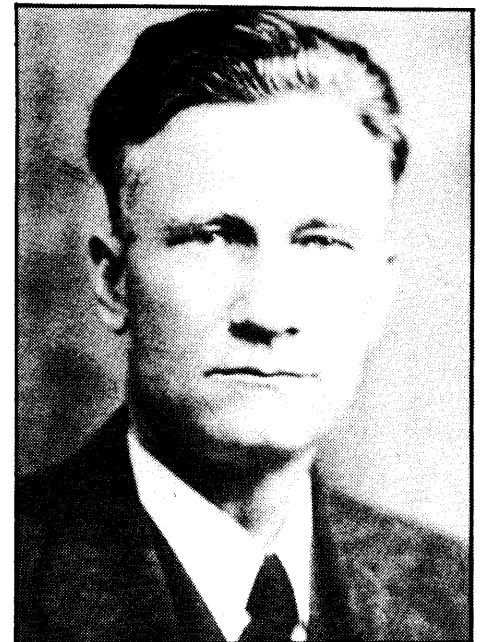
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Cannon and Trotsky's party lives on in Socialist Action

But we can say with complete assurance, that the Leninist combat party built by Cannon and Trotsky remains alive and well. Its name is Socialist Action (SA). We have regularly published a monthly newspaper, never missing an issue since December 1983.

SA conducts regular tours of its branches and other stable units which have been established in 12 major American cities. Our party has also sent several delegations to the Soviet Union, and at least one to China, Romania, Czechoslovakia, East Germany and Poland.

(Our first delegation to the Soviet Union



James P. Cannon

delivered a letter from Esteban Volkov, Leon Trotsky's grandson, to the Soviet government demanding that his grandfather's name be cleared.)

SA has helped establish Walnut Publishers as a viable producer and distributor of books and pamphlets. SA has worked together with Walnut to assist in the publication and distribution of basic works by Trotsky, in Russian, in the Soviet Union.

SA is an active participant in all arenas of the American class struggle. We have functioning fractions in industrial and other important trade unions. SA has, without exaggeration, played a major role in the movement against U.S. intervention in Central America and is currently in the center of initial efforts to oppose U.S. intervention in the Mideast.

SA has been, and continues to be a leading force in the political struggle by women to defend their right to choose as well as helping lead the physical defense of abortion clinics in several cities from ongoing fascist-like attacks.

In the best tradition of our founders, SA has proven itself to be a propaganda group which knows how to act like a full-fledged political party. Our weight and influence in the mass movement, because of this party-building perspective, is far greater than our numbers.

One measure of our success in maintaining the true continuity of the party of Trotsky and Cannon is the impact we have made on some of the best fighters in the SWP. In the last eight months, reinforcements from the SWP central leadership and other cadre have come back to the party of American Trotskyism, and more are on their way.

The United Secretariat of the Fourth International can give this process an important impulse by their simple acknowledgment that the SWP did more than resign from the FI; that it completed its break with its past, and forfeited all rights to claim the historic continuity of revolutionary Marxism in the United States—leaving Socialist Action as the rightful bearer of this continuity.

Such action by the FI will go a long way toward encouraging all those in the United States who wish to help build the revolutionary proletarian, Leninist combat party, based on the historic theoretical and programmatic conquests of our world movement, to join Socialist Action.

Fraternally,
Socialist Action Political Committee

International
VIEWPOINT

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Poland: Mazowiecki government falls as voters and strikers oppose austerity



Peter Turnley

By JAN SYLWESTROWICZ

The first round of Poland's presidential elections took place on Nov. 25. Before the vote, the elections were already seen as a turning point. The first free elections at national level for decades, they were to select a successor to General Jaruzelski, the Stalinist architect of martial law in 1981 and undoubtedly the most hated man in Poland during the last decade.

Jaruzelski was appointed president last year in observance of the "round table" agreement between the Stalinist bureaucracy and Solidarity, according to which he would act as a "guarantor of stability" for a certain transition period. As government popularity fell, labor protests increased, and the round table itself became questioned, this transition period turned out to be shorter than planned.

Lech Walesa topped the poll with 40 percent of the vote, a comfortable lead over the other contenders. Second came "Stan" Tyminski, (23 percent) a Canadian businessman of Polish origin totally unheard of before the campaign began. Prime Minister Mazowiecki, symbol of the "Polish road of economic reform," came only third, getting a mere 18 percent, while a representative of the Stalinist nomenklatura, Cimoszewicz, running as "the candidate of the left," scored 9 percent of the vote.

Two other candidates, representing the Peasants' Party and the extreme nationalist Confederation of Independent Poland, received 6 percent and 2 percent, respectively. The second round of the elections, on Dec. 9, will now be fought out between Walesa and Tyminski.

Walesa's lead in the first round came as no surprise. But few in Poland believed that Mazowiecki could fail to qualify for the run off. It is Mazowiecki's total humiliation at the hands of Tyminski that is the most significant event.

Yesterday and today

Let's recall the situation just one year ago. Mazowiecki was supported by the vast majority of the population; opinion polls showed him the most popular person in the country (considerably more popular than Walesa).

He had taken office in August 1989 as the head of Poland's first non-Stalinist government for 45 years and was commonly referred to as "our (i.e., Solidarity's) prime minister"—epitomizing "their" defeat, that of the Stalinist ruling party (the PZPR), in the elections of June 4.

Allowed to contest only 35 percent of seats in the region (lower house of parliament), Solidarity-backed candidates had won

'When this economic disaster began to trigger workers' protests in late spring and early summer, Lech Walesa broke publicly with the government.'

every single one. In elections to the Senate, they had captured 99 out of 100 seats. The resulting disarray and splits in the PZPR and its allies, the Peasants' Party and the Democratic Party, allowed Solidarity to form a coalition government with the latter two.

This coalition was dominated by Solidarity from the start, with Mazowiecki firmly in control of events. Solidarity was united behind him, and his government symbolized the wisdom of the "road of dialogue" pursued at the round table—a negotiated road to parliamentary democracy and the free market, with the blessing of the Stalinist PZPR.

Today, the strategy Mazowiecki symbolized is discredited. His defeat could scarcely have been more decisive. Yet he was supported in this campaign by all the important media: by the TV and radio, and four out of five national daily newspapers. He received public declarations of support from almost every well-known intellectual and artist, from film directors, actors, and actresses.

And it was no secret that a Mazowiecki victory was the favored option of the West (German leader Kohl was particularly open about this), of the Vatican, and of the Kremlin. To all of these, Mazowiecki seemed to offer the best hope of stability. So what happened? What has changed so much in Poland over the last year?

The "Balcerowicz Plan"

The single biggest factor working against Mazowiecki was undoubtedly the dramatic economic recession his government has created (quite deliberately).

The assumption behind the "Balcerowicz Plan" (named after Vice Premier Balcerowicz, who drafted the government's economic program, following instructions) is that the Polish economy needs "shock therapy" to assist restructuring and check inflation. The government has committed itself to driving down wages and forcing companies to cut back employment. This is to ensure higher profitability in the enterprises which

survive, allowing their gradual privatization.

The Balcerowicz Plan was put into effect on Jan. 1 this year. The effects have been catastrophic. Unemployment, virtually nonexistent previously, has climbed to 1,100,000 within 11 months. At the start of the year, government officials were warning of 400,000 possibly jobless in the future: now unemployment is predicted to reach 3 million, perhaps 4 million, next year.

Rising prices coupled with wage restraints meant that real incomes declined 43 percent in the first half of the year—a record for postwar Europe. Thousands of construction projects in health and education have been abandoned. Tens of thousands of family-owned production and repair businesses have folded.

Inflation is still continuing, albeit more slowly on average. Yet certain prices are leaping upwards: particularly housing, coal and electricity, and public transport. Many articles and services which were heavily subsidized only a few months ago are now very expensive, including some medicines.

Government members themselves seem stunned by the scale of the devastation they have caused by obeying IMF orders. As the months have passed, their defense of government economic policy has become restricted to one sentence, repeated over and over again: "There is no other road than the free market."

Walesa breaks with Mazowiecki

When this economic disaster began to trigger workers' protests in late spring and early summer, Lech Walesa suddenly broke publicly with the government. Warning that discontent could soon become explosive, he demanded the government "speed things up."

This "speed-up," he explained, meant quicker economic reforms and immediate political changes—in particular, the removal of Jaruzelski and free elections to both the presidency and the Sejm, the parliament.

For workers throughout Poland, it seemed as if Walesa was once again coming to their

defense. Confident of mass support, Walesa told the government the brutal truth: "All your debates in parliament mean nothing. When this country's shipyards, mines, and steelworks go on strike, the government will collapse like a house of cards."

Shortly after, the workers at the Gdansk shipyards demanded that government ministers and Solidarity-sponsored deputies come to the yards to account for their actions. This demand would have been rejected out of hand in any normal Western "democracy." But the deputies meekly trooped off to Gdansk, to be booed and jeered.

Mazowiecki himself resisted, proposing a meeting in the Palace of the Archbishop of Warsaw instead. But he finally gave in, too. The abuse he received was such that the film made of the meeting was never shown on TV.

This episode was symbolic: the workers had demonstrated that they were still confident of their own strength and would rely on it, "parliamentary democracy" or no "parliamentary democracy." The government had admitted its own weakness. And the writing was on the wall for Mazowiecki.

"Free market" and the ax

Yet despite attacking the government's economic record (no difficult task), Walesa has been unable to offer any alternative to the government's economic policies: He himself is firmly committed to the free-market reforms.

Indeed, during the election campaign he was frequently forced to admit that he had no program—although justifying this on the grounds that the powers of the presidency had yet to be specified (a new Constitution is still being drafted), and claiming he would present a program "when the time comes." On the eve of the first round of voting, he stated that he supported continuation of the Balcerowicz Plan, although again insisting it had to be "speeded up."

Nevertheless, Walesa does have one definite policy, one which has gathered him as many friends as unemployment and recession have produced enemies for Mazowiecki. This policy has come to be known as "the ax."

The ax in question is one that Walesa says he will use to behead the nomenklatura—the network of Stalinist bureaucrats who have remained in positions of power, untouched by the Mazowiecki government. The popular hostility to these people is intense, and the current government is believed to be protecting them.

This is perfectly true; indeed, it is a direct consequence of the round-table agreement. In return for allowing "democratization," the Stalinists successfully demand that no reprisals be taken against them, leaving them free to exploit their accumulated wealth and connections in the new free market. This reflects the common denominator that enables a deal to be struck at the round table—both the Solidarity leadership and the Stalinist bureaucracy believed it was now time to move toward the restoration of capitalism in Poland.

The Stalinist bureaucrats were quite happy to grant a degree of democracy and civil rights, correctly estimating that they were the only real force in Poland—apart from marginal groups of profiteers and black-market businessmen—who could reap the full benefits of an economy based on maximizing private profits.

The "Schnappsgate" scandal

And so it has been. The bureaucrats have used the new market mechanisms to enrich themselves at lightning speed, taking over state assets to set up their own private companies. The bureaucrats have been quick to master all the tricks of "legitimate" capitalist swindles and corporate theft. Small wonder, then, that Walesa has gained enormous support for this promise to give the bureaucrats a taste of his "ax."

"These people," Walesa said, "oppressed us for over 40 years. Now they're supposed to have been overthrown. Only we get poorer every day and they get richer." This is a common view. These feelings are also aggravated by the general suspicion that Mazowiecki's supporters, particularly those in and around parliament, are engaging in the same kind of dealings as their former Stalinist opponents.

A number of economic scandals—including one whose massive profits were made from illicit alcohol imports, with at least indirect involvement by some deputies (since dubbed "Schnappsgate")—have confirmed the

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suspicion that Poland's current rulers have become just as dishonest as the former ones.

These, then, were the two pillars of Walesa's election campaign: first, a sharp attack on the government for losing all control over the economy, and second, a pledge to square accounts with the Stalinists.

Both involved breathtaking demagoguery, however. On the first point—because Walesa has no alternative to the free-market reforms other than "speeding them up," which could only mean speeding up the growth of unemployment and speeding up the fall in living standards!

On the second—because Walesa is just as guilty as Mazowiecki of letting the Stalinists off the hook. After all, it was Walesa who hosted the "round table," along with the notorious Stalinist Minister of Internal Affairs, General Kiszczak. And he kept silent about the role the bureaucrats were playing in the "new Poland" until the workers' strikes of late spring forced him to distance himself from the government.

More important, the popular desire to see the Stalinists finally weeded out in fact represents a deep aspiration toward democracy. The continued power of the bureaucracy is interpreted as a sign that real power has still to be passed into the hands of the people. Real power lies elsewhere.

Walesa is no democrat

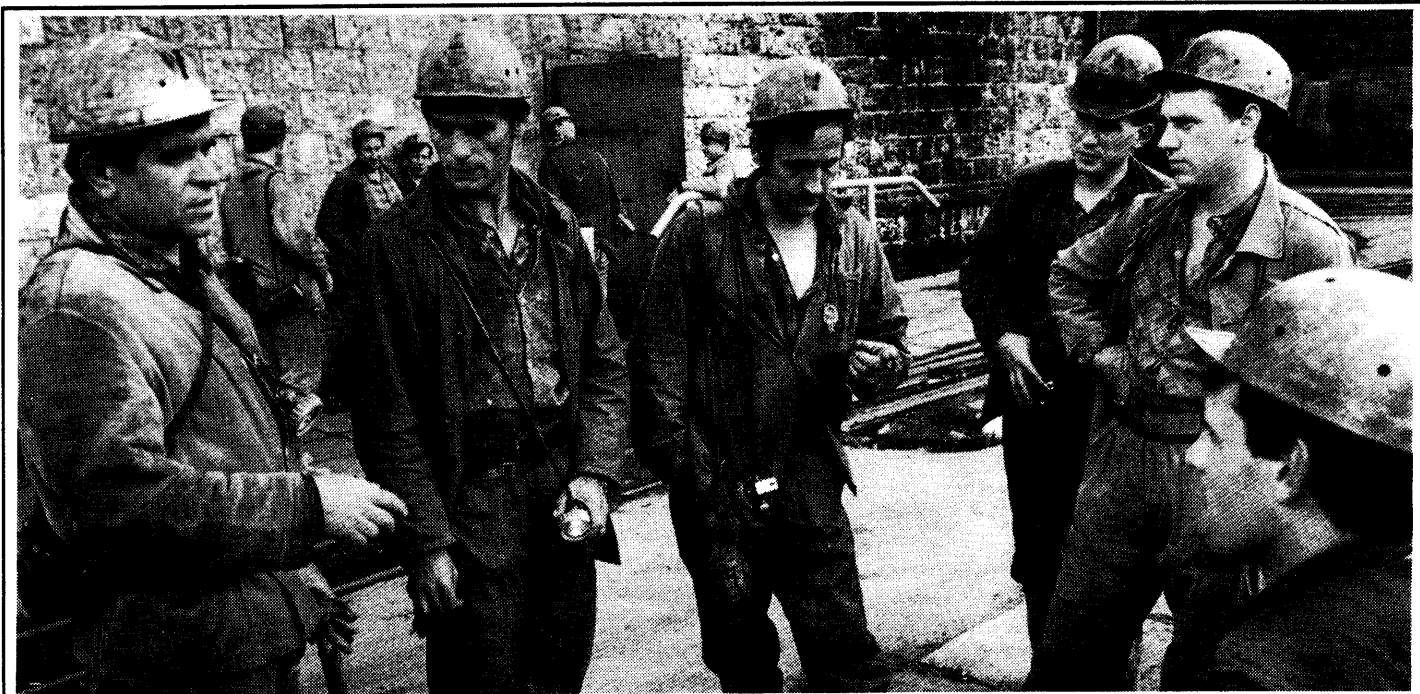
Yet Walesa is no democrat. He is arguably more anti-democratic than Mazowiecki, although the two are a fairly even match in this respect. (The portrayal of Mazowiecki in the Western press as an apostle of democracy is ridiculous nonsense: This man was a deputy for nearly 20 years in the Stalinist parliament of the '60s and '70s.)

Walesa has fully supported the Mazowiecki government's most reactionary moves: the introduction of Catholic religious education in state schools, the bill to ban abortion (linked to prison sentences), and the restriction of access to divorce by placing it under the jurisdiction of higher courts (which are fewer in number, thus lengthening the waiting time for divorce proceedings).

Walesa has made no attempt to compel the government to repeal the restrictions on trade-union freedoms still in force, which were introduced by Jaruzelski during martial law. He is hostile to democracy in the workplace and supports strengthening the police and army.

Moreover, he has stated his intention of trying to rule Poland by presidential decree. Clearly, the workers' hopes that Walesa will fulfill Solidarity's original democratic vision are totally misplaced.

On top of all this come Walesa's allies, who make up a frightening array of the most reactionary forces in Poland, all eager to jump on Walesa's bandwagon. These include many groups which are fiercely clericalist and authoritarian. Some have made a determined effort to give Walesa's campaign an anti-Semitic character, equating his promised purge of Stalinists with a purge of Jews who



David Turnley

Polish coal miners have threatened militant strikes against government austerity plans.

are allegedly "behind" the Mazowiecki government. Here Walesa has tried to play a scandalous double game: publicly criticizing anti-Semitism in one breath, and then in the next proudly declaring that he has proof that he himself is of "pure" Polish stock.

From the start, it was obvious Walesa would win the first round. A vote for him was a vote against the government; it was a protest at both falling living standards and the transformation of yesterday's Stalinists into today's capitalists. This protest was one most Poles were eager to express.

"Stan who?"

In this situation, Walesa could have easily gained over 50 percent in the first round of voting and been elected triumphantly. This did not happen because of the spectacular success of "Stan" Tyminski in beating Mazowiecki into third place, quite obviously capturing most of his votes from the Walesa camp.

At the beginning of the campaign, Tyminski's name elicited only one response: "Who?" He was ignored by the media and taken seriously by no one. All that was known about him was that he had left Poland in the mid-1960s and made a small fortune doing business in Canada and Peru.

The leader of an obscure party in Canada, he had decided to return to Poland and run for the presidency, so he claimed, with the sole purpose of presenting his economic views to the Polish public.

These views, at the beginning of the campaign, turned out to be no different from those of the other candidates; i.e., a blind faith in the miraculous powers of a free market.

Tyminski's campaign was to change dramatically, however. To understand why, we must look at the more general developments in Poland over the last weeks.

Rising tide of protest

From the beginning, the election cam-

paign was accompanied by a rising tide of workers' protests and strike actions. It became apparent that, while ready to vote for Walesa, workers were not prepared to wait until he was elected and none too sure he would actually deliver on his campaign promises. They were intent on fighting for better conditions immediately, themselves.

Despite a call from Solidarity's national trade-union executive for a total strike moratorium during the election campaign, one group of workers after another took action. The railworkers were followed by retail workers in dozens of cities. Farmers stepped up protests they had been conducting intermittently since the spring.

Municipal transport workers struck repeatedly across the country. In Cracow, they occupied the bus and tram depots for nine days, with no normal public transport in the streets whatsoever. Various engineering factories held one-day stoppages, or "rolling" strikes, with a different department out each day (including the giant Ursus tractor factory in Warsaw, employing 25,000).

Finally, five days before the first-round vote, Poland's coal miners held a one-day strike, warning that they would call an indefinite strike after the elections if their demands were not met. In two pits, a number of miners began a hunger strike (which continued through the first round of voting and is still continuing as I write).

In every case, the demands were for higher pay, almost always accompanied by calls for internal restructuring, guarantees of job security, and the return of government subsidies.

Outflanks other candidates

The effect of all this was to change the terms of debate in the elections. Midway through the campaign, Tyminski declared that the privatization bill passed by the Sejm should be revoked. He thereby outflanked all the other candidates from the left.

This call was later to be echoed by the other "minor" candidates, with the notable exception of the Stalinist Cimoszewicz, who had been talking of "capitalism with a human face" and underlining his own commitment to privatizations. This bureaucrat's campaign spokesman denounced Tyminski on TV for questioning privatizations—branding him "ultraleft!"

Tyminski then capitalized on his initial success. He accused Prime Minister Mazowiecki of "high treason," declaring that the government was about to sell off Polish industry to Western investors at rock-bottom prices. Continuing the theme, he stated that Western capital was conducting an "economic war" against Poland, which was the central issue facing the Polish people today. He warned of the Polish economy being sold off wholesale, of economic dependence on the West, and of mass poverty and unemployment.

At the same time, he repeatedly stressed that Polish workers were being cheated out of their earnings. He said that, if elected, he would enact a law to this effect "within a month." All this struck a responsive chord among working people.

Initially favorable to the fact that Tyminski, running as an "independent," had no record of past manipulation in the jungles of high-level Polish "politics," workers now began to listen with interest to what he had to say. Tyminski became more verbally radical as each week passed.

When the Solidarity trade-union leadership

announced it would take disciplinary measures against the miners' and transport workers' sections for breaking the strike moratorium, Tyminski declared that he supported "every strike taking place in Poland today. The workers are not to blame for wanting better living standards. The blame lies with the government."

The result: a complete unknown, "Stan" Tyminski, self-proclaimed "citizen of Poland, Canada, and Peru" who has not been resident in Poland for over 25 years, received nearly one-fourth of all votes cast.

Unserious explanations

In some sections of the Polish press, and most particularly in the first reactions of the Western press, Tyminski's success has been attributed to his image as a self-made expatriate millionaire. People voted for him, the theory goes, because they want to be like him—rich and successful.

This is a completely unserious explanation of why millions of Poles voted as they did. Tyminski's support picked up as he began to attack the effects of the market reforms (unusual for a millionaire, admittedly).

The composition of his electorate is revealing: He won half of all votes cast by those under 25 years of age. And it is the youth who are being hit hardest by the reforms and recession—no perspectives, no jobs, no housing.

Geographically, he obtained the greatest support in Upper Silesia, the center of Poland's heavy industry. It is clear his call to halt privatizations had a big impact on the steelworkers and striking miners of Silesia. In some mining districts he got 60 percent of the vote!

The day after the first-round poll, Tyminski thanked the voters of Silesia and said he would be visiting large plants in the region to ask the workers what they thought of privatizations. (A study of workers' opinions in large factories, published in September, showed 37 percent for continued state ownership, 36 percent for workers' group ownership or share schemes, and only 14 percent for straightforward privatizations of the factories, as the government plans.)

Rumors of Tyminski's real background and intentions have been thick in the Polish media. It is claimed he was declared unfit for military service in the 1960s due to mental problems, that he had connections with the Stalinist secret police—and also with Libya and the Medellin drug cartel—and that he, himself, while very wealthy lacks the funds to finance his campaign by himself (i.e., someone else is doing this for him secretly).

The allegations most probably backfired before the first round of voting, increasing public sympathy for someone the new establishment was clearly out to destroy.

The links with the secret police or other sections of the Stalinist apparatus cannot be ruled out—which is not quite the point, since the votes for Tyminski were clearly not votes for the Stalinists. He is certainly a very confused individual, most probably an opportunist charlatan. Many of his public statements are self-contradictory. Many are naïve, puerile, or simply idiotic.

He is often at a loss to answer journalists' questions. He claims no knowledge of the situation in Poland at the start of the 1980s, of Solidarity as it was then, and of martial law, saying he was in "the Peruvian jungle

(continued on page 15)

POLAND: The fight for workers' democracy



SOLIDARNOSC

By Zbigniew Kowalewski

with an introduction and article by Carl Finamore

Poland: Solidarnosc and the fight for workers' democracy

By Zbigniew Kowalewski,
with an introduction
and article by
Carl Finamore

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...UN war vote

(continued from page 1)

the Soviet Union is that the chickens are coming home to roost. Gross economic mismanagement and bureaucratic rule has led to massive revolts against the hated Stalinist rulers. These democratic movements have led to the demise of the Stalinist parties even though the states remain intact for now (except East Germany).

Decades of Stalinist rule, however, have left the people depoliticized and open to all types of capitalist demagoguery. Not surprisingly, many people in these countries have illusions in the capitalist West and its material goods as the solution to their economic problems. This includes the capitalist forms of democracy.

But the demise of Stalinist regimes is not a victory for imperialism over socialism in the Cold War. The collapse of Stalinism (the opposite of socialism) is an advance for working people in Eastern Europe and in the imperialist countries. For the first time in decades workers and farmers in these countries can be involved in real politics. They can consider all ideas—including genuine Marxist views. They can begin to organize independent of the Stalinists.

This reality frightens not only the old Stalinist bureaucrats who are still entrenched in the government and state apparatuses, but the capitalists as well. Big problems are already emerging in former East Germany as workers who once had "life-long jobs" and social benefits are now in the unemployment line. There is growing discontent in Poland and other Eastern European countries over the promises of the market economy.

In the short term, of course, Washington and its allies can take advantage of the collapse of the Stalinist regimes to push their aggression against the toilers of the world.

Today Gorbachev is a friend of Bush. The new governments in Eastern Europe are allies of Washington. They have cut aid to countries that have stood up to imperialist aggression. Gorbachev is ready to strike a deal against the people of Iraq.

At the same time, Washington's new position does not reflect all that it seems. The kings and emirs of the Persian Gulf do not reflect the views of the Arab masses on the question of war against Iraq. In a fight between Bush and Saddam Hussein,

...Jan. 26 call

(continued from page 1)

cluding the projection of an international peace conference under the auspices of the United Nations and other demands calling for a negotiated political settlement.

Antiwar coalitions have already formed in cities throughout the country. Town meetings, marches, and rallies have increased as war threats mount.

The heart of the antiwar upsurge in recent weeks has been on the college campuses. Students are keenly aware that a shooting war against Iraq will most likely lead to the reinstatement of the draft.

Campus antiwar actions have included a wide ar-

most Arab people will back Saddam, including those in Saudi Arabia. A long war would lead to explosions throughout the Middle East and beyond.

Furthermore, the world economy is on the brink of a major recession. Guns and butter are not possible in the United States. To pay for a major war, the U.S. government will have to demand more concessions from U.S. working people: fewer social benefits, more taxes, and a lower standard of living.

A Mideast war would boost the economy but only briefly, since the economic problems are structural. Economic competition between Washington, Bonn, Paris, and Tokyo will intensify for shrinking world markets. This could lead to new trade wars, or worse.

A worsening world capitalist economy means that the Charter of Paris' anticipated transition from "socialism" to market economies in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union will result in even more hardships for the workers of those countries. More hardships means more organized resistance to the bureaucracies' plans to become capitalists.

For these reasons Gorbachev and many imperialist allies in Europe prefer a "peaceful solution" than war against Iraq. They are ready to consider a compromise with Saddam over Kuwait if possible.

Washington, on the other hand, continues to raise the stakes as a warning to others who would dare stand up to the world's most hated power.

As we head for the new year, what is clear is that the war preparations of Washington are serious and that Bush plans war if he can get away with it. But the longer he waits, the more opposition to war will grow at home and abroad.

Recent opinion polls all show declining support for the Pentagon's war preparations. It is not surprising that Bush and other government officials are trying to find new arguments for their aggression: to save jobs is the newest one, along with stopping a "madman" from using atomic weapons.

More groups are speaking out, including major church organizations. Ads are appearing in newspapers opposing war in the Gulf. There are larger protests taking place on college campuses.

In this context, pressure must be multiplied demanding that Washington Bring Our Troops Home Now! Immediate withdrawal without negotiations or conditions on Iraq. Out Now! is the only just, and peaceful, solution to Washington's aggression against the Arab people. ■

ray of educational activities. The presence at these events of Vietnam veterans and current military reservists who oppose the war has done much to educate the current generation of youth about the real nature of U.S. war plans.

Although the new antiwar movement has responded speedily to the threat of war, it has been organized mainly on a local basis. The Dec. 1 New York meeting marked the first time a broad range of organizations from across the country met to discuss the threat of war in the Middle East and to issue a unified, authoritative call to action.

We urge antiwar activists across the country to join in building the Jan. 26 Washington and San Francisco demonstrations and the local Jan. 19 building actions. Bring the troops home now! ■

Our readers speak out

Trotsky

Dear editor,

Readers of Socialist Action will be interested to hear that on Friday, Nov. 16, in New York, the Moscow Trials Campaign Committee held a forum commemorating the 50th anniversary of Trotsky's assassination. Speakers included Paul Siegel of Socialist Action, Marilyn Vogt-Downey of the Fourth International Tendency, and Estoban Volkov, Trotsky's grandson.

Although the meeting commemorated Trotsky's death, the speakers focussed on the future. Several reported on the re-publication of Trotsky's works in the original Russian in the USSR and reported seeing this summer, for instance, "The Stalin School of Falsification" on sale in subway stations in Moscow.

Marilyn Vogt-Downey told the audience that at two of the three libraries she visited in Moscow, the librarians were reading Trotsky behind their newspapers.

Paul Siegel analyzed why Trotsky, along with his son Leon Sedov, is the only victim of the Moscow Trials who has not been rehabilitated. He concluded that it was above all the strength of his political ideas that the Stalinist bureaucracy fears.

Finally Estoban Volkov spoke for everyone present when he described his and his grandfather's hope for a non-exploitative socialist society in which "never more would the human tree be cut to gather its fruits."

Liz Campbell,
New York, N.Y.

Middle East

Dear editor,

I appreciate the position you have taken regarding self-determination for Arabic peoples without U.S. interference, but I have to point out that the "self-determination" you refer to applies only to men of that culture.

When women cannot vote, cannot play any role in self governance, cannot drive, cannot speak in public (or even in private often enough),

cannot travel without the permission of a male relative, cannot use contraception, cannot abort, cannot protect themselves or their daughters from the cultural practices of genital mutilation and labial infibulation, cannot work or be educated with men, then it must be acknowledged that the women of the Arabic nations have had no role in self-determination and that the culture of those nations is solely a men's culture imposed on the women.

Islamic scripture does not require these practices, although male religious authorities argue that it does—much as male Catholic authorities pretend they have scriptural or divine justification for Catholicism's oppression of women.

If there were open emigration for women—if those who did not like it could leave—maybe then this culture could be described as an "Arabic" culture rather than solely as "Arabic male" culture. However, until that day, *Socialist Action* should recognize that what you defend is nothing less than sex-based apartheid and oppression.

Lisa Small,
Arlington, Va.

Picketline

Dear editor,

The day after Thanksgiving, I took part in a picketline in front of F.A.O. Schwartz, a yuppie toy store in San Francisco.

F.A.O. Schwartz was recently purchased by a Dutch-based corporation, K.B.B., and has been trying to bust Local 1100 of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union. They recently fired a Black, gay employee who has AIDS for "excessive absenteeism" during his recent bout with pneumonia.

Many passersby agreed with the call for a boycott of "toys from Scrooge."

The picketline was unique—even for San Francisco! There were militant trade unionists from Hotel and Restaurant Employees - Local 2, Communication Workers of America, AFSCME, and SEIU along with militant lesbian and gay activists from ACT UP and Queer Nation.

Loretta Jones,
San Francisco, Calif.

The following organizations participated in the Dec. 1 antiwar conference at New York's Riverside Church:

Act for Peace in the Middle East/Phila. Pa.; Aegis Justice (Student Network); American Committee on Africa; Action for Peace Solutions; American Committee on Africa; Action for Peace Solutions; Autonomous Anarchist Action; American Friends Service Committee; Artwork; Austin Campaign for Peace in the Middle East; Baltimore Coalition Against U.S. Intervention in the Middle East; Black Veterans for Social Justice; Birmingham Committee Against Intervention in the Middle East; Brooklyn Committee for Peace and Social Justice; Brandeis Coalition for Peace; Buddhist Council, N.Y.; CASA-Westchester; Center for Constitutional Rights; Catholic Peace Fellowship; Central Jersey Coalition; City College Students for Educational Rights; Church Women United; Campaign for Peace and Democracy; Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador; Citizens Mobilization to Prevent War in the Middle East; Communist Party-USA; Coalition of Community and University Groups for Peace in the Gulf Region/Ann Arbor; Clearwater Poughkeepsie Coalition to Stop U.S. Intervention in the Middle East; Coalition for Peace in the Middle East-Chapel Hill, N.C.; Committee Against U.S. Intervention in the Persian Gulf/Cleveland, Ohio; Clergy and Laity Concerned-CALC; Committee against a Vietnam War in the Middle East/Berkeley, Calif.; Committee against a Vietnam War in the Middle East/Boston; Democratic Socialists of America; Democratic Socialists of America-Youth Section; Delaware County Campaign for Peace in the Middle East; Emergency Coalition for Peace in the Middle East/Chicago, Ill.; Episcopal Diocese of Michigan; Emergency Committee for Peace, Justice, Non-Intervention/Boston; Emergency Committee to Stop U.S. War in the Middle East-San Francisco; Emergency National Council against U.S. Intervention in Central America/Caribbean; Fellowship of Reconciliation; Florida Coalition for Peace and Justice; Fourth International Tendency; Freedom Road/Socialist Organization; Friends Peace Committee; Greenpeace; Greater New Haven Peace Council; Guardian; Gulf Crisis TV project; Gulf Coast Tenants/New Orleans; Hands Off; Housing NOW; Hudson County Coalition for Peace in Middle East; Hundreth Monkey; Impact Visuals; International Association of Machinists, Local 1018; Institute for Policy Studies; International Socialist Organization; Initiative for Peace in the Middle East; International Jewish Peace Union/Seattle, WA; International Jewish Peace Union/NY; Jobs with Peace; Jackson State Student Body; Jews Against U.S. Troops in Saudi Arabia; Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy; Local

Alliance for Mideast Peace/Maryville, TN.; Louisville Committee for Israeli/Palestine States; Middle East Action Network; Middle East Crisis Coalition/Milwaukee, WI; Middle East Justice Network, MA; Military Families Support Network; Manhattan (Kansas) Alliance for Peace in the Middle East; National Mobilization for Survival; Morgantown Coalition, Morgantown, W.Va.; National Campaign for Independent Political Action; National Committee Against a Vietnam War in the Middle East; National Council of Churches; National Lawyers Guild; No War for Oil-Albany; NYU-U.S. Out of the Gulf Coalition; Northeastern Students Against U.S. Intervention; NYC Student Network Against U.S. Intervention in the Middle East; Neighbor to Neighbor; New Jersey Coalition against War in the Middle East; New Yorkers for Peace in the Gulf; New Jewish Agenda; N.Y. Campaign for a Peace Dividend; Northeast Colleges Against the War; Operation Real Security; Out Now; Oberlin College Coalition Against Apartheid and White Supremacy; Palestine Aid Society; Palestine Human Rights-Information Center; Palestine Solidarity Committee; Paper Tiger - V; Pax Christi-Metro NYC; People for Peace in the Persian Gulf (Syracuse Coalition); People's Anti-War Mobilization, (NYC); Persian Gulf Crisis Coalition; Minn., MN; Physicians for Social Responsibility; Pittsburgh Committee for a Peaceful Resolution of the Gulf Crisis; Pittsburgh Committee for a Comprehensive Peace in the Middle East; Postal Mailhandlers-Local 300; Philadelphia Yearly Meeting-Friends Peace Committee; Pledge of Resistance; Presbytery of NYC; Presbyterian UN Office; Progressive Student Network; Queens Peace and Solidarity Council; Refuse/Resist; Rainbow Coalition; Riverside Church; RCP; SANE/Freeze; Southern Organization Committee; Shorefront Peace Committee; Syracuse Network for Israel-Palestine Peace; Socialist Action; Seattle Coalition; Socialist Workers Party; St. Louis Forum for Peace in the Gulf; Social Workers for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament; Sojourners; Solidarity; Student Action Union; Student Environmental Action Committee-SEAC; Stop the U.S. War Machine/Action Network; Twenty/Twenty Vision; Undercurrents; U. Mass Graduate Student Senate; U.S. Out of the Middle East- RI; U. of Michigan Student Coalition Against the War; U.S. Peace Council; U.S. Students Council; Veterans Civic Action Team/Huntington, MA; Vietnam Veterans Against the War; War Resisters League; Washington Area Student Coalition for Peace in the Middle East; Washington Area Coalition to Stop Intervention; Westchester People's Action Committee (M.E. Campaign); World Peacemakers; Women for Racial and Economic Equality; Womens' International League for Peace and Freedom; Workers League; Young Socialist Alliance.

Letter from Panama

One year ago, U.S. troops bombed and occupied Panama—a brutal dress rehearsal for a future war in the Middle East. Following are major portions of a letter given to *Socialist Action* staffwriter Sylvia Weinstein at a conference sponsored by the Federation of Cuban Women, in Havana last October.

Dear friends in North America,

I would like to begin this brief message by sending greetings to all the American women who opposed the U.S. invasion of Panama, a country which, after being invaded, is now being repressed. As a nationalist woman, I feel great anger at what has occurred in my country. But my experience has also strengthened my resolve to denounce this hideous U.S. invasion.

I would like my personal testimony to be heard throughout the United States. The American people must find out what really occurred to our people, to our community.

On Dec. 24, 1989, my sister Matyorie and I were followed and stopped by young Panamanian members of a para-military squad, who were clearly trained at the U.S. military installations in Panama. These young men asked us if we were members of the Dignity Battalions. They told us that if we were they would kidnap us.

Before we could even respond to their question, one member of the para-military gang simply took out his gun and shot my sister, crippling her for life. Today she is in a wheelchair.

These squads took over the neighborhoods because there was armed resistance to the U.S. invasion. I attribute this savage attack on my sister to the fact that I belonged—proudly, I should add—to the Patriotic Command Ascanio Villaluz and because I responded to the call to defend my homeland.

I witnessed with my own eyes the missile attacks by U.S. Cobra helicopters on the district of San Miguelito, where hundreds of children, women, and members of the Dignity Battalions died.

The Cuban government led by Comandante Fidel Castro opened its doors to us and offered my sister full medical treatment. I can't thank the Cuban people enough for their solidarity and support. I will follow their example of internationalism, of struggle for the self-determination of the peoples, and of respect for the internal affairs of nations, free from U.S. intervention.

People of the United States, you who do not know what an invasion is about, open your eyes and see the injustices that are being committed in Panama and other countries by George Bush.

Yorbalinda Chen

A valuable book on the demise of Eastern Airlines

"Grounded: Frank Lorenzo and the Destruction of Eastern Airlines" by Aaron Bernstein, who covers labor issues for *Business Week*, is a valuable book on the 20-month strike at Eastern Airlines.

One would not expect such a useful book from a pro-big business publication. But as a co-worker of mine who worked for Eastern for many years told me after reading the book: "It is 95 percent accurate."

The fact that a *Business Week* reporter would write a book on the labor movement shows the significance of this labor battle for working people and the employers.

"Grounded" provides a detailed description of the internal workings of Eastern's owners from 1986 to the present. It is a textbook for the employers first and foremost in describing how Eastern was able to wring concessions from its workers.

Lorenzo forced the workers organized by the International Association of Machinists out on strike in March 1989—an action which resulted in an unprecedented sympathy strike action by the pilots and flight attendants unions for eight months. But even before then, the workers faced a campaign of terror by management. Workers were fired at will. Harassment became the norm.

As Bernstein documents, from the day Lorenzo bought Eastern in 1986 until the strike, Lorenzo's management had one objective: to break the unions.

Cops and courts

The workers also had to fight the government of George Bush, the

police, the courts, and the news media. Labor, on the other hand, had to rely on the rank and file and solidarity from other unionists.

What Bernstein doesn't describe are the actions of the rank and file. His coverage of labor is primarily on the maneuvering of the IAM top leadership. The book documents the IAM leadership's strategy of seeking new and better owners for Eastern as the way to fight Frank Borman (Chief Executive Officer before Lorenzo) and later Frank Lorenzo himself.

To this day, the IAM is seeking a better "pro-labor" capitalist to buy out the smaller Eastern. (Part of this strategy too was to seek an Employee Stock Ownership Plan—ESOP—of the airline.)

The book shows how Lorenzo's anti-labor policies did not begin with his breaking of the unions at Continental in 1983 and Eastern in 1989.

Many labor leaders have said that Frank Lorenzo was a byproduct of the deregulation of the airline industry in 1978. But Bernstein points out that Lorenzo opposed deregulation, as did most other airline executives.

Lorenzo's strategy

Lorenzo began his career in aircraft leasing. Later, in 1969, he and his partner, Robert Carney, put up \$25,000 to start a new company, Jet Capital Corporation. Through business connections, they used Jet Capital as the medium to take over a near-bankrupt airline, TXI (Texas International Airlines, later renamed Texas Air). Through the use of borrowed money, Lorenzo began his

empire building.

In 1974, Lorenzo forced the unionized TXI employees out on strike. Five days later, he replaced the strikers with scabs. The strike grounded TXI for four months.

Lorenzo only survived with the help of the other airlines under the Mutual Aid Pact, an arrangement among the major airlines under which carriers were assessed set amounts to be paid any company shut down by a strike. In April 1975, the TXI unions capitulated to Lorenzo.

TXI set the pattern followed by Lorenzo in the post-deregulation 1980s. Lorenzo bought near-bankrupt companies on junk loans, forced the unions (where they existed) out on strike, then brought in scabs. He borrowed money to pay for it all and eventually repaid the high-interest loans.

Concessions framework

As Bernstein documents, all the airline bosses stepped up pressures

on the work force in the 1980s. This included major demands for concessions.

The response in the airlines unions was uneven. District 100 IAM leader Charles Bryan was elected president of the district in 1980 on an anti-concessions platform. But during this period, Bryan—like other IAM leaders—accepted the framework of concessions "to save jobs."

The AFL-CIO top labor leadership only began to get the wake-up call after President Reagan broke the air-traffic controllers strike and fired all the workers in 1981. But their shift was not to mobilize the ranks to fight back, but to find a new way to get cooperation from the employers. This included seeking profit-sharing plans, partial ESOPs, etc.

So in 1986, when the IAM refused to give more concessions, Eastern was sold to Frank Lorenzo's Texas Air. As Bernstein

notes, everyone knew what was coming: Lorenzo wanted a quick strike to break the unions and merge Eastern into non-union Continental.

Eastern was the third largest carrier at that time. Combined with Continental, Texas Air was the largest carrier in the capitalist world. But it was half-unionized.

And Texas Air had growing debts, since the takeovers were financed by junk bonds. Lorenzo's low-cost Continental was still not profitable. Eastern was also in the red. It was this reality that led Lorenzo to push for a strike and to break the unions at all costs.

The result? Eastern Airlines is a shell of its former self. It is waiting to be taken over by a stronger carrier, or sold off in parts. As William Sutton, a chief steward in the Eastern avionics shop in Miami, told Bernstein: "We may lose our jobs, but Lorenzo doesn't have an airline." ■

Which Side Are You On?

By
Malik Miah



... Poland

(continued from page 13)

at the time, cut off from the outside world."

But despite all the farcical aspects of this campaign, he has been the only one not afraid to break the established consensus from the round table. He has got one central question right: There is growing opposition to privatizations, the effects of the free market, and the attempts of Western capital to convert Poland into a dependent country and reservoir of cheap labor power.

Social conflict intensifies

Tyminski's success, whatever his motivation, taken together with Walesa's overall victory in the first round and Mazowiecki's crushing defeat, signifies a new intensification of social conflict in Poland.

The whole course of the election campaign, and above all the accompanying workers' struggles, point to a growing class polarization that is making itself felt with unexpected force. This was inevitable. The cost to the working class of the Balcerowicz Plan could not be borne indefinitely without provoking large-scale protest. This protest has now been expressed in strikes and at the ballot box.

The significance of what has occurred has not been lost on the government, which immediately resigned. Parliamentary leader Geremek declared that "society had failed the exam of democracy."

The supporters of Mazowiecki/Balcerowicz have been routed and they know it, although they are attempting to place the blame on Walesa for "stirring up emotions" in the first place.

The new manifestations of class division and class interest were recognized by *Gazeta Wyborcza*, the newspaper most closely linked to Mazowiecki. The morning after the first round of voting, the paper's front-page editorial stated the following:

"The results are unambiguous: Stan Tyminski's success was provided by the inhabitants of the countryside and medium-sized towns, by the workers and youth.... We have previously referred to this division into 'two Polands.'"

"We knew that the 'second Poland'—uneducated people, people from smaller towns—

did not understand the economic reforms, did not accept the need for sacrifice, and no longer supported the government. What surprised us were the dimensions of the hostility displayed by the 'second Poland.'"

The arrogance of the above quote is repulsive. Yet the general idea is correct. Yes, there are two Polands: a small elite of Stalinist bureaucrats, black marketeers, and pro-imperialist intellectuals, who have been benefiting from the moves to restore capitalism—and a large majority who have been suffering.

The newspaper is way off track when it claims the latter "do not understand the economic reforms." They understand them all too well! Which is why they are opposing them.

Exciting prospects for socialists

This article is being written 10 days before the second round of voting. An atmosphere of near-panic has hit the press and Solidarity leadership circles following the fall of the Mazowiecki government. While Walesa must be the clear favorite in the second round, he is running scared. Tyminski has shown himself a tougher opponent than Mazowiecki.

The day after the first round, Walesa declared he had not wanted to become president, but had run only to "teach Mazowiecki a lesson and then withdraw." Now, however, he would have to stay in the running to defeat Tyminski.

Following this amazing statement—and as the press announced "the end of Solidarity" and warned of Poland being plunged into "social strife and chaos"—Walesa called for national unity around him against Tyminski.

A new period has opened up in Poland. The IMF/Balcerowicz Plan of capitalist reconversion has been rejected by most working people. Opposition is mounting rapidly to the whole free-market project.

This offers exciting prospects of presenting a socialist alternative and new opportunities for the Polish Trotskyists of the Revolutionary Left Current. The task of the Trotskyists is now to turn ever more directly to the working class and give clear practical direction to the struggles, beginning to the mass opposition to capitalist restoration.

Neither Walesa nor Tyminski offer any way forward for Polish workers. The struggles will continue—against the Stalinists,

who are still clinging on to their positions and against the capitalists, who now wish to move in.

All the experts and political commentators

of the world's capitalist press who believed the restoration of capitalism would proceed smoothly thanks to popular support have been proven very, very wrong. ■

3000 attend Malcolm X conference



Malcolm X in 1965

By KWAME M.A. SOMBURU

NEW YORK—On Nov. 1-4, 1990, an extremely important and successful conference titled "Malcolm X: Radical Tradition and a Legacy of Struggle" took place at the Borough of Manhattan Community College. Over 2000 people registered and over 3000 attended the event.

The conference (four years in the planning) was initiated by the "Malcolm X Work Group of the Cooperative Research Network." It received support and sponsorship from the City University of New York and the Borough of Manhattan Community College.

In the call for the conference, the organizers said: "We believe that a major conference on Malcolm X is necessary to push past the rap and the rhetoric, past the icon and the image. A conference is necessary to define a militant program of study and struggle."

The conference, they said, would attempt to promote unity among "radical Blacks and

progressive forces in general." This was to be realized through maximum discussion and debate for the ultimate goals of "social protest" and "organized resistance" to oppression worldwide. Indeed, the discussions were extremely open and democratic, with absolutely no intimidation or suppression of opinion.

People of African ancestry of all ages attended. They came from many areas of the United States and from 15 countries, including: South Africa, Germany, Soviet Union, Nigeria, Mexico, Jamaica, and Italy.

There were 19 workshops and 5 plenary sessions. Six workshops dealt specifically with Malcolm X and his revolutionary ideas. This writer was an official presenter at one of them, along with Yuri Kochiyama (a close friend of Malcolm X, who has been active for many years in the Black struggle) and Conrad Lynn (a retired lawyer and political activist who worked with Malcolm).

Other workshops were Youth, Culture, and Rebellion; Fighting the Plague—AIDS and Drugs; Resistance Against the Racist War Machine, Black Women and Black Liberation, and Black Workers Unity and Independent Black Politics.

Among the well-known participants were Betty Shabazz (Malcolm's widow), C. Eric Lincoln, Alex Haley (Malcolm's biographer), Mohammed Babu, John Henrik Clarke, and Amiri Baraka. No decision has been made yet on making this an annual conference or convening another one next year.

All of the workshops and plenary sessions were audio-taped and video-taped. Eventually, written transcripts will be available.

Audio tapes cost \$10 for each workshop or plenary. For information, call WA'AT Productions in New York, (718) 271-7596.

For video tapes, conference publications (including a study guide, a poster, and other materials), and information on future plans, contact 21st Century Books, 607 E. Muddy Waters Dr., Chicago, Ill. 60653. Telephone (312) 538-2188. ■

Daily News strikers stand firm; solidarity given by other unions

By GERRY FIORI

The strike by 2600 workers against the New York *Daily News* is standing firm as it enters its second month. The workers were forced out on Oct. 26 after months of stalled contract negotiations and company provocations. Since then, the strike has generated an enthusiastic show of solidarity from the city's labor movement.

The strikers have demonstrated to the *News* management and to the paper's owner, the Tribune Co., that this strike will not simply be a replay of the 1985 *Chicago Tribune* strike. In that fight, management similarly provoked a walkout in order to bust the unions. Lack of unity among the striking unions, especially the refusal of the drivers to go out, led to the defeat of the workers and the loss of their jobs to permanent replacement scabs.

However, times have changed since 1985. There has been a steady erosion of living standards and working conditions in this country, combined with increasing attacks on the right of workers to protect themselves by organizing into unions. As a result, growing layers of labor now see the need for solidarity against the attacks raining down from the bosses.

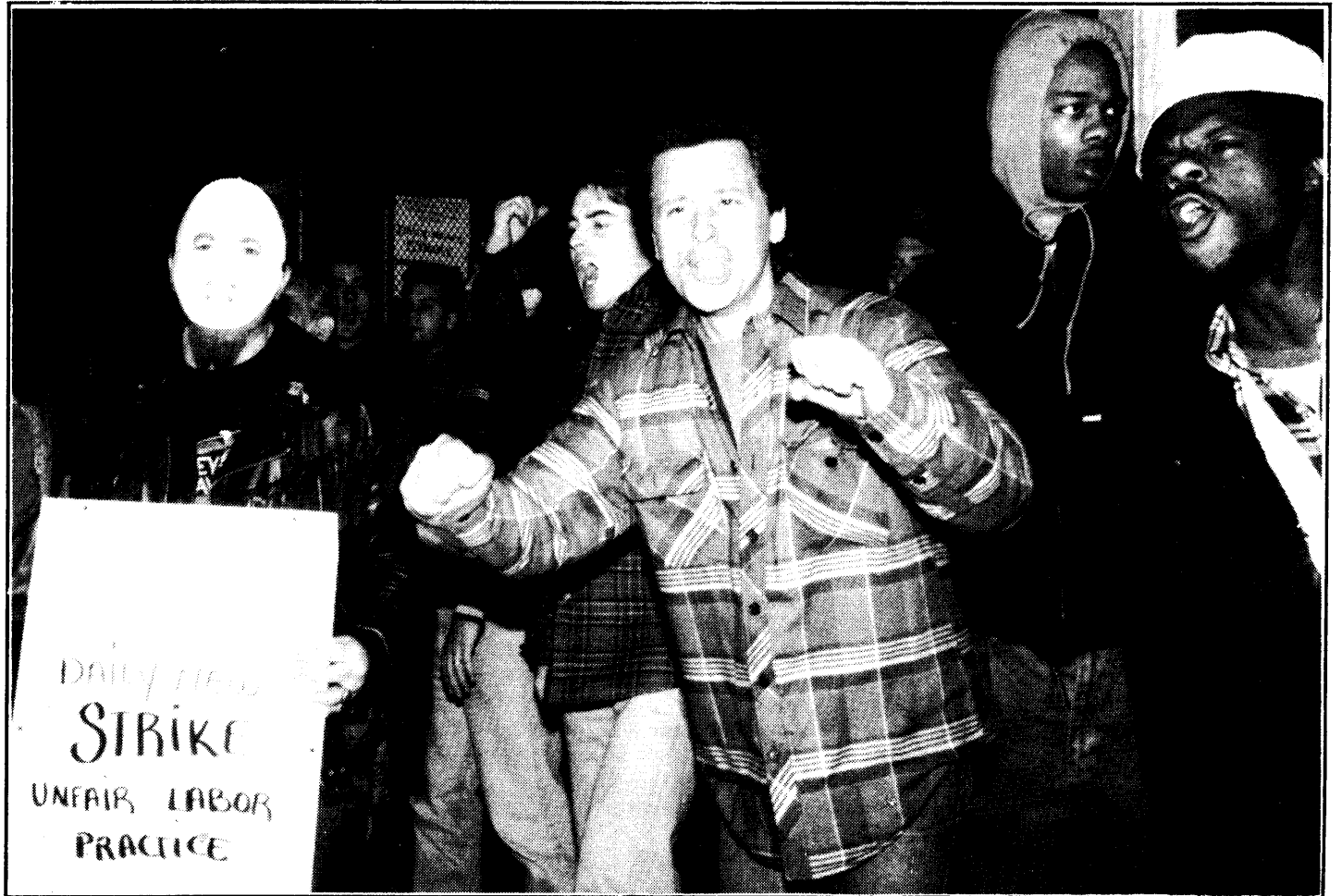
Since 1985, a growing number of fight-back struggles—among them those of the Hormel packinghouse workers, International Paper workers, Pittston coalminers, Eastern machinists, and Greyhound bus workers—have provided inspiring examples of the refusal of segments of the working class to just sit and take it, but to hit back instead. This new sense of militancy and solidarity has been evident throughout the *Daily News* strike.

Roving picket squads

Through a concerted campaign of applied boycott, all newsstands in the New York City area are regularly patrolled and "adopted" by "flying" picket squads who persuade their owners not to sell the *News*. Most newsstands have refused to sell the paper until the strike is over and display "I Love New York, I Don't Sell the *Daily News*" signs on the walls.

The working people of the city have engaged in a consumer boycott by reading other newspapers and by cancelling their subscriptions to the "scabloid." Industry sources report that circulation of the *News* is about 20 percent of its pre-strike figure of 1.1 million.

Eighty-seven percent of major newsstands have reported receiving no copies of the paper for entire weeks, while those that have received them have found sales to be 70 percent to 80 percent below pre-strike levels.



Tom McKitterick/Impact Visuals

'Union strike supporters have joined the strikers on picketlines... and helped distribute the *Real News*, an eight-page newspaper published by the strikers to present their side of the story.'

In desperation, the company has resorted to recruiting homeless people from city shelters to hawk the paper at street corners. At times, it has tried to simply give the paper away by dropping bundles at curbs and at stands.

Free or greatly reduced-rate ad space has been offered to companies that normally advertise in the *News*. Under union pressure, most of these stores have dropped their ads, fearing a consumer boycott. This has brought *News* revenues from advertising to a quarter of what they were before the strike.

The largely skilled workforce that worked in the company's printing plants in Brooklyn, Long Island, and New Jersey have

been replaced with anyone that could be rounded up off the streets or from out of state. A fair number of these replacements are in their teens.

Other unions give support

Several spirited rallies of up to 15,000 have been held, involving every major union in the city—as well as students and solidarity activists.

Union strike supporters have joined the strikers on picket lines, "adopted" newsstands, and helped distribute the *Real News*, an eight-page newspaper published by the strikers to present their side of the story. Among those who have been particularly ac-

tive are the fellow strikers at Greyhound, as well as the Bell Telephone and city hospital workers, who were involved in successful fights last year.

Also very active in support of the strikers have been the public city employees organized in AFSCME and the Teamsters. These unions are currently involved in joint contract negotiations with the Dinkins administration. The city wants to hold any salary increases to a minimum and plans to layoff tens of thousands of workers. A rally held by these unions several days after a *News* strike rally demonstrated the interrelation of the two struggles.

While the mayor claims that austerity for city workers is necessary because of a lack of funds, to date over \$4 million—including a third of all police overtime pay—has been spent on police protection for the *News*.

The solidarity among workers shown so far in this strike, and the successes that have come from it, demonstrate the potential of united labor action to defeat the forces of capitalist greed. The task for workers in this strike must be to keep up the mobilizations, keep the scab paper off the streets, and win a union contract without concessions. United and self-reliant, labor can win. ■

Company violence increasing against striking *News* workers

In its attempt to break the striking *Daily News* unions, the owners have hired special security guards from several out-of-state companies to intimidate the strikers and their supporters.

The most sinister of these strike-breaking groups is the Special Response Corporation, whose guards have been nicknamed the "ninjas" because of their black combat fatigue uniforms. The SRC, whose motto is "a private army when you need it most," is a Maryland-based paramilitary outfit that recruits former soldiers and cops and trains them in the techniques of breaking strikes.

One of SRC's ads states: "We can provide 1-200 specially trained professionals equipped with the latest in

Special Response Corp: 'a private army when you need it most.'

security technology: non-lethal weaponry, night vision equipment, and specially-designed vehicles that enable employees to cross picketlines safely."

Already, these "professionals" have demonstrated their "special training" in several major incidents during the course of the strike. On Nov. 9, a melee broke out at the Port Authority Bus Terminal, as guards escorting scab delivery trucks attacked strikers attempting to prevent delivery of the *News*. Eyewitnesses reported that guards continued to arrive

and join in the fight despite the presence of city police. Six guards and two strikers were arrested on illegal weapons and riot charges. The guards arrested were armed with a hammer, lead pipes, and martial arts chukka sticks.

The same day, several strike supporters from Hospital Workers Local 1199 were assaulted by guards as they were disposing of two bundles of the *News* they had purchased from a homeless hawker for \$60. Both confrontations that day resulted in injuries requiring hospital treatment.

In another incident, a *New York Times* driver, Dan Seymour, was attacked by guards with nightsticks while he was walking a picketline outside the *News* printing plant in Secaucus, N.J. He was then dragged into the plant. Another picketer called the police, who found Seymour handcuffed and tied to a chair, bleeding from a cut on his forehead. Similar incidents have occurred in other

places, as company guards have threatened strikers, union supporters, and newsstand owners who refuse to sell the *Daily News*.

It is clear that this private army of stormtroopers hired by the *News* constitutes not only a threat to the strikers but a danger to all the citizens of this area who attempt to exercise their Constitutional rights. The strikers have asked New York State Attorney General Robert Abrams to investigate the actions of the *News* for possible violations of state law—which, for instance, prohibit a company involved in a labor dispute to furnish weapons to its guards or employees.

All possible pressure should be put on the city and state governments to expel the imported strikebreakers as a menace to public safety. In the meantime, the strikers must rely on their own self-defense measures to protect themselves from further attacks. —G.F.