

LETTER FROM
NOAM CHOMSKY

CovertAction

Q U A R T E R L Y



FORUM ON BOSNIA

Bosnian Challenge

by Andreas Zumach

Dangerous Interventions

by Joan Phillips



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NAFTA's Corporate Con Artists

— Sarah Anderson and Kristyne Peter

Prison Labor: Workin' for the Man

— Reese Erlich

Armed and Dangerous

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Letter from Noam Chomsky

Dear CAQ,

Like all of us, I was sorry to learn that *Lies of Our Times* could not be sustained. It's a real loss, and another signal that we have our work cut out for us in times that are in many ways ominous, but that also offer a good deal of hope. I had been writing occasional pieces for *LOOT*, informal reflections on the passing scene. It began with a suggestion by Ed Herman that I put my letter-answering neurosis to some broader use. Thanks for inviting me to take another crack at it.

Today happens to be July 4 — as always, marked by lofty rhetoric about the significance of this “traditional American celebration” of independence and democracy (and maybe a day at the beach). Reality is not so uplifting. “Independence Day” was designed by the first state propaganda agency, Woodrow Wilson's Committee on Public Information (CPI), created during World War I to whip a pacifist country into anti-German frenzy — and, incidentally, to beat down the threat of labor which frightened respectable people after such events as the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World) victory in the Lawrence, Mass., strike of 1912.¹ The CPI's successes greatly impressed the business world; one of its members, Edward Bernays, became the leading figure in the vastly expanding public relations industry. Also much impressed was Adolf Hitler, who attributed Germany's failure in World War I to the ideological victories of the British and U.S. propaganda agencies, which overwhelmed Germany's efforts. Next time, Germany would be in the competition, he vowed. The influence of “the great generalissimo on the propaganda front,” as Wilson was described by political scientist Harold Lasswell, was not slight. “Independence Day” was one contribution.

This particular propaganda exercise began with business-government initiatives to “Americanize” immigrants, to inculcate loyalty and obedience and expel from their minds “alien” notions about the rights of working people. Such programs would turn immigrants into “the natural foe of the IWW” and other “destructive forces” that undermine “the country's ideals and institutions,” the CPI founding document read. At a major conference of civic organizations (organized labor excluded), “government and private organizations of all kinds and creeds had pledged themselves to cooperate in carrying out Americanization as a national endeavor,” the organizers reported, while issuing plans for “a successful Americanization program for the coming Fourth of July.” The CPI took up the cudgels, now using the wartime fanaticism it had helped engender as another weapon against “pacifists, agitators and other anti-American groups,” notably the hated Wobblies.² The “Generalissimo” joined in with a May 1918 endorsement. The title of the indoctrination ceremonies was to be “Americanization Day”; on reflection, “Independence Day” seemed preferable.

Noam Chomsky is institute professor of linguistics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He has written and lectured widely on linguistics, philosophy, intellectual history, contemporary issues, international affairs, and U.S. foreign policy.
1. See Sidney Lens, *The Labor Wars* (Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday, 1973).
2. See Alex Carey, *Taking the Risk Out of Democracy* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 1995).

Labor leaders were aware of what was happening. A United Mine Workers (UMW) official objected that the business-government project was

attempting to set up a paternalism that will bring the workers of this country even more absolutely under the control of the employers, ... strengthening the chain of industrial tyranny in this country. ... [That is what lies behind these efforts] to sanctify and confirm oppression by waving the American flag in the face of its victims and by insidiously stigmatizing as unpatriotic any attempts they may make to throw off the yoke of the exploiting interests [that the organizers] represent.³

But labor could not compete with state-corporate power, and lost this battle just as it failed to save May Day. (A jingoist holiday in the U.S., it is celebrated elsewhere as a labor festival which was begun in solidarity with the struggles of brutalized American workers.)

As the war ended and industrial strife renewed, “Generalissimo” Wilson launched his Red Scare, which devastated labor and independent thought, initiating a reign of virtually unchallenged business rule that was happily thought to be permanent.

Many of the features of a corporate-run, propaganda-managed democracy are illustrated by the achievements of the “Generalissimo” and his business associates, among them the very concept of “Americanism” and “anti-American.” Such notions are expected in totalitarian cultures (“anti-Sovietism,” etc.), though rarely elsewhere. Their prominent place in a society that is unusually free is a far more significant phenomenon, hence rarely investigated.

We're living in a strange period. *Z* magazine's Mike Albert described the country as “an organizer's paradise.” True, though there are chilling prospects as well. Perhaps the most likely — in the short run at least — is the continuation, even acceleration, of the deliberate policy of driving the country toward a kind of Third World model, with sectors of great privilege, growing numbers of people sinking into poverty or real misery, and a superfluous population confined in slums or expelled to the rapidly expanding prison system. Lurking not too deeply in the shadows is the threat of movements of a fascist character, perhaps with a populist streak (as often in the past), and imbued with the religious extremism that is a striking feature of American culture.

But there are also more hopeful opportunities in a country where over 80 percent of the population recognize that the economic system is “inherently unfair” and the government “run for the benefit of the few and the special interests, not the people.” (This figure is up from a steady 50 percent for a similarly worded question in earlier years — though what is meant by “special interests” is another question.) The general population stubbornly maintains social

(continued on p. 25)

3. *Ibid.*

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With the treaty ink barely dry, the very corporations that led the pro-NAFTA fight in Congress with promises of more jobs and a cleaner environment moved shops to Mexico. The cost, so far, is more than 35,000 lost jobs.

Cover photo: Moslem soldier plays piano in destroyed music school, Mostar, Bosnia.

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Reuther's career as a labor leader who stood up for a broad social agenda earned him powerful enemies and a high place on Hoover's hit list. His death in a 1970 plane crash may have been the last in a long series of attacks against him.

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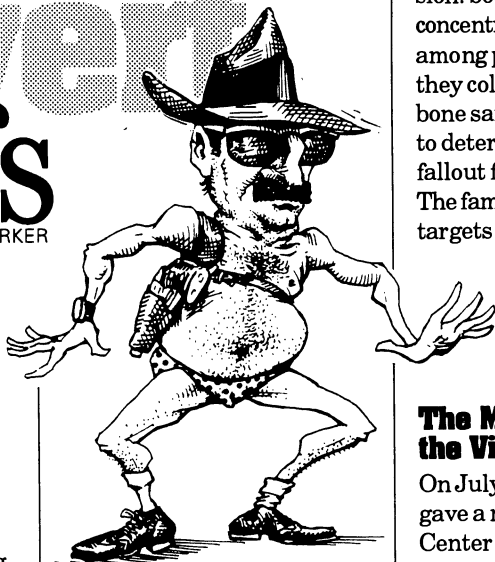


Private business and state prison systems have found a lucrative captive labor market. Civilian jobs and prisoners' rights are on the line as corporations set up factories and businesses behind bars.

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ILLUSTRATIONS BY MATT WUERKER



Smoke Screen

As part of his anti-smoking campaign, Clinton recommended that teenagers quit the habit. Asked if he would set a good example by giving up his occasional cigar, the president followed a high moral tone set by predecessors including Bush and Nixon: He weaseled: No, he said, "Cigars and pipes were not found by the FDA to be part of this." And hid: "I try to set a good example," he added earnestly, "I try never to do it where people see."

Meanwhile Fidel Castro, who actually did kick his stogie habit, is being promoted by an internet home page as the next president — of the U.S. According to the home page hackers, he's just what Americans want: He is the ultimate Washington outsider and the only person who has proven able to take on the political establishment and win.

Investing in America's Future

After riots shook the private immigration detention center run by Esmor Correctional Services, the INS made a shocking discovery: The private prison corporation was cutting costs to increase profits. Devastated to learn that the facility was not being run by kindhearted humanitarians devoted to the good of the prisoners, the INS severed its contract with Esmor, but only with that facility. The

move may also have been precipitated by a well-publicized investigation which documented a pattern of abuses including the fact that Esmor neglected to train its guards, some of whom beat prisoners and put them in leg irons. Other guards had been a tad overzealous in following management's spirit of private enterprise. Guards were arrested for taking bribes and others — who were perhaps simply networking for new business — were indicted for conspiring to smuggle undocumented aliens into the U.S.

J. Michael Quinlan, an executive at the rival Corrections Corporation of America explained that his was a new industry and "some people have gotten into it for the wrong reasons." Another entrepreneur in the \$250 million-a-year industry was clear about the right reasons. "It is the only real estate investment where you're guaranteed 100% occupancy, at least."

Invasion of the Body Snatchers

During the 1950s, the Atomic Energy Commission ran a network of operatives in the U.S. and a half dozen

other countries. Their mission: bodysnatching. Often concentrating in urban areas among poor populations, they collected tissue and bone samples from corpses to determine the effects of fallout from nuclear testing. The families of the up to 1,500 targets — which included infants — were never notified. Nor were any of the perpetrators prosecuted.

The Mind of a Quayle, the Vision of a Newt

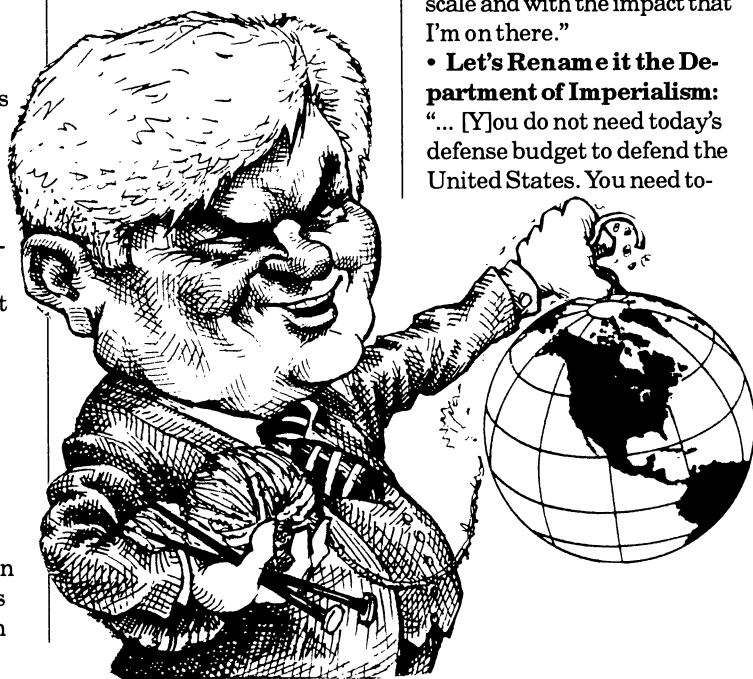
On July 18, Newt Gingrich gave a major speech to the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington to lay out his vision for U.S. foreign policy. What followed was contradictory, pretentious, pathologically inarticulate, shallow, pathetically grandiose, but most of all, bizarre. Following are some excerpts. If you figure out what the hell Mr. Two-heartbeats-from-the-presidency is talking about, you might consider a career as a mind reader, or a nice long rest at your local home for the sanity challenged.

• **That Vision Thing:** "In order for [my] vision to work both here at home and abroad,

we have to launch a genuine dialogue. That dialogue has to involve conversation and conversation on a grand scale."

• **Huh?** "And our cultural institutions, from our daily news media to our so-called area experts — I mean, we say we have a problem with China. Let's go talk to three experts on China. Well, what if part of the problem with China, in fact relates to something which is happening with Islam, and what if that relates to something which is happening to the price of oil, and what if that relates to. And now you go to an expert, who tells you, with great wisdom and profundity, exactly what they know about the part of the equation that doesn't matter. And we're a little bit like somebody trying to deal with quadratic equations using the best arithmetic we've ever learned. And this is a systems problem. It's a cultural problem that requires a lot of very deep rethinking. Now the American challenge in leading the world is compounded by our Constitution. I frankly have found myself having to rethink a great deal in the last five or six months, because we've never had a Speaker of the House on "Larry King" on the scale and with the impact that I'm on there."

• **Let's Rename it the Department of Imperialism:** "... [Y]ou do not need today's defense budget to defend the United States. You need to-



day's defense budget to lead the world. If you're prepared to give up leading the world, we can have a much smaller defense system. Then we just have to balance off all of our former allies, watch them as they devour the various continents and try to stand aloof. ... But until somebody is prepared to say, you need a big defense system in the United States because we're going to lead the planet, there is no other good justification for this scale defense system."

• **He Already Said It's Not About Defense:** "The purpose of a military is to impose your will by violence if necessary, by guile and stealth if possible. The purpose of your military is never sit around and be a political tool to be manipulated by diplomats in totally unmilitary matters."

• **Roll Over deTocqueville** "[Americans] are a romantic and often dangerous people who are sometimes confused but have an enormous reservoir of energy and drive. And we've been that kind of a people for almost 400 years, and we're not likely to change dramatically. And so when we get excited, we rush around with more energy than any other people on the planet, and when we are not excited we all go to the lake. And so it gets very difficult if you're a diplomat trying to understand us, because you just figure out the rushing-around stage, and we quit and go off to the lake."

• **Commies Under the Bed Meet Barbarians at the Gate:** "... Now when the entire world's honor is ruined because a group of barbarians — and people who deliberately, willfully violate the law, turn — stand down the forces of peace and civilization in order to kill and rape, are barbarians. They behave like barbarians, and we ought to decide whether or not we're prepared to tolerate the steady increase in barbarism."

• **Capitalist Battle Whine:** "Now my last point would be this. We need a series of large projects. You don't hold together the free people of the planet by small things. Let's get another 30,000 cars in this year. That's not exactly a noble battle cry."

• **Bambi Never Fawned This Hard:** After the speech, the moderator gave new meaning to the phrase "giant sucking sound," praising this dangerous loopiness: "I just want to say this is an extraordinary exposition in grand strategy, your ability to draw on history, your sense of the future."

On the Job Training

"I'm an expert in brainwashing, because I brainwashed people for 21 years. I was a drill instructor. I trained people to go to a foreign country and kill people they had never met — if that's not brainwashing, I don't know what is," boasted Mac McCarty, right-wing gun radical who met with accused Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh and befriended Mike Fortier, also indicted for the attack. For McVeigh, the army's brainwashing obviously took. In a hideous war crime during the Gulf War, his division buried thousands of Iraqi soldiers alive in trenches. The *Washington Post* described McVeigh as having "nailed a distant Iraqi soldier, hit him right in the head with an explosive shell. He had been trained by his government to kill at a distance, and came back from the war with a pile of medals." The four-minute fuse on the Oklahoma bomb allowed those who set it enough time to reach a highway on-ramp before it blew.

Pressing the Press

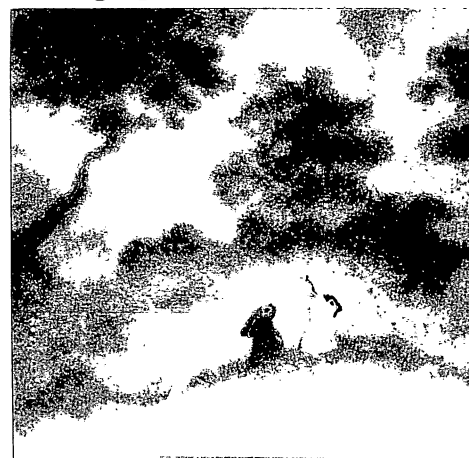
Now just suppose you are an executive at a corporation with a penchant for degrading the environment, spilling

toxics, or covering up disease and death linked with your less than pristine policies. What's the first thing you do? No, no, silly, not control the damage your corporation is unleashing, order damage control from your public relations firm. According to an article by Joel Bleifuss in *PR Watch*, worried PR flacks should begin by investigating the reporters who might be assigned to cover the mess. Former *Wall Street Journal* reporter Dean Rotbart has compiled dossiers on about 6,000 reporters who cover an environmental beat. If you subscribe to his \$395-a-year service, which "gather[s] information on key journalists," you can be prepared not only to defuse an emergency, but to suck up; to uncover a reporter's vulnerabilities, establish rapport with chit chat about spouses, almas, and hobbies; and develop co-op techniques. "If at any point you get a call from a journalist you don't know," Rotbart advises, "call up and we'll fax you that bio within an hour." In addition to age, interests, and names of those up the hierarchy to whom the journalist reports, the service promises "we'll tell you what [the journalists] want from you and what strategies you can employ with them to generate more positive stories and better manage potentially negative situations."

In the competitive spirit that made America great, CAQ offers a similar service. Write the name of a PR hack representing a major corporation on the back of a \$20 bill, and send it to us.

We'll immediately write back informing you of how to get the flack to do your bidding — no matter how sleazy and degrading, how unethical and odious. Oh well, we'll tell you now: Offer them money.

Pornographic Bunnies



From *A Rabbit's Wedding* by Garth Williams, banned because it featured the marriage of a black and a white bunny.

Why I Love Vermont

• **Reason #53:** The food left over from the gala banquet for the 1995 Governors' Conference held in Burlington was donated to the local food bank. Special guests at the food redistribution center that night were the demonstrators who had spent the day castigating the governors for the Contract on America and targeting Pennsylvania governor Thomas Ridge for his signature on Mumia Abu Jamal's death warrant. *Bon Appetit.*

• **Reason #54:** After a Vermont man was held up at gunpoint in his house for the pound of marijuana he had grown, he went to the cops. Crazy you say. Not exactly. When he testified in court against the robber, the grower was asked if he grew the pot. A drug dealer, perhaps, but not a liar, he allowed that he did. The verdict? The robber got 20 years, the farmer was let off. ●

— Terry Allen

CAQ Forum:

War in Bosnia

Chronology of Conflict

The war in Bosnia has horrified the world and led to ever more anguished cries for Western intervention. Seemingly driven by the latest atrocity, both pundits and politicians are calling for the West to "do something" — anything, from lifting the arms embargo to bombing Belgrade, to sending in the Marines.

The West, of course, has intervened from the start, with bilateral diplomacy, the U.N. peacekeeping mission, NATO threats and attacks on the Bosnian Serbs, and reported covert operations. Now, the U.S. and its NATO allies draw nearer to open military intervention.

The war drums in Washington and the European capitals have drowned out progressive voices. In an effort to cut through the propaganda and present viewpoints seldom heard in the U.S. media, CAQ has asked two longtime observers to reflect on the causes, conduct, and possible resolution of the war. CAQ supplied Andreas Zumach and Joan Phillips with a list of questions; their responses follow. In our winter issue, the two writers will reply to each other's arguments. We also welcome letters to the editor on this topic. (Only letters of fewer than 300 words will be considered.)

Chronology:

April 1987 After months of rising Serb nationalist agitation, Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic endorses strategy of nationalism with ringing speech at 600th anniversary of Serb defeat at the battle of Kosovo.

February 1989 Milosevic imposes state of emergency in Kosovo, ending ethnic Albanian political autonomy.

January 1990 The Yugoslav communist party fragments over question of democratization and use of federal troops in Kosovo.

April 1990 Multiparty elections in Slovenia and Croatia bring to power nationalists Milan Kucan in Slovenia

and Franjo Tudjman in Croatia. Anti-Serb campaign begins in Croatia.

July 1990 Kosovo Albanians declare independence; Milosevic incorporates the formerly autonomous provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina into Serbia.

August 1990 Fighting breaks out between Croatian government and Serbs, who declare Serb Autonomous Region of Croatia.

October 1990 Serbia refuses Croatian and Slovenian proposal to transform Yugoslav federation into loose confederation.

November 1990 Alija Izetbegovic and Muslim nationalists win multiparty elections in Bosnia.

December 1990 Milosevic wins multiparty elections in Serbia.

May 1991 Serb delegates' refusal to allow Croatian delegate to assume the rotating federal presidency in Belgrade leads to constitutional crisis.

June 1991 U.S. Secretary of State James Baker visits Belgrade, warns Croatia and Slovenia against secession. Slovenia and Croatia secede; Yugoslav army loses brief war with Slovenia, begins war with Croatia.

September 1991 Macedonia declares independence; UN Security Council imposes arms embargo on all Yugoslav republics.

December 1991 Germany recognizes Slovenia and Croatia.

January 1992 Bosnian Serbs led by Radovan Karadzic declare Serb Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina. European Community (E.C.) recognizes Croatia and Slovenia, brokers truce in Croatia.

March 1992 Bosnia declares independence; fighting among Muslims, Croats, and Bosnian Serbs commences.

April 1992 E.C. and U.S. recognize Bosnia; siege of Sarajevo begins.

May 1992 E.C. and U.S. recall ambassadors from Belgrade; U.N. admits Bosnia, Croatia, and Slovenia, but not rump Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). U.N. tightens embargo on Serbia.

July 1992 Bosnian Croats declare Croatian state within Bosnia.

October 1992 U.N. Security Council establishes "no-fly" zone over Bosnia.

April 1993 Bosnian Croats and Muslims fight in western Bosnia.

May 1993 U.N. Security Council establishes "safe havens" to protect Bosnian Muslims and creates war crimes tribunal to investigate crimes in former Yugoslavia.

July 1993 NATO deploys combat aircraft to carry out threatened air strikes against Serbs.

April 1994 After Sarajevo market massacre, U.N. establishes heavy weapons exclusion zone around the city.

July 1994 Contact group (Britain, France, Germany, Russia, U.S.) plan to partition Bosnia accepted by Bosnian government, rejected by Bosnian Serbs.

August 1994 U.S. brokers loose confederation between Croatia and Bosnia; Croat-Bosnian fighting ends.

November 1994 U.S. unilaterally ends enforcement of arms embargo.

July 1995 "Safe havens" of Srebrenica and Zepa fall to Bosnian Serbs; NATO threatens massive retaliations for attacks on "safe havens." Heavily-armed U.N. Rapid Reaction Force deployed.

August 1995 Clinton vetoes congressional vote to lift arms embargo. Croatian army takes back Krajina from Serbs; Croatian Serbs flee to Serbia and Serbian-controlled areas of Bosnia by the tens of thousands. •

Bosnian Challenge

by Andreas Zumach

What are the roots of the Bosnian War?

Although the roots of the crisis reach deep, the current round began in the second half of the 1980s. After the death of Yugoslav President Josip Broz Tito, Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic in Belgrade, abandoned Communism, began espousing Serbian nationalism, and openly advocated a Greater Serbia. The first warnings of Milosevic's turnaround — largely ignored in the West — were the abolition of Kosovo's autonomous status and the nationalist declaration by leading intellectuals.

But the blame is not Milosevic's alone; the response of the international community to growing fragmentation in the Yugoslav Federation increased the prospect for widespread war. In 1990-91, the 12 members of the European Union (E.U.) and the U.S. prevented the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE)—the only pan-European institution that might have defused the crisis—from dealing with the Yugoslav situation within its framework. Thus, the Soviet Union/Russia, Romania, Bulgaria, and other Eastern European countries with historical ties in ex-Yugoslavia and experience in the Balkan region never had an opportunity to bring their influence to bear for a peaceful solution. Instead, Western institutions and governments — sometimes in concert, but often in competition — took advantage of the conflict to promote their own goals. NATO and the Western European Union (WEU—a long-dormant Western European institution comprising nine E.U. member states), for example, tried to use the conflict to relegitimize their existence as Western military institutions in the post-Cold War world; the E.U. saw the crisis as an exercise field for a joint foreign and security policy.

In the meantime, E.U. members and the U.S. never used sufficient political and diplomatic energy or coherence to

Andreas Zumach is a Geneva-based correspondent covering the U.N. and European and international politics for *Die Tageszeitung* (Berlin) and other European newspapers. He also reports for the BBC German Service and other European radio services.



Bosnians mourn 17-year-old daughter killed in a Serbian attack, June 1995.

keep Yugoslavia together—at least within the loose framework of confederation. Until spring 1991, four of the six republics (Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, Macedonia) had argued for a transition to confederation, but Serbia and Montenegro rejected all changes. After this failure to restructure, Slovenia and Croatia viewed independence as their only option. Bonn supported this position, claiming that the former Yugoslav republics were entitled to self-determination. Only after they were recognized as independent sovereign states, Germany argued, could the international community protect them against further aggression and reverse the results of Serbian conquest. Given the role that Nazi Germany had played in the Balkan region, the behavior of the Kohl/Genscher government in 1991-92 raised understandable fears, not only among Serbs in ex-Yugoslavia but in most E.U. capitals. They suspected Germany of harboring expansionist

goals and having designs on Croatia and Slovenia as foreign markets. Whatever its motives, in December 1991 Germany overcame initial opposition from its 11 E.U. partners, Russia, the U.S., and U.N. Secretary General Perez de Cuellar, and pushed through E.U. recognition of Croatia and Slovenia. This action violated at least the spirit of the Final Act of the CSCE, according to which the 1945 European borders could only be altered peacefully and by mutual agreement.

But as bad as Germany's role was, it did not cause the war and does not excuse Serbian military aggression and war crimes. Serbia's attacks on Slovenia and Croatia in the summer of 1991 preceded the E.U.'s January 1992 recognition of Slovenia and Croatia. And after the clear disintegration of the federation, recognition of Bosnia in April 1992 was inevitable. The problem was and still remains that the declarations of independence by Croatia and Bos-

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nia were based on two-thirds majority referenda which overruled the wishes of the Serbs. When the Karadzic Serbs¹ launched a major military aggression against Sarajevo with strong support from the Milosevic regime and the army of the former Yugoslavia, the region drew closer to all-out war. At that point, the serious escalation that followed might have been prevented only if the U.N. had agreed to an urgent request in February 1992 by Bosnia-Herzegovina President Alija Izetbegovic to deploy a

eration intact. The position reflected ignorance of the strong centrifugal political and economic forces that had developed within the federation. But it was a predictable outgrowth of the Belgrade/Serb-centered orientation that marked the diplomacy of most Western states during the 1970s and '80s. Then as now, Washington saw the Yugoslav issue mainly as a European problem and failed to invest much political energy in promoting its stated goal of maintaining the status quo.



R.D. WARD/DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

NATO and E.U. defense ministers in Paris, June 1995, to discuss deteriorating situation. Gen John Shalikashvili, chair of Joint Chiefs, (2nd from l.), Sec. of Def. William Perry (c.) and Under Sec. of Def. Walter Slocumbe (2nd from r.).

peacekeeping U.N. force in Bosnia. This path was rejected by U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali.

What has been the policy and role of the United States in the conflict?

The U.S. has never had a clearly defined, coherent policy on the crisis beyond its desire to contain the conflict to Croatia and Bosnia. Of particular concern — and the motive behind the deployment of U.S. soldiers with the U.N. troops in Macedonia — is the danger that if the war spills over to Kosovo and Macedonia, it might draw in NATO members Greece and Turkey.²

In 1990-91, the Bush administration advocated preserving the Yugoslav fed-

eration intact. During the 1992 presidential campaign, candidate Bill Clinton, seeking to score points against Bush, advocated exempting the Bosnian government from the U.N. arms embargo and launching air strikes against the Karadzic Serbs. After Clinton's election, his administration continued the tough rhetoric but never followed through.

This posturing was not totally without effect on the partners to the conflict — especially on the Bosnian government. For most of 1993-94, President Izetbegovic and Prime (and ex-Foreign) Minister Haris Silajdzic were skeptical that the U.S. would actually come to Bosnia's rescue. But with no other options, hope of U.S. support — possibly including military aid — encouraged them to try to preserve a unified, multiethnic Bosnia-Herzegovina and influenced their positions at the negotiating table in Geneva. The unwillingness of the Bosnian government to surrender to the Karadzic Serbs threw a monkey wrench into the plans of former E.U. mediator David Owen, who, as early as spring 1993, tried to persuade the Bosnian government to acknowledge final military defeat, accept the results of military occupation and "ethnic cleansing,"

and succumb to a division plan along ethnically defined lines. Washington gave lukewarm support to the Owen plan and continued to pay lip service to preserving a unified multiethnic Bosnia. Verbal support for the predominantly Muslim government in Sarajevo might also have improved the U.S. image in some parts of the Islamic world.

But by fall 1994, the Bosnian government was forced by the grim reality of loss of territory, continuing Serb atrocities, and the embargo, to give up any illusions of meaningful U.S. support. By then, the Clinton administration was more concerned with protecting NATO unity than with preserving U.N. member state Bosnia-Herzegovina in its internationally recognized borders. As a member of the five-nation contact group (along with France, Britain, Germany, and Russia), the U.S. decided to throw in with Serbian President Milosevic as its main partner for a "peaceful solution." In the U.N. Security Council, the U.S. regularly rubber stamped reports by the U.N./E.U. mediators that went along with Milosevic's canard that borders between Serbia and those Bosnian territories controlled by Karadzic were closed.

In fact, arms trafficking by Serbia to the Karadzic Serbs continues with the knowledge of Western intelligence services, which have detailed the ongoing importation of supplies, including heavy weapons and missiles, as well as oil. This flow has enabled the outnumbered

The Clinton administration was more concerned with protecting NATO unity than with preserving U.N. member state Bosnia-Herzegovina in its internationally recognized borders.

Karadzic Serbs (80,000 troops to the Bosnian government's 150,000) to replenish their arsenal and to continue a pattern of successful military operations.

Meanwhile, the Bosnian troops are armed only with relatively light weapons. Although some arms are also delivered to them by the U.S. or other countries (with U.S. knowledge or tacit support), the quantity and type of weaponry have so far been insufficient to fun-

1. The common descriptor "Bosnian Serb" is inaccurate. It lumps together the many Serbs throughout Bosnia who still favor a multiethnic state with those led by Radovan Karadzic. These Karadzic Serbs favor division along ethnic lines enforced by "cleansing" Muslim- and Croatian-populated areas they consider Serbian.

2. From late 1993 to early 1994, Washington's initiative for a Muslim-Croat federation in Bosnia briefly created the impression of a policy. This move — which helped end the year-long war between Muslims and Croats — was certainly a major achievement, especially for the civilian population in the formerly disputed regions. But beside the fact that the federation concept does not answer the question of where the Serbs supporting Karadzic Serbs should be settled, Washington's support for a Muslim-Croat federation soon flagged.

damentally alter the military balance. At best, these deliveries might have enabled the government army to hold some positions against Serbian aggressors and — over the past few months — make limited territorial gains. But clearly, they were insufficient to liberate Bihac without Croatia's help or break through the siege of Sarajevo.

Recognizing Bosnia's military disadvantage (and perhaps an opportunity to score political points as well), Senate leader Robert Dole has advocated exemption of Bosnia from a region-wide U.N. arms embargo. Clinton opposes this move, claiming it will trigger the collapse of the UNPROFOR mission and precipitate a messy U.N. withdrawal to which his administration has committed 25,000 ground troops.

What are the roles of the external players — NATO, U.N., Russia, Western Europe, Islamic countries — and do they have competing or complementary interests?

Over the past four years the general public has been led to believe that institutions — namely the U.N., NATO, the E.U. or the WEU—have played a key role in the conflict in Bosnia. The media have repeatedly decried the “failure” of the U.N., labeled it incompetent/hesitant/cowardly, etc., and played up conflict between the world body and NATO.

NATO, on the other hand, is described as ready and willing to act — if only it weren't hamstrung by the U.N. Nothing is further from reality. With the exception of Russia, the main players in the U.N. Security Council and NATO (and key members of the international contact group on Bosnia) are the same: the U.S., Britain, France, and increasingly Germany. The three Western European countries are also the most influential powers in the E.U. and the WEU. The main thrust of the alleged U.N.-NATO conflict over Bosnia is the issue of air strikes. A careful examination of evidence surrounding the disagreement and a study of all available communications among NATO, the UNPROFOR local commanders, and the high levels of the U.N. (Secretary General Boutros Ghali and his special envoy in former Yugoslavia, Yasushi Akashi) reveals the U.N.-NATO conflict as fairy tale.

In 1993, after the Security Council (with a “yes”-vote by Russia!) gave NATO the green light on air strikes, the NATO council debated the issue for months. Britain and France (as well as Canada)



UNHCR worker helps evacuate the wounded from Sarajevo to Italy, 1993.

adamantly opposed air strikes, arguing that they would endanger their UNPROFOR soldiers. Only after strong public outcry over new atrocities by the Karadzic Serbs against civilians in Bos-

The well-publicized U.N.-NATO policy conflict is a fairy tale. ...With the exception of Russia, the main players are the same: the U.S., Britain, France, and increasingly Germany.

nia's six U.N.-declared “protection zones” did Paris and London finally agree to strikes. By this time (and ever since) NATO members France and Britain were appointing UNPROFOR's supreme commanders for Bosnia (in Sarajevo, currently Gen. Rupert Smith) as well as for the whole U.N. operation in former Yugoslavia (in Zagreb, currently Gen. Bertrand Janvier). These generals cooperate closely with their national defense ministries in London and Paris.

Thus, Britain and France, not the U.N., effectively control the decision-making process and the chain of command that could authorize air strikes or any other form of NATO military involvement. As of April 1995, in every one of numerous instances in which a UNPRO-

FOR unit was threatened by a warring side and the local U.N. commander requested NATO air strikes, the request was denied by the British and French generals in charge.³

To some degree, various Western defense and security institutions have used the Yugoslav conflict to jockey for power. Early on—in an attempt to reduce the role of NATO and therefore the influence of the U.S. in Europe—France emphasized stronger involvement of WEU. Although WEU has been given some limited tasks (e.g., control of economic sanctions against Serbia/Montenegro along the Danube River), all important discussions and decisions about Western policies on the crisis remain within NATO or among the Western contact group members.

With its three most influential members unable to agree on an approach, the E.U.'s claim of a unified approach on ex-Yugoslavia has never materialized. Suspicion of Germany, dating back to its strong push for recognition of Slovenia and Croatia, underlies a main objective of British and French policy: preserving a relatively strong and stable Serbia to balance perceived German influence in the Balkans. One result of

3. According to U.N. documents, more than 90 percent of the attacks were perpetrated by the Karadzic Serbs. Furthermore, the requests for strikes were not even relayed to Akashi or Boutros Ghali for a decision. But scapegoating the U.N. has been useful—especially to the U.S. and Germany—for undermining the credibility of the world organization and advancing the argument that NATO, not the U.N., should control any future military operations the Security Council might approve.

this division is that the E.U. does not deal seriously with the Kosovo problem — even though most Balkan experts agree that unless there is a political solution, lasting peace in the Balkans is impossible.

As for Russia, thus far the Yeltsin government has been torn between conflicting interests. On the one hand, Moscow wants to keep the Yugoslav issue from damaging relations with the U.S. But while it no longer has significant strategic interests in the Balkan region, Russia has important economic ties.

With an eye to reestablishing with Belgrade the trade and other economic links which existed before 1992, Russia is lobbying to get U.N. sanctions against Serbia/Montenegro lifted as soon as possible. Further complicating the equation for Yeltsin are the Russian nationalists who claim solidarity with the Orthodox Serbs. Although often cited historic/cultural/religious ties are of little importance to the president and his foreign minister Andrei Kozyrev, nationalists in the *Duma* (parliament) have mobilized public opinion around this pan-Slavic theme. And increasingly, the government has to play to this audience.

The role of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) has so far been largely one of verbal support for the Bosnian Muslims. To some Islamic countries, Bosnia's westernized Muslims are somewhat suspect, and most of the 51 member states are concerned with keeping the Bosnian war from harming their relations with the West. Nonetheless, a few states — notably Malaysia, Iran, and Pakistan — have given Sarajevo material support including money and weapons. So far, the Security Council has accepted only 3,000 of the 15,000 soldiers the OIC has offered to UNPROFOR. And finally, growing competition between Iran and Turkey in the Western Asian region is also preventing the OIC from playing a more active role.

In late July, as NATO met in London to deal with the fall of more U.N. safe areas, the Bosnia contact group of the OIC (Pakistan, Turkey, Iran, Malaysia, and four other countries) gathered in Geneva. They decided to consider the arms em-

bargo against Bosnia "de jure invalid and to act accordingly." It also announced that they would consider sending additional troops to Bosnia if France, Britain, and the other Western countries withdraw their U.N. contingents.

"Just war" doctrine is divided in two parts: having a just cause and prosecuting a war justly. Which actors can fairly lay claim to either requisite? Which can not?

Citing history reaching back to the Second World War, or even extending 700 years to the Ottoman Empire,

This war by those who fight in the name of the Serbs is certainly one of the most unjust Europe has ever experienced. The main targets and victims of the Serb militias, death squads, and regular army units are civilians — among them many Serbs. The siege of Sarajevo is medieval in nature and has already lasted longer than Germany's WWII siege of Stalingrad. The "ethnic cleansing" operations and horrific atrocities — especially those committed by the Karadzic Serbs — evoke memories of Nazi war crimes.

With the exception of the 1993 military conflict with the nationalist factions of the Croats, the Muslim-dominated Bosnian government army, on the other hand, can fairly claim that its is a just war. In the first phase of the conflict, the army tried unsuccessfully to defend the country against outside-supported Serbian aggression. Now, after the U.N. has failed to bring peace, the Bosnian army is trying to break the siege of Sarajevo and other cities, and finally to stop the genocide against the inhabitants — Muslim, Croat, and Serb alike. And so far, the government army can also claim just prosecution of the war. It has directed nearly all its offensives

and attacks against Serb military forces, not civilians. While Bosnian government soldiers have certainly committed atrocities and war crimes, these amount to less than five percent of all independently verified human rights violations (the same reports and sources hold Serbs responsible for more than 80 percent and Croats for about 15 percent).⁴

What is a desirable outcome and how should it be attained?

With little serious attention to finding a political solution, the debate over how to defuse the crisis in ex-Yugoslavia has been narrowed to the ques-

Former Yugoslavia



many — but certainly not all — Serbs in Bosnia and Croatia fear domination by Muslims and Croats. Regardless of whether these fears are rational or are sensationalized by clever propaganda from Belgrade and Pale (the Karadzic Serb capital), they exist and must be factored into any political solution. Nonetheless, neither the Serbs in Bosnia and Croatia nor those in Serbia can claim that theirs is a "just war." They are not now, and have never been since the beginning of the disintegration of the Yugoslav Federation in 1990, threatened with extinction or even serious physical danger from the Bosnians. The Serbian wars against Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia, however, were then and remain wars of aggression, not defense. In any case, the Serbian ideological and military preparations had already begun in the late 1980s, long before fighting broke out.

4. Reports including those by U.N. Human Rights Commission special rapporteur on the former Yugoslavia, Padeusz Mazowiecki, and by the U.N. commission of legal experts and the International War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague.

tion: "to bomb or not to bomb." Beyond that, the Western powers show no willingness to enter a military engagement. And indeed, outside military intervention would not solve the underlying problem. The best that could be expected by a massive bombardment or the invasion of foreign troops would be a very temporary halt to the war.

Likewise, a political settlement that fractured Bosnia along ethnic and religious lines would be short-lived — as well as immoral. Instead, any settlement which addressed both long-term needs and justice must restore a multi-ethnic Bosnia-Herzegovina and establish mechanisms to ensure the peaceful coexistence of all peoples and states in the Balkan region.

In the short term, this approach requires that the contact group change its current strategy and abandon Serbia's President Milosevic as principal partner in a solution. There will be no lasting settlement in Bosnia or Croatia (let alone Kosovo) as long as Milosevic rules. This conviction is now held by a growing number of Serbs who have recently left official positions with the regime in Belgrade and its diplomatic service abroad to join the democratic opposition.⁵

Instead of easing sanctions on Serbia/Montenegro, the international community must tighten the economic, political, and diplomatic pressure on

Many Serbs and international observers are convinced that — despite all of Belgrade's anti-E.U. propaganda since 1991 — 80 percent of Serbia's population would vote "yes" in a referendum on E.U. membership.

5. Based on extensive interviews with former diplomats and members of the Belgrade administration, and Serb businesspeople living abroad.



ENRIQUE MARTINPACT VISUALS

Burying the dead, Sarajevo.

Belgrade. At the same time, sufficiently strong and well-armed U.N. military contingents must seal off the borders between Serbia and the Serb-controlled areas in Bosnia and in Croatia. Instead of withdrawing UNPROFOR from Bosnia, the peacekeeping force should be strengthened to prevent additional "ethnic cleansing." And the member countries of the U.N., E.U., and the Western contact group should finally do what they should have done four years ago: give massive support to the still existing democratic opposition forces and independent media in Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia. Representatives of the democratic opposition should be allowed to participate in all future negotiations. And not only Bosnia and Croatia, but also Serbia, as well as Serbs living in Bosnia and Croatia must be offered a political and economic alternative that makes plans for a "Greater Serbia" and the continuation of conflict and war unattractive to all citizens of these states. Only then will the political support for the nationalist leaders and their policies erode.

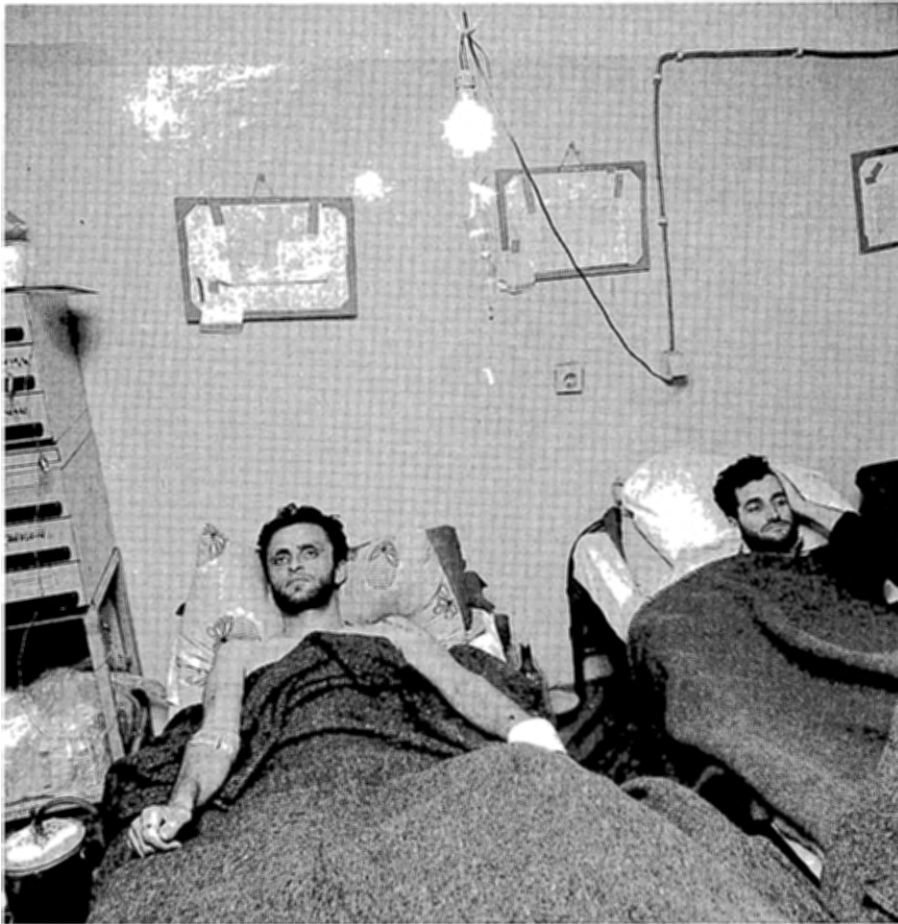
With restoration of the federation impossible, all former republics of Yugoslavia should be offered membership in the European Union under two conditions: 1) the return of all land, homes, and property seized since June 1991 by military force or "ethnic cleansing," thus enabling the return of all refugees

and displaced persons and the rebuilding of a multiethnic society in each of these states, and 2) cooperation with war crimes prosecution through the international tribunal in The Hague and national courts.

The offer of membership should be combined with a "Marshall" plan for reconstructing the war-torn region. As citizens of E.U. member countries, Serbs living in Croatia and Bosnia would no longer be dependent only on the governments in Zagreb and Sarajevo to ensure their minority rights and settle grievances; they could turn instead to E.U. institutions. The same would apply to Albanians in Kosovo and ethnic groups in Macedonia. If the territory of the former Yugoslavia became part of the E.U., the borders between Serbia and Bosnia or Serbia and Croatia would someday become as irrelevant as those currently dividing the Netherlands and Germany. For the people of economically and politically bankrupt Serbia, E.U. membership would provide an alternative that the Milosevic regime could never offer — not even after a total lifting of United Nations sanctions. Many Serbs and international observers are convinced that — despite all of Belgrade's anti-E.U. propaganda since 1991 — 80 percent of Serbia's population would vote "yes" in a referendum on E.U. membership. ●

Dangerous Interventions

by Joan Phillips



ROBIN GRAUBARD/IMPACT VISUALS

Hospital in Mostar

What are the roots of the Bosnian war?

The roots of the war in Bosnia lie in the interaction between internal tensions and external intervention. Yugoslavia, and all its component parts including Bosnia, worked as long as an internal equilibrium was maintained. This equilibrium depended on a complex division of power among the six republics that made up the Yugoslav federal state, as well as on a balance of rights and religions among the peoples intermingled throughout the republics. Increasingly vocal demands for ever more autonomy by some members of the fed-

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eration — particularly Slovenia and Croatia — began to upset that balance in the 1970s and 1980s.

The resort to nationalism by politicians in all republics militated against the survival of the federation. Yugoslavia's history can be seen as a cycle of nationalist action, reaction and counter-reaction, with Slovene, Croat, Serb and Albanian nationalists reacting against the assertion of nationalism by others. By the late eighties, when the unraveling of the communist order coincided with growing economic disparities between the republics, the espousal of nationalism had a particularly corrosive effect. By 1990, the Yugoslav state was certainly fragile.

But it took the intervention of outside powers to destroy it entirely. Without outside backing from powerful states, Slovenia and Croatia would have been wary of embarking on unilateral secession. Yugoslavia was still an internationally recognized state, an established international actor, a founding member of the United Nations, a leader of the non-aligned world and a country with a long history of ties with the West.

Germany's strong encouragement of nationalist leaders in Slovenia and Croatia to secede was therefore decisive. By spring 1991, Helmut Kohl's government had nailed its colors firmly to the secessionist mast. A U.S. diplomat told the *New Yorker*, "We were urging the Croats and Slovenes through Walter Zimmerman (the U.S. ambassador in Belgrade) to stay together. We discovered later that Genscher [Hans Dietrich Genscher, the then German foreign minister] had been in daily contact with the Croatian foreign minister. He was encouraging the Croats to leave the federation and declare independence."¹ Outside intervention of this sort removed the possibility of a local solution and pushed Yugoslavia over the precipice.

By calling Yugoslavia's territorial integrity into question, Germany and the other great powers that recognized the breakaway republics created a situation where everything was up for grabs. Western intervention encouraged a client mentality in a region with a history of weak states attaching themselves to great powers. German backing for Slovenia and Croatia was a green light for other republics to opt out of Yugoslavia and seek Western patronage. When the European Union subsequently recognized Croatia and Slovenia as independent states, it also invited all the Yugoslav republics to apply for independence. Presented with the choice of joining the Western-run world order or sticking it out in rump

1. John Newhouse, "Dodging the Bullet," *New Yorker*, Aug. 24, 1992, pp. 60-71.

Yugoslavia, it was obvious which option would be chosen. Bosnia and Macedonia applied reluctantly — fearing that secession would lead to a conflagration — but grabbed the only chance they thought they would have. The tinder was piled high in Bosnia, where all sides began preparing for war. The spark was lit when the Western powers endorsed an independence referendum of dubious legality that ignored the aspirations of 31 percent of the population — the Bosnian Serbs — who wanted to remain citizens of Yugoslavia and who had genuine, historically-rooted fears of being forced to live in a state dominated by Croats and Muslims.

What has been the policy and role of the U.S. in the conflict? What are the roles of the other external players — NATO, U.N., Russia, Western Europe, Islamic countries — and do they have competing or complementary interests?

Western foreign policy in Bosnia can only be understood in the context of the intensification of global competition among the major powers. The end of communism has led to the collapse of the international hierarchy that brought stability for 40-odd years. Today a new world order is being fashioned, and everybody is competing for a place at the head of the table. Through their interventions in the Balkans, all the major powers have sought to establish their global leadership at the expense of their rivals. Bosnia has become the theater of war in which the rivalries among the world powers are being played out.

Germany's role was decisive as the catalyst for the disintegration of Yugoslavia. Germany cynically used the conflict there to put itself at the center of superpower diplomacy. By breaking ranks and forcing through the recognition of Slovenia and Croatia, Germany was demonstrating its authority as the master of Europe. Germany's intervention did more than simply ignite the war in Yugoslavia, it made the conflict there the focus of internecine disputes among the Western powers. Intervention in Yugoslavia quickly became a game of one-upmanship by Western politicians striving to establish their credentials as world leaders. Every time one statesman urged the need for firm action in Bosnia, others felt obliged to respond with their own initiatives.



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

The only acknowledged U.S. ground troops in the Balkans, members of a U.N. peacekeeping team in Macedonia simulate a sniper attack.

The U.S. has played a leading role in Bosnia since spring 1992, when it intervened to restore its authority as global policeman. The U.S. led the campaign to recognize Bosnia; used its authority on the U.N. Security Council to impose

What are the liberal laptop bombardiers proposing in Bosnia? After air strikes against the Serbs, what next? A protectorate run by the great powers presiding over what's left of Bosnia? In the old days that was called colonialism. Now it's called peacekeeping.

sanctions against Serbia, establish a war crimes tribunal and enforce the no-fly zone; used its dominance of NATO to press for air strikes against the Serbs; and acted unilaterally to scuttle peace plans and undermine the arms embargo. There is no principle at stake in the U.S. approach; avowed principles (and the Bosnian Muslims) are always sacrificed to realpolitik. The object is to bolster America's authority at the ex-

pense of its rivals. Washington's advocacy of a more punitive anti-Serb policy throughout the Bosnian war has been aimed at presenting the Europeans as appeasers and the Americans as decisive leaders.

The Europeans have tried to seize the initiative from the Americans. France has often taken a bellicose line over Bosnia. In June 1992, then President François Mitterrand flew into Sarajevo to demand the opening of the airport. Seven months later, his foreign minister threatened to use force to liberate prisoners from detention camps in Bosnia. Earlier this year, French President Jacques Chirac led the charge for intervention against the Serbs. France's high profile role in Bosnia and its tug of war with the U.S. reflect its insecurity following German reunification in 1990. France's status has diminished since the end of the Cold War. Before that, it could pose as the leading power in Europe; now it fears being squeezed out of the international order. Paris is especially paranoid about the strengthening U.S.-German alliance.

Britain has sought to bolster its declining great power status through intervention in Bosnia. From playing host at the 1992 London conference on Yugoslavia, through the commitment of more ground troops in 1994 and 1995, to the recent London conference, John Major has tried to play the statesman in Bosnia in a bid to bolster his authority on the international stage. The fact



LEO ERKENIMPACT VISUALS

President of Serbia, Slobodan Milosevic.

that even Britain, which has no desire to go to war in Bosnia, has ended up dispatching more troops there reveals the pressures driving all the Western powers to militarize their foreign policy.

Russia has intervened in Bosnia in a bid to reaffirm its status as a great power whose counsel must be sought. Its intervention in Yugoslavia has less to do with any genuine empathy for the Serbs and more to do with Moscow's antipathy to Western meddling in what it considers to be its sphere of influence.

The leaders of the Islamic world have become involved in the war in Bosnia out of motives similar to those of the Western powers — mainly a self-interested desire to bolster their authority at home and abroad. Taking a stand on the war is seen by these leaders too as a way of lending legitimacy to their rule at a time of popular cynicism.

There has been an unseemly competition among the Islamic states to be seen as the best defenders of the Bosnian Muslims. Meanwhile, the more secular Turkish state has seized the opportunity provided by the war in Bosnia to prove its worth as a regional power and to cement relations with the U.S.

The Western powers want to use the Yugoslav conflict to establish their authority, but none has any desire to get bogged down in a war in the Balkans. Yugoslavia is not Somalia, where the U.S. Marines barely managed to go in and out (killing 4,000 Somalis in between) without things getting completely out of control. Unlike Somalia, where there were far fewer outside players involved, a concerted Western

military intervention in the Balkans would not only destabilize an entire region of Europe, it would also bring to the surface underlying conflicts among the great powers and accelerate the breakdown of the international order.

Despite these fears, intervention has acquired its own momentum. Western diplomacy over Bosnia is a deadly game. Each new initiative is put forward to make a Western politician appear resolute, but without committing his government to a major intervention. Chirac's bluster about liberating Srebrenica was a good example of this —

the French president felt he could say what he wanted and nobody would call his bluff. The problem is that every initiative inflames the war and increases the pressure on Western governments to intervene to sort out the mess they have created.

Western media have presented the complex civil war in Bosnia in Gunfight at the OK Corral-terms as a "good guys" (Bosnian Muslims) vs. "bad guys" (Bosnian Serbs) — nobody is sure what to call the Bosnian Croats, not to mention the Bosnian Muslims fighting alongside the Bosnian Serbs around Bihac.

The Western powers have so far stopped short of an all-out military intervention. Yet inexorably, they have been drawn deeper into the war. The increasingly public fracturing of the Western alliance increases the danger of events sliding out of control. A subjective desire to hold the alliance together, out of fear of what may happen if it falls apart, may no longer be sufficient to ar-

rest an apparently unstoppable dynamic toward unilateralism. The conflict of interests is assuming an institutional form, with the Americans attacking the Europeans through NATO, and the Europeans attacking the Americans through the U.N.

The U.S. may pay a high price for acting unilaterally in Bosnia. Going it alone is doing irreparable damage to the alliance system upon which the U.S. has depended for half a century. The more the U.S. alienates its alliance partners over Bosnia, the less it can expect of the alliance next time it wants a favor done. In the past, the U.S. has been able to get multilateral cover for its foreign policy adventures. After Bosnia, it will be that much more difficult. The next time the U.S. asks the British or the French to support an invasion here or a bombing there, the old allies are likely to think twice.

Western foreign policy is driven by realpolitik, but in the post-Cold War era, it is increasingly presented in moral terms as a fight between "civilization" and "barbarism." Today the most effective foreign policy is one which enables the government in question to take the moral high ground at the expense of a rival power. Thus, intervention in Bosnia is justified as a moral imperative, and discussions of the war are replete with evocations of the Holocaust.

"Just war" doctrine is divided in two parts: Having a just cause and prosecuting a war justly. Which actors can fairly lay claim to either requisite? Which cannot?

The war in Bosnia is a civil war involving four parties, three of whom (the Bosnian Serbs, the Bosnian Muslims under Fikret Abdic, and most of the Bosnian Croats) do not support the new state which was created by international diktat in April 1992.

The Western media have presented the complex civil war in Bosnia in Gunfight at the OK Corral-terms as a two-way fight between "good guys" (Bosnian Muslims) and "bad guys" (Bosnian Serbs) — nobody is sure what to call the Bosnian Croats, not to mention the Bosnian Muslims fighting alongside the Bosnian Serbs around Bihac. This sort of inanity was the stuff of Cold War propaganda decried by the same liberal journalists who perpetrate it today.

There are no "good guys" and "bad guys" in Bosnia, just a lot of victims of a bloody civil war. Yet practically every-

body seems to have singled out the Bosnian Serbs as the villains of the piece. In one of the most defamatory campaigns of the modern media age, the Serbs have been vilified as beasts, barbarians, rapists, psychopaths, communists, fascists, and Nazis. Serbian victims of war — in Mostar, Sarajevo, Zenica, Srebrenica and countless towns and villages across Bosnia, not to mention in Croatia where there are virtually no Serbs left — have simply been written out of the story because their plight does not fit the black-and-white media coverage.

A civil war unleashed by outside meddling has been reinterpreted as a war of “genocide” waged by the Serbs. The jargon in which the war is now routinely discussed evokes parallels with the Second World War and the systematic extermination of the Jews by the Nazis. The Bosnian Serbs are accused of conducting “ethnic cleansing,” running “death camps” and “rape camps,” and carrying out “genocide.” Serb politicians, generals and soldiers have been indicted on charges of “genocide” by a kangaroo court established in The Hague to try people for war crimes like the Nazis at Nuremberg.

This emotive terminology sensationalizes acts of war common to all civil wars and suggests they are unique to the conflict in Bosnia. The uprooting of large numbers of civilians from areas of conflict is not peculiar to Bosnia. Many more millions of people have been driven from their homes in the civil wars in Mozambique, Liberia, Sudan, Angola, Lebanon, Afghanistan, and countless other countries. There are 20 million refugees worldwide and another 26 million internally displaced persons.² In the case of Bosnia, a proc-

As long as the Western powers are involved, and as long as the Serbs are singled out as the aggressors, the other parties to the conflict will have an incentive to carry on fighting and the war will continue.

2. *Populations of Concern to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 1994* (Geneva: U.N., 1995).



The wheel turns. Croatian soldiers rest after a defeat by Serbs, 1991.

ess common to all wars has been singled out as something exceptional by journalists who cannot seem to tell the difference between facts of war and war propaganda.

Detention camps have been a routine feature of all wars this century. There were no “death camps” in Bosnia. This travesty was invented by journalists (with assistance from Ruder Finn, a U.S. public relations firm) unable to distinguish between an Omarska and an Auschwitz. The former was a makeshift holding camp where some people were arbitrarily brutalized and executed; the latter was a vast assembly line for the systematic extermination of the Jews.

The war in Bosnia has caused tremendous human suffering. But not a shred of evidence has been put forward to substantiate the charge of “genocide.” Instead, lurid tales of mass slaughter spun by journalists who have abandoned all professional standards have created an uncritical climate in which any exaggeration can be reported as fact. Fictional death tolls are deployed in the cause of encouraging military intervention by the West. Figures of 200,000 dead — plucked from nowhere or Bosnian government press releases — are bandied about by media hacks, but there are no reliable statistics. The best figures are from neutral organizations such as the International

TEIT HORNBAK/ZUMA/IMPACT VISUALS

Committee of the Red Cross, whose estimates are in the low tens of thousands.³ Everything else is just propaganda.

The second problem with the lexicon of "ethnic cleansing," "death camps," and "genocide" is that it is used selectively. The Serbs certainly have blood on their hands. But have all the atrocities in this dirty war been committed by one side? Why are 600,000 Serbian refugees invisible to the media?⁴ Why did journalists not bother to investigate detention camps run by the Bosnian Croats and Muslims which together held more prisoners than were held by the Serbs? Why have Serb victims been written out of the story? Is it because the Serbs really are the only guilty ones? Or is it because a conformist media pack jumped on the anti-Serb bandwagon and never bothered to ask any questions about what was really going on in Bosnia?

This is a vicious civil war in which all sides have been brutalized. But it is not a Holocaust. The invention of fascism in Bosnia renders banal the experience of the real Holocaust and rehabilitates the people who were really responsible for genocide. If what is happening in Bosnia is a Holocaust, then it follows that the crimes committed by the Nazis were nothing out of the ordinary. By going on about "genocide" in Bosnia, the something-must-be-done brigade is complicit in the trivialization of the Holocaust.

What is the desirable outcome and how should it be attained?

The only real solution to the war in Bosnia is a local solution. There is no Western solution. In the stampede toward intervention, the fact that the Western powers are largely responsible for the tragedy in Yugoslavia has been forgotten. A war that would probably never have happened without outside intervention, and which would certainly not have been so bloody, has been prolonged for three-and-a-half years by foreign meddling. Western involvement has led to broken cease-fires, dashed peace deals, intensified fighting, and a rising body count. As long as the Western powers are involved, and as long as the Serbs are singled out as the aggressors,

the other parties to the conflict will have an incentive to carry on fighting and the war will continue.

Many insist that "something must be done" about Bosnia. But what is the "something" and who should do it? The interventionists do not seem to have noticed that the Western powers "doing something" under U.N. banners has usually meant large numbers of people getting killed. Sending troops to do something ("save the starving") in Somalia meant U.S. Marines in helicopter gunships killing Somalis by the thousands on the streets of Mogadishu. Doing something in the Gulf ("defending democracy") meant killing 180,000 Iraqis in the desert. The U.S. doing something in the former Yugoslavia ("detering Serb aggression") meant giving explicit backing to the Croatian blitzkrieg that eliminated the Krajina Serbs from lands where they had lived for hundreds of years. How many times do we have to watch this happen before the blinders come off?

We are being asked to entrust the fate of the peoples of Bosnia to persons with more blood on their hands than all the militiamen in Bosnia put together. The five powers with permanent seats on the U.N. Security Council are directly or indirectly responsible for literally millions of deaths around the globe — in Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia, India, Pakistan, Algeria, Iraq, Lebanon, Rwanda, Kenya, and countless other killing fields — yet these are the forces being asked to save the people of Bosnia.

It is not possible to think of a single example where Western intervention has had positive consequences for the people concerned. Have the Kurds being bombed by Turkish planes in their "safe havens" in Iraq benefited from the intervention of their Western protectors? What have the people of Haiti gained from "Operation Restore Democracy"?

The idea that solutions can be imposed from outside is undemocratic. What is democratic about the greatest power on Earth occupying your country and imposing "democracy" at the point of a gun? And what about all those other forgotten interventions in Angola, Panama, Mozambique, Afghanistan, Liberia, Nicaragua, Indonesia, and Palestine, where Western involvement left bodies piled high? The trouble with the "something must be done" school of interven-

tion is that it cannot see that the worst outrages are carried out not by the powerless but by the powerful.

The presumption that the West knows what's best for Bosnia is galling. The demand for intervention rests on the idea that people over here know what's best for people over there — in Bosnia, Somalia, Rwanda, Haiti — and that the people who live there are like small children who cannot look after themselves. There is an automatic assumption that wisdom resides in the West. The most fervent exponents of this elitist view today are not the old-fashioned racists who think that colonialism was a good thing, but the radicals who used to oppose intervention in the Third World.

What exactly are the legions of liberal laptop bombardiers proposing in Bosnia? After airstrikes against the Serbs, what comes next? A protectorate run by the great powers presiding over what's left of Bosnia? In the old days that was called colonialism. Now it's called a peacekeeping operation.

The consequence of the "something must be done" school of liberal moralizing is to strengthen the moral authority of the major powers to intervene in other people's countries. Worse, it gives them a monopoly on the legitimate use of force.

We are being asked to entrust the fate of the peoples of Bosnia to persons with more blood on their hands than all the militiamen in Bosnia put together.

The right of the Western powers to bomb people in faraway places whenever they feel like it is not enshrined in any international resolution, statute or convention. According to the U.N. Charter, the Security Council has the right to use force as a last resort in cases of interstate aggression that threatens international peace. The conflict in Bosnia is a civil war, not a case of interstate aggression. And the only threat to international peace it poses is due to the meddling of foreign powers. ●

3. Cited in George Kenney, "Bloody Bosnia," *Washington Monthly*, Mar. 1995, pp. 49-52.

4. These figures are conservative and do not reflect the flight of Croatian Serbs from the Krajina in early August.



TEIT HORNBAKZMA/IMPACT VISUALS

Conflicted Kurdistan

by Vera Beaudin Saeedpour

Since the end of the Gulf War, the U.S. and its allies have portrayed themselves as benefactors of the Kurds, the world's largest stateless nation. (See box, p. 18.) After Saddam Hussein's defeat and the failed Kurdish uprising, the U.S. loudly championed the Iraqi Kurds and with its allies set up a Kurdish administration in the "protected zone" under the auspices of Operation Provide Comfort.

But recent events cast doubt on U.S. beneficence. The Iraqi and Turkish regions of Kurdistan are in flames and the U.S. is deeply involved. Beginning with the Gulf War, the U.S. has supported Iraqi Kurdish factions as pawns

in its continuing efforts to destabilize Saddam Hussein. Under U.S. tutelage, those factions have fought for control over the "protected zone." The casualties include thousands of dead and wounded Iraqi Kurds, and their leaders' democratic pretensions.

At the same time, the U.S. largely looks the other way as Turkey suppresses its Kurdish population. With good reason: Washington is providing massive military, intelligence, and economic assistance for Turkey's war against the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK). In the ten-year effort to quash the PKK, 15,000 people have been killed and the Turkish military has razed some 2,000 Kurdish villages.¹

This war has also leapt the border, most recently in July, when Turkish troops once again swept into Iraq in pursuit of the PKK. Turkish — and to a much lesser extent, Iranian — incursions and air raids into Iraqi Kurdistan have gone on ever since the end of the Gulf War, despite the U.S.-imposed "no-fly" zone and the U.N.-designated "safe haven." Apparently, the "no trespassing" sign applies only to Saddam Hussein.

The U.S. stand in favor of Kurdish guerrillas in Iraq and against Kurdish guerrillas in Turkey clearly demonstrates a "Kurdish policy" subordinate to a larger regional agenda: to help NATO ally Turkey while weakening Iran and Iraq. The policy plays Kurd against Kurd, with Iraqi Kurds playing a piv-

Vera Beaudin Saeedpour is director of the Center for Research of the Kurdish Library in Brooklyn, N.Y.
Photo: Kurdish refugees near the Iraq/Iran border.

1. Associated Press, "Turks Attack Kurds for 2nd Day; 200 Reported Killed," *New York Times*, March 22, 1995, p. A7.

State	Total pop.	Kurdish pop.	Percent Kurdish
Turkey	56.7	13.7	24.1
Iran	55.6	6.6	12.4
Iraq	18.8	4.4	23.5
Syria	12.6	1.3	9.2
Ex-USSR		0.3	
TOTAL		26.3	

Kurd population, millions, 1990¹

Kurds' Dream

The Kurds are cursed by geography. For at least 2,500 years, they have lived in the mountainous lands of the northern Middle East. Their homeland, Kurdistan (areas where Kurds are a majority), straddled the great trade routes from Asia to Europe and has been a contested zone where empires have clashed for centuries. Kurds have been subject to the suzerainty of Ottomans, Persians, Russians, and Arabs.

Only rarely and fleetingly have Kurds had their own state. Since the last medieval Kurdish principality fell to the Persians in 1867, a Kurdistan governed by Kurds has been only a nationalist dream.

After World War I, Woodrow Wilson promised independent states for the "Arabs, Armenians, and Kurds," but U.S. isolationism, British imperial interests in Iraq, and most of all, a resurgent Turkey under Kemal Ataturk intervened.

Throughout this century, Kurdistan has been shaken by nationalist revolts, especially in Turkey between the world wars and in Iraq since the 1960s. Turkish Kurds are now fighting the longest, most serious Kurdish uprising in decades, while Iraqi Kurds struggle to maintain autonomy, and Iranian Kurds continue a low-level insurgency.

For Kurds, the world's largest stateless nation and fourth largest ethnic group in the Middle East — behind Arabs, Persians, and Turks — the dream dies hard. ● — CAQ

1. Mehrdad R. Izady, *The Kurds: A Concise Handbook* (Washington: Taylor & Francis, 1992), p. 119.

otal role befitting their position at the strategic center of Kurdistan. This explains why Iraqi Kurds have become the only Kurds worth worrying about. After the war, Kurds hoped they would at last be players in the game of geopolitics. Instead, their homeland is the playing field and they are once again the ball.

Despite the turmoil in Kurdish Iraq, it is Turkey's Kurdish problem that is now most acute. Some 220,000 soldiers in the southeast — half of Turkey's armed forces — as well as 50,000 special antiguerrilla forces, thousands of rural paramilitary police, and nearly 50,000 Kurdish villagers pressed into service as "village guards" have thus far failed to crush the PKK.² Instead, Ankara's intransigence, brutal counterinsurgency tactics and scorched earth policies only add to the growing pool of recruits for the Kurdish rebels.

The PKK's War

Under Abdullah Ocalan, the PKK has grown from a few hundred guerrillas in 1984 to as many as 30,000 full-time fighters now, along with up to 50,000 militiamen and 375,000 "sympathizers."³ The guerrillas move at will through the Turkish southeast, ambushing army units, attacking "village guards," and assassinating teachers, political figures, and other representatives of the government. And as Kurds fled the violence —

some 2,000,000 are refugees — the PKK came with them to the cities of western Turkey, where it has engaged in a campaign of bombings and assassination.

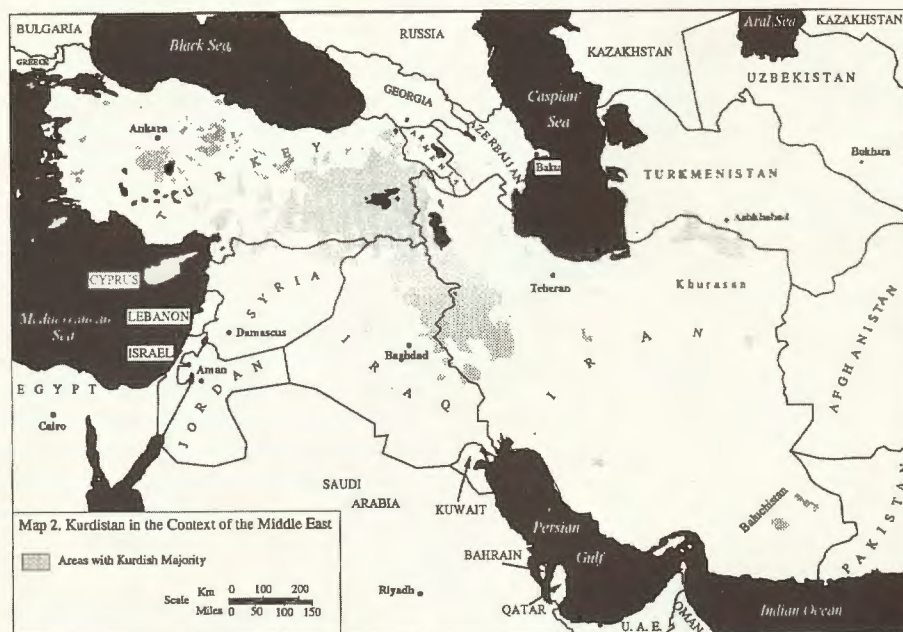
Known as an openly Marxist-Leninist and separatist movement since its inception, the PKK has proven adaptable. Ocalan now speaks of socialism, not Marxism, and as part of a so far futile effort to entice Ankara to negotiate, he conceded last year that, "I do not think it appropriate to see Kurdish independence in the form of separation from Turkey, even if we reach the stage where we have the military power to do that."⁴ The PKK has even initiated unilateral ceasefires. Still, Turkey shows no interest in any but a military solution.

Ironically, the same hard line toward the Kurds cleared the way for the PKK. Ferocious repression after the 1980 military coup decimated the fractious Kurdish left-nationalist parties — along with the Turkish left as a whole — and rendered Kurdish tribal leaders largely irrelevant. The PKK alone emerged to fill the vacuum. Strict discipline, commitment to armed struggle, and assiduously cultivated support among the peasantry, the working class, and the Kurdish diaspora allowed it to prosper. While other Kurdish parties still exist, the PKK is clearly the dominant Kurdish nationalist force within Turkey — and possibly all Kurdistan.⁵

2. Figures on Turkish troop strength from Defense Minister Mehmet Golhan, cited in Christopher Panico, "Turkey's Kurdish Conflict," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, v. 7, n. 4 (April 1995), p. 170.
3. *Ibid.*

4. Interview, *Ozgur Gundem*, April 1994, cited in Panico, *op. cit.*

5. Chris Kutschera, "Mad Dreams of Independence: The Kurds of Turkey and the PKK," *Middle East Report*, n. 189 (July-Aug. 1994), pp. 12-15.



Map 2. Kurdistan in the Context of the Middle East

Areas with Kurdish Majority

Scale
Km 0 100 200
Miles 0 50 100 150

Blame Kemal Ataturk, founder of modern Turkey and architect of Turkey's Kurdish policy. In building a new Turkey on the ashes of the Ottoman Empire after its defeat in World War I, Ataturk established a policy of obliterating Kurdish ethnic identity. In its place would be the ethos of Turkey for the Turks. Turkey banned all Kurdish names, both for individuals and places, as well as the Kurdish language and traditional costumes.

Turkey's suppression of all things Kurdish — a virulent form of ethnic cleansing — approaches the apotheosis of the absurd. Yet to this day, Ankara claims it has no idea why Kurds could possibly want a divorce. (Obviously afflicted with cognitive dissonance, it has no problem attacking the Serbs for "ethnic cleansing" in Bosnia.) Nor does it profess to understand why Kurds should take up arms, as they have done repeatedly over the last 70 years. And for largely the same reasons: to preserve their Kurdish identity and regain control over their ancestral lands.

Even after a decade of PKK guerrilla war and with the entire Kurdish southeast under martial law, Ankara has yet to admit a "Kurdish problem." The official version has it that "democratic" Turkey is beleaguered by "terrorists" from the left, the right and the middle. Human rights abuses are to be expected in the course of maintaining national security, say the apologists. Moreover, they argue, terrorists are to blame. Crush the PKK, create more employment in the southeast, give the Kurds a few cultural and civil rights, and the problem will simply disappear.

Turning a Blind Eye

Turkey's NATO allies, the U.S. in particular, largely concur. As it has long done, the U.S. acquiesces to Turkey's claim to be democratic. After the 1980 coup, when the European community twice formally condemned the military regime,⁶ the State Department held its ground: "While there are human rights problems in Turkey, it would be shortsighted to forget the current Government has nearly eliminated the human

6. In April 1981, the International Commission of Jurists denounced the coup. "Legal Situation in Turkey," *The Review*, June 1981, pp. 24-39. In 1982, the European Commission on Human Rights found that "human rights conditions in Turkey had deteriorated to such an extent that an international investigation was necessary." Quoted in Reuters, "U.S. Defends Turkey on Human Rights," *New York Times*, July 2, 1982, p. A4.



TEIT HORNBAK/2MA/IMPACT VISUALS

PUK leader Jalal Talabani (c.) with KDP leader Massoud Barzani (r.) meet with Turkish military officials, November 1992.

rights violations due to terrorism that were rapidly eroding the viability of democracy in Turkey."⁷

Also eroding was the credibility of the State Department, with its long history of excusing Turkey's excesses. Even as U.S. officials claimed Turkey's military government was "in the process of restoring parliamentary democracy,"⁸ the generals demonstrated their unique conception of democracy. In a bizarre and revealing incident, authorities demanded a three-year prison sentence for Franz Reissig, the deputy manager of the Lufthansa office in Istanbul. His crime? Providing the Istanbul Rotary Club magazine an airline publicity photo that showed an out-of-date globe with a geographical reference to Kurdistan.⁹

The Misrule of Law

While Turkey, with U.S. help, presses the public relations war for U.S. hearts,

7. Reuters, *ibid*.

8. U.S. State Department, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1982*, p. 1007.

9. David Barchard, "Turkey Makes Map References a Crime," *Guardian* (London), Mar. 23, 1993, p. 6.

minds and money,¹⁰ human rights abuses have increased, mystery killings abound, and torture and detention remain routine.¹¹ Last year, Ankara abruptly lifted the immunity of Kurdish parliamentarians and banned their Democracy Party. Seven were arrested at the doors of parliament and charged with "crimes against the state" — a death penalty offense — two for remarks made while speaking before the Helsinki Commission in Washington.¹²

The press has fared even worse. Using the Anti-Terror laws enacted after the Gulf War, Turkish authorities arrested hundreds of journalists last year, and Turkey now has the dubious distinction of holding the world's highest number of journalists in prison — 74.¹³ Kurds have been especially hard hit.

10. See *The Torturer's Lobby* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Public Integrity, 1991). In 1990, Ankara spent \$3.8 million on lobbyists here to receive some \$804 million in U.S. aid and major new trade benefits.

11. Amnesty International, *Human Rights and U.S. Security Assistance 1995*, pp. 48-50.

12. Kutschera, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

13. *Attacks on the Press in 1994: A Worldwide Survey* (New York: Committee to Protect Journalists, 1995), p. 224.

In 1993 and 1994, the pro-Kurdish paper *Ozgur Gundem* lost 14 journalists to "mystery killings."¹⁴ Newsboys were attacked with hatchets. Its first editor, Ocak Yutcu, is serving a 25-year sentence for publishing pro-Kurdish articles, and one of its columnists, Turkish sociologist Ismail Besikci, has sentences totaling 67 years for similar offenses.¹⁵

Despite Turkey's barbarous treatment of Kurds, President Clinton last year welcomed Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Ciller with this fatuous comment: "Turkey is a shining example to the world of the virtues of cultural diversity."¹⁶

Kurds and the Post-Gulf War Agenda

Ankara has largely escaped U.S. condemnation because the U.S. views Turkey as a bulwark — first against communism, now against Islamic fundamentalism and "radical" regimes in Teheran and Baghdad. In the post-war Gulf, the U.S. envisions Turkey as the cornerstone of regional security in the Middle East as well as its base to extend Western influence into Central Asia, countering Iran's reach.¹⁷

When Ankara lies, the U.S. swears to it; when Ankara abuses, the U.S. excuses. Vice President Al Gore fell right in line when he intoned that:

[W]e intend to work with Turkey. It's not fair for us to urge Turkey to not only be a democratic country but to recognize human rights and then not to help the government of Turkey deal with terrorism within its own borders. And I think you will see some more cooperation between our two nations on this front.¹⁸

As if Washington was not already cooperating with Turkey. U.S. economic assistance runs at around \$120 million per year,¹⁹ and military aid accounts for hundreds of millions more. (See box, p. 21.) That aid is used not only against Turkish Kurds, but also against the Iraqi Kurds the U.S. is pledged to protect. When 35,000 Turkish soldiers invaded Iraqi Kurd territory in March in

search of PKK camps, they came in U.S.-supplied warplanes, tanks, and armored vehicles. And U.S. pilots patrolling the no-fly zone develop intelligence on PKK movements, which the U.S. military passes on to Turkey.²⁰

Turkish forces declared victory and retreated some six weeks later, only to return in July after first announcing to the world at large that they could do so whenever they pleased. While the European community condemned the invasion as a violation of Iraqi sovereignty, U.S. officials merely mumbled about Turkey's right to "self-defense" and reminded Ankara only to avoid civilian casualties and to get out once the job was done.²¹ A "senior administration diplomat" explained, "We have made a deliberate decision to be less critical of the Turks than the Europeans and Congress. They are our NATO ally."²²

Iraqi Kurdish parties were as helpful as they could be in both operations.

Clinton labeled Turkey "a shining example to the world of the virtues of cultural diversity."

They allowed their arsenals to be commandeered by the Turkish military to display on Turkish TV as captured PKK weapons. And Iraqi Kurds acted as guides for the invading forces.²³ But these were only small gestures in Iraqi Kurds' larger role in aiding and abetting Turkish and U.S. regional designs.

Ties That Bind

From the beginning of the Gulf crisis, Jalal Talabani of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and Massoud Barzani of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) joined with other members of what would become the U.S.-financed Iraqi National Congress (INC) to assist CIA covert operations designed to destabilize Saddam Hussein, including the Kurdish uprising at war's end.²⁴ In

return, the Bush administration sent Talabani and Barzani to Washington for meetings with Secretary of State Baker and National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft. They left with assurances of continued protection, increased aid, and U.S. approval for their plans to rule Iraqi Kurdistan.²⁵

They got all three, but at a price paid largely by Kurdish civilians. After the failed uprising, nearly two million refugees fled into the rugged mountains of Turkey and Iran.²⁶ Thousands died on the trek and in the harsh highland winter. The great majority of them, notably children and the elderly, died not from Iraqi shelling but from exposure.²⁷

But the flight may have been more tactical than spontaneous, part of a deal among Turkey, the West, and Kurdish leaders.²⁸ Refugees reported that *peshmerga* (Kurdish fighters) moved through the cities shouting that they must leave immediately: "The Kurdish militias knocked on our doors and ordered us to leave town or join them. They said the Iraqi army was coming to kill the Kurds. But when people refused, they threatened to burn our cars and houses."²⁹

In early March 1991, Kurdish rebels claimed control of all Iraqi Kurdistan, and Talabani threatened to march on Baghdad. But a few days later, the *peshmerga* turned around and the refugee exodus began in earnest.

In late March, Talabani met with Turkish security forces, the latest in a series of meetings that began at the onset of the Gulf crisis. Much to Talabani's and Barzani's delight, the Turks promised to make the Iraqi Kurdish cause known.³⁰ But there was more. Soon after the war, Prime Minister Ozal played up to both the Kurdish leadership and international opinion by lifting the ban on the Kurdish language in Turkey, in the hope of deflecting charges of hypocrisy given Turkey's internal Kurdish policy. Thanks to a somnolent U.S. press that got derailed at the start of the Gulf War and has missed every train since,

25. Jim Hoagland, "We Won't Let You Down," *Washington Post*, Aug. 4, 1992, p. A17.

26. Clyde Haberman, "Military Takes Over Relief for Kurdish Refugees in Iraq," *New York Times*, Apr. 13, 1991.

27. "A Lifeline in Iraq," *Newsweek*, Apr. 29, 1991, p. 18, reported Kurdish refugees were "dying at the rate of 1,000 a day."

28. Associated Press, "Kurdish Refugees Returning to Iraq," *New York Times*, Apr. 4, 1991, p. A4; author's interviews with refugees, Erbil, Iraq, June 1992.

29. Quoted in Associated Press, *op. cit.*

30. Sam Cohen, "Turks Talk to Iraqi Kurdish Rebels," *Christian Science Monitor*, Mar. 15, 1991.

14. Carol Migdalovitz, "Turkey's Kurdish Imbroglio and U.S. Policy" (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 1994), p. 18.

15. *Attacks...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 232, 235.

16. Cited in Migdalovitz, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

17. Stephen J. Blank, et al., U.S. Army War College, *Turkey's Strategic Position at the Crossroads of World Affairs* (Carlisle, Penna.: Strategic Studies Institute, 1993).

18. Cited in Migdalovitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18.

19. U.S. State Department spokesperson, Aug. 9, 1995.

20. John Pomfret, "U.S. Supports Turkish Plan for Northern Iraq," *Washington Post*, Apr. 12, 1995, p. A27.

21. Chris Hedges, "Turks Likely to Keep Troops in Iraq for Weeks," *New York Times*, Mar. 23, 1995, p. A3.

22. Steven Greenhouse, "Turk Sees Foray in Iraq Ending in Few Weeks," *New York Times*, Apr. 7, 1995, p. A12.

23. Kurd-A Kurdish German News Agency, press release #8, May 13, 1995.

24. Angelo Codevilla, *Informing Statecraft* (New York: Free Press, 1992), p. 281.

U.S. Military Aid to Turkey Targets Kurds

The U.S. supplies NATO ally Turkey with funds and military equipment which Turkey uses to suppress the Kurds. Here, Turkish soldier eyes Kurdish protest, 1991.



R. MAROMEDICO INTERNATIONAL

U.S. weapons fuel Turkey's war on the Kurds. The Turkish military uses U.S.-supplied aircraft, particularly F-16 fighters, other fighter aircraft, and AH-1 Cobra attack helicopters in air attacks on the PKK and its sympathizers. Last year, the Turkish media reported that two squadrons of F-16s would be based at Diyarbakir because "officials are convinced the F-16s will be effective against the PKK." Turkish embassy officials in Washington confirmed that F-16s were used in air raids against PKK camps deep inside Iraqi Kurdistan near the Iranian border in January and May 1994. They used cluster bombs, and 500- and 2,000-pound bombs against rebel camps. Those same F-16s have been overflying Iraq this year as part of the Turkish sweep over the border.

Aircraft aren't the only U.S. war materiel supporting the Turks' war on the Kurds. On at least one occasion, Kurdish villagers said Turkish troops who burned down part of their village traveled in U.S. M-113 armored personnel carriers. The Turkish military also incorporates a wide range of U.S.-supplied, financed, and donated weaponry in its counterinsurgency program.

Turkey and the U.S. have a longstanding, mutually beneficial military relationship that includes various loan, training, joint manufacturing, and giveaway programs:

- A joint Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement that provides the U.S. with access to airfields, intelligence, and communications facilities.
- The Excess Defense Articles (EDA) and "cascade" programs. (Cascade is a program in which surplus weapons from U.S. bases in Europe are given as grants.) In FY 1992-93 under these programs, Turkey received more than 1,500 tanks, nearly 500 armored personnel carriers, nearly 150 howitzers, 28 AH-1 attack helicopters, and 29 F4-E fighter aircraft.

Proposed EDA deliveries for 1994 included: 110 M-85 machine guns, 14 SH-2F LAMPS antisubmarine helicopters, an antisubmarine rocket launcher, ammunition, and parts for machine guns, howitzers, tanks, and combat aircraft.

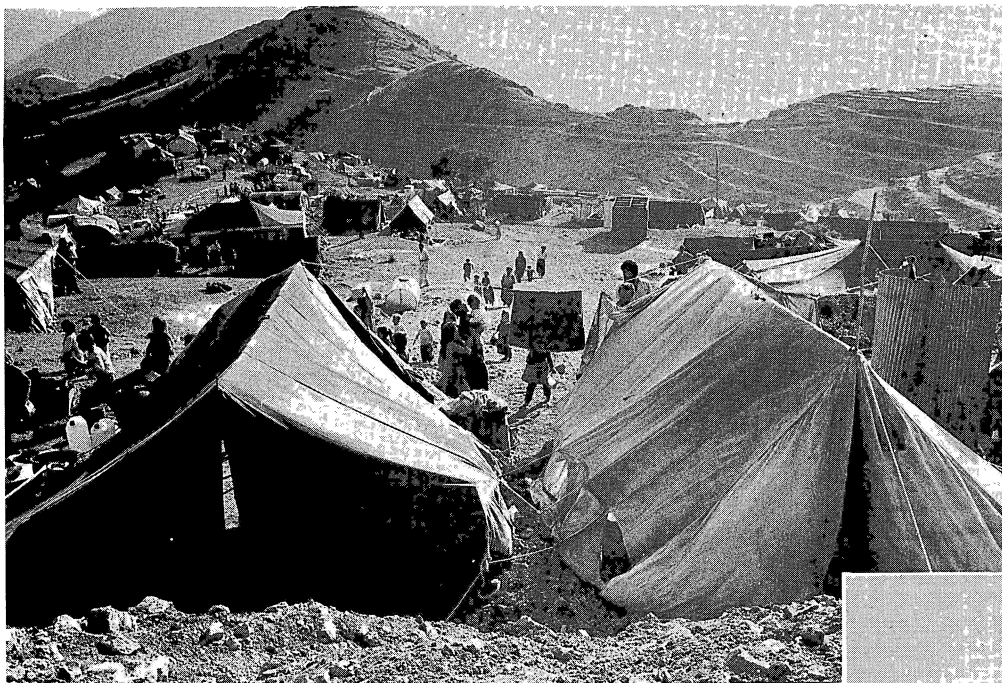
- A lucrative arms trade. From 1984 through 1993, the U.S. government sold Turkey \$8.5 billion worth of weaponry under the Foreign Military Sales program, along with an additional \$956 million in direct private sales, making Turkey the fifth largest market for U.S. arms dealers. Another \$3.5 billion is expected to be done in the next two years. Among recent purchases are 5 AH-1W Super Cobra attack helicopters, 51 Blackhawk transport choppers, and 74 armored vehicles. A controversial deal with U.S. arms manufacturer Alliant Techsystems to supply Turkey with 493 CBU-87 cluster bombs has been held up pending the State Department's granting of an export license.

- The "Peace Onyx" program — the centerpiece of U.S.-Turkish military relations — is an F-16 production deal valued at \$7.6 billion. The planes are built in Turkey under a co-production agreement with Lockheed. By the deal's end in 1996, 240 planes will be built.

The U.S. is easily Turkey's number one arms supplier. From 1987 to 1991, the U.S. accounted for 77 percent of arms deliveries. Germany was a distant second with 17 percent. Over the past decade, Congress spent \$5.1 billion in military aid under loan and Foreign Military Financing programs, placing Turkey behind only Israel and Egypt. Efforts in the House this spring to postpone aid to Turkey pending a presidential report on Turkey's human rights record failed.¹ ●

— CAQ

1. Dan Morgan, "Plan to Delay Aid to Turkey Is Rejected," *Washington Post*, June 16, 1995. Figures cited in Human Rights Watch Arms Project, *Cluster Bombs for Turkey?* (New York: Human Rights Watch, Dec. 1994, v. 6, n. 19).



Kurdish refugees, at a U.N. camp and on the road.



CHRISTOPHER ALIBONE/IMPACT VISUALS

he succeeded. Ozal's decree only affected "non-political communication." Political communication (read Kurds and Kurdistan) was made punishable under harsh "Anti-Terror" laws enacted at the same time.

Ozal easily seduced Barzani and Talabani by proposing a federated Iraq with the north for the Kurds, the Kirkuk oilfields for Iraq's tiny Turkmen minority, and leftovers for the Arabs. The Iraqi Turkmen would be Ankara's means of regaining a foothold around the oilfields — once part of Turkey, whose loss it never accepted. In exchange for Ozal's promotion of a federated Iraq, Iraqi Kurdish leaders would yield Kirkuk and Mosul city (both in traditional Kurdish territory) and secure their border with Turkey against their counterparts, the Kurdish guerrillas of the PKK. They didn't say no.³¹

With the Iraqi Kurd leaders in hand, the Gulf War coalition moved quickly. Holding up his end of the bargain, Ozal called for a safe haven, and Bush declared the 36th parallel Iraq's northern border. (Unfortunately for the Kurds, Kirkuk is even further south.) Bush unilaterally declared a "no-fly" zone over the enclave and began Operation Provide Comfort — ostensibly to protect the Kurds. Claiming a humanitarian mandate, the U.N. Security Council

quickly legitimized the safe haven designed by Ankara and Washington.

Whose Comfort?

But Operation Provide Comfort appears designed to provide more comfort to the West than to the Iraqi Kurds. The safe haven gives the West a military presence at the confluence of Turkey, Syria, Iran, and Iraq, with the former Soviet republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan just over the horizon. It also sanctifies a Western presence in the strategic center of Kurdistan, between far larger Kurdish populations in Turkey and Iran. As such, it serves to perpetuate the division of greater Kurdistan, for nowhere but in Kurdistan is there support for a united Kurdish state.

Moreover, the enclave designed to protect Iraqi Kurds becomes a trap for PKK fighters seeking refuge from the Turkish military. Beginning in 1992, Turkish attack squadrons based at Incirlik — ironically, the same U.S. airbase from which the "no-fly zone" is enforced — have operated right over the heads of the allies. Meanwhile, on the border with Iran, Iraqi Kurds provide aid and comfort to the KDP-Iran, Kurdish guerrillas battling Teheran since 1945.³²

months earlier Barzani was quoted as saying, "We have no intention of fighting the PKK."³⁵ But two months later, after meeting in Ankara with Turkish leaders, Talabani sang a different tune. "Iraqi Kurdistan will not be a base for a terrorist attack on Turkey ... the region will soon be cleared."³⁶

He then went on to reveal the extent to which he had swung into Turkey's orbit. Rather than remaining in an "undemocratic" Iraq, he said, "it would be better for us to join a democratic Turkey. ... The first target is the overthrow of the Saddam regime. If this doesn't succeed, we may even request the reunification ... with Turkey."³⁷

37. (Summer 1991), p. 56.

33. Elaine Sciolino, "CIA Asks Congress for More Money to Rein in Iraq and Iran," *New York Times*, Apr. 12, 1995, p. A8.

34. *Intelligence Newsletter* (Paris), May 26, 1994.

35. Nadir Mater, Inter Press Service, "Iraqi Kurds Pledge Neutrality Toward Turkish Brethren," May 29, 1992.

36. Reuters, "Iraqi Kurds hold talks in Turkey," July 25, 1992.

37. *Ibid.*

31. Jonathan Randall, "Iraqi Kurds Keep Low Profile," *Washington Post*, Feb. 17, 1991, p. A43.

32. For more on Iranian Kurds, see Salaam Al-Sharqi, "Iran: Unholy Alliances, Holy Terror," *CovertAction*, n.

Political Forces in Iraqi Kurdistan

Although Kurdish Iraq boasts a plethora of political parties, only three exercise real power. The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), led by Massoud Barzani (son of traditional leader and KDP founder Mustafa Barzani), and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), led by Jalal Talabani, jointly control the regional government. The Islamic Movement in Iraqi Kurdistan (IMIK), a Sunni Muslim grouping, remains outside the government and is the third force in Iraqi Kurdistan politics today. Smaller communist, socialist, and Islamic parties remain on the margins, while traditional clan leaders have seen their influence diminished but not eradicated.

- The KDP is the grand old man of Kurdish politics, founded after the fall of the 1946 Kurdish Republic in Iran. The KDP under Barzani *père* wedded an autocratic traditional leadership to a left-leaning emerging peasant and urban labor movement. Under Barzani *fils*, the autocratic style remains and the party's social base has contracted to remnants of the traditional landed elite, the *ulama* (Moslem clergy), and some clan leaders, as well as to the beneficiaries of its patronage machine.

The KDP is strongest along the Turkish border, the area that constitutes the "safe haven." It is thus well positioned to garner income from the lucrative traffic in smuggled goods. Some observers claim that much of the recent fighting between the PUK and KDP is rooted in the PUK's

attempts to wrest a larger share of the contraband revenues from the KDP.

- The PUK splintered from Barzani's KDP in 1975, taking with it substantial numbers of urban workers, radicalized peasants, and "reformist" intellectuals, as well as Marxists from the Kurdistan Workers' League. Jalal Talabani has led the party since its inception. Like the KDP, it calls for "autonomy and democracy," but claims a slightly more leftist economic program. The PUK dominates in the Erbil, Kirkuk, and Sulaimaniyya areas, where 75 percent of Iraqi Kurds live.
- IMIK is a relatively new party (formed in 1986), and has shown impressive growth as it consolidates its bases among Sunni Moslems along the Iranian border. An Islamist party that includes religious scholars and veterans of Afghanistan, it has violently — but so far unsuccessfully — opposed the KDP and PUK.¹
- Traditional clan leaders and their militias aided Saddam Hussein's murderous Anfal offensive against the PUK and KDP in 1987-88, but switched sides during the post-war uprising, and are now wooed by both parties. They also call for self-determination and independence.
- The Iraqi Communist Party-Base Organizations and several smaller Marxist parties close to the Turkish PKK that call for the establishment of "Greater Kurdistan," remain on the margins. All have been subject to repression by the Iraqi Kurd administration and KDP and PUK forces.¹

1. Amnesty International, *Iraq: Human Rights Abuses ...*, op. cit., p. 10.

Inside Iraqi Kurdistan

With U.S. supervision and funding, the PUK and KDP set up a Regional Administration after elections for a Kurdish parliament and "Leader of the Kurdish Liberation Movement."³⁸ These elections gave Barzani and Talabani useful democratic credentials, but failed to implant democratic rule. Neither candidate won a majority, and the leadership is now split between Barzani and Talabani. A runoff election never took place, but neither the State Department nor human rights monitors, some of whom were funded by NED, complained.³⁹

Resulting factional fighting has left hundreds dead as the PUK and KDP — and sometimes the Islamic IMIK — fight for land, prestige, and control of revenues. In December 1993, IMIK and PUK clashes left hundreds dead; in May-August 1994, fighting among all three parties killed up to 2,000 people.⁴⁰

Despite funneling \$1.14 billion into Iraqi Kurdistan since 1991,⁴¹ the U.S. government and the human rights community have been disturbingly quiet about events there — in vivid contrast to exposés of human rights abuses committed under Saddam Hussein. Only Amnesty International, after three years, produced a report detailing and condemning abuses of Kurds by Kurds.

Meanwhile, sympathizers tout the Regional Administration as a "bold experiment" in democracy.⁴² Reality is something else. Kurds have reported numerous instances of torture, prolonged detention without charge, and mysterious assassinations that go uninvestigated.⁴³ Kurdish women continue to be murdered by members of their

own families for such crimes as refusing to marry the man selected by their male relatives. Iraqi Kurds flee even to *Baghdad* to purchase exit visas.⁴⁴

All major political forces have been blamed for gross human rights abuses. The Ministry of Interior *Asayish* (security) forces reportedly arrest and torture political opponents and shoot demonstrators and innocent bystanders. None have been brought to justice.⁴⁵

The impunity extends as well to the PUK, the KDP, and the Islamist IMIK party. In fact, the warring parties — not the Regional Administration and not Saddam Hussein — are responsible for most assassinations, murders, tortures, and imprisonments. PUK and KDP forces far outnumber the government's. While the Regional Administration counts an estimated 12-15,000 *peshmerga*, the PUK and KDP independently control many thousands more. And even some of the official *peshmerga* are answerable only to Talabani or Barzani, notably two Special Bri-

international USA, 1995), pp. 89, 110.

41. Alfred B. Prados, *The Kurds in Iraq: Status, Protection, and Prospects* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 1994), pp. 25-26.

42. David A. Korn, "Democracy for the Kurds?" *Freedom Review*, May-June 1994, pp. 16-18. Korn repeats this phrase seven times in his brief article, which identifies him as "an occasional consultant to the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan."

43. Amnesty International, op. cit.; testimonies on file at the Kurdish Library.

44. *Ibid.*, Kurdish Library.

45. Amnesty International, op. cit., pp. 47-60.

38. See National Endowment for Democracy, *Annual Reports* for 1992, 1993, and 1994.

39. NED funded the Organization of Human Rights in Iraq and the Free Iraq Foundation. *Ibid.*, 1992.

40. Amnesty International, *Iraq: Human Rights Abuses in Iraqi Kurdistan Since 1991* (New York: Amnesty In-

gades of 2,000 fighters each. These Special Brigades have reportedly carried out atrocities both in peace and war.⁴⁶

For "special operations" — assassinations, "disappearances," and provocations such as firing on opposition funerals — both the PUK and KDP rely on their private intelligence and security apparatuses, the KDP's *Parastin* (Protection) and the PUK's *Dezgay Zan-yari* (Information Apparatus). Scores of assassinations are attributed to these political police, as are hundreds of cases of torture and unlawful imprisonment.⁴⁷ But such abuses are not the only problem facing Iraqi Kurds.

Dual Embargoes

Engrossed in power struggles, Barzani and Talabani have ignored Iraqi Kurdistan's primary economic problem: two embargoes, one imposed by the U.N. against Iraq — including the Kurdish "safe haven" — the other imposed by Baghdad against the Kurdish north.

Ironically, in normal times, Iraqi Kurdistan is Iraq's breadbasket, producing the bulk of its grain and fruit.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 69.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 89.

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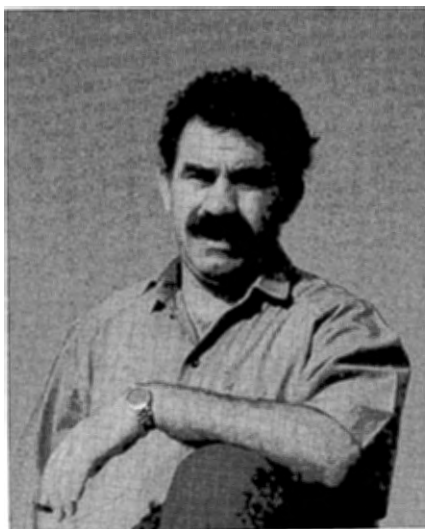
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PKK head Abdullah Ocalan

Now, severe poverty, malnutrition, and unemployment afflict the population.

"Sanctions have had a devastating effect not only on the general economic situation here, but also on our traditional Kurdish society," says one Kurdish observer. "Once the well-off used to help the poor ... others readily opened their homes to them and gave money to help the victims [of Hussein's offensives]. Now it's every man for himself."⁴⁸

While most suffer, some do quite well, especially those under the umbrella of the PUK or KDP. The Hawraman Hotel in Erbil is the scene of nightly drinking and gambling sessions for well-connected black marketeers, and the busy Green Tomato restaurant features meals costing the equivalent of a civil servant's monthly salary.⁴⁹

Washington's condemnation of Baghdad for its blockade against the north rings hollow since the West too has effectively embargoed the region. Coalition allies could supply Iraqi Kurds with whatever aid they wish through Turkey. Instead, they have chosen to provide only enough to avoid undermining their status as victims — victims they want to keep in protective custody while the larger regional agenda is carried out.

Turkey's Dreams, Washington's Failures

The U.S. has publicly based its presence in the Iraqi north solely on the threat posed by Saddam Hussein. With-

48. Quoted in Reuben Lowy, "Free to Self-Destruct; Kurdish Enclave in Northern Iraq," *New Statesman and Society* (London), Sept. 23, 1994, p. 18.
49. *Ibid.*

out Hussein in power, the West would lose the moral force of its presence. And despite the Bush administration's protests that a fragmented Iraq was the last thing it wanted, it was the first thing accomplished. There are now signs that Turkey may act to make that fragmentation permanent.

Since Turkey's March invasion wound down, President Demirel has spoken publicly about "readjusting" Turkey's border southward. Some observers now believe that the next Turkish intervention in Iraq may bring long-term occupation and eventual annexation.⁵⁰

Still, U.S. policymakers press ahead with the military buildup of Turkey — and the only war in sight is against its Kurds. U.S. arms and aid supported the string of "final offensives" designed to crush the PKK once and for all and carry Turkey ever closer to the Kirkuk oilfields. All have failed, as will Washington's and Ankara's efforts to "de-link" the PKK from the Kurds in Turkey.

None other than PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan can stop the rebels' guns. Having learned nothing from nearly three decades of the failure of Israel and its supporters to "de-link" the PLO from the Palestinians, U.S. leaders persist in this folly, forgetting that overnight they transformed Yasir Arafat from "terrorist" to "statesman." Why not PKK leader Ocalan?

So obvious a strategy is unlikely to find favor in Washington, which devotes much energy to convincing its citizens that foreign policy failures are really successes. Take Iran, for example. U.S. support for the late Shah's repressive regime brought Khomeini into power and destroyed U.S. influence in Iran, but U.S. leaders portrayed the release of the embassy hostages as an enormous success. Washington then proceeded to court and arm Saddam Hussein to counter Iran, a strategy that culminated in the Gulf War. A disastrously failed policy toward Iraq is instead touted as the greatest military victory ever.

Having flunked both Iraq and Iran, Washington is now unconditionally infatuated with a repressive Turkey with its own regional ambitions, which may help to explain why the fairy tale called Operation Provide Comfort is spun as a U.S. success story. ●

50. James Wyllie, "Turkish Objectives in Northern Iraq," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, v. 7, n. 7 (July 1995), p. 308.

Letter from Noam Chomsky (continued from inside cover)

democratic attitudes that have resisted the propaganda assaults of the past half century. Substantial majorities believe the government should assist people in need, oppose increased Pentagon spending and budget-balancing that entails cuts for health and education (contrary to the message of many a headline and lead paragraph), and so on, pretty much across the board.⁴

There has, furthermore, been no genetic change since the mid-19th century when a lively and independent press run by “factory girls,” mechanics, and other working people condemned the “degradation and the loss of that self-respect which had made the mechanics and laborers the pride of the world,” as free people were forced to sell *themselves*, not what they produced. Its writers described the destruction of “the spirit of free institutions,” with working people reduced to a “state of servitude” in which they “see a moneyed aristocracy hanging over us like a mighty avalanche threatening annihilation to every man who dares to question their right to enslave and oppress the poor and unfortunate.” They bitterly condemned “the New Spirit of the Age: Gain Wealth, forgetting all but Self,” a demeaning and shameful doctrine that no decent person could tolerate.⁵

“They who work in the mills ought to own them,” working people wrote without benefit of radical intellectuals. In that way, they would overcome the “monarchical principles” that were taking root “on democratic soil” well before the modern corporation was given its remarkable powers early in this century, mainly by courts

Many people are not only angry — not surprisingly, as their lives and world collapse — but also deeply confused.

and lawyers. Years later, that became a rallying cry for the organized labor movement. “It is by the people who do the work that the hours of labour, the conditions of employment, the division of the produce is to be determined,” Henry Demarest Lloyd urged in what labor historian David Montgomery calls “a clarion call to the 1893 AFL convention.” It is by the workers themselves, Lloyd continued, that “the captains of industry are to be chosen, and chosen to be servants, not masters. It is for the welfare of all that the coordinated labour of all must be directed. ... This is democracy.”⁶

Such values and insights into reality have only recently been suppressed, and can be recovered.



Striking Chicago clothing workers, 1915.

While attitudes are resilient — remarkably so, given that they receive little support and are often held in virtual isolation — the propaganda offensive has taken its toll. Irrational cults are proliferating alongside of the traditional supercult of mainstream intellectual culture, with its mindless rituals about the “Purpose of America” and the dedication of our leaders to democracy, markets, and human rights, all visibly under attack. People who would have been working to build the CIO 60 years ago are now joining paramilitary organizations. Many people are not only angry — not surprisingly, as their lives and world collapse — but also deeply confused.

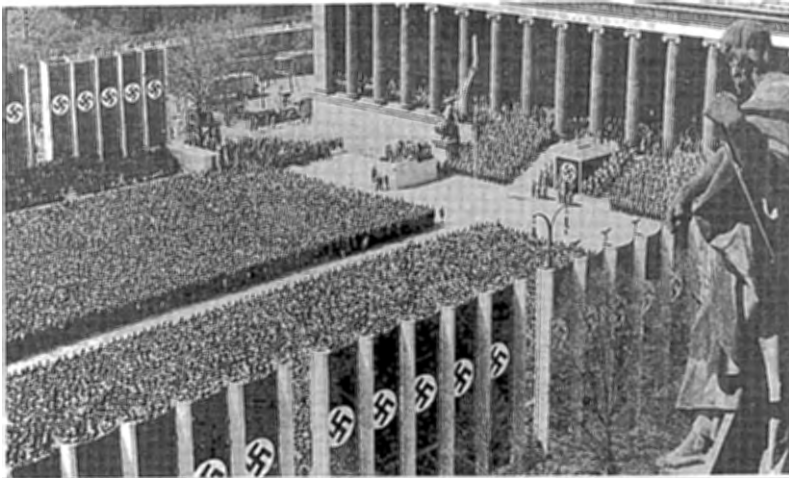
There are many illustrations of this. While over 80 percent of the population think that workers have too little influence, only 20 percent feel that way about unions and 40 percent consider them too influential. Despite a huge propaganda barrage, popular opposition to NAFTA remained high — coupled, however, with condemnation of unions lobbying for very much the views of the NAFTA critics, something they may not have known, thanks to the exclusion of the major union positions from the media.

The “welfare debate” reveals similar confusions. The same people who believe that the government should help the poor oppose welfare. Few are aware that the Pentagon system is largely a welfare system for the rich, catering to welfare freaks like Newt Gingrich, who brings more federal subsidies to his district than any other suburban county outside the federal system itself while his wealthy constituents self-righteously denounce the nanny state and commentators admire the “entrepreneurial values” of people who know only how to feed at the public trough. Nor are many aware

4. John Dillin, *Christian Science Monitor*, July 14, 1992; Everett Carl Ladd, *Political Science Quarterly*, Spring 1995; Deer, Margolis, Mitchell, Burns & Associates, *Being Heard: Strategic Communications Report and Recommendations* prepared for AFL-CIO, Mar. 21, 1994. See my articles in *Z*, Feb., Mar., May 1995, for further details.

5. Norman Ware, *The Industrial Worker 1840-1860* (Chicago: Ivan Dee, 1990, reprint of 1924 edition).

6. *Ibid.*; and David Montgomery, *Citizen Worker* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge U. Press, 1993). On the establishment of corporate tyranny, see particularly Morton Horowitz, *The Transformation of American Law, 1870-1960*, vol. II (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford U. Press, 1992).



Nazi propagandists organized massive campaigns to win hearts and minds as in the 1937 May Day rally, Nuremberg Square.

that the Pentagon system was established in explicit recognition that high-tech industry could not survive in a “competitive, unsubsidized, ‘free enterprise’ economy,”⁷ and that the private sector has relied extensively on such subsidy, including advanced technology readily transferred to commercial use, until the present, as is at last being investigated and acknowledged even in mainstream academic work.⁸ The authors believe that their (useful) discoveries refute “beliefs of analysts from both the right and the left,” but that is because they ignore the business press and left publications, which have long made just the same points. They conclude that the “defense industrial base” should be maintained — appropriately, on the understanding that the wealthy must be protected from market discipline and the population tricked into subsidizing them. Nor are many likely to discover the euphoria in the business press about record-shattering profit growth while real wages continue their decline from 1980.

Propaganda depicting unions as the enemy of the worker, welfare queens driving Cadillacs and breeding like rabbits, liberal elites and pointy-headed bureaucrats stealing our money and interfering in our lives, and the rest of the familiar refrain, may have left attitudes substantially unchanged. But it has reduced much of the population to bewilderment and irrationality. If the current mood is one of “antipolitics,” that is in no small measure a tribute to the success of campaigns to erase the understanding of elementary reality expressed by the UMW leader quoted earlier. That reality, traceable back at least to Adam Smith, was well-described by John Dewey: “Politics is the shadow cast on society by big business,” and as long as this is so, “the attenuation of the shadow will not change the substance.”⁹

The scale and intensity of these propaganda crusades is rarely appreciated, and little studied. What has been unearthed confirms the judgment of the late Alex Carey, the

Australian social scientist who pioneered the investigation of corporate propaganda, including his study of “Americanization” campaigns, from which I drew earlier. “The twentieth century has been characterized by three developments of great political importance,” Carey wrote in a 1978 paper: “the growth of democracy; the growth of corporate power; and the growth of corporate propaganda as a means of protecting corporate power against democracy.”¹⁰ From their modern origins, the corporations that now dominate much of the domestic and global economies, casting their shadow on all other aspects of life, recognized the need to control “the public mind” and “engineer consent” by what their leaders frankly called “propaganda” in more honest days.¹¹

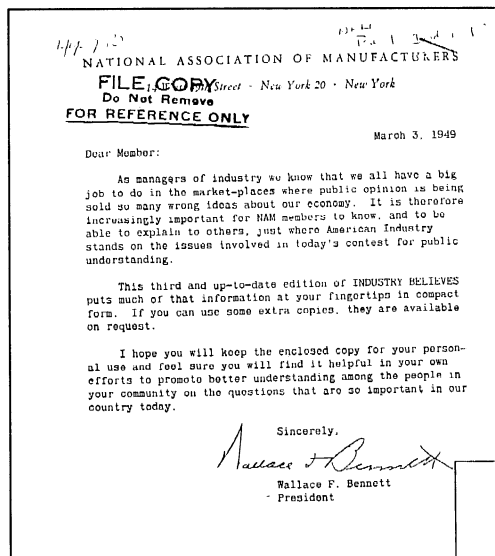
In his 1943 classic, *Business As a System of Power*, Robert Brady pointed out a natural correlation: Propaganda tends to be more prevalent in societies that are more free.¹² At the same time, in his (unpublished) introduction to *Animal Farm* on “lit-

erary censorship in England,” George Orwell observed that in free societies, “Unpopular ideas can be silenced, and inconvenient facts kept dark, without any need for any official ban.”¹³ Dewey, Robert Dahl, and others made similar observations, which have been supported in the last few years by substantial documentation. It is intriguing to see the reaction among the more passionate ideologues, who take such work to imply that its authors believe that the U.S. is a totalitarian or fascist society, equivalent to Soviet Russia or Nazi Germany; they utterly fail to comprehend that the clear and explicit thesis is precisely the opposite. (I’m citing current commentary, so

foolishly as to be hardly worth refuting, and interesting only for what it reveals about the intellectual culture.)

Seventy years ago, the business world and the “responsible men” who arrogated to themselves the right of political and doctrinal

National Association of Manufacturers, leader in pro-business propaganda.



10. Carey, *op. cit.*

11. For many sources, see my *Towards a New Cold War* (New York: Pantheon, 1982), chaps. 1, 2; *Turning the Tide* (Boston: South End Press, 1985) chap. 5.1.6; and many others. For a valuable early critique, see Robert Brady, *Business As a System of Power* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943, p. 217f.).

12. Brady, *ibid.*

13. Published by Bernard Crick in *Times Literary Supplement*, Sept. 15, 1972; reprinted in Everyman's Library edition of *Animal Farm*.



7. *Fortune*, 1948. Cited by Frank Kofsky, *Harry Truman and the War Scare of 1947* (New York: St. Martin's, 1993), p. 39, in an illuminating review. Although the quote refers specifically to the aircraft industry, the observation can be applied generally.

8. M. R. Kelley and T. A. Watkins, *Technology Review*, Apr. 1995; *Science*, Apr. 28, 1995.

9. Cited by Robert Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 440.



CHRISTOPHER SMITH/IMPACT VISUALS

The floor of the New York Stock Exchange.

management assumed — mistakenly, the popular struggles of the 1930s revealed — that the “great beast,” as Alexander Hamilton termed the people, had been caged. Business reacted with alarm, warning of the “hazard facing industrialists” in “the newly realized political power of the masses.”

“We are definitely heading for adversity” unless “their thinking is directed” to more proper channels, the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) warned.¹⁴ Its PR budget increased over 20-fold from 1934 to 1937.

The hazard only grew in severity as Americans joined the social democratic currents sweeping the world after the war. One PR firm warned in 1947 that “our present economic system, and the men who run it, have three years — maybe five at the outside — to resell our so-far preferred way of life as against competing systems.” A huge campaign was undertaken to win “the everlasting battle for the minds of men,” in the words of the chair of the NAM’s PR Advisory Committee; only the tools of the PR industry were “powerful enough” to stem the “current drift toward Socialism,” he warned. From 1946 to 1950, the NAM distributed over 18 million pamphlets: Forty percent went to employees as part of “extensive programs to indoctrinate employees,” *Fortune* reported; the rest mostly to students and community leaders. Business propaganda had a circulation of 70 million people, *Fortune* editor Daniel Bell wrote, along with other propaganda that was “stagger-

ing” and “prodigious” in scale. By the early 1950s, 20 million people a week were watching business-sponsored films. The entertainment industry was enlisted for the cause, portraying unions as the enemy, the outsider disrupting the “harmony” of the “American way of life,” and otherwise helping to “indoctrinate citizens with the capitalist story,” as business leaders formulated the task. Every aspect of social life was targeted, and permeated: schools and universities, churches, even recreational programs. By 1954, business propaganda in public schools reached half the amount spent on textbooks.

Labor sought to combat the plan to “sell the American people on the virtues of big business,” recognizing that the commercial media would follow the policy of “damning labor at every opportunity while carefully glossing over the sins of the banking and industrial magnates who really control the nation.” With a circulation of 20-30 million, the 800 labor newspapers that still survived sought to expose racial hatred and “all kinds of antidemocratic words and deeds” and to provide “antidotes for the worst poisons of the kept press.” But labor utterly lacked the resources to compete.

The story continues to the present, including the “concerted efforts” of corporate America “to change the attitudes and values of workers” and convert “worker apathy into corporate allegiance,”¹⁵ advertising Council cam-

14. Here and below, see Carey, *op. cit.*; and Elizabeth Fones-Wolf, *Selling Free Enterprise* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995).

15. Cited by Herbert Schiller, *The Corporate Takeover of Public Expression* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 1989).

paigns “saturating the media and reaching practically everybody” (*Fortune*), university “Chairs of Free Enterprise” and other measures to subvert the educational system, as well as the whole panoply of devices available to those for whom cost is no consideration. So effectively has functioning civil society been dismantled, that Congress can now ram through programs opposed by large majorities who are left in fear, anger, and hopelessness.

The achievement is real. “For working people,” David Montgomery observes, “the most important part of the Jeffersonian legacy was the shelter it provided to free association, diversity of beliefs and behavior, and defiance of alleged social superiors in society.” The structures of civil society “obstructed

So effectively has functioning civil society been dismantled that Congress can now ram through programs opposed by large majorities who are left in fear, anger, and hopelessness.

bourgeois control of American life at every turn.”¹⁶ Hence, the unrelenting campaigns to demolish the independent press and eliminate effective forms of community solidarity, from trade unions to political clubs and organizations. They have been conducted with passionate intensity and considerable success.

The propaganda assault is fully in accord with prevailing concepts of democracy, a matter I’ve discussed at length elsewhere.¹⁷ It adapts to the conditions of 20th century America the principle on which the sociopolitical system was founded: “To protect the minority of the opulent against the majority,” as James Madison formulated the primary concern of government in the debates of the Constitutional Convention in 1787.¹⁸ But history records many successes of popular resistance and struggle and only the most dedicated commissar can believe that it is somehow at an end.

This year is a stellar one in one respect at least: Fones-Wolf’s *Selling Free Enterprise: The Business Assault on Labor and Liberalism, 1945-1960*, the first extensive academic study of corporate propaganda appeared, and Carey’s essays on the American system of thought control are finally available, at least in Australia.¹⁹ The discussion of corporate propaganda in this letter is largely drawn from this important work.

We can take heart in other current developments, among them, the huge growth of the left. We learn of its scale from the congressional program to “defund the left” outlined by Stephen Moore of the Cato Institute, which helped develop the project. “Republicans Take Aim at Left-Leaning Groups,” a headline in the *Wall Street Journal* reads. Leading the campaign, Newt Gingrich blasts “those who would extort money out of the taxpayer” — unlike the Speaker of the House who holds the prize. The issue is “philosophical,” a policy analyst at the Heritage Foundation explains:

16. Montgomery, *op. cit.*

17. See, among others, my *Deterring Democracy* (London: Verso, 1991 and New York: Hill & Wang, 1992).

18. Jonathan Elliot, ed., *The Debates in the Several State Conventions on the Adoption of the Federal Constitution, 1787*, Yates’s Minutes, v. 1, second ed. (Lippincott, 1836), p. 450.

19. Carey, *op. cit.*; and Fones-Wolf, *op. cit.*

“Taxpayers should not be forced to support activities they may not agree with.” So *that* explains why the Heritage Foundation budget proposal, basically adopted by Congress, calls for an increase in the Pentagon budget (beyond what the military requests) in accord with the wishes of one out of six taxpayers, while sharply cutting funds for education, drug addiction programs, the environment, and other social spending favored by two-thirds of the public.

Philosophy is a subtle discipline, beyond the ken of ordinary mortals.

What then is “the left” that has to be barred from its evil practice of extorting public funds? By far the major criminal targeted is Catholic Charities, which receives public funds “to help run more than a dozen programs ranging from low-income heating assistance to Head Start,” the *Wall Street Journal* reports, with the aid of “nuns and priests working for very low wages ... out of faith,” a health-policy advocate at Catholic Charities adds. Next on the list of extortionists are the American Association of Retired Persons and the National Council of Senior Citizens, which “run programs aimed at helping elderly Americans find jobs.” Their depravity is highlighted by another article in the *Journal*, which notes that hunger among the elderly is “surging,” as “several million older Americans are going hungry — and their numbers are growing steadily,” many literally “starving to death.” Next comes the World Wildlife Fund. And far below, the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise, the only target not identified as “left-leaning.”²⁰

There will be no human cost to “defunding the left,” the Heritage Foundation policy analyst explains: “If these charities are doing something that people want to support, they’ll get adequate funding from the private sector.”

The terms of political discourse have been virtually deprived of meaning, but it is helpful to learn how the reactionary statists in the guise of libertarians understand the concepts “the people” and “the left.”

“The people” are the private sector, which can provide “adequate funding.” The people are thus a shrinking category in a country with far higher inequality than any other in the developed world, now reaching the artificially inflated level of 1929, right before the crash. The share of marketable net worth held by the top one percent is now twice that of England and 50 percent higher than that of France, the nearest competitor. In 1980, differences among these countries were slight, but Reaganite programs directed 60 percent of marketable wealth gain to the top 1 percent of income recipients, while the bottom 40 percent suffered an absolute loss of net worth in real terms; other measures are still more stark.²¹

As for “the left,” it consists of anyone with the slightest concern for the featherless bipeds who do not rank among “the people” — a rather flattering image, for those who consider themselves on the left. These non-people are to be subjected to the harsh and morally purifying discipline of the market. But not “the minority of the opulent,” who can shelter under the wings of the nanny state they nurture. Such are the doctrines of “the people.”

The awesome scale of the left is revealed further in a study by the Clemson University Center for Policy Studies, one of

20. Michael McCarthy, “Hunger Among Elderly Surges; Meal Programs Just Can’t Keep Up,” *Wall Street Journal*, Nov. 8, 1994, pp. A1, 11.

21. Edward Wolff, *Top Heavy* (New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1995).



FERNANDO MOLERES/IMPACT VISUALS

Third World model heads north. Here, a boy survives by scavenging in smoke-shrouded Guatemala City dump.

the many components of the huge right-wing assault against independent schools in recent years. The study condemns corporations for funding “left-wing” groups, such as the National Audubon Society, the Trilateral Commission, and the Council on Foreign Relations. Contrary to what some of us have believed, the left has the media on its side as well, including the Newspaper of Record, the *New York Times*, which Foreign Policy editor Charles William Maynes calls “the establishment left” in one of the many odes to Washington’s crusade “to spread the cause of democracy.”²²

A deliberate policy is driving the country toward a kind of Third World model, with sectors of great privilege, growing numbers of people sinking into poverty or real misery, and a superfluous population confined in slums or expelled to the rapidly expanding prison system.

22. Lawrence Soley, *Leasing the Ivory Tower* (Boston: South End Press, 1995), p. 117; Maynes, “America Without the Cold War,” *Foreign Policy*, Spring 1990, pp. 3-25.

So “the left” can hardly complain of marginalization. It includes major institutions, as well as just about everyone who isn’t an outright monster removed from the moral realm, if we can believe the few embattled souls who are at last trying to weaken its grip on the social order.

Still, the left has its problems. One is that the lefties of Catholic Charities and the American Association of Retired Persons are going to find it harder to locate the non-people they seek to assist. So we learn from New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, who finally came clean about his fiscal policies, including the radically regressive shift in the tax burden that he and the governor are implementing: reduction in taxes on the rich (“all of the Mayor’s tax cuts benefit business,” the *Times* comments) and increase in taxes on the poor (concealed as rise in subway fares for school children and working people, higher tuition at city schools, etc.). Coupled with severe cut-backs in public funds that serve public needs, these policies should help the poor move out of New York State, “enabling them to move freely around the country,” the report in the establishment left press explained under the headline: “Giuliani Sees Welfare Cuts Providing a Chance to Move.”²³

At last, those who were bound by the welfare system are liberated from their chains. The compassion for the poor brings tears to the eyes.

23. David Firestone, *New York Times*, “Giuliani Sees Welfare Cuts Providing a Chance to Move,” Apr. 29, 1995, p. A26; tax cuts, Steven Lee Myers, “Giuliani Calls for Budget Cut of \$1.1 Billion,” *New York Times*, Apr. 28, 1995, p. B5.

Where will the liberated masses go? Perhaps to *favelas* on the outskirts, so they can be “free” to find their way into the city somehow to do the dirty work for those who are entitled to enjoy the richest city in the world, with inequality greater than Guatemala and with 40 percent of children already below the poverty line before these new measures of “tough love” are instituted.

Bleeding hearts who cannot comprehend the benefits being lavished on the poor should at least be able to see that there is no alternative. “The lesson of the next few years may be that New York is simply not wealthy or economically vital enough to afford the extensive public sector that it has created over the post great Depression period,” we learn from an

At last, those who were bound by the welfare system are liberated from their chains. The compassion for the poor brings tears to the eyes.

expert opinion featured in a *Times* front-page story.²⁴ The loss of economic vitality is real enough, in part a result of government policy that eliminated a flourishing manufacturing base in favor of the expanding financial sector. The city’s wealth is another matter. The expert opinion to which the *Times* turned is the report to investors of the J.P. Morgan investment firm, fifth in the ranking of commercial banks in the current *Fortune* 500 listing, suffering from a mere \$1.2 billion in profits in 1994. To be sure, it was not a great year for J.P. Morgan as compared with the “stunning” profit increase of 54 percent for the 500 with a mere 2.6 percent increase of employment and 8.2 percent sales gain in “one of the most profitable years ever for American business,” *Fortune* reported exultantly. The business press hailed another “banner year for U.S. corporate profits,” while “U.S. household wealth seems to have actually fallen” in this fourth straight year of double-digit profit growth and 14th straight year of decline in real wages. The *Fortune* 500 have attained new heights of “economic might,” with revenues close to two-thirds of the gross domestic product, a good bit more than Germany or Britain, not to speak of their power over the global economy — an impressive concentration of power in unaccountable private tyrannies, and for “the people,” a welcome blow against democracy and markets.²⁵

We live in “lean and mean times,” and everyone has to tighten their belts; so the mantra goes. In reality, the country is awash in capital, with “surging profits” that are “overflowing the coffers of Corporate America,” *Business Week* exulted even before the grand news came in about the record-breaking final quarter of 1994, with a “phenomenal 71 percent advance” for the 900 companies in *BW*’s “Corporate Scoreboard.”²⁶

“Tough love” is just the right phrase: love for the rich, and tough for everyone else.

The business press explains “Why Profits Will Keep Booming,” and the 1994-95 annual review of *The State of Working*

America explains why wages and family wealth are likely to keep falling.²⁷ Deliberate social policy to achieve these goals is facilitated by significant changes in the international economy from the 1970s; the restoration of a huge sector of the traditional Third World to its service role with the end of the Cold War, offering new weapons against what the business press calls “the pampered Western workers” with their “luxurious lifestyles,” added a further contribution.

One crucial factor was the deregulation of financial markets in the early 1970s. Its consequences were quickly understood. In 1978, economist James Tobin proposed that foreign exchange transactions be taxed to slow the hemorrhage of capital from the real economy (investment and trade) to financial manipulations that now constitute 95 percent of foreign exchange transactions (as compared with 10 percent of a far smaller total in 1970). As Tobin observed at this early stage, these processes would drive the world toward a low-growth, low-wage economy. A study directed by Paul Volcker, formerly head of the Federal Reserve, attributes about half of the substantial slowdown in growth since the early 1970s to this factor.

International economist David Felix makes the interesting observation that even the productive sectors that would benefit from the Tobin tax have joined financial capital in resisting it. The reason, he suggests, is that elites generally are “bonded by a common objective, ... to shrink, perhaps even to liquidate, the welfare state.” The instant mobility of huge sums of financial capital is a potent weapon to force governments to follow “fiscally responsible policies,” which can bring home the sharply two-tiered Third World model to the rich societies. By enhancing the shadow cast by big business over society and restricting the capacity of governments to respond to the public will, these processes also undermine the threat of democracy, another welcome consequence. The shared elite interest, Felix suggests, overcomes the narrower self-interest of the owners and managers of productive sectors of the economy.²⁸

The suggestion is a reasonable one. The history of business and political economy yields many examples of the subordination of narrow gain to the broader interest of the opulent minority, which is unusually class conscious in a business-run society like ours. Illustrations include central features of the modern world: the creation and sustenance of the Pentagon system of corporate welfare despite its well-known inefficiencies; the openly proclaimed strategy of diversion of soaring profits to creation of excess capacity abroad as a weapon against the domestic working class; the design of automation within the state system to enhance managerial control and de-skill workers even at the cost of efficiency and profitability; and many other examples, including a large part of the foreign policy.

In the real world, the left includes a considerable majority of the population, to judge by public opinion and the lessons of history — or it should, if the authentic left could get its act together. That is where hope lies, in otherwise dismal times.

Sincerely yours,

Noam Chomsky

24. Alison Mitchell, “In New York, the Dying Days of Expansive Government,” *New York Times*, May 8, 1995.

25. Richard Teitelbaum, “Introduction to the *Fortune* 500 Largest U.S. Corporations,” *Fortune*, May 15, 1995; Louis Richman, “Why Profits Will Keep Booming,” *Fortune*, May 1, 1995; and Lori Bongiorno, “Hot Damn, What a Year; and Gene Koretz, “A Poor Year for U.S. Households,” *Business Week*, Mar. 6, 1995.

26. *Business Week*, Michael J. Mandel, “Plumper Profits, Skimpier Paychecks,” Jan. 30,

1995, pp. 86-7; and Lori Bongiorno, “A Well-Oiled Profit Machine,” May 15, 1995, pp. 122-26.

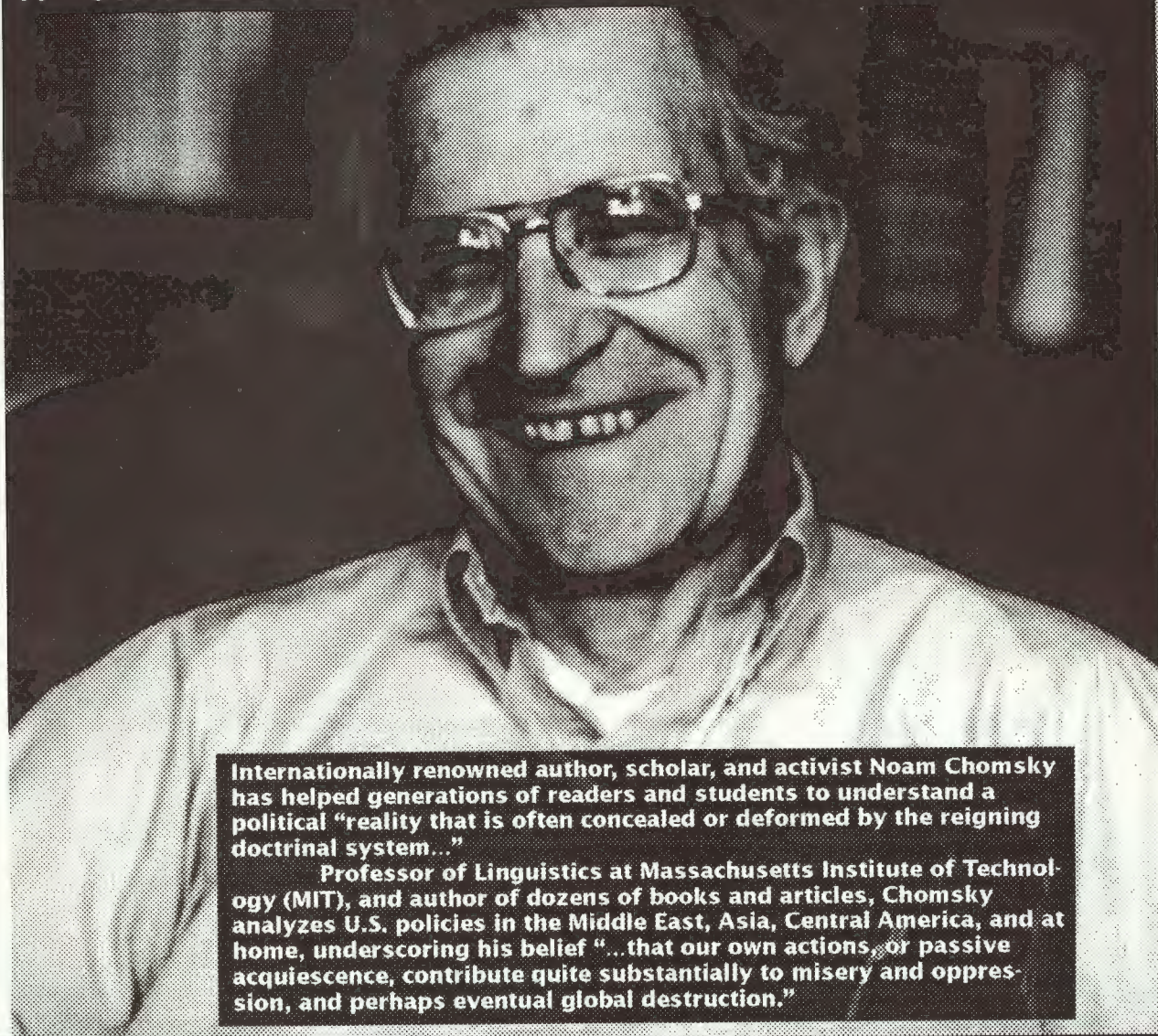
27. Richman, *op. cit.* Lawrence Mishel and Jared Bernstein, *The State of Working America, 1994-95* (Washington, D.C.: Economic Policy Institute, 1995).

28. See: Felix, “The Tobin Tax Proposal,” Working Paper #191, U.N. Development Program, June 1994; *Challenge*, May/June 1995; and *Wall Street Journal*, May 9, 1994.

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ALAN FOGUE

NAFTA's Corporate Con Artists

by Sarah Anderson and Kristyne Peter

Many of the firms that only a short time ago were extolling the benefits of NAFTA for U.S. workers and communities have cut jobs, moved plants to Mexico, or continued to violate labor rights and environmental regulations in Mexico.

It was not hard to figure out who was who in the halls of the congressional office buildings on November 15, 1993, two days before the vote on the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). There were clusters of people wearing labor union caps and jackets; they were lobbying against the trade pact. Then there were the crowds of dark-suited men in matching red, white, and blue neckties; they were with the pro-NAFTA business coalition, USA*NAFTA.

The patriotic neckties were just a minor tactic in one of the most expansive lobbying efforts in the history of corporate America. Calling itself a "grassroots" organization, USA*NAFTA gave new meaning to the term by enlisting *Fortune* 500 companies as "captains" to whip up support for the agreement in each of the 50 states. An

army of more than 2,000 member corporations provided backup.

The USA*NAFTA coalition promised that the free trade pact would be all things to all people. It would improve the environment, reduce illegal immigration by raising Mexican wages, deter international drug trafficking, and most importantly, create a net increase in high-paying U.S. jobs.¹ In the final days of the battle for passage, USA*NAFTA worked closely with the White House NAFTA war room to sway undecided members of Congress. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, coalition members studied the fence-sitters' campaign contribution lists and urged the top corporate donors to turn up the heat. Many firms complied by promising new jobs in the member's district or threatening to withhold future contributions.²

Today, less than two years after the agreement became law, USA*NAFTA's own members are blatantly breaking the coalition's grand promises. Many of the firms that only a short time ago were extolling the benefits of NAFTA for U.S. workers and communities have cut jobs, moved plants to Mexico, or continued to violate labor rights and environmental regulations in Mexico.

The best available information on NAFTA layoffs comes from the U.S. Department of Labor's (DoL) NAFTA Transitional Adjustment Assistance (TAA). This program provides retraining and other benefits to U.S. workers after the DoL certifies that they were laid off because of a shift in production to Mexico or Canada or an increase in imports from those countries. Between January 1, 1994, and July 10, 1995, 62,000 workers filed claims for this assistance; 35,000 of them were certified. It should be noted that recipients of NAFTA-TAA benefits are only a fraction of the total number of NAFTA-related layoffs, since

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Photo: Reynosa, Mexico.

1. Statement of USA*NAFTA to the Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Policy, Trade, and Environment, U.S. House of Representatives, Oct. 21, 1993.
2. Michael K. Frisby and Bob Davis, "Arm-Twisting, Citing Threats to U. S.," *Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 26, 1993.

“Any CEO who could be the head of USA*NAFTA and then turn around in the first year of the agreement and start laying off people — and get away with it — he’s worth \$12.4 million!”

many workers are not aware of the program or apply for a general retraining program with more generous benefits. A University of Maryland study estimates that in 1994, more than 150,000 U.S. jobs were cut as a result of increased consumer imports from Mexico.³

Even these limited data reveal that USA*NAFTA members have carried out NAFTA-related layoffs at a rate surprising even to cynics. If only for public relations purposes, they might have held off on the job cuts until the ink on the agreement was a little drier. However, by July 10 (only 18 months into the agreement), USA*NAFTA firms were already responsible for 40 NAFTA-related layoffs affecting 7,785 U.S. workers. Another 4,626 workers from 24 plants operated by coalition companies applied for NAFTA-TAA benefits during this time and were rejected, in some cases simply because the Department of Labor was unable to verify a shift in production.

Dozens of USA*NAFTA companies carried out NAFTA-related layoffs, but a few member firms deserve special attention for their ability to quickly harness the agreement’s benefits for themselves — at the expense of workers and communities.

AlliedSignal

At the helm of USA*NAFTA was Lawrence Bossidy, CEO of AlliedSignal, a diversified manufacturing firm which produces auto parts and defense equipment. As chief spokesperson, Bossidy made countless public and media appearances to persuade Americans that NAFTA would be good for them.

3. Robert E. Scott, “1994 and 1995 U.S.-Mexico Trade Data: NAFTA Impact,” occasional paper #56, May 1995, College of Business and Management, University of Maryland at College Park, p. 6.

While lauding the benefits of the agreement for society at large, Bossidy was quick to deny any suggestion that it would provide incentives for his own company to move jobs to Mexico. In August 1993, CNN anchor Lou Dobbs asked him, “Do you think jobs will move to Mexico [under NAFTA]? For example, would your company, would you put jobs in Mexico?” Bossidy replied, “I think quite the contrary, Lou. I think the jobs that were to move to Mexico have already moved there. I mean, there’s more than 700,000 employees in the Mexican maquiladoras now!”⁴

Less than two years later, Bossidy’s firm could boast the most NAFTA-related layoffs. As of July, AlliedSignal workers in five cities have petitioned for NAFTA-TAA benefits. The DoL approved the claims in three communities (Greenville, Ohio; El Paso, Texas; and Orangeburg, South Carolina). Claims from workers in Danville, Illinois, and Eatontown, New Jersey, were rejected, even though the New Jersey workers say that AlliedSignal left little doubt that the company was moving jobs south. In the months leading up to the layoffs, New Jersey workers were sent to provide training in one of the company’s Mexican plants, while Mexican managers were brought to New Jersey for training.

Increasing Disparity

Bossidy’s NAFTA promises were not confined to U.S. workers. In congressional testimony, he also claimed that “NAFTA will benefit the Mexicans; it will improve their standard of living.”⁵

4. *Moneyline*, CNN, Aug. 23, 1993.

5. Testimony of Lawrence A. Bossidy on behalf of USA*

Unfortunately for Mexican workers, just the opposite has occurred. The peso devaluation of December 1994 cut the value of their wages by as much as 40 percent, making them far less able to buy U.S. goods today than they were before NAFTA. Interest rates on credit cards have climbed above 100 percent, and the Mexican government reports that retail sales in Mexico’s three largest cities have dropped by nearly 25 percent. The continuing crisis is expected to cause the loss of two million jobs this year, and economic desperation is blamed for the 30 percent increase in arrests by U.S. border patrols between January and May 1995.⁶

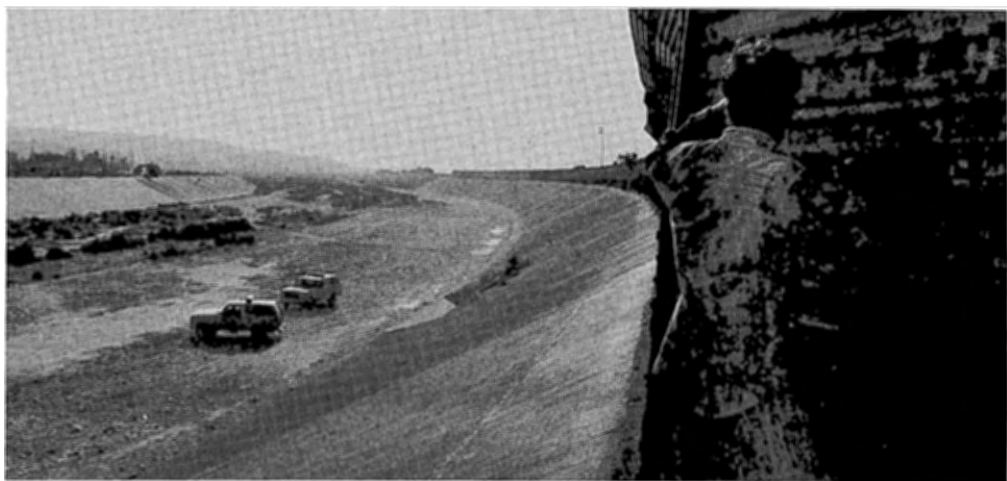
Workers at AlliedSignal, like those at other Mexican maquiladoras operated by U.S. corporations, have lost significant purchasing power. At the corporation’s Monterrey, Mexico plant, workers saw the dollar value of their wages drop from \$1.30 to \$.82 an hour in January 1995.⁷ Laboring 48 hours a week at \$.82 per hour, AlliedSignal’s 3,800-person Mexican workforce would make approximately \$7.8 million a year. By contrast, Bossidy’s personal pay last year was worth far more — \$12.4 million, ranking him among the top eight corporate earners in the country.

AlliedSignal’s executive board justifies the salary as necessary to keep Bossidy from being lured away by other corporations. One union leader ironically

NAFTA and the Business Roundtable before the Subcommittee on Trade, Committee on Ways and Means, U.S. House of Representatives, Sept. 15, 1993.

6. *SourceMex — Economic News and Analysis on Mexico*, July 26, 1995; and Patrick J. McDonnell, “Mexico in Crisis,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 18, 1995, p. A1.

7. Andrew Maykuth, “Mexican-made products may invade the U.S.,” *Times-Picayune* (New Orleans), Jan. 29, 1995.



NAFTA boosters stirred up xenophobia to push through the legislation. Here, a young man eyes border patrol near the Tijuana River.

DAVID ZIEGER/IMPACT VISUALS



Citizens of Texas and Ciudad Acuña, Mexico join to protest toxic dumps (l). GE workers (indicated, r.) who talked to reporters about toxics, were fired for "insubordination."

concurred. "Any CEO who could be the head of USA*NAFTA and then turn around in the first year of the agreement and start laying off people — and get away with it — he's worth \$12.4 million!"

General Electric

GE, one of USA*NAFTA's proud captains, made NAFTA history as the target of the first complaint filed under NAFTA's labor side agreement. On February 15, 1994, the United Electrical Workers (UE) charged that GE had fired about 30 employees at its Ciudad Juárez, Mexico plant for union organizing. Workers in the border area report that the GE case reflects common practice. In fact, such violations seem to have increased. After NAFTA became law, companies no longer had to worry about generating bad publicity that might have jeopardized passage.

According to UE, GE officials told one worker that he was being fired for distributing union fliers and for telling a MacNeil-Lehrer News Hour reporter that GE used chemicals in its Mexican plant that are banned in the U.S.⁸ The NAFTA agency responsible for investi-



gating labor complaints, the National Administrative Office, dismissed the case, not because it found GE innocent of the charges, but because it could not prove that the Mexican government had knowingly failed to enforce the rights of the GE workers.

Before the Juárez firings, GE management had reportedly warned the workers that the company had come to Mexico to get away from U.S. unions, so if the Mexican workers brought in a union, GE might as well pack up the plant and move it back north.⁹ Meanwhile, GE was busily shifting operations from the U.S. to Mexico. In March, it announced plans to cut 271 jobs at its Fort Wayne, Indiana facility. In May, the DoL determined that the layoffs resulted from GE's decision to move jobs to Mexico, and certified 95 of the workers for NAFTA retraining.

Both GE workers and the community of Fort Wayne got swindled. In 1988, the employees had agreed to a \$1.20 per hour wage cut to prevent their

jobs from being moved to Mexico. Then in 1992, GE managed to squeeze a \$485,290 tax cut out of the local government, claiming it was necessary to defray the cost of new machinery needed to preserve jobs.¹⁰ Once NAFTA passed, the wage cuts and the tax breaks were not enough to keep those jobs in Fort Wayne. As one longtime GE employee put it, "You give them all your life, and this is what they give you."¹¹

In a cynical recycling of Reagan's failed trickle-down policies, USA*NAFTA predicted that "NAFTA itself will improve working conditions by generating economic growth, which will enable all three countries to provide more jobs with higher pay in a better working environment."¹² This theory hasn't held up well for workers at Xerox, another USA*NAFTA member.

Xerox

After taking a loss in 1993, Xerox profits rose to \$794 million on sales of \$17.8 billion in 1994.

Rather than translate this gain into more jobs or higher pay, the corporation began both laying off workers and bargaining down the wages of those it kept. According to the DoL, Xerox has fired 50 workers in Oakbrook, Illinois, and another 13 in Peabody, Massachusetts, and moved the jobs to Mexico. Under the shadow of those job cuts, it's not surprising that Xerox was able to pressure workers at its Webster, New York facility to accept wage concessions by threatening to move to Mexico. Backed to the wall, the union agreed to reduce base pay rates by 50 percent for new employees and cut workers' compensation in exchange for job guarantees through the year 2001.¹³

In a similar move in May 1995, Xerox pressured 700 workers in El Segundo, California, to accept a 20 percent pay cut to save their jobs. The com-

10. Jay Margolis and Sarah True, "GE Plans to Cut 271 Jobs in City," *Fort Wayne Journal Gazette*, Mar. 10, 1995.

11. *Ibid.*

12. Statement of USA*NAFTA for the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Economic Policy Trade, and Environment, U.S. House of Representatives.

13. Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, "Local 14-A Contract Highlights," *Reflections* (Rochester ACTWU), June 1994, v. 12, n. 52.

8. Testimony before the U.S. National Administrative Office, submitted by Robin Alexander, director of International Labor Affairs, United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, Sept. 12, 1994.

9. United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, "Supplemental Submission to Submission 940002, filed against the General Electric Company," Sept. 12, 1994.

pany even demanded the elimination of a paid five-minute break at the end of the day for workers to wash up.¹⁴

Zenith

Xerox employees aren't the only U.S. workers who have seen a drop in wages and working conditions. A June 1995 U.S. Department of Labor report revealed that real wages across the country dropped by 2.3 percent between March 1994 and March 1995, even though productivity had risen by 2.1 percent. Economists offer numerous explanations for the declining pay, but the increased power of corporations to bargain down their wages by threatening to move overseas is certainly a major factor. At Zenith's Springfield, Missouri plant, workers accepted an 8.2 percent wage cut in 1987 under threat of losing their jobs to Mexico. However, in spite of these concessions, USA*NAFTA member Zenith has laid off 430 workers in Springfield and another 80 in Chicago after NAFTA took effect, and moved the jobs to Mexico. According to one of the Springfield employees, "If[we] didn't give them the wage concession, they were going to move to Mexico. We just gave more. We just helped pay for it."¹⁵

South of the border, the TV maker is notorious for its rock-bottom wages. A March 1995 pay stub from one Zenith worker in Mexico showed he was making less than 50 cents an hour.¹⁶ On top of the low pay, Zenith's Mexican workers often face health risks. According to the Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras (CJM), thousands of child-bearing-age women work with lead solder in Zenith's TV factories without proper training about its dangers or adequate protective equipment. A 1994 inspection of one Zenith plant in Reynosa revealed that eye protection and gloves were unavailable and unidentified containers of glue sat open on the floor.¹⁷

Alcoa

NAFTA critics claimed that the agreement would add extra incentive for U.S. firms in highly toxic industries to avoid expensive safety measures and law-

suits by relocating to Mexico, where they could take advantage of more lax enforcement. A firm like Alcoa, for example, might see the largely unregulated Mexican border area as a pleasant refuge. Ranked by the Environmental Protection Agency as one of the country's top 100 polluters (in terms of toxic releases), Alcoa has been the target of numerous environmental lawsuits. In 1991, it was forced to pay \$7.5 million for environmental offenses at its Mas-sena plant in upstate New York. At that time, it was the largest criminal penalty ever paid by a U.S. firm for hazardous waste violations.¹⁸

18. Jeff Pillets, "Edgewater set to force action on Alcoa site," *The Record*, Mar. 2, 1994.

As a USA*NAFTA captain, Alcoa dismissed fears of anti-NAFTA environmentalists, claiming that it was a myth that Mexico has lax enforcement of environmental laws and worker protections and that in any case, protections are "strict, and getting stricter."¹⁹

During the first year of NAFTA, Alcoa revealed just how seriously it regards these safeguards. According to CJM, in September and October 1994, a series of three unexplained gas intoxications led to the hospitalization of 226 workers at Alcoa's plant in Ciudad Acuña. Community activists and the local press accuse the company of threaten-

19. USA*NAFTA, "Myths and Realities Regarding the NAFTA," Sept. 8, 1992.



TED SOQUIMPACT VISUALS

Maquiladora workers earn a small fraction of their U.S. counterparts' pay.

14. Ted Johnson, "Xerox Cancels Factory Closure After Union Agrees to 20% Pay Cut," *Los Angeles Times*, May 18, 1995.

15. David Kameras, "TV maker pulls plug on U.S.," *AFL-CIO News*, Feb. 20, 1995, p. 1. In July 1995, Zenith was acquired by South Korean-based LEG Electronics Zenith.

16. The Institute for Policy Studies received a copy of the pay stub from the New York-based Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility.

17. *CJM Newsletter*, v. 4, n. 2, July 1994, p. 3.

ing to fire workers if they talked publicly about their experiences.²⁰ CJM also claims that Alcoa management prevented health officials from inspecting the facilities until it was too late to conduct meaningful air quality tests. Nonetheless, health officials found that the gases had caused sudden spells of nausea, headaches, dizziness and fainting. So far, these incidents have not resulted in legal action against Alcoa.

Baxter International

The effects of NAFTA in the U.S. are also increasingly toxic — not so much to the health of workers (U.S. environmental standards have yet to fall because of NAFTA) — but to the health of communities around the country. Last year Baxter International, a medical equipment manufacturer and USA*NAFTA member, laid off 830 workers in Kingstree, South Carolina (population 4,000), after deciding to shift production overseas. About 120 of the workers, who made medical procedure trays, qualified for the NAFTA retraining program because their jobs were moving to Mexico. The rest, whose jobs were destined for Asia, were rejected.

The layoffs dealt a devastating blow to the entire county, which already had the state's lowest per capita income (\$10,255) and highest unemployment rate (13.6 percent).²¹ The layoffs also contributed to racial tensions in the county, which is 65 percent African American. Angered by the possibility that the loss of so many jobs might drive up local taxes and crime, residents of a small, predominantly white town tried to secede and join a neighboring county that is predominantly white and more affluent. The Justice Department refused the request, but the secession attempt created deep wounds in the community.²²

Baxter CEO Vernon Loucks, Jr., is far removed from the type of day-to-day economic struggles faced by his company's former employees in Kingstree. A *Wall Street Journal* article on "imperial perks" featured Loucks and reported that in 1993, Baxter paid him \$79,600 for personal travel by him and his family on the company jet, and

kicked in another \$33,450 for club membership fees. Loucks was also reimbursed nearly \$100,000 for taxes attributable to use of aircraft, a car allowance, a financial counseling allowance, and the maintenance of a home security system.²³ With all those angry unemployed workers out there, the company apparently feels obligated to pay for Loucks' personal security.

USA*NAFTA Marches On

The groups that fought against NAFTA — particularly the citizens' coalitions formed by labor, environmental, consumer, family farm and other groups — are proud that they took on practically

USA*NAFTA — representing more economic clout than many nation-states — wrapped its self-serving lobbying campaign in the flag.

the entire *Fortune* 500 and nearly won. (The vote was 234 to 200 in the House). At the same time, the experience was a chilling reminder of how things work in Washington.

USA*NAFTA — representing more economic clout than many nation-states — wrapped its self-serving lobbying campaign in an American flag. During the past two years, that flag has proved to have an exceptionally slick Teflon coating. The group has suffered neither negative publicity nor political disfavor, despite NAFTA's miserable results so far. Nor have USA*NAFTA members drawn fire for the way they contributed to and benefited from the failure of NAFTA to fulfill its stated promises. Their star-spangled report, "NAFTA: It's Working for America," opens with a quote from USA*NAFTA Chair and AlliedSignal CEO Lawrence Bossidy. "Today, it is clear that NAFTA is a success," he proclaims. "Exports to Mexico and Canada are up, and we've been able to create thousands of new jobs here in the United States. By any standards, NAFTA is surely a winner."

As Bossidy indicates, U.S. exports to Mexico did indeed increase in 1994. However, what the report fails to point out is that during that time, U.S. imports from Mexico increased at a faster

rate and displaced U.S. jobs by muscling out American products. Since the peso devaluation in December 1994, the U.S. trade surplus with Mexico has turned into a large and growing deficit expanding from \$885 million in May 1994 to \$6.9 billion a year later, and thereby wiping out any basis for claiming that NAFTA is a net job creator for U.S. workers.²⁴

The bulk of the USA*NAFTA report is a state-by-state listing of jobs created by NAFTA. However, a careful examination reveals a sleight of hand. Almost all of the job claims are empty statements by USA*NAFTA firms that they *intend* to hire more workers, not that they have already created actual jobs.

Although USA*NAFTA's work was completed with the passage of the agreement, the coalition continues to play an important political role in supporting the free trade model. When President Clinton was attempting to mobilize congressional support for the financial bailout of Mexico in January 1995, he arranged for lobbyists from 150 USA*NAFTA firms to meet in Washington. *Business Week* reported that Rep. Robert Matsui (D-Calif.), Clinton's chief congressional strategist on NAFTA, told the group, "You got us NAFTA. Now you can deliver on this one, too."²⁵ The article described USA*NAFTA's strategy as two-fold: mobilizing its troops to voice their support for the bailout package, and fear-mongering among border state legislators by claiming that an aborted bailout might trigger a flood of illegal immigrants.

In the end, Clinton did not need USA*NAFTA's help on the bailout, since he opted to bypass Congress with an executive order. However, the administration is clearly confident that the old USA*NAFTA gang can still wield enough influence and con artistry to help push another free trade agreement through Congress. Otherwise, the administration might not have rushed into its latest round of trade negotiations — aimed at expanding NAFTA to include Chile. President Clinton reportedly would like to push the expanded NAFTA through Congress before the 1996 election. When that bill comes up for a vote, USA*NAFTA's patriotic neckties will no doubt reappear in the halls of Congress. ●

24. AFL-CIO Task Force on Trade, *Trade Deficit Monitor*, v. 1, n. 5, July 1995.

25. Douglas Harbrecht and Dean Foust, "Remember Those Guys Who Brought You NAFTA?" *Business Week*, Feb. 6, 1995, p. 34.

20. Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras, *1994 Annual Report*, p. 15. The plant, an Alcoa subsidiary operated under the name Arneses y Accesorios, assembles electrical wire harnesses for automobiles.

21. Andrew Meadows, "Economic Shock," *Florence Morning News*, Mar. 6, 1995, p. A1.

22. "Rural Carolina County Battered by Economy Situation Is Common Throughout the South," *Charleston Daily Mail*, Aug. 25, 1994, p. B6.

23. "In Cost-Cutting Era, Many CEOs Enjoy Imperial Perks," *Wall Street Journal*, Mar. 7, 1995, pp. B1, 16.

The Wonderful Life and Strange Death of Walter Reuther



UPI/BETTMANN

In 1948, Walter Reuther was hospitalized after a shotgun attack.

by Michael Parenti and Peggy Noton

In recent decades, organized labor has endured a serious battering by conservative interests in government and the corporate world. As progressives in the AFL-CIO try to rally their forces, they would do well to remember those few specially gifted union leaders who understood the broader social and political dimensions of the labor struggle. Among such leaders looms the great figure of Walter Reuther. His life — and death — contain lessons relevant to today's struggle. Rising from the ranks to spearhead the creation of the United Auto Workers (UAW), Reuther brought a special blend of unfaltering progressivism and efficacy to the U.S. political scene.

Michael Parenti is the author of *Land of Idols, Political Mythology in America* and the recently published *Against Empire* (San Francisco: City Lights Books). Peggy Noton is a Berkeley, California-based independent researcher and writer. The authors wish to thank William J. Gallagher, news investigator at WJBK-TV, Detroit, for making his extensive files on Reuther available.

For this he earned the wrath of powerful corporate and political interests.

On the evening of May 9, 1970, Reuther, his wife, two close UAW associates, and the plane's two-man crew were killed when their chartered Lear Jet crashed near the Emmet County Airport in northern Michigan. The brief flight had originated in Detroit and was coming in through the mist on an instrument landing when it plowed into the treetops and burst into flames. There were no survivors.

A year and a half earlier, in October 1968, Reuther and his brother Victor had barely escaped death in a remarkably similar incident while flying into Dulles Airport outside Washington, D.C., again in a small private plane. On that night, the sky was clear enough for the pilots to realize that their altimeter was malfunctioning, and at the last moment they managed a crash landing

that smashed a wing of the plane but left no one seriously injured.¹

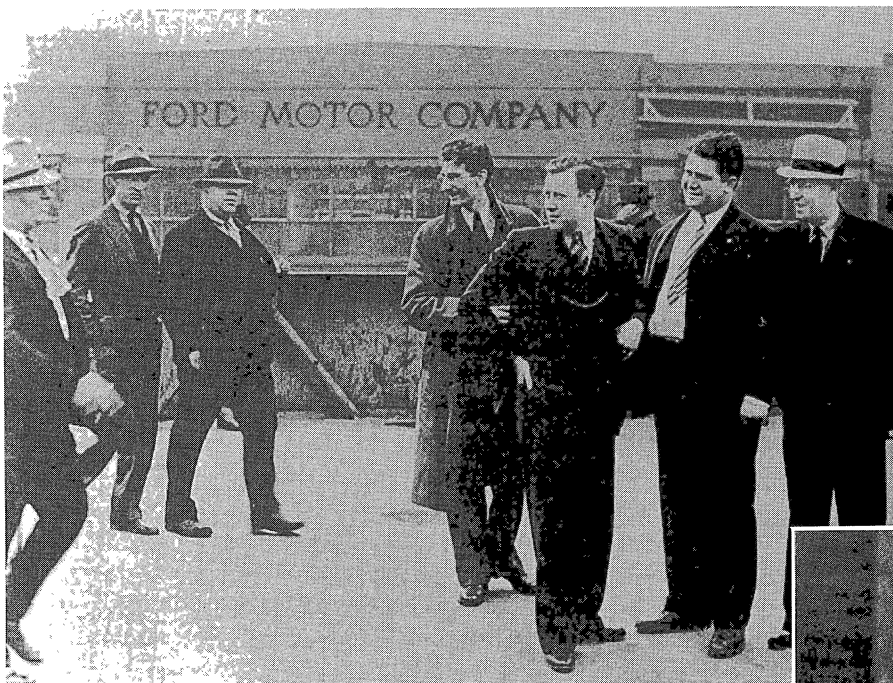
Years later, Victor Reuther, Walter's brother, told us: "I and other family members were convinced that both the fatal crash and the near-fatal one in 1968 were not accidental."² Any number of highly placed persons might have wanted Walter Reuther out of the way. Indeed, there is evidence of foul play against him through much of his public life and evidence of sabotage in the fatal crash itself.

The Early Struggle

Eight months before his death, Reuther reflected: "The labor movement is about changing society. ... What good is a dollar an hour more in wages if your neighborhood is burning down? What good is another week's vacation if the lake you

1. Victor Reuther, *The Brothers Reuther and the Story of the UAW* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1976), pp. 457-58.

2. Interview, Jan. 30, 1992.



PRESS ASSOCIATES

UAW organizers, including Walter Reuther (3rd from l.), before and after 1937 confrontation with "Ford Service" thugs.

used to go to, where you've got a cottage, is polluted and you can't swim in it and the kids can't play in it? What good is another \$100 pension if the world goes up in atomic smoke?"³ Reuther was the kind of labor leader who most discomfited the higher circles: militant, incorruptible, and dedicated to both the rank-and-file and a broad class agenda.⁴

The son of a German immigrant who was a lifelong socialist and labor organizer, Reuther devoted his life to the labor struggle. In 1932, after being fired from his job at a Ford plant because of his unionizing efforts, Walter departed with Victor on a three-year trip around the world. Their itinerary included a prolonged stint as workers in a Ford plant in the Soviet Union. Writing to a friend back in the states, Victor described Soviet society in enthusiastic terms. The letter, which he signed "Vic and Wal," later was doctored in a number of places. Most notably, its closing comment, "Carry on the fight" was changed to "Carry on the fight for a Soviet America." The FBI had the original

letter in its internal files but circulated only the forged one to political leaders, corporate heads, and rival unionists in an attempt to show that Walter was a Communist tool.⁵

Returning to Detroit in late 1935, Walter and Victor emerged as leaders in the often bloody struggle against the automotive bosses, winning landmark victories against Chrysler, GM, and Ford. In May 1937, during a major leafleting effort, Reuther and dozens of other UAW organizers were assaulted by Ford's thugs. Testifying at a federal hearing, Reuther described how he and his companions were repeatedly punched, kicked, and slammed against the concrete floor, then thrown down several flights of stairs — while the police stood by doing nothing.⁶

Murder Attempts

In April 1938, two masked gunmen forced their way into Reuther's Detroit home during a party and attempted to abduct him. While they were trying to beat Reuther into submission, one guest managed to flee and summon help.⁷ The assailants were eventually

arrested but their trial proved to be a sham. Facing a jury packed with Ford sympathizers, the defense argued that Walter had staged the whole event as a publicity stunt. The state prosecutor neglected to mention that Reuther's organizing activities had made him a target at Ford and that both of the accused recently had been working for Ford's security chief, Harry Bennett. The jury acquitted the two men.

No one could claim that another attack a decade later was staged. In April 1948, Reuther was nearly killed by a shotgun blast fired through his kitchen window. He suffered chest and arm wounds and never recovered the full



AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

use of his right arm and hand.

An attempt on Victor Reuther's life the following year suggests outright complicity by law enforcers. Victor began receiving calls from the Detroit police telling him that neighbors (whom the police refused to name) were complaining about his dog barking. In fact, the dog had occasionally barked at night. When Victor would go out to investigate, he would see a parked car start up and speed away. After the police issued a "final warning," the family reluctantly gave their pet to some friends. The very next evening, Victor was shot in the head as he sat reading in his home. The bullet took out his right eye and parts of his jaw. A neighbor who volunteered a detailed description of the assailants to the police was never contacted for follow-up questioning and

3. Frank Cormier and William Eaton, *Reuther* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970), unnumbered page before table of contents.

4. Throughout his career, Reuther kept his salary at an impressively modest level. In 1945, just before becoming president of the UAW, he earned \$7,000 — while his opponent at the bargaining table, General Motors president Charles Wilson, pocketed \$459,000 plus perks.

5. Reuther, *op. cit.*, pp. 214-19.

6. Cormier and Eaton, *op. cit.*, pp. 103-05.

7. Reuther, *op. cit.*, pp. 206-08.

began receiving anonymous phone calls warning him to shut up.⁸

Two days after Victor was shot, the U.S. Senate unanimously adopted a resolution requesting the FBI to investigate both attacks. U.S. Attorney General Tom Clark, the governor of Michigan, and the UAW itself also demanded an investigation. Although Attorney General Clark — FBI chief J. Edgar Hoover's putative boss — pointed to possible violations of the Fugitive Felon Act and several other federal statutes, Hoover refused to move, claiming a lack of jurisdiction because no federal laws had been broken.⁹

Neither the FBI nor the Detroit police followed up on any of the leads uncovered by UAW investigators. Nor did they come up with any of their own. No corporate officials were ever questioned. Ford strongman Harry Bennett, who had been implicated in the 1938 attempt against Walter, was never interrogated. In fact, Bennett was Hoover's golfing buddy and was considered a valuable ally who gave the FBI access to his files on "Communist" activity, consisting mostly of dossiers on labor activists.¹⁰

At the end of 1949, an attempt to bomb UAW headquarters in Detroit was foiled by an anonymous call to a *Detroit Times* reporter. According to the caller, the explosive was "planted when the big guy [Walter] was in the building."¹¹ Investigations conducted by the police and the FBI produced not a clue.

On the National Scene

Under Reuther's leadership, the UAW not only grew into the largest union in the Western world with 1.2 million members, but it also became a powerful political organization. By 1952, as president of both the UAW and the entire CIO, Reuther had become, in the words of one historian, "the most influential labor figure in the country."¹² He

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 288-89. According to Victor, Ralph Winstead spent eight years investigating the Reuther shootings for the UAW. In December 1957, Winstead's body was recovered from Lake St. Clair. His death was declared "accidental" and no investigation was made.

9. In expressing his unwillingness to invoke federal law, Hoover also revealed deeply engrained racist attitudes. As Clark related to UAW attorney Joseph Rauh, "Edgar says no. He says he's not going to get involved every time some nigger woman gets raped." Elizabeth Reuther Dickmeyer, *Reuther: A Daughter Strikes* (Southfield, Mich.: Spelman Publishers, 1989), p. 9; also Hoover memorandum, May 26, 1949, FBI archives 61-9556. On the demands for an investigation, see FBI archives 61-9556, section 4.

10. Robert Lacey, *Ford: The Men and the Machine* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1986), pp. 372-74; Dickmeyer, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

11. Reuther, *op. cit.*, pp. 291, 295.

12. John Barnard, *Walter Reuther and the Rise of the Auto Workers* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1983), p. 132.

used his position to promote progressive stances on a wide range of domestic and foreign policy issues. UAW locals around the country formed political action committees that lobbied lawmakers and helped elect candidates friendly to organized labor. At the same time, Walter and his brother Roy were building alliances between labor, church, and civic groups and ethnic minorities.

Throughout the 1960s, the UAW lent

Reuther was the kind of labor leader who most discomforted the higher circles: militant, incorruptible, and dedicated to both the rank-and-file and a broad class agenda.

financial and moral support to the civil rights movement. Reuther worked closely with Martin Luther King, Jr., joining him in all the great civil rights marches and serving as a long-time member of the NAACP's board of directors — whose meetings the FBI routinely bugged.¹³

Reuther sparked the creation of a Citizens' Board of Inquiry into Hunger and Malnutrition. The board's findings that millions of Americans were not getting enough to eat spurred Congress into enacting reforms. The UAW leader pioneered a variety of innovative programs, including employer-funded health and pension plans, cost-of-living allowances, and a guaranteed annual wage. He fought for federally funded affordable housing, nationalized health care, government ownership of monopolistic industries, worker participation in economic planning, and other proposals for redistributing power and wealth, all of which were taken as threats to ruling class interests — as indeed they were.

Under Walter and Victor's leadership, the UAW became one of the strongest proponents of the 1963 Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. UAW members marched in peace demonstrations and voted funds to support antiwar campaigns. Abroad, Reuther was the U.S.'s

13. Athan Theoharis and John Cox, *The Boss: J. Edgar Hoover and the Great American Inquisition* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988), p. 11n; FBI archive 141-31770; Cormier and Eaton, *op. cit.*, p. 386.

best-known and best-liked labor leader in a number of nonaligned countries. In India, he told an appreciative audience that U.S. foreign policy in Asia placed undue emphasis on military power and "doubtful military allies" to the neglect of "reliable democratic friends."¹⁴

These activities earned Reuther powerful political enemies. During the 1956 presidential campaign, Vice President Richard Nixon told Republican stalwarts that the UAW leader, not Democratic presidential candidate Adlai Stevenson, was "the man to beat," because of his organizing power and "big money."¹⁵ In 1958, at a GOP fundraiser, Sen. Barry Goldwater declared that "Walter Reuther and the UAW-CIO are a more dangerous menace than ... anything Soviet Russia might do to America."¹⁶ Other members of Congress warned of Reuther's "dream of establishing a Socialist labor government in the U.S."¹⁷

A double-page ad in the *Wall Street Journal* echoed the theme. Under an inch-high headline reading "WILL YOU LET REUTHER GET AWAY WITH IT?" the ad warned: "Walter Reuther is already within reach of controlling your Congress. The American Labor movement has now become a political movement with the objective of establishing a socialist labor government in control of the economic and social life of this nation."¹⁸ For his activities at home and abroad, as Victor recalled, "The right wing never lost its violent bitter taste against Walter."¹⁹

Hoover's Vendetta

Nor did J. Edgar Hoover, who stalked Reuther for some forty years, using undercover informants and illegal bugging equipment.²⁰ Hoover successfully blocked Reuther's appointment to several presidential boards and commissions by secretly circulating disinformation packets to the White House and members of Congress, featuring the doctored "For a Soviet America" letter and testi-

14. Cormier and Eaton, *op. cit.*, pp. 360-62.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 341.

16. *Detroit Times*, Jan. 21, 1958. To support his charge that the UAW fomented violence, Goldwater noted that more than 30 people had been killed in UAW strikes. What he and most of the press failed to mention was that the 30 victims were all strikers. Robert F. Kennedy, *The Enemy Within* (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), p. 293.

17. Remarks by Representative Timothy Sheehan, *Congressional Record* — House, Apr. 2, 1958, pp. 6142-43.

18. *Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 22, 1958. The ad was paid for by the Committee for Constitutional Government.

19. Interview, July 28, 1992.

20. Theoharis and Cox, *op. cit.*, p. 10; Dickmeyer, *op. cit.*, p. 356; FBI archives, 141-31770.



The UAW under Reuther helped integrate organized labor. Here, strike, Detroit, 1948.

mony by individuals falsely accusing Walter of Communist affiliations.²¹

During World War II, Hoover made preparations to put all three Reuther brothers in custodial detention. He was ultimately dissuaded from doing so by John Bugas, chief FBI agent in Detroit.²² Both the CIA and the FBI monitored Reuther's foreign travel, taking note of public comments of his that "might be construed as contrary to the

foreign policy of the United States."²³

In his early Detroit days, Walter had formed an alliance with Communists within the union in order to combat conservative labor factions and company bosses. In 1938 he severed this association, and some years later, after gaining control of the UAW board, he launched a purge of dedicated UAW organizers who were Communists or close to the party. In 1949, he played a key role in the expulsion of eleven CIO unions accused of being Communist-led.

Over the years, Reuther denounced Communism at every opportunity, seeking to legitimate his own status as a loyal American. But for the industrialists, financiers, and leading politicians, it

made little difference whether their wealth and power was challenged by "Communist subversives" or "loyal Americans." It was not an obsession with Communism that caused them to hate and fear Reuther but an obsession with maintaining their privileged place in the politico-economic status quo.

At the same time, Reuther was critical of right-wing radicalism. In 1961, Attorney General Robert Kennedy asked him, Victor, and Joseph Rauh, an attorney for the UAW, to investigate the ultra-right. (Walter was a close friend and adviser to the Kennedys.) The resulting report warned of radical right elements inside the military and urged the president to dismiss generals and admirals who engaged in rightist political activities. The report also faulted J.

21. At least three internal FBI memos admitted that this testimony had no basis in fact: "No one interviewed during the investigation, which included 185 interviews, could place Reuther in CP or corroborate these allegations." Memorandum, Mar. 3, 1958, FBI archives 61-9556-239; memorandum, Sept. 17, 1956, 61-9556-223; memorandum, Nov. 2, 1956, 141-21770-3.

22. Hoover memoranda, Apr. 17 and Aug. 15, 1941, FBI archive 61-9556, section 1; Bugas memorandum, Sept. 9, 1941; Hoover memorandum, Nov. 1, 1941, FBI archive 61-9556, section 2.

23. From Legat, Mexico, to Hoover, Dec. 15, 1954, FBI archive 61-9556-20.

Edgar Hoover for exaggerating "the domestic Communist menace at every turn," thus contributing "to the public's frame of mind upon which the radical right feeds."²⁴

Leaving the AFL-CIO

From the first days of the AFL-CIO merger in 1955, irreconcilable political differences existed between Reuther and AFL-CIO president George Meany, a Cold War hawk. Under Meany, the AFL-CIO had entered an unholy alliance with the CIA in order to bolster conservative, anticommunist unions in other countries. These unions, Victor Reuther concluded, were run by people who were "well soaked with both U.S. corporate and CIA juices. It was, in effect, an exercise in trade union colonialism."²⁵

In early 1968, the UAW withdrew from the AFL-CIO and joined forces with the Teamsters and two smaller unions to form the Alliance for Labor Action (ALA), with a membership totaling over four million. The Teamsters gave Reuther a free hand on political and social issues. With Nixon in the White House and the bombings in Indochina escalating to unprecedented levels, Reuther ran ads in the national media and appeared before congressional committees to denounce the war and call for drastic cuts in the military budget. While the AFL-CIO proclaimed its support for Nixon's escalation of the war and his anti-ballistic missile program, the ALA lobbied hard against both.²⁶

Nixon's invasion of Cambodia and the killing of four Kent State students prompted Reuther — the day before his death — to telegram the White House condemning the war, the invasion, and "the bankruptcy of our policy of force and violence in Vietnam."²⁷ By 1970, Reuther was seen more than ever as a threat to the dominant political agenda, earning him top place on Nixon's enemy list.²⁸

The Fatal Crash: Disturbing Evidence

The struggles of Walter Reuther's life provide ample cause to give more than

cursory attention to the questionable circumstances of his death. First, as president of the largest union in the country, Reuther had the resources for advancing his causes on the national scene as did few others. He was an extraordinarily effective proponent of socio-economic equality and an outspoken critic of the military-industrial complex, the arms race, the CIA, the entire national security state, and the Vietnam War. For these stands he earned the enmity of people in high places.

Second, in the years before the fatal crash there had been assassination attempts against Walter and Victor. (Victor believes the attempt against him

Nixon's invasion of Cambodia and the killing of four Kent State students prompted Reuther — the day before his death — to telegram the White House condemn- ing the "the bankruptcy of our policy of force and vio- lence in Vietnam."

was intended as a message to Walter.) In each of these instances, state and federal law enforcement agencies were at best lackadaisical in their investigative efforts, suggesting the possibility of official collusion or at least tolerance for the criminal deeds.²⁹

Third, like the suspicious near-crash a year and a half earlier, the fatal crash also involved a faulty altimeter in a small plane. It is a remarkable coincidence that Reuther would have been in two planes with the exact same malfunction in that brief time.

Fourth, and most significantly, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigation of the fatal May 1970 crash turned up disturbing evidence.³⁰ When investigators disassem-

bled the captain's altimeter, they found no fewer than seven abnormalities.

Most significantly, investigators found a brass screw lying loose in the altimeter case. Although the report notes that with the loosened screw, "the altimeter would have read high by 225 to 250 feet," the investigators did not say who or what had loosened it. They did, however, manage to eliminate the crash itself as the cause.

The screw "locks the movable aluminum calibration arm in place when the instrument is calibrated. The threads within the screw hole were torn and ragged. Deposits of aluminum particles were observed on the threads of the screw ..." Testing to see if the heat of the crash might have caused the screw to come loose, investigators placed a similar calibration arm mechanism in an oven and heated it for two hours at 1,100 degrees Fahrenheit: "This screw was found to be tight when examined." When the test screw was removed, "aluminum deposits were found on its threads. The hole from which it was removed displayed torn and broken threads similar to those of the accident calibration arm," indicating that the loose screw in Reuther's plane had been unscrewed and not forced loose by the crash. Since the crash itself did not cause the screw to come loose, it must have been removed or loosened by deliberate human effort.

Further examination revealed six other unusual defects in the altimeter:

- an incorrect pivot was installed in one end of a rocking shaft;
- an end stone was missing from the opposite end of the rocking shaft;
- a ring jewel within the mechanism was installed off center;
- a second rocking shaft rear support pivot was incorrect;
- the wrong kind of link pin, which holds a spring clip in place at the pneumatic capsule, was installed;
- an end stone, which supports a shaft within the mechanism, was installed upside down.

The odds that this many abnormalities could accidentally or coincidentally appear in a single altimeter are extremely low. With notable understatement, the investigators concluded that "such conditions undoubtedly

24. The Reuther/Rauh memo is discussed in Donald Jan-son and Bernard Eisman, *The Far Right* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963). Though the report was secret at the time, Hoover was fully aware of its existence. FBI archives 61-9556 and 140-31770-46.

25. Reuther, *op. cit.*, pp. 412-18.

26. Barnard, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

27. *Solidarity* (UAW publication), Detroit, June 1970.

28. Barnard, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

29. In this context, it might be noted that in January 1970, only three months before the crash, the Nixon White House requested Reuther's FBI file. The call came from Egil Krogh, a Nixon staff member who was later arrested as a Watergate burglar. The file documented Reuther's leadership role in progressive and antiwar organizations. In 1985, when Detroit newsman William Gallagher asked why Nixon had wanted the file, Krogh was evasive, claiming a lack of memory. Jan. 26, 1970, FBI archive, 61-9556, section 8; Dickmeyer, *op. cit.*, p. 356.

30. National Transportation Safety Board, *Aircraft Accident Report, Executive Jet Aviation, Inc. Lear Jet*

L23A N434EJ Near the Emmet County Airport, Pellston, Michigan, May 9, 1970 (Adopted: December 22, 1970, Report No. NTSB-AAR-71-3), Washington, D.C., p. 9. All references to the crash investigation refer to this report.



EARL DOTTER/IMPACT VISUALS

Sit-down strikers organizing first contract with UAW, 1930s.

caused excessive friction [in the altimeter mechanism]. ... The board believes that while the evidence is not conclusive, the captain's altimeter was probably reading inaccurately."

There were other problems. The pilots chose the only lighted approach, Runway 5, but it lacked both Runway and Identifier Lights and a Visual Approach Path Indicator. VAPIs give pilots their proper flight angle and help determine altitude. The main approach, Runway 23, had a VAPI, but one of the runway lights was out. That the pilots were not notified of this fault, as is customary, suggests that the light broke near to landing time.

In its opening synopsis, the NTSB report emphasized the "lack of visual cues" as a cause of the accident. But the synopsis is misleading. The body of the report noted that in the absence of suffi-

cient visual cues, "use of the altimeter is a necessity." And if the pilot was using the altimeter to determine altitude during the approach, then "lack of visual cues for altitude determination must be considered to have had little effect." However, "an altimeter which read too high" could have caused the pilot mistakenly to think he had sufficient altitude for a safe landing. "In view of the condition of the captain's altimeter, such a situation is highly possible."

Aside from the altimeter, the report found no other defects in the aircraft. The Lear Jet "was properly certificated and airworthy" and "there was no malfunction of the aircraft prior to the accident."

Nor was there evidence of crew incapacity or error. Medical records and post mortem examinations of the pilot and first officer found no evidence of

disease or physical disability, and both crew members had been free from flight duties for approximately 24 hours prior to the flight. Captain George Evans had more than 2,000 hours of flight time on Lear Jets, and more than 140 hours in the previous three months. And both pilots had flown into Pellston Airport many times under far worse conditions.³¹

An Associated Press story carried in the *New York Times* under the headline, "No Sabotage Found In Reuther Crash," stated that the NTSB "said today that it had found no indication of sabotage to explain the jet air taxi crash."³² The *Times* story is seriously misleading. In fact, the final NTSB report utters not a word about sabotage one way or the other. It notes how numerous unusual defects in the altimeter may have caused a malfunction, *but it says nothing about what caused the defects themselves* (except to rule out crash heat as a factor in disassembling the locking screw). The report never asks whether the altimeter was tampered with — yet it proffers a good deal of evidence to suggest that it was. In effect, the investigators ignored their own findings.

Earlier on the day of the fatal crash, the same ill-fated Lear Jet, carrying popular singer Glen Campbell, had flown into Detroit with no report of a faulty altimeter.³³ Victor Reuther noted that there was sufficient time between flights for tampering with the altimeter. He also pointed out that because they have so many clients and different pilots, rental planes are inspected with unusual care and frequency.³⁴ The pi-

31. Cormier and Eaton, *op. cit.*, p. 423.

32. *New York Times*, July 16, 1970.

33. Dickmeyer, *op. cit.*, p. 357.

34. The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association backs

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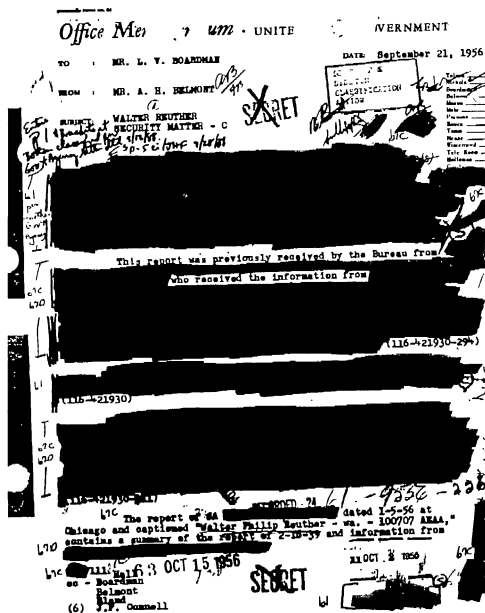
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This recently released 1956 FBI document shows continuing secrecy obsession.

lots demand as much. It is unlikely that an altimeter with seven defects would have gone undetected if properly inspected before the flight. Victor added: "I was never convinced that there had been a thorough investigation by federal authorities. ... There had been too many direct attempts on [Walter's life] and there was too much evidence of tampering with the rental plane."³⁵

In a follow-up interview, Victor Reuther further noted:

Animosity from government had been present for some time [before the fatal crash]. It was not only Walter's stand on Vietnam and Cambodia that angered Nixon, but also I had exposed some CIA elements inside labor, and this was also associated with Walter. Although Walter knew I was right, he felt that I had put him in an impossible position. He said, "You're taking on an agency that can forge any document to prove we are liars." But I think he was glad to see the information come out ...³⁶

Checking into the vendetta is no easy task. The FBI still refuses to turn over nearly 200 pages of documents, including the copious correspondence be-

up Victor Reuther's assertion. Civil aviation aircraft used for commercial purposes undergo rigorous mandatory inspection programs, according to an organization spokesperson. Interview, July 27, 1995.

35. Interview, Jan. 30, 1992.

36. Interview, July 28, 1992.

tween field offices and Hoover regarding Reuther's death. And many of the documents it has released are totally inked out. It is hard to fathom what national security concern is involved or why the FBI and the CIA must still keep so many secrets about Walter Reuther.³⁷

Reuther's death appears as part of a truncation of liberal and radical leadership that included the murders of four other national figures: President John Kennedy, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Senator Robert Kennedy, and dozens of leaders in the Black Panther Party and in various community organizations. Whether Reuther's death was part of a broader agenda to decapitate and demoralize the mass movements of that day, or whether such an agenda existed at all, are questions that go beyond the scope of our inquiry.

But Victor's belief, shared by Walter's daughter Elizabeth Reuther Dickmeyer and other members of the family,

He was an extraordinarily effective proponent of socioeconomic equality and an outspoken critic of the military-industrial complex, the arms race, the CIA, the entire national security state, and the Vietnam War.

that the crash was no accident does not seem implausible. Despite the limited investigation, there is enough evidence to suggest that foul play was involved. The death of this dedicated and effective progressive labor leader raises disquieting questions about the criminal nature of state power in what purports to be a democracy. •

37. After going through Walter's file, Victor observed, "They had censored so much of the documents, there were not six words on a page you could read." Dickmeyer, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

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Armed and Dangerous:

Private Police on the March

by Mike Zielinski

"[Private security] seems like it is the point of preferred employment for mass murderers."

— William Brill, manager, security planning firm¹

Propelled by public panic over crime, the private security industry is one of the fastest growing enterprises in the U.S., spending more money and employing more guards than public police forces around the country. In 1990 alone, \$52 billion was spent on private security, compared to \$30 billion on police. More than 10,000 private security companies employ some 1.5 million guards, nearly triple the 554,000 state and local police officers.²

And the industry — which generates billions in profits — is growing rapidly.³ One congressional advocate of increased regulation says "national labor statistics indicate that more jobs will be created in the private security field than any other categories over the next

Mike Zielinski, a free-lance journalist, is currently working as a consultant with the labor movement.

1. Testimony at "Hearings Regarding Private Security Guards" before the House of Representatives Subcommittee on Human Resources, June 15 and 17, 1993, p. 29, Serial No. 103-16.

2. Adam Walinsky, "The Crisis of Public Order," *The Atlantic Monthly*, June 1995, pp. 39-40.

3. Richard Behar, "Thugs in Uniform," *Time*, Mar. 9, 1992.



MICHAEL KAUFMAN/IMPACT VISUALS

Corporations routinely hire private security to break strikes. Here, Vance Security guards keep striking miners from Pittston Coal mine site. The man on the right described himself as a "soldier of fortune."

decade."⁴ Industry executives estimate that the number of private guards will surge to 2 million by the year 2000.

Amidst heightened public fears in the wake of the Oklahoma bombing, fresh threats by the UNABOMBER, and recurring references by the press and politicians to the menace of foreign terrorists, the industry is poised for boom times. With the 1996 presidential election looming large, both major political parties are sure to issue more strident calls for stepped-up policing, both public and private.

Dual Law Enforcement

The era of dual law enforcement is already here, with a vengeance. Private guards are popping up everywhere, patrolling shopping malls, workplaces, apartment buildings and neighbor-

hoods. The phenomenal growth of massive private shopping malls, and the steady shrinkage of public shopping streets, means the public is more likely to encounter private security than public police on a daily basis. The business community already pays for security in malls, stores, offices, banks, and highly congested public places such as New York City's Grand Central Station. And as federal funding recedes, many municipalities are looking to cut costs further by hiring rent-a-cops to work ambulance services and parking enforcement, as well as to watch over crime scenes and transport prisoners — who increasingly face incarceration in corporate-run prisons. California, always the harbinger of disturbing new trends in American culture, goes beyond putting private guards on the street. Wealthy residents of Los Angeles hire their guards complete with

4. "Hearings ...," *op. cit.*, p. 1.

squad cars. The City Council has 50 applications pending to barricade public streets to facilitate the work of these private security cruisers.

Privatization extends to the federal government, which is increasingly handing over security functions to corporations which employ and underpay a non-unionized workforce. In 1971, there were 5,000 federal police providing security at government buildings. Today there are 409, with private contract guards making up the difference. Government-busters in Congress support these privatization moves, overriding objections from the American Federation of Government Employees. The union is pushing for federal workers to have a say in all decisions that affect the workplace, particularly when it comes to a question as vital as providing physical security.

As rent-a-cops supplant functions once performed by police, the private security industry is creating a separate and unequal system under which the rich protect their privileges and guard their wealth from perceived barbarians at the gate. Many of the affluent now live in enclaves, "gated" communities, where private security forces control entrances, screen visitors and hired help, and patrol the grounds. These heavily-armed private guards are accountable not to the public, but to the well-manicured hand that feeds them. Meanwhile, it is left to public police forces to maintain a coercive order within deteriorating inner cities.

Fortress America

This private security business bonanza is fueled by demagogic politicians and reinforced with violent imagery and fear-mongering rhetoric from talk radio, the tabloid press, and sensationalist television shows such as *Hard Copy*. It is taking place even as government surveys indicate that crime levels have been more or less constant over the past 20 years. In fact, the FBI reported at the end of 1994 that overall crime for the year decreased to 1986 levels, while violent crime declined to the level of 1990.⁵ The facts, however, do not make a dent in the public's perception that crime is out of control.

As a result of the rhetoric and fear — as well as rational concerns about crime — the private security industry is prof-

itably positioned at the intersection of two of the right-wing's most cherished crusades: privatization and law and order. The industry enjoys a symbiotic relationship with the gun lobby as organizations such as the NRA help incite public fear of crime, then hold out assault weapons as the best solution to security concerns. In turn, the expanded presence of private guards in daily life reinforces the notion that a gun is an essential piece in any urban survival kit.

This rush to employ private guards reflects the militarization of America. Private firms are arming guards at a pace to match the rapid expansion of

The more than 100,000 gun-toting private guards have more firepower than the combined police forces of the nation's 30 largest urban centers.

non-sporting firearms in private hands. America is an armed camp, with an estimated 200 million guns in private hands. The more than 100,000 gun-toting private guards have more firepower than the combined police forces of the nation's 30 largest urban centers.⁶

Mercenaries for Hire

All this firepower, trained on a public which places its trust in uniformed guards, raises a variety of concerns: The private security industry is largely unregulated; its employees are often poorly trained, underpaid, and inadequately screened; and they serve only those who hired them. While rent-a-cops are legally limited to observing, reporting and attempting to deter crime — a power which falls short of the authorized

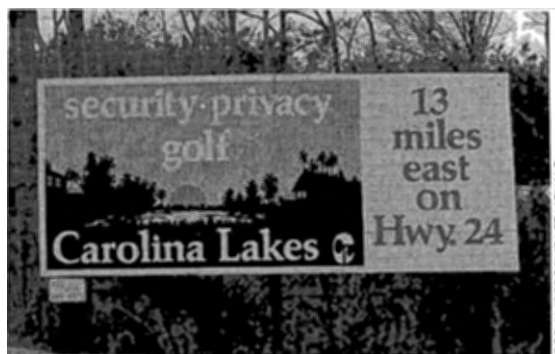
6. Behar, *op. cit.*, p. 44. Gun ownership rights, like safety, are sometimes parceled out to those who can pay for the privilege. At the urging of the NRA, congressional Republicans are promoting legislation to allow convicted felons to bear arms, provided they pay the government's costs for running background checks. Jim Lightfoot (R-Iowa), chair of the House Subcommittee on the Treasury, Postal Service and General Government, "said the measure is designed to help law-abiding, nonviolent white-collar felons regain the right to own firearms. 'I don't see this as dangerous,' he said. 'Violent people won't apply in the first place.'" (John Mintz, "Move to Allow Felons to Own Firearms Draws Criticism," *Washington Post*, July 1, 1995.)

use of force or the right to make an arrest — the distinction is apt to be lost on most citizens accosted by a uniformed private guard waving a gun and security badge.

The history of businesses hiring security firms and using them like a private army is long and rife with abuse. Pinkerton, the nation's oldest and second largest security company, earned its spurs in the late 19th century when its guards served as a private army for robber barons intent on wiping out unions. Pinkerton provided the firepower when Ford Frick issued the order to gun down striking workers at Andrew Carnegie's Homestead steel plant in 1892.

Private security companies today have kept that union-busting tradition alive and well. As corporations faced with labor disputes turn more and more to so-called "permanent replacement workers," guard firms are utilized to crush militant opposition from unions. A rapidly expanding subset of the industry specializes in strikebreaking.

At the forefront is the Special Response Corporation (SRC), based in Towson, Maryland. SRC's ads feature a uniformed agent wielding a riot shield beneath a headline which proclaims: "A Private Army When You Need It Most." SRC promises prospective employers that "we can provide the security and control measures necessary for the continued operation of the business" in the event of a strike. SRC vouches for the professionalism of its agents, stating that they all have "prior military or law enforcement experience." In 1990, SRC helped



precipitate a melee when its guards used martial arts sticks against striking newspaper workers in New York City.

The company claims to have seen action in a thousand labor disputes during the last decade and to receive up to 500 inquiries a year about its services. One grateful SRC client thanked the

5. Noam Chomsky, "Rollback Part II," *Z*, Feb. 1995, p. 25.

company for providing "surveillance relating to Workmen's Compensation claims and other general undercover surveillance work" during a strike.⁷

SRC does not limit itself to labor strife. The company dispatched guards to South Central Los Angeles following the unrest that erupted when police officers were acquitted in the brutal beating of Rodney King. SRC agents helped provide security for private businesses.

One of the most active strike-breaking firms is Vance Security, founded by Charles Vance, ex-son-in-law of ex-President Gerald Ford. Vance's agents were deployed against striking Greyhound drivers in the late 1980s and served as shock troops for the Pittston Coal Group, Inc. in its protracted and bitter battle with the United Mine Workers.

7. Industrial Union Dept., AFL-CIO, *Dishonor Roll*, 1989.

Vance runs a rent-a-mercenary operation which recruits through ads in *Soldier of Fortune* and offers its agents training in the use of firearms, Mace, and riot batons. An ad in the 1986 *Gung-Ho Yearbook*, a paramilitary magazine, was aimed at "those of you who have military backgrounds who are interested in \$100-a-day, all-expenses-paid work." The company offered a refresher course in the use of firearms "should things get completely out of hand."⁸

The Asset Protection Team, a Vance subsidiary, runs an ad which features a jack-booted security agent equipped with a riot shield, club and helmet. A brochure guarantees guards will "arrive with all the personal equipment necessary to handle all levels of violence."⁹

8. AFL-CIO, *Report on Union Busters*, n. 54, July/Aug. 1986.

9. AFL-CIO, *Report on Union Busters*, n. 79, Mar./Apr. 1990.

These firms' stock in trade is the creation of a threatening atmosphere for union supporters. During a dispute between Caterpillar, Inc. and the United Auto Workers in 1992, Vance Security transformed the company's plant into a war zone, placing barbed wire around the grounds. Striking steel workers at an Alcoa plant in Tennessee were subjected to constant surveillance with video cameras, while gun-toting agents were stationed on the tops of buildings and ground-level security brandished riot shields and tear gas canisters. Vance guards followed union members after they left picket lines.

Union organizers view these tactics as a form of psychological warfare. According to John Duray of the United Mine Workers, private guards act as provocateurs, attempting to incite a violent response from strikers. Duray says that security firms "create a violent situation, then record it, and take the film to court." Employers then seek a legal injunction against the union.¹⁰

The most current case of union-busting security guards is unfolding in Detroit this summer. Members of the Newspaper Guild and the Teamsters are on strike at the city's two daily newspapers, the *Detroit News* and *Detroit Free Press*, owned by Knight-Ridder and media giant Gannett, respectively. In mid-July, agents from Vance Security attacked four strikers, sending three of them to a hospital emergency room. Local police confiscated four armloads of wooden clubs from security guards employed by the newspapers.¹¹

When it comes to repression, one of the most versatile guard companies is Wackenhut, founded by a retired FBI agent. The security corporation operates 12 prisons, with plans for expansions, and runs a detention center in Queens, New York, under contract from the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). Detainees, who have not been charged with a crime but are awaiting an INS hearing on asylum claims, are confined in cinder block cells and denied access to outside grounds.¹²

Wackenhut has received a number of security contracts from local governments, including assignments to patrol

10. Bureau of National Affairs (Washington, D.C.), *Impact of Picket Line Security: Stemming Conflict or Inciting Violence?* n. 95, May 16, 1990.

11. PR Newswire, "Unions Stop Most Deliveries of Sunday Papers," July 16, 1995.

12. Willa Appel, "They Did No Crime, but They're Doing Time," *Newsday*, Dec. 6, 1993.

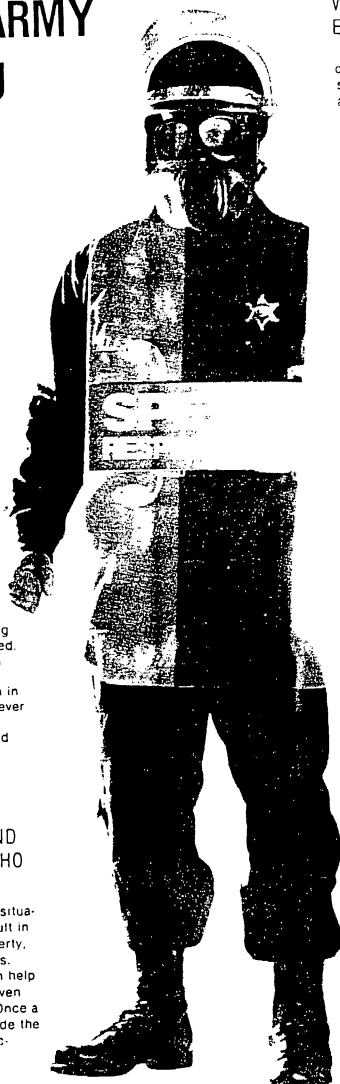
A PRIVATE ARMY WHEN YOU NEED IT MOST . . . SPECIAL RESPONSE TEAM

DON'T SECOND GUESS
WHEN IT COMES TO
DISASTER . . . YOU
MAY NOT GET A
SECOND CHANCE.

The consequences of a labor strike can be devastating. How you handle a strike can effect your business long after the immediate crisis has ended. A strike can cause both short term financial losses as well as have a negative impact on your reputation in the business community. With an ever increasing potential for labor disputes, you owe it to yourself and your business to have Special Response Corporation behind you

ASSURE YOUR SAFETY AND
THE SAFETY OF THOSE WHO
COUNT ON YOU . . .

A strike is a potentially volatile situation. Too often labor disputes result in injury to workers, damage to property, and poor morale among employees. Special Response Corporation can help you prepare for these problems, even before negotiations break down. Once a strike is in progress, we can provide the security and control measures necessary for the continued operation of the business.



WE'RE EQUIPPED FOR PROMPT,
EFFECTIVE CONTROL . . .

Special Response Corporation can meet a crisis within 24 hours. Just as important, our service provides security measures appropriate to your specific needs. We can provide 1 to 200 specially trained professionals equipped with the latest in security technology: non-lethal weaponry, night vision equipment, and specially designed vehicles that enable employees to cross picket lines safely. The prompt and professional presence of our specially trained forces, can preserve stability, maintain security, and ensure safety

WE ARE THE BEST FOR
THE JOB . . .

Special Response Corporation provides you with a team of security professionals, trained to operate in a crisis responsibly and with authority. Their special training includes: education in defensive tactics, fire prevention and first aid, as well as legal training, general safety and security knowledge. Most important, our special response force keeps a cool head under pressure. They are professionals, all with prior military or law enforcement experience

BE PREPARED CALL US TODAY . . .

Special Response Corporation can help you in any potentially volatile situation. Call Martin S. Herman, President, Special Response Corporation, 301-494-1900, or write, Post Office Box 20282, Towson, Md. 21284. Ask for our guidelines on pre-planning in the event of a work stoppage.

SRC

SPECIAL RESPONSE
CORPORATION

SECOND TO NONE

downtown Miami's shopping district, rest stops at Florida highways, and commuter trains in Denver. Wackenhut assisted in the installation of video cameras trained on Denver light rail riders and petitioned the city for permission to take over ticket-writing functions from local police.¹³

All of this activity adds up to megaprofits for Wackenhut. In 1994, its annual operating income zoomed from 47 cents per share to 85 cents.¹⁴

Guarding Whose Security?

In addition to their role as mercenaries in the class war, some guards have committed misdeeds beyond those commissioned by their employers. Asked why he robbed banks, legendary stickup man Willie Sutton reportedly replied "because that's where the money is." In that spirit, some aspiring thieves seek out jobs as security guards in order to gain access to ATM machines, bank vaults, and victims. According to William Brill, who has helped train and evaluate security guards for more than 20 years, "in many of my interviews with convicted murderers and rapists, I have found that many worked for security guard companies at one point or another. One reason for this was that the job was easy to get; another was that it put them in touch with potential targets."¹⁵

In mid-July, agents from Vance Security attacked four strikers, sending three of them to a hospital emergency ward. Local police confiscated four armloads of wooden clubs from security guards employed by the newspapers.

The security industry appears to be a magnet for the socially dispossessed. Security jobs are readily available and do not require specialized skills or extensive education. At the same time, a guard's uniform and gun offer a sense of

power and authority lacking in most service sector jobs. Experts who monitor the industry point to a fascination with guns and police work as common characteristics found among security guards. Some individuals turned to private security firms after failing to pass tests to become police officers. Timothy McVeigh, the accused Oklahoma City bomber, signed on as a security guard after flunking the Green Berets' psychological tests.

Although no agency records crime statistics for offenses committed by security guards, anecdotal evidence is voluminous. Private security guards in action offer a mix of the macabre and the Keystone Cops:

- Hoping to receive a commendation for reporting it, Michael Huston, a guard for Burns International Security Services, set fire to a trash can full of papers at Hollywood's Universal Studios in early 1992. The fire flared out of control, causing more than \$25 million in damage to Universal's sets.¹⁶
- A former Wells Fargo guard stood trial in May for the 1984 murder of a 20-year-old student at Drexel University, the campus he was hired to protect. Police charged that the guard strangled the young woman for her sneakers so he could satisfy a shoe fetish. At the trial, another ex-guard described her fellow co-workers as "alcoholics and drug addicts."¹⁷
- In New Jersey, a grand jury found that guards employed by Burns assaulted or otherwise abused spectators at the Meadowlands sports arena on more than 20 occasions between 1987 and 1990. This same company provides security at nearly one in three of the country's nuclear power plants.

16. Behar, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

17. Don Russell, "'84 Drexel Security Called Lax by Witness, Slaying Trial Told Guards Drunk, Stoned," *Philadelphia Daily News*, May 9, 1995. A former campus security chief told the court Wells Fargo would not provide extra patrols because it wasn't "cost-efficient," refusing to even buy flashlights for guards.



ELAINE OSOWSKI/UMWA ARCHIVES

Picketer asks a pertinent question.

- A Wells Fargo guard made the FBI's "10 Most Wanted List" for allegedly stealing \$7 million from a bank vault.¹⁸
- A Philadelphia ATM machine was robbed of \$40,000 after the thief told Wells Fargo guards to ignore any alarms because he was there to "fix" the machine.
- In March, a Globe Security guard choked ex-Virginia Governor Douglas Wilder at the Raleigh-Durham airport, following an exchange of harsh words when Wilder set off a metal detector.

In 1994, Wells Fargo Armored Service Corporation turned in 23 employees for theft, while another 25 were dismissed for reasons related to theft or negligence.¹⁹ The company president, Hugh Sawyer, informed Congress that "our industry is subject to an unusually high rate of internal theft because our personnel are constantly exposed to our cash in transit and in our vaults."²⁰ Sawyer acknowledged that low hourly pay rates only increased the temptation faced by his employees.

Peter Everett, an attorney representing clients who have suffered abuses because of negligent guards,

13. Hector Gutiérrez, "Buses to Get Security Cameras," *Rocky Mountain News*, Jan. 2, 1995.

14. "It's Fear of Crime that Pays for Security Firm," *Los Angeles Times*, Nov. 19, 1994.

15. "Hearings...", *op. cit.*, p. 34.

18. WRC-TV, NBC (Washington, D.C.), Aug. 24, 1994.

19. *Security Business*, n. 13, July 1, 1994.

20. "Hearings...", *op. cit.*, p. 67.



MARK POKEMPIN/IMPACT VISUALS

Armed private security guard outside Chicago Housing Authority.

contends that intense competition within the industry leads firms to make ever deeper cuts in their only real expense: labor.²¹ According to Everett, "Economic incentives now exist to hire inexperienced, minimum wage guards without conducting the most basic background checks or providing essential training. After all, the faster you can put someone on a beat that you are paying \$5 an hour to and charge \$10 for their services, the faster you will pocket the revenues."²² And — when coupled with scarce benefits — the higher the worker turnover.

William Brill put the question to Congress: "Is it going to be an industry that includes companies that field poorly paid and poorly supervised guards, that includes companies that have 500 percent turnover in a year, that hire a guard one day and put him on duty the next; that offer no training, no future for their employees — an industry that has been a career stop for any number of criminals, including mass murderers like James Huberty,

21. In the case of the largest single company in the security field, Chicago-based Borg-Warner Security Corporation, the go-go greed of the Reagan '80s continues to exert influence on corporate policies of the '90s. A management-led leveraged buyout in 1987 gave 47% of the company's stock to Merrill Lynch. Since then, company managers have been under tremendous pressure to cut costs to service \$575 million in debt left over from the leveraged buyout. (Carl Quintanilla, "Borg-Warner Held Up by Debt, Errors, Even 'Bad Guys,'" *Wall Street Journal*, May 5, 1995, p. B4.) Typically, the cuts strike deepest at wages, benefits and training.

22. "Hearings...," *op. cit.*, p. 14.

who gunned down 21 people at a McDonalds in California?"²³

With a seemingly limitless pool not only of guards, but also of potential business clients, many companies simply shrug off business lost to negligent or corrupt services, and move on to the next assignment. A steady demand for security, combined with low overhead

**"there are security officers...
who are convicted murderers
and rapists, who are
thrilled at the sight of fire,
who think that a uniform
gives them authority, that
a gun gives them power ..."**

costs, has made the guard business an attractive investment for entrepreneurs both big and small. Firms move in and out of the field so fast that even the most knowledgeable experts can only guess that the number of companies ranges between 10,000 and 15,000.

Who Watches the Watchmen?

And while vast numbers of private guards may lull some of the public into believing that protection is in place, a look at the industry's record reveals

23. *Ibid.*, p. 33.

what a false sense of security this is. In fact, the industry operates in a marketplace virtually free of regulation. A mere 17 states have established standards for training unarmed guards and 18 states do not even require training for guards equipped with weapons. In 1993, Rep. Matthew Martinez (D-Calif.) introduced legislation setting a threshold for guard training, mandating 16 hours of schooling before deployment. The bill received support from some of the security industry's major players, including top executives from Wackenhut and Wells Fargo Armored Service.

Advocates of even stricter controls contend that these security giants endorsed limited regulation as a means of erecting barriers to the competition. The training standards were set low enough so that the largest companies could easily meet the requirements, but sufficiently high as to be cost-prohibitive for locally-based mom and pop companies. In pressing for expanded background checks, security firms may also be motivated as much by their own financial liability as concern for public safety. Companies regularly pay out millions to settle lawsuits and obtain insurance against the negligence or misconduct of their guards. For example, Wells Fargo was forced to ante up \$3.7 million in 1992 to reimburse customers who were robbed in thefts linked to its guards.²⁴

Among the most outspoken critics to emerge from within the industry is Ira Lipman, president of Guardsmark, the country's fifth largest security firm. He draws a dismal picture of the industry, asserting that "there are security officers in this nation who are convicted murderers and rapists, who are thrilled at the sight of fire, who think that a uniform gives them authority, and that a gun gives them power, who cannot control their urges or contain their wants, who prey on those they are hired to protect."²⁵ The industry's greatest weakness, he contends is the lack of rigorous background checks. "[Security firms] do not even attempt to check applicants' criminal records, military service records, personal references, previous employers or educational claims. They don't test for literacy, they don't test for drug use, and they don't evaluate psychological fitness."²⁶

24. *Security Business*, n. 13, July 1, 1994.

25. "Hearings...," *op. cit.*, p. 137.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 136.

Lipman's criticism fails to address several important issues. First, while stricter standards may weed out violence prone individuals, they may do violence to the Constitution. Potential screening measures rouse civil liberties concerns about the collaboration of private firms and government law enforcement agencies. While private guard companies can now search in-state arrest records, corporate leaders, joined by a growing number of congressmembers, are demanding increased access to FBI data banks. At least two bills facilitating such access may be introduced in this session of Congress, while one Republican lawmaker has already attached a similar amendment to anti-terrorist legislation rushed through Congress in the aftermath of the Oklahoma City bombing. Leading security companies, and their allies in Congress, are also pressing for direct access to the FBI's National Crime Information Center listing criminal convictions throughout the country. The American Bankers Association already has access to this data bank.

Given the FBI's own history of illegal spying and civil liberties abuses, the prospect of the bureau sharing its data with security corporations is a dangerous development. Increased training, responsible monitoring and higher wages for guards would help ensure a greater level of accountability without threatening civil liberties.

Controlling Labor, Protest and the Poor

The expanding use of the security industry is yet another sign that social conditions in the U.S. increasingly mirror those in the Third World. As in Guatemala and El Salvador, where the rich employ paramilitaries to defend their privileges and security, in the U.S. too, justice is often measured by the size of your bank account. The same is ever

Given the FBI's history of illegal spying and civil liberties abuses, the prospect of the bureau sharing its data with security corporations is a dangerous development.

more true for access to the most basic public services. Inadequate funding and official neglect are plunging public housing, education, and transportation to levels approaching those in the Third World. Meanwhile, affluent communities continue to turn to the private sector where the most basic social services — from trash collection to the supply of drinking water, from education to mail delivery — are auctioned off to the highest bidder in a real-life variant of the board game Monopoly.

Increased privatization is further widening the gap between the haves and the have-nots. Since 1979, the real income of the richest 20 percent of the U.S. has grown by nearly 20 percent, while the 60 percent at the bottom have seen their share of the wealth decline.²⁷ This difference will be further exacerbated by new tax breaks promoted by a Republican Congress. Fifty percent of

27. John Miller, "Hard Times Roll On," *Dollars and Sense*, May/June 1995, p. 8.

Grading the Alienation Index

Borg-Warner subjected guard applicants to a 100-question survey which the company acknowledges is designed to examine the job seekers' degree of alienation and trustworthiness.

While criminal background checks may still be optional, at least one security company is not taking any chances on its employees' political opinions. In December 1994, Mel Thompson filed suit against Borg-Warner in San Francisco, alleging that the company used a political litmus test as part of its interview process for job applicants. Borg-Warner subjected California guard applicants to a 100-question survey which the company acknowledges is designed to examine the job seekers' degree of alienation and trustworthiness. Test takers are graded on an alienation index, with a goal of hiring those most likely to follow the rules. According to Thompson's attorney, a "non-alienated person is somebody who believes in traditional values of free enterprise ... The only persons that are likely to do well are people with very traditional political beliefs, the small-town Republicans."

Applicants are asked the following "true or false" questions:

- Most companies make too much profit.
- Workers usually come last as far as companies are concerned.
- Society really encourages rebelliousness by having too many rules.
- Do you sometimes enjoy going against the rules and doing things you're not supposed to do?

- Most employers try to keep their people happy just to get more work out of them.
- If the facts were known, most bosses take more from the company than their workers, but are better able to get away with it.¹

Nearly a third of the test's questions focus on attitudes toward corporate authority. Thompson was rejected after he answered such questions "incorrectly" with a question mark. His legal team, which includes the ACLU, states that "the questions on the test are not ones that have anything to do with a security guard."

Lawyers for Thompson contend that Borg-Warner's political litmus test violates the state's labor code which prohibits job discrimination because of political affiliation or participation. In March, a federal judge rebuffed an attempt by Borg-Warner to have the suit dismissed. Thompson's attorneys are currently preparing a class-action suit, the first-ever legal challenge to a political pre-employment test. Ed Chen of the ACLU believes that if the suit is successful, "this case will nip in the bud a potentially dangerous trend of hiring on the basis of one's political beliefs."² ●

1. Nina Schuyler, "Politics Makes Strange Hiring Practices," *California Lawyer*, March 1995, p. 58.
2. *Ibid.*

McVeigh On Guard

The most notorious security guard alumnus is Timothy McVeigh. After serving in Operation Desert Storm, he hooked up with Burns Security in upstate New York. He guarded Calspan Corporation, a firm which conducts research for the Defense Department.

McVeigh's behavior both on and off the job highlights the lack of screening within the industry. According to a former supervisor, "Mr. McVeigh, who had often talked about guns and had a licensed handgun for work, came in one day with a sawed-off shotgun and bandoliers slung in an 'X' over his chest. 'He came to work looking like Rambo,' Mr. Camp recalled."¹

McVeigh exhibited a pattern of aggressive behavior. His last supervisor at Burns said "he wasn't good at dealing with people. 'If somebody didn't cooperate with him, he would yell at them,' she said. 'It didn't take much to set him off.'"²

In his off-duty hours, McVeigh peppered local newspapers with angry letters complaining of crime and taxes, warning: "Do we have to shed blood to reform the current system? I hope it doesn't come to that. But it might."³

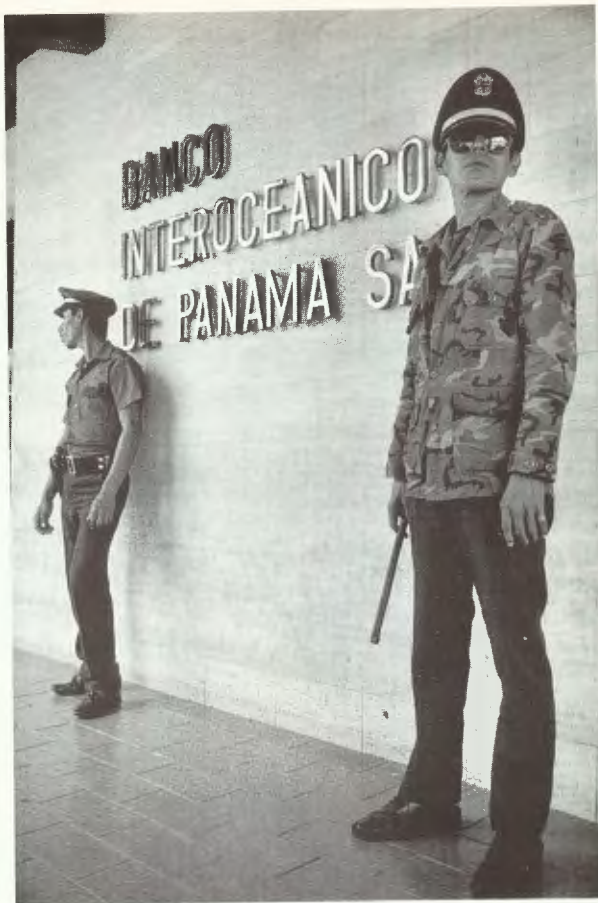
A report by AFGE (American Federation of Government Employees) issued in the aftermath of the Oklahoma bombing cited McVeigh's stint as a security guard in questioning the level of security provided to federal employees by private contract guards. The AFGE report states: "McVeigh's on-the-job performance should have raised serious questions about his fitness for a security position. ... The fact that McVeigh retained his job in spite of these behaviors suggests serious deficiencies in screening and monitoring private security guards."⁴ ●

1. Robert D. McFadden, "A Life of Solitude and Obsessions," *New York Times*, May 4, 1995.

2. Mike Vogel, "Pendleton Native Held in Blast," *Buffalo News*, Apr. 22, 1995, p. B12.

3. McFadden, op. cit.

4. AFGE's *Preliminary Report on Security and Protection of Federal Property, Employees and Other Citizens on Federal Property*, June 5, 1995, p. 2.



DAVID MALING/IMPACT VISUALS

Use of private guards, such as at this Panama bank, is the norm in the Third World and is becoming increasingly common in the U.S.

the benefits would accrue to those with more than \$200,000 in annual income, while another 30 percent would go to those making more than \$100,000.²⁸

Privileges such as these must be jealously guarded — by force if necessary. In a society marked by growing inequality, security — both private and public — is likely to be stepped-up to enforce social order and keep the poorest sectors of the population under control.²⁹

Better Options

The private security industry's rapid growth challenges those seeking progressive solutions to problems of crime and violence. Calling for more authority

for public police is not an appealing remedy in communities where police-inflicted beatings like that rained on Rodney King are the rule rather than the exception. Community organizations are emerging that recognize the dangers of placing too much trust in either public or private police, while acknowledging the need for action to combat crime, which strikes disproportionately at low-income neighborhoods. The Oakland-based Center for Third World Organizing has helped to bring some sponsors of locally focused initiatives together to share strategies and resources.

The nationwide Campaign for Community Safety and Police Accountability (CCSPA) addresses the need to make security forces accountable to the public while implementing programs designed to reduce crime by meeting social needs.

The organization calls for programs geared toward ending police brutality, giving communities greater control over anti-crime resources, and generating alternatives to imprisonment. Such efforts pose a progressive alternative to vigilante-style "neighborhood watch" groups and the increased deployment of armed guards from the public and private sector.³⁰

These community efforts offer the best hope for halting the rapid march toward the militarization of America. Community initiatives to rein in police forces need to focus on the abusive potential of the private security industry as well. In a democracy, public police forces, with all their abuses, have at least a theoretical potential for accountability through citizen review boards and other community pressures. Private security firms, however, are inherently a law unto themselves, only accountable to the corporate bottom line. ●

28. Mark Levinson, "The Republican Economic Agenda," *Dissent*, Spring 1995, p. 177.

29. Another key element, beyond the scope of this article is increased incarceration. Currently, more than 1.5 million people are behind bars — a disproportionate number are people of color. The per capita prison population of the United States is surpassed only by Russia; the U.S. ranks slightly ahead of South Africa as it emerges from apartheid's unequal application of justice. (Steven A. Holmes, "Ranks of Inmates Reach One Million in 2-Decade Rise," *New York Times*, Oct. 28, 1994.)

30. John Anner, "Community Safety and Police Accountability," *Z*, July-Aug. 1995, pp. 23-27.

Farewell to a Fascist

by Daniel Junas

Ryoichi Sasakawa, the right-wing Japanese power broker who once proclaimed himself “the world’s wealthiest fascist,”¹ is dead at age 96. His seven-decade career illuminates a history of Japanese fascism — both before and after World War II — that has received only a fraction of the attention paid to its European counterparts.

His twin career in financial speculation and ultranationalist politics began in the 1920s. Riding a wave of nationalist fervor sparked by the Japanese conquest of Manchuria, he soon established the Patriotic People’s Mass Party. It boasted thousands of members who wore black shirts in emulation of Benito Mussolini, whom Sasakawa once called “the perfect fascist and dictator.”²

In 1939, Sasakawa traveled to Europe to play a behind-the-scenes role in forging the Axis alliance. Although he posed for photographs with Mussolini, *Il Duce* declined Sasakawa’s proposal for a private, international grouping of fascist parties.

In 1942, Sasakawa won election to the Japanese Diet on a platform of intensified aggression in Southeast Asia. After the war, he was jailed as a Class A war crimes suspect, along with two men who would become key allies in postwar Japan: Yoshio Kodama, implicated in the Lockheed scandal of the 1970s; and Nobusuke Kishi, a member of Prime Minister Tojo’s wartime cabinet who served as Prime Minister himself from 1957 to 1960.

This trio was released from Sugamo Prison on Christmas Eve, 1948. Although their release has never been publicly explained, it is suspected that they gained their freedom by promising



Sasakawa cultivated people he thought could lend him credibility.

to cooperate with U.S. authorities. Sasakawa quickly gained a legal monopoly over gambling on motorboat races and distributed much of the proceeds to a variety of right-wing causes that supported U.S. policy toward Japan.

Sasakawa also renewed his right-wing internationalism, paying special attention to regions that produced oil. He maintained extensive interests in the Middle East, particularly Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.³ In oil-rich Indonesia, he “gave” a Japanese wife to nationalist leader Sukarno, but later helped finance the CIA-backed 1965 coup that overthrew him and left hundreds of thousands of Indonesian nationalists and communists murdered.

Sasakawa also helped found the World Anti-Communist League.⁴ Organized initially by the governments of Taiwan and South Korea, WACL became

the meeting ground for a motley conglomeration of hard-line anticommunists, fascists, and antisemites. In the 1980s the Reagan administration enlisted WACL in its global struggle against communism, to provide support for such “freedom fighters” as the Nicaraguan contras.

Sasakawa’s most profound legacy, however, may be his backing for the global, right-wing political machine whose figurehead is Rev. Sun Myung Moon. Sasakawa, along with his former prisonmates, Kodama and Kishi, helped make the Moon organization into a global empire,⁵ reaching into over a hundred nations, with a budget in the hundreds of millions, if not billions of dollars. Its organizational arms extend into religion, academia, politics, the media, business, the military, and the arts. Moon’s, and therefore Sasakawa’s, influence continues to be felt in the U.S. through the right-wing *Washington Times*.

In old age, Sasakawa attempted to buy respectability. Becoming a prolific philanthropist, he bestowed enormous gifts on the United Nations and a wide range of charities, including former President Carter’s Global 2000 project and his Carter Presidential Center in Atlanta.⁶ Sasakawa’s generosity helped him win the Mahatma Gandhi World Peace Award, but the award that he coveted above all others — the Nobel Peace Prize — eluded him.⁷ Even the old fascist’s millions could not completely erase his legacy of death and destruction. ●

Daniel Junas is a Seattle-based researcher who has written extensively on right-wing movements including the Unification Church and citizen militia movements.

1. “The Godfather-san,” *Time*, Aug. 26, 1974, p. 42.

2. Alec Dubro and David E. Kaplan, “Soft-Core Fascism,” *Village Voice*, Oct. 4, 1983, pp. 28-29. Unless otherwise noted, Sasakawa’s career highlights are sourced to this article.

3. “Profile: Sasagawa Ryoichi: Impresario of the Japanese Right,” *Ampo* (Tokyo), v. 6, n. 1, p. 44.

4. John Roberts, “Ryoichi Sasakawa: Nippon’s right-wing musclem,” *Insight*, Apr. 1978, p. 9.

5. Ann Crittenden, “Moon’s Sect Pushes Pro-Seoul Activities,” *New York Times*, May 25, 1976, p. A16.

6. Karen Grassmuck, “Japanese Businessman’s Background Stirs Debate Over Whether Colleges Should Accept His Gifts,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 2, 1990, pp. 1, 28-29; Elizabeth Kurylo, “Doubt on Carter Charity Donors,” Cox News Service, *San Francisco Chronicle*, Apr. 17, 1991.

7. Joshua B. Good, “Fascist endows fellowship,” *Daily Californian*, Feb. 8, 1990, pp. 1, 8.

The AFL-CIO In Moscow

The Cold War That Never Ends

by David Bacon

In 1990, Mikhail Gorbachev visited the U.S. and spoke at Stanford University. While 50 business leaders clamored for the Soviet Premier's attention, Jack Henning, the only trade unionist present, tried unsuccessfully to ask a question. Later, the progressive executive secretary-treasurer of the California Labor Federation wrote Gorbachev in a prophetic letter:

We are concerned that certain American corporations will seek to use the Soviet Union as a haven for their low-wage, long-hour conditions of employment at the expense of our workers. They will do this in the name of assisting the market economy proposals espoused in your country. We do not believe this is your intent, but we seek assurance that the new economic order of the USSR will not be so used.¹

Henning never got a reply. Within a year Gorbachev was gone, the USSR itself was just a memory, and Russia's standard of living was in free fall. But Henning's concern hangs in the air as U.S. and European companies invest in privatized enterprises and position themselves in the new Russian economy.

His letter goes to the heart of the AFL-CIO's foreign policy and highlights the question of what the relationship is between U.S. and international labor movements: Is it to join with workers in other countries for mutual protection against the global activities of transnational corporations, or to act as an arm of U.S. foreign policy and business interests?

David Bacon is a San Francisco Bay area-based labor journalist and photographer who has been published by Pacific News Service, *The Nation*, *the Progressive*, *Z*, and numerous daily and weekly papers and magazines. He was a labor organizer for two decades and factory worker for many years.

1. *California AFL-CIO News*, Aug. 10, 1990.



Lane Kirkland helped set labor's Cold War agenda.

In October, the AFL-CIO faces the first contested election in decades for its top leadership. The original and key demand of those advocating change was the replacement of President Lane Kirkland who was, in fact, forced into retirement. Some charged that in his 16-year tenure, Kirkland spent too much time on international affairs, and too little on the problems of U.S. workers. But the real problem, say others, is the nature of the activity on both fronts. Rather than continuing the Cold War agenda of creating unions abroad sympathetic to U.S. interests, they say, the AFL-CIO should be actively promoting a global labor framework within which workers can confront the activity of transnational corporations. While these companies move production and investment from country to country at the speed of a phone call in search of weak unions and low wages, the labor movement — with important exceptions — has had a hard time meeting the challenge.

AFL-CIO policy and activity in Russia, although relatively unknown to most

union members, is the clearest expression that the Cold War values and goals of federation leaders such as Kirkland continue. As members and leaders look for a new direction, they will have to examine this policy closely, and decide how to respond to the concern Henning put to Gorbachev five years ago.

Shaping Russian Unions

Under Kirkland, the AFL-CIO's growing network in Russia has been closely linked to U.S. foreign policy and business goals. There, as in many Third World countries, the federation, with help from the Free Trade Union Institute (FTUI), a non-profit corporation established by AFL-CIO's

Department of International Affairs,² opted to sponsor an "independent" labor movement rather than work with the old unions. Soviet-era unions were structured very differently from their U.S. counterparts. "[They] didn't see themselves as collective bargaining agents, but as agents of production," says Lynn Williams, retired president of the United Steelworkers. "Their collective bargaining agreements were not remotely like ours."³ Instead, their main function was to administer housing, hospitals, schools, vacations, child-care and pensions, and to distribute

2. The Free Trade Union Institute is a non-profit corporation set up by the AFL-CIO Department of International Affairs, which has a long history of links to the State Department and CIA. The federation established FTUI in 1977 to carry on the work of the CIA-connected Free Trade Union Committee and to promote U.S. policy objectives among unions in Eastern Europe, and set up sister institutes in the 1960s to do the same in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. FTUI is one of four core organizations through which the National Endowment for Democracy channels funding. The others are the Center for Private Enterprise, and the international institutes of the Democratic and Republican Parties. FTUI's activities are also funded by the Agency for International Development and the U.S. Information Agency; it then coordinates the funding for the other regional institutes.

3. Interview, July 1995.

consumer goods to workers in large enterprises. They cooperated with management to increase productivity and forge a worker-management alliance to lobby the government for greater resources for their enterprise.⁴

The changes during perestroika and after the dissolution of the Soviet Union had an enormous impact. The old union federation, the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions, died with the Communist Party and the USSR, and made way for a new Russian national federation — the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia (FNPR). (Despite the term “independent,” these were official unions and are still referred to as such; the independent unions are those which started outside the old framework.) A new organization, the General Confederation of Trade Unions (GCTU), serves as an umbrella for unions throughout the former Soviet republics.⁵

In the last years of the USSR, groups of workers, especially coal miners, began to break away from the old unions. The government had failed to invest in the aging, inefficient coal mines despite their central importance to industry. In the wake of a series of strikes starting in 1989 and involving hundreds of thou-

“We are concerned that certain American corporations will seek to use the Soviet Union as a haven for their low-wage, long-hour conditions of employment at the expense of our workers.”

— Jack Henning, U.S. union leader

sands of miners, the Independent Miners Union (NPG), was created. Its membership grew to 50,000 out of the country's 800,000 miners and sparked the formation of other independent unions for air traffic controllers, airline pilots, and workers around the country.



DAVID BACON

“More and more we’re facing the same employers and tackling the same problems of jobs, inflation, unemployment and the globalization of trade.”
— Vasily Balog, Russian union leader

Nonetheless, membership in these non-official unions has never exceeded about 3 percent of the workforce.

PIER Pressure

In 1989, during this period of transition U.S. interest in Soviet labor increased. The Bush administration sent Anthony G. Freeman, special assistant to the secretary of state and coordinator of international labor affairs, on a tour of industrial regions of the USSR. According to Russian journalist Kirill Buketov, covert activity also increased as U.S. intelligence agencies initiated a project concentrating on the Russian workers' movement.⁶

The AFL-CIO also stepped up activity, setting up a committee on perestroika. After the big miners' strike in 1989, FTUI invited strike leaders to the U.S. and gave them financial and material support. In June 1990, Richard Wilson, director of programs for FTUI, visited the USSR, with the secretary-treasurer of the United Mine Workers of America (UMW), John Banovic. Six months later, Wilson returned to attend a founding conference of the NPG. In 1991, a team of labor and management representatives from the UMW and the U.S. coal industry followed.⁷

As a result of these exchanges, FTUI sparked the creation in 1991 of Partners in Economic Reform (PIER), bringing to-

gether the U.S. coal industry association, the UMW, the U.S. government's Mine Safety Administration, the Russian coal ministry, and the independent coal miners' union, the NPG. Despite representing over 80 percent of the workforce, the official miners' union, the Russian Union of Coal Industry Workers (PRUP) is not represented.

According to FTUI, “this program is aimed at providing technical assistance and promoting U.S. investment in order to revitalize these coal regions, and to provide a model for other sectors of the Soviet economy in terms of adapting to a market economic system.” In January 1992, President Bush made the project part of a federal energy sector initiative for aid to Russia.⁸

The leadership structure reflects the group's orientation. PIER is headed by ex-Labor Secretary Bill Usery. The U.S. National Mining Association is represented by Gen. Rich Lawson (ret.) and the retired president of the Peabody Coal Company, Robert Quenon, sits on the board along with CSX president John Snow. While cooperating with unions in Russia in 1992, Peabody spearheaded the coal companies that provoked a long and bitter strike with the UMW in U.S. coal fields. Kirkland and UMW President Rich Trumka also sit on the project's board of trustees.⁹

4. David Mandel, *Rabotyagi — Perestroika and After Viewed from Below* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1994), pp. 7-14.

5. Interview, Vasily Balog, head of the international department of the GCTU, June 1995.

6. Kirill Buketov, “Undeclared War: The AFL-CIO vs. the Russian Labor Movement,” Moscow, 1995, unpublished.

7. Interview, Richard Wilson, July 14, 1995.

8. *Assisting Democratic Trade Unions in the Former Soviet Union*, Report of the Free Trade Union Institute, Washington, D.C., 1992.

9. Interview, PIER spokesman Neal DeLaurentis, July 1995.

The effect of so many big business interests did not go unnoticed. In November 1994, the head of the FSK, the Russian intelligence service, appeared on television, and accused the project of advancing the commercial interests of U.S. corporations in gaining a favorable position in the Russian coal industry.¹⁰

FTUI asserts that UMW representatives are simply training NPG members in health and safety practices, and in ways of asserting workplace rights.

The coal project was the first of a series of FTUI-organized programs. Critics charge that the institute opposes any protest against government economic policies. Instead, its programs are designed to mobilize political support for IMF-dictated economic reforms and for the Yeltsin government, which has been willing to implement them. These reforms create conditions for multinational investment — the same conditions large corporations look for in any country — a low standard of living, weak and divided unions, and a political structure favoring investment over the needs of workers. They also encourage privatization. Asked if he saw a basic conflict with privatization and U.S. investment generally, FTUI director Wilson replied, “No, of course not.” Russian workers are desperate, he says. “They’ll take whatever they can get [including] privatization, if it’s serious, or investment, if it’s serious.”¹¹

The focus of PIER activity lends credence to charges that it supports the interests of international capital. The coal project, which has so far received \$7.64 million from the Agency for International Development (AID),¹² provides technical advice and logistical support to the World Bank. In 1994, the Bank recommended that Moscow close unprofitable and inefficient mines to make the industry a more attractive investment. A Bank team is negotiating the terms of a possible \$500-600 million loan to restructure the mining industry if it cuts 400,000 of its 800,000 jobs.¹³

After helping bring Yeltsin to power and forming the backbone of the independent union movement, Russian miners would find the enormous job losses a bitter pill — especially since both the past head of the NPG, Victor Utkin, and its present leader, Sasha

Sergeev, are on Yeltsin’s council of advisers. For U.S. and Western European miners, large investments by foreign coal companies in more efficient Russian mines, combined with the comparatively low wages of Russian miners, might lead to the export of Russian coal and loss of their jobs.

RAFTURE Raids

In April 1992, following the formation of the PIER coal project, FTUI established a Moscow office. Its first project, the Russian American Foundation for Trade Union Research and Education (RAFTURE), receives all its funding from the AID through grants administered by FTUI. The foundation was necessary, according to FTUI, because the independent unions “lacked a democratic national labor center through 1994, and generally acted separately.”¹⁴

According to FTUI documents, the “Correspondents’ Network of reporters around Russia sends basic information to RAFTURE on developments in the workers’ movement to help track both the official trade unions, and different anti-democratic union groups.”

The scale of the RAFTURE program dwarfs other FTUI activities throughout Eastern Europe. Russian intellectuals run RAFTURE with worker advice, according to Wilson. “We had a lot of contact with Russian dissidents way before we had any [trade union] contacts over there,” he explained.¹⁵ But despite local input, decisions about its activities are made in the Moscow FTUI office, which controls funding.¹⁶

Official unions charge that RAFTURE-sponsored unions defend privatization — in the interest of foreign companies. They point to the country’s telephone company, Russian Telecom, in which three U.S. companies hold a 35 percent stake. Last year, when Yeltsin proposed

allowing them to increase their holdings to more than 60 percent, the official union fought back with a one-day strike and eventually defeated the proposal; the alternative communications unions favored the increased privatization.¹⁷

A key RAFTURE program, the Organizers Project, which spent \$660,000 last year, employs 20 organizers responsible for establishing new independent unions.¹⁸ According to Leslie Deak, a U.S. trade unionist who worked in FTUI’s Moscow office in 1994, the choice of where and whom to organize is made in that office by FTUI’s AFL-CIO staff. “A lot of work done in Russia is based on the needs of U.S. unions,” she says.¹⁹

And since over 85 percent of Russian workers belong to official unions, RAFTURE organizers inevitably set up competing organizations designed to strip away the official union’s members and bargaining rights. Aleksandr Sereshnikov, who was employed by RAFTURE in its trade union education program, describes one incident at the Central Heating Plant in Novosibirsk:

An organizer comes to the factory and starts trying to tempt the workers [by saying]: “Set up a trade union, we’ll give you a fax and a photo copier, and a regular financial sustainer.” Someone sets to work on that enthusiastically, enters into dispute with management, tries to discredit the FNPR [official] union committee, and what’s the result? Fights break out within the labor collective, the management takes advantage of this to weaken the existing trade union committee, and then the troublemakers are simply sacked. The new trade union isn’t established, the old one is weakened, and the most militant workers are out on the street.²⁰

Originally, Victor Utkin, past president of NPG, was appointed to head the Organizers Project. In December 1993, he announced the formation of the short-lived Association of Free Trade Unions of Russia at a Moscow seminar and was elected its chair. The largest independent union supported by FTUI,

10. Buketov, *op. cit.*

11. Interview, Richard Wilson, July 1995.

12. Interview, AID spokesman Russell Porter, July 1995.

13. Interviews with Wilson and DeLaurentis, July 1995.

14. FTUI, 1994 Annual Report, *op. cit.*

15. Interview, July 1995.

16. Interview, Leslie Deak, June 1995.

17. Interview with Victor Maleshko, St. Petersburg chair of the official Communication Workers Union of Russia, July 1995.

18. Interview with Wilson, July 1995.

19. Interview, Aug. 1995.

20. Buketov, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

SotsProf, then lost its organization in the Urals to a raid led by RAFTURE's organizers. The head of SotsProf, Sergei Khranov, then sent a letter to the FTUI executive director in Washington, D.C., demanding the removal of Victor Utkin as head of the Organizers Project. Although FTUI's Wilson says that these problems have been resolved, Khranov's opinion of RAFTURE remains negative: "... [T]he Russian part of RAFTURE is hindering the development of the free trade unions," he charged. "The foundation provokes conflicts, and then parasitizes these situations."²¹

FTUI also funds the administrative staff of certain unions through its intern program. Ten people on the staff of SotsProf, and a like number on the staff of the Independent Miners Union, are paid through the program. But funding positions is also a means of control, according to Sereshnikov. "Refusing a pile of greenbacks isn't so easy," Sereshnikov said. "This is how the Americans control them. If trade union leaders show independence, let's say in the question of calling a strike, the Americans can easily put them back in their place."²²

The National Endowment for Democracy is also in on the action. Through FTUI, it has funded a newspaper, *Delo*, from its inception and gave it \$250,000 last year.²³ The paper's editorial policy is very supportive of the Yeltsin government, and is described by FTUI as advocating "social partnerships among labor, business and government." *Delo* editor, Boris Batarchuk, was formerly an editor of the Communist Party journal "Problems of Peace and Socialism."²⁴ *Delo* constantly attacks the official unions. When they organize strikes and demonstrations against nonpayment of wages or unem-



DAVID REED/IMPACT VISUALS

Since the dissolution of the USSR, the failure of the social safety net has meant increased poverty, homelessness, and unemployment.

ployment, *Delo* urges workers not to take part.²⁵ Among many articles favoring privatization and neoliberal economic reforms, it published one called "How to Restore Order in Your House," by Pedro Daza Valenzuelo, head of the Chilean "Libertad" institute supported by Gen. Augusto Pinochet.²⁶

When Yeltsin dissolved the elected Russian Parliament, and shelled the Parliament building, *Delo* immediately supported him. The FNPR condemned the action, and the government cut off telephone lines to its building. Pavel Kudyukin, RAFTURE's first chief and formerly deputy labor minister in the Russian government, condemned calls for the dissolution of the FNPR in an open letter, and was forced to resign from RAFTURE.²⁷

Russian unionists fear that the RAFTURE program may be even more aggressively pro-U.S. than appears on the surface, and its use of information more suspect. FTUI's report describes a RAFTURE program: The "Correspondents' Network of reporters in a dozen regions ... send[s] basic information to RAFTURE on developments in the workers' move-

ment ... RAFTURE draws on the Correspondents' Network, the clippings service, and other sources of information for its Database of Workers Organizations, an invaluable tool for keeping track of both the free labor movement, the official trade unions, and different anti-democratic union groups."²⁸ Following Yeltsin's attack on parliament, RAFTURE planned to use the network and database to build a new electoral and political force based in the independent unions, supporting Yegor Gaidar, architect of Yeltsin's shock therapy economic policies.²⁹

Other RAFTURE-funded projects include four radio stations, which got \$660,000 last year from AID, via FTUI and the Glasnost Foundation. RAFTURE also has television programs, a labor education program, a public relations department, and an advisory council of trade union leaders. The Rule of Law Program sets up Workers Rights Centers, which advise workers on ways to enforce their legal rights, and received \$250,000 in a separate AID grant.³⁰

21. Buketov, *op. cit.*, pp. 18, 22.

22. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 21.

23. Interview with Wilson, July 1995.

24. FTUI, 1994 Annual Report, *op. cit.*

25. Interviews with Buzgalin and Maleshko, May, July 1995.

26. Buketov, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 33.

28. FTUI, 1994 Annual Report, *op. cit.*

29. Buketov, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

30. Interview with Wilson, July 1995.

Labor Responds

If FTUI is successfully gathering information, it is doing less well disseminating it. FTUI reports on its activity in Moscow make no mention of the economic crisis faced by Russian workers, nor of the increasing number of strikes and demonstrations organized in response to it. Yet that movement is growing, and the official unions are, in general, leading it.

In spring 1992, more than 2.5 million workers in the Russian health care system struck for three weeks to protest the fact that the Yeltsin government had budgeted only 40 percent of the actual cost of running the system. In the preceding two months, most medical personnel hadn't received salaries.³¹ Led by the 4.5 million-member Russian Union of Medical Workers, affiliated to the FNPR, the strike was "to secure the financing of medical institutions and ensure that health care protection of the population would have a budget that would rise with the cost of living," said union President Mikhail Kuzmenko.³²

Throughout the country, labor was making its needs known. In the first half of 1994, unions of communications and education workers, coal miners, pilots and shipyard workers organized strikes. Pickets and demonstrations were sponsored by organized woodworkers, metalworkers, and by unions in the nuclear, oil and gas, textile, machine, defense and fishing industries. Predictably, *Delo* attacked coal miners who supported these actions.

The rank and file is growing stronger. Buketov notes that "in the past, the leadership of the FNPR called collective actions, but quickly curtailed them after failing to receive support from below. Now the FNPR coordinates actions organized through initiatives

FTUI reports make no mention of the economic crisis faced by Russian workers, or of strikes and demonstrations organized in response to it.

31. David Bacon, "Political Tightrope for Yeltsin," *Pacific News Service*, June 23, 1992.

32. Interview, June 1992.



FTUI head Paul Somogyi (l.) with Boris Batarchuk, editor of *Delo*.

from the ranks." Individual actions by unions culminated in coordinated demonstrations in cities throughout the country on October 27, 1994, organized by the FNPR, over nonpayment of wages.³³

On February 8, 500,000 coal workers in 189 mines and 21 open pits again struck in a one-day national action. According to Moscow correspondent Rajiv Tiwari, "the official and independent trade unions of coal miners have buried their differences and for the first time joined hands in the strike." Their key demand was payment of the government's 2.5 billion ruble debt to the coal industry, which led to nonpayment of wages for the three months before the strike.³⁴

Finally, on April 12, more than half a million workers demonstrated in various cities in a "day of all-Russian united collective trade union action," organized by FNPR. They demanded payment of wages and a freeze on unemployment. In some regions, they also called for new presidential elections, and more humane economic reforms.³⁵

The State Department

Despite growing cooperation on the ground between independent and official unions, at least among coal miners, and increased protest over such basic issues as payment of wages, the FTUI office still works only with the independents and attacks the official unions. That the State Department apparently operates under the same policy came to light after Mary Donovan, a

33. Kirill Buketov, *The Russian Trade Union Movement During the First Half of 1994*, KAS-KOR Report on Russian Trade Unions, Moscow, 1994, p. 4.

34. Rajiv Tiwari, *InterPress Service*, Moscow, Feb. 8, 1995.

35. Renfrey Clarke, "Russian Union Day of Action Makes an Impact," *Internet*, Moscow, Apr. 20, 1995.

business representative of the big New York City Musicians Union Local 802, traveled to Russia in 1992. She was part of a union delegation, invited by the General Confederation of Trade Unions (GCTU) to conduct a seminar on collective bargaining, health and safety, and other areas of union activity.

I had heard a lot about the GCTU including the fact that it was a former arm of the Communist Party and had used the KGB to suppress workers. Nevertheless, the federation still represents approximately 95 percent of the workforce in the republics of the former Soviet Union. Due to the changing economic situation, these workers are now confronted by many of the same problems that unions in this country face. ... [T]he Cold War is over, and it is up to individuals — including trade unionists — to see that it stays over.³⁶

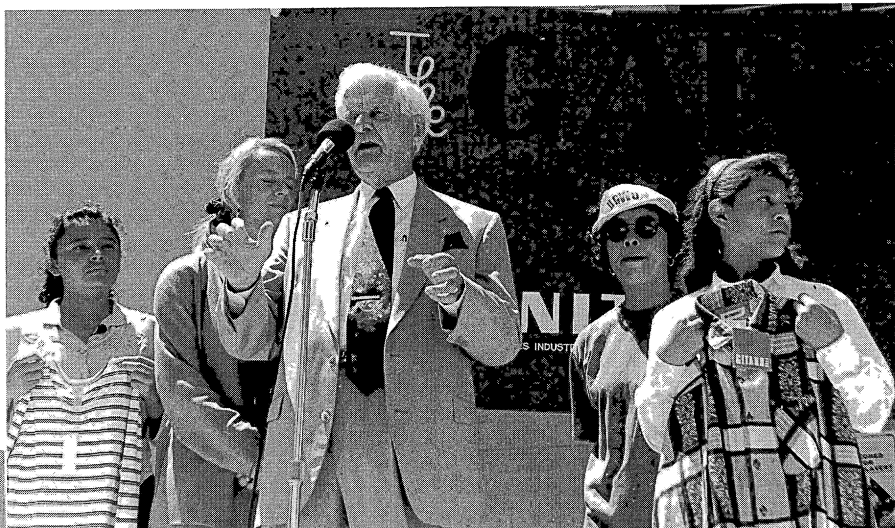
Not everyone agrees. On the seminar's third day, Matthew Boyce, labor attaché at the U.S. Embassy, showed up at the conference and announced that the U.S. participants were in violation of the AFL-CIO's policy forbidding contact between U.S. and official Russian trade unionists. "[U.S.] union representatives are apparently expected to register with the State Department," Donovan commented, even though "U.S. businessmen — who were crawling all over Moscow and St. Petersburg — are exempt from this expectation." Boyce later wrote in the *Wall Street Journal* that he had kept tabs on the delegation throughout its three-week stay.³⁷

Former FTUI staffer Deak says that non-contact is still "a hard-and-fast rule. Those ex-official unions were completely irrelevant [to FTUI]. We didn't even think about them or talk to them." This policy of supporting only unions hostile to the FNPR federation, she believes, "comes from the top down. This is Lane Kirkland's policy." But it's one which she has increasingly questioned. "We've done a very poor job at fostering unity. The AFL-CIO has really enforced the fracturing of the movement there. They justify it by saying the official unions are corrupt, or don't represent people properly, but some unions in this

36. Mary Donovan, "Union to Union in Moscow," *Allegro*, Dec., 1992.

37. Cited in *ibid*.

country are, too." In her view, the old unions run a spectrum: a small number are extremely corrupt, a large middle ground "just don't know how to change to become more representative," and a few have made that change. "I don't believe," Deak continues, "you can really see what's in the best interest of the Russian trade union movement, or Russia itself, if you're only talking to 3 percent of the workers. They have a highly organized trade union movement. If your goal is to organize workers, you have to look at that."³⁸



DAVID BACON

Progressive AFL-CIO leader Jack Henning (above) condemns the abuses of maquiladora workers in Central America where cheap labor and lax environmental standards lure companies like The Gap, at the expense of workers in both countries. Russian workers too, are affected by the globalization of capital. Left, Moscow women sell personal clothing on the street.



SEAN SPRAGUE/IMPACT VISUALS

Global Labor Movement?

The concerns which Jack Henning raised with Gorbachev in 1990 still form the center of the debate over the FTUI policy in Moscow. The World Bank loan to make coal mines more profitable highlights them, as do other investments by oil and communications companies, the prospect of mass unemployment, and a further breakdown of the safety net for workers generally. FTUI's Moscow mission will ultimately be assessed by workers, both in the U.S. and Russia, according to how well it helps create a united and strong movement of workers to confront the situation Henning warned against.

Henning's solution is global unionism, to confront global capitalism. Retired Steelworkers President Lynn Williams sees the same goal:

My general sense is that there are lines to be drawn [between legitimate and illegitimate unions], but there's a compelling need to develop an international labor movement as quickly as possible. We can only do that by reaching out and working with people.

Williams expresses concern that Russia's official unions still generally include management. For trade unionists in most countries, since management and workers are in basic conflict, unions dominated by management are seen as illegitimate. Objecting to man-

agement control of unions is "not an unreasonable line to draw," but because local conditions around the world vary, the issue of legitimacy is not black and white. The important thing, he concludes, is "that it is to our advantage to help build a labor movement which is genuine, independent, honestly led, and which is committed to the cause of its own members, and the cause of the international labor movement."³⁹

That perspective is compatible with the view of Vasily Balog, head of international affairs for the GCTU, the federation of official unions for all the former Soviet republics. "More and more," he says, "we're facing the same employers and tackling the same problems of jobs, inflation, unemployment and the globalization of trade." Balog proposes that international union relationships be guided by the principles of "common understanding, mutual respect, tolerance, willingness to speak and listen to each other, and concern for what unites us rather than what divides us."⁴⁰ The question remains: Is that goal compatible with the activities of the Moscow FTUI office? ●

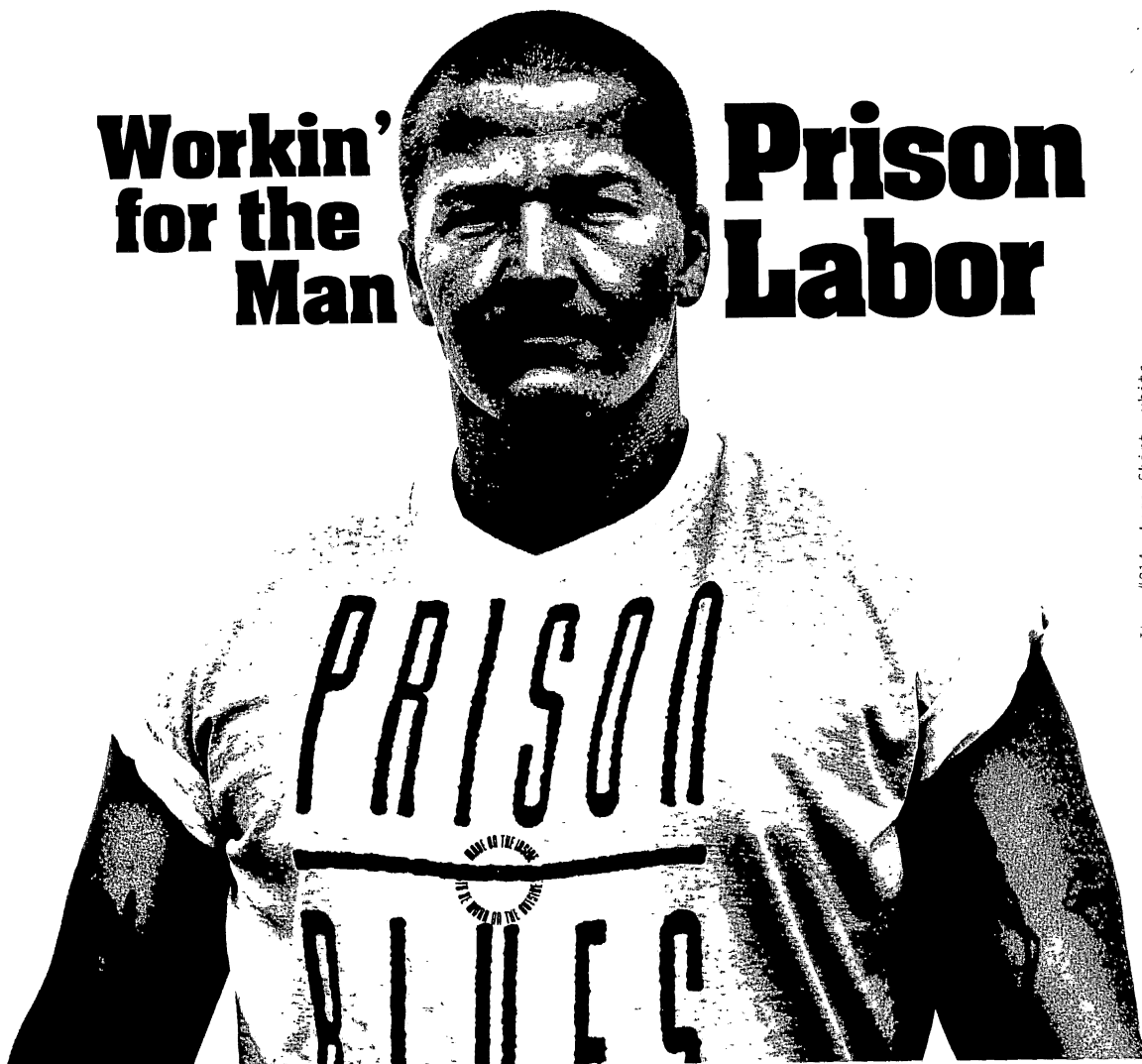
38. Interview, June 1995.

39. Interview, July 1995.

40. Interview, June 1995.

Workin'
for the
Man

Prison
Labor



Item #214, Logo Shirt, white

stone-washed
"Blues" jeans
breasted opening.
-inches
dies.
by 23-inches

ed denim
the
es logo
ed on it.

Item #404, Striped Inmate Shirt with zipper, long sleeves

by Reese Erlich

Convicted kidnapper Dino Navarrete doesn't smile much as he surveys the sewing machines at Soledad prison's sprawling workshop. The short, stocky man with tattoos rippling his muscled forearms earns 45 cents an hour making blue work shirts in a medium-security prison near Monterey, California. After deductions, he earns about \$60 for an entire month of nine-hour days.

"They put you on a machine and expect you to put out for them," says

Reese Erlich, a free-lance reporter, teaches journalism at California State University, Hayward. Portions of this article appeared in the UAW's magazine *Solidarity*. Erlich co-produced the PBS-TV documentary *Prison Labor/Prison Blues* for We Do the Work productions. For VHS tapes, call 510/547-8484. Kyung Sung Yu provided invaluable reporting and research for this article.

Photo: Catalogue of Prison Blues Clothing Co., Oregon State Prison System, 1995.

Navarrete. "Nobody wants to do that. These jobs are jokes to most inmates here."¹ California long ago stopped claiming that prison labor rehabilitates inmates. Wardens just want to keep them occupied. If prisoners refuse to work, they are moved to disciplinary housing and lose canteen privileges. Most importantly, they lose "good time" credit that reduces their sentence.

Navarrete was surprised to learn that California has been exporting prison-made clothing to Asia. He and the other prisoners had no idea that California, along with Oregon, was doing exactly what the U.S. has been lambasting China for — exporting prison-made goods. "You might just as well call this slave la-

bor, then," says Navarrete. "If they're selling it overseas, you know they're making money. Where's the money going to? It ain't going to us." For the first time in the interview, Navarrete's usual scowl turned briefly into a smile.

Federal law prohibits domestic commerce in prison-made goods unless inmates are paid "prevailing wage." But because the law doesn't apply to exports, no California prison officials will end up in cells alongside their "employees."

Interestingly enough, prison authorities on both sides of the Pacific make similar arguments to justify prison labor. "We want prisoners to learn a working skill," says Mai Lin Hua, warden at China's maximum security Shanghai Jail. He admits that his prisoners are forced to work, facing

1. On-site interview, Mar. 1994.

solitary confinement if they refuse. He also says China no longer exports prison-made goods to the U.S.²

U.S. prison officials echo a similar line, except they claim the labor is voluntary. Fred Nichols, head of Oregon's "Prison Blues" jeans-making operation, says, "We provide extra training for them. Here the inmates volunteer."³

But prisoners in Oregon, like those virtually everywhere else in the U.S., get time subtracted from their sentences for working in prison industries. If prisoners don't work, they serve longer sentences, lose privileges, and risk solitary confinement.

So what's the real difference between China's "forced labor" and that in the U.S. prison system? Brad Haga, marketing director for Oregon Prison Industries, sheepishly admits, "Perhaps it smacks of old-fashioned imperialism to be making those kinds of judgments."⁴

A Dynamic Sector

Regardless of such qualms, hundreds of thousands of American prisoners now work in what is becoming a growth business: prison industries. The term encompasses several distinct but related arrangements: Federal and state prisons employ inmates to produce goods for sale to government and for the open market. Private companies as well contract with prisons to hire prisoners. And private prisons similarly employ inmate labor for private profit, either for outside companies or for the prison operators themselves. What all three arrangements share is the exploitation of a growing and literally captive labor pool.

And that pool is overflowing. The U.S. now has 1.12 million people behind bars, and its incarceration rate is second only to Russia's. The U.S. rate is more than four times Canada's, five times England's, and 14 times Japan's.⁵

Some cite the country's violent traditions, chronic social tensions, and high crime rates to explain this perverse accomplishment. But such explanations beg the question of how society responds to crime and its causes. Instead of addressing the causes of criminality, political leaders and the mass media have

2. Interview with Warden Mai Lin Hua at the Shanghai Jail, July 5, 1994.

3. Interview with Fred Nichols, Oct. 17, 1994.

4. Interview with Brad Haga, Jan. 28, 1994.

5. Steven A. Holmes, "Ranks of Inmates Reach One Million in a 2-Decade Rise," *New York Times*, Oct. 28, 1994.

If prisoners don't work, they serve longer sentences, lose privileges, and risk solitary. So what's the real difference between China's "forced labor" and that in the U.S.?

inflamed popular concern about crime and sparked revulsion at notorious offenses. Hyped-up moral panics and crime hysteria lead to good ratings and easy political points. They also deflect attention from the causes of crime. The goal becomes simply to suppress deviance, a stance that prepares the terrain for a harshly repressive response to crime.

For those at the bottom, public policy has become all stick and no carrot. "Three strikes" and other mandatory

minimum laws, the war on drugs, and moves to abolish parole are the concrete embodiments of the repressive approach. In the past 20 years, while serious crime rates have remained relatively stable, the incarceration rate has more than doubled. As programs for the poor and disadvantaged face the axe, spending for police and prisons grows rapidly.

As a result, U.S. prisons are jam-packed. To keep prisoners busy and increase revenues, prisons across the country are expanding prison industries. And conservative politicians are jumping on the bandwagon. Presidential candidate Sen. Phil Gramm (R-Texas) has called for prison labor to pay half the cost of the federal prison system.⁶

But beneath these pragmatic arguments lurks a darker subtext: the need to impose discipline and control over an ever-larger and increasingly restive prison population. Critics also charge

6. Speech to National Rifle Association, May 20, 1995.

Private Prisons: A Bargain?

Private prison officials argue that their operations are more efficient than state facilities and give taxpayers a better bargain for their money. Most private prisons are too new to make any final judgment on that claim. So far, virtually all U.S. private prisons handle low- and medium-security prisoners, leaving the tougher criminals to state care. Private prison companies thus skim off the easiest and least expensive prisoners to handle.

But it is not entirely clear that private companies can even operate medium-security prisons more cheaply when there's a fair comparison. The state of Louisiana is running an interesting experiment. It set up three medium-security prisons at the same time, one run by the state, one by Corrections Corporation of America, and one by Wackenhut. In March 1993, a legislative review committee found the per prisoner cost for each facility was virtually the same.¹

Critics have long argued that private prisons are tempted to abuse inmates by skimping on food and other

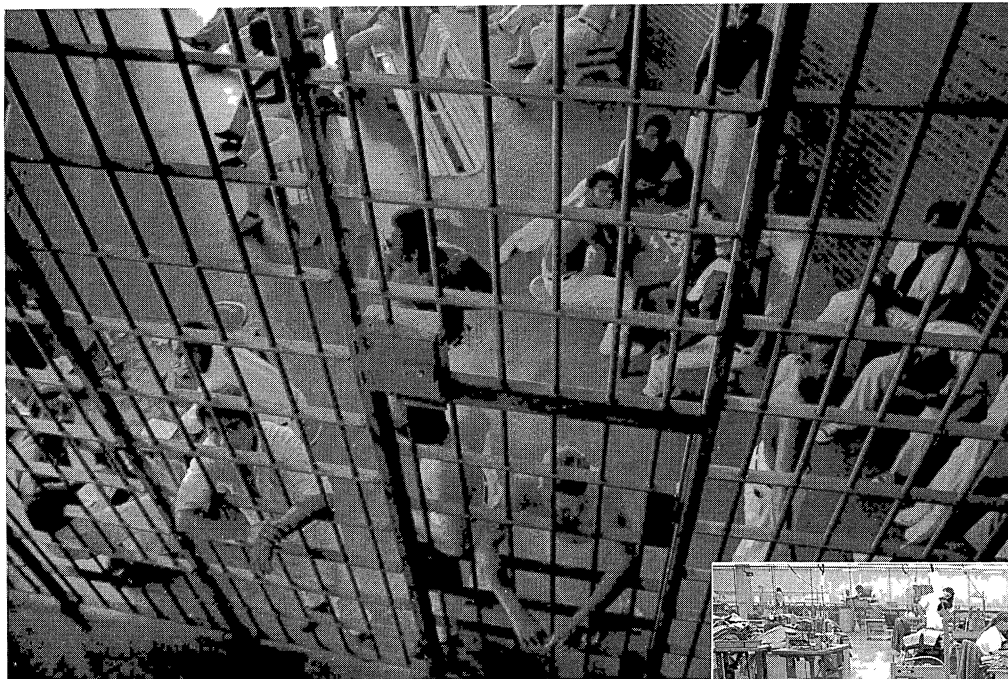
basics in order to increase profits. The privately operated Immigration and Naturalization Service detention center at Elizabeth, New Jersey, is a case in point. Immigrants charged with illegal entry into the U.S. had long complained about inedible food, dirty clothes and insects in the beds at the Esmor Correctional Services facility. Their complaints were ignored. Then, on June 18, hundreds of detainees rebelled, nearly destroying the prison.²

An INS report on the incident concluded that Esmor had skimmed on food, building repairs, and guard salaries in order to make greater profits. The report said some detainees were abused by guards. INS cancelled its contract with Esmor in New Jersey, but will continue contracts with Esmor and other private companies elsewhere in the U.S.³ ●

1. Interview with Peggy Wilson Lawrence, spokesperson for Corrections Corporation of America, Oct. 4, 1994.

2. Richard Pérez-Peña, "Aliens' Melee Closes Center in New Jersey," *New York Times*, June 19, 1995, p. 1.

3. Ashley Dunn, "U.S. Inquiry Finds Detention Center Was Poorly Run," *New York Times*, July 22, 1995, p. 1.



ALAN POSE

Prisoners are caught between tedium and the pressure to work. (l) Killing time at Texas Department of Corrections; (r) prisoner sews Prison Blues jeans.

that inmates are exploited, the jobs provide few real skills, and prison industries throw prisoners into direct competition with civilian workers.

Meet the New Consensus

In the 1950s, prison authorities, unions, and private companies reached a compromise on the issue of prison labor. The federal government and states agreed that prisoners should work as a means of rehabilitation. Inmate-produced goods would be used inside prisons or sold only to government agencies — and would not compete with private businesses or labor.⁷ Now, prison authorities, along with cost-conscious entrepreneurs, budget-paring politicians, and private prison operators such as Wackenhut and the Corrections Corporation of America (CCA), are in the process of overturning that long-held political consensus.

The law hasn't changed since the 1950s, but the political climate has moved so far to the right that it is often ignored. Nowadays, almost no one talks about rehabilitation. And in the go-go, free enterprise, let's-privatize-everything 1990s, many in authority just don't care if prison labor competes with civilians. Prisoners are one more sector

ripe for exploitation.

In fact, some politicians and businesspeople view inmates much as they see workers in the Third World. In a revealing comment, Oregon State Representative Kevin Mannix argues that corporations should cut deals with prison systems just as Nike shoes does with the Indonesian government. Nike subcontractors there pay workers \$1.20 per day. "We propose that [Nike] take a look at their transportation costs and their labor costs," says Mannix. "We could offer [competitive] prison inmate labor" in Oregon.⁸

And prison labor is proving highly competitive. From 1980 to 1994, while the number of federal and state prisoners increased by 221 percent, the number of inmates employed in prison industries jumped by 358 percent. Prison industries sales have skyrocketed during those years from \$392 million to \$1.31 billion.⁹ And they're not just making license plates.

8. Interview with Rep. Kevin Mannix, Oct. 27, 1994.

9. Statistics provided by fax by Correctional Industries Association and in phone interview with Department of Justice official. Figures for 1994 from Justice Department spokesperson, phone interview.



REESE ERICHS

- Oregon prisoners sew jeans called "Prison Blues." Inmates are paid anywhere from 28 cents to \$8.00/hour, but 80 percent of the higher wage is withheld.¹⁰
- In 1994, a local prison secretly slipped Chicago-area prisoners into a Toys R Us store to stock shelves. Union protests stopped it.¹¹
- Southern California youth offenders book flights for TWA.¹²
- Private companies hire prisoners in Ohio, California and other states to do data processing inside prisons.¹³

The Prison-Industrial Complex

That prison labor is being exploited should come as no surprise. Prison industries are only one source of potential profits for companies feeding off the imprisonment boom. Prisons themselves are a growth industry. Federal, state, and local governments spent an estimated \$30 billion for their prison systems in 1994, up from only \$4 billion in 1975.¹⁴ This year, for the first time in its history, California will spend more for prisons than on higher education.¹⁵

"Prison construction is going crazy all over the country," one happy contractor told the *New York Times*.¹⁶ Califor-

10. Interview with Fred Nichols, Oregon Prison Industries, Oct. 17, 1994.

11. Tom Pelton, "Union hits inmate labor at Toys R Us," *Chicago Tribune*, June 24, 1994, sec. 2, p. 4.

12. Aaron Bernstein, et al., "There's Prison Labor in America, Too," *Business Week*, Feb. 17, 1992, pp. 42, 44.

13. Taped interview with Rob Sexton, legislative aide, Ohio State Legislature, Dec. 1994.

14. Steven A. Holmes, "The Boom in Jails is Locking Up Lots of Loot," *New York Times*, Nov. 6, 1994, sec. 3, p. 4.

15. Yumi Wilson, "Prisons Get Bigger Slice of the Pie," *San Francisco Chronicle*, Jan. 11, 1995.

16. Holmes, op. cit.

7. Taped interview with historian Paul Lucko, Austin, Texas; Jan. 29, 1995.

nia officials estimate they will have to build 20 new prisons to handle the state's "three strikes" law. Florida plans eight new prisons and four new work camps by 2000. And, incredibly enough, Texas plans to open one new facility a week for the next 18 months.¹⁷ Larry Solomon, vice president of Joy Food Service in Florida, said sales to prisons are "a great, great business. Sales are just about doubling every year."¹⁸

Corporate interest in prisons goes beyond construction and providing candy bars. Long distance phone carriers are falling all over themselves to provide pay phones to prisons. In return for the pay phone monopoly, they routinely kick back part of their profits to prison systems in the form of commissions. Why? Prisoners must phone collect, and the companies can charge substantially higher rates than at other pay phones.

A single prison phone can gross \$15,000 per year, five times more than a street phone box.¹⁹ One of the worst offenders among the phone companies, RCNA, holds the contract for the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) detention center in Florence, Arizona. RCNA charges inmates \$22 for a 15-minute call to the East Coast, with INS taking a 35 percent cut.²⁰ The relatives paying for the calls often have no idea of the scam, until their phone bill comes.

Since the early 1980s, some new corporate players have joined the fray. Private companies such as CCA and Wackenhut are now building and operating private prisons under contract from federal and state governments. So far, 13 states have private prisons.²¹

CCA co-founder T. Don Hutto, a former Virginia corrections commissioner who jumped to the private sector,²² is but one example of a revolving door in corrections that has nothing to do with the recidivism rate. The interlocking directorates of former government officials and corporate boards looks alarmingly like the more familiar military-industrial version.

Wackenhut most strongly reflects this trend. Its boards of directors includes former Marine Corps Commandant Paul X. Kelley, a pair of retired Air Force generals and a former Air Force under secretary, former Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti, and the former chair of AlliedSignal, among others.²³

But Wackenhut's competitors can play the game as well. When Esmor Correctional Services Corporation wanted to win a halfway house contract with the City of New York, it hired an aide to Democratic state Rep. Edolphus Towns. Both Towns and the aide had initially opposed the project.²⁴

Esmor also runs jails for the INS, so it made a senior vice president out of Richard Staley, a former acting INS director. And former acting Attorney General Stuart Gerson sits on Esmor's board of directors.²⁵ These government ties didn't help Esmor, however, when INS detainees rebelled over bad conditions and almost destroyed its private prison in New Jersey. (See box, p. 59.)

This new prison-industrial complex is establishing a network of political

The company paid the state \$2.05 an hour for inmate labor to assemble Honda parts; prisoners got 35 cents an hour.

contacts and local constituencies — wardens, prison guard unions, subcontractors and suppliers, and local government officials — that benefit from increased incarceration. As in the case of the prison pay phones, that complex will make great profits at the expense of the inmates and the public. Just as the country now struggles to get rid of unnecessary military bases and weapons systems, in the years ahead, the prison-industrial complex may lobby to maintain unneeded prisons or promote laws that help fill them.

Wackenhut's Brave New World

For a glimpse of the future, just visit the small town of Lockhart, Texas. Located about 30 miles outside Austin, the

sleepy little town is most famous for a lip-smacking barbecue restaurant. But just down the road is a private prison run by Wackenhut. The private security firm in recent years has branched out and is now the second largest private prison operation in the U.S. And it's the very model of the prison-industrial complex.

Scott Comstock, warden at the Lockhart Work Program Facility, sits in a comfortably appointed office with an entire wall of deer and elk heads mounted behind him. He's been hunting for years, almost as long as he's been in the prison business. Comstock, as is the style in these parts, sports a mustache, Stetson hat, and cowboy boots. As an early member of the prison-industrial complex, he worked his way up from guard to warden in the Texas state system and then made the leap to the private sector.

"I think that Texas, in particular, has proven that privatization is a viable alternative," he says.²⁶ And certainly, that arrangement has been viable for Wackenhut, which receives \$31 per day per prisoner from the state. From that money, Comstock must provide housing, guards, electricity and everything else to run the facility. Whatever is left over is profit. So Comstock says adding prison industries to the mix can eventually help the bottom line.

At the moment, however, Wackenhut must convince private employers they will profit from locating in a prison. The Lockhart facility currently houses three private companies: Lockhart Technologies, Inc. (LTI) (circuit board assembly), a subsidiary of Ft. Lauderdale's United Vision Group (eyeglass manufacture) and Chatleff Controls (valves and fittings).²⁷

Leonard Hill, owner of LTI, is an unassuming man with thinning grey hair. He wears a sweater with no tie and appears shy and uncomfortable at the prospect of being interviewed. He is exactly the kind of small entrepreneur that prison industries are attracting across the country — not so big he can locate overseas, but not so small as to go belly up in the first months of operation. And in order to attract businesses like his, Wackenhut arranged a sweetheart deal that defense contractors could only dream about.

17. *Ibid.*

18. Kevin Helliker, "Expanding Prison Population Captivates Marketers," *Wall Street Journal*, Jan. 19, 1995, p. B1.

19. Alix M. Freedman, "Phone Firms Wrestle for Prisoners' Business in Hot Phone Market," *Wall Street Journal*, Feb. 15, 1995, p. A1.

20. Alisa Solomon, "Yearning to Breathe Free," *Village Voice*, Aug. 8, 1995, p. 26.

21. Anthony Ramirez, "Privatizing America's Prisons, Slowly," *New York Times*, Aug. 14, 1994, sec. 3, pp. 1, 6.

22. *Ibid.*

23. *Corporate Yellow Book*, Winter 1995, pp. 1032-33.

24. John Sullivan and Matthew Purdy, "In Corrections Business, Shrewdness Pays," *New York Times*, July 23, 1995, pp. A1, 28.

25. *Ibid.*

26. All information on Lockhart Correctional Facility from on-site interviews, Jan. 30, 1995.

27. Interviews with Comstock and Hill, Jan. 30, 1995.

Good Ol' Days

In 1885, Texas forced mostly African American inmates to haul granite for building the new state capitol. These men, some of whom had been born into slavery, had become slaves once again. The skilled granite cutters union strongly objected to the use of prison labor and boycotted the building project. The contractor imported 62 scab cutters from Scotland to break the boycott.

Prisoners were regularly leased out to plantation and factory owners.

The use of prisoners to take away civilian jobs has a long history in the U.S. For most of the last century, prisoners were regularly leased out to plantation and factory owners. Guards whipped inmates for failing to meet quotas or for other work infractions.

Prison labor led to the Briceville, Tennessee, Coal Creek Rebellion in 1891-92. When coal owners insisted on a contract barring union membership, coal miners were locked out, and leased convicts were forced to scab in the mines. Miners stormed the convicts' stockade and freed the prisoners. The company gave in, rehiring the miners and halting the use of convicts.

By the early 1900s, most states banned prison contract labor as the public became aware of the brutal conditions facing prisoners. Citizens also objected to the corruption of prison officials who took bribes to provide inmate labor to selected companies. The infamous chain gangs of the South weren't completely abolished until the 1950s.

Just this year, Alabama and Arizona reinstituted chain gangs to do road work. Prison authorities are also bringing back inmate labor for private companies. Too bad they haven't read their history. Then again, maybe they have.

The data for this section came from interviews with Paul Lucko, historian studying for his Ph.D.

LTI, which assembles and repairs circuit boards for companies such as IBM, Dell, and Texas Instruments, got a completely new factory assembly room, built to specifications by prison labor. It pays only \$1/year rent and gets a tax abatement from the city to boot. Hill closed his circuit board assembly plant in Austin, laid off 150 workers and moved all the equipment to Lockhart, where he pays prisoners minimum wage, as required by federal law.²⁸ The prison then takes about 80 percent of inmate wages for room and board, victim restitution and other fees. Wackenhut argues this work benefits both the prisoners and society. But Hill is no dogooding liberal out to help inmates. He made a hard-headed business decision to relocate inside the prison because he eventually expects to rake in bigger profits.

"Normally when you work in the free world," says Hill, "you have people call in sick, they have car problems, they have family problems. We don't have that here." Hill says the state pays for workers' compensation and medical care. And, he notes, inmates "don't go on vacations."

Union Labor and Prison Labor

Under federal law, Wackenhut was supposed to consult with local businesses and unions before allowing LTI to set up shop. But the Texas AFL-CIO was never consulted, according to its president, Joe Gunn. Gunn too sports a huge Stetson and has a penchant for string ties held together with a silver clasp in the shape of Texas. But Gunn is no mirror image of Warden Comstock.

Wackenhut violated the law by not consulting with labor, he charges, "and we're going to pursue it." He calls this kind of prison labor "absolute indentured slavery. [Wackenhut] puts people to work under conditions that we criticize China for."²⁹

Wackenhut denies any violation of the law, saying it followed guidelines established by the Texas Employment Commission (TEC), the state agency regulating such matters. But the TEC's guidelines follow a rather crabbed interpretation of federal law. The TEC

claims Wackenhut needed to consult with unions only in the county where the plant was set up. Since there are no electronic unions in largely rural Caldwell County where Lockhart is located, Wackenhut had no one with whom to consult.³⁰

The Texas AFL-CIO begs to differ. The TEC should have required Wackenhut to consult with the AFL-CIO office in Austin in neighboring Travis County, where 150 jobs were lost, says Gunn.

The experience of the Texas AFL-CIO and the laid-off Austin workers explains why the trade union movement has been among the most active opponents of private prisons and prison labor in general. In a few cases, unions have successfully fought prison industries. United Auto Workers (UAW) union members were shocked when they learned that Weastec Corporation in Ohio hired prisoners to assemble Honda parts. The company paid the state \$2.05 an hour for inmate labor. From that, the prisoners got 35 cents an hour.³¹

UAW Region 2 Director Warren Davis says the deal threatened union jobs even more than cheap parts imported under NAFTA. "No smaller employer could compete for that contract with Honda," says Davis.³²

Crying foul, the UAW Community Action Program contacted local legisla-

"Normally, in the free world, people call in sick, they have car problems. We don't have that here. And inmates don't go on vacations."

tors, other unions, and the media. State Rep. Rocco Colonna successfully sponsored bills in the Ohio House of Representatives banning prison industries from taking over civilian jobs. Although the legislation never passed the state senate, the pressure forced Honda to eliminate the prison labor contract in 1992.

"Honda backed off," says Davis, "because they didn't feel the negative publicity was worth it."

28. The federal Prison Industry Enhancement Program, passed during the Carter administration, requires prisoners be paid at least minimum wage if they work on products sold interstate. No such requirement exists for goods exported outside the U.S. or for those sold within a state.

29. Interview, Jan. 30, 1995.

30. Interview with Texas Employment Commission representative, February 1995.

31. Information about Weastec and UAW actions from interview with UAW International Representative Jim Harris, Dec. 1994.

32. Quoted in Reese Erlich, "Prison Labor, Prison Blues," *Solidarity*, March 1995, p. 10.

Dead End Skills?

The debate about privately run prison industries extends far beyond their impact on free labor. Wackenhut and other private companies claim that they, unlike state prisons, actually rehabilitate inmates. That's no small issue when most states have given up rehabilitation as even a stated goal. Lockhart does have more education and training programs than many similar state operations. Some prisoners appreciate the difference.

Derek Hervey is serving a 15-year sentence for drug dealing. The slightly built African American is dressed in the green uniform worn by all LTI "employees." He says field work at the state-operated medium-security Sugarland prison was "hot, hard work, very abusive." At Lockhart, he got some basic education and works in a clean, air conditioned plant. (The air conditioning is for the circuit boards, not the men.) He hopes to get a job after release, noting that many companies in Texas manufacture circuit boards. "It's something I can apply for."

But the direct skills learned at LTI aren't going to get Hervey or anyone else a job. Owner Hill admits that most circuit board assemblers on the outside are immigrant women. "I think those people are not going to get jobs identical to what we're doing here," he admits. Hill argues, however, that the work discipline and general familiarity with electronics should make the men more employable.

Helping Prisoners Profit

In theory, any prison job that involves good training and skills could eventually threaten free-world employment. And any well-manufactured prison product could end up undercutting sales of a small company. Yet some union officials have worked with prison administrators and reformers to establish meaningful training programs.

Unions can help "break the cycle of crime, prison, parole and crime again," says Jack Buckhorn, training director for an International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) program at San Quentin Prison, near San Francisco.³³

Since 1978, the IBEW and the local building contractors association have trained six San Quentin inmates each



GARDEN PROJECT

Unlike most profit-driven prison industries, the San Francisco-based Garden Project offers prisoners both training and job placement after release.

year as apprentice electricians. Of the inmates who continued the program after release, 90 percent stayed out of prison. In most American prisons, over half the ex-cons return within three years. At San Quentin, the recidivism rate tops 80 percent.³⁴

But most inmates don't have the opportunity to become apprentice electricians. San Francisco Sheriff Michael Hennessey runs an innovative jail labor program that both helps keep order and rehabilitates less-skilled prisoners. Inmates can take classes in English as a Second Language, classes to get high school equivalence diplomas, and a class in modern printing techniques.³⁵

Hennessey also reopened a long-abandoned agricultural field and set up a small farm. Inmates grow specialty fruits and vegetables, which are sold to local restaurants. Released prisoners are encouraged to continue their education in community college. And the Community Garden Project was established in San Francisco to help employ ex-cons. Local restaurants are able to buy competitively priced and high-quality produce from the privately run garden.

Such efforts provide a concrete alternative to the "lock 'em up and throw

away the key" mentality currently in vogue. And they avoid the exploitation of captive labor typical of profit-driven prison industry programs. Prisoners, like anyone else, do need training, skills, and experience to help them compete in a dog-eat-dog labor market. Likewise, civilian workers and businesses need guarantees that their jobs won't be taken over by profit-hungry prison industries.

While programs like those in San Francisco are relatively small, they could be replicated anywhere. For prisoners, they would be an improvement. The current system certainly doesn't work, except for those who profit from prison labor. As long as the U.S. remains hell-bent on packing the prisons, meaningful work programs that actually prepare inmates for life on the outside are worth a try. Otherwise, prisoners may as well be making license plates. ●

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³⁴ The recidivism rate is so bad at San Quentin that a prison spokesperson giving the information requested anonymity.

³⁵ Jim Balderston, "Start the Presses," *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, Apr. 13, 1994.

³³ Interview, Jan. 1995.

Off the Shelf:

CAQ'S BOOKS OF INTEREST

For the President's Eyes Only: Secret Intelligence and the American Presidency from Washington to Bush

by Christopher Andrew

HARPERCOLLINS, 1995, PHOTOS, ENDNOTES, BIBLIOGRAPHY, INDEX, 660 PP., \$30.00 HB.

Clearly, Christopher Andrew is no enemy of the intelligence agencies. Nonetheless, the Cambridge professor and visiting lecturer at the CIA, among other places, has produced a sweeping and invaluable history of how the presidency has both transformed and been transformed by the workings of U.S. intelligence. Serious students of the U.S. intelligence community should have this massive tome handy on their reference shelves.

Relying on voluminous archival sources, both here and in Britain, as well as access to "high-level intelligence community sources," Andrew paints a picture of intelligence and the presidency informed by the vantage point of the inner circles. That perspective is highly advantageous for understanding the intelligence decision-making process as it developed over the years.

By the same token, however, it reveals the distorted, Machiavellian world-view of U.S. leaders, especially in the twentieth century, where individuals and whole societies become little more than "problems" of global superpower politics. Andrew seems curiously unaware of this moral blind spot; perhaps he has grown too close to his subjects. He seems to accept cynicism and betrayal as givens, barely worth commenting on. If the Bay of Pigs was a mistake, it was only because it "lower[ed] the international reputation of the United States."

Still, neither does Andrew seek to protect the reputations of his subjects. He describes Woodrow Wilson's unleashing the FBI in "the first peacetime

campaign against subversion," Herbert Hoover's authorization of black bag jobs against the Democrats—sound familiar?—and Truman's uncharacteristically modest avoidance of responsibility for creating the modern national security state, among many examples.

Andrew's broad historical perspective is perhaps his most important contribution. In reading Andrew, we get a sense of the continuities that characterize U.S. intelligence from its beginnings, as well as the institutional ruptures and reshufflings. It is the continuities that are especially striking. Over and over, we see the same types—cold, calculating dominators; bureaucratic in-fighters; zealous moral entrepreneurs—representing seemingly eternal tendencies in the U.S. polity and intelligence community. The players come and go, but the struggle is unceasing.

Andrew's strengths far outweigh his faults. With its wealth of detail, broad sweep, and view from the seat of power, *For the President's Eyes Only* is a major contribution.

Sellout: Aldrich Ames and the Corruption of the CIA

by James Adams

VIKING PRESS, 1995, APPENDICES, ENDNOTES, BIBLIOGRAPHY, INDEX, 321 PP., \$23.95 HB

Aldrich Ames is one of the worst disasters in the CIA's history. Not only did he effectively ruin the agency's Soviet counterintelligence program for nearly a decade, but since his arrest his name has become shorthand for all that mainstream critics point to as wrong with the agency: greed, sloth, complacency, petty rivalry, incredible blindness—both within the man himself and at the heart of the CIA.

James Adams, longtime spywatcher and Washington bureau chief for the London *Sunday Times*, is thoroughly mainstream. He provides a fast-moving narrative of Ames' rise and fall, and through it, a stinging indictment of the CIA's Directorate of Operations and its counterintelligence division. Adams loathes Ames and clearly identifies with the agency's values. For Adams, Ames' greatest sin is betraying his peers; he is "a drunken loser who managed to destroy and kill everything he touched within the CIA."

Adams overcomes his spite, though, long enough to spread the blame

around. And there is plenty to go around, as he shows in scrupulous detail. Some, he shows, lies in an institutional culture grown flabby and rotten. More interestingly, he suggests that part of the fault lies within the structures of the intelligence community itself.

It is here that Adams is most useful and provocative. Following the trajectory of former DCI Robert Gates' reform proposals, Adams suggests a dramatic reorganization of the entire apparatus. He would move the Directorate of Intelligence to a new, single National Research Agency in charge of all open-source intelligence, move the agency's paramilitary operations to the Pentagon, and close the service branch's intelligence agencies, folding them into a new, more powerful DIA.

Adams clearly stakes his ground in the looming fray over the fate of the CIA and makes a strong pitch for major changes. In doing so, he may be providing us with a blueprint for the future of intelligence in this country.

The Dangerous Classes: Drug Prohibition and Policy Politics

by Diana R. Gordon

W.W. NORTON, 1994, ENDNOTES, BIBLIOGRAPHY, INDEX, 316 PP., \$29.95 HB.

Drugs and Foreign Policy: A Critical Review

by Raphael F. Perl, ed.

WESTVIEW PRESS, 1994, ENDNOTES, BIBLIOGRAPHIES, 227 PP., \$54.95 HB.

These two books on drugs and drug policy are quite different, but each is illuminating in its own way. *Drugs and Foreign Policy*, a collection of articles by government officials and academic specialists, is hardly "a critical review." Instead, it is thoroughly representative of the prevailing drug war paradigm. Its value lies in what its contributors' application of that model reveals about the conventional wisdom's implications for U.S. policy-making.

That contributors like David Westrate, the DEA's chief international intelligence manager, or Melvin Levitsky, who ran the State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics Matters, unblinkingly buy into the drug war model is no surprise. After all, their livelihoods depend on it. But even historians David Musto and William O. Walker III, whose earlier works reveal a

nuanced skepticism about the practicality and desirability of the prohibitionist paradigm, have also hopped on board for this volume, and that is a disappointment.

Still, some of these pieces are extremely revealing. Westrate's article on the role of law enforcement, while a puff piece for his employers, provides some unsettling insights into the DEA's mindset. In one casual aside, he bemoans the way observance of human rights interferes with the drug war. This is especially unnerving when coupled with Westrate's description of the DEA's International Training Program, which has so far involved 35,000 foreign drug enforcers.

Given recent lawsuits filed by *police* about abusive DEA training in this country, such revelations are not exactly comforting. The DEA could be only an exposé or two away from its own School of the Americas scandal.

Even though the analyses are hampered by adherence to the drug war model, the area studies in particular develop useful information on the contours of the drug trade. Rensselaer Lee's description of the emerging trade in the former Soviet Union, for instance, while primarily a plea to put all those unemployed KGB agents to work, provides new detail on Central Asian and East European drug economies.

Political scientist Diana R. Gordon has a more refreshing agenda. While Lee and his cohorts accept the War on Drugs as a given, Gordon's purpose in *The Return of the Dangerous Classes* is to interrogate the premises and "shadow agendas" that underlie and determine drug policy. She does a masterly job.

She begins by making the case that U.S. drug policy has, by any rational standard, been a terrible and destructive failure. That drug prohibition continues despite its inability to achieve its stated aims, argues Gordon, shows it must be serving other, hidden ends ("shadow agendas").

Here Gordon really shines. She identifies the primary "shadow agenda" as social control, particularly of "the dangerous classes." While a century ago the term referred to the impoverished immigrant masses, Gordon here updates and broadens it. In her formulation, "the dangerous classes" include not only recent Third World immigrants, but also racial minorities, rebellious youth, and civil libertarians who toler-

ate—and sometimes celebrate—sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll in the name of individual freedom.

Gordon ties the assault on "the dangerous classes" to a frankly right-wing, socially conservative political project. In fact, she argues convincingly that the social construction of a "dangerous class" is a function of the rich and powerful's fear of the dispossessed: "the many-headed monster" of vagabonds and thieves, who were sometimes also rebels," in a 19th century formulation. In our time, the "drug menace" serves as a cement that binds demands for racial and gender equality, emancipation of youth, and civil liberties to an identifiable danger and thus excuses (demands!) their suppression.

In that sense, the War on Drugs is profoundly reactionary, an excuse for powerful authoritarian forces "to mount a rearguard action against full equality...and [whip] young people (and cultural liberals) back into line after they threatened to kick over the traces in the 1960s and 1970s."

Gordon buttresses her thesis with a wealth of supporting data, a series of case studies in drug policy formulation, and a coolly level-headed and quite readable approach. If you have ever wondered why those conservatives who rail about getting the government off the backs of the people or eliminating programs that clearly do not work have never gotten around to dismantling the War on Drugs, Diana Gordon has some answers for you.

Our Guerrillas, Our Sidewalks:
A Journey into
the Violence of Colombia
by Herbert Braun

UNIVERSITY PRESS OF COLORADO, 1994, PHOTOS,
BIBLIOGRAPHY, 239 PP., \$17.50 PB.

Herbert Braun is uniquely qualified to write about contemporary Colombia. He was born and raised in a Colombian family and is now a frankly leftist historian at the University of Virginia specializing in Colombian politics and political violence. Moreover, the central thread around which his meditation on Colombian reality is wrapped—the kidnapping of an American oilman by guerrillas—is for him no bloodless abstraction. The oilman, Jake Gambini, is married to Braun's sister. This tale is a family affair as well as an illuminating essay on Colombia.

Told through the eyes of the historian, the oilman, and the guerrillas, this fast-paced, suspenseful account provides much more than a narrative of one family's trauma. From Charlottesville and Houston to Bogotá and the remote Colombian jungle, Braun brings together the elements that made this kidnapping not only predictable but almost inevitable.

Braun writes about the character of Colombians, the grave injustices impelling rebellion, the lack of state will or ability to bring change—and the impact of all this on his family's experience. Braun the historian brings to life the legacy of political violence precipitated by cynical elites, and Braun the writer wields a keen eye for telling detail. The sidewalks in the book's title—now crumbled and in disrepair, unlike the cleanswept and well-maintained sidewalks of his youthful memory—serve as a metaphor for the deteriorating state of Colombian civil society, and yes, Colombian civility.

Not a scholarly monograph, not a journalistic work, not quite autobiography, *Our Guerrillas, Our Sidewalks* is a work of indeterminate genre, but one that is illuminating and provocative.

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Edge of the Knife: **Police Violence in the Americas** *by Paul Chevigny*

THE NEW PRESS, 1995, ENDNOTES, BIBLIOGRAPHY, INDEX, 320 PP., \$25.00 HB.

"The police are to the government as the edge is to the knife." The epigram that opens Paul Chevigny's comparative study illuminates more than the book's title. In explicitly recognizing the repressive function of the police, Chevigny transcends the limited sociological and criminological analysis that typifies most of the academic literature. (Most of what passes for "serious" journalism about the police is hardly worthy of the name, patrolling as it does the terrain of banal scandal — one exception being the work of Mike Davis.)

A New York University law professor, Chevigny has studied police brutality and corruption for decades, for the last ten years concentrating on police violence in the Western Hemisphere. Until recently, his field of inquiry was not well-plowed, for quite obvious reasons having to do with the nature of military dictatorships. But now, working largely in association with Human Rights Watch/Americas, Chevigny has compiled what is probably the most authoritative comparative data available on police use of deadly force.

Specifically, he compares killings by (and of) police in six major Western Hemisphere cities, two in the U.S. (New York and Los Angeles), three Latin American (Buenos Aires, São Paulo, and Mexico City), and one Anglophone Caribbean (Kingston, Jamaica).

It should be noted that he is not examining political murder by the police—at least in the narrow sense of the word—but the killing of criminal suspects and other unfortunates.

Chevigny's work confirms some widely held impressions, but also unearths some surprises. Given the LAPD's reputation in the wake of the Rodney King beating, it is no surprise to learn that its Special Investigations Section alone shot 55 "armed and dangerous" suspects and killed 28 of them between 1965 and 1992, while only one policeman involved in the "confrontations" was injured—by the accidental discharge of a colleague's shotgun. Likewise, with the widespread publicity given the executions of street children in Brazil, it comes as no shock to see that the São Paulo police were killing citizens at the rate of four a day in the early 1990s. To put it in perspective, police killings in São Paulo in 1992 alone totalled more than all Brazil's deaths and disappearances for political reasons during the entire 15 years of military dictatorship.

Surprisingly, despite its many superficial similarities with Buenos Aires and São Paulo, Mexico City's rate of police killings is orders of magnitude lower. Chevigny's tentative explanation (in part) that the police, like all other aspects of the Mexican state, are tightly controlled and disciplined by centralized political power, rings true. In Mexico City, the police kill for reasons of state, not (so far) out of vigilantism or to impose semi-military control by terror.

Beyond the particulars, Chevigny has the savvy to read between the lines — for instance, examining the ratio of civilians killed to those wounded by police to arrive at conclusions about the frequency of deliberate execution of suspects. He also demonstrates the wherewithal to generalize across cultural and national boundaries and the ability to juggle different levels of analysis. In so doing, Chevigny deepens and enriches our understanding of police violence. His book is an important contribution.

Chevigny would probably be quite uncomfortable to be associated with Marxist analysis, but it is his keen awareness of class politics and elite rule, in addition to his familiarity with the nuts and bolts of the repressive apparatus, that makes this work especially fruitful. ●

— Phillip Smith

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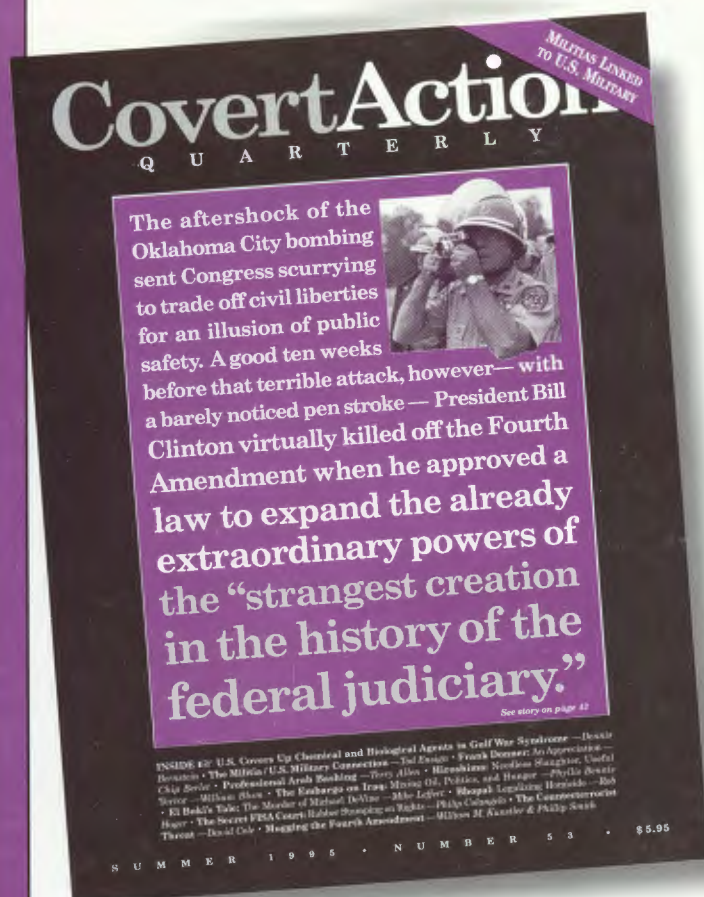
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