

LABOR

Strike and boycott against right-wing as well as Coors

By Dan Marshall
"America's Fine Light Beer—brewed with Pure Rocky Mountain Spring Water." That's how the Adolph Coors Co., headquartered in Golden, Colo., touts their world-famous product, the beer that connoisseurs like Gerald Ford and Henry Kissinger had flown to Washington, D.C., by the plane load.

Just to make sure that people got the point, Coors used to put a picture of a real Rocky Mountain on its label. "Everyone is familiar with the Coors bottle that has a picture of 'Castle Rock' on it," says Fred Criswell, a member of Brewery Workers local 366 in Golden. "Coors owns that mountain. And nothing can take place inside Golden without the authorization of the Coors family. During the 1920s and the height of the Ku Klux Klan, once a week the Klan would meet in Golden on that mountain."

This is a relatively mild example, says Criswell, of the connections between right-wing organizations and the Coors company, now run by Bill and Joe Coors. He should know. During a four-month stint in Coors Management, Criswell was approached several times by fellow employees who "strongly suggested" that it would be in his best interests to become "extremely active" in the Republican party and attend the functions of some rightwing organizations. "It was even

suggested that I become active in a certain part of the bowling club because those people were moving in a certain direction," he explained in a recent interview with IN THESE TIMES.

Friendly facade.

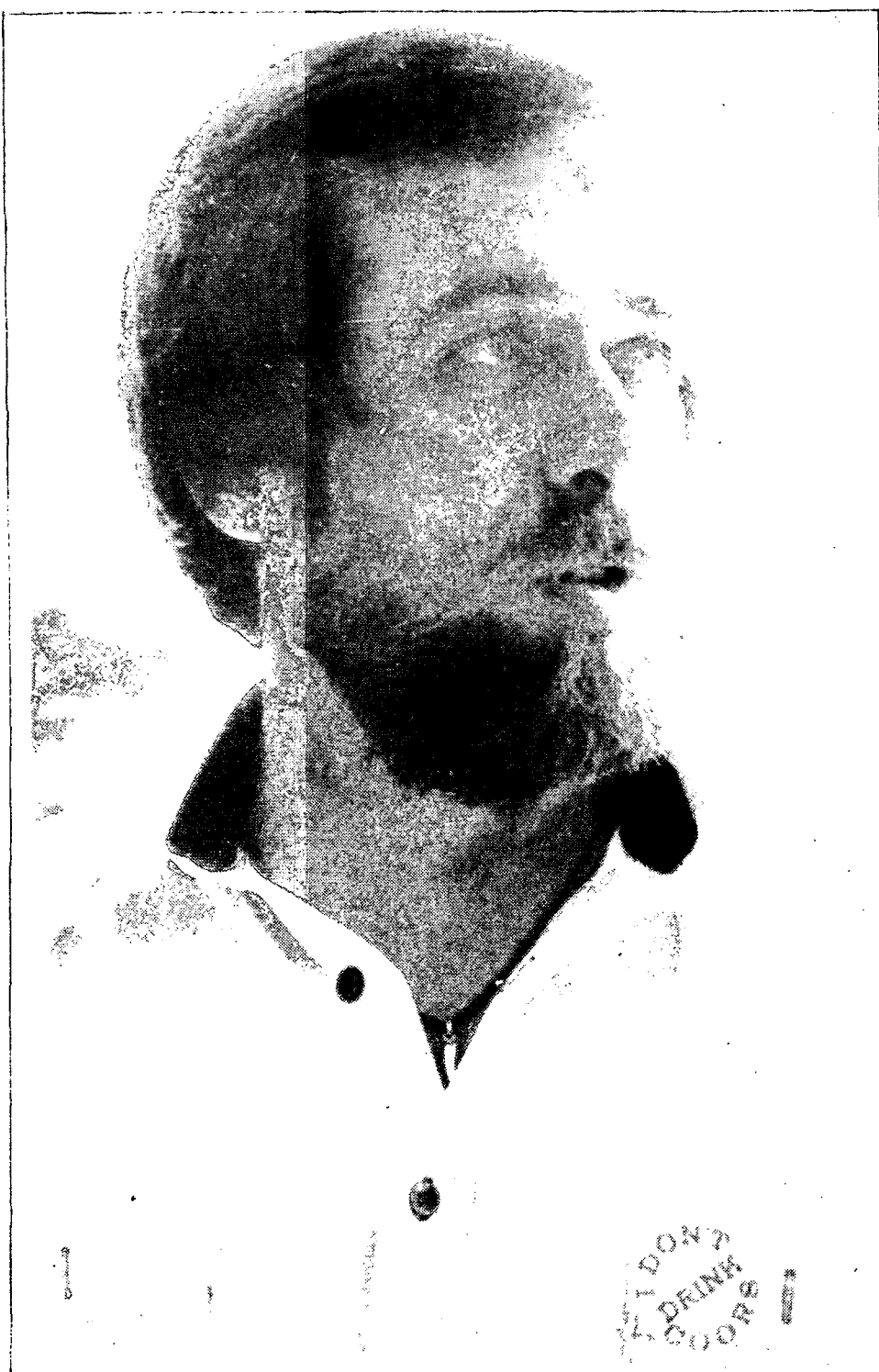
That was in the latter half of 1976, months before April 5 when about 1,400 brewery workers struck Coors in protest of a company-imposed contract that included cuts in seniority, violations of workers' human rights, and various harassment tactics.

By that time Criswell was back working as a production employee, having been thoroughly disillusioned with the inner workings of the company. Now Fred Criswell is one of several rank and file organizers for a nationwide boycott of Coors beer, an action endorsed by the AFL-CIO.

"I was originally very impressed with Bill Coors, and believed that he was concerned about his people. This was the first year I was there. Both Bill and Joe walk around the plant in work shoes and work pants and older, casual dress shirts. They seemed to have a rapport with their people," he recalls.

"But it's really a facade. He says that we're a bunch of monkeys and that if we want to compete with him why don't we go out and get our own brewery."

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Fred Criswell, rank and file organizer for the Coors boycott.

Jane Melnick

Coors strike in trouble

By Timothy Lange
GOLDEN, COLO.—On the wall behind the dais at the Coors brewery union hall are the black-draped photographs of three dead strikers. Two died of heart attacks and the third in a mining accident at a job he took after the brewery workers struck on April 5th. In the minds of the remaining strikers there is no doubt about who killed these men. It was Joe and Bill Coors, the arch-conservative brothers who run their late grandfather Adolph's 104-year-old brewery as if it were a medieval fief.

The three martyrs are the most extreme manifestation of the pain the workers have suffered since the strike and boycott against Coors began. Rather than face financial ruin by trying to live on the \$25-a-week strike benefits, many workers had to find other jobs, usually at half or less the pay they earned in the brewery. Unable to meet mortgage payments, some have lost their homes. Friendships have dissolved when once-striking workers left their compatriots on the picketlines and returned to the plant.

Although 92 percent of the 1,400 brewers voted last spring to strike, 900 are now back in the brewery together with 500 scabs Coors hired within weeks of the walkout.

Reliance on NLRB.

Until early October union leadership had relied on the National Labor Relations Board to rule in their favor and force Coors to end the strike. On Oct. 6 that hope was smashed when an administrative law judge of the NLRB ruled that Coors had not violated the law as the union had charged.

The union had charged, among other things, that Coors had misrepresented proposed contract language in a letter the company mailed to brewery workers. The NLRB judge said Coors had, in fact, misled the workers, but had not broken

the law. An appeal is planned, but the strikers who expected the NLRB to solve their problems are thoroughly demoralized.

The reliance of union leadership on the NLRB and a nationwide boycott of Coors has drawn criticism from some union members. One active rank and filer, who admitted that his views were accepted by only about 20 percent of the union's members, said, "The leadership is rotten. They've got everybody confused. Hardly anyone is working on the strike because they are not encouraging them to."

Most active strikers, however, had nothing but praise for their leaders. Told of some of the criticisms, another veteran Coors worker said, "It's just the gripers. They need somebody to blame because the strike is taking so long. If they were leaders, things wouldn't be any different."

Nonetheless, it is clear that the strike part of the union's strike and boycott strategy is in trouble. Although 500 strikers are still out, only 100 or so regularly attend the weekly union meetings and many fewer show up for picketline duty. Home contacts with less active strikers and their families were long ago abandoned, allowing the majority of members to drift away and become strikers in name only.

Sales down.

The boycott's effectiveness so far is more difficult to judge. Sales of Coors have fallen, especially in the company's two biggest markets—California and Texas—where active rank and filers have driven thousands of miles to spread the word. Even brewery officials admit "some" loss because of the boycott.

As with just about everything the company does, Coors has tended to stick to 19th century marketing techniques. Per barrel of beer sold, the company spent less than half as much on advertising in 1976 as the smallest of its 13 closest rivals. This

approach had cost the brewery its fourth-place position in national beer sales even before the boycott began. Just how much the recent sales drop is due to the Coors brothers' own marketing stupidity and how much to the efforts of the boycotters is open to question.

The old advertising approach is soon to be replaced with a new one aimed at the youth market, featuring country-western, soft-rock and modified soul music. How this will affect sales cannot be guessed, but the campaign cannot help the union's boycott effort.

Consequences of the left's fairly visible role in the fight against Coors have been mixed. Many individuals have devoted every spare moment to the strike and boycott, and a few have been arrested on badly trumped-up charges. One of those, folksinger/activist Kathy Kahn, who has cut a 45 rpm record about the strike, was clubbed and stomped into unconsciousness during an otherwise peaceful picket outside the Coors gates.

"In solidarity" with the strikers, the California-based New World Liberation Front has bombed the property of some Coors distributors. Strikers, however, say they do not appreciate such "help" and contend that the bombings did more harm than anything else. Last month a local TV station capitalized on the sensationalism of the NWLF, alleging that the militant Kahn was the terrorist group's Colorado contact. Kahn has denied the connection and charged the station with trying to divert attention away from the real issues of the strike.

Split in support coalition.

The accumulation of five months of sectarian bickering recently split the union's support coalition.

Originally an alliance of relatively diverse political groups and area unions, by mid-summer the coalition was merely a

left front with most of the members trying to exercise hegemony over the others and sold on their own "correct" approach to the strike.

There was general agreement that the union's early reliance on the NLRB and the boycott was a mistake. But "factions" formed around what to do about that.

On one side were those who argued for a more militant strike that they said would teach the strikers how to effectively fight the corporate ruling class. Even with militant actions, however, they said the workers would probably lose.

Others saw this approach as unrealistic and opportunistic. As one ex-coalition chairman pointed out, no matter how glorious might be the dream of a 1930s style mass action, that is not the reality of the Coors strike. To him and others in a split-off group now organized in a rank-and-file controlled Boycott Committee, there is still some feeling the workers can win and that winning is important.

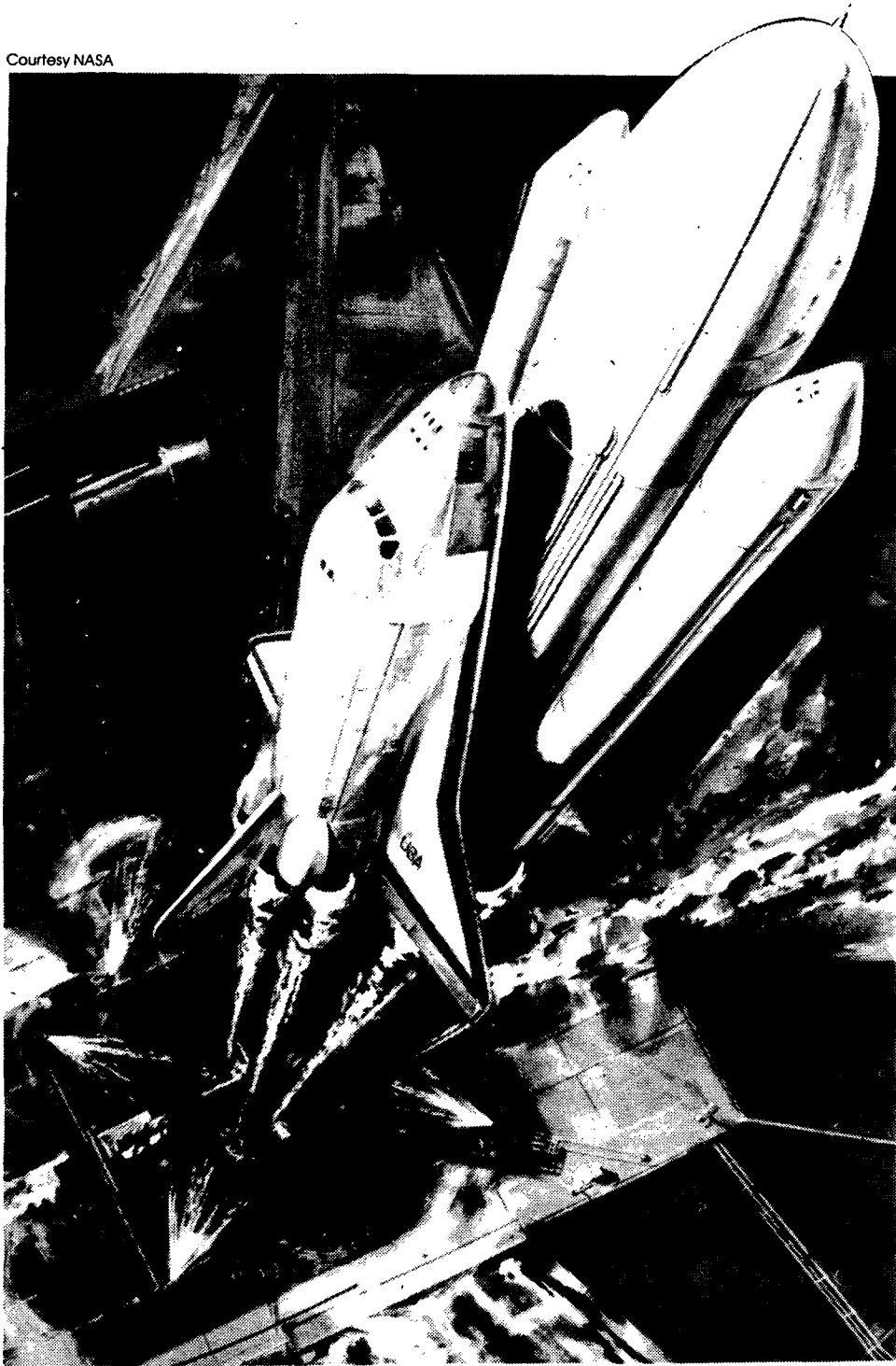
In spite of the demoralizing effect of the NLRB decision, talk among some of the remaining rank and file has been tough. "The past six months have just been practice," says Sam Littles, whose scab-baiting wisecracks have enlivened the picket lines.

The question here, however, is whether he and five or six other rank and file leaders can count on the strikers to hold out for another six months. At the very least, that is how long it will take for them to regain contact with inactive strikers and to lure some workers out of the plant to build a credible strike.

All this has to be done without de-emphasizing the boycott, which is now the workers' only hold over Coors. Everybody knows it's a longshot.

Timothy Lange is a writer in Denver.

Courtesy NASA



SPACE WARS

& Other Defense Department Fantasies

Wanna new rocket?
Or perhaps I could
interest you in a
neutron bomb...

MILITARY NEEDS ENCROACHING ON NASA AND SPACE SHUTTLE PROGRAM

By John Markoff
Pacific News Service

Space war—now only a movie fantasy—could add a frightening new dimension to global conflict as early as the mid-1980s.

The Pentagon has quietly begun using the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) new Space Shuttle program as a stepping stone to build a capability to fight a war in space. More than 100 of the first 560 Shuttle flights will carry American military satellites and weapons experiments into orbit.

Publicly, most American officials are on the record against expanding the arms race into space. In a press conference this month, for instance, Secretary of Defense Harold Brown said, "I would hope that we could keep space from becoming an area of active conflict."

But some military planners are excited about possible star wars. "Space is a dandy arena, actually," one DoD scientist was quoted as saying in a recent issue of *Aeronautics and Astronautics*. "You've got to attract strategic war off the planet. The notion of abhorring war in space is just plain wrong."

The Pentagon is concerned that the U.S. is falling behind the Soviets in key portions of the "space race." One Air Force general summarized the military's view of the situation: "There has never been a transportation medium in the history of man that has not been exploited for economic and military advantage. Space is not going to be an exception."

Weekly flights in the '80s.

The Space Shuttle, now being tested in Southern California, will allow scientists, private industry and the military to send large payloads into orbit on a weekly basis during the 1980s. The Shuttle system will include a reusable orbiter that will be boosted into space by giant rockets and then glide back to earth, landing like an airplane. The first spaceflight for the Shuttle is now scheduled for 1979.

Pentagon involvement in the Shuttle program began shortly after the Nixon administration—in a cost-cutting move—cancelled the Air Force Manned Orbiting Laboratory in 1969.

The DoD then decided to rely exclusively on NASA's Space Shuttle for routine access to space. By 1984 all military space missions will be carried by the Space Shuttle.

The Pentagon's first 10 shuttle missions will include the following satellites and weapons:

- Air Force DSCS-3—communications satellites for military use.
- Defense Meteorological Satellites.
- Laser weapons developed from the Space Laser Experiment Definition (SLED) studies intended to counter Soviet ICBMs.
- Teal Ruby, an infra-red monitoring system to detect low-flying aircraft.
- High Altitude Large Optics (HALO) a huge camera designed to monitor Soviet sites.

Military planners are currently at work on more exotic and potentially more deadly research to be carried out by the Space Shuttle. Last month the Air Force contracted with the Vought Corporation to build a test version of a satellite killer.

American intelligence agencies have re-

ported that the Soviets are also studying the use of lasers and space-mines, and some defense officials are worried that such Soviet satellite killers could be a threat to the Space Shuttle.

On the American side, NASA commissioned a study last year on the feasibility of placing a huge array of mirrors in orbit to reflect the energy of ground-based lasers and shoot down enemy missiles. The think-tank envisioned an advanced version of the Space Shuttle to put the mirrors into orbit and estimated the cost of such a system to be \$105 billion.

Orienting NASA to military.

NASA/DoD cooperation in the Space Shuttle program was called into question recently by the New York-based Council on Economic Priorities. The Council warns that Congress' ability to control the American space program will be complicated by the inclusion of the military in the Space Shuttle program.

"Because the DoD will be entirely dependent upon NASA's transportation system for space launches," a Council report states, "there is a danger that in the future NASA programs will be oriented toward military, rather than civilian and scientific purposes."

Rep. Les Aspin (D-Wis.) has claimed that NASA increased the payload of the Shuttle from 25,000 to 65,000 pounds to satisfy the Air Force and that Shuttle thrust was increased and other technical changes made in the program at the military's request.

In an interview last week, Gordon Adams, a research associate at the Council, said that NASA has been placed in a position where it must indirectly subsidize many DoD costs. In 1976 the Air Force refused to participate in funding the fourth and fifth Shuttle orbiters. "In effect NASA is carrying the charge for what they had originally anticipated being able to share with the Air Force budget," Adams stated.

But proponents of NASA's new military role argue that its cooperation with the DoD space program is both cost-effective and vital to national security.

Major General Richard D. Henry, vice commander of the Air Force research and development agency for space systems, says, "The Shuttle represents the next threshold for using space for vital military and scientific missions. If military space technology can provide reliability and global information, then our nation can cope with those forces that are upsetting the global equilibrium."

John Markoff is a freelance writer specializing in military affairs.

WHAT'S BEHIND CARTER'S PUSH FOR THE M-X MISSILE AND NEUTRON BOMB?

By Alan Wolfe

Two recent decisions by the Carter administration presage a new defense "posture" for the U.S. Within a ten-day period in early October, Secretary of Defense Harold Brown announced that development would continue on the M-X missile program, and he told NATO ministers to overcome their scruples against the neutron bomb and support its deployment.

Between them these two decisions will have a long range impact on defense policy far more decisive than the decision to stop production of the B-1 bomber. Both decisions seriously impair Carter's image as a man who understands the folly of the nuclear arms race.

The M-X missile is a key aspect of the defense TRIAD—the term used to describe a three-pronged strategy of bombers, sea-launched missiles, and land-based missiles.

At the moment, the U.S. has 1,054 intercontinental ballistic missiles. Each missile contains three warheads. If successfully launched, each ICBM could destroy sig-