

## U.S. defeat of Iraq is no victory for working people

By JOSEPH RYAN

"Victory!" "It's Over!" "Iraq's Military Crushed!" These were the gloating headlines on the front page of daily newspapers across the country following President Bush's cessation of hostilities against Iraq on Feb. 27.

Undoubtedly, the lightning quickness of U.S. imperialism's military triumph over the Iraqi armed forces caught even the most optimistic war boosters by surprise. After all, the politicians and generals were prepared to sacrifice the lives of thousands of American soldiers—the sons and daughters of working people—to maintain their control over the natural resources of the Middle East.

But after dropping (in the course of 100,000 air sorties) over a million pounds of explosives on Iraq, and then unleashing a murderous ground/air assault against a *withdrawing* army, who should be surprised at the outcome?

This was a war that the U.S. ruling class ached for from the start. It was the first salvo of what they boastfully call the "new world order."

Bush refused to allow Saddam Hussein to back out of Kuwait gracefully shortly before the ground offensive began. His stated intention to "humiliate" Hussein had only one intended goal: to "humiliate" the masses of the Arab world in particular, and the rest of the underdeveloped world in general.

### A country in tatters

The U.S. ruling class made it brutally clear how far it will go to protect its economic interests in the area. Iraq, once a country with one of the higher standards of living in the Middle East, is now shattered.

With nearly 150,000 dead, hundreds of thousands wounded, its social and economic infrastructure in tatters, Iraq today is grim testimony to what is meant by the "new world order." Damage to the country is estimated at over \$200 billion—and not a cent to rebuild the country will come from the United States. Under the most optimum conditions, it will take Iraqi workers and peasants at least a decade to recover.

The hypocrisy of the U.S. rulers is only surpassed by their brutality. In a "war for democracy" they re-installed the feudal Kuwaiti princes; in a "war against aggression" they unleashed a "blitzkrieg;" in a "war for peace" they levelled cities, killed civilians, and impoverished a nation.

The United States is now not only prepared to play the role of "world cop," it has also demonstrated its capacity to play the role of "world *hard* cop."

### Is the war over?

"This war is now behind us," George Bush says. But is the war really over? Soviet revolutionary Leon Trotsky said that war was the midwife to revolution. And today, in Iraq, the specter of social revolution is looming on the horizon.

In cities like Basra, Nasiriya, Samawa, and Karbala, the masses are in the streets. This social upheaval could easily set off a chain reaction in urban centers throughout the Arab world. While Bush may be happy to see his former client Hussein ejected from power, the dynamic created by a mass mobilization in Iraq may set a course not intended by U.S. imperialism.

The policy-makers in Washington, D.C.



Cynthia Johnson

**Rhoda Hatch demonstrates outside the White House with a picture of her son, a soldier stationed in Saudi Arabia.**

unleashed their military machine against Iraq to "insure stability" in the region. Ironically, their "victory" may prove to be much more "destabilizing" to the region than Hussein's takeover of Kuwait. The real war—class war—may be just starting.

Defeating a disorganized and demoralized army is one thing; fighting against a politically-motivated and radicalized mass movement is quite another. The United States wouldn't be the first imperial power in history to win the battles but lose the war.

### Is Vietnam Syndrome dead?

"By God, I think we've got this Vietnam Syndrome thing licked," George Bush stated at a press conference the day after he declared victory over Iraq.

Besides trying to humiliate the Arab

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# Yippee! Goliath whips David!



## Fightback

By  
Sylvia Weinstein

We have just been through one of the most bloodthirsty wars in U.S. history. The number of dead is in the hundreds of thousands—almost all Iraqi dead.

The United States dropped the equivalent of one bomb per minute on Iraq civilians and the Iraq army. Even as the Iraq army was retreating and moving out of Kuwait, the U.S. forces continued their blood-letting.

This was neither a war nor a battle. This was what we hillbillies used to call "shooting fish in a barrel." It was like putting my seven-year-old grandson in the ring with Joe Lewis and cheering Lewis on to victory.

Iraq is a Third World country with a population of less than 19 million. Half of that population is under the age of 15. The United States chose to make an example of Iraq for the whole world, especially the Third World.

### "Democratic" Kuwait?

Does the United States government care so much for democracy that it would spend \$1 billion per day to save Kuwait? Kuwait is ruled completely by a monarchy, noted for the extreme differences between its poor and its wealthy. In fact, Kuwait hires its workers mainly from the Arab world's poor because most Kuwait "citizens" don't work.

The real reason for the enormous destruction unleashed by the United States is to warn all Third World countries and the working class of the Soviet Union, itself, not to make a move for independence or freedom from the world's most powerful imperialist power.

From the beginning of the war against Iraq, Bush promised the people in this country that it would not be another Vietnam. The ruling class knew that the anti-war feeling, which arose immediately after the first air raid on Iraq, was growing into a massive force in this country and around the world. Millions of people marched and demonstrated

against the war in every city of the world.

The capitalist class knew that only a swift war would stop such a movement. That is another reason for the massive force used against the people of Iraq. It also allowed the generals to test their deadly weapons, which have cost the working people of the United States untold billions of dollars. The military-industrial complex is rubbing its hands in glee at the thought of billions more for even more deadly weapons.

### A rotten system

Since the fall of the Berlin wall, the mouthpieces for the capitalist class have been saying that socialism just doesn't work. What doesn't work is capitalism. Any economic system that depends on a bloody war against the poor and oppressed of the world to keep its system operating is a rotten, fouled-up system. It doesn't work for the millions of homeless and hungry (and the even larger number of working people on the edge of disaster).

Billions of dollars have been

used to foul up the environment, destroy our forest, pollute our air and water, and waste the world's resources for the profit of a few. Since World War II alone, millions of people have died in capitalist wars.

The war against Iraq was an imperialist war—a war of the large imperialist countries against the Middle Eastern peoples. Now the imperialists will, once again, fight among themselves to grab up the loot. They will continue to buy off governments such as the debauched monarchies of Kuwait

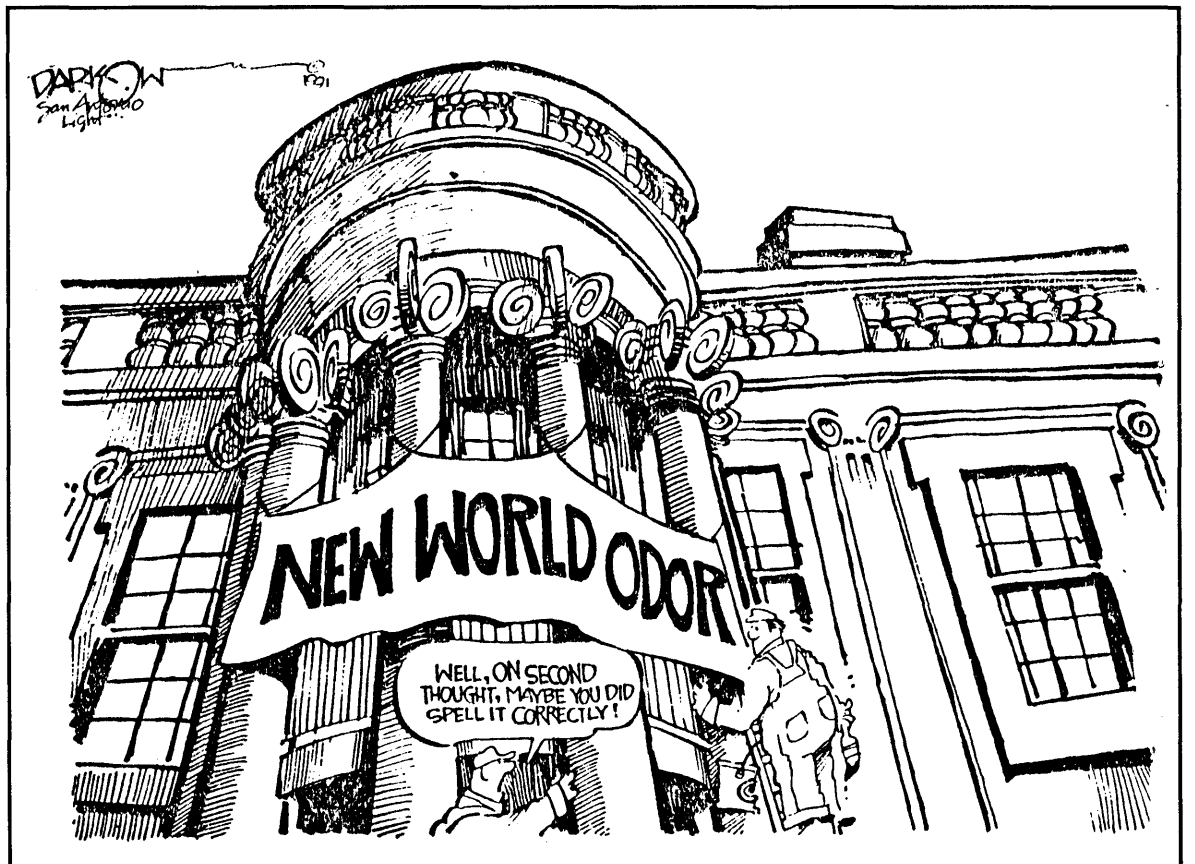
and Saudi Arabia, using the wealth they steal from them.

Then the sheikhs and princes, the idle rich of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, will go back to the gaming tables of Monaco and the night clubs of Southern France. That's how capitalism works. It works to make the rich richer and the poor poorer.

We must demand that the United States stop using our sons and daughters as cannon fodder for the rich. We have a war here at home. A war for full medical treatment for all. A war to end the curse of

AIDS once and for all. A war for free, quality childcare centers for all children who need them. A war to lower the class room size of our schools and provide each and every child a free, quality education from childcare through college.

We have a war to end hunger, to provide decent jobs for all, to provide decent housing for every person. A war to clean up our rivers, air, and earth. A war to provide safe, unpolluted living conditions for all. That's a war worth winning and one in which we can be proud to serve. ■



## Nat'l antiwar conference sets goals

By JEFF MACKLER

WASHINGTON, D.C.—On Feb. 23, the day before the U.S.-led warmakers launched their ground assault on the people of Iraq, 350 antiwar activists from a broad range of national antiwar groups and local coalitions met here to plan future coordinated national activities.

The conference was called by the National Campaign for Peace in the Middle East, the group that initiated the Jan. 26 actions in San Francisco and Washington, D.C., which mobilized 500,000 people to "Bring the Troops Home Now."

Conference organizer and National Campaign Director Leslie Cagan affirmed at the outset that agreement had been reached in advance with the rival Coalition to Stop

U.S. Intervention in the Middle East on projected dates for future actions. In that way, a repetition of the Jan. 19-Jan. 26 scenario of competing demonstrations was avoided.

Discussions had also taken place prior to the conference with a newly-formed coalition led by the Reverend Ben Chavis and with another coalition of African Americans against the war—thus paving the way for broader unity.

Few in attendance had any notion that the coming week would register a blitzkreig-type victory over a virtually defenseless nation. Instead, most expected a long and costly military confrontation. In light of the actual outcome of the war, the scale of the activities set by the conference (March 16 for local actions and April 6 for New York/San Francisco national demonstrations) has been modified by all concerned.

Most coalitions around the country will organize educational events on these dates, focusing on the still-continuing need to oppose U.S. military presence in the region and exposing the full extent of the horror perpetrated on the Arab people by the United States.

The San Francisco-based Mobilization to Bring the Troops Home Now, for example, has approved support for a local March 16 action at the Concord Naval Weapons Station to protest U.S. war policies. This action was initiated by the Pledge of Resistance, the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, and several other Bay Area groups. Other actions contemplated by the Mobilization include a march and indoor rally in defense of GI resisters, on April 6 in San Francisco.

In New York, both national coalitions have approved a March 16 protest at the United Nations.

After considerable discussion, the conference adopted four demands: "Stop the Bombing;" "Stop the War;" "Bring the Troops Home Now;" and "Money for Human Needs, Not War." It was also agreed to formulate another demand addressing the racist aspects of the U.S. war offensive.

While these demands received a near-unanimous vote, a proposal to add a demand for a "cease-fire," put forward by Charlene Mitchell of the Communist Party, was defeated. Less than a quarter of the conference participants voted in favor. Most who spoke in opposition to the demand saw it as cutting across the clear call to "Bring the Troops Home Now." It would imply, they said, that U.S. military intervention carried with it the right to negotiate

the future of the Iraqi people.

The conference demonstrated the capacity of the broad antiwar movement to put aside past rivalries in favor of a united action plan based on clear demands opposing the U.S. war in the Middle East.

Most activists agree that the chief reason for the current public euphoria is the short duration of the war—with its correspondingly small number of U.S. casualties—and not the wholesale slaughter of the Iraqi people (the extent of which is largely unknown in this country).

It is clear, however, that the rapid rise of the antiwar movement is testimony to the deep-seated working-class frustrations with the quality of life in U.S. society. The need of the imperialist war machine to extend its domination in the Middle East should be seen as a sign of its inherent weakness, not its strength. ■

## Young feminists meet

On the weekend of Feb. 1-3, approximately 800 young women and their supporters from across the country converged on the city of Akron, Ohio, for the National Organization for Women's First National Young Feminist Conference.

Workshops and plenaries dealt with many aspects of the women's movement, including the issues of race, class, and sexual orientation. Over 20 resolutions were passed—dealing with reproductive rights, economic justice issues, health issues, legal issues, pornography, acquaintance/date rape, and many other topics that have a large im-

pact on the lives of young women.

A resolution was passed calling for a mass mobilization to confront the growing offensive against women's rights. Another resolution called for U.S. troops to pull out of Saudi Arabia.

The antiwar presence at the conference was very strong. Young feminists spoke passionately about their work to change the system in this country, a system that constantly feels the need to get involved in wars around the world.

Commitments were made calling for a Young Feminist Conference to be held every year. ■

—JENNIFER GOLDBERG

# Socialist ACTION

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# Canadian Senate reverses anti-abortion bill

By SHIRLEY PASHOLK

On Jan. 31, the Canadian Senate, a non-elected body composed entirely of members of the two major capitalist parties, defeated legislation to reimpose criminal penalties for most abortions. The Senate's vote against Bill-C-43 was the first time in 30 years that it overturned a bill passed by the House.

The Tory government had sponsored this anti-abortion bill, which passed the House by a vote of 1140 to 131 last May. Heavy government pressure was applied to Tory senators to ensure their support. It had seemed certain that the Senate would rubber stamp the legislation.

The big business media have tried to downplay the extent of the unexpected pro-choice victory. They claim that anti-choice legislators who wanted even more restrictive legislation (Bill C-43 allowed abortions when the woman's health would be gravely affected) were responsible for the defeat of the bill. Yet, a series of amendments to impose additional restrictions were defeated overwhelm-

ingly—each receiving only two to four votes.

Despite the media propaganda barrage, pro-choice supporters recognized that it was their continued visible presence in the streets that resulted in the victory. News of the Senate vote was greeted with pro-choice victory demonstrations in Montréal, Toronto, and Vancouver.

While expressing elation over the vote, Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics spokesperson Cherie MacDonald explained that the fight to ensure all Quebecois and Canadian women access to abortion is not over.

"We can't leave the struggle to the courts and medical authorities and groups which focus only on lobbying," MacDonald told *Socialist Action*. "We still need to mobilize people. Even if people don't see a current emergency, there still is one. Women who couldn't get abortions before, still can't get them."

"We want to be prepared," she added, "when the next real crisis arrives. We're putting more emphasis on links with other activist pro-choice groups bi-na-

tionally. We're also making more links on a provincial level to discuss problems with access and harassment."

## Fight for funding

MacDonald explained that pro-choice supporters are demanding that abortion be declared an essential health service under the Canada Health Act. They demand that transfer payments (payments from the federal government to the provincial governments designed to equalize health and education benefits) be withheld from provinces which refuse to treat abortion like any other medically necessary health procedure.

Pro-choice supporters are also demanding that all provinces fully fund existing abortion clinics and take the initiative in setting up new ones where none currently exist. MacDonald pointed out that this is especially important in the poorer provinces, where massive unemployment has left many women unable to afford abortions.

MacDonald stated that the federal government has cut back on health and education transfer payments to the provinces

(citing the budget crisis), and threatened to totally eliminate these payments by 2005. She stressed the need for feminists to oppose Canadian intervention in the Middle East and demand that money for military spending be redirected to meet human needs—including the need for adequate funding for abortion and other health services.

Although some provinces continue to try to prohibit abortion clinics, Dr. Henry Morgenthaler, who in the past was prosecuted for performing abortions and is a national leader of the pro-choice movement, has taken the initiative in challenging these restrictions. Successful legal challenges have resulted in clinics in both Newfoundland and Nova Scotia remaining open.

Anti-choice forces are in disarray. Operation Rescue has not mounted any clinic assaults for some time. They are now focusing on electing anti-choice Liberals in the hope that a new Liberal Party government will introduce restrictive legislation.

Demonstrations are planned for late May in cities and towns throughout English Canada and Quebec, demanding that fully funded abortions be readily available to women in all provinces. ■

By BARBARA PUTNAM  
and JONI JACOBS

Today women comprise 11 percent of the military. Nearly 400,000 women serve in the active armed forces, in the National Guard, and in the reserve. Many of them are Black women—almost 50 percent in some branches.

Civilian life has taught these women that, without a decent job, they face a very real threat of poverty and even homelessness. Yet the education that provides a living wage is increasingly inaccessible.

The military is the largest vocational training ground in the U.S. Women enlist in the armed forces primarily to receive training for eventual employment in the civilian sector.

Many women also enlist to escape de-

children in their parents' absence. This burden was placed on the families, many of which shifted the burden to grandmothers or aunts.

## Defending women's rights

Socialists defend the right of soldiers to have the same rights as other citizens—the right to vote, to oppose policies of the military they do not agree with, to organize themselves around their own demands, and to

choose their own officers. Socialists also defend the many women and men who resisted going to fight in the Gulf.

Organizations supporting women's rights have opposed the U.S. government's role in the Middle East slaughter. Unfortunately, the National Organization for Women (NOW), which has strongly condemned the war, passed a statement demanding women have equal access to participate in the slaughter.

In a resolution on "Women in Combat" passed by the NOW Board of Directors on Sept. 16, 1990, the leaders of NOW contend that "women are effectively eliminated from most high-ranking leadership positions in the military by being excluded from career-enhancing, command positions defined as 'combat.'"

The resolution therefore calls for repeal of the 1948 military law preventing women from serving in combat positions in order to

**'Women also suffer the additional burden of child care. A number of women were torn away from nursing babies and small children when they were ordered to Saudi Arabia.'**

meaning and suffocating traditional jobs. Unfortunately, they find that the military cruelly repeats the same discrimination found in civilian life.

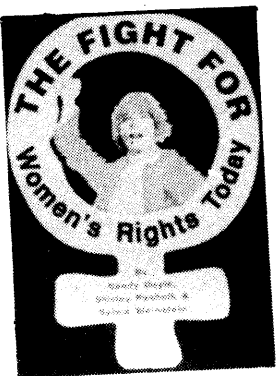
Women (along with Blacks and other oppressed nationalities) get the worst jobs in the military—just as in the rest of society—serving as clerks, secretaries, nurses, or in other traditionally "female," and therefore, less "valued" jobs.

Women receive less training and fewer promotions in the military. Only 0.9% of the top 1000 officer's jobs, and 0.8% of the top 15,000 senior enlisted positions are filled by women.

Women also suffer the additional burden of child care. A number of women were torn away from nursing babies and small children when they were ordered to Saudi Arabia. Meanwhile, the government and military made no provisions for the care of these

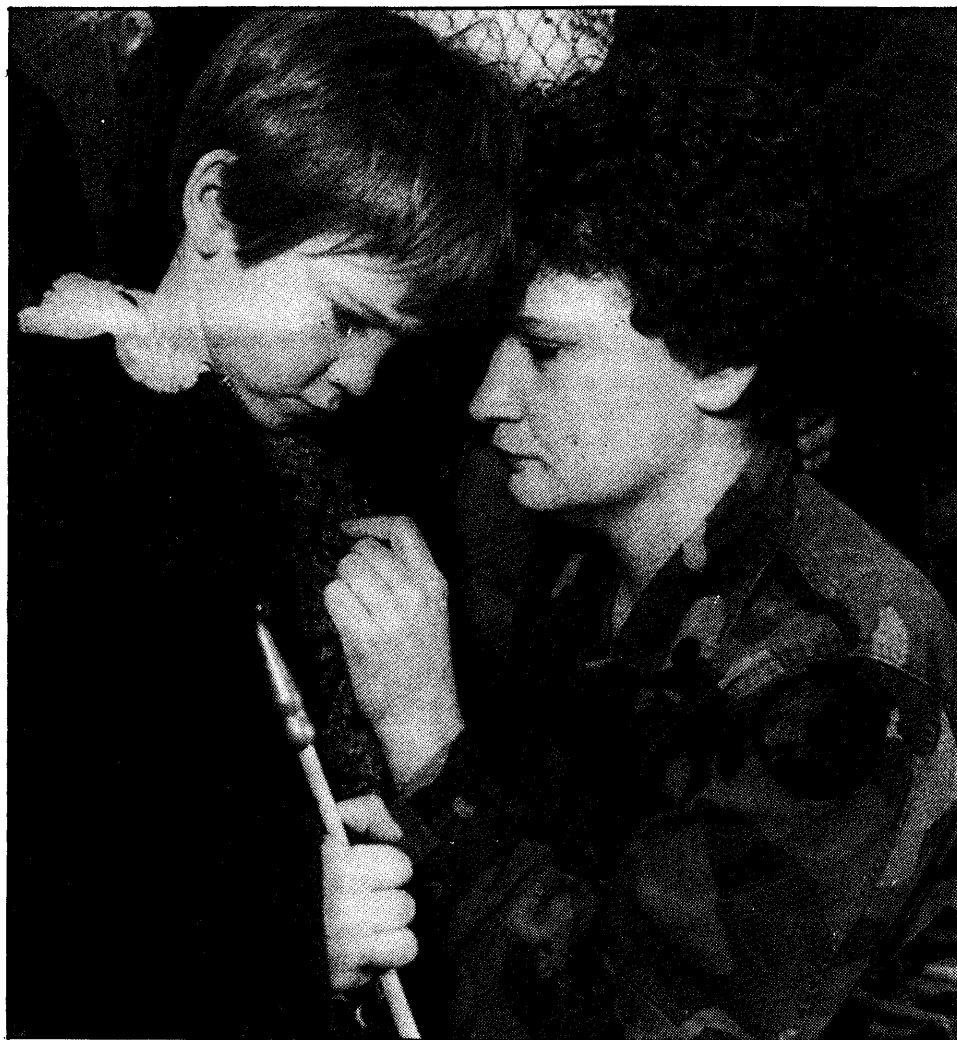
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by Sandy Doyle, Shirley Pasholk, and  
Sylvia Weinstein (\$1.25)



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# What kind of 'equality' can women find in the military?



Pat Wellenbach

"remove what has been an overwhelming obstacle to women's equality and the Equal Rights Amendment."

The resolution is a continuation of NOW's policy on the draft. In 1980, when Congress reinstated draft registration, NOW called on the government to require 18-year old women—as well as men—to register. Their logic was that because men attain power and status in society through military service, women must have equal access to military service to allow them to attain equal power and status.

However, because the military is an institution of a class system, it reflects all the discrimination, inequality and injustice of the ruling class. Its hierarchical structure accentuates the inequality. The rich and privileged become the officers and the poor and disenfranchised become the grunts.

To expect women to receive equality in the military when they are denied equality in society is utopian. If NOW wants to eliminate inequality in the armed forces, they must first challenge the class nature of society.

Until women receive equal pay for equal work, for example, why should they fight and die in wars to protect the ruling class's ability to discriminate against them?

Ironically, as the "Women in Combat" resolution also points out, "80-90% of the casualties in conflicts since World War II have been civilians and the majority have been women and children."

Why, then, is NOW demanding that women be on the front lines to kill their sisters abroad when women are *already* on the front lines of the army of the unemployed, underpaid, exploited and oppressed?

NOW's opposition to the Gulf War, unfortunately, is undermined by its support for registering women for the draft. It would better serve women's interests—and serve as a pole of attraction to young, draft-age women—if NOW opposed the draft for both women and men.

We need to fight a war at home against discrimination, inequality, poverty, hunger and homelessness. Money for human needs, not for war! ■

# The crushing of Iraq: Ushering in the new world order?

By NAT WEINSTEIN

Not since nuclear bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the close of World War II has the world witnessed such unconscionable destruction of a defeated people.

As in the nuking of the two Japanese cities in August 1945, the lesson intended by the devastation wreaked on an already defeated Iraq is unmistakable. In both cases, American imperialism demonstrated its newest capability for mass destruction. More importantly, it showed a willingness to blow up tens of thousands of human beings as a warning to all its potential and future opponents.

On Feb. 27, President George Bush announced to the nation and the world that "Kuwait is liberated, Iraq's army is defeated, our military objectives are met." But throughout the next day, bombs continued to rain down on innocent civilians in Baghdad and other Iraqi cities.

Rather than allow Iraq to give up with a modicum of self-respect, President Bush made the most humiliating demands, designed to maximize the chances of their rejection by President Hussein. Then Bush authorized a further slaughter in what could only be a shooting gallery "battle," designed to show the destructiveness of U.S. weaponry.

It is safe to say that this mass murder had nothing whatsoever to do with the destruction of Iraq's alleged "threat to the region." To the extent there was a threat to *imperialist interests*, it had been removed at least weeks before the ground war was launched.

At a Feb. 27 news conference, Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf, commander of allied forces in the Persian Gulf, described in gloating detail how he "closed the gate," on the Iraqi army and "destroyed" the remaining enemy divisions, who were "for all intents and purposes, blinded."

Members of the American high command have thrown out figures ranging up to over 150,000 dead Iraqi soldiers and tens of thousands of civilians killed in the course of one of the largest aerial and naval bombardments in the history of warfare. The air war was closely followed by the largest mechanized and coordinated air-ground assault since World War II.

The military effectiveness of the 30-nation allied force is underscored by the "miraculously" light casualties suffered by the imperialist invaders—less than 200 killed in action! (The allied force was backed by the resources of over 400 million people in the developed countries alone, against an underdeveloped country of less than 19 million inhabitants.)

## Alleged U.S. war aims

The stated aims of American imperialism centered on the eviction of Iraq from Kuwait and the restoration of the alleged "legitimate" government.

A few words need to be said on the "legitimacy" of the al-Sabah monarchy, which President Bush pledged to restore to its throne in Kuwait:

Sheikh al-Sabah was foisted upon the indigenous population of Kuwait by British imperialism. As Emir of Kuwait, this feudal lord reigned as absolute ruler. The Emir's "legitimate" government denied the rights of citizenship to the majority of Kuwait's inhabitants.

More than 80 percent of the workforce, some of whom are third-generation inhabitants born in Kuwait, had no rights. Only 10 percent of non-Kuwaiti Arabs were allowed to attend public schools. Non-Kuwaitis were denied medical care provided to citizens and were not permitted to own property, not even homes. They were also barred from participating in political activity and were not allowed to join trade unions.

It has been widely noted that Kuwait cannot really be seen so much as a state, but as a *company* owned by the Sabah family of several thousand brothers, uncles, and cousins.

The ruling Kuwaiti family, moreover,



Christopher Morris

***"If we look beneath the surface of events in the Middle East, we will be able to see the historical forces driving American capitalism to play a role matching and surpassing the crimes of all those tyrants who sought to establish world 'peace' through military conquest and intimidation."***

used little of its profits for development of Kuwait or anywhere else in the Mideast. Instead it has invested over \$60 billion of these profits primarily in United States banks, corporations, and real estate.

Continuation of this abominable state of affairs is what it means to "restore to power the legitimate government of Kuwait!" But, even though this is part of their stated objectives, this is not why American imperialism invaded the Persian Gulf. Neither does control over Middle East oil adequately explain the U.S. invasion.

The real purpose of the smashing of Iraq is to serve as a warning to all comers that U.S. capitalism has the power and the *will* to spill any amount of blood necessary to defend its interests.

## Why go to war?

If we look beneath the surface of events in the Middle East we will be able to see the historical forces driving American capitalism to play a role matching and surpassing the

crimes of all those tyrants who sought to establish world "peace" through military conquest and intimidation.

We will see that while the destruction of Iraq constitutes a major victory for imperialism, the underlying reality driving the American ruling class tells another story. It tells of a critical new stage in the decay of the world capitalist order, which led them to carry out this outrage.

Let's take a brief look back over the history of the 20th century to gain a perspective on today's world situation.

The dominant imperialist powers in the post-World War I world were headed by Britain, France, and the United States. Their dominance was challenged by Germany, Italy, and Japan towards the middle of the 1930s. The latter were, and are, imperialist powers too, but were largely excluded from access to the colonies and neo-colonies controlled by the dominant capitalist states.

The excluded imperialist states were intent on gaining a more favorable re-division of

the colonial world by force of arms (if necessary) or by the threat of force.

In short, the Second World War, like the First World War, was an inter-imperialist war for markets—for the right to super-exploit the dependent nations of the world. The history books say it was a war against fascism. This is false.

As a matter of fact, Hitler and his Nazis were financed and helped to power by the dominant "democratic" imperialists. Germany had previously been disarmed and made to pay reparations after its defeat in the first global war. After the economic crisis of the Great Depression upset capitalist stability, Germany's former adversaries saw fascism in a rearmed Germany as a "bulwark against communism"—especially the threat of revolution in Germany itself.

In fact, had Hitler been content to limit himself to smashing the workers' organizations in Germany and later to overrunning the Soviet Union, there might have been no World War II. At least not until after German imperialism had conquered the Soviets and digested a neo-colonialized Eastern Europe and parts of Asia.

Thus, when German imperialism made clear its intention to go beyond the limits established by its imperialist rivals, their interests and those of the dominant imperialist powers ceased to coincide.

When Hitler and his allies moved toward establishing a Pax-Germana over Europe and the colonies by military conquest, the Anglo-French-American imperialist bloc was inexorably impelled toward a collision with the upstarts.

It is said that politics makes strange bed-fellows, and the Europe of the 1940s showed the truth of this once again. After Holland, Belgium, France, and much of the rest of Europe were overrun by German troops, the remaining components of the Anglo-American imperialist alliance made a military bloc with the Stalinized Soviet Union against the German-Italian axis.

## Precursor of Desert Storm

It is instructive to note that Germany, rearmed with the latest in military technology, also attempted to intimidate its rivals with the original version of warfare based upon sudden, devastating, highly maneuverable and swiftly moving motorized armies.

The German "blitzkrieg" (lightning war) and the recent "Desert Storm," have more in common than the names given to the technologically advanced, mechanized warfare innovated at the end of the 1930s and the up-scaled version employed in the Gulf in 1991.

It is also no accident that Adolph Hitler was the first to march to war in the name of peace and a "new world order"—one that he claimed would last a thousand years. The Nazis had at the outset characterized their regime as the "new order" in contrast to the sharp class warfare prevailing in most other capitalist countries of the time. They expected, and not without good reason, that a Europe made peaceful by fascist-imposed class "peace" might be attractive to the hard-pressed capitalists of that continent in the 1930s.

It is also instructive to note that the seeds of WWII were sown in the Great Depression which opened up a pre-revolutionary situation in Europe and deepened the turmoil persisting in many of the colonies since the end of WWI. The resulting intensified economic competition between imperialists could only be resolved by war or revolution.

The failure by the world's workers to construct a revolutionary leadership, along with betrayal by reformists of the Social Democratic and Stalinist varieties heading the mass workers' parties of that day, made WWII inevitable.

It was no surprise that at the end of WWII, the objective basis for the alliance between Anglo-American imperialism and the Soviets came to an abrupt end. Even before the end, when their victory was in sight, the fundamental antagonisms between the two social systems erupted. It took the form of a race by the allied armies, East and West, to defeat and occupy as much of Germany as they could.

And in short order, after the defeat of Italy, Germany, and finally Japan, the imperialist victors prepared to settle accounts with their erstwhile Soviet allies.

This was the context. It points to the motive for the nuclear annihilation of two Japanese cities. It had one purpose, and one purpose alone, to show off the awesome power now in the hands of U.S. imperialism

(continued on page 6)



# A chronology of the Gulf War

**May 1990:** National Security Council white paper labels Iraq and Saddam Hussein "the optimum contenders to replace the Warsaw Pact" as the rationale for major military spending.

**July 1990:** Iraq charges that Kuwait is overproducing oil and stealing oil from Iraqi oil fields across the border. Kuwait refuses to settle.

**July 25:** U.S. Ambassador April Glaspie informs Saddam Hussein, "We have no opinion on ... conflicts like your border dispute with Kuwait."

**Aug. 2:** Iraq's army occupies Kuwait.

**Aug. 6:** On the urging of the U.S. government, the UN Security Council imposes harsh economic sanctions on Iraq.

**Aug. 7:** President Bush sends U.S. troops to Gulf "to protect Saudi Arabia."

**Aug. 10:** After meeting with U.S. officials, 10 Arab countries vote to send troops.

**Aug. 24:** UN Security Council authorizes use of "minimum [military] force" to halt oil to and from Iraq. Cuba and Yemen abstain.

**Oct. 7:** Over 100,000 people, on international peace march in Italy, protest war buildup in Gulf.

**Oct. 20:** Thousands of antiwar protesters march in New York, San Francisco, Paris, and other cities.

**Oct. 21:** In Tokyo, over 23,000 people form ring around U.S. airbase to protest plans to send Japanese troops to Gulf.

**Nov. 24:** Close to 20,000 march in London to stop the war.

**Nov. 29:** UN Security Council rubberstamps Bush's six-week deadline for Iraq to remove troops from Kuwait.

**Jan. 12:** Both Houses of Congress approve resolutions giving Bush power to launch war.

**Jan. 12:** Over 100,000 antiwar demonstrators rally in Rome. Another 100,000 march in Paris, 100,000 in Frankfurt, 80,000 in London, 20,000 in Marseilles, and 13,000 in Portland, Ore.

**Jan. 13:** Over 50,000 take part in an illegal antiwar protest in Istanbul, Turkey. Some 30,000 rally in Seattle and 10,000 in Minneapolis.



Joseph Ryan/Socialist Action

**Jan 16-17:** United States launches massive air attack on Baghdad, Basra, and other areas of Iraq and Kuwait. In one day, the firepower surpasses one-and-a-half Hiroshima bombs. Meanwhile, Israel enforces curfew against West Bank Palestinians to forestall "violent pro-Iraq demonstrations."

**Jan. 16-17:** Protests against the U.S. attack are held worldwide; close to 30,000 march in San Francisco, 10,000 in New York, 25,000 in Milan, 15,000 in Tunis, tens of thousands in Algiers, and 100,000 throughout Germany.

**Jan. 18:** Iraq directs first Scud attack against Israel.

**Jan. 19-20:** People in many countries march against the war—including close to 50,000 in Washington, D.C., 100,000 in San Francisco, 80,000 in Madrid, 50,000 in Barcelona, 40,000 in Sydney, and

40,000 in Melbourne.

**Jan. 21:** Iraq charges U.S. planes attacked a Baghdad factory producing baby's milk. Warplanes pound city of Basra. Bombings continue for days. Civilian neighborhoods in Basra are leveled.

**Jan. 25:** Huge oil slick reported in Gulf. United States claims that Iraq "turned on the taps." Other reports put blame on U.S. bombing of oil terminal and ships.

**Jan. 26-27:** Coordinated protests against the Gulf War are held around the world. Some 250,000 march in Washington, D.C., 200,000 in San Francisco, and 20,000 in Los Angeles. Another 250,000 protest in Bonn and Berlin.

**Jan. 28:** More than 80 Iraqi fighter-bombers find refuge in Iran.

**Jan 28-30:** Iraqis capture Saudi port of Khafji. U.S. Marines and Saudi troops retake it. Eleven Marines are killed.

**Feb. 3:** Over 300,000 rally in Morocco to denounce U.S. intervention in the Gulf.

**Feb. 4:** Iran offers to mediate Gulf conflict. United States is cool to the idea.

**Feb. 5:** Israeli planes destroy Palestinian bases and villages in southern Lebanon in the largest attack in years.

**Feb. 6:** King Hussein of Jordan declares support of Iraq.

**Feb. 13:** U.S. planes attack bomb shelter in Baghdad. Close to 350 civilians are killed.

**Feb. 14:** British warplanes hit apartment building and market in Iraqi town of Fallouja. At least 130 people are killed.

**Feb. 15:** Iraq offers a conditional pullout. Bush refuses terms, calls it a "hoax."

**Feb. 18:** Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz talks with Mikhail Gorbachev in Moscow.

**Feb. 19:** Reports say Iraq is trying to evacuate some forces from the border region. U.S. and allied airplanes bomb retreating Iraqi troops.

**Feb. 22:** Terms of Soviet-Iraqi peace plan announced. Bush refuses to consider it; sets deadline of noon on the following day for Iraq to withdraw. Refugees say disease epidemics are sweeping Basra.

**Feb. 23:** United States and allies launch a ground assault.

**Feb. 25:** Hussein orders troops to withdraw from Kuwait. Bush vows to continue assault. U.S. planes bombard Iraqi forces fleeing Kuwait, killing thousands. Scud attack on barracks in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, kills 28 U.S. soldiers.

**Feb. 26:** Hussein announces willingness to renounce claims to Kuwait; again calls for cease-fire. Bush turns him down. Giant tank battle, the largest since World War II, rages as U.S. forces approach Basra. U.S. allies enter Kuwait City.

**Feb. 27:** Bush announces allies will observe a cease-fire. Several hours later, Hussein also declares a cease-fire. ■

## Marching for Malcolm X

By DAWN REEL

NEW YORK—The 26th anniversary of the assassination of Malcolm X, on Feb. 21, was marked by many rallies and marches throughout the country.

In New York, the major uptown rally and march was held in Harlem, where Malcolm X taught and worked for many years. This event was coordinated by the Black December 12 Movement and its youth wing, the Black Consciousness Movement.

Around 1000 people joined the rally. At the end, about 300 youthful members of the crowd took the initiative of marching through the streets of Harlem to spread their message of "Stop the war abroad and at

home" to more people.

The marchers went down Malcolm X Boulevard to 110th Street in three-column formation. Police were unable to stop or reroute the march because of the highly disciplined marshaling by seasoned organizers and the tactics of tight columns and jogging—which left the police huffing and puffing in the dust!

The marchers later held a 15-minute rally on the steps of Columbia University's Low Library. They protested both the Gulf War and the university's war on Harlem.

Columbia is currently trying to tear down the Audubon Ballroom, where Malcolm X taught and was assassinated. Columbia University wants to build a bio-technological facility, which would produce hazardous waste, in its place. The densely populated residential community is horrified at this prospect and is organizing to preserve the Audubon as a museum, daycare facility, health clinic, and multicultural resource center.

## ... Defeat of Iraq

(continued from page 1)

people, the capitalist class also wanted to humiliate the American antiwar movement. But the Vietnam Syndrome "thing" wasn't "licked." On the contrary, it was only avoided—and perhaps based on events now taking place in Iraq—only temporarily.

The ruling class couldn't help but take notice of the gigantic antiwar mobilizations of Jan. 19 and 26. Literally one million people demonstrated and demanded "Bring the Troops Home Now!" before the ground war even got underway!

This demand still remains valid today. The administration has made it clear that it will "take longer to bring the troops home than it did to deploy them." Furthermore, it was announced that a permanent force of at least 20,000 troops will be kept in the area. If the revolutionary conflagration now sweeping Iraq gets out of hand, American troops will undoubtedly be used to suppress the Iraqi people. The war is far from over.

The American antiwar movement, which demonstrated its ability to mobilize hundreds of thousands on short notice, would have grown by leaps and bounds had the ground war become protracted. And as long as American troops are in the area, the potential for them to be used in a bloody and costly counter-revolutionary war against the insurgent Arab masses can be assured. The Vietnam Syndrome is far from being "licked."

Behind the U.S. "victory"

There were three main reasons why the U.S. was able to not only win this war, but also, to fight it in the first place.

First, was the complete capitulation of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union. Their active collaboration with the aims and goals of U.S. imperialism ensured the

isolation of Iraq and gave the U.S. war-makers a free hand in the area. Ironically, the military strategy and tactics used by the U.S.-led "coalition" forces was originally designed for use against the Red Army on the plains of Europe.

"I spent most of my life preparing to fight this battle, although in a different place," a senior general admitted. "The difference is the terrain has changed a bit from the battle we expected to fight in Europe."

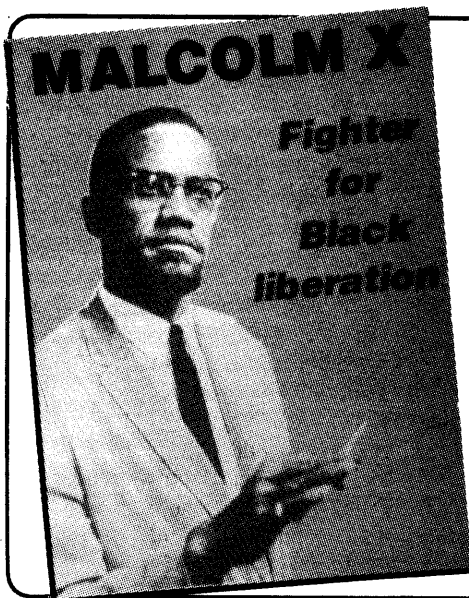
Second, was the betrayal of the neo-colonial Arab regimes, like Egypt and Syria. Their participation in the war allowed the United States to camouflage its aggression with Arab window dressing. The masses of these countries won't soon forget the strike-breaking role of their "leaders."

Third, was the virtually unanimous support given to the Gulf War by both capitalist parties in this country—the Democrats and Republicans. Even those handful of "liberals" who expressed reservations about the war are now beating a hasty retreat so they, too, can bask in the warm glow of "victory."

But the U.S. victory over Iraq was no victory for working people. The Iraqis who were killed were workers and peasants. The American troops who were killed were workers. American working people gained absolutely nothing—except for higher oil prices and higher taxes to pay for the war.

The "patriotic pride" now being encouraged by the bosses of this country will soon give way to the realization that U.S. troops will be used to play "cop" in the region for years to come. The U.S. ruling class, by sowing the wind of "Desert Storm," may now reap the whirlwind of social revolution.

It will be the sons and daughters of American working people who will have to pay the price. Bring the Troops Home Now! ■



## A pamphlet for struggle

by Kwame M.A. Somburu, Joe Ryan, and Nat Weinstein

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# Turkey's involvement in Gulf War triggers opposition among workers

By CEM IZMIRLI

Turkey was potentially a major actor in the war against Iraq, and may be even more of one in the post-war situation. It has historically claimed a large area in northern Iraq and intervened during the Iran-Iraq war to prevent the Kurdish nationalist groups from profiting from weaknesses in the Iraqi regime.

Therefore, the following article from the February issue of *Socialist Outlook* (a British Fourth Internationalist journal) remains timely. It has been edited for style and space.

Turkey is now involved in the Gulf War, with the roar of U.S. warplanes leaving Incirlik air base every day on bombing sorties to Iraq. Soon a 200,000-strong Turkish army could be engaged in a land offensive on Iraq's northern border. However, as in Egypt and Syria, the Turkish government's determination to drag its people into this war is in conflict with popular opinion.

In January, hundreds of thousands of people demonstrated for peace in Istanbul and Iskenderun, and in every major province on Jan. 25 and 26.

Clashes with police and troops are still going on in which the police are reported to have opened fire on crowds, killing at least one man and injuring many. Details of this recent uprising have been suppressed by the current censorship in the British [and international] media.

The peculiarity of the antiwar opposition in Turkey is its class character: Unlike the religion-inspired movements throughout the Middle East, it has emerged out of a wave of industrial action by workers.

There was, of course, a significant antiwar

feeling and an opposition to the government's warmongering role from the very beginning of the Gulf crisis, within every layer of society, which was expressed even by the far-right president's right-wing rival, Süleyman Demirel: "Our president is turning us into an American aircraft carrier".

There had also been anti-imperialist student unrest since November last year, when a 16-year-old girl was arrested and threatened with 24-years imprisonment for writing antiwar slogans on a school wall.

## Miners on strike

But these initial responses to the imperialist war drive spread around the country to develop into a mass movement only after 48,000 miners in Zonguldak went on strike on Dec. 1 in the biggest all-out industrial action in Turkey since the 1980 *coup d'etat*.

The miners' main demand was for a decent living wage. Average monthly earnings are currently 400,000 lira [\$140], even lower than those of South African miners, who are considered to be one of the most oppressed sections of the world proletariat.

They also demand safety in mines, where 3000 have died in accidents over the last 10 years. The average life expectancy of a Zonguldak miner is 47 years.

President Ozal's initial response to the miners' demands was very similar to that of Thatcher's hard line against the British miners' strike in 1984. He denounced the action as being illegal and threatened pit closures. About 10,000 troops and police have been sent in from other provinces.

However, this provocative position has only deepened the unpopularity of the government and of Ozal in particular, and solidarity with the miners' strike has quickly become a symbol for political opposition.

Nearly all of Turkey's 2 million unionized workers boycotted work on Jan. 3, ignoring the constitutional ban on general strikes and solidarity strikes imposed by the generals in 1983.

With workers shouting slogans of "the miners are not alone" and "no to war", this was effectively the first general strike in the country's history. By that time, 10,000 metal workers had already begun striking with demands similar to those of the miners.

On Jan. 4, 100,000 people left the Black Sea coal-mining town of Zonguldak to embark on a march to the capital to protest against the government's anti-labor position. After three days on the road, the strikers, their wives, and children had travelled 100 kilometers and had reached the trans-Turkey motorway.

Here, however, hundreds of riot police and troops backed by water cannons and bulldozers blocked the way. For two days, the miners attempted to pass peacefully but were repulsed. Security forces arrested 326 miners and refused to allow some supplies through to feed the huge mass of protesters.

After another night out on the freezing mountainside, it seemed the miners either had to enter into a violent clash with security forces or return to Zonguldak. They decided on a "tactical retreat"—as they call it—and marched back to Zonguldak, but their strikes continue with support from workers and trade unions all around the world.

## British solidarity actions

These new workers' actions have also mobilized Turkish and Kurdish communities in Europe and Britain in solidarity actions. Kurdish and Turkish workers in London boycotted work on Jan. 3 in coordination with the one-day general strike in Turkey.

Turkish shops in Hackney [a London working-class neighborhood] also refused to open, in a defiant action of solidarity.

A Solidarity Committee with Striking Miners of Turkey has been set up in London to build solidarity between British workers and the labor movement in Turkey, and to collect money to support their struggle. A campaign against the Turkish government's war drive is also now on the agenda.

Millions of other workers are due to strike by February and March, but they now face the prospect of all industrial action being banned—with the Gulf War being used as the excuse.

This explains why a major element in the strikes has been a strong-antiwar sentiment in defiance of President Ozal's plans for a pre-emptive strike on Baghdad by which he is hoping to demonstrate just how good a friend he is of George Bush, and to overcome his domestic unpopularity by becoming one of the strategic thinkers of Turkish history.

"We want to be invited to the victory banquet, not to be on the menu," says one of Ozal's colleagues, hinting at the imperialist aspirations of the Turkish government for a slice of the post-war Middle East, which are embarrassingly obvious.

Moreover, the circumstances of war and confusion provide the government with a rare opportunity for a decisive suppression of the "Kurdish intifada" in southeastern Turkey.

Turkey is now at the crossroads either to political freedom or Bonapartist dictatorship, and the latter possibility has been reinforced by the threats of war.

All the social democrat and leftist union leaders have already declared that if President Ozal drags the country into the imperialist war in the Middle East, they will once again support the demands from below for a general strike.

In short, the Turkish labor movement's growing realization of its strength after a decade of restrictions represents an important challenge to the government's war drive.

In contrast with the pseudo-patriotic slogan to "Free Kuwait," workers of Turkey have developed the slogans of "Free Palestine, Free Kurdistan, Free Turkey!" ■

## ...New world order

(continued from page 4)

as a warning, primarily, to the workers and farmers of Western Europe and Asia—which were then seething with revolt—as well as to the Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy.

Of course, we cannot discount the effect of the August 1945 display of destructive power on any potential rivals to American domination in the imperialist camp itself. As we shall see, this last factor is not an unimportant additional motive for U.S. imperialism's current bloody adventure in the Gulf.

### Collapse of capitalist stability

The world is once again on the brink of a major collapse of capitalist economic, financial, monetary, and political stability. American economic power, although still dominant, has lost ground to its competitors—primarily to Germany and Japan.

The U.S. economy has just entered a recession whose depth and duration cannot be predicted. The savings and loan system is in collapse. The banks, too, are on the verge of collapse. The system of federal deposit insurance is bankrupt. City, state, and federal insolvency mounts at an increasing rate. And the costs of the Gulf War heavily add to the deficit.

Moreover, Stalinism has been dealt an irreparable blow by the uprising which swept across Eastern Europe. Now these countries, and the Soviet Union as well, are in turmoil. And, so far, the ruling castes seem unable to make the transition to a market-driven economy. This is not good news to world capitalism.

Gorbachev, now, has added his voice to those warning of the deepening crisis and the threat of civil war in the USSR. He knows that if his Stalinist cohorts and their petty bourgeois "democratic" allies are unable to break the resistance of the workers to the pre-capitalist "reforms"—a reduction in wages, a rise in prices, an increase in labor intensity, and a generalized elimination of the most extensive social welfare system in the world—imperialists will not risk their capital.

Without new capital for industrial modernization, the Soviet economy would continue its tailspin, and a new stage in the socialist revolution will open up. This is what Gorbachev and his former Foreign Minister, Eduard Shevardnadze, really fear. This is what American imperialism fears.

"The new world order" may well see U.S. troops entering the Soviet Union to help the Stalinist bureaucracy put down workers' uprisings!

The neo-colonial world has long been bankrupt. It flounders and sinks ever deeper. It continues to be ravaged by ever-worsening poverty, inflation, unemployment and new outbreaks of diseases, like cholera—once thought to have been effectively contained in Iraq before the bombing. Meanwhile, the threat to the planet's environment deepens and has been worsened by the massive oil spills and fires in the Gulf.

(The claim by America's rulers that the Iraqis are responsible for this and other "atrocities" is far less compelling than that it is a logical result of the ton-a-minute bombardment of Iraq by the imperialist brigands.)

### House of cards

The developing crisis of world capitalism is the other side of the Persian Gulf story. No one knows what event will trigger a collapse of this house of cards. The U.S. adventure in the Gulf is not a result of strength, but is a desperate attempt by American imperialism to prepare to meet the coming crises; to gird for inevitable revolutionary upsurges and civil wars which are now casting their shadows before them.

Furthermore, they will not hesitate to use their military power to "convince" their imperialist competitors to make economic and trade concessions to U.S. capitalists when necessary.

Yes, the U.S. imperialist victory in the Gulf is a defeat for all its victims. But the unprecedented upsurge of opposition to this war here in the United States and throughout the world is proof that lessons learned by the exploited and oppressed, as well as those from the more privileged layers of society

who can see farther ahead, is cumulative.

The phenomenal rise in mass consciousness evidenced by two national mobilizations against the Gulf war of hundreds of thousands on Jan. 19 and half a million on Jan. 26—in the U.S. alone—is not negated by this lost battle in the class war against capitalist anarchy, exploitation, and social injustice.

We have every reason to be optimistic over the ability of the masses to absorb the lessons of history. To recover from this setback. To renew the task of organizing a fighting scientific political movement based on the historic tasks of the world working class. And to take humanity forward to the next stage of human progress—to a genuinely new, world socialist order. ■

They can find the money to wage a war in the Gulf, but they can't find the money to house this woman and child.



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## New socialist group in South Africa

# WOSA will fight against apartheid and capitalism



Paul Weinberg

By MALIK MIAH

In mid-February, *Socialist Action* interviewed three leaders of the Workers Organization for Socialist Action (WOSA) of South Africa during the 13th World Congress of the Fourth International, an international socialist organization. Robert, Joseph, and Jackson (not their actual names) discussed the origins of WOSA and the political situation in South Africa today.

WOSA was founded in Cape Town, South Africa, on April 14-15, 1990. It brought together socialists from the Cape Action League, Action Youth, Students of Young Azania, and many individuals from across South Africa. Accompanying this article is an interview with the leadership of the organization, and an editorial reprinted from *Workers' Voice*, WOSA's magazine.

Robert explained that WOSA "was established to press the socialist perspective against the stagist view of the South African Communist Party." This view of the SACP, he explained, advocates a strategy of negotiations with the Nationalist Party white government to bring about a "national democratic state" in South Africa.

"After the national democratic state is created, according to the SACP, the struggle against capitalism would begin," Robert added. "But South Africa is a capitalist state built by the labor of Blacks. The struggle to root out apartheid is a combined one against racial capitalism."

The stagist conception of the South African revolution lies behind the strategic alliance of the African National Congress (ANC) with the SACP. The ANC, according to the SACP, will lead the first phase of the struggle which will not necessarily lead to the smashing of the apartheid-capitalist state. The current strategy of the ANC thus is more and more one of a fight for a peaceful transfer of governmental power to the Black majority while the white economic monopoly is not seriously challenged.

### Politics of negotiations

"The politics of negotiations practiced by the ANC," Joseph explained, "has the aim

**"WOSA's aim is to seek regroupment. We expect it to involve socialists from all currents. We believe it will be around a socialist program."**

of strengthening the ANC among the South African people as they seek their goal of a national democratic state. This state they see coming into existence peacefully if possible."

Nelson Mandela, the central leader of the ANC, in fact stated the main purpose of the armed struggle launched by the ANC until its suspension last year was to bring the South African government to the negotiating table. The ANC, from its formation nearly 80 years ago, attempted a peaceful transformation of South Africa. Its Freedom Charter adopted in 1955 had the same aim. But it was the massive repression of the white-ruled government that led to the picking up of arms in the 1960s.

As the mass movement developed in the 1970s and 1980s, when the ANC was still in decline and primarily organized as an exiled organization, it shifted its rhetoric. In the 1984-86 period it even talked about insurrection, making the country ungovernable.

Once Mandela was released from prison, however, the possibility of direct talks with the white government led to a shift by the ANC. Many of the youth are upset by the change. They don't see freedom coming from concessions won through talks with the white government.

### Combined revolution

WOSA, on the other hand, rejects the idea that the Black majority can win true freedom

under any form of capitalism. Both apartheid and capitalism—which in South Africa are intimately connected—must be replaced by socialism.

"To win national liberation," Robert said, "our fight must be against national oppression and capitalism. The national movement must be led by the Black working class. It will not only fight racism but class exploitation. It will be a permanent revolution."

WOSA puts forward a Program of Action to advance its perspectives in the liberation movement. WOSA does not reject negotiations in principle. The issue is: negotiations for what purpose?

"We are for the establishment of a Constituent Assembly based on one person, one vote with no special rights for the white minority," said Joseph. "We are for a gathering of the oppressed. We say all liberation forces must join together and no one group can proclaim itself speaking for all the rest."

WOSA, Robert added, advocates building a broad-based socialist working-class movement to fight for an end to apartheid-capitalism and for the establishment of a workers state.

Robert referred to a resolution adopted by their founding conference on WOSA's response to the ANC's strategy of negotiations. Two of the non-negotiable demands raised by WOSA are: "agrarian reform that allows distribution and the nationalization of the big landholdings," and "the nationalization of the banks and mines."

Joseph pointed out that the question of nationalization is now a thorn in the ANC's side. "While we consider the Freedom Charter inadequate, we support its plank on nationalization. We raise it. Many of them don't like it anymore," he added.

In fact, many of the ANC top leaders, including Nelson Mandela, have publicly questioned the Freedom Charter's plank that states: "The mineral wealth beneath the soil, the banks and the monopoly industry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole." During his tour of the United States last year, Mandela talked of a "mixed economy" and said a modification of the Freedom Charter demand on nationalization is possible.

Recently the Center for Development Studies, a think tank sympathetic to the ANC at the mixed-race University of the Western Cape, prepared a position paper that even went further. The paper raised that nationalization was "not a simple, clear-cut issue." There are positive and negative features to nationalization, the paper said. It said nationalization could increase the national debt without creating jobs.

Moreover, the paper stated, nationalization could drive away many of the skilled professionals and foreign investors and thus end up benefiting few people. Since most of the skilled people currently in South Africa are whites, and foreign investors are from the big imperialist corporations, the appeal is obvious: a "free" South Africa should not rock the capitalist economy.

While the ANC has not yet formally dropped its call for nationalization, such a position paper is being floated to begin preparing the rank and file for a radical change in line.

Robert noted that the ANC already faces a growing problem with many of its young supporters and those in trade unions. Many are pro-socialist and want no compromises with the white government. "Divisions in the ANC are real," he said. "Most of the youth opposed suspension of the armed struggle. They understand well that the South African army is the strongest on the continent. It will not give up power peacefully."

### WOSA's aim

"WOSA's aim," he continued, "is to seek regroupment. We expect it to involve socialists from all currents. We believe it will be around a socialist program. Our policy is one of united front against violence and to take advantage of the democratic openings as a result of the current situation."

"WOSA," Joseph added, "is only a beginning. It is a revolutionary socialist organization, not Trotskyist. But we do stand on the program of Permanent Revolution."

"Over 90 percent of our 500 members are Black. We stand on the Workers Charter which we see as not counterposed to the Freedom Charter. But as an advance; it is our transitional program."

"Our influence is greater than our size," he continued. "We work in all the major trade unions and have a united front approach toward the other liberation organizations including the ANC and SACP, who have be-

(continued on page 10)

**See Interview  
with WOSA  
leadership on  
page 8.**

# WOSA leadership speaks: 'why we formed, who we are'



The following is an interview with the central leadership of the Workers Organization for Socialist Action (WOSA). It is reprinted from the August 1990 issue of *Workers' Voice*, WOSA's quarterly magazine.

**Why was WOSA formed at this point in the struggle?**

WOSA was formed to take forward working class politics. The revival of the mass movement after it was crushed in the wake of the Sharpeville massacre; the 1973 workers revolts in Durban which ushered in the modern workers movement; all of this has put independent working class politics firmly on the agenda of our struggle.

Tremendous gains have been made over the last few years. The modern trade union movement, represented by COSATU [Congress of South African Trade Unions], NACTU [National Council of Trade Unions] and some unaffiliated unions, has done much to mobilize workers to defend themselves against exploitation.

Ideas such as the independence of the working class and its leadership of the struggle have been resolutely fought for and most mass organizations identify with these. Socialism itself has become a popular slogan amongst large sections of the working class and the youth. Anti-capitalist struggle has become a major obstacle to the government's reform plan.

However, this is not enough to ensure that the working class successfully leads the national struggle and can establish its democratic control over society. The working class needs a political organization that will link the struggle against national oppression and capitalism into a single struggle for workers power and democracy.

Today the workers movement stands at the crossroads. Is it going to stop its struggle short and support negotiations as the ANC and the SACP [South African Communist Party] are urging it to do? Or is it going to continue to rely on its independent mass struggles to win its demands? WOSA will seek to win the workers to this alternative politics which is summed up in the slogan *we are our own liberators*.

**Is WOSA a vanguard party of the working class that seeks to rival the South African Communist Party (SACP)?**

We don't believe that organizations can proclaim themselves as the leaders and vanguard of the working class. This is earned in

the struggle itself. WOSA hopes that it can gain influence in the workers movement not by substituting for the working class.

We do not proclaim that we have all the answers and denounce those we disagree with. We will patiently but resolutely argue our politics before the workers, defend their struggles and attempt to lead them in a direction that strengthens them. It is inevitable that WOSA and the SACP will compete for the allegiance of the working class to their different policies and programs.

The SACP has, as a result of its alliance with ANC, its support (material as well as moral) for the armed struggle, and its relationship with the heirs of the great Russian Revolution, won tremendous popular support. As such the SACP plays an important role in our struggle: WOSA will support the SACP where it strengthens the position of the working class and will join it in a united front manner to build the unity of the working class.

**Is this formation of WOSA not a potentially divisive step?**

No! The idea that political pluralism equals division is nonsense and thankfully now completely discredited with the collapse of Stalinism.

Since 1928 when the CPSA, as it was called then, adopted the slogan of a Native Republic and developed the two stage theory, there have been essentially two traditions in the workers' movement.

On the one hand was the Stalinist view, held by the SACP, that our struggle is firstly directed against national oppression or apartheid and that only once apartheid has been destroyed can we begin a struggle for socialism.

On the other hand was the view that capitalism has been built on the foundations of national oppression. Therefore in order to secure national liberation a combined permanent struggle against national oppression and capitalism is needed. This will put in place a workers state. WOSA seeks to represent the second view.

**Will WOSA not be isolated from the mass of workers who support other organizations like the ANC, PAC [Pan-African Congress] or SACP?**

There is no doubt that we face a daunting task. WOSA is not as yet a mass political organization while particularly the ANC, PAC, AZAPO and SACP have mass support. Most of the mass organizations such as

the trade unions, civics and youth organizations are influenced by these mass political organizations.

We believe that by taking our politics into the mass organizations, by arguing for a socialist perspective while urging mass struggles forward, we will be able to win many workers to revolutionary socialism.

However, to do that we obviously need to have a clear perspective or program, as well as an independent banner to rally the workers to. We do not wish to end up confusing the workers and sowing illusions by hiding behind the banners of the nationalist organizations who don't have a socialist program.

**What's meant by independence?**

Workers play a very special role in capitalist society. It is the workers who produce the wealth of that society. And while we are producing that wealth, the capitalists are stealing from us the fruits of our labor. This is the heart of the never-changing battle under capitalism.

Of course this gives workers a special interest. It is the workers, differently from all others in society, who have the most direct interest in getting rid of capitalism. Because it is the workers who are daily exploited, who labor for poor wages, while the capitalists go home to their big houses to enjoy the luxury produced by others.

So it is this special place in our society which makes us say that the workers organizations must always be independent from all other organizations. Our organizations must be free at all times to defend our interests in the factories, in the mines and on the farms.

This is important because we know that there are other forces which want freedom for the country but not freedom for the workers.

The independence of the working class can ultimately only be achieved with the building of an independent political organization of the working class that fights for a socialist society in which the working class controls the state and the economy for the benefit of all.

This is why WOSA has been launched to start the process of building such a powerful independent socialist organization of the workers.

**What is WOSA's position on the negotiations?**

We believe that these negotiations between the government and sections of the liberation movement will not succeed in de-

living the central demand of our struggle; i.e., full and equal democratic rights for all. This will amount to a handing over of the power to the majority which the government is dead against.

For the government, the strategy of negotiations represents a decisive initiative to win the time and space to extract itself from the economic, social and political crisis that the system of apartheid is in.

Although the regime faces a deep economic crisis which makes it vulnerable to international pressure, power is firmly entrenched in their hands. State institutions rest on the military, police, and the electoral support of the majority of the whites. This the government is still able to rely on.

While the government is prepared to get rid of most of the racial laws on the statute books, such as the Group Areas Act and even the Populations Registration Act, they are not ready to hand over power to the majority.

The government could reintegrate the bantustans into South Africa and may even formally introduce some form of universal franchise. However the government will not grant majority rule. They will insist on some form of minority rights or veto [power] for the whites. This is necessary to ensure not only that the economic wealth remains in the hands of the small minority of whites, but also that material privileges are maintained for whites as a whole.

If the NP [Nationalist Party] is not going to break its pact with the white electorate, it follows that negotiations between the ANC and the government will not deliver a unitary, non-racial democratic South Africa in the current period.

WOSA absolutely rejects any settlement which offers "universal franchise" (as proposed by de Klerk) whilst still maintaining white privilege in any form. We support unconditionally the demand for one person one vote in a unitary non-racial South Africa/Azania.

Further than that, only when ownership and democratic control of the wealth of our society is in the hands of the majority, can we tackle the fundamental problems of poverty and social inequality for all.

But historical experience shows that the owners and controllers of wealth do not "negotiate" away their ruling position. The majority must seize back the wealth they have created. We stand a long way from this situation and therefore believe in maximum discussion and debate and a democratic process of decision-making on *all* items negotiated in the name of the people of

## 'The situation'

The following is an editorial from the August 1990 issue of *Workers' Voice*, the quarterly magazine of the Workers' Organization for Socialist Action (WOSA).

Often you hear comrades say: "we agree with you that negotiations cannot lead to fundamental change, but what is your alternative? Under what circumstances do you see this powerful state surrendering power to the mass of oppressed people?"

The National Party [The main white party] is involved in the risky rescue operation known as apartheid from above.

Massive opposition is growing amongst the white middle and working class to the De Klerk reforms. In the English-speaking constituency of Umlazi over 5000 voters voted for the far right-wing of the Conservative party, failing by a mere 500 votes to win this safe seat from the Nats [the National Party].

Talk abounds amongst the far right of the "third freedom war" [this refers to the tradition of the Boer wars]. Some right-wing groups have not only begun to arm themselves, but have even started armed attacks. Notable was the attack on Melrose House, symbol of the Boer War defeat and the recent bombing of the NUM [National Union of Mineworkers] office in Welkom. Yet for fear of causing bitter malcontent in the armed forces, the government is powerless to act against the far right.

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We believe that by taking our politics into  
the mass organizations, by arguing for a  
socialist perspective while urging mass  
struggles forward, we will be able to win  
many workers to revolutionary socialism.

However, to do that we obviously need to  
have a clear perspective or program, as well  
as an independent banner to rally the workers  
to. We do not wish to end up confusing the  
workers and sowing illusions by hiding  
behind the banners of the nationalist  
organizations who don't have a socialist  
program.

### What's meant by independence?

Workers play a very special role in capital-  
ist society. It is the workers who produce the  
wealth of that society. And while we are  
producing that wealth, the capitalists are  
stealing from us the fruits of our labor. This  
is the heart of the never-changing battle  
under capitalism.

Of course this gives workers a special in-  
terest. It is the workers, differently from all  
others in society, who have the most direct  
interest in getting rid of capitalism. Because  
it is the workers who are daily exploited,  
who labor for poor wages, while the capi-  
talists go home to their big houses to enjoy  
the luxury produced by others.

So it is this special place in our society  
which makes us say that the workers  
organizations must always be independent  
from all other organizations. Our organi-  
zations must be free at all times to defend  
our interests in the factories, in the mines  
and on the farms.

This is important because we know that  
there are other forces which want freedom for  
the country but not freedom for the workers.

The independence of the working class can  
ultimately only be achieved with the build-  
ing of an independent political organization  
of the working class that fights for a social-  
ist society in which the working class con-  
trols the state and the economy for the  
benefit of all.

This is why WOSA has been launched to  
start the process of building such a powerful  
independent socialist organization of the  
workers.

### What is WOSA's position on the negotiations?

We believe that these negotiations be-  
tween the government and sections of the  
liberation movement will not succeed in de-

livering the central demand of our struggle;  
i.e., full and equal democratic rights for all.  
This will amount to a handing over of the  
power to the majority which the government  
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### In the light of what has happened in Eastern Europe how does WOSA see the future of socialism?

As a political tendency, we always warned  
against equating socialism with what existed  
in Eastern Europe, China and the USSR. We  
stood by the understanding that socialism  
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You see, we believe that it is necessary to  
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In Eastern Europe (and in China to a more  
limited extent) what occurred were indeed  
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That they have taken on a direction of  
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The social unrest, the growing strength of  
the right wing, the lack of spectacular  
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De Klerk knows there are definite limits to  
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*In the light of what has happened in Eastern Europe how does WOSA see the future of socialism?*

As a political tendency, we always warned against equating socialism with what existed in Eastern Europe, China and the USSR. We stood by the understanding that socialism meant an even more democratic society than what exists in the most democratic of capitalist states.

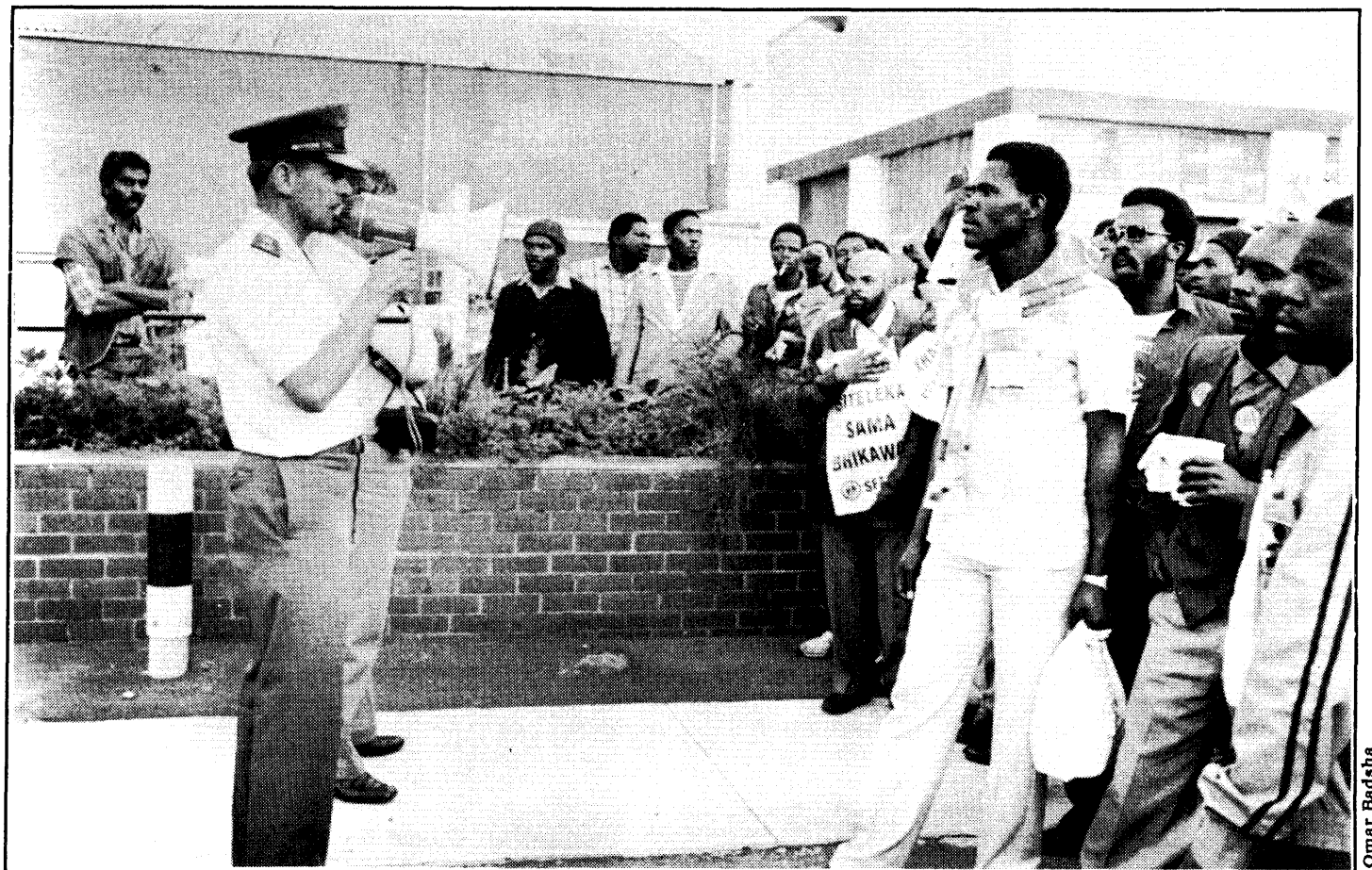
You see, we believe that it is necessary to renew the concept of socialism. Therefore, there cannot be the slightest doubt that for more than 150 years there was a consistent definition of socialism, among the overwhelming majority of Marxist and non-Marxist socialists alike, which did not equate socialism with the disappearance of private ownership of the means of production.

Socialism meant for all these scholars and political agitators a society qualitatively superior to capitalism in terms of average standard of living, of social equality, of human freedom (including political freedom and civil rights), of pluralistic democracy and cultural diversity and of weakening of institutionalised authority (the state, the bureaucracy and its "secular army").

For Marxists, that implied a withering away of commodity production, of market economy, of social classes and of the state, in short it meant a classless society. Only in the late twenties and the early thirties was that consensus broken in favour of a radically reductionist definition of socialism, identifying that new social system with the abolition of private property in the means of production. That reductionist definition was produced by Stalin.

In Eastern Europe (and in China to a more limited extent) what occurred were indeed mass uprisings of the workers and youth.

That they have taken on a direction of restoring capitalism can be understood when one examines the consequence of [over] 40 years of Stalinist rule that has led to these economies being wrecked, to them lagging far behind the West European economies and to the continued fall in the living standards of the people. It is understandable therefore that the masses identify prosperity with the market.



Omar Badsha

**'It is the workers who produce the wealth of that society. And while we are producing that wealth, the capitalists are stealing from us the fruits of our labor.'**

If we take this together with the way the Communist regimes acted to depoliticize the people as a means of retaining their control, (as can be seen by the ease with which the Hungarians have embraced South Africa) then we can realize the extent to which the cause of socialism has been damaged in the short term.

However, in the medium term we believe that the future of socialism is assured. This is not simply because of the continued existence of revolutionary socialist organization[s] in most parts of the world. It is mainly because of the continued class struggle that arises out of the inherent contradictions of capitalism.

The periodic attacks on wages, the sackings [laying off] of millions of workers in the interests of profits, the growth of social inequality to the point that it provokes

mass revolts, the way international capitalism subjects the toiling millions of the so-called Third World to lives of misery, homelessness, starvation and illness—all of these are examples of the contradictions as they play themselves out concretely in practice.

It is these inevitable contradictions of capitalism that ensure the continued growth and spread of a political current that goes beyond the immediate demands and incorporates those demands in a program that seeks to restructure society in the interests of the producers—the workers and poor peasants of the world. Because of this, because of the inevitability of the class struggle under capitalism, the future of socialism is assured.

**What are the major challenges and tasks confronting WOSA?**

We believe that our first task is to elaborate an alternative strategy to that of negotiations. It is not enough to denounce those who seek to resolve the conflict in South Africa if we are unable to chart a clear alternative.

For us, this means putting perspectives forward that aim at strengthening the strategic position of the working class.

To take the question of the education crisis for example, it means not only encouraging the students to go back to school, as all now agree. But it also means winning in the schools the space for the operation of democratic SRCs [Student Representative Councils] and PTAs [Parent/Teachers Associations] that can campaign against all the inequalities of bantu education and can put forward alternative methods of education—non-racial and non-sexist education.

Of course all of that is meaningless if we are unable to develop strong roots in the working class. For us this means not only proclaiming that we defend working class politics but to be an organization of the workers.

We see that the only means of establishing an influence amongst the working class is by defending their mass organizations and supporting their struggles.

Here, we see defending the independence of the trade union movement as crucial. The decision by the COSATU leadership to form a strategic alliance much like the relationship between the Congress Alliance and SACTU [South African Congress of Trade Unions, the CP controlled labor apparatus] presents a great danger.

Again we don't see defending the independence of the trade union movement by denouncing the leadership of COSATU, NACTU, etc. We will attempt to do this by supporting the campaigns of the labor movement and through promoting maximum unity in action.

We see as a priority the need to contribute to the Workers Charter campaign both in ensuring the greatest participation of all workers and by making an input into the Charter itself so that working class perspectives such as workers' control, workers' unity, workers' leadership are concretized around an anti-capitalist program of demands.

As important will be our ability as an organization to assist our members in carrying out this work in the mass movement. Here political education that is aimed at combating the unevenness in the consciousness of our members will be crucial. We hope that our newspaper 'Ukani Basebenzi' (Arise Workers) and our journal 'Workers Voice' will play a positive role. ■

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De Klerk knows there are definite limits to how far his reform initiatives can go. The social base in which he draws his support will not allow him to negotiate power away. Less than full and equal democratic rights for all will not dampen the determination of the masses to struggle for fundamental socio-economic change.

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In this situation the existence of a political organization of the workers for the workers could mean the difference between bringing about a successful transfer of power to the workers and/or a massive defeat for the workers movement, from which it could take decades to recover.

Such an organization would have to be committed to promoting at all times the class interests of the workers and to directing the struggle in a way that strengthens the strategic position of the working class.

Such an organization would have to be armed with a social theory capable of grasping all the complex strategic and tactical problems our liberation struggle will have to face. It would have to be fully and completely involved in the mass struggles of our people.

It is for this reason that we have launched WOSA, to begin the process of building such an organization. For we believe that in the next few years our country is going to be shaken by class struggles in ways that we have never experienced before.

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Omar Badsha



# Lithuanian referendum rebuffs Gorbachev, affirms independence



Soviet troops in Vilnius, Lithuania.

By GERRY FOLEY

The campaign against the Lithuanian national democratic movement by Gorbachev and the neo-Stalinists has been dealt a sharp setback. In a referendum held on Feb. 9, over 91 percent of the voters and 76.3 percent of the total population of the republic voted for independence. About 84 percent of the population participated.

Lithuania declared its independence in March 1990, only a few weeks before passage of Gorbachev's new law on secession from the USSR which, among other things, requires a referendum as well as a waiting period.

Moscow responded to the Lithuanian declaration at the time by arguing that it was undemocratic for the republic's Supreme Soviet to take such a step without directly consulting the population through a referendum.

The leadership of the national democratic movement, Sajudis, which holds a large majority in the Lithuanian Supreme Soviet, argued that since their country was illegally incorporated into the USSR, they did not grant Moscow any right to determine the conditions by which it could withdraw from the forced union.

In fact, the Soviet constitution and the tradition from the first revolutionary government under Lenin assured the republics

unrestricted right of secession.

## New totalitarians?

Since the confrontation in the spring of 1990, the Soviet press has been trying to brand the Lithuanian movement as "new totalitarians," accusing them of political repression against the Moscow loyalist faction of the Lithuanian Communist Party (CP), of oppressing the non-Lithuanian populations living in the republic and "provocations" against the Soviet forces stationed in the republic.

The so-called independent Communist Party has argued a similar line, protesting that Sajudis is trying to exclude it from political life. The independent CP, however, has openly sought an alliance with the Sajudis "moderates," represented by former premier Prunskiene, the leading proponent of negotiations with Moscow.

At the outset of the present confrontation, which started several weeks ago, the majority of Sajudis deputies rejected both Prunskiene's line of price rises and conciliation with the Soviet authorities.

The Feb. 9 referendum showed that nearly all the Lithuanian population remained determined, despite pressures and threats, to achieve independence and that a large proportion of the non-Lithuanians preferred to support independence rather than harken to the siren songs of Great Russian

chauvinism, old Polish resentments, and neo-Stalinism.

Of course, pockets of opposition remain. In the Sneckus region, for example, where there is a concentration of non-Lithuanians, only 15 percent voted.

The right to vote was determined by the Lithuanian Supreme Soviet's citizenship law of November 1989. Thus, persons arriving in the republic after that date and Soviet military forces stationed there were excluded from the referendum. This represents a sharp point of contention for Moscow, which has stubbornly maintained that the republics not make distinc-



Peter Turnley

## Independence rally in Vilnius

tions among Soviet citizens.

However, the USSR military forces in the Baltic republics remain under the thumb of neo-Stalinist officers and are numerous enough to distort election results, particularly in Latvia and Estonia, which are smaller than Lithuania and have larger non-native populations.

In Latvia, for example, where the largest numbers of serving and retired Soviet military personnel are concentrated, the native people make up only about 52 percent of the population. The numerical weight of the military populations is one reason why the Baltic national movements have reacted negatively to Gorbachev's proposals for referenda.

Moreover, the Soviet military forces have been called into service to spread propaganda for Moscow and its local agents of the loyalist CP, which Lithuanians commonly call the "night party." In the confrontation in the spring of 1990, Soviet army helicopters dropped leaflets arguing for the night party's line of a "renewed union."

In the present crisis, Soviet army helicopters dropped leaflets from the shadowy "Civic Committee" calling on people to

boycott the referendum. This organization, made up of Moscow loyalists, has presented itself even as a counterpower to the Lithuanian Supreme Soviet.

## Referendum in Latvia

On February 9, the Council of the Latvian national democratic movement, the Popular Front of Latvia, called for a referendum on the question of independence and how to reestablish Latvian statehood. Unlike the Lithuanian movement, it opposed any restriction on the right to take part in the vote. At the same time, it called for a boycott of the referendum on maintaining the union that Gorbachev intends to hold in March.

The confrontation between Moscow and the Baltic republics is continuing to sharpen. The democratic movement in the Soviet Union has shown its awareness of what is at issue by mobilizing mass protests on behalf of the Baltic peoples.

There is no mistaking the meaning of the fact that all the forces inclined to repressive solutions, neo-Stalinism, and chauvinism in the USSR, are arrayed against the Baltic peoples.

Moreover, despite certain inclinations on the part of the Baltic nationalists to look for support in the West and a rebound effect against Stalinism identified with socialism, there has been a clear dynamic of radicalization since the Lithuanian declaration of independence, when the embattled Sajudis found that its only real allies were Russian democrats and the organizations of the other oppressed peoples in the Soviet Union.

The present confrontation, in fact, began with a rejection of a concrete program of market reforms that was threatening to divide and demoralize the working people of Lithuania. The sharper the confrontation becomes between the national democratic movements and the Soviet bureaucracy, the more clearly the radical democratic logic of this struggle appears, including on the economic level. The same logic led the leader of the Ukrainian movement, Ivan Drach, to denounce the bureaucracy's market reforms at his organization's congress in October in these terms:

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

Drach went on to say: "We are making every effort to prevent the reform of nationalized ownership, when the party top echelon and its Siamese twin—organized crime—wants to convert it into their own private property."

"The real facts and the laws that the party, Komsomol and economic magnates adopt in the Supreme Soviets in Moscow and Kiev confirm that this legislative process of converting the party-state-feudal socialists into the first social-capitalists, industrialists and bankers has already started. Some 90 percent of the working people have still not gotten any ownership, and the president has already issued an order declaring the inviolability of property in order to defend the property of the party mafia."

The workers and socialist movements, therefore, have an interest and a duty to support the struggle of the Baltic peoples for national freedom, not only for the sake of democratic rights—without which working people cannot gain control of their fate—but also in order to fight effectively the bureaucracy's program of driving all of the peoples of the Soviet Union back to capitalist barbarism.

The bureaucracy's claim that the national movements are forces for capitalist restoration, regardless of ideologies and illusions that may temporarily gain a hold in these movements, is the exact opposite of the real process.

It is the Soviet bureaucracy itself that is the champion of exploitation and oppression, of capitalism, and all it implies. To the extent that the national movements struggle against it, they have to fight for more and more radical democracy, and therefore for the economic rights of working people as well, for a democratic international order that can only be based on socialist economic principles. ■

## ...WOSA formed

(continued from page 7)

come less sectarian in the recent period."

An example of WOSA's approach to build a unified, non-sectarian liberation movement is its reaction to the so-called tribal township wars regularly reported in the Western press. Newspapers such as the *New York Times* describe such violence as "Black on Black" or between the ANC and the right-wing Inkatha movement based among the Zulu-speaking Blacks.

WOSA, in its newspaper *VUKANI BASEBENZI*, explains that the source of the "tribal" violence is the apartheid-capitalist system itself which is based on the "hostel/migrant labor system." That system is based on the Bantustans homelands policy of influx control, which means jobs and accommodations divided along racial, "ethnic," social and economic lines.

(The Bantustans were set up by the apartheid state as homelands for the Black majority on less than 13 percent of the country's land. No country but South Africa has ever recognized these phony "nations.")

### Call for united action

*VUKANKI BASEBENZI* explains: "The divisions and brutality forced on us by the hostel/migrant labor system have been exploited by many elements. In the case of the recent violence these are mainly Inkatha, the

police and organized vigilantes both black and white....But, whatever the underlying and immediate causes of the violence, it has taken the form of an anti-working class pogrom. This only serves the interests of the state, especially the right wing, the far right and the policies of Inkatha....

"WOSA suggests that the only way forward is for ALL the organizations committed to liberation and transformation of our society (i.e., ANC, AZAPO [Azanian Peoples Organization], NUM [National Union of Mineworkers] PAC [Pan Africanist Congress], WOSA, COSATU [Congress of South African Trade Unions], NACTU [National Council of Trade Unions], SACP) to come together to discuss ways and means of defending the communities and resisting all provocations from whatever source.

"WOSA members and supporters will join all Defense Committees genuinely committed to defend the community.

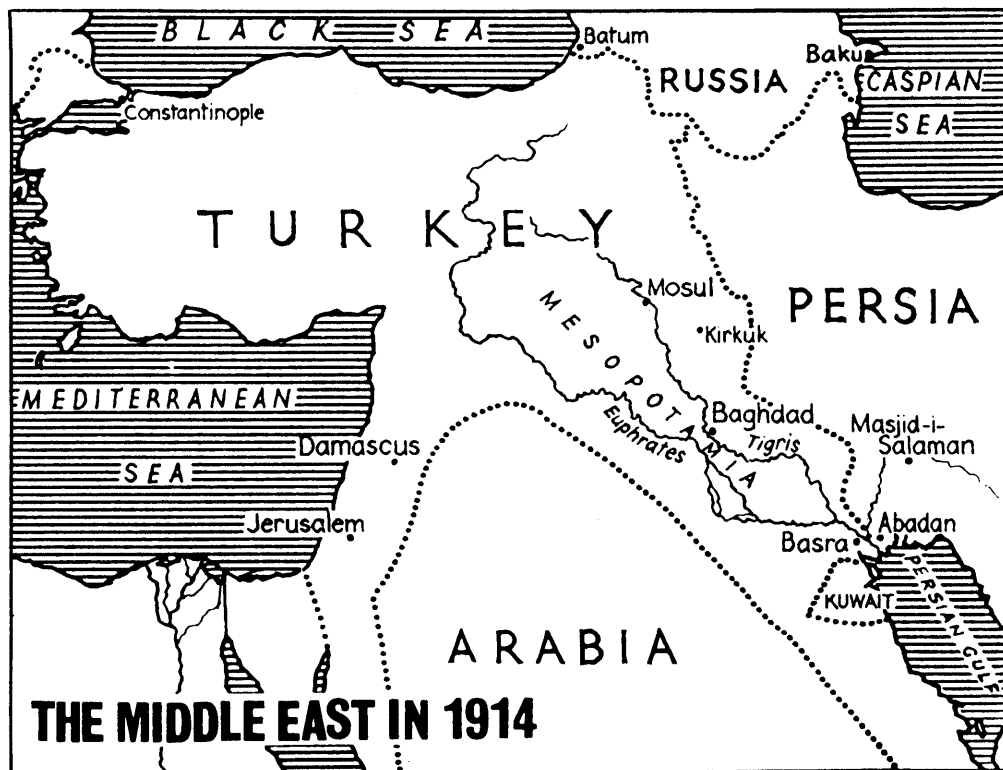
"WOSA supports all progress towards the abolition and dismantling of the 'hostel/migrant labor system' with all that this implies; i.e., a policy of decent housing for all, no forced separation of families, an end to the bantustan system; job opportunities for all; no more ethnically based jobs, accommodation or wages."

"Our policy," Robert concluded, "is for Unity in Action. We will work with all forces to that end. We believe the strongest form of defense is mass-based and independent working-class organizations rooted in the working class." ■

# Capitalism's long-standing drive for oil profits in the Middle East

**Today's war against Iraq is not the first time the major capitalist powers have intervened in the region to guarantee their access to 'black gold.'**

**Many times in the past, Britain, Germany, France—and later, the U.S.—have used divide and conquer tactics and outright military aggression to maintain their control over the area.**



By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

*This article is the first of a two-part series.*

Oil is as necessary as blood," said French Premier Georges Clemenceau following World War I. France, Britain, and the United States had just "floated to victory," relying on a wave of petroleum to fuel their ships and other engines of war.

Oil had become so "necessary" to the allied powers, in fact, that millions of people were sent into battle to obtain it. Sir Maurice Hankey, secretary of the British war cabinet at the time, pointed out that control over the oil supplies of Mesopotamia (Iraq) and Persia (Iran) was a "first-class British war aim."

Oil had become a valuable commodity in Europe and America as the gasoline-driven internal combustion engine came into use toward the close of the 19th century. But one country, the United States, supplied practically all the world's petroleum.

Government officials in Europe warned that it was necessary to find other sources of oil that they could control. They looked hungrily toward the Middle East, which seemed ripe for financial and political exploitation.

The Middle East prior to World War I was dominated by two crumbling empires—that of the Persians and that of the Ottoman Turks. Virtually all of the area's railroads, shipping lines, and sources of raw materials were controlled by Western capitalists. But the European powers wanted more.

Britain had already dislodged Egypt from Ottoman rule and was working to pick off Kuwait as well. France had taken Algeria and now hoped to snatch Syria from Turkey. Russia had occupied Turkestan and parts of northern Persia. And Germany was engaged in a financial and diplomatic "drive to the East."

## Germans search for oil profits

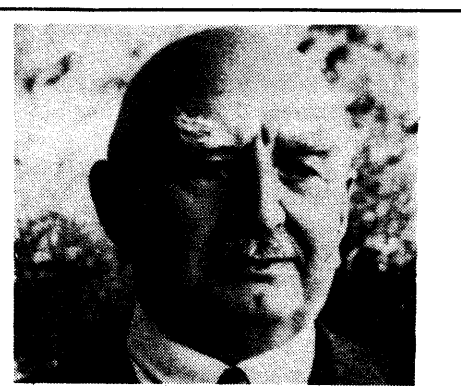
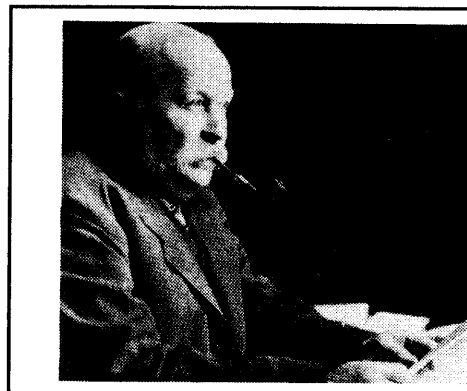
The region that is now called Iraq, then part of the Ottoman Empire, was also up for grabs. As early as 1871, a party of German geologists was sent to scout the provinces of Baghdad and Mosul for oil. They brought back glowing reports of the oil seepages that the local potentate, Midhat Pasha, was gathering there.

In 1888, the Germans obtained a conces-

sion from the Turkish sultan to construct a railroad from Berlin to Bagdad and the Gulf. The rights for the project were soon transferred to the giant Deutsche Bank monopoly, which received all the mineral and oil rights for 20 miles on both sides of the trackway.

But the Germans' interest in oil aroused the suspicions of the Imperial Government. It appointed a young Armenian engineer, Calouste Gulbenkian, to gather all the information he could find on the oil projects in Iraq.

On the strength of Gulbenkian's reports,



Two of the big "players": William D'Arcy and Calouste Gulbenkian

the state lands managed by the Germans were transferred directly to the Sultan's privy purse. Several years later, alleging that the railroad company had failed to meet its obligations, the Sultan informed the Germans that their concession had expired.

That was a blow to the Deutsche Bank; but neither it nor Gulbenkian were yet out of the bidding for Iraqi oil. First, however, a new player would join the oil game—the British capitalist class.

## The British find oil in Persia

In the 1870s, the British began exploring for oil in Persia. They concentrated their efforts in a region that had been part of Ottoman-ruled Iraq many times in the past and now was within the Persian state. That region was called Arabistan (Khuzistan today).

Arabistan was populated in large part by rebellious Arabic-speaking tribes. These people, despite all the wars for control over their territory, were able to maintain a great deal

of autonomy from both the Persian Shah and the Ottoman Sultan.

The British, of course, were only too glad to offer their protection to the tribal leaders—while at the same time offering their services to the Shah and his army.

In 1901, upon the urging of the British government, the Shah granted an oil concession to William D'Arcy, an English millionaire. D'Arcy was given rights over 480,000 square miles of Persian territory.

By royal decree, the Shah declared that "as a result of the particularly friendly relation which unites powerful Great Britain and Persia," D'Arcy and his heirs would be given "unlimited liberty for a period of 60 years to probe, pierce, and drill at their will the depths of Persian soil; in consequence of which all the subsoil products wrought by him without exception will remain the property of D'Arcy."

First, however, the drilling sites had to be protected from the local inhabitants. A company of Bengal Lancers was sent to one field and a gunboat to another. Still, the oil exploration dragged on for six years. Finally, in 1908, oil was found. A new company, Anglo-Persian (AP, today called British Petroleum), was formed to exploit the discovery.

Stringent measures were taken to ship and protect the oil. A pipeline to the seacoast was constructed after the British government procured the land from the local sheikh. In exchange, the British promised to protect Arabistan's autonomy against the Shah.

A refinery and port was built at Abadan, on the Shatt Al-Arab River. This land had once been part of Iraq, but in 1847 Britain and Russia had arranged a treaty which gave the territory to Persia—thus shrinking Iraq's access to the sea. Nevertheless, large oil tankers still had to load in Ottoman territorial waters. In 1913, Britain and Russia collaborated on a new treaty to shift the border even more in Persia's favor.

## Oil for the British Navy

Meanwhile, the major imperialist powers were arming for war. Germany had constructed a new fleet of oil-powered submarines. In order to surpass the Germans, the British, too, made plans to expand and modernize their navy.

Winston Churchill, who became First Lord of the Admiralty in 1911, was among

By means of its interest in Persian oil—the Anglo-Persian combine—the British government hoped to obtain control of Iraq's oil as well. Unfortunately, the AP group had been beaten out in Iraq by another syndicate, the Turkish Petroleum Company (TPC).

TPC was the brainchild of Calouste Gulbenkian—the former engineer for the Ottoman Sultan—who was now 20 years older, much wealthier, and admired by some as the "Talleyrand of oil diplomacy." Gulbenkian had become a member of the directors of the Turkish National Bank (which, despite its name, was a group designed to promote British interests in the Ottoman Empire).

Gulbenkian was able to convince his fellow bank directors to join the hunt for oil in Iraq. But before they could get down to business, they had to deal with the Deutsche Bank, which already had a claim on oil in the country.

Rather than fight the Germans, Gulbenkian decided to join them. The Deutsche Bank was given a quarter share in TPC, and another corporation—Royal Dutch Shell—was also given a quarter.

The British government, however, was far from satisfied that this new British-German-Dutch combine would serve its interests. British officials set to work to force the company to amalgamate with its own Anglo-Persian group. Anxious negotiations were carried on between the governments of Britain and Germany.

Finally, according to the "Foreign Office Agreement" of March 19, 1914, Anglo-Persian was given a 50 percent share of the Iraqi concession. The Deutsche Bank and Royal Dutch Shell were allowed to keep their 25 percent shares. This only left Gulbenkian's Turkish National Bank to contend with.

After some prodding, the Deutsche Bank and Shell agreed to give 2.5 percent from each of their shares as payoff to Gulbenkian, who was known from then on as "Mr. Five Percent."

As part of the pact, all of the parties agreed not to have any oil dealings in the whole of the Ottoman Empire outside of the Turkish Petroleum Company. Thus, as Britain and Germany divided up the Middle Eastern oil fields, decades of imperialist rivalry seemed to have come to an end. Many believed that a "New World Order" was in store.

## Beginning of the World War

Unfortunately, on the very day that the Turkish Grand Vizier signed a memo promising the Iraqi oil concession to TPC, the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated in Sarajevo. World War I had begun.

At the time, British shipyards were completing construction on two dreadnought battleships for the Ottoman Empire. Although the Ottomans had not yet entered the war, Churchill commandeered the ships on behalf of the Royal Navy. This act helped to convince the Turks to ally with the Germans in the war.

The British thought victory against the Ottoman Turks would be quick and easy. This was not to be. Thousands of allied troops died storming the beaches of Gallipoli.

Meanwhile, a "valiant" second front was carried on in the boardrooms of the big oil companies. The Deutsche Bank's 25 percent interest in Iraqi oil was taken over by the British Custodian of Enemy Property. Eventually, the share was given to Britain's new ally, France.

But in order to be safe, British troops were sent into the area of the Mosul oil fields to beat out the French in occupying the region.

Although the armistice had already been signed with the Ottoman Empire, the British claimed a "military necessity" to justify their construction of oil pipelines, railways, and refineries in the captured territory.

Very soon, however, the British had to confront a latecomer to the Middle East treasure hunt; the United States was also clamoring for a share of the Iraqi oil concession. The Americans and their so-called "Open Door Policy" were a threat that the Europeans could not ignore.

The people of Iraq, for their part, received nothing. Freed from the Ottoman Empire, their land became a direct colony of Britain. In a future issue of *Socialist Action*, we will describe how Big Oil and the Western governments divided the spoils of the First World War—with consequences that remain today.



# Stop the aggression against Iraq! Imperialist troops out of the Gulf!

The following is an appeal adopted by the XIII World Congress of the Fourth International, held in mid-February.

In the name of justice, a new massacre is being carried out. In the name of liberty, they are murdering once again. In the name of democracy, a country is being crushingly bombed. After so many others, it is now the turn of Iraq. Who will be next?

The assault being led in the Persian Gulf by the army of the United States, its imperialist allies and its Arab and other supporters, fundamentalist monarchies or dictatorships, has a goal that goes well beyond the so-called "liberation of Kuwait" and the alleged defense of "international law." The actions of this coalition of oppressors of peoples, as always, are quite opposite to the "values" they claim to hold.

In reality, for the imperialist powers, it is a question of decisively establishing a "new world order," where every attack on their vital interests will produce the same treatment as is being received by Iraq today. This "new order" is more than ever subjected to the political-military hegemony of the United States, whose terrorizing arrogance now knows no bounds. The policy of collusion with imperialism followed by the Soviet leadership, far from opening up a new era of peace, has greatly encouraged the governments of London, Washington and Paris to carry out their most criminal plans.

The aggression against Iraq is the biggest aerial operation in history. It is the first major electronic war, with Iraq being used as a vast testing ground for the latest murderous gadgets from the imperialist military array. The immediate aim of this attack is no longer in doubt: it is the total destruction of Iraq's military-industrial potential. American imperialism wants to remove from the scene a regional power liable to challenge its oil interests and capable of counter-balancing the power of the Zionist state, the USA's main ally in the region. In order to achieve this, the Pentagon is prepared to consider anything, including the use of nuclear weapons.

Nothing can justify this barbaric attack on the people

Ali Yurtsever/GAMMA LIAISON



Survivors of bombing raid on Baghdad.

of Iraq. Neither the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait nor the nature of the Baghdad regime make it justified for the U.S. and its allies to set themselves up as police and arbiters

of the world situation.

We know all too well how much respect for the rights of peoples motivates these "dispensers of justice" who only yesterday supported the Iraqi dictatorship in its war against Iran and closed their eyes to the massacre of the Kurdish people, these "liberators" who have equipped and financed the Israeli army of occupation in Palestine, and who are even now multiplying this support, as the Zionist government is openly planning to expel a large proportion of the Palestinian people once more from their own land.

Faced with this offensive, whose real motives are eminently reactionary, anti-imperialist movements are not neutral. They are on the side of the people of Iraq, subjected to bombing by the coalition forces. They are for an immediate and unilateral end to the aggression, for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of imperialist forces from the Gulf region, for the right of the Arab peoples to freely decide their own fate without interference from the big powers.

In particular, they must defend the Kurdish and Palestinian peoples' rights to self-determination against all their oppressors.

To be anti-imperialist today means being unconditionally for the defeat of imperialism, as are the peoples of the Arab region and the Middle East who have massively expressed their solidarity with the people of Iraq against the governments of the coalition and those who take refuge in an embarrassed neutrality and join the blockade of Iraq, rather than supporting its people who are under threat of death.

We will step up our effort to strengthen the world movement against the aggression, creating the broadest possible unity so as to impose a halt to the bombing and the withdrawal of the imperialist troops.

We refuse to pay for the costs of this criminal war, undertaken in the interests of the oil and financial magnates. We denounce those who do not hesitate to waste billions in order to crush Iraq, while they refuse to cancel the debt everywhere.

Together with the workers of the world, we shall unite to block the imperialist war machine. We will support the youth, the soldiers, the reservists who, in the countries of the aggressive coalition, refuse to take part in this massacre.

Against the oppressors' "new world order", we stand for a new world solidarity of all struggles against oppression!

## Effects of Gulf War create ripples in Lebanese politics

By GERRY FOLEY

The following is an interview I conducted in mid-February with a leader of the Lebanese section of the Fourth International, the world revolutionary organization founded by Leon Trotsky.

**Question:** Could you describe for me the impact of the Gulf war on politics in Lebanon?

**Answer:** This has varied according to the regions. Some are under Syrian dominance, while there are no Syrians in the South. In Saida for example, the Palestinian camps are dominated by Arafat and the PLO. Toward the East, there is the Christian area dominated by the Falangists.

There have been big demonstrations in Saida, the largest ones in solidarity with Iraq and against the imperialist aggression. The walls of the city are covered with slogans expressing support for Iraq and denouncing the imperialists.

As regards the part of the country under Syrian domination, there was a demonstration in the southern suburbs of Beirut. It brought out about 30,000 people. This happened only once, a few weeks ago, at the beginning of the war.

Since then, there has been hardly anything. It is said that the Syrians have jailed dozens of people who have talked about solidarity with Iraq. They were seized by the Syrian striking forces there. The Syrians have also tried to prevent the mass media from talking about this question.

We ourselves have tried to get articles in the Beirut daily press, in the two most famous dailies, *Safir* and *Al Nahar*. They told us that this was impossible. Our own publication cannot reach many people. Its print run varies from a few hundred to about a thousand.

While it has been impossible to break into the media, it was possible to discuss the question in cultural institutions. There was a rally bringing together a great number of these institutions at the Lebanese Writers'

Union, where everyone talked about the aggression and in solidarity with Iraq, except for one person who is a hired hand of the Syrian regime.

There was discussion about a program for mobilizing. A rally was called where several people were to speak, but it was cancelled as a result of Syrian pressure.

It is possible that the Syrians will take action against us, if we manage to get our position [out] to many people. They are aware of it. It was expressed in the meeting of the cultural institutions.

**Question:** What is the attitude of the general population?

**Answer:** About 90 percent is with Iraq. But now it is nearly impossible to express this opinion. For the Christians, of course, this question is tricky. In the last few years, the Iraqi regime has supported the Christian reactionaries. It supported the Falangists, and then it backed Michel Aoun against the Syrians.

Only on the TV station of the Lebanese forces, a member of the Iraqi leadership in Lebanon was interviewed. The Hezbollah, the pro-Iranian [faction], organized the big demonstration I talked about in the southern suburbs of Beirut.

The Lebanese Communist party also called on its supporters to take part in that action. We talked with the Communist Party about holding a demonstration in Beirut.

They are afraid, they are afraid of Syrian repression. They said that maybe, if Israel entered the war, that would mobilize people. And maybe then there would be demonstrations in Beirut.

But as of now they don't want to do anything. As regards their position on the Gulf war, it is not different from that of the Syrians. They call for the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait, at the same time calling for the withdrawal of the imperialist forces from the Gulf.

On the other hand, the party leadership faces a challenge from within to its whole policy, to Gorbachevism. There is talk about



Pro-Saddam rallies were banned in Lebanon—but not in Jordan

a left current. But nothing definite is known about it.

**Question:** Is Syria's support of the imperialists undermining its position in Lebanon?

**Answer:** We have to wait [and see]. If the war drags on, we can expect changes not only in Lebanon but also in Syria. Because the Syrian people itself are totally against the policy of their government. They are with Iraq.

Slogans have been written on the walls of Damascus and Aleppo, and other Syrian cities. There was even a meeting of writers and artists, who made a statement that was published in the papers in Lebanon. In that statement, they affirm their total solidarity with Iraq.

The regime feels threatened. But so far it has a firm hand on the situation. The future is uncertain. There is a threat in particular from the fundamentalists, the Muslim Brothers. The Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan has made a statement against the Syrian regime, calling on the Syrian people to topple the government.

But so far there has been nothing in terms of acts. In Lebanon, there has been vocal opposition to the aggression among the Druses, one of the major religious com-

munities.

Their present leader has made several statements, in which you can see a position against the aggression, support for the Iraqi people. Even Saut el-Jebel, the Voice of the Mountain, their radio station, supported Iraq for several days, but the Syrians intervened and forced it to confine itself to rebroadcasting the reports from CNN. The Lebanese TV channels are all relying on CNN.

**Question:** Isn't there any organized mass opposition to the aggression?

**Answer:** Yes, the students, even in the American University. There was a demonstration on the campus of the American University, but the Syrians repressed this.

In the Lebanese University, there was a call for a meeting of all the students in the Law School. The Syrian forces came and prevented the students from going in. But the students have tried to demonstrate. In Saida, the unions participated in the demonstration I mentioned.

**Question:** In what sectors are the Lebanese Fourth Internationalists working mainly?

**Answer:** Among the youth, in the universities. But in the Druse mountains we are in contact with various layers, working youth and also farmers. We have a lot of contacts with factory workers.

Andy Hernandez for NEWSWEEK

# Interview with Israeli civil rights activist: Israeli 'peace movement' tails Zionists on Gulf War

Michel Warschawski is the best known leader of the Israeli state section of the Fourth International, the worldwide revolutionary socialist organization founded by Leon Trotsky. He is also director of The Alternative Information Center in West Jerusalem.

Warschawski spent four months in prison last year after being found guilty of "closing his eyes" to the source of a booklet the Center was typesetting. The source of the booklet, the state prosecution charged, was an organization banned in Israel, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. The Arabic-language pamphlet instructed activists how to confront interrogation and torture in Israeli custody.

Warschawski was interviewed by Steve Sozby for the Feb. 11 issue of the English-language Palestinian paper, *Al Fajr* (published in Jerusalem). Although the interview dates from the beginning of the war, Warschawski's analyses are still timely. Some technical errors have been corrected.

**Al Fajr:** Perhaps the most tragic effect of the Gulf war has been the Israeli left's unwillingness to speak out, especially considering the situation today in the occupied territories, the curfew now being more than three weeks old. Can you explain that?

**Michel Warschawski:** I would say something very extreme. Part of the peace movement in Israel, and it's part of a very long history of the Zionist left, is looking at a situation of political polarization in Israel and the lack of national consensus as a disease, as a temporary phenomenon.

Every opportunity to go back to the situation of national unity, of national consensus, is a permanent expectation of the left.

So every event which can provide reasons for such a turn is welcomed by these people. In fact, for many leaders on the Zionist left, August provided the opportunity to realize a return and to show their return to the national consensus.

This is when [Citizens Rights Movement member of the Knesset] Yossi Sarid wrote to the Palestinians, "Come find me." Two days ago, he published a new article, "Don't look for me anymore," which is a new statement.

It was the beginning of a long, deep affair between Yossi Sarid and [Likud Knesset member] Benny Begin which even the Zionist daily press was laughing about and making jokes about. It is something which has to be understood as an essential component of the Zionist left.

For them, what is basic is national unity and what is unfortunate is a split in the national consensus in Israel. Now, with missiles on Tel Aviv, it became a phenomenon among the peace forces in Israel.

There is no doubt that we are at a turning point where there will be no peace movement in Israel and it will take quite a lot of time [for another to develop].

Now, the second point which has to be understood is a ghetto mentality in Israeli society in general and its left part in particular. Everything is looked at and understood only from the point of view of Israel.

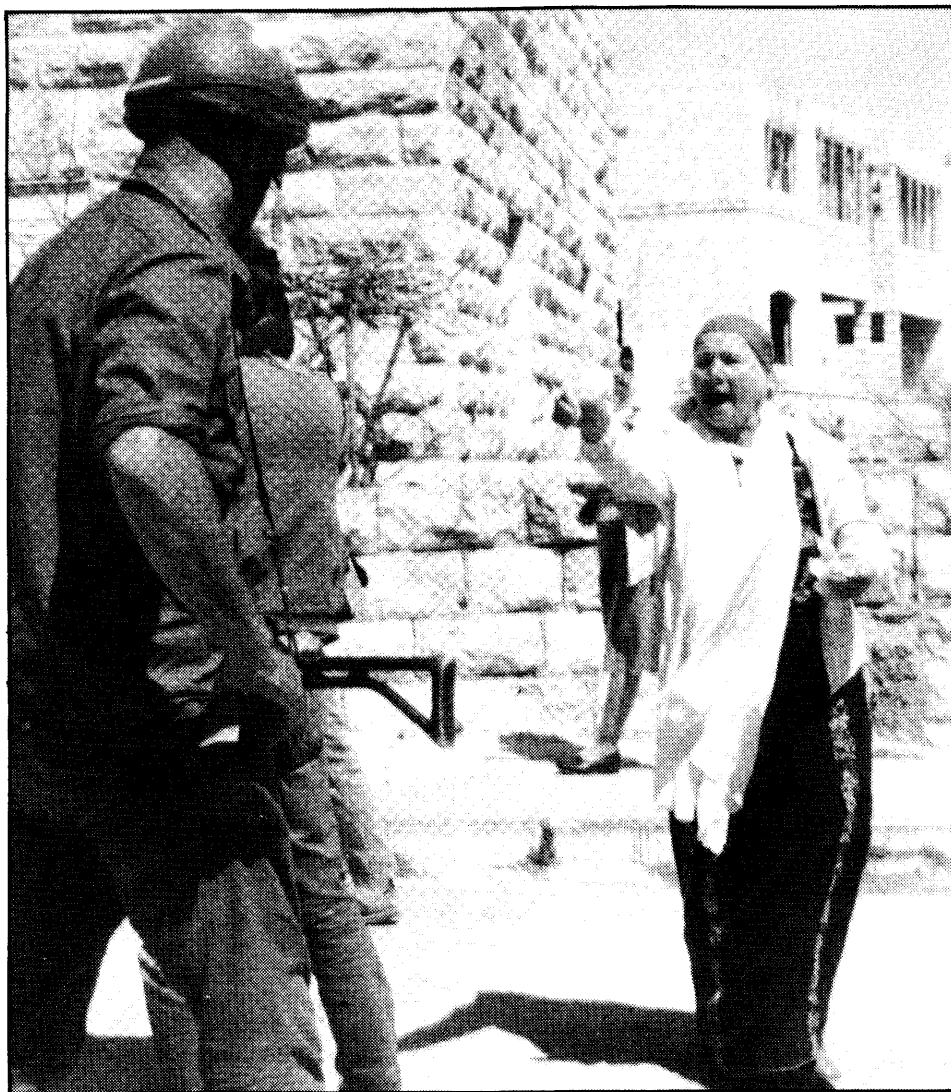
The global role of the United States, the global implications of the United States' intervention in the area, is never understood in its entirety, but rather if it is good for us in the immediate future or not.

For that reason, the Israeli left, and there have been plenty of examples the last two weeks, cannot only not accept but cannot even understand the peace demonstrations in the United States and Europe.

Ratz [Citizens Rights Movement] secretariat issued a strong statement against the peace demonstrations in Europe. Amos Oz and A.B. Yehoshua also issued strong statements against all of that.

I believe they cannot understand at all the reasons for the mass opposition in the world in general and in Europe in particular to the war. Their whole understanding is that Iraq is threatening us, Iraq is to be destroyed.

It is simplistic, but this is the way they are looking at it. Like Yehoshua, for example, saying, "When the possibility of Ausch-



Beverly A. Orr

**'All of these things reflect a very deep sentiment not only among the Palestinians, but also among the Arab masses, and it explains not only why the Palestinians support Saddam but why the whole majority of the Arab peoples do so as well.'**

witz is on the agenda, even the atomic bomb can be used." He is completely out of focus, and he is a famous left-wing intellectual in Israel, losing every sense of proportion.

There is no possibility, not necessarily to accept, but to understand why Arabs in general and Palestinians in particular identify with the Iraqi side in the war. For them, it is simply nonsense or Muslim fundamentalism or anti-Semitism or the true feelings of the Palestinians who never wanted peace but only to kill as many Jews as possible.

All that means that we have quite a long period of setback, of reshaping a peace movement, and this statement of Yossi Sarid, "Don't get in touch with me," only reflects in an extreme way the fact that an important part of the Israeli peace camp doesn't believe anymore in the possibility of dialogue, of negotiations, of peace.

**Al Fajr:** What is your response to the question: Why do the Palestinians support Saddam Hussein?

**Warschawski:** Why not? On one hand, the enemy of my enemy is my friend. This is the first reaction of any normal person. Then you have to qualify it a bit.

On one side you have the United States, strongly supported by Israel and pushed even by Israel, who gave a lot of false promises to the Palestinians and who is also responsible for the continuation of the occupation for over 23 years, and who also accepts every crime of the Israeli occupation forces.

On the other hand, you have an Arab nation which is taking the lead, verbally at least, for the liberation of the Arab people.

The slogans or the declared aims of Saddam's war—and I don't entertain now the question of whether it is true or not or whether he is willing to do it or able to do

it—are the liberation of Palestine and the unity of the Arab world against imperialist intervention in the area.

All of these things reflect a very deep sentiment not only among the Palestinians, but also among the Arab masses, and it explains not only why the Palestinians support Saddam but why the huge majority of the Arab peoples do so as well.

**Al Fajr:** I think the reason so many ask why the Palestinians support Saddam is because it appears so obvious to them that the

Palestinians will be the biggest losers. What is your scenario for the Palestinians if the regime in Baghdad is destroyed?

**Warschawski:** A victory for the so-called coalition will be catastrophic, not only at the regional level but also at the international level. It is my way to look at the problem from the global to the local. In that sense, it doesn't matter what happened before the American intervention in the war.

I don't just speak about bombing. I speak about the economic war too, from the moment the United States succeeded in uniting a part of the most important countries in the world and a part of the Arab countries in an attempt to establish its own order in the area.

What is at stake is very clear: whether the United States of America will be able to affirm itself as the superpower that can decide what should be or shouldn't be everywhere in the world. In that sense, it is going much further than Iraq or the Arab region and Palestine.

Never mind if there will be an international peace conference over a Palestinian state or not. Even with such a possibility—which I doubt now—victory for the coalition means a blank check to the United States and a terrible blow to all peoples around the world.

On the other hand, everything which will be less than a victory, even a compromise, will be perceived in the world, in American public opinion, even by the American leaders, as the setting of a limit to the ability of the United States to decide the fate of the world.

This, in my opinion, is the real issue of the war. From this definition I draw conclusions on "Where do I stand?" and "What do I expect?"

It has nothing to do with my relation to the regime in Iraq and my position toward Kuwait and the price the Palestinians will have to pay.

There is something more global and much more important. A victory for the United States will mean, in my opinion, that over the next 10 to 20 years, humanity will have to pay a tremendous price.

Now, you can ask yourself, isn't it important from the historical point of view whether Saddam was wrong or not to provoke the United States, to allow it the opportunity?

But this is not a confrontation where sides are taken over whether I like the regime in Baghdad or about Kuwait. I am sure of one thing: a total victory, an easy victory for the coalition, cannot and will not promote a peace settlement between Israel and the Arabs.

**Al Fajr:** What is your opinion of the curfew now in effect in the occupied territories? Do you expect the Israelis to try to finish off the Intifada? It seems the right wing would consider the war a historical opportunity to deal with the Palestinians.

**Warschawski:** Of course, they recognize the situation in the Gulf presents opportunities to do things they otherwise might not try, and this is what is frightening. The possibilities for severe bloodshed, another massacre or worse, are very real.

We know for sure that there is a plan in the government to deport 1500 Palestinians from the territories. The question is whether they feel they can get away with it without too much damage.

**Is the war really over in the Middle East?**

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# Holes in the safety net get bigger as recession deepens

By HAYDEN PERRY

The initial bill for the Gulf War—\$56 billion—was presented to Congress the first week of February. Congress scarcely blinked. They simply put the invoice on the pile of other bills they will get round to paying some day. These include \$50 billion for S&L bailouts and billions in interest payments to bankers who hold the nation's \$42 trillion national debt.

Whether this gargantuan debt will ever be paid in real money scarcely concerns the members of Congress, who expect to be enjoying their generous pensions long before the day of reckoning comes.

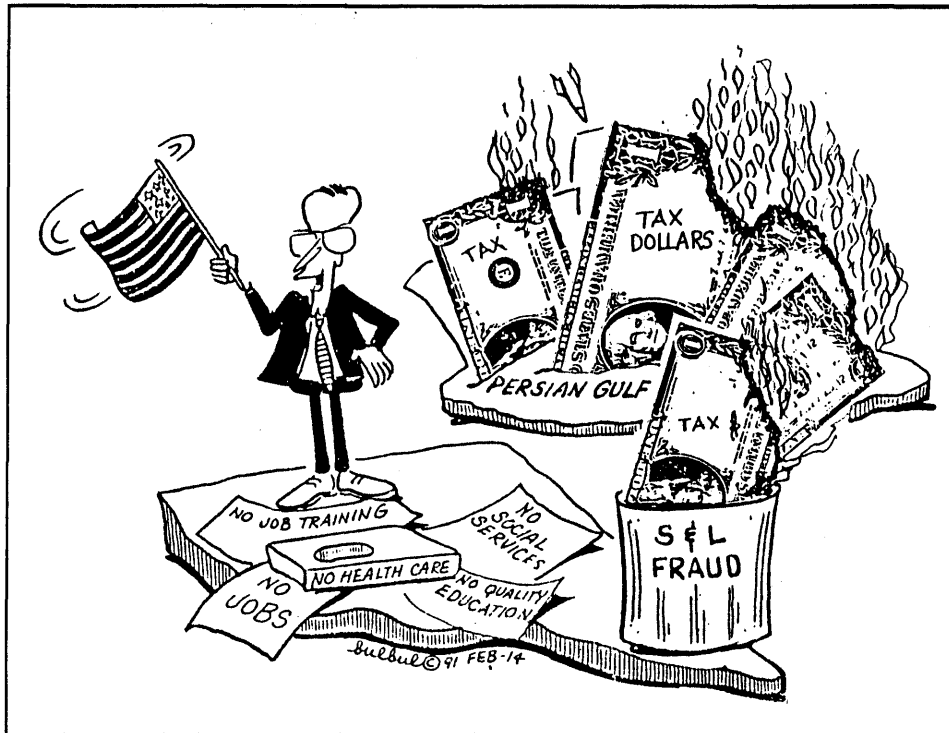
But American workers cannot be so relaxed about it. The bill is presented to us daily, and payment is extracted in ways that make our lives more arduous and the future more frightening.

President George Bush, who really has no idea how we will ever get out of debt, is nibbling at the problem by pushing the costs of social programs onto the states. He recently announced an ambitious project to restore the nation's sadly eroded interstate highways. But no money was provided.

This was left to the states. They would have the "democratic" right to raise the billions needed any way they wanted. Charging tolls for driving on the roads might be a good approach, Bush suggested.

Having taken care of the nation's roads at no cost to the federal government, Bush proceeded to tackle the rising cost of medical care. His formula: cut the fees Medicare will pay to doctors for various medical procedures. Doctors will hassle hospitals and patients for supplementary payments, or drop out of the Medicare program altogether.

The gap between the Medicare payment and the doctor's bill will grow ever-wider. It must be bridged by supplementary insurance that the elderly must buy. This will steadily reduce the share the government pays and ultimately jerk the entire federal safety net



from under the poor and aged.

In other programs that are jointly funded by the federal and state governments, Washington is renegeing on its share. This is felt in the Unemployment Compensation offices, where laid off workers seek their first safety net.

## Unemployed workers will suffer

Because Washington has cut its contribution, the states are making it harder for the unemployed to qualify for benefits. Today, less than half of the laid off workers collect any benefits at all.

Even those workers who are entitled to compensation suffer from the federal government's parsimony. Because of budget cuts, there are not enough staff to expeditiously process the claims. The unemployed

must wait as long as seven weeks for their first check. Persuading landlords to wait patiently for their rent is best left to state officials who are closer to the problem, Washington tells us.

## Counties face bankruptcy

State officials, however, have learned from Washington. If the federal government can push their obligations onto the states, state governments can push their costs onto the counties. While governor of California, Ronald Reagan saved millions by closing the state mental hospitals and sending the mentally sick "to be cared for in their own communities."

As this new financial burden was put upon the counties, no state money was allotted to them. Consequently, many of the displaced

mental patients have joined the homeless on the streets. Now the problem is shunted down to the towns and cities, who have to find some way of sheltering the homeless in their midst. As state governments shift the burdens of government onto the counties, these units of government are going bankrupt.

How far can this process of cutting the living standards of our youngest and poorest citizens go? This is now a question before the courts. The California Court of Appeals has ruled that Alameda County supervisors set welfare levels without considering the actual cost of subsistence.

When California's Gov. Pete Wilson took office in January, his first act was to propose cutting \$60 from the life-support benefit paid to mothers with dependent children. He announced the proposed cut with the cynical remark, "They won't be able to buy that extra six-pack of beer."

A welfare recipient testified that she had to sleep in the street because she could not find an apartment for \$340 a month. That was the total monthly grant she received on General Assistance. The court ruled that the benefit must cover the actual cost of food and housing.

Today, it takes court intervention to pull our poorest citizens up to the barest subsistence level.

In the Great Depression of the 1930s, American workers were left without any kind of safety net by a bankrupt economy run by uncaring politicians. But the unemployed mobilized and forced city and county authorities to deliver immediate relief. Then they occupied state legislatures to force them to vote money for welfare. The capitalist class felt the heat, as hunger marchers converged on the nation's capitol.

Washington responded with the WPA, CCC, and other programs that sent federal money flowing through every community in the nation. It was not Roosevelt's generosity, but his fear of unrest, that made the federal government take responsibility for the nation's poor. Now Washington has reneged on that responsibility.

It is time to mobilize the poor again and put the fear of social upheaval in the ruling class and their politicians. Only in that way will we reverse the trend that is destroying the social safety net and reducing the poor to the status of Third World indigents. ■

# Richmond, Calif. teachers fight pay cuts, union-busting

By BARBARA PUTNAM

RICHMOND, Calif.—On Feb. 19, over 1500 teachers, students, and parents rallied on the state capitol steps in Sacramento, Calif. They were protesting the imminent financial collapse of the Richmond Unified School District and the union-busting tactics of newly elected Republican Gov. Pete Wilson.

Wilson has directed his fire against the United Teachers of Richmond (UTR), and Public Employees Local 1. The governor threatens to veto a \$29 million emergency loan for the Richmond school district unless the unions accept suspension of union contracts *right now*—even if it means bankruptcy.

The teachers are worried their paychecks are in jeopardy. Some say their benefits have already been cut off. Many carried signs saying, "I will not work for free."

"We're here for survival," Local 1 President Sandy Falk said at the rally. "We are here to protect our right to a free, public education for students." That's a clear statement of the real stakes of the fight.

UTR and Public Employees Local 1 speakers seemed to be girding themselves for a pitched battle. Some endorsed the idea of a state-wide strike, pointing to the example of militancy among the East European workers. "If it's good enough for the workers in Gdansk," said one, "it's good enough for Richmond."

## Undertones of racism

The Richmond district sprawls across the northeast portion of the San Francisco Bay Area. The school district of more than 31,000 students includes the city of



Joseph Ryan/Socialist Action

Richmond, which is predominantly Black, and several nearly all-white communities, such as El Cerrito.

There is a sentiment in some of the more prosperous communities to secede from the Richmond school district and form their own district. There are undertones of racism in this demand.

A local paper, *West County Times*, carried an article the day after the rally, declaring that "El Cerrito parents want to secede." The El Cerrito City Council was asked to support the formation of a district comprised of schools in El Cerrito and Kensington—another mainly white community. Some signs at the Sacramento rally also revealed a

secessionist sentiment.

Gov. Wilson has tried to stir up discontent against the teachers who got "fat" under former Richmond Schools Superintendent Walter Marks, who paid them a little more than other teachers in the country. It should be made clear that even with the "fattened" salaries, starting teachers only make \$21,000 a year—hardly tremendous wages.

Teachers are keenly aware of this. One sign at the rally said, "I can't pay their debts, I've got my own! Support your teacher."

## Hardball/softball

If Wilson is playing hardball, the Democrats are playing a mean game of softball. Assemblymen Dan Boatwright and Bob Chase (Democrats) have formulated their game plan, AB128, which the unions support. But it is hard to see how this legislative bill is anything but a softer version of Gov. Wilson's plan.

AB128 calls for a \$29 million bailout package and for an administrator who would have the sole right to cut teachers loose and cut the budget and deal with contracts. While Wilson wants to tear up the contracts without further delay, AB128 would delay the process a little longer and give the unions a breathing space—but only until April 6.

"This smells like PATCO," Henry Clark, General Manager of Local 1, told the rally. He was referring to the air traffic controllers union, which was smashed by President Reagan. Clark continued, "It's as if the governor wants to do away with collective bargaining for *all* public employees."

Neither Wilson's game plan nor that of the Democrats really addresses the underlying problems of Richmond Unified. This crisis, like the sorry state of public education as a whole, stems from the huge financial deficit in the country, the collapse of the S&L system, and war spending.

If the teachers and employees of the school system in Richmond are to avoid another PATCO, they should look closely at the rea-

sons for the PATCO defeat.

The official labor bureaucracy of the AFL-CIO refused to mobilize the organized strength of labor and its natural allies to defend PATCO. The school employees should learn from this, mobilize their membership, and attempt to make common cause with the Black population of Richmond.

A defeat for the Richmond school workers will be a foretaste of what workers in other school districts throughout the state can expect soon.

There are no easy answers here. As one of the signs at the rally put it, "Let's all pull together!" That would be a good start. ■

# Cutbacks in S.F.

SAN FRANCISCO—Gov. Pete Wilson's budget attacks on the schools have had repercussions throughout California.

In San Francisco, students, parents, and teachers are protesting the city's plan to close two high schools; lay off more than 800 employees; and cancel arts and foreign language classes, sports, and some library services and health programs.

On Feb. 28, hundreds of angry students from Balboa High School came to a public hearing with their "Save Balboa" signs. "Closing Balboa is not going to solve any problems," argued senior Serria Carter. "It's going to create them."

The students booed when administrators referred to the proposed state budget that will cut school funding by \$2 billion.

Teachers union officials have also vowed to fight the cutbacks. "By proceeding to dismantle the schools of San Francisco, you accept Gov. Wilson's attempt to destroy public education in California as a *fait accompli*," said Joan Marie Shelley, the local union president.

—MICHAEL SCHREIBER

# 1930s sit-down strikes—What lessons for today?

On Feb. 23, some 200 working people gathered at my union hall in Burlingame, Calif., to "celebrate" the end of the 22-month strike at Eastern Airlines. Eastern, the first airline to be organized by the International Association of Machinists (IAM), permanently shut its doors at midnight, Jan. 18. We came to IAM Local Lodge 1781's hall to draw some lessons from the strike and to look ahead.

Mike Fitzpatrick, a former Eastern striker and chief IAM steward for Eastern workers in San Francisco, summed up the battle as: "We were right and they were wrong, and they never were willing to bargain in good faith. I think that other airlines and corporate America now knows that unions and workers will strike and can take the fight to the bitter end if necessary. This can only make all of us stronger."

Fitzpatrick, now an employee of United Airlines, added that "the strike vindicated the union on its safety charge against top management." Some dozen Eastern managers are under federal indictment—with more to come, he said.

In a March 1 plea-bargain agreement with the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, Eastern has admitted that it conspired to prevent the Federal Aviation Administration from determining if Eastern managers falsified maintenance records and will pay \$3.5 million in fines. The IAM had said all along that Eastern was unsafe to fly.

Another speaker at the solidarity-celebration dinner was Art Pulaski of the San Mateo Central Labor Council, an active supporter of the strike. Pulaski's comments deserve

some analysis.

Pulaski said the Eastern workers won "a victory" that "parallels the 1937 Flint sit-down strikes."

Unfortunately, the Eastern strike cannot be compared to the great sit-down strike in Flint, Mich., that played a crucial role in the organization of the United Auto Workers and the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO).

The main strength of the Eastern strike was the fact that few of the 9500 IAM members crossed the picket line and scabbed. The strike also won the support of Eastern flight attendants and pilots for nearly nine months, and sympathy from labor nationwide.

The great weakness of the strike, however, was the strategy followed by the labor officialdom. They sought to use the strike to pressure the owners of Eastern to sell out to another capitalist or to the workers. The need to shut the carrier down tight was given up early in the strike.

So while the strike lasted 22 months, it was long enough for the employing class and its courts, cops, and governments to minimize the impact of the strike. There are as many aircraft in the air today as two years ago. But 38,000 Eastern employees are without their jobs, many lost homes and families, and none won any compensation from the bankrupt carrier or government.

To tell the truth about the fight and its outcome does not take away from the sentiment expressed by Fitzpatrick (and many other former Eastern strikers): "I think in some ways it's a victory. Our struggle was for dignity, integrity, and the safety of the flying public. We achieved that, even if Eastern never

## Which Side Are You On?

By  
Malik Miah



flies again."

Yet it wasn't a victory in the proper meaning of the word: the IAM was unable to force the owners of Eastern and their backers to the bargaining table to negotiate a fair contract. Forcing Frank Lorenzo out of the industry as a controlling owner (he's still on the Board of Directors of Continental Airlines) is at best a moral gain for labor.

### Sit down—a real victory

But in Flint in 1936-37, a real victory was achieved, which inspired workers in auto and other industries to build industrial unions. Art Preis, in his invaluable book, "Labor's Giant Step," discussed how that battle was won and its impact on labor.

Preis wrote: "On Nov. 13, 1936, a spontaneous sit-down strike halted operations of the Fisher Body No. 1 plant in Flint. ... Within three weeks, 15 other GM [General Motors] units were closed by strikes. ... By the end of the strike, some 140,000 of GM's 150,000 pro-

duction workers either sat down or 'hit the bricks,' as traditional picketing in a strike was described.

"Victory or defeat for the GM workers depended on a simple strategy: keeping their buttocks firmly planked on \$50 million worth of GM property until they got a signed contract."

GM's owners tried everything to break the sit-down strikes: use of cops, deputies, and National Guard violence—as well as the federal and state governments.

Less than three months later, the workers won. "The muscular rumps of the GM workers pressed on the chests of GM's corporate owners until they cried 'Uncle!'" wrote Preis. "On Feb. 1, 1937, GM signed a six-month agreement. It provided that the company would not recognize or deal with any other organization in the 17 plants closed by the UAW, that all unionists and strikers would be rehired, that unionism could be discussed on company property during lunch and rest periods, and that negotiations would proceed at once on wages,

hours, production speedup, and other issues.

"It wasn't much of a deal by present standards," Preis added, "But it was an inspiring victory to all American labor in 1937. The floodgates of class struggle were opened. The cry 'sit-down!' echoed from one corner of the land to the other.

"One month after the end of the GM strike, some 193,000 workers engaged in 247 sit-downs; nearly a half million took up this weapon before 1937 ended. The number of all strikes rose from 2172 in 1936 to 4740 in 1937, with 1,861,000 workers involved. That is the way the CIO was built and consolidated." (See Chapter 7, "Flint '37—'Gettysburg' of the CIO" for more details.)

Victories inspire workers to emulate those who fight and win. The Eastern rank and file fought valiantly but lacked the leadership to bring about a parallel victory of the 1937 type. It is why there are no cries today in the airline unions, or elsewhere, to repeat the Eastern fight in the same manner. ■

# Scientists ask—Will the seas rise up against us?

By PETER CLARK

Water is the foundation upon which the house of life has been built. Even though our evolutionary ancestors left the ocean long ago, we maintain a close relationship with water. The human body is mostly water, and the bulk of humanity lives along the banks of rivers or the ocean shore.

Capitalism is undermining this foundation, however, through the disposal of wastes into fresh water supplies and through massive ocean pollution. And by the continued use of fossil fuels, which pump gases into the atmosphere, it has set into motion the conditions that can

cause the seas of our origins to rise up against us.

This process has been labeled, "The Greenhouse Effect." The two principle greenhouse gases are carbon dioxide and methane. The carbon dioxide comes mostly from the burning of fossil fuels, and the methane is produced by the breakdown of organic materials by cattle, termites, and anaerobic bacteria in rice fields. Methane is also given off by decomposing grass, leaves, and food waste piled in garbage dumps.

At present rates of emission, by the year 2050 the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere will have doubled since the beginning of the

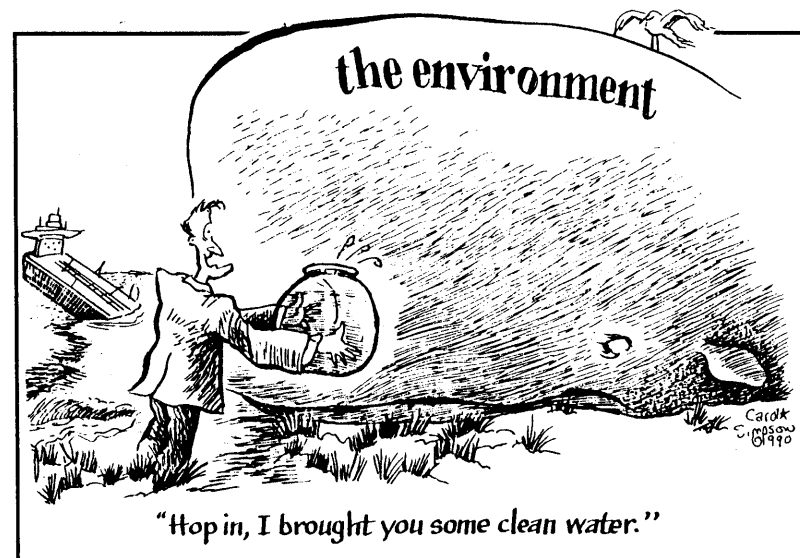
Industrial Revolution. Some scientists believe that this will result in an increase in average global temperatures of as much as nine degrees Fahrenheit.

A major effect of global warming would be a rise in ocean levels. There are still large uncertainties in scientific predictions of increased sea levels, but a study by the National Academy of Sciences, published last August, predicts a rise of between 1.5 feet and 3.5 feet in the coming century.

Evidence is mounting that a sea level rise has begun: In 1986, approximately 9000 square miles of Antarctic ice broke off into the sea. A glacier in Greenland, a major source of ice that led to sea-level increase in the geologic past, has been moving toward the sea at the rate of 75 feet per day. The thickness of Antarctic ice has also decreased.

Not all scientists agree that this has been caused by global warming, but many believe it. An article in *The New York Times* (Aug. 8, 1990) quotes Dr. Gary D. Clow from The Geological Survey, who says his team of scientists has collected data indicating that, "during the last century much of northern Alaska has warmed about four to eight degrees Fahrenheit." He says that drilling holes in Antarctic ice shows that the temperature there has risen two degrees in the last 15 years.

Another pair of research scientists quoted in the *Times* article, Phillip D. Jones and Tom M.L. Wigley,



say, "Our work shows conclusively that the world's climate, though highly variable over periods of a decade or less, has become generally warmer during the past century."

As the seas rise, where will the billions of people affected by this change on our planet go? Consider Florida, the fourth most populated state in the United States, for example. Two-thirds of the Florida peninsula lies just one-half foot above sea-level. Today, 39 million tourists per year and 1000 new residents moving there each day have led to a losing struggle to meet demands for fresh water.

Florida's natural ecology has been disrupted more extensively than anywhere in the country. Some places, such as New York City, may succeed in building dikes to fend off the seas, but the porous rock of Florida means that saltwater will filter up behind such a wall, even if it could be built.

Confronting the crisis of rising ocean levels means that the cause of this increase must be halted. The use of fossil fuels must be replaced by a new worldwide energy plan based on solar power. A process of global reforestation must be under-

taken in order to remove the excess carbon dioxide blanketing the earth. Through careful resource selection and management, with extensive recycling of waste, humanity needs to develop a stable relationship in nature.

But with the fast-food, quick-buck mentality of the social minority who currently own and control everything—the capitalist class—there is no way the human race has a chance. Fundamental social and structural changes are needed right now! A world-coordinated contingency plan must be prepared as the symptoms of climate instability become worse.

Yet before these things can happen, a social tool must be built to accomplish them. This tool is a mass, independent working-class political party founded on the principles of longterm social planning, cooperation between all the peoples of the world, and the broadest, fullest democracy that technology will allow.

Socialist Action seeks to build such a party, and every person that comes to understand the extent of the looming environmental crisis should join us. ■

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# Marine corporal Tahan K. Jones faces witchhunt for antiwar views

By JOSEPH RYAN

SAN FRANCISCO—Now that the U.S. war against Iraq has ended in a resounding "victory," what will happen to all those GIs who resisted serving in the Gulf?

One of them is Tahan K. Jones, 22, a corporal in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve who refused to be deployed to Saudi Arabia and applied for Conscientious Objector (CO) status in October 1990.

Tahan believes he is now a young man with an uncertain future.

Acting on his moral opposition to the war in the Gulf, he refused to ship out with his unit to Arizona, where it was being trained for eventual deployment to Saudi Arabia. Consequently, he is now "Absent Without Leave" (AWOL).

While thousands of GIs around the country had applied for CO status, hundreds of them had to make a critical decision when their units were called for duty in the Gulf: To go or not go.

Tahan chose to act on his beliefs and now finds himself a "fugitive" from a military judicial system that he knows is intoxicated with "victory" and hell-bent on making an "example" out of him and other GIs who spoke out against the war.

## "I'm not the only one"

I was able to interview Tahan recently. He will soon turn himself in and have to conduct a defense that will have important implications for all GI resisters.

Tahan told me that he faces charges of "unauthorized absence," "desertion," "missing a troop movement," and maybe more. He could be sentenced to five years at hard labor. He has heard that some resisters have already been locked up in the brig.

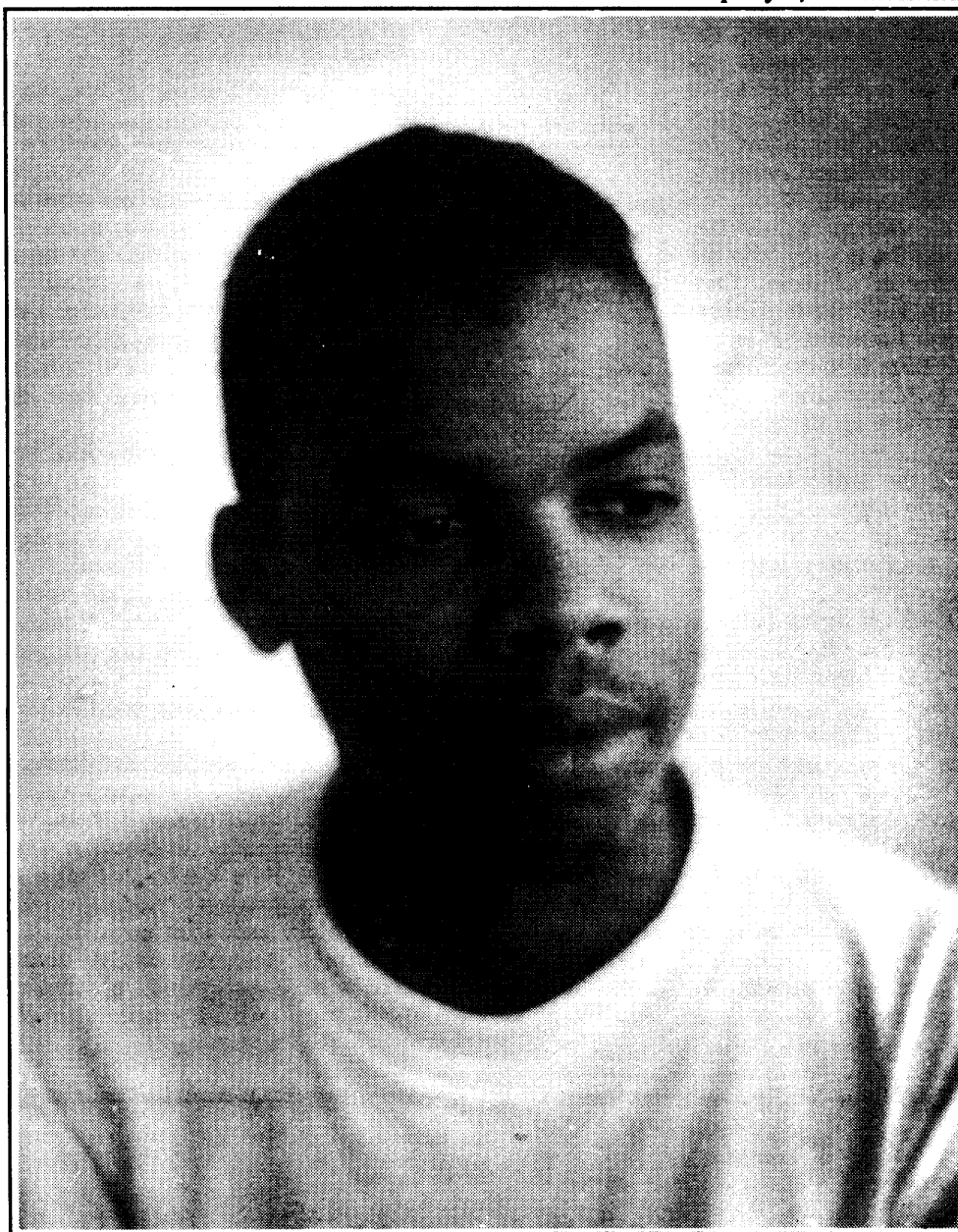
Tahan applied for CO status on Oct. 26, 1990, but the maze of red tape erected by the Marine Corps meant that he would have to disobey orders if he were to remain true to his beliefs.

When I asked him if he thought the military authorities would come down hard on him and other resisters, he responded, "Oh yes, of course they will. The military is arrogant, you know. Now they feel they can do whatever they want to do. They will come after me and others. And I'm not the only one."

I asked him if he was opposed to the war in the Gulf. "Yes. But not just this war, all wars. I see no gain in it."

## Blacks are singled out

Tahan, a native of Oakland, Calif., says he has a lot of support in the Black community. He believes he will be singled out



Joseph Ryan/Socialist Action

because he is Black—and outspoken.

In a message he sent to a University of California, Berkeley, teach-in on Dec. 7, 1990, Tahan stated, "I believe that it is immoral and hypocritical that African-Americans are asked to make the ultimate sacrifice for a nation that refuses to enact a Civil Rights Bill to end employment discrimination."

Tahan says the white investigating officer assigned to his case, Capt. Swanson, evinced a racist attitude. "During a two-hour interview," Tahan said, "he came to the conclusion that my beliefs are not sincerely and deeply held, and that my CO status should be denied."

Tahan showed me a transcript of his first

review at a Marine Corps hearing on his request for CO status. Capt. Swanson, the "impartial" investigating officer, stated, "After observing Corporal Jones throughout this investigation, I believe that he is incapable of articulating any discernible thought or perceptions concerning such subjective matters as conscientious objection to all war. It also leads me to believe that without a considerable amount of coaching and influence, Corporal Jones would not have produced his initial letter stating that he was a conscientious objector—or pursued the matter at all."

Tahan sees this statement as racially motivated. "It creates stereotypes," he said. It infers that Blacks are "less intelligent,

ignorant, lazy, and unpatriotic. It is very much a slander."

I asked him what he thinks will happen when he turns himself in. "They might send us to Camp Pendleton or Camp LeJeune back East in order to isolate us from our base of support—and then 'hang' us."

"You understand," he said, "I expressed my opposition to war on Oct. 26. This means I expressed my opposition to the military, which means you face repercussions."

## "Next time—it might be you"

Tahan, a native of Oakland, Calif., says he has a lot of support in the Black community. He also believes that it is critically important for the fight for civil liberties that all GI resisters be defended unconditionally.

"It would build support and raise people's consciousness on the issue. ... Domestic and foreign policies are related," he said. "It would raise the public consciousness that we have to change domestic and foreign policy. We would be helping other resisters. We're all in the same boat together. This time it might be me. But next time, it might be you."

I asked Tahan about the Jeff Paterson case. Paterson was a Marine stationed in Hawaii who refused to board the plane to Saudi Arabia with his unit in early September 1990. He was subsequently court-martialed, but given an administrative discharge. At the time, this was considered a victory. "That was then, this is now," Tahan said. "At the time, there was public support for Paterson, but things are different now."

It's apparent the U.S. government will try its utmost to victimize the hundreds of GI resisters who spoke out, refused orders, and thereby put their lives on the line in the cause of opposition to Washington's war drive.

Every sector of society that participated in the antiwar mobilizations—unions, peace groups, churches, Black and Latino organizations, and students—must now pick up the banner of defense of these brave young men and women. The antiwar movement was proud to introduce them at rallies and marches; we should be committed to defend them against the witchhunt the government is now unleashing.

On April 6, 1991, the San Francisco-based Mobilization to Bring the Troops Home Now—the coalition which organized a march of 200,000 people on Jan. 26—will sponsor a fund-raising rally for all GI resisters in the Bay Area. The money raised will go to pay the legal defense costs of the GI resisters and to mobilize public support for the right of all GIs to free speech and dissent. For more information, call (415) 626-8053. ■

## DEFEND ELLENORA JOHNSON!

Ellenora Johnson, 31, a U.S. Army medical supply clerk at the Presidio in San Francisco, Calif., is facing court-martial for refusing orders to Saudi Arabia. Her court-martial began on March 4.

At a Feb. 13 press conference, Johnson explained that she refused orders because of her religious beliefs, her opposition to sexual discrimination against women in Saudi Arabia, and her opposition to war. Johnson has been in the army for 13 years. She stated that when she first joined up, her recruiter told her that she would never be sent to a war.

She is one of thousands of resisters who have acted according to their conscience, risking military prosecution and imprisonment. Support for Johnson is growing as her court-martial date nears.

Endorsers of her defense include: Wilson Riles, Jr., Oakland City Council; Terence Hallinan, San Francisco Board of Supervisors; Maudelle Shirek, Berkeley City Council; James Ryder, president, Local 6, ILWU; Rev. Dorsey O. Blake, director, Center for Black Studies, Berkeley; and representatives from women's, peace, and religious organizations. Defend Ellenora Johnson! Drop the Charges! For more information, call (415) 465-2241.



Joseph Ryan/Socialist Action