



Bring the Troops Home Now!

Bush is holding a tiger by the tail in the Mideast

By BARRY SHEPPARD

By throwing up a blockade of all goods going into or out of Iraq—and invading Saudi Arabia—the U.S. government has launched a war against the Iraqi people and the Arab nation as a whole.

In a massive military buildup not seen since the Vietnam War, Bush and his generals moved a military force the equivalent of a medium-sized city into Saudi Arabia and amassed a powerful fleet of warships in the Persian Gulf, Red Sea, and the Mediterranean in preparation for escalation of the war. U.S. forces have now taken an offensive posture in their deployment in Saudi Arabia.

In launching this war, Bush—himself a rich “oil man”—is acting in the interests of a tiny handful of super-rich families who own controlling interests in the big oil monopolies and all other key sectors of the U.S. economy.

The annexation of Kuwait to Iraq is just a pretext for Washington's aggression. Based on historical links that go back to the Ottoman Empire and its Basra province before World War I, Iraqis have long claimed Kuwait as part of their country. The colonial powers separated Kuwait from Iraq at the turn of the century. When the British declared Kuwait to be an independent monarchy in 1961, the Iraqi government again asserted its claim that Kuwait was part of Iraq.

Kuwait has no viable agriculture or industry except for oil wells. Its Emir, or monarch, is a puppet of U.S. and British oil monopolies. The workers in Kuwait come mainly from outside. More than 60 percent of the population has no citizenship rights.

On the other hand, some 2000 idle princes of the al-Sabah royal family have a hundred billion dollars at their disposal in assets outside Kuwait alone. [For more background on how the imperialist powers carved up the Arab East into separate countries, and the artificial creation of Kuwait, see the center supplement in this issue.]

The utter hypocrisy of Bush's rhetoric about defending poor little Kuwait was brought home when Iraqi President Saddam Hussein offered to withdraw from Kuwait if (1) the United States got out of Saudi Arabia and ended the blockade, (2) Israel withdrew from the lands it occupied after the 1967 Israeli aggression, and (3) Syria withdrew from Lebanon.

This offer was rejected by Bush out of hand. It might seem strange to many Americans to link these different questions, but it makes perfect sense to the Arab masses.

The U.S. government backed up Israel's aggression and further occupation of Arab lands in 1967. Today, it is backing Israel's brutal attempts to suppress the Palestinian “Intifada” against the cruel occupation.

Washington quietly supported Syria's 1975 invasion of Lebanon because that invasion prevented a victory of the Moslems,

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A kiss goodbye to fight for Big Oil?



A sailor departs for duty in the Persian Gulf

War threats send economy into tailspin

By MALIK MIAH

The news headline proclaimed, “Morning Panic Costs Dow 52 Points.”

The lead paragraph went on to explain: “Stock prices plunged yesterday on continuing uncertainty about the Persian Gulf crisis.... As turmoil in the Middle East continues, stocks will remain under pressure, analysts said.”

The above *San Francisco Chronicle* headline and story are typical for daily newspapers across the country. While the U.S. government and military press their drive against the Arab people of the Middle East, the financial markets continue to nosedive. There is little confidence that this imperialist aggression will lead to economic stability.

In fact, the opposite is expected. “Clearly the 1990 oil shock will send producer and consumer prices skyward in August and September. But it will also be a hammer blow to a weak economy,” reports the Aug. 27 *Business Week*.

“America is already on the edge of a recession; an oil-price rise of 25% might push it over the edge; and never before has America gone into recession with a structural budget deficit stuck at around 3% of GNP [Gross National Product],” adds the Aug. 18 *Economist*, a British weekly.

Is U.S. in recession?

Before the U.S. rulers sent tens of thousands of troops into the Middle East, there was little doubt that the economy was on a downward spiral. The “oil shock” is pushing the U.S. economy into a recession that will likely be worse than the one in 1981-82.

Traditionally a recession is when the economy declines for at least six months; that is, when the total goods and services

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U.S. Marine resists service in Saudi Arabia Refuses to board plane, won't fight for 'corporate profits'

Corporal Jeff Patterson, a 22-year-old Marine stationed in Honolulu, Hawaii, announced that he will refuse to ship out with his unit for combat duty in Saudi Arabia. Patterson, who issued a public statement at an Aug. 16 press conference, has applied for “conscientious objector” status.

On Aug. 20, the Marine Corps informed Patterson that he is scheduled to be deployed with his unit despite his application for “conscientious objector” status.

Patterson states that he will have to be carried onto the plane, and once in Saudi Arabia, will refuse to fight. Elements of Patterson's unit, an artillery brigade, have already been sent to the Mideast.

In the meantime, Patterson, a native of Hollister, Calif., has been confined to barracks. He is followed when walking around

on the base, and when he makes phone calls an officer stands next to him.

The Jeff Patterson Defense Committee is on a campaign to win support for this courageous Marine, who chose to speak out against the U.S. war moves in the Mideast. The Committee justifiably believes that the Marine Corps will try to make an “example” out of Patterson.

Statements of support for Patterson should be sent to: Commanding General, First Marine Expeditionary Brigade, Kaneohe Marine Corp. Air Station, Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii 96863-5501. Send a copy of the statement to Patterson's attorney: Eric A. Seitz, 820 Mililani Ave., Suite 714, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813.

The following is Jeff Patterson's statement to the press.

Good Afternoon,

My name is Jeff Patterson. I'm a Corporal in the U.S. Marine Corps. I have served 3 years and 10 months in the military with a relatively clean record. I have received various awards and have consistently received above-average job proficiency and conduct ratings from my superiors.

I have seven months left to serve before my End of Active Service Date. My MOS is that of a Field Artillery Fire Direction Controller. However, for the past two years I have been able to keep myself posted as a supply clerk to reduce the internal conflicts within myself. The recent moves by our government in the Persian Gulf has made my attempt to fulfill the remainder of my

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Reba Hansen: 'Jenny Higgins' extraordinaire



Fightback

By
Sylvia Weinstein

Reba Hansen died on July 3, 1990, after spending 56 years in the revolutionary Trotskyist movement. Reba joined the Communist League of America in 1934. The League was to become the Socialist Workers Party (SWP).

She joined the revolutionary movement in Salt Lake City, Utah, along with her husband, Joe Hansen. They were part of a group of young radicals who received their education in class consciousness from the Depression of 1929. They threw themselves into the struggles of the working class, first by aiding the miners of Utah and later, the farm workers of California.

Reba and Joe moved to San Francisco in 1935, where Joe helped edit a newspaper in the seamen's union while Reba did secretarial work to help support herself and Joe. She got involved in strike-support activity and worked to distribute our revolutionary socialist press.

In 1938, Reba and Joe went to Mexico to work with Leon Trotsky. Joe was Trotsky's secretary, chauffeur, and organizer of household defense. Reba stayed in Mexico for almost one year.

Reba left Mexico and moved to the Bronx, N.Y., where she became involved in building that branch and another in the Yorkville area of Manhattan. She was assigned to participate in party classes, taught some of them, and helped organize sales of the party press. Reba also held down a full-time job as a top-notch office worker.

In the national office

I worked at the SWP national headquarters at 116 University Place, beginning, I think, in 1954. At that time I was working in the city office and came to know Reba. Her job was not only as secretary to Cannon, but to run the national office as efficiently as possible. One of her many tasks

was to keep track of the party's office supplies. They were kept in the attic of the headquarters building, and it was Reba's job to dole them out. We were not a wealthy party—we did not waste paper, pencils, or anything else.

She made sure that whatever we took was strictly accounted for, but always with the greatest courtesy and good humor. We all knew, however, that she could be hard as nails when it came to doing the job she was assigned to do. You didn't mess with Reba.

Reba and Joe were probably the best working team the SWP ever had. They were friends as well as lovers, and both were hard-working comrades.

Reba was not known by most comrades as a political leader of the party. But while she was highly regarded by all who knew her as a "Jenny Higgins," she was also viewed as one of the most devoted and politically mature members of the SWP.

("Jimmy Higgins" was a highly respectful term applied in the socialist movement to those worker activists who served their party in any way needed, whether it was teaching a class, or turning the crank on a mimeograph machine, or distributing leaflets, or keeping the headquarters clean.)

During the 1960s, we began to recruit from the student movement. At first, a few of these new young members brought with them a little of the elitist terminology existing among some of the student activists.

One of these carry-overs was to call what we respectfully thought of as "Jimmy Higgins" work, "shit work." Reba and all the other Jenny and Jimmy Higginses would cringe every time they heard that snobbish put-down of working people. The young people soon got the message.

Spanish lessons

In 1962, Reba and Joe were sent to Latin America by the party.

Their job was to locate supporters of the Fourth International and, if possible, to bring them closer to the SWP and our world movement. The Cuban Revolution of 1959 had shaken up the whole continent, and workers and peasants were in motion. Our organizations in Third World countries were hampered, not only by the repressive governments of their countries, but by simply being poor.

Being the professional revolutionaries that they were, both Joe and Reba began to learn Spanish so they would be better able to do their job while in Latin America. They set about it by literally sealing themselves off from all outside forces for several months for at least two hours a night.

One night I had to deliver a message to Joe and could not reach him by phone. I went over to their apartment, knocked on the door and was met by Reba. She took my message, then excused herself, closed the door and returned to their Spanish lesson. She explained to me the next day that they had only a short time to learn to read, write, and speak Spanish so could not invite me in.

Needless to say, by the time they left on their trip they both were capable in their new language.

A frugal diet

Reba and Joe knew how to enjoy life also. Both of them loved to cook. However, they were the most economical cooks known in the heartland of imperialism. In

fact, when they went to Latin America we all felt they were probably the only pair who could live on roots and leaves if necessary.

Joe's frugal habits brought a rebellion at the "Trotsky School" in Mt. Spring Camp in Washington, N.J. Joe and Reba headed up the school at which comrades from around the country would be chosen to go for six months for an intensive study of our Marxist classics.

He and Reba had the cost of the school's diet down to a minimum through their applied science of how to save money at every meal. But we had some city slickers at the school who just couldn't get down that much heart, liver, and lungs along with black-eyed peas, barley, and greens. The city office in New York began to be besieged with requests to bring food relief or face an uprising by the students. Joe and Reba finally gave in, even though they were serving probably the healthiest, cheapest meals ever eaten.

It would be impossible to cover all of Reba's contributions to the revolutionary movement even in a book, let alone an article such as this. But comrades should read the book, "James P. Cannon As We Knew Him," published by Pathfinder Press in 1976 after Cannon's death. Reba's article, the last one in the book, gives you some idea of her warmth and dedication.

Of course, we will miss her, but she will remain with us as an inspiring example of dedication to the cause of human freedom. ■



Reba Hansen in 1989

Liberal Democrats duck for cover in U.S. oil war

Just a short time ago, liberal Democrats in Congress were shadow boxing with the Bush administration over how much to trim the military budget. "The Cold War is over," they claimed.

Now, however, the Cold War is quickly being replaced by a hot one on the desert sands. And (with a nervous look over their shoulder) the liberal Democrats are lining up to be counted in the war effort.

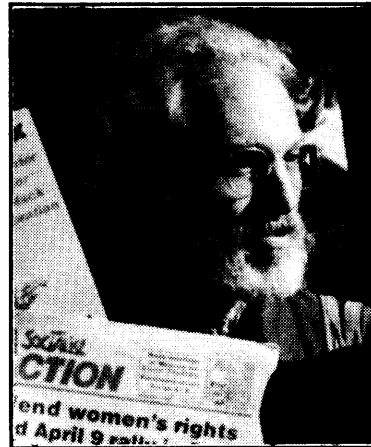
North Carolina Rep. Terry Sanford, for example, labels the deployment of U.S. troops in the Middle East a "brilliant performance." (*The New York Times*, Aug. 24, 1990) At the same time, he warns, the Bush administration is playing into Saddam Hussein's effort to depict the conflict as a "confrontation between Iraq and the 'imperialist' U.S."

The solution? Rep. Sanford recommends, "shift the primary burden to the U.N."

Rep. Ronald Dellums (D-Calif.), a member of the Congressional Black Caucus, echoes the call for United Nations intervention. In the meantime, Dellums says not a word against the use of U.S. troops in the region.

Jesse Jackson, on the other hand, has found it expedient to stress the need for negotiations. At the same time, he affirms his support for sending U.S. troops to the Persian Gulf to "defend our allies" and "protect our national interests." (*The New York Times*, Aug. 13, 1990)

As long ago as last June, in the midst of the "debate" on budget cuts, the liberals in Congress conceded that the "threat" of Saddam



Behind the Lines

By
Michael Schreiber

Hussein showed it was necessary to keep up American military prowess.

By the end of July, the Bush administration, in concert with Democrats in Congress, could announce that economic sanctions were being considered against "terrorist" Iraq. This was at the same time that discussions were taking place between Iraq and Kuwait, and was meant to show that the United States lined up with Kuwait in the Persian Gulf dispute.

Egyptian President Mubarak, who was acting as a mediator in the negotiations, reported to Washington that Saddam Hussein had promised he would not use force against Kuwait. But U.S. officials chose to ignore the promise. Instead, they sent six warships to the Persian Gulf to begin maneuvers with the naval forces of the United Arab Emirates.

The Kuwaitis—no doubt per-

ceiving that the United States was prepared to fight on their side—hardened their stance in the negotiations. The next day, the Iraqis sent their tanks into Kuwait. A week later, U.S. troops were on their way into Saudi Arabia.

The liberal Democrats, who stood behind all the U.S. preparations for war over the last few months, are experienced players in the game called "fool the people." Faced with the danger of a Vietnam-type conflict, they have now outdone themselves in lies and deceit.

These scoundrels hope that their calls for the United Nations to step in can mollify the deep anti-war sentiments of the American people. Bush, moreover, has the same hopes. He is seeking U.N. intervention against Iraq as long as it doesn't tie his hands.

In promoting this war for the bankers and the oil magnates, the liberal Democrats are no less dangerous than Bush and the Republicans. ■

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By LARS HOAGLAND

MINNEAPOLIS—On Aug. 23 over 175 people gathered here to protest the U.S. military deployment in the Persian Gulf.

The Speak-Out/Teach-In, held at the Minnesota Church Center, produced a virtually unanimous opinion calling for the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from the Middle East. A fax message expressing that demand was sent to the White House.

Alan Dale, a member of the Emergency Committee on the Persian Gulf, said, "People are already asking how we can get our troops out. We have to make it quite clear that the U.S. can get out of the region the same way they got in—by boats and by planes."

Dominic Najjar, a member of an Arab-American anti-discrimination group and a Palestinian who was raised in Israel, asked why there was not a call for international sanctions and a blockade when Israel invaded Lebanon.

Mary Sheppard, of Women Against Military Madness (WAMM), blasted the news media for providing one-sided information about the crisis, therefore leaving the impression that there is broad support for Bush's military moves in the Middle East.

Wendy Lyons, Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor, said she remembered the early days of the Vietnam protests. "This is a lot bigger than those early meetings," she said.

Lynn Henderson, speaking on behalf of Socialist Action, pointed out that the U.S. ruling class is deploying U.S. troops to "act as cannon fodder for oil profits." [See accompanying text of his remarks.]

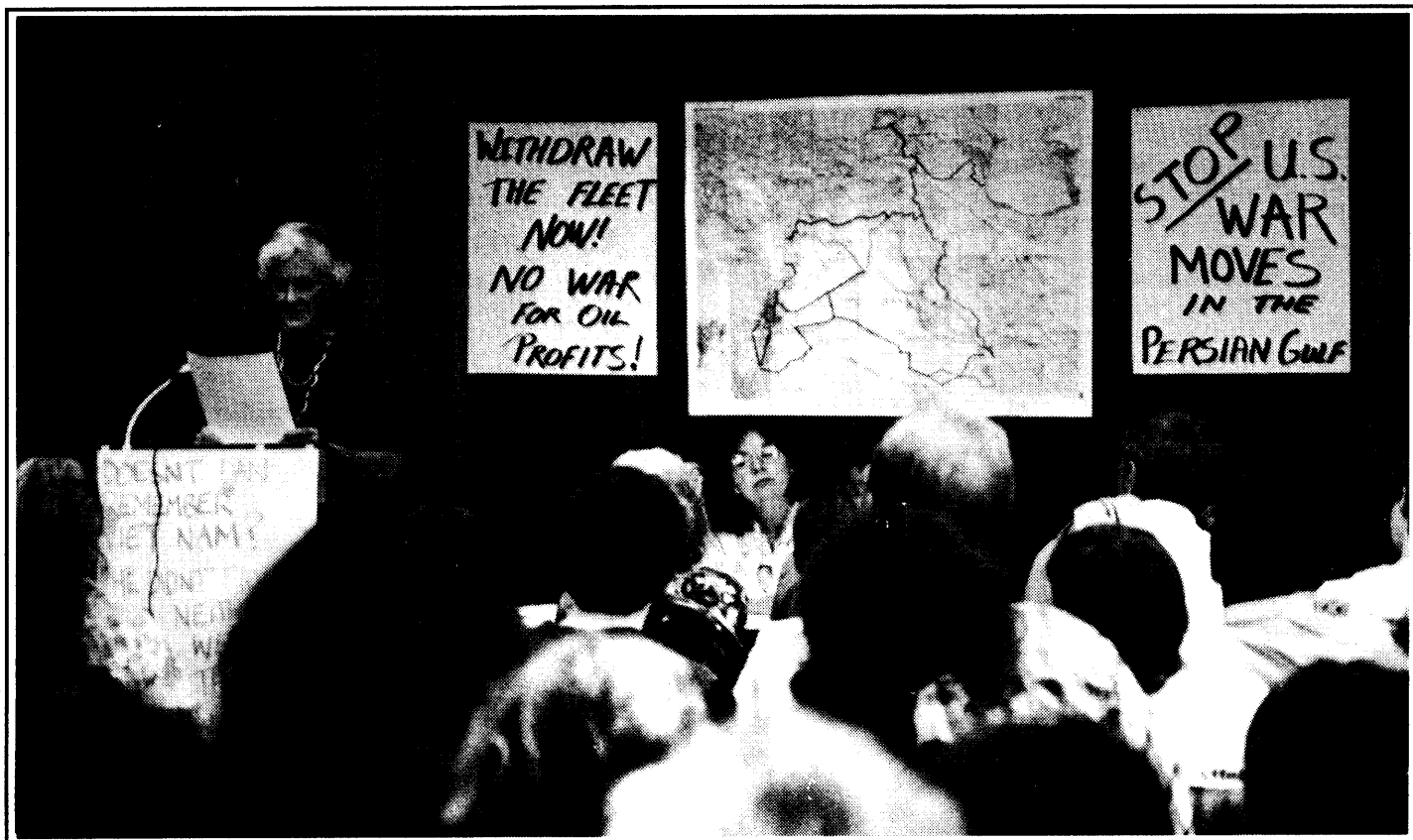
One of the most moving moments of the meeting was when Minneapolis-based truck driver Carol Overland described a recent trip through Nebraska in which she noticed vehicles carrying closely shorn young men accompanied by sullen-looking companions obviously reporting for military service. Overland also said Nebraska radio stations were repeatedly playing Bruce Springsteen's antiwar song "Born in the USA."

Sponsors of the Speak-Out/Teach-In included Women Against Military Madness, the Emergency Committee on the Persian Gulf, Clergy and Laity Concerned, Socialist Action, Progressive Student Organization, Twin Cities CISPES, and the U.S.-Cuba Friendship Committee.

Future meetings of the sponsoring groups are being projected to organize campus teach-ins when school opens as well as a picket-line against President Bush, who is scheduled to be in the Twin Cities on Sept. 27.

The following remarks were presented by Lynn Henderson to the Minneapolis Speak-

Twin Cities speak-out condemns U.S. war moves in Persian Gulf



Mary Sheppard from Women Against Military Madness (WAMM) speaking at teach-in

Out/Teach-In to protest the U.S. war moves in the Persian Gulf.

As has already been explained, virtually all the borders in the Middle East were, and continue to be, artificially established by the imperialist countries for their own interests.

These artificial boundaries were drawn on the basis of two criteria: One, in a conscious divide-and-rule strategy, to as much as possible fracture the Arab peoples with borders that deliberately cut across common languages and cultures. And two, to separate the known major oil deposits from the major Arab population centers.

For what purpose? To assure that the wealth from the oil natural resources of the Arab lands accrued not to the Arab peoples but to the imperialist oil companies. And that has largely been achieved. Despite tremendous natural resource wealth, the mass of Arab peoples live in abject poverty while the bulk of the oil wealth accrues directly and indirectly to a handful of imperialist cor-

porations.

It is this arrangement that Bush is moving to preserve. That's what is behind this massive troop deployment. That's what Bush means when he says "Our American way of life" is at stake. Our only stake in this policy is to act as cannon fodder for oil profits.

How can this policy be resisted and reversed? I think it would be a mistake to think the United Nations is going to do it. With the recent further evolution and degeneration of the Soviet bureaucracy, we have entered a new historic era in which more than ever that bureaucracy is willing to collaborate with U.S. imperialism in suppressing so-called "regional disputes."

We are not, unfortunately, moving into an era of "peace dividends." Left unchecked, U.S. imperialism feels freer today than ever before to intervene militarily and massively throughout most of the world. That's what Grenada, Panama, Liberia, and the Saudi Arabia deployment reflect.

There are two forces capable of reversing

this policy, and Bush and his friends are watching both with considerable caution and even fear. One is the Arab peoples, who could explode and sweep away the present puppet regimes as quickly as the Shah was swept away not long ago.

The other is the American people, who, drawing on the lessons of the Vietnam war experience, are capable of organizing a mass antiwar movement which can veto all of Bush's Mid-East war plans.

The right of national self-determination in the Middle East, which the imperialists denied in the past, will not be affirmed by them today. This right belongs only to the Arab people, who must be free to settle their differences without the "assistance" of those who have oppressed them for more than 80 years.

We must begin building a movement here which says loud and clear: "U.S. Out of the Middle East!" — "Bring the Troops Home Now!"

If my marine son is killed...

The following are excerpts from an open letter to George Bush that appeared in the Aug. 22 issue of *The New York Times* op-ed section.

Dear President Bush,

I kissed my son goodbye today. He is a 21-year-old marine. You have ordered him to Saudi Arabia.

The letter telling us he was going arrived at our vacation cottage in northern Wisconsin by Express Mail on Aug. 13. We left immediately for North Carolina to be with him. Our vacation was over....

While visiting my son I had a chance to see him pack his chemical weapons suit and try on his body armor. I don't know if you've ever had this experience, Mr. President. I hope you never will.

I also met many of my son's fellow soldiers. They are fine young men. A number told me that they were from poor families. They joined the Marines as a way of earning enough money to go to college.

None of the young men I met are likely to be invited to serve on the board of directors of a savings and loan association, as your son Neil was. And none of them have parents well-enough connected to call or write a general to insure that their child stays out of harm's way, as Vice President Quayle's parents did for him during the Vietnam War....

Yes, you have proved a relatively adept tactician in the last three weeks. But if American diplomacy hadn't been on vacation for the better part of a decade, we wouldn't be in the spot we are today.

Where were you, Mr. President, when Iraq was killing its own people with poison gas? Why, until the recent crisis, was it business as usual with Saddam Hussein, the man you now call a Hitler?...

Now that we face the prospect of war I intend to support my son and his fellow soldiers by doing everything I can to oppose any offensive American military action in the Persian Gulf. The troops I met deserve far better than the politicians and policies that hold them hostage.

As my wife and I sat in a little cafe outside our son's base last week, trying to eat, fighting back tears, a young marine struck up a conversation with us. As we parted he wished us well and said, "May God forgive us for what we are about to do."

President Bush, the policies you have advocated for the last decade have set the stage for military conflict in the Middle East.... If, as I expect, you eventually order American soldiers to attack Iraq, then it is God who will have to forgive you. I will not.

Alex Molnar,
Milwaukee, Wisc.

...Marine refuses deployment

(continued from page 1)

contract in a benign way impossible.

As we speak, tens of thousands of servicemen are being mobilized to defend, for the first time in American memory, a blatantly imperialistic economic interest stripped of the State Department's beloved specter of international communism. Although the United States is facing off against a truly despicable man in Saddam Hussein, the reality is that U.S. foreign policy created this monster.

It was the U.S. which tacitly endorsed the Iraqi invasion of Iran 10 years ago.

It was the U.S. and West Germany which sold Hussein chemical weapons throughout the war.

It was the U.S. which remained silent when Hussein used these weapons on his own population.

And after all of this, it was the U.S. which gave Hussein safe passage through the Persian Gulf and Strait of Hormuz by shipping Iraqi oil under the flag of Kuwait, thus protecting it from Iranian attack by U.S. escorts.

As usual, the world banks were delighted to assist Iraq in its invasion of Iran by handing out blank checks to be payable by the blood of the people after Iran would be crushed into submission.

It was these banks that actually financed the carnage of the half-million dead resulting from that war. It was this enormous war debt owed by Iraq that forced Hussein, in my

opinion, to make the following choice: Impose harsh austerity measures on his people and face the downfall of his regime, or, with a little military maneuvering, take Kuwait and in one fell swoop double the amount of oil produced by Iraq.

Although there are great differences in this interventionist policy and that of U.S. support for the death-squad regimes in El Salvador and Guatemala, there is an underlying motive of corporate profit throughout. Unfortunately the American people have fallen for a Big Lie—that corporate interests are always in the best interest of the people. This is rarely true.

What is the equation that balances human lives and corporate profits?

In my opinion, no such equation exists, except in the minds of the those who are preparing to fight this war.

The United States has no moral ground to stand on in the Persian Gulf. We created this monster and pointed him in this direction.

We pour millions into the coffers of Israel's military to wage a war against stone-throwing youth seeking a country to call their own once again.

I cannot and will not be a pawn in America's power plays for profits and oil in the Middle East. I will resist my scheduled departure, tentatively Sunday [Aug. 19], by immediately filing for conscientious objector status, and physically refusing to board the plane. And of course, if I am dragged out into the Saudi desert, I will refuse to fight.

Thanks and have a nice day.

Louis Farrakhan's new popularity shows search for alternatives among Black youth

But he feels Malcolm X looking over his left shoulder

By ADAM WOOD

Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam, attacked with great outrage by conservatives and liberals alike since 1984, just won't disappear. In fact, since coming into national prominence as a supporter of Jesse Jackson's first bid for the presidency, The Nation of Islam's (NOI) influence has steadily grown. Farrakhan and his followers are no longer ignored by politicians seeking a hearing from the Black community.

Farrakhan's public appearances have attracted growing crowds of young African Americans. A San Francisco meeting featuring Farrakhan in April of 1989 brought in 2000 people. An Oakland appearance this year on May 20 attracted over 6000 people.

Among the guests on stage welcoming Farrakhan to the city were most of the mainstream Black political and religious figures in the San Francisco Bay Area.

A NOI meeting at the Omni auditorium in Atlanta this year had an audience of 19,000, also with a strong representation of mainstream politicians. As a writer for *Emerge* magazine put it, the Black elected officials "were no longer offering excuses for having to be 'out of town' whenever Farrakhan was in town."

What's behind the growing influence and credibility of the Nation of Islam? Why are so many Black politicians clearing their throats after denouncing Farrakhan a few years ago and looking to him for left cover today? Why are young African Americans looking to Farrakhan as an alternative to the mainstream Black leaders.

Undeclared war on Blacks

An undeclared war on the Black community has been raging in the United States for the past 10 years. White mob violence claimed the lives of young Black men in Howard Beach and Bensonhurst, N.Y. Police attacks as part of the so-called war on drugs left Black people dead, brutalized, and homeless in Boston and Minneapolis.

The federal government has undermined important legal victories won by the civil rights movement with the Supreme Court's recent decisions against affirmative action.

There are more Black elected officials now than at any time in U.S. history, yet the standard of living for African Americans is lower than it was in 1955. Black teenage unemployment hovers around 50 percent, and the gap between average incomes of Blacks and whites is now greater than before the civil rights movement.

Young African Americans have responded to these attacks with demonstrations and picket lines on city streets and college campuses.

The vacuum of Black leadership, the failure of a reformist approach, and the default of the labor bureaucracy to lead a fight against racism have combined to make Black nationalism a pole of attraction for militant African American youth. The colors and symbols of Africa can be seen on medallions and T-shirts worn across the country.

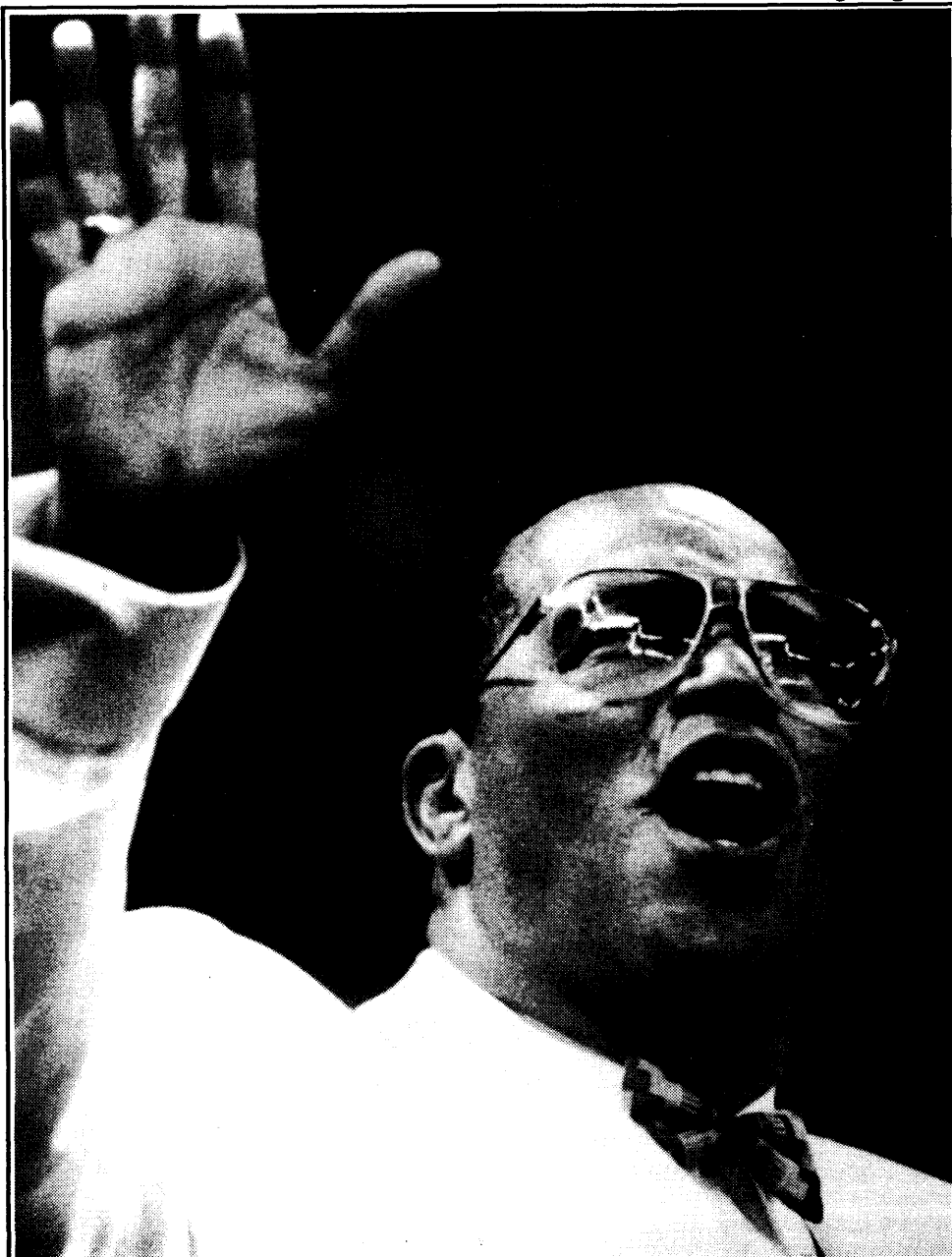
Black nationalism, as taught by Marcus Garvey and Malcolm X, rejects any reliance on the white-dominated government and politicians and stands for the independent organization of Blacks for self-determination.

NOI's recent transformation

The NOI is the largest Black nationalist organization in the country today. This alone would give it an important place in the African American political spectrum, but the NOI itself has undergone some political developments which have helped it grow.

The Nation of Islam, founded by Elijah Muhammad, first gained national attention in the late '50s and early '60s with Malcolm X as its national spokesperson. It gave a voice to African Americans in the Northern cities and stood as a radical alternative to the civil rights leadership in the South.

When Malcolm X left the NOI in 1964 to form his own organization, the NOI went into decline. It was largely displaced by secular Black power organizations like the Black Panther Party in the late '60s. In 1975 Warith Deen Muhammad, Elijah's son, took



"I'm not a Democrat—I can't subscribe to the madness and hypocrisy of the Democratic Party—and I'm certainly not a Republican."

over the organization. He rejected his father's Black nationalist ideas which diverged from traditional Islam and changed the name of the group to the American Muslim Mission.

Louis Farrakhan split from Muhammad in 1978 and formed his own organization with the old name and the old ideology.

Farrakhan was thrust into public notoriety in 1984 by taking a new step for the NOI—he gave its support to a presidential candidate, Jesse Jackson. Remarks that Farrakhan made during that campaign about Jews and the state of Israel led to his being attacked by everyone from Jerry Falwell to David Dinkins. Jackson himself denounced the remarks and distanced himself from Farrakhan.

Farrakhan stated that the creation of Israel was an "outlaw act" and went on to say, "There can never be peace structured on injustice, thievery, lying and deceit, and using the holy name of God to shield your dirty religion under His holy and righteous name."

Farrakhan's remarks were directed against the colonial state of Israel and its genocidal policies against the Palestinians, but he made no distinction between the racist Zionist movement and the Jewish people. This opened him up to attack and alienated many potential supporters.

Of course, Falwell and other right-wing forces who attacked him were not concerned with the plight of the Jews. Their motive was to discredit Black nationalism, not anti-Semitism.

In the years that followed, Farrakhan oriented his organization toward other movements in the Black community. Whereas the NOI had previously stood aside from mass actions and activities called by others, Farrakhan now began to participate in actions with contingents from the NOI.

NOI members marched in the rallies to support Tawana Brawley, and in the "Days of Outrage" in New York City following the Bernard Goetz decision. The NOI was also very visible in the recent rallies welcoming Nelson Mandela to the United States. Such moves have established the NOI as a real force in the day-to-day politics of the Black community and gained new followers.

Farrakhan has also tried to shed the image given to him as an anti-Semite and a "Black Hitler." In his 1990 speeches, Farrakhan opens by stating, "If you came to hear attacks on whites and Jews, you came to the wrong place. If you came to hear a Black man tell the truth, you came to the right place."

A contradictory orientation

Farrakhan has taken a largely independent stance in politics. He stated that Jesse Jackson, if elected, would only manage white affairs and could no longer expect the NOI's support.

In an August 1990 interview with *Emerge* magazine Farrakhan said, "I'm not a Democrat—I can't subscribe to the madness and hypocrisy of the Democratic Party—and I'm certainly not a Republican."

The NOI's steps toward independent political action reached a new stage with the campaigns of Dr. Abdul Alim Muhammad, George X Cure, and Shawn X Brakeen, launched on May 4, 1990, for local and congressional seats in Maryland and Washington, D.C. The three candidates are running as members of the NOI against Democratic and Republican party opponents.

At the press conference announcing the campaigns, Farrakhan said, "When we see

the need for good leadership, courageous leadership, incorruptible leadership, then we have to say it is time now for us to come out of the mosque into the community and serve the needs of all."

These campaigns raise the idea of a new Black political party independent of the Democrats and Republicans. However, some other statements by Farrakhan cloud the NOI's independent stance.

In the same interview with *Emerge*, Farrakhan stated:

"I feel that a lot of politicians, Black and white, don't represent the interests of Black people. I want to use my popularity to get them out of city councils, state legislatures and congress and put in those who will fight for our people. And whether that politician is Black or white, if that politician will stand up for justice for our Black people ... we will certainly consider giving that politician our vote."

An approach which makes no distinction about a politician's party affiliation is dangerous. Farrakhan could lead the NOI into supporting demagogic politicians tied to the existing white power structure. Much of the attention Farrakhan has received from mainstream Black leaders and media stems from their hope that they can win the NOI's political support for their own reformist projects.

Support for Democratic Party politicians has been the death of many radical organizations. The resolution of this contradiction in the NOI's political orientation will have a decisive influence on its ability to represent the heritage of Black nationalism.

Growing interest in Malcolm X

One aspect of the struggle by young African Americans to reclaim Black nationalism is the growing interest in Malcolm X and his ideas. Black nationalism found its highest expression in Malcolm X, who was gunned down in 1965 as his ideas were still developing.

It might seem natural that the largest Black nationalist organization in the country would welcome this interest in Malcolm X and promote the study of his ideas. However, some problems in the NOI's past make it difficult for them to identify with Malcolm.

When Malcolm X left the NOI in 1964, he was denounced by the NOI leadership. Louis Farrakhan, known at that time as Louis X, wrote, "Only those who wish to be led to hell, or to their doom, will follow Malcolm."

Farrakhan went on to state, "Such a man as Malcolm is worthy of death, and would have met death if it had not been for Muhammad's confidence in Allah for victory over the enemies." (*Muhammad Speaks*, Dec. 4, 1964)

When Malcolm X was assassinated in 1965, the government tried to frame the NOI for the murder. The NOI and the men convicted for the murder have denied any guilt to this day. However, such remarks by Farrakhan and others gave the government the opportunity to portray the murder as "Black extremist in-fighting."

Farrakhan reevaluates Malcolm

The tremendous influence which Malcolm still holds in the minds of young African Americans has forced the NOI to soften its stance toward him. Farrakhan told *Emerge*, "Malcolm's name is being heard again, and people are going back and studying Malcolm's words and waking up all over again. It speeds up the general rise in consciousness of our people."

But Farrakhan sees something behind this renewed interest in Malcolm. He goes on to say, "The enemy sees Louis Farrakhan mounting up on wings today, rebuilding the Nation. There is no living person they can bring against Louis Farrakhan."

"So they say there is a resurgence of Malcolm ... the wickedly wise devils want to bring Malcolm back, to use the growing popularity of Malcolm against the rise of Farrakhan."

There is some truth in what Farrakhan says, insofar as the capitalist media is trying to use *distortions* of Malcolm X's ideas against all Black militants.

The *New York Times*, which called Malcolm "a victim of the hell he created" at the time of his death, ran an article around the time of his birthday this year hailing him as a man who rejected "extremism," became an integrationist, and supported registering Blacks to vote for capitalist politicians.

Malcolm, however, never abandoned the fight to organize Blacks independently
(continued on next page)

Cleveland State Univ. guilty of racist practices

By SHIRLEY PASHOLK

In 1987, a U.S. Labor Department investigation found Cleveland State University (CSU) guilty of discriminatory hiring and promotion of people of color. For a time federal funds were withheld.

The Greater Cleveland Roundtable, a group of business leaders, also investigated charges of racism at CSU in 1987. They concluded that CSU had "serious problems related to race relations" and recommended a 40-point plan of corrective measures. One of their recommendations was the creation of an office of minority affairs with a vice president to head it.

Following a two-year search, with over 200 candidates interviewed, Dr. Raymond A. Winbush, who held a similar position at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn., was hired. He became the first Black vice president in CSU's 25-year history.

Winbush accepted this job as a mandate to improve the environment for Blacks and other people of color at CSU. When he was hired, only 26 of the 539 faculty members were Black, and 20 of these were concentrated in three of CSU's 43 departments.

Although over 52 percent of Cleveland residents are Black, only 11.6 percent of CSU students were Black. Even worse, 83 percent of Black students were forced to take remedial "special studies" courses and only 6.3 percent of CSU graduates were Black.

The Roundtable report described Winbush's job as coordinating "efforts to strengthen student achievement, minority employment opportunities, procurement and race relations on campus and throughout the community."

Yet, as soon as he was hired, CSU President John Flower warned him, "We must be careful not to let the misperception emerge that you are the Black community's instrument to get a bigger piece of CSU."

Racism prompts firing

In June, after 10 months on the job, Winbush was surprised when he was only offered a 2 percent cost of living adjustment while other CSU vice presidents were given merit raises. When he questioned this new contract, Flower responded by firing him.

Outraged students went to Flower's office and demanded an explanation. When Flower refused to reconsider his decision, they formed Students for Dr. Raymond Winbush.

At first Flower tried to dismiss the whole incident as a salary dispute, saying Winbush had resigned over money. The story fell apart when word got out that Winbush had rejected a substantial buy-out offer to resign.

Then Flower claimed Winbush was fired for poor performance—not being a team player, refusing to follow accepted university channels of command, failing to work well with white students, and alienating white business and community leaders.

Winbush explained, "I was an advocate for minority rights and that's what got me in trouble." During his 10 months on

him. The OAAU declined and broke up after his death.

Malcolm's legacy

It is absolutely essential to carry on Malcolm's struggle to build a real independent Black organization.

Such an organization could stand as an alternative to Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition and the phony independent projects of others, like Chicago's Tim Evans and his Harold Washington Party. These organizations disappear the day after an election and only come back to life next election time to support their leaders or other Democratic Party politicians.

A real Black independent political organization or party would fight for justice 365

the job, he actively intervened in the hiring process to bring more Black faculty members to CSU. He started the Co-operative Learning and Academic Success System, a 10-week pre-college program to prepare inner-city Cleveland youth for college.

Winbush also followed the Roundtable report's mandate to "outreach into the minority community and work in partnership with it" by providing university financial assistance and support to a series of community programs.

Schuyler Cook, president of CWA Local 4509, which represents the CSU staff, wrote an open letter to Flower, "to express our outrage and disappointment at the way in which Dr. Raymond Winbush was not afforded the opportunity to negotiate a new contract."

Cook's open letter continues, "Dr. Raymond Winbush has been instrumental in making the transition smooth between his office and the establishment of the Communication Workers of America at Cleveland State University, despite efforts by the administration to undermine his work in this regard."

The officers and members of Communication Workers of America, Local 4509, are unalterably opposed to the non-contract renewal and WE DEMAND his immediate reinstatement with a reasonable salary offer to reflect his work that he has done at Cleveland State University."

Taking message to community

While maintaining a 24-hour a day sit-in at President Flower's office, the Students for Dr. Raymond Winbush have also taken their message into the community, holding rallies at area churches featuring such nationally known civil rights leaders as Southern Christian Leadership Conference President Joseph Lowery.

They have protested the CSU Board of Trustees' support for Flower's stance by picketing businesses of the Trustees. Seven protesters were arrested for trespassing at one of these demonstrations. They have also picketed outside the State Office Building demanding that Governor Richard Celeste intervene on Winbush's behalf.

Many churches and community organizations have sent support statements to the students. The Cleveland Board of Education passed a resolution "that it will desist from entering contracts of any kind with Cleveland State University until such time as the Raymond A. Winbush matter is satisfactorily resolved." Numerous politicians, including Cleveland Mayor Michael White, have offered their support.

Despite two bomb threats, three phoned death threats, and a mysterious gas leak which forced evacuation of the building, the students vow to continue their actions until their demands are met.

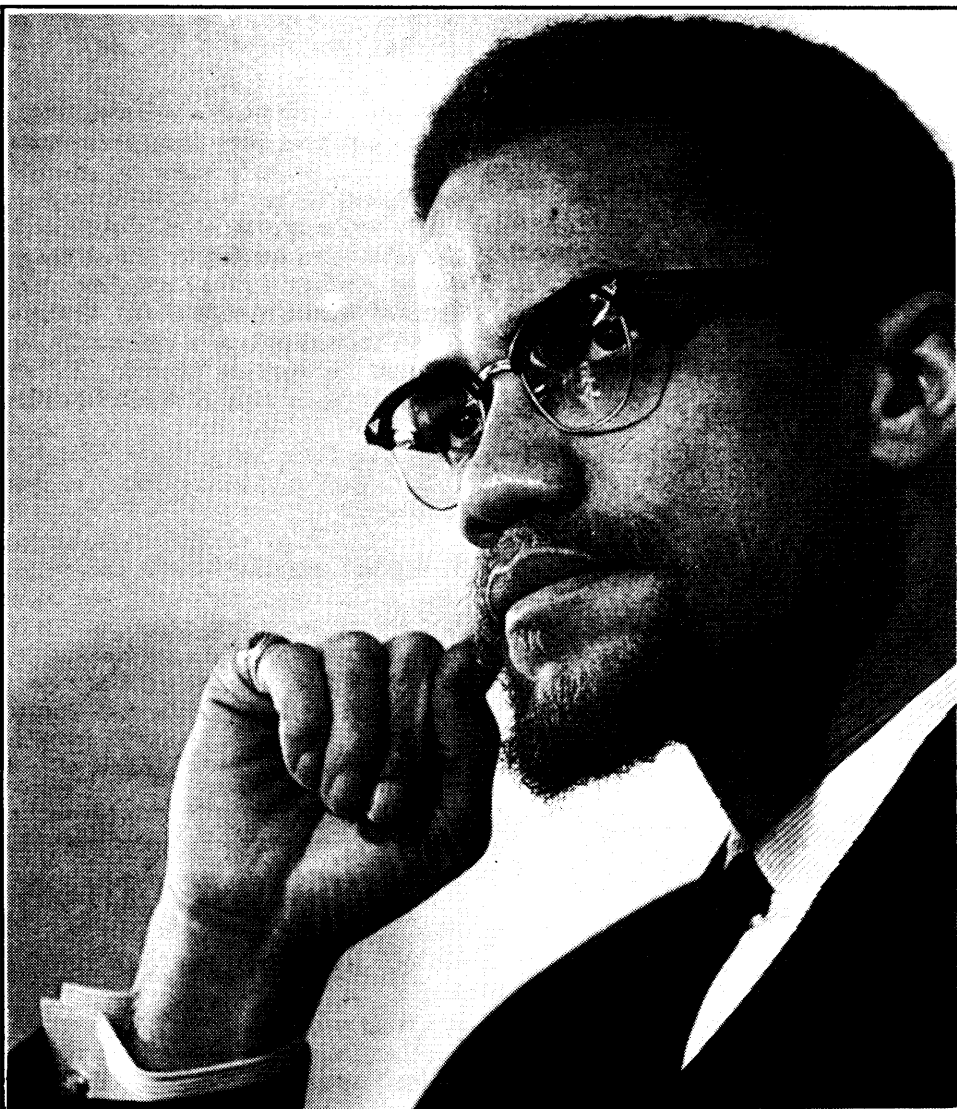
These demands are: "1. Reinstatement Dr. Winbush! 2. Fair and equitable contract negotiations. 3. Increase the power and budget of the Office of Minority Affairs and Human Relations. 4. Create a clear-cut job description for the position of Vice President of Minority Affairs. 5. Increased communication between the Administration/Board of Directors of CSU and the Student Body." ■

days a year and actively involve African Americans in its decision making—not just its fund raising.

Such a party would also be an example for the labor movement and speed the discussion of forming an independent labor party.

This is Malcolm X's legacy. He never rejected Black nationalism. He struggled to bring his revolutionary ideas into the real struggles of his time.

Young African Americans inside and outside the Nation of Islam who are looking to Black nationalism must carefully study and understand the real issues behind Malcolm's split with the NOI. Read Malcolm's words, not interpretations by the *New York Times* or Louis Farrakhan. These words still point the way forward. ■



Michael Ochs Archives

'This is Malcolm X's legacy. He never rejected Black nationalism. He struggled to bring his revolutionary ideas into the real struggles of his time.'

(continued from previous page)

around their own demands. He spent his last year trying to build an organization for just that purpose.

Malcolm never rejected Black nationalism. He tried to redefine it in the context of the liberation struggles he witnessed first-hand in Africa and the Middle East.

If Malcolm's real words pose a problem for Farrakhan, it is only because he progressed much farther than the NOI on crucial political questions.

On the question of which forces in the Black community to look toward for leadership, Farrakhan urges his supporters to support Black businesses. *The Final Call*, the NOI's newspaper, tells its readers to "Buy Black" and keep their money in the Black community. The argument is that by enriching Black businesses, African Americans can form an economic base independent from white America, and move toward establishing an independent state.

Malcolm X was for encouraging Black small businesses, but he increasingly rejected capitalism as a solution for African Americans. He stated:

"Capitalism used to be like an eagle, now it's more like a vulture. It used to be strong enough to go and suck anybody's blood whether they were strong or not. But now it has become more cowardly, like the vulture, and it can only suck the blood of the helpless."

"As the nations of the world free themselves, then capitalism has less victims, less to suck, and it becomes weaker and weaker. It's only a matter of time in my opinion before it will collapse completely." (Interview in *Young Socialist*, March-April 1965)

History backs up Malcolm

History has backed up Malcolm's point of view. The wealth of the world has long been divided up by the capitalists of the United States, Europe, and Japan. No new country, white or Black, can enter the world on a capitalist basis and expect anything but plunder and exploitation by the existing world capitalist powers.

The recent experiences of the Eastern European countries moving toward capitalism prove this. Rather than capitalist plenty, these countries are discovering capitalist unemployment, debt, and inflation.

The Black businesses in this country can never compete with the resources and political power of white capitalism. They are and will be dependent on the major corporations and banks of this country for loans, materials, and markets.

Farrakhan approaches the whole question from a position of weakness. Rather than looking to the illusion of a Black capitalist class, the Black nationalist movement should look to the millions of Black workers who make up the majority of African Americans.

These workers, organized in the plants, mines, offices, and schools of the country have the power—especially when participating in common action with white workers—to shut down the profits of the white capitalists and run the industries in their own name. This is the way out of the racist capitalist system.

Malcolm's evolution

Malcolm also went further that Farrakhan in attempting to participate in the day-to-day struggles in the Black community. He went beyond the narrow religious base of the NOI and founded the secular Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU).

Malcolm did not see this in conflict with building a Muslim movement, and he founded his own Muslim Mosque Inc. at the same time. But he saw the need for an organization which could unite African Americans on the basis of their common oppression, rather than their religious views.

Malcolm saw the OAAU as an organization which would participate in the struggles of the Black community and would also bring the best young minds of Black America together to create a political program that met the demands of the majority of African Americans.

Such a program could serve as the basis for election campaigns and for common action with other forces, Black and white, who agreed on certain issues. "We would have some meeting and determine at a later date if we want to form a Black nationalist party or a Black nationalist army," Malcolm told the founding conference of the OAAU on June 28, 1964.

Tragically, Malcolm was assassinated before he could build a solid organizational structure or train a new leadership to replace

Canadian pro-choice actions planned

By SHIRLEY PASHOLK

Women from all over English Canada and Quebec traveled to Ottawa for a binational conference of the Pro Choice Action Network (PCAN) on the weekend of Aug. 11-12. The breadth of participation marked the considerable growth of PCAN since it was formed by groups from four cities in 1988.

Although the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics (OCAC) started in 1982, most of the groups represented at the PCAN conference began in the last year or two. Many grew out of efforts to build participation in last fall's cross-country day of pro-choice actions. A new student-based group was formed only eight weeks before the conference in Kitchener-Waterloo.

While agreeing that their main focus is opposing the government's attack on abortion rights, conference participants also noted that the House's passage of a law re-criminalizing abortion has emboldened right-wing groups. Conference participants agreed

on the need to visibly mobilize to defend the clinics from these thugs.

They also discussed the need to counter new tactics the anti-choice goons devise. For example, a recent Operation Rescue hit in Toronto successfully blockaded a clinic for some time before police arrested 25 of the bigots. OCAC had no advance notice of this hit, which was staged at 2:30 on a Saturday afternoon. By the time the clinic director realized they had been targeted, it was too late to prepare an adequate physical defense.

In small towns, anti-choice goons have taken to harassing individual doctors—staging picketlines outside their homes and threatening them with lawsuits. This, coupled with the threat of criminal prosecution under the new law, has caused many small-town doctors to announce they will no longer perform abortions—further restricting access.

The new law has encouraged an upswing of activity by the religious right. Such prominent U.S. misogynists as Jerry

Falwell and Joseph Scheidler are making well-publicized appearances.

Organizing the fightback

Although the Canadian Senate, which is expected to vote on the law sometime this fall, generally rubber stamps House-passed legislation, conference participants agreed it is important not to concede passage of this law. They will continue to push for its defeat.

Protests are planned for the day of the Senate vote. If it is signed into law, they will pressure the Justice Minister not to implement it. (She has already promised not to proclaim it immediately because of her concerns over possible additional restrictions on access.)

If the law passes, a province-by-province attack on abortion rights is likely. PCAN is prepared to launch a national educational campaign to explain that restrictions in one province are a danger to women in all provinces since they will serve as a model

for similar restrictions elsewhere. PCAN will mobilize support throughout English Canada and Quebec to oppose any provincial restrictions.

The conference voted to work with the Canadian Abortion Rights Action League and the National Action Committee on the Status of Women to build an Oct. 13 Day of Action in cities and towns binationally. The demands are "No New Abortion Law" and "Full Access to Free Abortion." Possible future activities include a major speaking tour for Dr. Henry Morgenthaler and a cross-country abortion caravan modelled after the 1970 one.

Provincial PCAN conferences are planned in British Columbia, Ontario, and Saskatchewan. Conference participants were optimistic about drawing more people into visible defense of abortion rights and building new PCAN affiliates in other cities and towns throughout English Canada and Quebec. Support has been particularly strong on college campuses. ■

By BELLE KENNEDY

NEW YORK—Anti-choice forces are still hard at it in the New York City area. "Prayer vigils for the unborn," organized by the Catholic Church but attended by a range of right-wingers, are being held once a month outside women's health clinics.

Ostensibly non-militant, these rallies have been effective in forcing at least one clinic to reschedule its patients' appointments, and the "sidewalk counsellors" are still there to harass and disinform women who try to use the clinic's resources.

Though they are organized by Monsignor Reilly and Bishop Daily of the Brooklyn diocese, these vigil-attacks move from parish to parish throughout the city, trying to give the impression of mass opposition to women's right to choose.

These vigils do not officially blockade clinics. After a service at a neighborhood church, the participants walk to the clinic door, where they sing hymns and pray for a couple of hours before dispersing to abuse patients at various other clinics in the area. They even announce their targets in advance. But they remain a dangerously effective force in the battle against accessible abortion.

Both the National Organization for Women (NOW) and the Women's Health Action and Mobilization (WHAM) have been well-organized in providing escorts for patients during these and other attacks in New York, and both groups give out information about upcoming anti-choice rallies. But too few people, besides the escorts themselves, are being organized to show up to defend the clinics.

One "prayer vigil" in July had over 200 people, and less than 50 people were there to challenge them—mainly from WHAM, which has better success at getting its sup-

N.Y. women's clinics hit



Operation Rescue fanatics are still harassing women at clinics.

porters out.

This lack of numbers makes it too easy for the police to segregate pro-choice supporters far from the clinic entrance and almost out of earshot. With so few people, it is much harder to make an impact, and much

more likely that the clinic will be effectively closed for business.

It may seem as if Operation Rescue is on the retreat, but women's right to choose is still being seriously threatened. The only way to protect that right is by mass mobi-

Abused women

By CAROLINE LUND

What would you guess is the greatest cause of injuries to women 15 years and older? Automobile accidents? Accidents at home or at work? Muggings and rapes? Wrong.

A study recently reported in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* found that the most common cause of injuries to women is abuse by husband or partner. Injuries from domestic abuse occurred more often than auto accidents, muggings, and rapes combined.

The study further noted that "34 percent of all female homicide victims older than 15 years are killed by their husbands or intimate partners." This conclusion came from FBI data gathered from 1976 to 1987.

The *Journal* article pointed to the crying inadequacy of the U.S. medical system, which treats these women and then sends them home to the likelihood of more abuse. The deeper problem is the sickness of the family and human relations in this capitalist system of violence, competition, and hypocrisy. ■

Promoting our ideas

By BARBARA PUTNAM

Socialist Action responded quickly to the U.S. government's decision to send troops to the Middle East. We printed a special mid-August edition of our newspaper with the banner headline "Bring the Troops Home!" The articles have been reprinted in this issue.

Socialist Action salespeople in 19 cities across the country report that the Middle East edition was well received at protest actions in their areas.

In the San Francisco Bay Area, several Palestinian grocery-store owners took copies of the special edition to give to their customers. At a protest on Aug. 20 in Chicago, a number of Palestinian demonstrators raised up the *Socialist Action* front page and used it for a sign. Here are some other reports we've received:

The Chicano Moratorium, on Aug. 25 in Los Angeles, drew about 6000 participants. This rally and march, a commemoration of the 1970 Chicano Moratorium, was built around the theme of "U.S. out of the Middle East."

The Los Angeles Socialist Action branch sold newspapers and Middle East special edi-

tions at the Moratorium and at an earlier protest demonstration of 300 called by the ad-hoc Coalition Against Intervention in the Middle East.

On Aug. 9, an emergency demonstration of 100-125 people took place in downtown San Francisco in front of the Chevron headquarters. The San Francisco branch of Socialist Action had a speaker at the rally. Several young people bought the newspaper and signed up for Socialist Action classes.

The following week, in Berkeley, Calif., a local radio station, KPFA, co-sponsored a public speakout of 200 people. There was a lively and rich discussion as speakers, including those from Socialist Action, raised their voices against the U.S. war in the Middle East.

In the Minneapolis-St. Paul area, a successful teach-in of 175 people took place on Aug. 23. (See story on page 3.) The Twin Cities branch of Socialist Action participated in building the rally, distributed copies of the special edition, and sold several new subscriptions to *Socialist Action* newspaper.

In next month's issue of *Socialist Action*, we will inaugurate a new expanded theoretical supplement, which will appear every few months in the paper. Our October supplement will contain reports from Poland and East Germany, an article summing up the lessons of the 1917 Russian Revolution for revolutionaries today, and a debate on the economic basis of the Soviet Union: "Stalinized workers state or state capital-

ism?"

Not only are we expanding the size of Socialist Action—we're lowering the subscription price! For the next three months, during our Fall 1990 subscription drive, the

special reduced price will be \$6 for one year and \$3 for six months. We aim to get 700 new subscribers by Thanksgiving. If you are not a current subscriber, here's your chance. Subscribe now! ■

Help make our fund drive a success!

Delegates to Socialist Action's recent national convention unanimously approved a \$25,000 fund drive. At a "Rally in Defense of Socialism and Democracy" held at the closing of the convention on July 7, \$16,500 was pledged by members and supporters.

We are now appealing to readers of *Socialist Action* newspaper to help raise the remaining \$8500 by Oct. 31.

Past fund drives have been instrumental in Socialist Action's publishing efforts, subsidizing our initial series of books and pamphlets. *Socialist Action* newspaper has also been a major beneficiary.

Past fund drives have made it possible to send *Socialist Action* reporters to cover class-struggle battles from the coal mines of Pittston to the shipyards in Poland to the Pro-Democracy Movement in China.

Money for the current fund drive is already being spent. A special edition of

Socialist Action was printed and distributed across the country in mid-August in response to U.S. intervention in the Middle East.

We are also doubling the press run of our current issue to help build the movement against the U.S. war in the Persian Gulf. We want to continue and expand our coverage of the Middle East.

With this fund drive we want to update office equipment and expand our newspaper staff. In addition we plan to send a delegation of four socialist journalists to Cuba to increase our understanding and bring back an accurate picture, undistorted by capitalist propaganda, of Cuba today.

Join with us to make our \$25,000 fund-drive goal "in full and on time"—because every dollar counts. Please send your fund-drive contribution to Socialist Action, 3435 Army St. #308, San Francisco, CA 94110.—SHANNON SHEPPARD

Prognosis for world capitalism: New crises, attacks on workers

Joseph Ryan/Socialist Action

The following is an abridged and edited version of the Draft Political Resolution approved by the July 1990 Socialist Action National Convention.

In an amazingly brief space of time one of the most breathtaking series of revolutionary mass mobilizations in history has swept through the degenerated and deformed workers states of Eastern Europe. It is no exaggeration to say that the crumbling of Stalinism in Eastern Europe has qualitatively changed world politics.

The facade of Stalinist omnipotence collapsed under the feet of angry millions marching in the streets. It has opened up a period of pre-revolutionary political struggle in these countries that will not come to an end until the workers have had their say.

But, in the meantime, the bureaucracies are still far from being dislodged from their positions of control in the industrial and state apparatus. And they will not be dislodged without the conscious action of the workers in their own name, in their own class interests.

In the current political context—in which the working class has stayed on the sidelines—the anti-Stalinist movements have come under the influence of the middle classes who are reinforcing the [capitalist] restorationist tendency of the Stalinist bureaucracies.

Although at this point there has not yet been established the nuclei of revolutionary proletarian parties in these countries, the opportunity for their construction has opened up and will grow in the coming months and years. One of our tasks in the period ahead will be to do what we can to help this movement toward achieving this goal.

We have already taken a number of small steps in this direction. We organized a delegation to the Soviet Union in the spring of last year, and another that arrived in China shortly after the Tiananmen massacre. We sent a correspondent to Romania after the bloody uprising there that overthrew Ceausescu. Soon afterward we inspired friends of the party to go to the Soviet Union and Poland, and we sent a delegation to Eastern Europe in the spring.

As a result, we have gained a clearer picture of the pace of development and the nature of the class forces in motion and made some contact with a very small layer of an emerging vanguard of our class.

These are extremely modest efforts but are quite impressive given our size. Small as we are, we intend to be a part of the unfolding process of world revolution because of the special contribution we can make toward its ultimate success.

Our main tasks, however, continue to be in our own country. This is not in any sense in conflict with our internationalist perspective. In fact, it is our consistent revolutionary socialist world outlook that sets us apart from all our opponents.

In this connection, it is no exaggeration to say that world events, which are confirming our theoretical and programmatic positions with each passing day, have begun to favorably alter the relationship of forces between us and our opponents. This small advantage today, will have far greater effect in the next period, when the working class is impelled by events onto the road of class struggle.

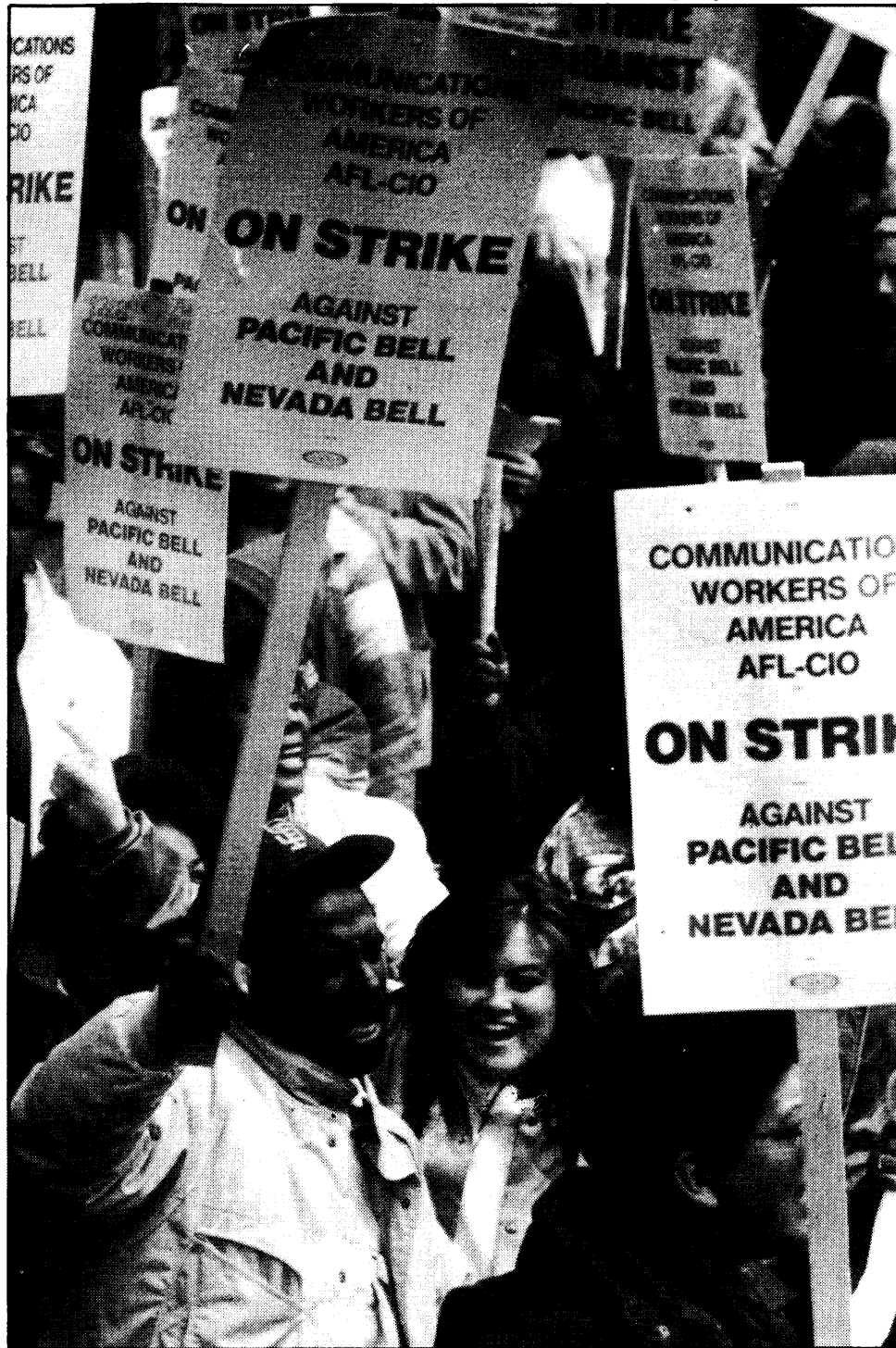
Capitalism's eroding foundations

The colonial and semi-colonial world has remained in an uninterrupted pre-revolutionary state since the end of World War I. Now the Stalinist world has also entered a pre-revolutionary state of unequalled instability.

The chain of imperialism continues to break at its weakest links. In these spheres, the "chief obstacle in the path of transforming the prerevolutionary into a revolutionary state is the opportunist character of proletarian leadership..."

These words remain as true today as when Trotsky wrote them in 1938.

In the imperialist centers of world capitalism, Trotsky stated, "the opportunist charac-



'Capitalism, the material foundation from which this social insanity springs, faces deepening contradictions.'

ter of proletarian leadership: its petty bourgeois cowardice before the big bourgeoisie and its perfidious connection with it even in its death agony...." opened the door to the catastrophe of World War II.

Again, at the end of the war, further reformist betrayal of revolutionary opportunities allowed imperialism to regain its equilibrium and opened up a new period of capitalist expansion. It was thus granted a new lease on life, condemning the world's peoples to suffer nearly another half century of imperialist counter-revolutionary wars, intensified exploitation and oppression and ecological disaster.

It is difficult to exaggerate the full consequences of the failure to resolve the historical crisis of proletarian leadership during the pre-revolutionary period of the 1930s and 40s. In line with Trotsky's 1938 warning, the whole culture of the human race has begun to unravel.

It has reached a point where the very earth upon which we live is gasping for breath and whole peoples in Africa, Asia and Latin America are steadily being pushed back to a level of subsistence that is worse than that belonging to a distant past. A condition of existence in which natural disasters—floods, droughts—unnecessarily condemn millions

to starvation, disease and painful death.

Capitalism, the material foundation from which this social insanity springs, faces deepening contradictions. But as we noted in the 1988 Political Resolution, while the long period of economic stability is showing signs of exhaustion, "No one can predict when the current economic phase will come to an end or what will bring the developing crisis to a head."

The assault on living standards

In the last two years, even though further evidence of the deepening crisis continues to surface, such as the collapse of the savings and loan industry which threatens to capsize the nation's entire banking system, the ruling class has remained able to contain the damage and keep the whole system from reeling out of control. In the meantime, capitalism works incessantly to intensify the rate of exploitation and thus postpone economic collapse.

One of the most obvious consequences of this is the absolute decline in workers' real per-capita income. According to government statistics, which notoriously understate such bad news, real hourly wages fell by five percent in the last twenty years. But other statistics from the same source inadvertently

suggest a more serious decline in the quality of life for an ever-larger proportion of the population.

It is well known that the 40-hour week has become a legal fiction and has been expanded in most industrial jobs by built-in overtime. Workers have contradictory feelings toward institutionalized compulsory overtime. They welcome overtime, even compete for it in slow periods, in order to compensate for declining real wages. But they are, at the same time, increasingly resentful when they are forced to go week after week without a day off.

Moreover, despite the increase in the real work-week, the average working class family requires two paychecks in order to keep up with the cost of living and to satisfy their natural desire to enjoy new products, like color TVs and VCRs.

But they nevertheless feel short-changed because they instinctively sense that although many may enjoy a wider variety of commodities, their share of society's increasing total product steadily decreases in step with the intensifying rate of exploitation.

Furthermore, one of the more insidious consequences of bureaucratic misleadership has been the proliferation of the two-tier system in which the young entering the workforce are condemned to a period—which tends to grow longer—of significantly lower wages than their parents. And the lower standards of the sons and daughters are then used by the bosses to drag down the standards of their mothers and fathers as well.

These and other setbacks have resulted in a sharp increase in the number of women compelled to become breadwinners just to stay abreast of what they consider to be their rightful living standard. The number of women in the workforce has thus climbed from 28.9 million in 1970 to 52.8 million as of May 1989.

This, of course, has a positive side. Women gain a greater measure of independence from male domination when they establish their right to jobs. On the other hand, many women and/or other family members who enter the workforce are often only able to maintain a living standard no higher than that achieved with only one family member working.

The latest reports from the Bureau of Labor Statistics show that the continuing offensive against living standards has forced a startling increase in moonlighting—workers holding two jobs—with the main burden falling on women. And often there is no improvement—in many cases, a marked decline—in the quality of life, especially for single heads of households.

From 1970 to 1989 the percentage of men holding two jobs went down from 7 to 6.4 percent, while in the same time-frame, that of women rose from 2.2 to 5.9 percent. (The absolute numbers of both sexes holding two jobs, however, went up in line with the absolute increase of jobholders between 1970 and 1989. Combined employment of men and women rose during that 20-year period from 77.6 to 117.1 million.)

Furthermore, Labor Department officials caution that the number holding two jobs may be significantly understated given the fact that many of these workers are paid in cash and might not report it to avoid paying a higher tax-rate on the extra income.

The growing tax ripoff

This leads us into the other main method by which capitalism increases the rate of exploitation—the steady shifting of the tax burden from the rich to the poor. There has been an explosive growth in regressive taxes. The sales taxes of various kinds have proliferated. They exact a flat percentage of much, if not most, of a workers' wages, but leave up to 99 percent of the income of the rich untaxed.

The Social Security tax is no less regressive, taking a flat percentage of every dollar earned by most workers. (And then what is left is taxed again when spent!) Senator

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Moynihan's sudden "discovery" of this long-standing injustice, and his proposal to reduce or eliminate it, is pure hypocrisy.

No real reform will come of it. It is entirely intended to put his party in position to capture and contain the gestating mass rebellion against the soak-the-poor tax policy of his class.

And even if there would be a reduction of the Social Security tax, we can be absolutely certain that workers will be made to pay through the nose some other way. The twin parties of capitalism will either be forced to reduce social benefits or saddle workers with another variety of regressive taxation—or a combination of both. The only other alternative would be to set-off a massive increase in the gulf between government spending and revenues—and with it, hyper-inflation.

But the income tax system, itself, is crassly regressive. It has, however, a deceptive "progressive" facade. Many workers look at the tax tables and are deceived into thinking that the higher the income the higher the rate of taxation.

However, the naked truth is that the "progressive" rise in the rate of taxation applies only to the workers, while capitalists effectively pay a lower rate as their income goes up. This outrageously unjust tax system has been steadily made worse by Presidents Carter, Reagan and Bush, not to mention their predecessors going back to Roosevelt—with the whole-hearted support of both capitalist parties.

But while from the first turning of the tax screws there has been a pained reflex from the working class, it had been successfully diverted by the ruling class into a weapon against the most exploited victims of the system, especially those whose very hopes for a job have been expunged by capitalism's ruthlessness.

The failure of the workers' leadership to mount a vigorous opposition to the increasingly regressive tax system permitted the capitalists to use it in classic divide and rule-style. The manufacturers of "public opinion" were unchallenged as they painted a sordid picture of "welfare queens" living high on the hog while the "middle class" had to pay the tab.

Little did many of the better-off workers, and others in similar circumstances realize that their own social benefits were as much the target of the bi-partisan tax offensive.

It worked well for a while. But now the broader sections of the working and middle classes are beginning to suffer from a similar slander campaign while their own social benefits are being attacked.

Only last year we began to read about the "powerful lobby" of "greedy" retired senior citizens. They had dared to raise an outcry against a heavy tax on their meager incomes to finance an alleged program to protect seniors from catastrophic medical costs.

It didn't work: The catastrophic insurance scheme was full of loopholes and the cost to pensioners too high. Under the pressure of massive protests, the tax was revoked and the "catastrophic" insurance plan dumped—but without anything put in its place.

So far, we have not heard much more about our "greedy" seniors. This should not be viewed as a passing episode, but rather as symptomatic of the sharpening dilemma of capitalism. They will be compelled to mount increasing attacks affecting wider layers of the masses. If capitalism cannot find a way to open the road to a new period of expansion, the attack on living standards must accelerate. This will inevitably trigger an explosive rise in mass protest and class consciousness.

American socialist revolution

The potential for socialist revolution in the United States is greater than ever before. While prosperity continues, despite horrendous growth of the most extreme poverty in its midst, it has taken place at the expense of exhausting much of the financial reserves that played a big role in enabling American capitalism to survive the depression.

Those reserves—which Trotsky called the "fat from the past [that] permits Roosevelt his experiments..." was partly expressed in the position of the United States in the 1930s as the largest creditor nation in the world.

Today, this country is the largest debtor nation in the world. And an escalation of American indebtedness to fantastic new heights is built into an economy which must bear the expense, among other things, of the largest military force on the face of

the earth.

In contrast to the 1930s when Roosevelt was able to experiment with concessions to the workers and other measures designed to enable capitalism to climb out of the most serious economic crisis in its history, these financial reserves have been steadily spent to prevent a recurrence of another such profound crisis.

This financial exhaustion of its reserves is compounded by the objective weakening of capitalist social, economic and political power in three important areas:

- The Black and women's struggles have begun to batter down two of the most important social props of American capitalism—racism and sexism. These are major weapons in the capitalist arsenal for dividing the working class. There remains a long way

ness—the strike of coal miners against the Pittston Coal Group, the strike of machinists against Boeing and that of airline mechanics against Eastern Airlines.

The ten-month strike by 1,700 miners in Virginia, West Virginia and Kentucky against Pittston showed labor at its best. It has been the most effective labor struggle since the United Mine Workers of America's (UMWA) own general miners strike of 1977-78. The Pittston strike, moreover, took place in the face of a major challenge to their picket lines by mineowners, state and local cops and anti-picketing injunctions backed up by an unprecedented \$64 million in fines.

Eleven years ago, miners were victorious despite President Carter's strike-breaking attempt to use troops to force them to mine

support.

The resulting demoralization and the defeatist mood generated by bureaucratic treachery in the ranks of labor has reduced Pittston strikers' ability to inspire the outstanding level of national grass roots labor response they had succeeded in mobilizing a decade ago.

Even so, the strike inspired an unusually high level of solidarity: A thousand unions, churches and community groups, mainly in the areas closest to the struggle, rallied to the miners' cause, including some participation in mass picketing—the key to the success of any strike when picket lines are challenged by the boss.

In a sense, the sheer weight of their class struggle traditions permitted the Pittston miners to mount a remarkable defensive struggle based on mass picketing to stop coal deliveries in defiance of anti-strike injunctions and massive fines. The high cost to the struck company brought it to the bargaining table. (Pittston admits to \$27 million in "lost sales and other expenses," but it is no doubt considerably higher.)

But a larger factor bringing the bosses to terms was the UMWA's actual steps toward extending the Pittston conflict to a general miners' strike.

Shortly after UMWA President Trumka's election he initiated a break from the historic policy of the union which had been on insistence on negotiating industry wide contracts for all coal miners.

Thus the miners were led into a battle on the most unfavorable grounds of pitting a small portion of the UMWA membership against one company, but one which had behind it the full force of all the coal bosses, the repressive agencies of the capitalist state, and the ruling class as a whole.

However, the rank and file instinctively saw the road to higher ground. Wildcat strikes erupted throughout the coal fields reflecting the class struggle traditions of the UMWA membership and demonstrating miners' readiness to stop all coal production.

This knocked the strategists running the Pittston Company's union-busting assault off balance. They knew such an extension in the breadth of the strike could have set in motion a general rise in class consciousness that would have altered the overall relation of forces between the opposed classes in favor of labor.

The ruling class responded to the miners' mobilization with both stick and carrot. The bosses and their agencies levied new fines and increased police repression. But at the same time they sent signals of a willingness to compromise, including backing off from some of the worst take-away demands. The UMWA leadership chose to compromise.

The result was that Pittston miners were able to hold on to most of their health and retirement benefits and job security, including a hiring policy that will tend to replace non-union workers with laid-off miners. These were two of the key issues in dispute.

But Pittston miners have been compelled to permit "flexible" schedules, an important concession to the company. UMWA leaders also promised to adhere to anti-strike laws in the future. They also decided to retreat from their earlier position and allow a vote before the issue of the fines was resolved. Miners voted to go back to work with \$64 million in fines still hanging over the union's head.

(This was somewhat offset by the company's agreement to join the union in asking the court to forgive the fines. But the court's intransigence indicates that the bulk of the fines will be held in abeyance primarily to enforce the UMWA leadership's pledge to obey future injunctions in coming struggles.)

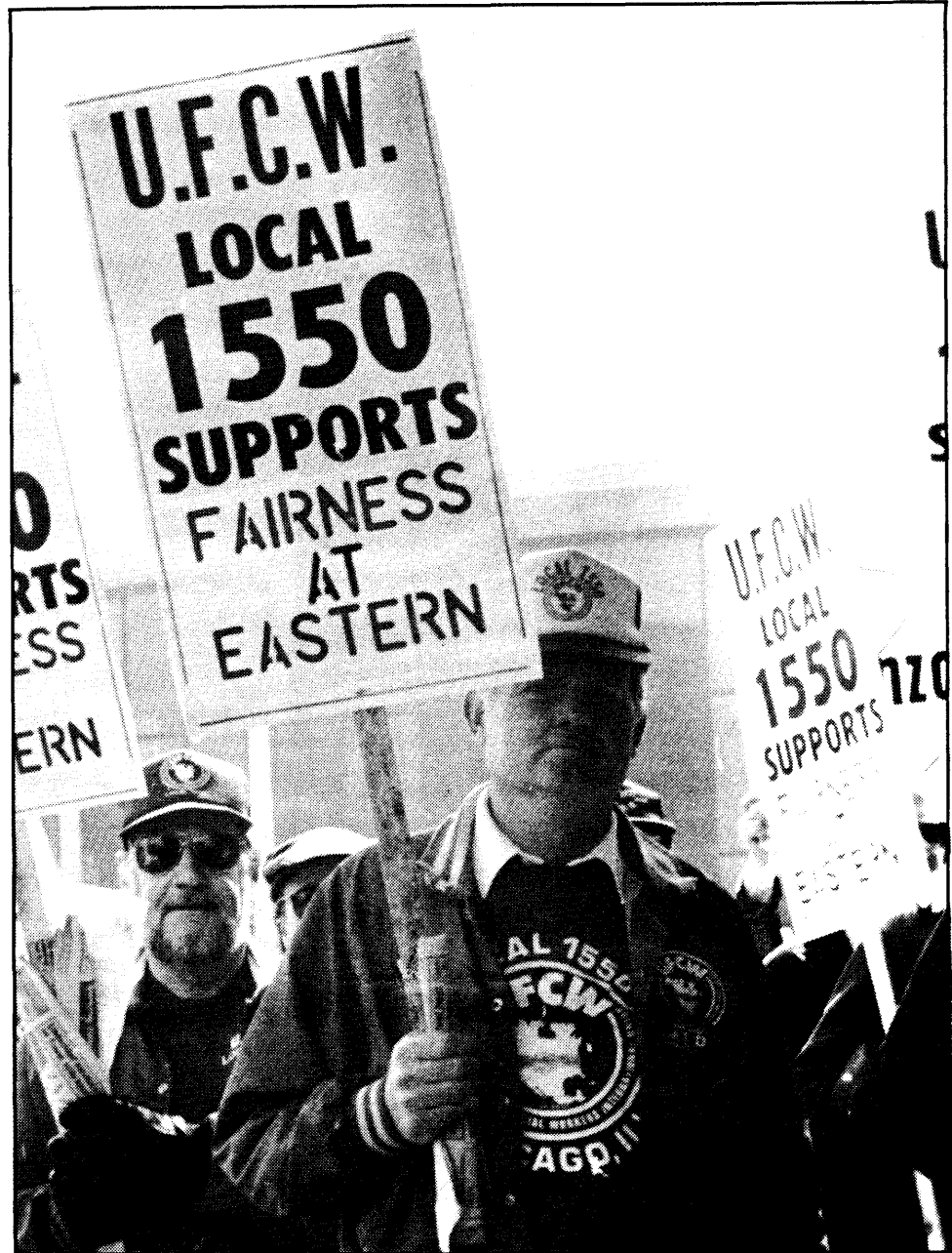
Overall, however, the strike must be seen as a clear victory for miners and all labor, given the bosses' attempt to bust the union and given the unfavorable objective context created by over four decades of a step-by-step, bureaucratic demobilization of a fighting labor movement.

Despite the concessions they have been forced to make, miners certainly have gone back with justified pride and self-confidence at their demonstration of fighting ability. The bosses will be sure to weigh plans more carefully when the current general miners' contract expires—but so too must the UMWA; the concessions granted to Pittston will be demanded by the coal bosses as a whole.

Boeing strike

The strike by the International Association of Machinists (IAM) against Boeing showed

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... 'the decisive factor in the current struggle has been the 20-year-long series of outright givebacks to the bosses by the top labor bureaucrats.'

to go, but the power displayed by these social layers makes them far more attractive allies to American workers which will make it easier for revolutionists to unite the class as a whole, along with its natural allies.

- The Marshall Plan financed the economic resurrection of European capitalism and helped save it, and its world system, from social revolution. But the price American capitalism paid has been the evaporation of much of the competitive economic advantage it had held in the 1930s, '40s and '50s. And with it, a measure of American capitalism's inner resources has also faded away.

- American capitalism's need to rapidly accelerate the rate of exploitation in the aftermath of WWII led it to mount a prolonged assault on labor's rights and living standards. The myth of a pro-labor wing of the capitalist class has been seriously eroded by this bipartisan political and economic assault.

The word "liberal" has little left of its old meaning to American workers. The capability of capitalist demagogues to deceive sections of the working class has been significantly reduced, although far from eliminated. The road to independent labor political action, at the very least, will be easier in the next major crisis than it was in the last.

Pittston strike

In the last couple of years, three industrial conflicts serve as a gauge of the current level of trade union and working class conscious-

coal, and despite a stab in the back by the AFL-CIO's top bureaucrats who had backed Carter's attempt to force miners back into the pits with the threat of National Guard bayonets.

Unfortunately, since that time a gradual erosion of the miners' position has continued to take place, partly as a result of a revolution in mining technology which has led to a massive reduction in the number of working miners. (Technology has eliminated almost half a million mining jobs since the 1950s and, at the same time, increased production.)

The fewer jobs available increases competition among miners. This advantage for mine owners gave them the ability to break the union hold over a large section of the industry. (Union control slipped from 90 percent in the 1950s to a third of the industry today.)

But the decisive factor in the current struggle has been the 20-year-long series of outright givebacks to the bosses by the top labor bureaucrats. In line with this concessions policy, they have also worked assiduously to block any mass fight-back by the working class.

Real labor solidarity, honoring picket lines during strikes, has been virtually banned by the labor bureaucracy to the point of it being proscribed by most union contracts. Class solidarity has been reduced by them to essentially moral and some financial

Tina Beacock/Socialist Action

U.S. Out of the Middle East!



Joseph Ryan/Socialist Action

By NAT WEINSTEIN

The U.S. news media has been inundated with a highly distorted version of events set into motion by Iraq's occupation of Kuwait. Only by the most careful scrutiny of the capitalist press can the ordinary reader get an inkling of the truth.

Contrary to the message coming through the news headlines and the radio and television "sound bites," the innocent victim is not Kuwait, and the criminal aggressor is not Iraq.

The blatant hypocrisy of the imperialist rulers of America and the army of professional liars, twisters, and rationalizers who attempt to conceal naked greed behind lofty "principles" like self-determination, democracy, and freedom would try the patience of a saint.

Imperialism and its stooges in the Middle East—not a single democratic soul among them—aided, abetted, and egged on Iraqi President Saddam Hussein when he did their dirty work for them in invading Iran. They did not wince when Hussein used poison gases on his enemies, including Iraqi Kurds who dared to demand freedom from national oppression.

The best the mouthpieces of corporate America (who didn't blink an eye at U.S. atrocities from the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to the invasion of Panama) could come up with was: "Gee, that's not nice," without interrupting for a second the flow of moral and material support to Hussein.

But be that as it may, let's take a closer look at the crisis in the Middle East. Let's try to objectively determine who is the criminal and who is the victim.

For over 100 years the Middle East, along with virtually all regions of the planet which had not yet entered the age of industrialization, has been colonized.

As subjected nations, they have been politically and militarily dominated, their natural resources appropriated, and their toiling masses superexploited by the major industrialized capitalist nations.

The living standards of imperialism's sub-

"Contrary to the message coming through the news headlines and the radio and television 'sound bites,' the innocent victim is not Kuwait, and the criminal aggressor is not Iraq."

jugated victims were driven down to a level of impoverishment very often lower than that of chattel slaves.

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

To this day, the residual social relations which prevailed centuries ago continue to survive in an unholy combination with capitalist wage-slavery. The result leaves the majority of the earth's population plagued by the evils of both pre-capitalist society and modern capitalism, but benefiting from neither social order's advantages.

The Saudi monarchy, for example, is a feudal regime where women are not even allowed to drive cars. And Saudi Arabia and Kuwait are each ruled by single families who run their countries as private corporations.

Since the end of the last century, the misery of the colonial peoples was intensified when two inter-imperialist world wars raged across their lands. Workers from opposing imperialist camps were dragooned into military service and then sent to kill each other to settle the question of which imperialists would have the right to exploit the toilers of these countries.

Thus, most borders in the colonial and semi-colonial world have little to do with natural boundaries set by mountain ranges and bodies of water. The lines between countries have been arbitrarily drawn and redrawn on maps and approved in peace treaties signed by warring imperialist bandits without the slightest regard for the wishes of

their inhabitants. [See accompanying background articles.]

Besides marking out spheres of imperialist domination, the artificial boundaries have served imperialism in other ways. The division of peoples into separate states—often despite common language and culture—serves the oppressor's strategy of divide and rule.

Bush acts precipitously

When Iraqi troops occupied Kuwait, President George Bush got on the phone, intent on securing support and collaboration for decisive action against Iraq.

Virtually every important governmental leader having an interest in the Middle Eastern peoples' oil was contacted by him or one of his righthand men. He got a considerable amount of verbal support as well as important commitments to join in economic sanctions against Iraq.

From the outset Bush and Co. dropped hints of full support, including military commitments. However, the major imperialists deriving profits from the rivers of black gold flowing out of the Middle East have been extremely reluctant to take military responsibility for an assault on Iraq.

France declined to send any military forces and Britain has so far declined to commit ground troops to the U.S. invasion force. No major imperialist power has yet agreed to commit troops.

Even Saudi Arabia's King Fahd, whose reign depends entirely upon imperialist military power, needed considerable arm-twisting before consenting to "invite" a U.S. inva-

sion force into his country. He pays a very heavy price by so serving the interests of the hated imperialists.

Arab "peacekeeping" forces?

Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak was reported, at first, to have agreed to send Egyptian troops to provide an "Arab" cover for the imperialist invasion. Egyptian officials soon denied having made such a premature commitment.

Instead, Mubarak initiated a "summit" meeting of Arab governments—the Arab League—for the purpose of forming an "independent" Arab military "umbrella" to "defuse" the Middle East crisis. The idea was to send contingents of troops, from as many Arab countries as possible, to interpose themselves on the border between Iraqi and American forces.

This fit in with President Bush's deceptive description of U.S. goals in sending an invasion force into Saudi Arabia: Ruling out "any immediate invasion of Iraqi-occupied Kuwait [emphasis added]," Bush claimed only the "defense" of Fahd's kingdom against an Iraqi invasion.

But without a doubt, Bush has not too far back in his mind the "possibility" that provocateurs can easily set off an exchange of shots between counterposed "Arab umbrella forces" and Iraqi troops. Such an incident could easily be trumpeted by Bush as an "Iraqi invasion of Saudi Arabia"—justifying a U.S. assault on Kuwait/Iraq.

Such a development is unlikely unless the U.S.-initiated embargo on trade with Iraq breaks down, threatening a victory for Iraq. That possibility, however, cannot be excluded.

On Aug. 9, the Arab summit failed to act on the Mubarak proposal. But the next day, 12 of the 21 members voted to send in their forces. (Three voted against, three abstained or didn't vote, and three expressed reservations.)

Such a "peace-keeping" hornet's nest could put them smack in the middle of a major shooting war on the side of imperialism and

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Israel and is laced with the potential deployment of poison gas and atomic bombs.

It remains to be seen how many of the 12 will actually send troops, and how many troops each will send. But it is generally acknowledged that the numbers are secondary to the Bush administration's main aim of putting on an "Arab face" to give "legitimacy" to the American armed intervention. Besides, once committing a few troops, it will be hard to fail to send massive reinforcements when and if that becomes necessary.

The United Nations debate

The Soviet and Chinese governments also gave political support—and their blessing—to resolutions in the United Nations Security Council condemning the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait.

(Only Cuba and Yemen abstained; but these two countries subsequently voted for another resolution which condemned the Iraqi annexation of Kuwait. Cuba tried to tag on an amendment to this resolution "expressing concern at the buildup of foreign forces in the Gulf and calling for a halt," but it failed. [Reported in the Aug. 10 *New York Times*.] So far, there have been no further reports of any differentiation by Cuba from the arrogant action by American imperialism.)

Moreover, President Bush has not yet formally moved to put American forces under United Nations auspices, as when President Truman covered the U.S. invasion of North Korea with the UN flag. Such an attempt has not been made at the present time since it would likely fail, constituting a major political defeat for imperialism.

Furthermore, the strong vocal support from virtually all the world's governments can very swiftly change in the course of the highly unstable and complex interaction of contradictory forces in the period ahead.

Even the Israelis, who know their interests as a client state are entirely bound up with the success or failure of the U.S. intervention, are barred by circumstances from joining the American adventure at this very critical juncture.

Recent history has altered the roles of some nations. Any war moves by Zionist Israel, an imperialist agency which previously could get away with outrageous acts of aggression, would decisively unite the Arab peoples against the imperialist invasion from the very outset.

The key role of Iran

What about the role of Iran, which suffered an eight-year-long war with Iraq? At that time, Iraq objectively served as a stalking horse for imperialism against Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini.

The Ayatollah had attempted to set off a movement of Middle Eastern peoples united by religion and deep anti-imperialist moods in a struggle against imperialism. Khomeini was not the first to make the attempt. Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser tried it in the 1960s, Khomeini in the 1970s, Libya's Muammar el-Qaddafi in the 1980s, and now Iraq's Saddam Hussein.

Bush's right-hand men are working overtime to provide inducements to the Iranians to bring them over as far as possible to the United States in their confrontation with Iraq. U.S. spokespersons dropped many hints that Iran, too, was about to make a deal and join up with the "Great Satan's" adventure in the Persian Gulf.

But so far only the Iranian Foreign Minister, Ali Akbar Velayati and his supporters in that country have come out for siding with the American "devil."

Velayati is reported in an Aug. 10 *New York Times* piece by Youssef M. Ibrahim, to have argued that "the Iraqi invasion represents a golden opportunity for Iran to 'reinsert' itself into the world community, gain badly needed Western financial credit and support and court the rich Arab countries along the Gulf, which sided with Iraq during its 1980-88 war with Iran. ...

"But...increasingly, the United States buildup seems to worry the Iranians more than the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait."

And Ibrahim reports, for instance, that the

commander of Iran's Revolutionary Guards, Mohsen Rezei, has said: "The massive presence of American military forces in the Persian Gulf had more dangerous impact on developments in the region than Iraq's military occupation. For long, the United States was waiting for an opportunity to tighten its hold on the Persian Gulf and the flow of oil in particular."

Rezei is reported to have sharply disagreed with the above-noted judgment of his country's Foreign Minister. "The Iraqi aggression," he said, "had provided Washington the golden chance." [Emphasis added.]

The *Times* reporter goes on to write, "Kuwait...has been a thorn in Iran's side for a decade. Among other things, Kuwait gave Iraq anywhere from \$10 billion to \$15 billion to finance its war with Iran, a Muslim but non-Arab nation. Besides supporting Iraq in the war, Kuwait deliberately flooded oil markets after 1986 to keep oil prices from rising above \$15 to \$17 a barrel, thereby keeping down Iran's oil revenues." (And, it should also be noted, keeping down the costs to the industrialized imperialist countries.)

But for the moment, Iran is gaining a windfall resulting from the embargo of Iraq-controlled oil supplies. In the first five days of the crisis, it sold as much as 26 million extra gallons of oil from its floating storage tankers at sea to Japanese and other Asian customers.

This takes us to the heart of the current desperate conflict between the American-led world of imperialism and the rebellious oil-producing and other Middle East countries. The grave military measures taken by U.S. imperialism—including a virtual blockade of Iraq—suggests that the stakes in this conflict are unusually high.

Arab stakes in the conflict

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

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

Thus while every capitalist is in competition with every other capitalist, in spheres of production such as this they have a common interest in keeping down the cost of raw petroleum. This is true even when the oil corporations also reap a giant share of the profits derived from the sale of oil as it comes out of the well.

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

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

A price rise resulting from monopoly control by the oil-producers who restrict the amount of oil placed on the market increases the rate of profit on their end, but reduces it on the other. This is, of course, to the great disadvantage of the capitalists in the imperialist countries.

And this is what's behind Hussein's occupation of Kuwait.

Hoping to enforce oil quotas

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

Some countries, driven by necessity, put more oil on the market than the quotas allotted to them. Others violate the OPEC

agreements in direct collusion with the imperialists.

Kuwait and Saudi Arabia were among the worst offenders. This is partly explained by the enormous wealth concentrated in the hands of the rulers of these countries and invested in the imperialist countries.

Kuwait alone is reputed to have some



\$100 billion invested outside the Middle East, mostly in the United States. This enormous investment indicates a closer identity of interests and puts them closer to sharing the point of view of the capitalists in the imperialist countries.

In the face of the OPEC countries' failure to maintain their unity by common consent, Saddam Hussein's game plan is to win leadership of the producing countries and be in a position to enforce quotas. He—like Nasser, Khomeini and Qaddafi before him—hopes to accomplish this by a combination of military power and audacious action to inspire the others to follow his lead against imperialist interests.

But, on the other hand, while they need a strong leader to unite the colonial countries against imperialism, the Arab rulers fear both domination by a strong leader and vengeful retaliation from imperialism. And what they fear most, of course, is Hussein's increasingly desperate setting of the masses of poor Muslims against the rich!

Hussein knows that he can't force imperialism to come to terms without encouraging mass demonstrations and strikes and even arming the toilers to help repel the imperialists. All of the Middle East rulers fear, however, that the masses will try to use their power, ultimately, in defense of their own class interests.

But the result of the Arab League majority's decision to send troops to the Gulf to be the "Arab face" for imperialism has been to force Hussein to more reckless agitation of the masses.

"For the benefit of the foreigner"

Hussein's immediate response was to up the ante and call for a "holy war" against the "colonialists" and the "disfigured petroleum states" they "set up." He explained that it was through these puppet states that the "wealth came into the hands of the few to be exploited for the benefit of the foreigner and those few new rulers." (Aug. 11 *New York Times*.)

Even more explosive was Hussein's reported declaration that Iraq would withdraw from Kuwait if the Israelis would also with-

draw from the occupied West Bank of Palestine! Both Israel and the United States rejected this proposal, revealing the baseless pretenses of their opposition to violation of a nation's right to self-determination.

But demagoguery or not, it's easy to understand the powerfully exultant chord struck in the hearts of the super-exploited victims of imperialism when the Iraqi armed forces swept the Emir and all his retainers out of Kuwait.

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, like those who earlier had attempted to lead the Muslim countries against domination, is appealing to

the anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist passion of the masses. Even granting that he is driven first and foremost by the quest for a larger share of the profits for Iraqi capitalists, whose representative he is, the masses fully expect to gain a portion of the benefits.

And if Hussein fails to grant them a larger portion of the increased wealth imperialism may be forced give up, the aroused masses will be sure to move to take them.

Proletarian revolutionists in the Middle East have every reason to independently mobilize the workers and peasants in these countries against imperialism and join in united front action with Hussein against imperialism.

This is because imperialism's real objectives center on the continued domination of all the oppressed nations of the region—not on the protection of the right of self-determination.

And as Hussein demagogically calls for the poor to rise up against the ruling rich, they will accept his "invitation," while keeping their guard up and a watchful eye for treachery from this very temporary ally.

Imperialist stakes in the conflict

Obviously, American imperialism on the other side of the exchange relationship between seller and buyer of petroleum has long ago won the position of leadership of the buyers. Thus its strategy is to unite the buyers and to divide the sellers—by force, if necessary.

Imperialism is more acutely concerned than ever before with maintaining its share of profits—in which the price of oil plays a large part. But alongside the panic creeping through news accounts of the developing collision in the Middle East, are increasingly ominous reports of the precarious position of the American economy in particular, and that of the industrialized nations in general.

Economists fear that a rise in the price of oil will tip the American economy into a recession whose depth is said to depend on how high the price will go.

This is, by all indications, not an exaggeration. If anything, their fears are understated. In fact, the dilemma of imperialism is that,

the Middle East!

of Iran's Revolutionary Guards, he has said: "The massive presence of American military forces in the region had more dangerous impact on the region than Iraq's military. For long, the United States has provided an opportunity to tighten its grip on the Persian Gulf and the flow of oil."

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Imperialist stakes in the conflict

A major share of the world's oil is produced by the oil-producing colonies, a much larger share of oil is controlled by the giant oil companies and their parent entities. The imperialist core has a virtual monopoly on the other industries which turn oil into fuels, lubricants, plastics, fertilizers and a multitude of other derivatives which consume the variety of products refined from petroleum by the oil industry connected to them financially through overlapping ownership. Every capitalist is in competition with every other capitalist, in spheres of production as well as in consumption. As long as this they have a common interest in keeping down the cost of raw materials, this is true even when the oil-producing countries also reap a giant share of the profits from the sale of oil as it is refined.

But, on the other hand, while they need a strong reason for the otherwise unresisting opposition by the imperialists to the production of their own raw petroleum, a larger portion of their profits is derived from the labor-intensive productive process which adds much more surplus value to the raw material as it goes from one stage to the next in the process of production. The industrial capitalists in the oil-producing countries have little interest in increasing the price of oil as it is refined, which they must share with the imperialists of the oil-producing

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What's behind Hussein's occupation of Kuwait is to enforce oil quotas.

The organization through which the oil-producing countries have attempted to control the supplies of oil reaching the industrialized nations (and thus keep the price from falling through the united action of the industrialized nations). But the OPEC countries have been unable to stick together. The industrialized nations, driven by necessity, put a price ceiling on the market that the quotas allowed. Others violate the OPEC

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leaving aside which side ultimately comes out on top, the costs of this military adventure alone can tip the American economy into a crisis.

The estimated numbers of U.S. troops involved went, in a matter of days, from 5000 to 50,000, then to 100,000, and by Aug. 10 as high as 250,000!

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\$100 billion invested outside the Middle East, mostly in the United States. This enormous investment indicates a closer identity of interests and puts them closer to sharing the point of view of the capitalists in the imperialist countries.

In the face of the OPEC countries' failure to maintain their unity by common consent, Saddam Hussein's game plan is to win leadership of the producing countries and be in a position to enforce quotas. He—like Nasser, Khomeini and Qaddafi before him—hopes to accomplish this by a combination of military power and audacious action to inspire the others to follow his lead against imperialist interests.

But, on the other hand, while they need a strong leader to unite the colonial countries against imperialism, the Arab rulers fear both domination by a strong leader and vengeful retaliation from imperialism. And what they fear most, of course, is Hussein's increasingly desperate setting of the masses of poor Muslims against the rich!

Hussein knows that he can't force imperialism to come to terms without encouraging mass demonstrations and strikes and even arming the toilers to help repel the imperialists. All of the Middle East rulers fear, however, that the masses will try to use their power, ultimately, in defense of their own class interests.

But the result of the Arab League majority's decision to send troops to the Gulf to be the "Arab face" for imperialism has been to force Hussein to more reckless agitation of the masses.

"For the benefit of the foreigner"

Hussein's immediate response was to up the ante and call for a "holy war" against the "colonialists" and the "disfigured petroleum states" they "set up." He explained that it was through these puppet states that the "wealth came into the hands of the few to be exploited for the benefit of the foreigner and those few new rulers." (Aug. 11 *New York Times*.)

Even more explosive was Hussein's reported declaration that Iraq would withdraw from Kuwait if the Israelis would also with-

draw from the occupied West Bank of Palestine! Both Israel and the United States rejected this proposal, revealing the baseless pretenses of their opposition to violation of a nation's right to self-determination.

But demagoguery or not, it's easy to understand the powerfully exultant chord struck in the hearts of the super-exploited victims of imperialism when the Iraqi armed forces swept the Emir and all his retainers out of Kuwait.

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, like those who earlier had attempted to lead the Muslim countries against domination, is appealing to

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intervention seems to have come off better than expected, serious observers know that successes can quickly turn to ashes. This will be the result if the masses, who are already stirring from northern Africa to Iran, throw their weight into the battle shaping up.

The capitalist news media also know that if shooting starts, the present uneasy and cranky support of the American people for President Bush's intervention will start to go in reverse as their sons and daughters are sent back from the Gulf region in bodybags.

During the Vietnam War, American imperialism's allies (South Korea, New Zealand, and Australia) committed a relative handful of troops to the conflict. If shooting starts in the current crisis, we can expect deep opposition to the Gulf war to grow in all countries sending invading forces, in proportion to their casualties.

Finally, it should now be clear that there will be no "peace dividend" from the ending of the "Cold War." The real decision-makers never once believed this myth. They well knew that the need for U.S. imperialism to continue to play its role of world policeman has not diminished.

On the contrary, when account is taken of the accumulating evidence of world capitalism's developing economic crisis, revolutionary eruptions loom on the horizon in virtually every corner of the globe.

Furthermore, Gorbachev's course (and the course of all the Stalinists) toward capitalist restoration continues to follow its logic to the end. The Soviet and Chinese Stalinists are falling in line behind American imperialism's counterrevolutionary action in the Gulf like any one of Uncle Sam's run-of-the-mill allies and vassals.

Obviously, American imperialism on the other side of the exchange relationship between seller and buyer of petroleum has long ago won the position of leadership of the buyers. Thus its strategy is to unite the buyers and to divide the sellers—by force, if necessary.

Imperialism is more acutely concerned than ever before with maintaining its share of profits—in which the price of oil plays a large part. But alongside the panic creeping through news accounts of the developing collision in the Middle East, are increasingly ominous reports of the precarious position of the American economy in particular, and that of the industrialized nations in general.

Economists fear that a rise in the price of oil will tip the American economy into a recession whose depth is said to depend on how high the price will go.

This is, by all indications, not an exaggeration. If anything, their fears are understated. In fact, the dilemma of imperialism is that,

intervention seems to have come off better than expected, serious observers know that successes can quickly turn to ashes. This will be the result if the masses, who are already stirring from northern Africa to Iran, throw their weight into the battle shaping up.

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But while imperialism gains from this in one place, it loses in another: Now the so-called threat of Soviet "imperialism" has all but evaporated. It is clearer than ever before that the current military adventure, this time in the Persian Gulf, is motivated by nothing more than the naked interests of capitalist imperialism. Americans will have less reason than ever to kill and be killed in defense of corporate profits.

How to divide

By MICHAEL

In 1961, when Kuwait declared its independence from British claim to the territory on the border. The British troops to Kuwait to "invaders," just as the British allies are doing today.

Few people in this country know the boundaries between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia not set by the people of those countries but by the British.

For centuries, the countries of the Persian Gulf had no fixed borders. The small emirates and sheikhdoms were incorporated into the empire of the Ottoman Turks.

A handbook for British imperialism in the early 1900s observed that the boundaries of the Kuwait principality were most part fluctuating and were, at any given time, determined by the tribes which then, either by compulsion, or by the will of the Sheikh of Kuwait.

The area of Kuwait was populated by nomadic clans from the Arabian Peninsula in the early 18th century. The head of the Al-Sabah family was the ruler (his descendants ruled until the recent Iraqi invasion).

Nominal allegiance to the Ottoman Empire was given by the Ottoman Turks, who were a part of their Basra province. The British, in order to protect their interests, did what they could to maintain the autonomy of the Kuwaiti ruler against the Ottoman Empire.

By the late 19th century, the British saw the need to take measures; Germany and other imperialist rivals, had established lines and ports in the region.

In 1896, Sheikh Mubarak was assassinated by his son, Mubarak, who seized the throne.

'Just as the subdivided the behind the Arab people, States seeks to own solution

himself. Though the British anything to do with the events show that Mubarak's company with the British just before the assassination.

In 1899, Mubarak signed a treaty making Kuwait a British protectorate. As part of the pact, the British pay a yearly subsidy to keep him in power.

During the next few years, the British integrated into the colonial system the Persian Gulf a vast area of Native handicrafts and industries, as they had been in the past. The subject people buy British goods that were shipped on British ships.

Kuwait, like other "protectorate" countries, was limited to trade with the British. When, during the First World War, local traders attempted to trade beyond the framework of the British blockaded Kuwait.

During the World War I, the British quered the Arab portion of the Ottoman Empire. The northern portion was mandated to France (which seized the area in 1920). Britain awarded itself Iraq.

The desires of the people of the region for independence, as well as the British, were thwarted. After public rebellions in Iraq, the British placed Faisal, the former Ottoman ally, whom the French had deposed from the Iraqi throne.

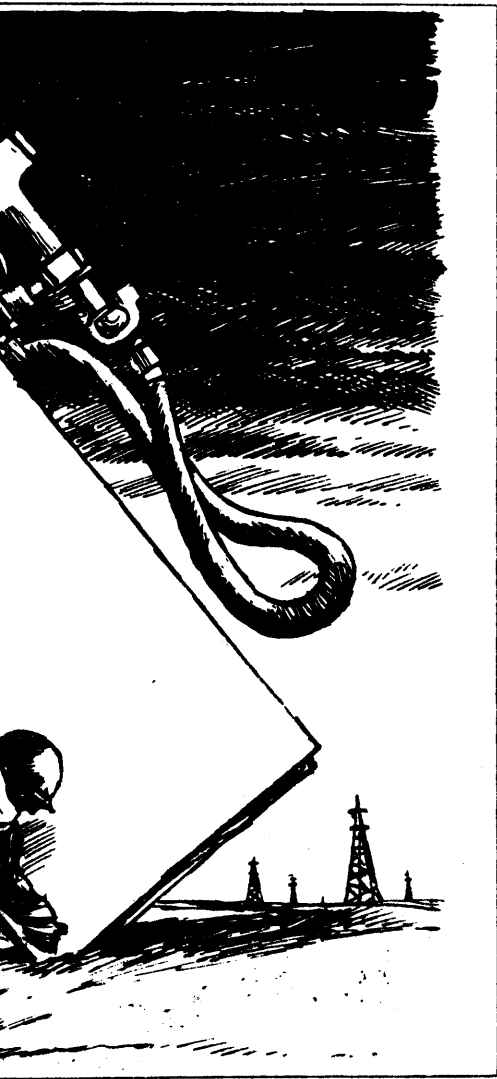
In 1922, Sir Percy

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How the colonialists divided up the Gulf

By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

In 1961, when Kuwait attained formal independence from Britain, the Iraqis laid claim to the territory and gathered an army on the border. The British immediately sent troops to Kuwait to threaten the Iraqi "invaders," just as the United States and its allies are doing today.

Few people in this country realize that the boundaries between Kuwait and Iraq were not set by the people or governments of those countries but by the imperialists who ruled the area.

For centuries, the countries of the Persian Gulf had no fixed borders. Most of these small emirates and sheikhdoms were incorporated into the empire of the Ottoman Turks.

A handbook for British colonial officials in the early 1900s observed: "The boundaries of the Kuwait principality are for the most part fluctuating and undefined; they are, at any given time, the limits of the tribes which then, either voluntarily or under compulsion, own allegiance to the Sheikh of Kuwait."

The area of Kuwait Bay was settled by nomadic clans from the Arabian peninsula in the early 18th century. In the 1750s, the head of the Al-Sabah family was elected ruler (his descendants continued to rule until the recent Iraqi invasion).

Nominal allegiance was paid to the Ottoman Turks, who considered Kuwait part of their Basra province in Iraq. The British, in order to protect their own trade interests, did what they could to assure the autonomy of the Kuwaiti sheikhdom against the Ottoman Empire.

By the late 19th century, however, the British saw the need to take stronger measures; Germany and Russia, their imperialist rivals, had plans to build rail lines and ports in the region.

In 1896, Sheikh Mohammed of Kuwait was assassinated by his half-brother, Mubarak, who seized the title of Emir for

'Just as the British subdivided the Gulf region behind the backs of the Arab people, the United States seeks to impose its own solution today.'

himself. Though the British denied having anything to do with the coup, official documents show that Mubarak spent a month in company with the British *chargé d'affaires* just before the assassination.

In 1899, Mubarak signed a secret agreement making Kuwait a British protectorate. As part of the pact, the British promised to pay a yearly subsidy to the Emir in order to keep him in power.

During the next few years, Kuwait was integrated into the colonial system that made the Persian Gulf a virtual British lake. Native handicrafts and industry were suppressed, as they had been in India in earlier times. The subject peoples were forced to buy British goods that were transported on British ships.

Kuwait, like other "one-crop" colonial countries, was limited to a single export—pearls. When, during the First World War, local traders attempted to expand commerce beyond the framework of British interests, the British blockaded Kuwait.

During the World War, the British conquered the Arab portions of the Ottoman Empire. The northern territory, Syria, was mandated to France (which sent troops to seize the area in 1920). In the meantime, Britain awarded itself Iraq and Trans-Jordan.

The desires of the people of the region for independence, as well as for Arab unity, were thwarted. After putting down several rebellions in Iraq, the British helped to place Faisal, the former nationalist leader whom the French had expelled from Syria, on the Iraqi throne.

In 1922, Sir Percy Cox, British High

Commissioner in Iraq, was entrusted with the job of settling the boundaries of the Iraqi and Kuwaiti puppet states and Saudi Arabia. After five days of heated negotiations with Ibn Saud (the Saudi king) and Iraqi representatives, a British official reported:

"Sir Percy took a red pencil and very carefully drew in on the map of Arabia a boundary line. ... This gave Iraq a large area of the territory claimed by Najd [a region of Saudi Arabia]. Obviously to placate Ibn Saud, he ruthlessly deprived Kuwait of nearly two-thirds of her territory and gave it

to Najd..."

Thus with a pencil stroke, the British drew the boundaries of Kuwait. Yet the Kuwaitis weren't even in the room at the time!

Just as the British subdivided the Gulf region and set up borders in opposition to the wishes of the Arab people, the United States seeks to impose its own solution today. As in the past, the profits of the oil cartels take precedence over the interests of the people who live there.

The right of national self-determination, which the imperialists denied in the past, will not be affirmed by them today. This right belongs only to the Arab people, who must be free to settle their differences without the "assistance" of those who have oppressed them.

Sources used for this article include "Kuwait: Social Change in Historical Perspective" by Jacqueline S. Ismael. Syracuse University Press, Syracuse, N.Y., 1982.

... Imperialism and oil

(continued from page 12)

exploitation.

The rise of the Arab nationalist movement, which was responsible for imperialism's direct losses in the area, gained impetus in 1956 when Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal. With British and French backing, Israel invaded Egypt a few months later, only to be compelled to withdraw by the United States—which sought to use the incident to further weaken the hold of its oil competitors in the region.

The 1950s witnessed a realignment in the Middle East, as the various capitalist governments in the region sought to strengthen their positions against world imperialism through a series of regional alliances and by seeking military and economic aid from the USSR and Eastern Europe.

At the same time, the United States maneuvered with the help of Britain to create a series of military pacts with those regimes which leaned openly toward imperialism. This resulted in the 1955 Baghdad Pact, which included Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Pakistan in the pro-imperialist camp.

A centerpiece of imperialist strategy and military might in the Middle East is the Zionist state of Israel, forcibly carved out of the Palestinian nation in 1948 with the joint agreement of the United States and the Soviet Union. Since its formation, Israel has supported or led every imperialist intervention in the region, not to mention its covert but still significant support to U.S. intervention in the rest of the world.

The universal hatred of the Zionist state among the masses of the Middle East stems directly from the role it has played as imperialism's surrogate in the region. The nationalist movement nevertheless succeeded in ending most of the direct ownership of the oil resources of the region by imperialist cartels.

"One-crop" economies

Still, the virtual monopoly of the pipelines, refineries, shipping, and markets exercised by the United States and its capitalist counterparts enables them to maintain still-unchallenged control over the oil-producing nations.

This stems from the fact that in spite of the billions of dollars in profits which today flow into the hands of the various sheiks and dictators of the region, no Middle Eastern nation (and for that matter, no underdeveloped capitalist nation on earth) has been able to emerge from its previous state of underdevelopment to compete on the world market. The monopoly established by imperialist finance capital in the major industrialized nations has precluded such a development.

All Middle Eastern oil-producing nations essentially remain "one-crop" economies. That is, virtually all state revenues are derived from their one resource, oil. If the spigot is turned off, the nation is brought to a halt.

Like all underdeveloped nations they also suffer from an unequal exchange with imperialism—forced to sell their single resource cheaply and import food and finished goods at monopolized prices.

The U.S. media, aping the words of the oil cartels, whine about the devastating effects of higher oil prices on the U.S. economy. But they are still silent as tens of thousands of people in the underdeveloped world starve because of higher prices the U.S. government is charging for food, of which it is the main exporter.

The road to development in the Middle East lies in the united and revolutionary actions of the masses themselves, aimed at the elimination of capitalism in the region and the establishment of a united socialist Middle East where the resources of the region can be rationally apportioned to meet the needs of the oppressed masses themselves.

Similarly, the job of ending the predatory imperialist system in the United States, which depends on both sending American youth to die for capitalist profit in foreign lands and on the exploitation of American workers themselves, lies with the U.S. working class.

U.S. intervention in the Persian Gulf benefits no one but the ruling-class elite, who are just as anxious to extract greater profits from American workers as they are to maintain control over the oppressed people of the Middle East.

Essential reading on the Middle East

"The Hidden History of Zionism"

a Socialist Action pamphlet by Ralph Schoenman (104 pp.)

Send \$4 (price includes postage) to 3435 Army St. #308, San Francisco, CA 94110.

Make checks payable to Walnut Publishing Co.



The hidden history of Zionism

by Ralph Schoenman

Imperialism, oil, and the Arab revolution: Background to the U.S. intervention

By JEFF MACKLER

Three-quarters of the capitalist world's known oil reserves lie beneath the lands of the people of the Middle East and North Africa.

For over 90 years, world imperialism has fought to divide up this precious resource at the expense of the indigenous people, with U.S. imperialism ruthlessly maneuvering to grab the lion's share.

The 20th-century history of the region—including two world wars, innumerable imperialist-instigated wars between the various Arab nations, and the anti-colonial struggle—is the history of imperialist subjugation and exploitation and the drive of the Arab masses for liberation.

Driven by the need to exercise dominance and control over the single resource which literally turns the "wheels of industry," the giant international oil cartels, owned by the world's leading ruling-class families, have exercised their influence and power to subjugate the people of the Middle East to the interests of capitalist profit.

Oil is the central resource required by advanced capitalist society, accounting in the early 1970s for some 42 percent of the energy needed to run its industry and commerce. By the mid-1970s the Middle East supplied more than 70 percent of the oil consumption in Britain; 80 percent in France; 90 percent in Japan and West Germany; and almost 95 percent in Italy.

Proximity to coastal shipping routes, favorable geographic and climactic conditions, and the low wages of the region's oilworkers make Middle Eastern oil the most profitable in the world.

The Middle East is also the chief supplier to imperialism's military "industry," providing virtually all of NATO's oil today—as it did for the United States during the imperialist war in Vietnam.

Iran—a case example

To fuel its then worldwide military machine and industrial infrastructure, the British occupied Iran following World War I and again during World War II.

British oil interests in Iran remained dominant until the Shah of Iran was challenged by Premier Mohammed Mossadegh who, the day after his 1951 election, nationalized the British-owned Anglo-Persian Oil Company in order to improve the horrible conditions of life of the Iranian people.

The United States used the occasion to impose a worldwide oil embargo in order to enhance its future holdings in Iran. The result was a reduction in Iran's total oil exports during the next two years to less than it had exported in a single day, before the embargo.

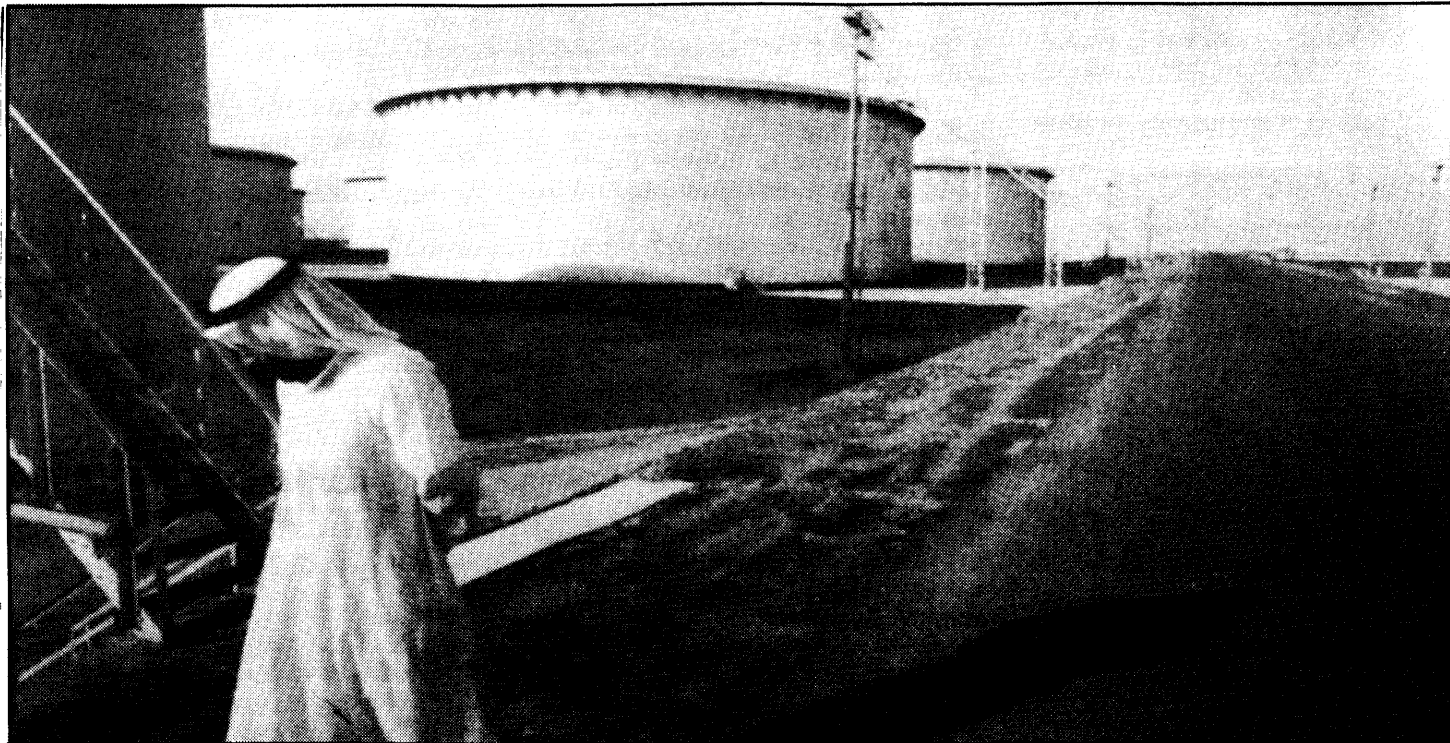
The United States culminated the punishment of Iran in 1953 with a CIA-engineered coup to return the Shah to power. And following this, it restructured Iran's oil cartel to give U.S. corporations the controlling interest.

When U.S. interests were again threatened following the 1979 popular revolution which again removed the Shah, the United States sought the help of Iraq's Saddam Hussein, who complied by invading Iran in a devastating seven-year war. This resulted in a dramatic drop in Iranian oil production, not to mention the loss of one million Iranian lives and nearly that many Iraqi losses.

A strategy of "pacification"

In a 1971 article published in the *International Socialist Review* titled "Middle East Oil and U.S. Imperialism," Dick Roberts summarized the sordid history of the competing imperialist powers in the region:

"Oil was first exported from Iran, in the first decade of this century. The giant Abadan refinery, still the largest in the world, had been constructed in Iran by 1912. Since that time oil exports from the Middle East and North Africa have steadily increased as imperialism spread its wells initially westward from Iran to Iraq, then southward into Saudi Arabia and to the other sheikdoms along the Persian Gulf, into the Persian Gulf itself, and finally westward again to Libya and Algeria...



The ECONOMIST

"The First World War had resulted in the balkanization [artificially breaking up into small nations] of the old Ottoman Empire into spheres of British and French military occupation, at the expense of the Arabs who had supported the allied powers during the world war and expected independence afterwards. Arab resistance to British and French imperialism erupted during the interwar period into strikes, demonstrations, and guerrilla warfare.

"The strategy of 'pacification,' [a term used during the Vietnam War as a euphemism for mass murder] which the French government had already employed in its Morocco campaigns at the turn of the century, was employed by French and British armies alike: French bombers and artillery were used against the civilians of Damascus in 1920, again from 1925-1927, and at the outbreak of the Second World War, as well as at its conclusion. The British massacred an Iraq rebellion in 1920. RAF bombers were pounding the nationalists in 1922 while Colonial Secretary Winston Churchill negotiated with Faisal, later appointed Monarch.

"All this time the imperialists were also preoccupied with the 'black gold' of Iraq and the formation of a consortium to divide this precious spoil of the war."

The Red Line Agreement

The leading contenders—the British, French, Dutch, German, and American imperialists—continued to squabble over Iraqi oil until 1928, when the infamous "Red Line Agreement" was reached under which U.S. corporations received some 24 percent of Iraqi oil.

The agreement was so-named because during the negotiations its chief author, the British oil magnate Calouste Gulbenkian, called for a map of the Middle East—a virtual imperialist colony—and with a red crayon marked off the contending areas to the temporary satisfaction of everyone concerned.

The key issue in dispute was whether Kuwait, the fifth largest oil producer in the world today, and the other Arabian sheikdoms would come under the terms of the agreement under which the British sought to maintain their oil hegemony. The Americans were satisfied with the agreement because Gulbenkian marked Kuwait outside the area in dispute, leaving its future open to negotiation by U.S. oil interests.

The British accepted the agreement because virtually everything else—Bahrein, Qatar, the former Trucial Oman, and Saudi Arabia—remained theirs. A few years later, the U.S. ambassador to Britain, the billionaire owner of Gulf Oil, Andrew Mellon, negotiated a deal with the British, giving his company a 50 percent share of Kuwait's oil.

Today's competing claims to Kuwait notwithstanding, U.S. imperialism's claim that they are sending over 250,000 soldiers to the region to uphold Kuwaiti sovereignty, is entirely negated by their historic violation of this right in the Middle East and the world

over.

Despite early British domination of Saudi Arabia, the 100 percent U.S.-owned Arabian American Oil Company (Aramco) consortium (Standard Oil of New Jersey 30 percent; Standard Oil of California 30 percent; Texaco 30 percent; Mobil 10 percent) established its control over Saudi Arabian oil as well following World War II and the demise of the British Empire.

This was done through the device of massive U.S. government subsidies—through the Lend Lease program—to the Saudi monarchy, with the resulting granting of concessions to U.S. corporations. This deal represents a classic example of the naked use of the financial resources of the U.S. government being used for the interests of its ruling capitalists.

While pre-war Britain controlled 72 percent of the Middle East's oil reserves and the United States an estimated 9.2 percent, by 1967 Britain's holding accounted for only 29.3 percent, with the United States share rising to 58.6 percent.

The world's richest men

Dick Roberts cites the Feb. 24, 1969, *New York Times* in the article quoted above to provide an idea of the return on their "investment" U.S. imperialists expected in the Middle East. Roberts' apt measure is the wealth inherited by the son of the deceased Saudi monarch Ibn Saud:

"The oil 'income' of \$300 million a year ... made him one of the world's richest men.... His personal household numbered about ten thousand. It was filled with scores of slaves (the country's population of six million includes a half-million slaves) and concubines, bodyguards and pensioners on the King's charity. He had 24 palaces."

The world's oil industry in the 1970s was extremely centralized, with 70 percent of production and 50 percent of refinery capacity in the hands of seven corporations. (Today the number has been reduced to six.) Five of these were U.S.-owned; the other two were jointly held by the British government and private capital (British Petroleum) and by British and Dutch corpo-

rations (Royal Dutch Shell).

Ranked in terms of assets, Standard Oil of New Jersey in 1971 was the largest U.S. corporation; Texaco, third; Gulf, fifth; Mobil, seventh; and Standard Oil of California, tenth.

Through a series of concessions, secret agreements, and a network of consortiums, these multinational corporations owned most of the oil in the Middle East. The result was the unimpeded extraction of billions of dollars in profits from oppressed nations in favor of U.S. capital.

Two of the most powerful ruling-class families in the world, the Rockefellers and the Mellons, stand at the top of the world's oil pyramid. By 1971, the Rockefellers, in addition to their controlling interest in such corporations as the Chase Manhattan Bank and the lesser oil concerns, controlled three of the five major U.S. oil corporations. Similarly, the Mellons owned the controlling interest in Gulf Oil.

The combined oil holdings of these two families accounted for a figure approximating the total yearly Gross National Product of Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen combined!

The influence of the oil families in U.S. politics and foreign policy is directly related to their financial power.

Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, under both Republican and Democratic administrations, was the chief architect for Washington's present military, political, and economic policies in the Middle East. He and his brother Allen were partners of the Wall Street law firm of Sullivan and Cromwell, the major attorneys for Standard Oil of New Jersey. Allen Dulles was CIA director from 1953 to 1961.

Post-war realignments

Today, the structure of oil ownership in the Middle East has changed dramatically. The change began with the rise in the colonial revolution following the Second World War and culminated in the last two decades as imperialism's outright "ownership" of its former colonies gave way to newer forms of

(continued on page 11)

U.S. Troops Out of the Middle East! No Vietnam War in the Persian Gulf!

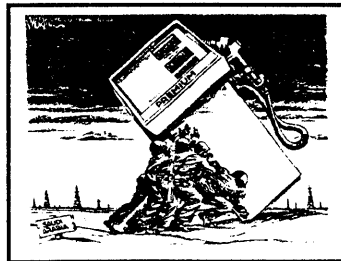
Socialist Action Forum:

Speakers:

Khalil Barhoum, Palestinian professor, Stanford Univ.

Dick Roberts, former editor, *International Socialist Review*.

Jeff Mackler, National Secretary, Socialist Action.



Saturday, Sept. 15 at 8 p.m.

3435 Army St., suite 308, San Francisco

(continued from page 8)

another side of the state of mass worker consciousness. Boeing workers were in a far more favorable objective position than were the miners.

Fifty-eight thousand-strong and able to bring their force to bear against a single large workplace, they had Boeing stopped in its tracks; there was no serious attempt by the bosses to run scabs through picket lines and the company had a 1600-plane backlog of orders to fill. Machinists were in position to gain a decisive victory.

But IAM misleaders, in line with their policy of putting the profitability of the bosses ahead of the needs of their membership, and a cowardly fear of "provoking" the ire of their capitalist partners, seized the earliest opportunity to accept terms far below what should have been gained given the powerful position of Boeing workers.

The settlement included a 10 percent increase in wages over three years and a further increase in the pay-packet of an additional 19 percent in the form of a lump-sum "bonus."

As we shall see, the 19 percent figure is really worth significantly less, therefore the pay packet as a whole didn't even make up for what was given back earlier.

In the two previous contracts, the union officialdom had convinced the membership to make big concessions to Boeing: In 1983 a two-tier wage scale ranging from \$8 to \$18 per hour was introduced; and in 1986 Boeing was allowed to freeze hourly wages, giving lump-sum payments instead. And the 1986 contract reduced medical coverage by requiring workers to pay a \$75 deductible per family member. These concessions were unjustified, given the relation of forces, even then.

The most recent settlement was barely better than Boeing offered before the strike—a direct result of the IAM leadership's no-win strategy.

Lump-sum payments in lieu of regular wage increases and other concessions were rationalized by the need to help the company survive during a period of lowered profits.

The most obvious dirty trick connected with the lump-sum payment is that it tempts workers on a prolonged strike to accept a bad contract because an immediate substantial payment is dangled in front of them.

But even if this were not a factor, this method of payment has very serious negative consequences. Lump sum payments are not figured into the basic hourly rate. This means, among other things, that premium pay for overtime is lower because it is based on an hourly wage that does not include the lump-sum payments.

So, too, are subsequent "percentage" increases in hourly pay which also are calculated only on hourly wages—excluding "bonuses." And all benefits—vacations, health care, pensions, travel-time—are also calculated at lower rates for the same reason.

The overall concessions policy is rationalized by the labor bureaucracy as necessary to save jobs. Some bureaucrats really believe that workers must join in a "united front" with their bosses against all comers. But these concessions are unjustified even as a temporary expedient to save jobs. The fact is that companies will inevitably go under if their technological development doesn't keep pace with that of the industry as a whole.

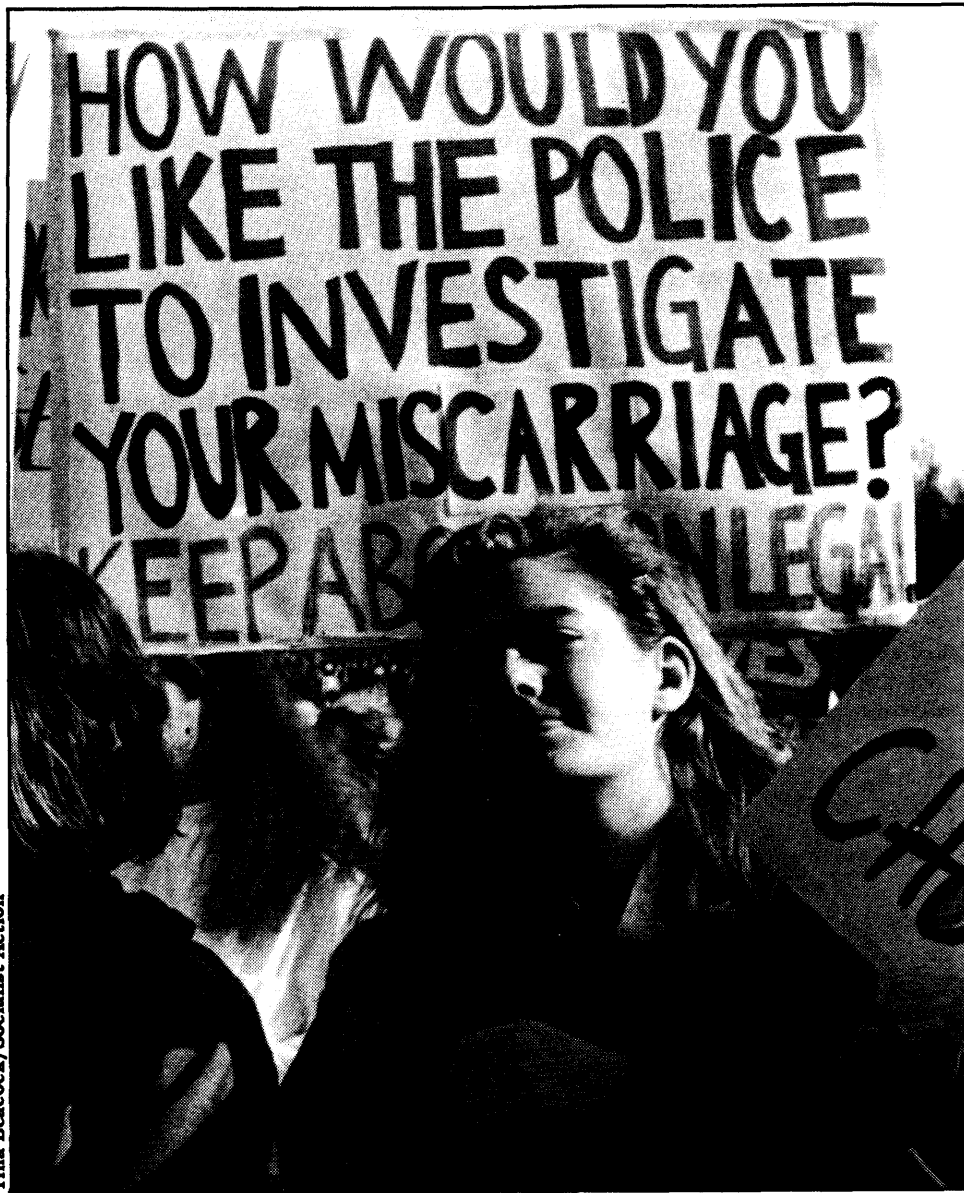
Reduced labor costs alone cannot save an inefficient enterprise—much less make it a leading profitmaker. Givebacks save no jobs, they only allow inefficient enterprises to last a little longer. Moreover, concessions to "save" jobs in one place inexorably loses jobs, for workers as a whole, in another.

These concessions have helped make Boeing, years later, one of the most profitable among the world's producers of aircraft. In its own way this testifies to the initially strong competitive position of Boeing before the givebacks. The main effect of give-backs to such enterprises as Boeing is to help them reap super-profits at the expense of the workers.

And finally, "temporary" concessions are not really temporary. They are, to the contrary, long-lasting. And though they may be given up without a fight they require a major struggle to win back.

Eastern Airlines strike

In the strike of mechanics and other airline employees against Eastern Airlines the inadequacy of IAM leadership is glaring. Certainly, the objective relationship of forces was not nearly as favorable as in the Boeing strike, but it had been far better than that of the miners in their struggle against Pittston.



'...we have assessed the struggle today as chiefly centered on the attack on abortion rights. We have already helped lead this struggle by campaigning for a mobilization of forces around this issue.'

Despite the inspiring solidarity of pilots and flight attendants who walked out in support of striking mechanics, and despite declarations by railroad workers who pledged to honor machinist pickets, the IAM leadership ruled out any extension of the strike, not to mention mass picketing to stop planes from flying. The picketing that has been organized has been essentially limited to an appeal to travellers to boycott Eastern.

(At an Eastern strike support rally in San Francisco, a UMWA speaker declared that had the IAM shut down airports on the first day, the strike would have been over in two weeks.)

At the very least, the response of pilots, flight attendants and railroad workers was evidence that even broader support would be forthcoming providing the IAM leadership demonstrated the kind of fighting spirit needed to carry the strike forward to victory. Such an inspiring example was displayed by miners who struck the Pittston Coal Group shortly after the Eastern strike began.

The two strikes could have and should have been linked up. Then, together with all machinists and railroad workers' support, Eastern strikers could have opened a new chapter in the struggle of the entire working class.

The IAM is a nation-wide industrial union with common problems shared with the rest of America's powerhouse of industrial unions. These unions were born in the fire of mass mobilizations on the picket lines which successfully closed down production. They did so despite strikebreaking scabs, cops, troops and court injunctions. The working class will be "born again" when they rediscover the source of their former power.

We said all this and much more in the special supplement to Socialist Action which we issued at the outset of the Eastern strike. We also warned that the IAM leadership's orientation toward a hoped-for rescue coming from the capitalist adversaries of Eastern Airlines' boss, Frank Lorenzo, was a delusion.

So, too, were illusions in Democratic Party "friends of labor" doing anything more than taking token action in support of striking workers—and then only to be in position to stab labor in the back. It is patently

absurd to pin any hopes on corporate raiders like Carl Icahn or liberals like Senator Edward Kennedy, or any other representative of the capitalist class.

On the contrary, to have expected such people to help workers in this strike; that is, to help the union deal a major blow to the capitalist class, is worse than a delusion. The false hopes placed in representatives and institutions of the capitalist enemy by the IAM leadership disarm the rank and file and put the union on the road to defeat. Unfortunately, only a miraculous turn of events can now prevent a major setback for the Eastern Airline workers.

And finally, we must note that at the time of the announcement of the end of the Pittston strike at a meeting of the AFL-CIO top leadership in Bal Harbour, Florida, it was reported that George J. Kourpias, president of the IAM was there to ask Labor Secretary Elizabeth H. Dole about a \$120 million contract he said the General Services Administration had awarded Eastern to provide transportation services to the government. Dole denied knowledge of this latest anti-labor intervention by the government.

In the case of the Eastern strike, Secretary Dole and the Bush Administration, by granting the struck company a \$120 million contract, have decisively intervened to maximize the defeat of Eastern's striking employees. In the Pittston strike, they also intervened on the side of the bosses. But in that case, for a somewhat different reason:

Pittston realized its attempt to bust the union of striking miners had failed. Dole's role in the mediation process was to appoint W. J. Usery Jr., a former union official who is usually brought on when a "friendly" mediator serves the purposes of the capitalist government. Usery's function here was to save face for the Pittston bosses who had to retreat from their union-busting stance.

Also, it served to bolster the illusion that government mediation is indeed neutral. It would be dead wrong for workers' leaders to give the slightest credibility to this myth. But that was exactly the purpose served by the AFL-CIO heads parading Secretary Dole with honors before their Bal Harbour meeting.

These related episodes confirm once again the absurdity of relying on so-called capital-

ist allies rather than on the independent power of the working class.

The preceding brief review of these three strikes confirms our basic outlook. The objective class power that was realized in the formation of the CIO retains all its potential force. The crisis of world capitalism opened the door to the "semi-revolution" of the 1930s. A new crisis will inevitably reproduce a new upsurge that will begin where the other left off.

The only other missing factor for American labor's next giant step is the subjective one; the construction of a proletarian leadership that has absorbed the lessons to be derived from class struggle history.

But for us, a very small nucleus of the revolutionary party, the subjective factor is an objective one. Big leaps forward for us depend on objective factors beyond our control. We, nevertheless, seek to modestly intervene wherever opportunities to do so open up. In the unions, for the time being, that continues to be mainly on the level of propaganda and through our press.

Women's Liberation

The Political Committee majority's draft women's resolution shows how we have assessed the struggle today as chiefly centered on the attack on abortion rights. Our small party has focused on placing ourselves on the front-line of this defensive struggle. We have already helped lead this struggle by campaigning for a mobilization of forces around this issue.

We have judged that by focusing on organizing effective defense of the clinics and on mass street demonstrations around the single issue of defending the right to choose we can help mobilize the largest number of fighters.

We have also attempted to avoid any tactical prescriptions by evaluating, at each point, how best to mobilize the largest possible independent mass mobilization in this central struggle today. We have generally stressed our long-time orientation to the National Organization for Women (NOW) since it is the only mass multi-issue national women's organization open to all women, irrespective of their political outlook.

Moreover, it is based on local membership chapters, which, in principle, meet on a regular basis and therefore are subject—more than any other organization—to the pressure of this mass national constituency.

In any case, despite our basic orientation, where local NOW Chapters failed to take necessary initiatives, we helped to form coalitions on as broad a basis as possible to serve as the medium for mass mobilizations, including the defense of clinics.

We should not forget, however, that NOW (like trade unions) is in itself a form of the united front, in this case in defense of women's rights. In principle NOW remains the major combat instrument for all those who defend women's rights.

Our orientation to NOW has been confirmed by initiatives it has taken to mobilize a mass defense of the clinics as a vital part of its focus on the defense of choice. This orientation led NOW to call two national mass mobilizations last year in response to the ruling class attack on the right to choose.

Women, and others, will not forget that these mass actions, independent of the capitalist class and objectively in opposition to it, has already paid off by forcing many capitalist politicians to retreat from their more blatantly anti-choice positions.

This tactical retreat by both Democrats and Republicans is intended to give a semblance of credibility to lesser-evil politics to help the petty-bourgeois leaders of the women's movement divert it back into the bourgeois electoral trap. The NOW leadership's current retreat toward capitalist electoralism is not unexpected, but its mass base remains an objective force against this orientation.

Independent class political action

We must also stay alert to opportunities, when and where they arise, to involve the mass organizations of workers, Blacks and other natural allies of women in ever-broader united front actions. Last year's NOW conference is very significant in this respect.

One of the features of the conference was a panel on political action. Our comrades effectively intervened in favor of independent political action in the streets and solidarized themselves with the instinctive demand by women fighters for a break from the twin

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parties of capitalism.

A women's party independent of the working class, however, cannot be independent of the capitalist class. A political party must have a program which answers the entire range of questions dividing society along class lines.

Thus, the only road to the liberation of women is through an alliance with the labor movement and on a rounded program based on the class interests of working people. There is no such thing as a single issue party or candidate for public office!

The political road forward for women is inescapably linked today with our transitional slogan calling for a labor party based on the unions. Normally we have approached this class relationship between the proletariat and its natural allies from the direction of our propaganda aimed at the working class.

It is also useful to raise the same independent class political perspective from the standpoint of the needs of the women's movement as well.

A mass labor party must be a feminist party championing the rights of women, and a Black liberation party, committed to full equality.

But in the meantime mass action in the streets remains the main form of independent political action open to women fighters given the current state of mass consciousness. This parallels our current propaganda focus on mass action on picket lines and in the streets for labor as a more immediate possible form of independent political action.

The Black struggle

We have witnessed continuing outbreaks of racism in many parts of the country. These vary from almost weekly reports of police-murders of Blacks and other oppressed minorities, to a rise of overt racism on college campuses, to the ouster of a Black school superintendent in Selma, Alabama.

The "crime" of this educator was that he had attempted to end the prevailing tracking system which funnels mostly Blacks (and more generally, students from poor working class families) into classes exclusively composed of alleged "slow" students. Such "tracking," it is well known, becomes a self-fulfilling prophesy.

The attack on affirmative action, which began shortly after it was first introduced, has continued to mount. The hopes and opportunities it gave for a little better opening to jobs for Blacks is being whittled away. But this conscious attack on better paying jobs for Blacks only compounds the effects of the natural working of the system.

More than 12 million jobs were lost in the 1980s due to plant closings and layoffs. These tend to be higher-paying, unionized industrial jobs. On the other hand, half of all new jobs created in the last eight years tend to be in the service sector, non-union and pay below the minimum wage. This shift in the economy disproportionately affects Black workers.

In Boston, the murder of a pregnant white woman by her white husband unleashed a witch-hunt indiscriminately directed at all Black males. The husband, knowing the prevailing hysterical fear of "Black" crime in the streets, sought to divert attention from himself by inventing a story of robbery and murder by a Black assailant. Boston's mayor and police department seized the pretext to trample the Bill of Rights underfoot as they stopped and harassed every Black man who lived in the area.

In general, the position of Blacks in our society continues to deteriorate despite advances made by a layer of the Black middle-class. The following are the most startling of statistics reflecting the malignancy of racism in America:

- Nearly one-quarter of Black men in their 20s are in jail, in prison or otherwise under the control of criminal courts through probation or parole.
- With prison sentencings on the increase, more Black men in their 20s are under court control than there are Black men of all ages in higher education. By contrast, the figures for whites in the same age group under court control are 6 percent; and more than four times as many white men are in college as are under court control.

Malcolm X lives!

There has not yet surfaced any qualitative change in the level of combativity and self-organization in the Black community. While this is not entirely dependent on the objective factors affecting the entire mass of

working people in America, Blacks are nevertheless also subject to them in the last analysis.

The biggest opportunities for a major rise in the Black struggle are related to the same conditions that will open up a new stage of struggle for the working class as a whole.

In the meantime there has been a highly significant re-flowering of interest in Malcolm X whose contributions will have a prolonged impact on the struggle for Black liberation.

It is of such amazing proportions that Malcolm, who was slandered, reviled, scorned and, above all, feared by the whole of bourgeois society when he lived, is being treated more objectively, and even hailed—15 years after his death—as a leader more far-seeing than most and one whose ideas remain fresh to this day.

But, we can be sure, this belated recognition is only for the ultimate purpose of transforming, if they can, this uncompromising revolutionary into a "harmless icon."

We had been aware of this growing inter-

after our expulsion from the SWP.

It is difficult to see how this Malcolm X renaissance will concretely impact on the struggle of Blacks for social, economic and political justice here in the United States, and other parts of the world where the oppression of Blacks plays a significant role in these societies. But we can be certain that it will. This makes more urgent our need to stay alert to opportunities that will come for intervening in this key sector of the class struggle.

The "war on drugs"

One of the issues Malcolm had prominently identified himself with was the Nation of Islam's campaign to educate Blacks against the plague of drug addiction afflicting the most exploited and oppressed in capitalist society. He was one of the most effective in inspiring Blacks to resist this pestilence.

But such noble efforts are not sufficient to overcome the despair that grows from poverty and hopelessness, and which drives



Lynn Henderson/Socialist Action

'The so-called war on drugs...is much more a vehicle for violating the civil rights of working people than it is to stamp out the drug epidemic.'

est since shortly after the formation of Socialist Action. Whenever our newspaper carried a story and photo relating to Malcolm, sales increased. Pathfinder Press, the principal distributor of English language collections of speeches by Malcolm X, reports it has sold over 500,000 books by and about him and since July it has sold 33,000 copies of its most recent of seven titles, "Malcolm X: The Last Speeches."

We intend to increase efforts to relate to those inspired by his ideas. We will be organizing tours of the branches around this topic by Kwame and Malik and others. We all need to be extremely alert to find other ways to respond to this opportunity to link up with radicalizing Blacks and, it should be noted, many other people, mostly young, also inspired by Malcolm's ideas.

There can be no doubt that the tumultuous events taking place in South Africa over the past few years have contributed significantly to the attractiveness of his ideas. We have every reason to expect that this will grow along with the retreat from apartheid forced on the white capitalist rulers by the Black majority of South Africa.

But there is another side to the new interest in Malcolm. It is his evolution in the last years of his life to a broader understanding of why Blacks are kept down. He had begun to see that it was more than racism. Or more accurately, that racism was primarily the tool for class exploitation and oppression.

The Socialist Workers Party (SWP) played a significant role in helping tell the truth about Malcolm's ideas when he was alive, and we give it due credit for continuing to publish books by and about him. Members of Socialist Action, of course, have also participated in this important task before and

the victims of capitalism to seek a way out through drugs. And just like when British imperialists subjugated China with the help of opium-laced candy handed out to Chinese children, the drug-lords similarly hooked ghetto youth and enlist many of those hooked as pushers.

The so-called war on drugs now being waged by the American ruling class, is much more a vehicle for violating the civil rights of working people than it is to stamp out the drug epidemic.

Unlawful searches and other invasions of privacy, and indiscriminate testing are proliferating. Capitalist repressive agencies use the widespread concern and opposition in the working class communities to the turf wars between drug dealers to maintain a reign of terror in these communities.

And the growing compulsory testing of workers is used to scape-goat them for accidents due to capitalist speedup and faulty or unsafe equipment, and employ incompetent testing laboratories which are used to set-up and weed out union militants.

The "war on drugs" has also been utilized to justify the invasion of Panama. American imperialism had, at the same time, sought to implicate Cuba in Panamanian drug dealing as well.

This undoubtedly contributed to the Cuban government's decision to hold a public trial of one of its generals, and others, charged with dealing in drugs in Africa and Panama. The convicted General Ochoa was executed. The death penalty served to underscore the determined opposition of Cuban revolutionaries to drug-dealing.

Not long afterward, a Cuban-chartered freighter loaded with bauxite and in international waters on its way to Mexico was shot up by U.S. naval vessels without the slight-

est justification.

In the meantime, the real drug kings in North, South and Central America remain untouched, and continue to do business as usual.

Anti-intervention movement

The electoral defeat of the Sandinistas registers the defeat of the Nicaraguan Revolution which can now be traced back to Nicaraguan President Ortega's signing on to the Arias Peace Plan in August 1987.

This setback constitutes a blow to the struggle of the international proletariat against imperialism. And although the further unraveling of the conquests of the Nicaraguan Revolution will take some time, and rear-guard battles will be fought, the election of Violeta Chomorro represents a decisive shift of class forces in Nicaragua in favor of U.S. imperialism.

One of the areas which this report must address has for most practical purposes been superseded by the election in Nicaragua. We can safely predict that it will contribute heavily to the demobilization of the anti-intervention movement set in motion by Gorbachev.

The historic agreements reached by Bush and Gorbachev cannot be seen as just another step by Soviet Stalinism toward a mythical state of peaceful coexistence between socialism and capitalism. It is also crystal clear that Gorbachev's commitment to help imperialism stop and roll back the Central American Revolution has now paid off for imperialism with the historic defeat in Nicaragua.

Gorbachev's deal with imperialism first had the effect of driving the Sandinistas further and faster along the road of capitulation to the American capitalist class and putting opponents of U.S. intervention in Central America off guard. Even the invasion of Panama did little to dispel the euphoric sense that the threat of new counter-revolutionary interventions had declined.

Now the capability of imperialism to make such direct military intervention in places like El Salvador—and Nicaragua, in the event it should prove necessary—has greatly increased, while the likelihood of an effective response by Americans to more open imperialist aggression has declined.

This new situation—which also can be traced to the signing of the Arias Peace Plan in 1987—has made it easier for the solidarity groups to dominate the movement and impose their mistaken conceptions of how to build the largest and most effective opposition to imperialist intervention.

This new situation, reinforced by the electoral defeat of the FSLN, underscores our temporary loss of leverage, which had formerly allowed us to play such a remarkably influential role in setting an effective anti-interventionist course for the movement.

The success of our interventions in the mid-1980s flowed from our political focus on the slogan of "U.S. out of Central America!" This eminently reasonable demand was the most profoundly anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist one possible, and it led to the largest demonstrations in the recent history of this struggle.

We should, of course, continue to support all meaningful actions in opposition to imperialist intervention without taking responsibility for the tendency of current leadership to adopt "negotiation" demands which compromise principled support for the right of nations to self-determination.

We must also continue to disassociate ourselves from any attempt to link or counterpose civil disobedience with mass peaceful protest demonstrations.

Preparing for big opportunities

In the coming period of rising class struggle there will be bigger opportunities for us to lead the way for our class. There will be, therefore, a more fertile ground for recruitment and fusion with forces which will evolve in our direction in response to the new situation.

New layers of class struggle fighters will arise independently of us out of the mass workers' movements. Our paths will tend to converge. Our responsibility, as we have taken pains to explain many times, is to find our way to these layers as they arise.

In Socialist Action's short time of existence we have shown we know how to stick to our principled guns even when it has led to splits. We must be just as determined when opportunities come along to regroup with forces moving in our direction. We will not be impatient. ■

...tiger by the tail

(continued from page 1)

who have been historically oppressed by the wealthier Christian Maronites in the Lebanese civil war.

Moreover, when the same Saddam Hussein launched his bloody war against Iran, the U.S. government "tilted" in favor of Iraq, because in that war Iraq was doing Washington's dirty work in attempting to contain and roll back the Iranian Revolution.

But when the fake "country" of Kuwait, in reality nothing more than a big oil company, is incorporated into Iraq, Washington screams "aggression," and launches a war in which U.S. young men and women are expected to die to reinstall the Emir of Kuwait and his degenerate family.

Arab masses oppose U.S.

But the Arab masses, the "people in the street," see Washington's aggression for what it is—an attempt to keep the Arab peoples subjugated by the oil monopolies. Reports in the U.S. press of this growing opposition by the Arab masses to the U.S. war are sketchy, but have begun to come through.

Demonstrations by Palestinians are occurring every day in the West Bank and Gaza, and in other countries. Early reports indicated that the large number of Palestinians in Kuwait helped the Iraqi soldiers in their initial thrust, leading to a rapid victory.

Demonstrations in Syria against the United States have been reported, even though demonstrations are illegal there and the Syrian government has joined the front of traitors of Arab regimes who are backing the United States.

Jordan's King Hussein, traditionally pro-U.S., faces such big opposition from Jordanians against the U.S. invasion that he has been forced to be neutral and keep open trade with Iraq in defiance of the U.S. blockade. Demonstrations in Jordan are a daily occurrence, and it is reported that thousands of Jordanians, many of whom are Palestinians, are signing up to fight the U.S. forces as the war deepens.

Writing from Amman, Jordan, in the Aug. 23 *New York Times*, Joseph Treaster discussed King Hussein's plight:

"Emotionally, King Hussein would like to side with Iraq. He said tonight, for example, that President [Saddam] Hussein, whom he recently called 'an Arab patriot,' had been the victim of an international campaign of vilification.

"But throwing in with Iraq would make the King a pariah, too, and bring an end to substantial financial aid from Saudi Arabia and the gulf oil states as well as the United States.

"On the other hand, siding with the United States would make a front-line enemy of Iraq and, even in a nation with the tight internal security of Jordan, such moves would probably ignite waves of protests from a population that adores Saddam Hussein as the embodiment of Arab dignity and pride."

Treaster added that if Jordan were to back

the U.S. blockade, there "is the possibility of such tumultuous protest that the King would be toppled, probably to be replaced by a radical from Jordan's majority Palestinian population, or a surrogate of Iraq, neither of which would bode well for the United States."

It is to this groundswell of Arab nationalism in the face of the U.S. invasion that Saddam Hussein is now appealing. Writing



Protestors in Amman, Jordan, demonstrate against the U.S. military buildup in Saudi Arabia.

in the Aug. *New York Times*, John Kifner in Cairo wrote:

"It is this effort to assume the Arab nationalist mantle of Gamal Abdel Nasser that the Iraqi leader seems to be banking on in the face of the unexpected closing of Arab ranks [that is, the Arab regimes—B.S.], led by Egypt, against him.

"In bombastic speeches, [Saddam Hussein] has not only inveighed against the deeply resented foreigners, but set the poor Arabs against the rich, portrayed the oil-wealthy emirs as decadent, selfish spendthrifts....

"His speeches have a visceral appeal to many poor Arabs working in the Gulf and to Palestinians in refugee camps, because much of what he says is not without truth. Few Arab regimes have real legitimacy."

U.S. imperialism's objectives

What are the U.S. government's objec-

tives in launching this war?

One immediate objective is to beat back the Iraqis, reinstall the Kuwaiti royal family, and thereby greatly enhance U.S. imperialism's hold on the whole region.

This would solidify Washington's domination over the regimes that have sided with it, and put the United States into the position of going for the overthrow of the Iraqi government, and installing an Iraqi puppet regime.

This would re-establish the United States as the major force in the Persian Gulf, a position the Iranian people booted Washington out of when they overthrew the puppet regime of the Shah in 1979. Then Washing-

staining.

As we go to press, U.S. military commanders are suggesting that a U.N.-sponsored naval fleet (comprised mainly of U.S. war ships) could be used to torpedo the rudders of the Iraqi oil ships to demobilize them.

Now, the United Nations—primarily thanks to the treacherous role of the Soviet bureaucracy—is being used to provide the fig leaf for Washington to escalate its military aggression in the Persian Gulf.

The United Nations has once again—as in the cases of the Korean War and the Belgian aggression in the Congo in the 1960s—been shown to be a tool of the imperialist pow-

ton would be in a position to overthrow what remains of the Iranian Revolution, securing the Gulf as an American lake.

(One positive outcome of the current conflict is that Saddam Hussein has felt compelled to make peace with Iran, on Iran's terms.)

Another objective is to strengthen U.S. imperialism relative to its imperialist competitors, especially Germany and Japan—even though Bush needs their political support behind his war.

Another objective of Washington is to bolster its regional ally and surrogate police force in the region, Israel. Israeli officials are keeping a low profile at present, to make it easier for the traitor Arab regimes who have backed the United States to do so. But they have stated that they expect the war to widen and that their armed forces will play a key role. They are also lobbying the United States to invade Iraq sooner, rather than later.

(Imperialist adviser Henry Kissinger is making the same point. He says that the wide support that Washington has gotten from the world's governments might not last all that long, and the United States should attack now while that support is intact.)

U.N.: Cover for U.S. war

Faced with the deep resistance of the Arab masses, it has been politically important for the United States to get support from other governments and the United Nations as a cover for its aggression.

Backing from its imperialist allies was to be expected, but Bush needed more. He needed support from the Soviet government and from the colonial and semicolonial countries, especially the Arab regimes.

The bureaucratic toadies of imperialism in Moscow and Peking were quick to line up, although they have expressed some reservations. (The Kremlin doesn't want it to look like a nakedly American operation, and Peking has expressed unease at the American military buildup in the region, while going along with the blockade.)

But on Aug. 24, with Gorbachev's full support, the United Nations Security Council voted to authorize the use of "minimum [military] force" to halt all oil to and from Iraq. The Security Council vote passed 13 to 0, with Yemen and Cuba ab-

ers. It can never take action against Israeli aggression, or the U.S. invasions of Grenada and Panama, or the U.S.-sponsored war against Nicaragua, for example.

[For more on the role of United Nations, including a critical assessment of the position of the Cuban leadership, see editorial on page 18.]

Stakes high in showdown

The stakes are high in this showdown, not only for the Arab peoples but all the world's people. If the unholy alliance of the U.S. and other imperialist powers—including Israel, the traitor Arab regimes who have hitched their destiny to a U.S. victory, and Moscow and Peking—wins, a tremendous blow will have been dealt to the Arab peoples and to all the working people and oppressed people of the world.

But that outcome is not certain by any means. Far from it. If the United States doesn't rapidly achieve its goals, either through the starvation of Iraq or through other military moves, but rather gets bogged down in a long Vietnam-type war, more and more people throughout the world will come to understand the real nature of this war.

Political support for the United States will dwindle, including here at home, as those young Americans who are Bush's pawns in this war come home in body bags, and the economic costs of the war hit home and intensify the coming recession. [See article by Malik Miah on page 1 on the economic impact of the U.S. war in the Persian Gulf.]

The key fighters against the unholy alliance are the Arab masses, each day displaying greater resistance.

We here in the United States have our job to do to defeat this aggression by the war-makers in Washington.

Most immediately, we have to help clear up the confusion about these events that exists among many who have opposed U.S. aggressions before.

And we need to reach out to the great masses of American working people, who are exploited by the very same handful of super-rich families that are behind this war, and whose children are being sent as cannon fodder against the Arab peoples, and who have the power to stop this war right here at home, as the Vietnam war was stopped. ■

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Khalil Barhoum, Professor, Stanford University; Palestinian activist; member, Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee

Kiren Chaudhry, Professor of Political Science, specialist in Middle Eastern Studies, University of California at Berkeley

Dick Roberts, former staffwriter, "The Militant," author of several books and articles on the Middle East

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...economy in tailspin

(continued from page 1)

produced by the economy—the Gross National Product—declines for two straight quarters. Officially it hasn't happened for nearly eight years.

But consider the following facts:

- The GNP eked out a 1.2% gain in the second quarter of 1990. But if you exclude production that went straight into inventories, final sales fell by 1.5%.

- The Dow Jones industrial average, as of Aug. 23, lost almost 440 points, or nearly 15% of its value, since its peak in mid-July. On Aug. 21, in a 24-hour period, Japan's Nikkei index dropped 8% (nearly 38% this year), while West German and French markets fell 5.2% and 4% respectively.

- A barrel of crude oil has gone up over 50% since early July, from around \$18 to \$31 as of Aug. 23. It's the highest price since 1985.

- Gasoline prices have averaged a 13% rise and will continue to rise as the oil corporations gouge working people and other consumers. Air fares have gone up an average of 5.3% with the rise in jet fuel prices. Oil affects the cost of all commodities produced.

- Some 35 states reported employment declines in the second quarter. Official unemployment remains around 5.5%, meaning fewer workers are seeking work. Moreover, wage disparities continue to widen, especially between Blacks (and other oppressed minorities) and whites.

- The number of people receiving food stamps and welfare benefits has jumped sharply this year. At least 44 states have reported increases in enrollment, some ranging up to 50%.

- Housing starts continue to decline as four times as many homes are in foreclosure as in 1980. That's roughly the equivalent to a home being seized or abandoned every two minutes.

- Corporate profits continue to decline and debt rises. Second-quarter profits declined 7%, the fourth decline in a row. The Big Three automakers had an average profit decline of over 40%. Moreover, 27.3% of corporate cash flow went to service debt in the first quarter. This ties the all-time high for that ratio during the 1974 recession.

- The budget deficit is leading to new taxes. Most states are considering regressive sales tax increases that hit workers hardest. Only a handful of states, perhaps no more than 10, can boast of good financial health. All this before the oil shock.

- The S&L bailout, already taking billions from taxpayers, is expected to rise. The government deficit for 1990 is expected to top \$195 billion. Bankruptcies among commercial banks are accelerating, as their profits decline because of loan defaults from highly leveraged companies, real estate developers, and Third World countries.

As the military budget skyrockets to pay for the U.S. intervention into the Arab East, the Bush government is expected to press for more cuts in social programs to "balance" the federal budget.

Moreover, the oil shock is hitting semi-colonial countries in the Third World many times harder than the industrialized economies. One example: \$25-a-barrel oil will raise Brazil's oil bill by \$1.5 billion a year, while that country's annual exports are \$34 billion and annual debt service is \$10 billion. Other countries are worse off.

Structural crisis worsens

The bottom line is the economy is teetering on the edge of a major recession likely to be more severe than usual because of unresolved structural factors.

The heart of the problem for U.S. capitalism is a crisis of over-production and inter-imperialist competition that has led to a decline in both the rate of profits and mass of profits for major U.S. multinational corporations. The total corporate debt, which affects capital investments, has skyrocketed over the 1980s. That debt is a big reason behind the crisis of the banking industry.

There are two fundamental ways to resolve such a crisis: introduce new technology that can qualitatively raise labor productivity, or destroy excess capacity. The former is not yet on the agenda. The latter requires a massive world war that is excluded. Regional wars aren't enough.

Short of these scenarios, the employers and their governments seek to qualitatively

lower labor costs by any means necessary as well as shift productive capital away from their competitors. It means union-busting and going to war to dominate and control as much of the world's natural resources—such as the Arab oil in the Middle East.

Moreover, some two-thirds of the U.S. economy is based on consumer spending, which is declining as workers spend more re-

continue to rise as oil prices escalate.

U.S. competitors in Europe and Japan continue to make gains as well. German and Japanese capitalists hold some \$350 billion worth of Treasury debt. The dollar is now at its lowest level against the mark since the German currency was created in 1948. The cheaper dollar scares away more foreign investment. While all industrialized economies are interconnected, Japan and Germany's economies expect to grow 4% in 1990, compared to less than 1% for the United States. Depending on the impact of the oil war, all

As the U.S. rulers press their aggression in the Arab East, the economy will continue to spiral down toward a deep recession. The employers are already using the war drive to attack the wages and living standards of working people.

What policy for labor?

It is not only the big oil corporations that are gouging workers. The list includes big food processors, truck companies, airlines, and many more. Local and state governments are preparing layoffs and cuts in social programs.

So far top labor officials have not condemned the imperialist intervention in the Middle East. This stance disarms workers as the bosses step up their profit drive. The trade unions should take a firm stand against the U.S. government's aggression. U.S. Out of the Middle East! Hands Off Iraq! Jobs Not War! should be labor's demands.

To stand up to the price gouging the unions should demand nationalization of the oil giants, under control of the workers and the public, and a rollback of all price increases.

Workers facing layoffs must be protected. The AFL-CIO should call for a reduction of the workweek with no cut in pay (30 hours work for 40 hours pay) and unemployment benefits at a living wage.

The number of unions with cost-of-living clauses in their contracts are few. The unions should demand escalator clauses to protect workers from rising inflation. These escalators should apply to all fixed incomes such as welfare benefits and social security. Medicaid must be expanded for the new homeless and unemployed.

Workers called up as army reserves for the war drive must be guaranteed their jobs and health benefits. Many employers have already said they will not cover lost wages or medical benefits for reservists' families.

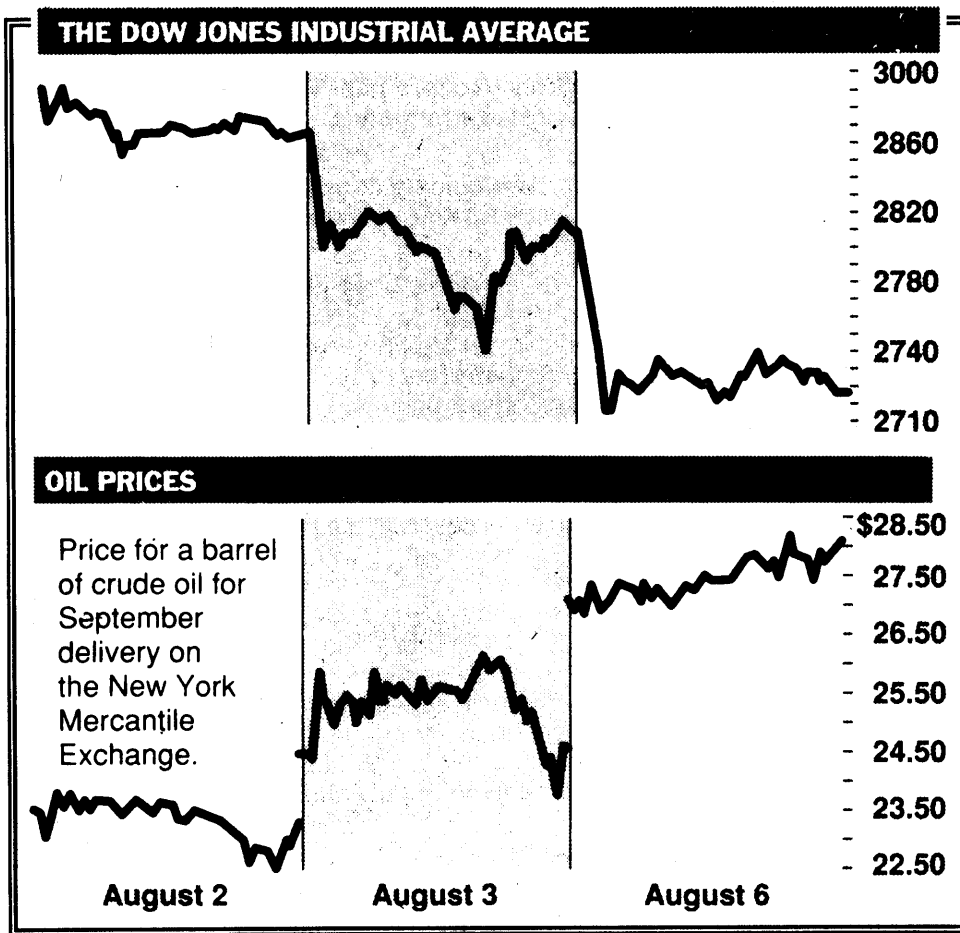
Break with the bosses' parties

The labor movement must take the high moral ground and give solidarity to workers and farmers of the semicolonial countries hardest hit by the oil shock. The huge debt owed by these countries to the big banks are immoral and unpayable. The debts should be cancelled. Countries like Brazil and India should receive oil at a price they can pay to lessen the blow of the price gouging of the multinational oil corporations.

Finally, the unions should end their political support to the Democrats and "Republicans who are called "friends of labor." These so-called friends have been unanimous in their support for the U.S. war drive and other steps against working people's interests.

To fight for a "jobs not war" program the trade unions should take steps to form an independent labor party to fight for the needs of union and nonunion labor, including working farmers.

It is now that the unions must stand up and speak out for all workers and the oppressed of the world. Only a class-struggle policy will protect working people against Washington's aggression and the impending economic crisis. ■



sources on basic necessities and attempt modest savings as they await the recession.

Only the top one-fifth of American families enjoyed real income gains in the 1980s. In the last decade, working families stayed afloat by going deeper into debt and by putting a second wage earner into the economy. The two-income family will not be adequate for many families in the 1990s.

Union membership in decline

Union membership is at its lowest level since the 1920s. In the last 10 years the employers have imposed two-tier contracts and major concession contracts. While short-term profit gains were won, the rate of profit continues to decline.

At the same time more workers are stepping up resistance to union-busting—for example, at Eastern Airlines, Greyhound bus lines, telephone companies and hospitals on the East Coast, and Pittston coal mines. Most of these defensive strikes, however, have lost, although a few have won modest gains. Wage increases have generally stayed behind the inflation rate, which will con-

may show a decline.

The current military build-up in the Middle East will at best be a short-term shot in the arm for the war-production industries. Tanks and guns are not productive goods. Inflation will rise as billions are paid out for the war drive.

"There is no good time to have a recession," writes Robert Kutter in the Aug. 20 *Business Week*, "but this is a particularly bad time. The one coming will reflect deep weaknesses in the economy that will be hard to fix. The slow-growth recovery of the 1980s was made possible by a combination of deficit spending and cheap foreign borrowing, not by real improvements in U.S. competitiveness or productivity.

"As that recovery finally succumbs to overdue fiscal reform, slow productivity growth, declining corporate earnings, weak consumer spending, and high real interest rates, there is simply no good mix of policy options. Recession will only worsen the conditions of banks and increase the weight of past debt."

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Perestroika's architect reveals details of Gorbachev's blueprint

By HAYDEN PERRY

Inside Perestroika, by Abel Aganbegyan, Harper and Row, New York. 245 pages, \$9.95.

Abel Aganbegyan has been described as the "architect of perestroika" and "Gorbachev's guru." So his book has value as a view from high in the Kremlin of the turmoil that perestroika is creating.

Aganbegyan was trained as a mathematician and spent years with the graphs and statistics of macro-economics. He felt at home in the world of international economists and made many trips abroad. As a government representative, he conferred with economists and leaders of the Western world.

After visiting Milton Friedman, President Ronald Reagan's economic adviser, he wrote favorably of the "great thinker" and proposed publishing his books in the Soviet Union. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher also impressed this representative of a degenerated workers' state.

He wrote, after a visit to Downing St. in 1987, "If I were asked my opinion of the policies of the Conservative government, often labelled Thatcherism, I would certainly have to give them quite high marks." (p. 57)

Aganbegyan includes a caveat that he does not believe capitalism is superior to socialism. But he then proceeds to outline a "socialist market" economy that is, in fact, little different from the system envisaged by pro-capitalist theoretician Adam Smith in the 18th century.

First, centralized planning is to play a minor role under perestroika. Aganbegyan writes, "The center of gravity will no longer lie in the directives given to the branches of the economy ... but in a system of advantages and privileges." (p. 93)

Aganbegyan proposes to achieve this "system of economic advantages and privileges" by a series of steps, ranging from selling shares in state enterprises to meshing the Soviet economy into the system of Western imperialism.

Prices must first be allowed to find their own level in a free market and reflect the true cost of production, Aganbegyan says. He acknowledges that lifting state subsidies will lead to a doubling or tripling of many prices.

Here Aganbegyan's blueprint collides with Soviet reality. Gorbachev is not ready to risk hyper-inflation by dropping all price controls. When Gorbachev prepared to raise prices of bread, meat, and milk in May he was condemned. "Worse than shock therapy!" cried one deputy. "It is shock without the therapy."

The therapy is missing, Aganbegyan argues, because Gorbachev is combining an administered price system with a free-market economy. For three years, this "mixed-economy" perestroika has failed to improve anything. Aganbegyan says: Go to the free market all the way; throw out central planning except for public works and the military.

"Profits guarantee production"

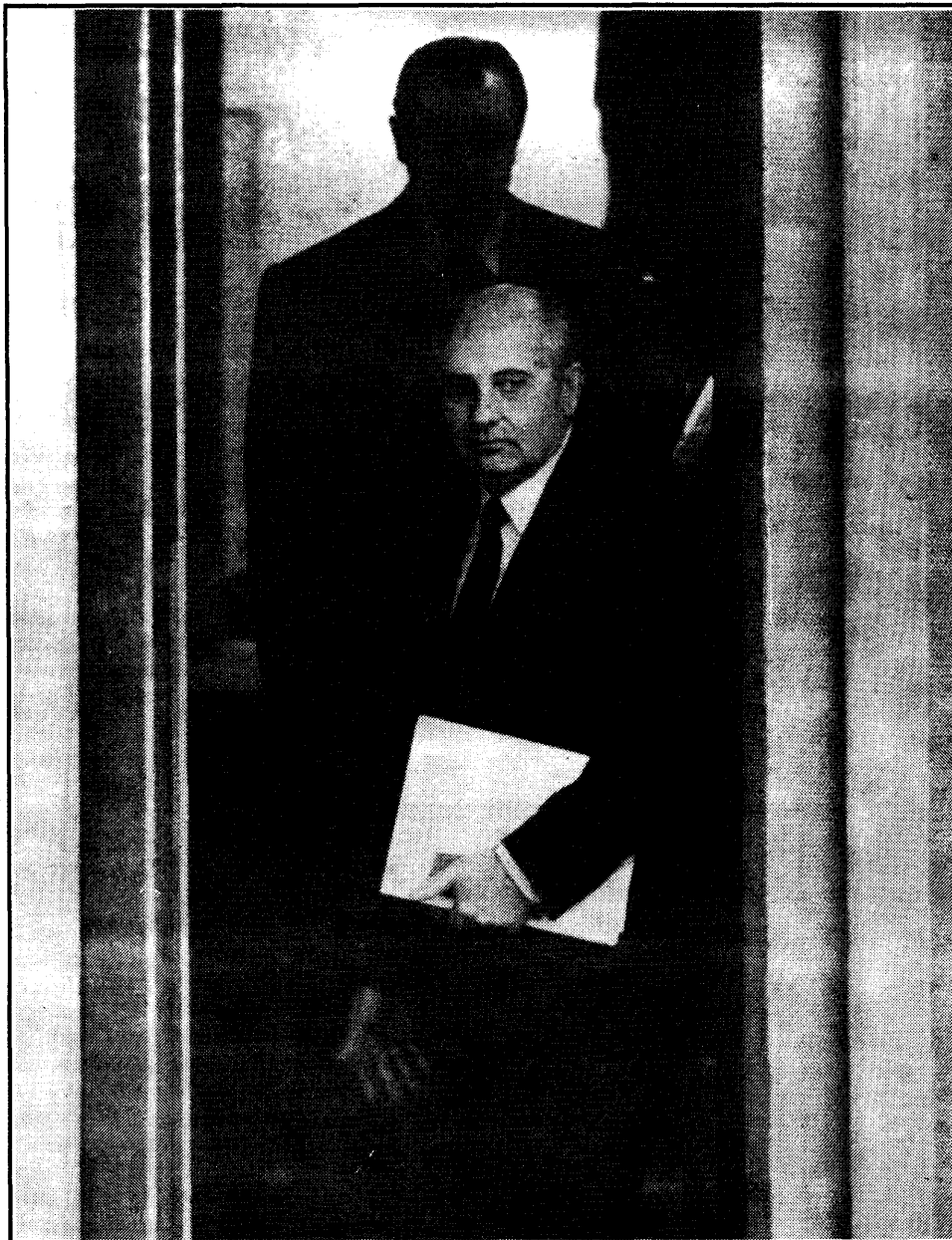
Self-managed and self-financed enterprises will decide production and prices. Their overriding concern will be to make a profit. Profits alone, says Aganbegyan, will guarantee production of every social need. (The sick and homeless in the profit-motivated United States would challenge that assertion!)

New financing for Soviet industry would come partly from workers' savings, which are high because they have little to buy. Workers would buy shares in the plants where they work. This would give workers a stake in their factory and presumably lead to greater effort on the job.

(American industrialists have also tried Employee Stock Option Plans [ESOP], but there has been no voluntary speedup in those plants.)

Aganbegyan may have some doubts about raising productivity through share ownership. He presents us with another scheme to motivate workers. He calls it "collective leaseholding." In agriculture, this has meant leasing part of a state farm to a group of workers, who raise a crop and share the profits.

In a factory, the system would work the same way. A group of employees in a state-



Gorbachev waiting in the wings. Is the restoration of capitalism waiting there with him?

run factory could join together and contract with management to independently produce some part of the output. Several such groups could be formed in a large factory.

Aganbegyan writes: "For instance, in a shoe factory a collective produces clogs and is paid the price fixed for clogs. On completion, the leasehold collective is paid the contractual amount and divides it among its members according to its own democratic principles.

"Such an idea could be developed further to include payment for the machinery and equipment needed by the collective in the lease. If the collective then consumes less by increasing its efficiency, its income will increase still further.... This will transform the worker in a socialist enterprise from a wage-earner into a co-master or co-manager of the leased means of production and will provide a new motivating mechanism and new possibilities for involvement." (p. 76)

Eastern Europe is becoming a cog in the world capitalist assembly line

By GERRY FIORI

One of the major tendencies of modern-day capitalism has been the transfer by major multinational corporations of textile, electronic, and vehicle-component assembly to the semi-colonial world. In these countries labor costs are less, unions are weaker, and health and safety regulations are often nonexistent.

These types of plants (for example, the foreign-owned assembly plants in Mexico known as *maquiladoras*) construct consumer goods for export to some countries out of component parts shipped in from others.

This process tends to extend the assembly-line process to a world scale, with whole sectors of the economies of some countries functioning as part of a giant conveyor belt, dependent for their existence on the other parts of the "belt" continuing to operate.

This acts to increase the control of imperialism over the economies of the Third World, as the flow of production can be transferred from plants where wages become too high (through strikes, etc.) to lower-cost areas, leaving the independently non-viable plants to be forced to close down.

This situation is beginning to be the case in Eastern Europe, as perestroika reforms have opened the economies of the workers' states to increasing penetration by imperialist corporations. A glimpse of this can be seen in an article in the August issue of

Airport Press ("Austrian Airlines Filling Eastern Bloc Needs"), published in New York.

In this article, Joseph Luise, North American cargo sales and service manager of Austrian Airlines, a major flyer to Eastern Europe, explains how a number of U.S. companies are taking advantage of the new opportunities for extending the assembly-line system. These companies include Kodak, Casio, Levi's, Sassoon, IBM, and AMP.

The process whereby numbers of East European workers are being drawn into the capitalist world assembly line is described in the article:

What an effective way to destroy worker solidarity in a plant! In a large factory, little groups of speedup artists will share the gains from increased production. What will happen to the rest of the work force who are not invited into these privileged groups? Presumably they will be toiling at the less desirable jobs at low fixed wages.

Citizens would also be free to form cooperatives to supply any product or service that can command a market. Their regulation, Aganbegyan says, is to be based on the principle that "anything not actually forbidden is permitted."

This *laissez-faire* attitude to commerce would extend to foreign trade and investment. Enterprises could deal directly with foreign concerns, by-passing state ministries and breaking the traditional state monopoly of foreign trade.

Foreign trade zones

Investment in the Soviet Union by Western capitalists can put foreign investors in charge. They can now own more than 50 percent of the stock and make all the decisions. To make foreign trade and investment easier the rouble is being made convertible.

Aganbegyan proposes to bring Soviet industry even closer to foreign investors. "We are looking into the possibilities of creating zones where conditions for joint enterprises will be particularly favorable. Such zones exist in China and have on the whole been successful," Aganbegyan tells us. He mentions the low cost of Russian labor that should attract Western investors.

For Aganbegyan, perestroika requires a new world view. He says he no longer holds the "old outlook that divided the world into different political systems that had to be in confrontation." International problems must now be addressed "not from a class position but from a general human position," he declares. (p.175)

By "general human position," Aganbegyan means the position of the dominant ideology in the world today—capitalism. Throwing the word "socialism" into his thesis here and there does not disguise the fact that he has laid out a blueprint for a retreat back to capitalism.

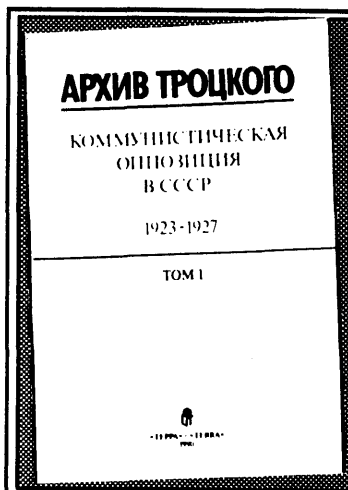
The road back to capitalism will be a rocky one. Protests over rising prices will be followed by even louder ones as unemployment mounts. Gorbachev is committed to the capitalist road, but he fears the destabilization that will result. Aganbegyan assures him the transition can be made safely.

But Gorbachev has challenged Aganbegyan by appointing him to the "Commission for the Evaluation of Alternative Variants for the Transition to a Regulated Market Economy." This tongue twister could be translated as, "Take us to capitalism, but don't disturb the people." This is likely to be an impossible task. ■

"The flow of goods goes like this: The parts, whether clothing or electronics, come in from the Far East, are transshipped through U.S. airports and on to the Eastern bloc countries where they are assembled, and shipped back as whole goods for Americans to buy." The article adds: "Formerly, garments were assembled in South America. But manufacturers have found that they can get the same quality of work in Eastern Europe."

This is the future imperialism is preparing for the workers of Eastern Europe. The capitalism waiting for them is not that of West Germany or the United States, but that of Taiwan and Mexico.

The only way forward in these countries is for the working class to organize to defend the socialized property forms that exist, gain collective democratic control over them, and join the worldwide struggle to end exploitation everywhere. ■



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Bush's hypocrisy in the Middle East

The U.S. government is risking another Vietnam by moving its military might into the Middle East on the pretext that Iraq has re-shuffled the borders. Few people realize that world imperialist powers (the United States, Great Britain and France) artificially established these borders over the past eight decades.

The American people have no interest in such a war—a war that will be fought to protect the profits

years as successive U.S. administrations tried through armed force (the contras), economic blockade, and every other method to oust the Sandinista government. And what about Cuba, which faces constant U.S. military threats?

Bush's hypocrisy over Iraq would be embarrassing were it not for the high stakes involved in terms of profits—and American and Arab lives!

During Iraq's war with Iran (1981-1989) the U.S. government was "neutral for Iraq," despite the use of poison gas against civilians of the oppressed Kurdish nationality. That war was secretly instigated and backed by the United States to weaken Iran and cost both sides over one million dead.

Now, the fear of a stronger Arab nation in the Middle East, one that dares to fight for a greater share of profits from its own oil resources, causes President Bush and the oil monopolies he represents to suddenly discover that Saddam Hussein is "another Hitler."

Three-fourths of the world's oil comes from the Middle East and North Africa. The vast majority of the oil, the tankers, and the refineries are owned or controlled by U.S. corporations and their imperialist allies.

The United States government is defending the interests of the oil corporations, not the interests of working people here or in the Middle East.

**Bring the troops home now!
Self-determination for the Arab people!
U.S. Hands Off!**

Editorials

of the oil corporations. President Bush wants the sons and daughters of American working people to put their lives on the line for Chevron's and others' enrichment.

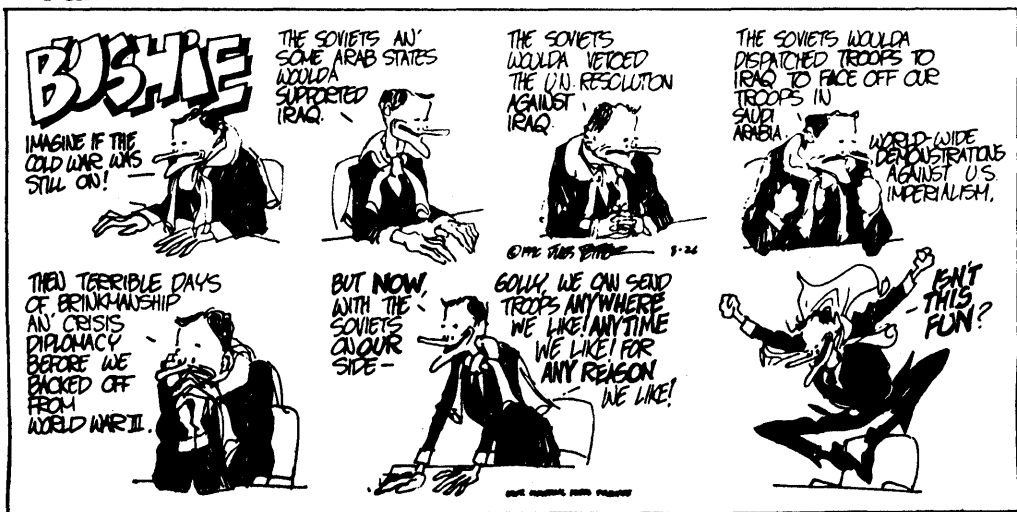
The oil corporations and the U.S. government, which acts as their representative in the Middle East, are ripping off the Arab people just like they are already ripping off the American people at the gas pumps.

The immediate raising of gasoline prices had nothing to do with the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Oil pumped since Iraq took over Kuwait isn't even in the pipelines yet and won't be for several months!

President Bush is a hypocrite when he cries about Kuwait's sovereignty. Bush certainly had no concern for the sovereignty of Panama when he invaded that little country and installed a puppet regime, or when the United States invaded tiny Grenada in 1983.

Nicaragua's sovereignty was undermined for over 10

Felfler



The U.N. and the Cuban Revolution

Once again the United Nations is showing itself to be a tool of the imperialist powers—primarily of the United States—against an oppressed people.

The U.N. Security Council's vote on Aug. 24 authorizing the use of "minimum force" to halt all oil to and from Iraq provides the U.S. government with the cover it has been looking for to go on the military offensive against Iraq and the Arab people.

The instrumental role in getting this resolution approved was played by the Soviet Union. The U.N. vote came only after Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, lining up fully behind U.S. imperialism, threatened "additional international actions" against Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. Gorbachev showed with this stance how committed he is to collaborate with the U.S. warmakers in promoting worldwide counterrevolutionary military action.

In contrast to the Gorbachev leadership of the Soviet Communist Party, the Soviet leadership in Lenin's time, when the Soviet government was still revolutionary, denounced the then-existing League of Nations as a "den of thieves" and refused to join and lend prestige to this club dominated by the imperialist powers.

In this regard the revolutionary government of Cuba made an important mistake in voting in the Security Council to condemn Iraq's invasion of and annexation of Kuwait—and, later, in abstaining on motions to embargo Iraq and to enforce it by military action.

In explaining Cuba's vote against the annexation of Kuwait, in a letter to the leaders of the Arab countries reprinted in the Aug. 13 *Granma Weekly Review*, Fidel Castro stated:

"Not without pain and bitterness did we take that necessary and just step in line with our principled policy concerning the inadmissibility of resorting to force and military superiority to solve the contradictions among countries, more so when involved here is a fratricidal confrontation between Third World peoples."

Given the unstinting aggression against Cuba for 30 years by the United States, we agree with and understand Cuba's fear of giving the imperialists any argument that might be used for future justification for aggression against Cuba. We also agree with the principle that revolution cannot be exported by bayonets. The oppressed Third World nations should stick together against imperialism.

But the government of Cuba made two mistakes here.

The first mistake was to view the motions before the Security Council as a means of defending the right of the Kuwaiti people to self-determination. They were not. These motions were intended to show a united world opinion backing armed U.S. imperialist intervention to suppress the right of the Arab people to self-determination—and that's how they have been used.

The second mistake was to look at Kuwait as just any other semi-colonial country. It isn't. It is a fake "country"—in reality nothing more than a big oil company.

Cuba should have cast its votes in that framework, and denounced these motions for what they were. Unfortunately, Cuba's votes may well come back to haunt it.

Castro states, correctly, in the same letter that these U.N. motions were "just a pretext for the United States. They are seeking to legitimize armed intervention in the name of the international community. We are now facing such a disaster."

Castro also warns in his speech of a major catastrophe and holocaust in the Middle East "caused by the growing and speedy preparations for a direct military intervention by the United States and its allies. No less alarming is the evidence pointing to the steps aimed at the creation, for the same interventionist purpose, of a multinational force whose composition reveals a new correlation of forces on a world scale against the interests of the Arab peoples."

Castro was fully justified in warning against the use of a multinational force to provide a fig leaf for U.S. intervention against the Arab masses. But then why did Cuba abstain—rather than vote against—the U.N. Security Council resolution that authorized "United Nations" military action against Iraqi ships?

Cuba is undoubtedly coming under pressure from the Soviet Union, its erstwhile "ally," to line up behind United Nations "peace-keeping solutions" to the U.S. war in the Middle East. But such a road is a dead end.

The Arab masses—like the oppressed majority in Latin America and throughout the world—are the best allies of the Cuban Revolution. It is to them that Castro should offer his total solidarity in the fight against imperialism—and it is to them he should look for support in the struggle to defend the Cuban Revolution against the U.S. warmongers.

Our readers speak out

Voice

Dear editor,

I agree with James Patrick's letter in the June 1990 issue. I think it would be terrific if you could publish twice a month. You provide a unique and much-needed voice for revolutionary-socialist democracy on today's left, and I think with more frequent publication you could get your perspective across 1) on a more timely basis and 2) to a wider audience.

Second: How about a piece on socialist democracy, theory, practice, and history—somewhere along the lines of Cannon's articles in your "Toward a Socialist America" pamphlet?

One of the clearest lines of demarcation between Trotskyism and both Stalinism and Social Democracy in the workers' movement is our commitment to such principles. I think this needs to be hammered in, again and again.

We can recruit people to a clearly understood and presented socialist (Trotskyist) program, particularly now with the collapse of Stalinism in the East and the upping of the bosses' offensive here.

C.F.,
St. Paul, Minn.

Teachers

Dear editor,

I'd like to fill you in on the current situation of teachers here in West Virginia. A circuit court injunction against a statewide strike was upheld by the state supreme court, as expected. This stick, and even a stringy carrot, will very likely head off a strike in the fall.

There will be a special session on education in late August as teachers come back to work (and as many teachers who had their pay withheld come to the end of paychecks). I suspect that the governor will plead poverty as before.

And as before, the poverty is self-induced, caused by massive tax breaks to business. I've just read an estimate that in 1980 corporations paid about 50 percent of revenues in taxes, and today about 38 percent.

Basically, I expect this offer from the governor: Since there's not enough money, there can only be a moderate salary increase this year, and further increases can only be funded if costs are contained; i.e., student-teacher ratios are raised.

Steven Johnson,
Williamson, W.Va.

Class line

Dear editor,

You should devote more space to strikes and other labor issues and less to abortion, the environment, etc. Stick to the hard class line!

D.B.,
New York, N.Y.

Censorship

Dear editor,

The article on women in Poland [*Socialist Action*, July 1990] was highly interesting and informative, but I must take issue with the position on pornography set forth therein.

In the first place, the widespread appearance of "Playboy-style calendars" is mentioned as a setback for women. In my personal opinion, this view is questionable at best. While many women do find such "objectifying" material offensive, many other women do not, and the scientific evidence overwhelmingly contradicts the notion that it promotes sexist violence.

Even more serious is including the fact that "pornography was legally banned" among gains for women under the postwar regime. Anti-pornography laws are not gains, but attacks on everyone's civil liberties, especially women, who most often work in porn.

This apparent deviation from the

traditional position of the revolutionary socialist movement on such a basic democratic question is disturbing. If SA has abandoned that position in favor of one that supports censorship, please say so and explain your decision.

Eric Hamell
Philadelphia, Pa.

In reply

Pornography—by its very nature—exploits and debases women. In capitalist countries, it serves the ruling-class ideology that tends to reduce women to sex objects, while denying them their rightful role in society. Thus, the capitalist class promotes pornography through such media as advertising.

Poland is not a capitalist country, but the ideology of the capitalist class is steadily seeping in as the Solidarity/Stalinist regime moves toward a "market economy."

Brenda Bishop's article in our July issue points out that pornography is on the rise in Poland despite the fact that the Stalinist censorship laws remain in effect. Thus, censoring pornography can be seen to be ineffective—as well as anti-democratic (as Eric Hamell makes clear).

Laws of censorship open the door to other, more dangerous laws which seek to "regulate" the civil liberties of the working class. That is why we oppose censorship. The way to stop pornography is by education and by working to build a more equitable (socialist) society in which men and women can be equals.—the editors

Wake up

Dear editor,

I am a retired member of the International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftsmen. The April-May issue of the union journal gives thanks to Bricklayers and the AFL-CIO for helping to defeat the Sandinistas in the February elections.

When the Sandinista government came to power, Ronald Reagan appointed John T. Joyce, president of the Bricklayers, to his board along with Oliver North and the rest of the crew to destroy the Nicaraguan government.

Let's not blame Reagan and Bush alone for the state of the union movement. It's time for labor to wake up. We started to wake up in 1936 under John L. Lewis. We can do it again.

Joe Stack,
San Francisco, Calif.

Healthcare

Dear editor,

The Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union (OCAW) and the Physicians for a National Health Program (PNHP) have formed an alliance around the effort to secure national healthcare. The goal is to educate workers, as well as the general public, of the need to address our healthcare crisis with a national program modeled after the Canadian healthcare system.

The United States has the world's most technologically advanced and expensive healthcare system. Yet we are the only developed country other than South Africa that fails to guarantee all citizens access to medical care.

Close to 38 million Americans have no health coverage at all. Another 40 million have inadequate coverage, and 7 million are said to be "uninsurable." It takes guts to reform the system, but the result will be worth the effort.

Denis J. Staphano,
Financial Secretary,
OCAW Local 8-234,
Linwood, Pa.

What perspectives for Black liberation in the 1990s?

By MALIK MIAH

The National Association of Black Organizations is a new group formed in mid August at a three-day conference held in Washington, D.C. According to Horace Sheffield, executive director of the Detroit Association of Black Organizations, "The most important thing we did here is form an umbrella organization to pull together and maximize the leverage of 30 million members of the Black community to work, think, and act together."

What is the first project of this new group to "take the first step" toward putting African Americans on the road to self destiny? The organizations attending the gathering pledged to raise enough money to purchase a hotel large enough to convene annual conventions of Black organizations. Currently there are no major Black-owned hotels in the country.

Journalist Tony Brown told the meeting: "We could create our own financial institutions and economy," he said. "And all of our social problems could be solved because we'd have the dollars."

Of course the idea of developing Black capitalism is not new. The alternative is for fundamental social change, which they reject.

Why form a new group when the NAACP and other formations already exist? Because some 25 years since the adoption of the Voting Rights and Civil Rights Act by Congress, institutional discrimination is as strong as ever.

Jim Crow legal segregation may be outlawed, but Blacks are at the bottom of every economic indicator: twice the unemployment rates as whites; inferior housing and education; devastating health care in

most urban areas; and little prospect for change as we enter the 1990s.

That reality leads many middle-class Black rights leaders to set up another coalition to coordinate their attempt to "self-help" the Black community. (It is noteworthy that the only major Black group not invited to the Washington Summit gathering was the Nation of Islam led by Louis Farrakhan. Although Farrakhan is pro-capitalist and supports establishing Black businesses, his use of nationalism to attack the white power structure, including many Blacks who support it, strikes fear among traditional civil rights leaders.)

New Black politics

Not only middle class Black leaders are discussing the plight of Black America. Others claiming to speak for the most racially discriminated and exploited layers of the Black community are outlining their agenda for the 1990s.

"A New Black Politics," is the title of an article by Manning Marable in the August issue of the *Progressive*. Marable is a longtime activist in the Black movement. He was involved in attempts to form an independent Black political agenda, including helping to form the National Black Independent Political Party, in the 1970s and early 1980s. Currently he's a professor of political science and sociology at the University of Colorado, Boulder.

Marable argues that the current crisis of perspectives in the Black movement is the failure of the civil rights leaders to change strategy and tactics to meet the changed system of institutionalized racism. "We must rethink the concept of Blackness itself," Marable writes.

Which Side Are You On?

By
Malik Miah



"The first and most important measure we must take to restructure and resurrect a viable Black protest movement is to forge a new synthesis of an old feud."

All past strategies and tactics, Marable says, were based on integrationism and Black nationalism. Both strategies, he says, are inadequate. Selective integration of Blacks into the political mainstream has been achieved. Black nationalism has achieved reaffirmation of Black identity, culture, and values. But racism remains. A synthesis of the two "race-based strategies," first advocated by W.B. Du Bois, Marable says, is required.

"The changing forms [of domination] thus require activists to shift ground, from a racial to a truly multi-ethnic focus," Marable says. He points out that within three decades Latinos, not Blacks, will be the largest minority in the country.

Marable adds, "We must refocus our tactical approach toward the majority of white Americans as well."

Malcolm X's example

The view that Blacks should seek

alliances with other oppressed minorities and progressive-minded whites is not a new idea. Malcolm X first explained this in the 1960s. But he emphasized that Black unity based on a program of self-determination was needed first in order to forge effective alliances with others.

Malcolm, a revolutionary nationalist and internationalist, also explained that the system of capitalism was the source of racism and national oppression.

Amazingly, Marable leaves Malcolm's perspectives out of his article. Malcolm X's view are as relevant today as the 1960s. Marable's call for a nonracial or "multifocus" strategy, outside of a framework articulated by Malcolm, can become a diversion in a discussion of Black politics today.

The road to a nonracial U.S. society is only possible through the independent organization and mobilization of Blacks fighting in alliance with other minorities for their self determination, and the working class as a whole for socialism.

Marable, while critical of the

middle-class Black leaders who formed the National Association of Black Organizations, sees reform of the system as the road to Black equality. Marable supported Jesse Jackson's Democratic Party presidential campaigns, for example. He's now critical of Jackson's Rainbow Coalition attempt to reform the Democratic Party, but only calls for more community-based organizing among all "people of color."

Neither this type of organizing or Black capitalism, however, can end institutionalized racism.

The new Black politics of the 1990s must be based on independent Black organization and mobilization as Malcolm X advocated. We need a strategy based on the power of the working class that challenges the capitalist system.

At the same time, Marable's call for "a viable Black protest movement" to fight racism is urgently needed. It will be out of such protests that new leaders—Black, Asian, Latin, and from the labor movement—will emerge. ■

Why I joined Socialist Action: 'Only the program of Trotskyism can save the SWP as a revolutionary organization'

By GERRY FIORI

I am writing this article on the reasons I left the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and joined Socialist Action not because I believe that my situation is of special importance, but because I consider it important that revolutionists today understand what is at stake.

The SWP was founded by militants who were expelled from the Communist Party for opposing its bureaucratic Stalinist degeneration. As committed communists, these comrades built their new party as the genuine continuation of the old one. They joined with similar forces around the world to form the Fourth International, the world revolutionary party led by Leon Trotsky.

My allegiance over the past five years to the SWP as a supporter and member was based on the belief that this party represented that heritage.

The reality, however, is that the SWP today has broken almost entirely from its continuity with Bolshevism and the party's founding program. This is the result of a revisionist political course begun a decade ago under the leadership of National Secretary Jack Barnes.

Over the last decade, the SWP has adapted itself uncritically to other political currents (the Cuban Castroists, the FSLN, the ANC, etc.) and has presented their analysis of world events rather than its own

to working people.

This tail-ending reflects a lack of confidence by the SWP leadership in the relevance of the Trotskyist program today. The most blatant example is the SWP's assertion last year that the rectification campaign in Cuba is a better example to the workers of the USSR and Eastern Europe today than the policies of the Bolshevik government under Lenin and the struggle of the Left Opposition led by Trotsky!

Marxist theory abandoned

Another major element of the SWP's revisionism is its abandonment of tested Marxist theoretical principles—in the name of overcoming "sectarianism." Most obvious is the party leadership's rejection of Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution, which has been proven correct in every revolution since 1917.

Permanent Revolution has been replaced by a stagist theory which the party claims is Lenin's but which in reality is a Menshevik-Stalinist class-collaborationist one.

The SWP has also rejected its traditional practice of consistently educating workers in class-struggle self-reliance. Thus, there has been no public criticism of the self-defeating strategies pursued by the bureaucratic misleaders of the Eastern Airlines strike.

Along with the rejection of Trotskyist politics has come the rejection of the Trotskyist Fourth

International. The SWP has maintained a deceitful relationship with the world organization from 1983 until this year, when the party and its co-thinkers in other countries formally split from the FI.

The truth is that the split really occurred in 1983-84, when the SWP purged the Trotskyists from its ranks. The SWP leadership has now publicly written off the Fourth International and all other political tendencies in the workers' movement (except the Cubans) as "petty bourgeois."

The nature of the SWP's political degeneration was made increasingly clear to me over a period of months beginning in late 1989 as the party defaulted on its responsibility to deal concretely with the most important world event of the present period, the developing political revolution in the Stalinized workers' states.

I also studied the recent history of the party, and discovered that the analysis of the opposition expelled in 1983 had in fact been proven correct by subsequent events.

As I began to see where the party had gone wrong, I started to defend the traditional Trotskyist program in conversations with individual comrades and in branch discussions. It eventually became apparent to me, however, that the party cannot be seriously changed from within.

After a decade of the "new course," no balance sheet has been

made by the leadership, despite the fact that the party's line has been changed on a number of important points. Any party that can reverse its positions without explaining what was wrong with the original ones is not a party that takes its members seriously.

Since I resigned, I discovered what increasing numbers of former SWPers are discovering: There is a

party which represents the real traditions of the SWP and carries on the struggle of the party's founders. That party is Socialist Action.

Socialist Action is a party where the members count and which maintains an unshakeable commitment to the principles of Bolshevik-Leninism. It is the real revolutionary vanguard in the United States today.

I urge all comrades in the SWP to rediscover and fight to reconquer the party's old program. The course of the SWP leadership under Jack Barnes is a dead-end. Only the program of Trotskyism can save the party as a revolutionary organization.

I invite all comrades who have left or will leave the Socialist Workers party—join Socialist Action! ■

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'Redwood Summer' activists want to win over loggers and mill workers

By KRISTIN DEMPSEY

FORT BRAGG, Calif.—Redwood Summer has brought national attention to the depletion of the redwood forests by major logging operations. Initiated and organized by the Earth First! environmental group, the summer-long campaign was an attempt to bring hundreds of young activists into this northern California region to save the forests.

The concept was based on the Mississippi Freedom Summer actions in the early 1960s, in which "freedom riders" brought national attention to the Black struggle for democratic rights in the South and helped build the civil rights movement.

Based in camps on the outskirts of mill towns, Redwood Summer activists were bused to sites in which they participated in non-violent civil disobedience. In one action, in the mill town of Samoa, 44 environmental activists were arrested on June 20 while attempting to blockade the Louisiana Pacific export dock, which ships logs to Mexico for processing.

Here in Fort Bragg, on July 21, the streets were swollen with thousands of locals and "out of towners." In a vacant lot on the north end of town, Earth First! and a local environmental coalition were holding a rally to protest overcutting by the town's largest employer, Georgia Pacific.

Meanwhile, local residents in pick-up trucks with yellow ribbons on their antennas—the symbol signifying solidarity with the lumber companies—hurried to a Georgia Pacific-financed "counter-demonstration" at the high school football field eight blocks away. The pro-company rally was organized by Don Nelson, business agent for the International Woodworkers of America local union.

"Blinded by dollar signs"

The environmentalists' rally at Fort Bragg was a departure from smaller civil disobedience demonstrations that typified most of the Redwood Summer actions. Over 2000 demonstrators attended the rally, giving it a mass, peaceful—and militant—character.

The featured speakers included anti-war activist Brian Willson, local independent loggers, environmental activists, and members of the Native American and Black communities. Almost every speaker made the point that monitoring the harvest of lumber was in the interest of lumber workers, since clear-cutting forests translates into no harvestable trees and therefore no jobs for thousands of workers.

Local "gyppo" (independent) logger Walter Smith's comments typified the disgust with corporate greed and concern for future foresting expressed by many of the speakers: "We've been living a lie... where are the sustainable-yield forests? Where are the companies who care about their workers? They are blinded by dollar signs."

Ben Drees, 23, and Kerry White, 19, of Oakland, Calif., had seen fliers throughout Berkeley publicizing Redwood Summer, but were attracted to the Fort Bragg event because they believed it would be an educational as well as a political action, accessible to new people. Ben stated, "This seems like a really critical issue. ... I didn't know before how this liquidation practice was related to Wall Street hanky-panky."

Clearcutting and over-cutting

The three major logging companies in Northern California—Georgia Pacific, Louisiana Pacific, and MAXXAM—all employ clearcutting as a method of harvesting forests.

Clearcutting is simply removing entire forests; the trees that are too small to make into boards and planks are made into log chips. This method of clearing land is highly profitable since no time or money is wasted in selecting trees large enough to be harvested. Large-scale clearcutting can lead to soil erosion that will permanently damage



Kristin Dempsey/Socialist Action

'Although the Fort Bragg rally was a strong initial attempt to attract workers, the movement would be more successful if it addressed the fears of the workers.'

the growth of new seedlings—as well as destroy fisheries and wildlife habitat.

The rate of overharvesting by timber corporations in Mendocino County alone is 320 percent greater than the rate of forest growth. At this rate, the forests are being cut three times faster than they can grow back.

The environmental movement, on the other hand, is demanding "sustainable-yield" foresting, which requires that the rate of harvesting equal the rate of forest growth. Most importantly, sustainable-yield cutting can help stem the long-term fall in employment in the timber history as well as protect the environment.

Ironically, company-organized counter-demonstrators at Fort Bragg carried yellow signs proclaiming, "Save our Timber Jobs, Families, Community, County and Sustainable Forests" [our emphasis].

By demanding sustainable-yield harvesting, the counter-demonstrators are supporting environmental objectives, even though the company which financed their rally would just as soon wipe out the forests for a quick buck and leave thousands without jobs.

Union leadership's wrong policy

The union bureaucracy is one of the main forces separating the environmental movement from the workers. The union tops have advised lumber workers to pin their hopes of keeping the industry alive on the giant corporations. Don Nelson, a long-standing business agent of the International Woodworkers of America (IWA) local in Fort Bragg, assisted greatly in funneling workers into the Georgia Pacific-backed Community Solidarity Coalition (CSC).

By means of the CSC, the workers have been fed company-inspired misinformation on the intent of the environmentalists. It was alleged, for example, that members of

Earth First! and other groups are violent and do not care about loggers' jobs or families. Such misinformation struck an emotional chord in workers who have seen fewer and fewer logging jobs due to depleted forests and new technology.

Maribelle Anderson, the wife of a small logging-operation owner, stated clearly the concerns of many CSC supporters: "We are doing this for our families, for ourselves—not for the industry. We want to continue to live here."

But in order to continue living as a logger in California, a sustainable forest yield is necessary. By leading workers into a company-backed grouping which doesn't challenge the clear-cutting and over-harvesting policies of major logging companies, the IWA bureaucracy is undercutting the livelihood of its ranks.

However, a challenge to both Georgia Pacific and the union bureaucrats is coming from within the IWA itself. A grouping calling itself the IWA Rank and File has come out publicly in the local press in opposition to overcutting the forests.

In a letter to the Santa Rosa Press Democrat, the Rank and File stated disagreement with a policy that means, "To make a living wage we must serve as unwilling co-conspirators in the stripping of the forests and the destruction of our own jobs."

The Rank and File grouping is an example of how workers need to challenge the companies in order to maintain their jobs and the forests.

In the past, other workers have organized against the environmental policies of their own employer. Members of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) organized opposition to the strip-mining practices of the coal bosses.

Strip-mining destroyed the land on which the workers, their families, and neighbors lived and eliminated jobs because the practice was less labor intensive. Loggers and mill workers are faced with a similar situation today.

Need for mass action

The main strategy of Earth First! and other environmental groups has been civil disobedience. This tactic, which many of the environmental activists have elevated to a strategy, has failed to involve the majority of lumber workers—who justifiably are in no rush to be arrested or lose their jobs.

Instead, mass action in the form of demonstrations and teach-ins is needed to involve workers, students, and others in the day-to-day building of the movement.

Although the Fort Bragg rally was a strong initial attempt by the environmental movement to attract workers, the movement would be more successful if it addressed more fully some of the workers' fears. One way of doing this would be to propose practical solutions to overharvesting, such as workers' committees to monitor the timber harvest.

To fight the high rate of unemployment among loggers and mill workers, the demand for a shorter work week with no cut in pay should be raised. Environmentalists should link up with the workers' demands for occupational safety and adequate health care.

In the last analysis, it is the loggers and mill workers who have the clout and social weight to take the lumber industry to task for its rape of the forests.

Under capitalism, every living thing is ultimately threatened by extinction. Capitalism thrives by exploiting all natural resources in order to make a profit. Guided by the laws of capitalist competition, individual companies survive by cutting costs, not protecting the environment—or the jobs of workers.

Only in a socialist society can survival for the environment be guaranteed. The economy should be rationally planned, taking into account the long-term needs of human society instead of profits. A workers government and workers' control over industry will bring us closer to this ultimate goal.

Working people have the ability and the need to protect the environment. The environmental movement must make every effort to win over workers. In that regard, the Fort Bragg rally was a good first step. ■