

HEALING

ABOUT A YEAR AGO, I WAS ON THE verge of cancelling my subscription to *In These Times* because I was enraged at the unfair bias against Jews, particularly in articles by Diana Johnstone. Since then the article discussing black anti-Semitism has appeared, and the coverage of Israel by David Mandel and others seems to me more objective than the simplistic spouting of Arab propaganda I found in Johnstone's articles. I now feel that I can renew my subscription and make a contribution without having to betray my Jewish heritage and beliefs.

In the words of Jesse Jackson in his eloquent speech to the Democratic convention on July 17, it is time for all of us to move to "higher ground." As he noted, Jews have a tradition of caring for human welfare, as well as a history of being oppressed. The Rainbow needs all of us, and we need the Rainbow. It is time for a change, and that change needs to begin with examination and transformation of the sources of hate and prejudice in each of us.

—Devera Black
South Salem, N.Y.

SOLIDARITY

WE THE UNDERSIGNED STRONGLY urge the Polish government to halt the judicial proceedings against the imprisoned activists of KOR (Workers' Defense Committee)—Jacek Kuron, Adam Michnik, Zbigniew Romaszewski and Henryk Wujec. We further urge the unconditional release of these four prisoners, as well as these seven leaders of Solidarity: Jan Rulewski, Karol Modzelewski, Marian Jurczyk, Andrzej Gwiazda, Grzegorz Palka, Seweryn Jaworski and Andrzej Rozplochowski, who continue to be held without indictment or trial, and the hundreds of other political prisoners remaining in Polish jails.

As the Polish state prosecutor's indictment makes clear, the only charge against the four activists is their agitation and organization for political and social reform. As trade unionists and activists in the movements for civil rights, civil liberties and disarmament in our own country, we oppose this trial as a violation of basic human rights.

We are also moved, however, by the fear that this trial can only deepen the Cold War atmosphere and provide encouragement for our own government's increasingly militarist actions in Central America and elsewhere. Conversely, a positive response to international public opinion on this issue will make it more difficult for our government to ignore the outrage provoked by its military escalation and violations of human rights at home and abroad. Out of concern for these prisoners and for the international consequences of the threatened trial, we have sent a protest to the Polish Prime Minister, Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski, demanding the withdrawal of all charges.

—Gail Daneker, Co-Director, Campaign for Peace and Democracy/East and West
—Richard Deats, Executive Secretary, Fellowship of Reconciliation
—David Dyson, Union Label Dept., Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union
—Daniel Ellsberg
—Melinda Fine
—Lee Grant
—Richard Healey, Director, Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy
—Grace Hedemann, War Resisters League
—Grace Paley
—Paul Robeson Jr.
—I.F. Stone
—Raoul Tellhet, President, California Federation of Teachers
(organizations listed for identification only)

PASTORA

JOHN JUDIS' ARTICLE ON EDEN Pastora (*ITT*, July 11) seems thinly veiled apologia. Beyond the obvious questions, isn't it ridiculous to expect the

Sandinistas not to put him on trial, considering the state of warfare in Nicaragua?

I question some of Judis' history. Pastora certainly was not a "founder" of the "Sandinista opposition" in 1959—Tomas Borge is the only survivor of that group. Pastora at the time was an activist in the Conservative Party, an opposition group to Somoza that had been discredited by its paltry attempts at resistance.

I don't know about Judis' claim of Pastora's "retiring from guerrilla warfare" in 1974. I thought he spent many of those years as a businessman. Finally, by the time Pastora became commander of the Sandinista "Southern Front," there was in effect no "tercerista" faction with which he could align himself. This was the final stage of the revolution—the internal factional disputes had ended.

These points are only important because of the attempts of many to resurrect Pastora as a "true Sandinista." Facts are hard to come by. Perhaps some of mine are wrong, too.

—Bruce Bernstein
Flushing, N.Y.

SPREAD IT AROUND

I STRONGLY URGE THAT YOU TAKE whatever steps are necessary to get into the hands of every member of Congress, plus other appropriate groups such as the Mondale campaign organization, the excellent article on "Deadly Connections" by Diana Johnstone (*ITT*, July 11). This is the most informative and significant article I have read on the subject of Euromissiles.

—John B. Massen
San Francisco

QUERY

FOR A DISSERTATION ON THE SDS Economic Research and Action Project in the mid-1960s, I would like to hear from people involved in the ERAP effort, especially the Cleveland project. Please write me in care of the American Studies Program, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio 44106.

—Ken Rose
Cleveland

ADDICTED

DIANA JOHNSTONE'S MASTERLY piece on "Deadly Connections" (*ITT*, July 11) leads me to write a fan letter I've had in mind for a long time.

I write in part as a lifelong addict of broad global reporting such as hers, as a son of Louis Fischer who did a like kind of reporting out of Moscow in the '30s for *The Nation*. Most of all I want to cheer and thank Diana Johnstone for uniquely deep, strong and clear reporting on all parts of Europe, on how Europe fits into the world and into all that we do in the U.S. The "Deadly Connections" roundup only highlights a long series of topnotch pieces on feminists as well as missiles, Britain as well as France, Germany and Benelux and Scandinavia as well as the Mediterranean, Solidarity as well as the Socialist International.

More power to you, Diana! And for keeping her at it, more power to you, *ITT*!

—George Fischer
Woodstock, N.Y.

SPADES

IT'S DEPRESSING TO SEE CHRIS Norton apologizing for the forced guerrilla recruitment in El Salvador (*ITT*, June 27). But his reasoning is even more depressing. So what if it is "not on as large a scale as the army"? What can he mean when he says "there is now a war between two armies, and...as an army, the FMLN has the right to recruit"? The same argument could be made on the other side, where Norton surely

LETTERS

In These Times is an independent newspaper committed to democratic pluralism and to helping build a popular movement for socialism in the United States. Our pages are open to a wide range of views on the left, both socialist and non-socialist. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

would reject it. And does Norton seriously believe that "recruits can leave after about a month if they don't like being with the guerrillas"? "Recruits"? If they don't "like" "being with" the guerrillas? After "about" a month? Who's he kidding?

Call a spade a spade. This impression might be justified as a necessary evil, but simple decency requires that it be recognized as evil. The argument that "the end justifies the means" has been a pitfall for the left too often in the past. Let's not repeat it.

—Anthony Weston
Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

TENDER COMRADES

I AM PRODUCING A FEATURE-LENGTH independent documentary entitled *Tender Comrades*. The film traces the life and times through the '30s, '40s and into the '50s of those Hollywood screenwriters, actors and directors who were later blacklisted. In essence, the film is a group portrait of a generation of Hollywood activists, through their and the movies' most fertile years.

Archival research is essential to this project, but we are also hoping to reach individuals who may have home movies, photos, or newsreels of Los Angeles demonstrations, anti-fascist rallies and Hollywood Guild activities from the '30s and '40s. If any of your readers have collected or know of material like this, they should call (213) 821-2597 and leave a message, or write: Penumbra Films, 2322 Clement Ave., Venice, CA 90291.

—Kenneth Mate
Venice, Calif.

ENGLISH PROPAGANDA

IF HIS REVIEW OF THE MARGARET AND James Jacob book, *The Origins of Anglo-American Radicalism* (*ITT*, July 25) fully represents his views, Edward Countryman surely teaches a propagandized version of American history at the University of Warwick.

Even King George III of England

called the American Revolution of 1776 an Irish Presbyterian war! But Countryman does not mention the ethnic aspect of our inheritances from the inhabitants of the British Isles. He says: "Anglo-American public culture was a single fabric." It surely was not such in the British Isles, and the "British" who came to what is now the United States imported their democratic tendencies from having fought against the classism and ethnocentrism of the English.

Countryman apparently has not taken into consideration the brutal clearances of Scottish and Welsh lands so that proprietors might more profitably raise sheep. What about the four Irish holocausts, those of the Elizabethan period, the Cromwellian period, the 1740s and the 1840s when millions of the Irish were starved or driven out of Ireland by English policies? Our radical traditions owe much positively to the Irish, Scots and Welsh as well as to the Huguenots, German dissenters and other ethnic groups, but very little positively to the English.

What nonsense it is to say that the English "established a bastion of personal rights against the state that commands respect as much now as then," referring to the Glorious Revolution of 1688-89. The class-ridden and ethnocentric courts of the United Kingdom have not yet heard of such rights. Just recently the House of Lords as the supreme court of the realm upheld the right of police to shoot and kill on suspicion or to kill through the use of such murderous "crowd control" devices as plastic bullets. Irish and West Indian immigrants in London are afraid to ask for police protection; they too often get police mayhem.

—Alfred McClung Lee
(author of *Terrorism in Northern Ireland*)
Madison, N.J.

Editor's note: Please try to keep letters under 250 words in length. Otherwise we may have to make drastic cuts, which may change what you want to say. Also, if possible, please type and double-space letters—or at least write clearly and with wide margins.

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PERSPECTIVES

By Phillip Frazer

LAST MONTH, GENERAL Electric notified 400 workers in Charleston, S.C., that its plant there would be closed and all jobs terminated by June 1985. The facility makes equipment for nuclear power plants, the demand for which has collapsed. For several weeks after receiving that notification the workers and their union—United Electrical local 1202—campaign against the GE plan. “We lambasted GE on the tax breaks they got,” says Lance Compa, Washington representative of the UE, “and we argued that there was still demand from conventional power plants. But,” he adds, “it was all a defensive, oppositional-style campaign.”

That was before Compa attended the first International Economic Conversion

campaign was mostly rhetorical,” Compa reports. “The value of conversion is that it puts it on a positive footing. Now we’re not just analyzing why the company is a bunch of bastards, we’re analyzing what the plant can do. Our leaders and our members have real tasks instead of hopelessness. We’re putting forward proposals and pushing them.”

No one knows how many such tales of conversion have flowed—or will flow—from that Boston conference. But this may be just one of many to come from the gathering of 750 peace activists, unionists and academics from the U.S. and 19 other countries. In all, more than 100 people came from Europe, Asia, Canada and Africa, adding to an already exciting mix of labor and peace people—half of them women—engaged in a rare outbreak of solidarity and networking.

Among those invited by conference organizers Suzanne Gordon and Tony Mulvaney were 15 British municipal govern-

ment Labour Party councils. At the Boston conference Phil Asquith, who is principal Product Development Engineer for the Sheffield City Council, drew a packed house and a standing ovation when he recounted his experiences as a co-drafter of the Lucas plan. Asquith is now running a program in Sheffield to utilize the local unemployed, and an abandoned factory, to manufacture dehumidifiers from the 93,000 Council homes infested with a rotting black mold. Sheffield used to be a thriving steel-producer, and while the city’s vast unemployment—and the mold—are not directly military-related, “conversion” has been expanded to include any worker or community initiated program to redirect production to fill social needs.

“What we want to do,” Asquith says, “is create, in microcosm, a viable local economy that bypasses the most pernicious effects of the kind of market economy that exports unemployment, disenfranchises poor and working-class citizens and spends more money developing weapons of destruction than satisfying human needs. This working economy,” he hopes, “will serve as a prototype that can be elaborated upon and replicated when a sympathetic national government takes office.” Asquith, who is a youthful-looking, articulate politician, was, of course, addressing himself to the British situation.

Reverse conversion.

Since employment rates and profits have been declining through much of Europe for most of the past decade, governments have increasingly been funding industry to “reverse convert,” from highly competitive civilian product lines to arms manufacture.

At the Blohm and Voss shipyard in Hamburg, Germany, workers led by their union have distributed conversion plans to management, the media, and to local government—in hopes of pre-empting plans to “reverse convert” to production of naval vessels. Their plan is to design and build windmills on ships anchored offshore in order to generate enough energy to replace the 700 megawatt nuclear power plant that now serves the city.

Similar efforts are underway in Italy, Austria, the Netherlands, France, Scandinavia and Canada. The London City Council (which Prime Minister Thatcher wants to abolish) has instituted a program that invests \$42 million annually in rehabilitative industrial projects, retraining, research and planning and public education.

The Boston conference brought many of the principals in these and other European initiatives into direct contact with members of such American unions as the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE), United Steelworkers of America, United Autoworkers (UAW), International Union of Electronic, Electrical, Technical, Salaried and Machine Workers, Communications Workers of America (CWA), the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)—30 in all, as well as 19 foreign unions—and local peace activists.

Machinists President William Winpisinger delivered a brief pep talk on the necessity of building for conversion from the shop floor up. His union recently surveyed its members—many of whom hold military-related jobs—so as to identify the “shopfloor inventors” in their ranks. The results showed, according to Winpisinger, that “we can probably undertake local economic conversion—alternative production planning projects—without corporate or professional engineering and management help.”

For their part, national disarmament groups such as the Freeze, SANE, Clergy and Laity Concerned, the American Friends Service Committee, Jobs with

Peace and the Mobilization for Survival have all recently endorsed policies of promoting conversion whenever they address the issue of cutting the Pentagon budget. A recent notice mailed to all branches by the National Committee of the Freeze declared that “the National Freeze Campaign supports income and retraining benefits for workers and alternate production planning by labor, industry and the community.”

Presently, two bills to provide federal assistance for conversion initiatives are before the House—HR4805 sponsored by Nick Mavroules (D-MA) and HR425 written by Ted Wein (D-NY). Both Mavroules and Weiss addressed the Boston conference where Mavroules was given a

The Machinists union is surveying its members to develop local conversion plans based on their own experience.

longer-than-average standing ovation for his successful pressuring of the State Department to gain admission for the 100 European invitees deemed politically undesirable by the Reagan administration. (Both the French and Italian governments also intervened to force the U.S. to issue visas to the 10.)

Addressing the House last February 8, Mavroules recalled how, at the end of the Vietnam defense spending spree, 44 percent of his New England constituency’s aerospace workers lost their jobs. His bill calls for:

- One year’s warning by the Defense Department to communities affected by a planned defense contract cut-back.

- A grant of up to \$250,000 to communities hit by reductions of \$10 million or more, to be used for worker retraining and to fund planning for plant conversion.

- Income guarantees for up to two years for laid-off defense workers, to encourage them to stay in their communities and help build alternative industries.

Mavroules argues that his bill would cost no new federal dollars. “According to the Congressional Budget Office,” he says, “the cost...for one lost contract would be about \$1 million.” This for a contract that would have added \$9 million to the government deficit. “Compared to the compensation Rockwell received in 1977 for the lost B-1 bomber contract (\$750 million),” Mavroules told the House, “\$1 million is not much to ask for the defense worker and his community.”

The Weiss bill is generally perceived to have more teeth—and less chance of passing. It contains many of the Mavroules provisions as well as providing for:

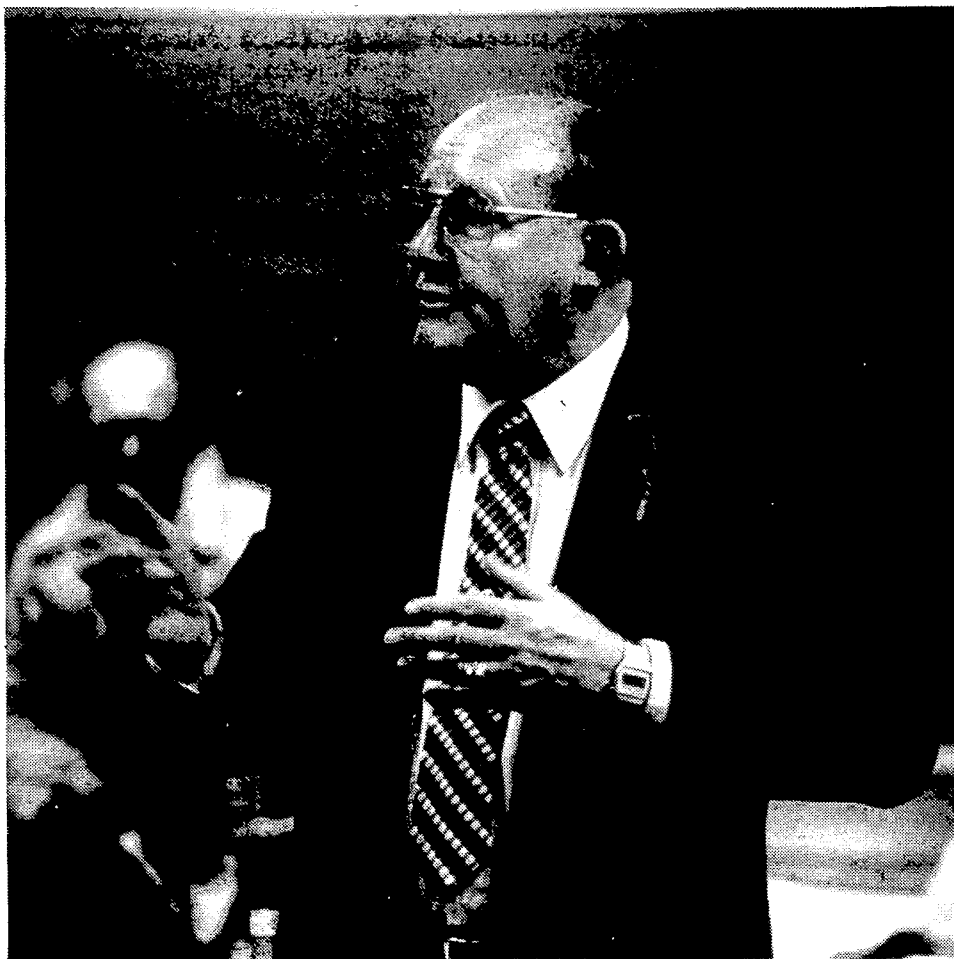
- Ongoing alternative use committees in military-related facilities to develop detailed conversion plans—including representatives of labor, business and the community; and

- A Federal Defense Economic Adjustment Council to provide conversion guidelines, resources and overall coordination—with a mandate to prepare for non-defense public projects “addressing vital areas of national concern,” such as transportation, housing, education, health care, environmental protection and renewable energy resources.

In the Weiss plan, defense contractors would be required to contribute 1.25 percent of their contract revenues to a fund to pay for the program.

As economic advisor to the German Green Party Joachim Muller told the Boston conference: “You cannot get far in conversion without some government funding, but you must keep control in the hands of the workforce and the community if you are to go beyond the old options of wage-slavery or lemon socialism.”

American unions are thinking about local conversion



William Winpisinger, Machinists union president

Conference at Boston College June 23-24. “Conversion” means the re-casting of a factory and the retraining of its workforce to produce “socially-useful” goods instead of military-related output.

At that conference Compa heard several speakers from Europe recounting their efforts to prevent plant closings by proposing alternative uses for the facilities. One of those speakers was Bill Niven, director of the London Conversion Council. And in the days following the conference Niven flew with Compa to South Carolina and addressed the executive board of the union local as well as the factory workforce. His tales of workers who had taken their future in their own hands in Europe inspired his listeners to form an alternative use committee. It is now preparing a skills and equipment assessment of the plant in the hope that they’ll be able to use the otherwise doomed equipment to produce products their community needs.

“Up until now our opposition cam-

ment and union members, 15 German, 13 Italian and several French labor organizers, as well as representatives from Austria, Greece, Japan, Sweden, India, Canada, Australia and South Africa. The movement to confront the jobs-for-bombs tradeoff blackmail practiced by militaristic governments worldwide is just beginning in this country, but there have been some landmark victories in Europe.

The British example.

Thousands of workers at Lucas Aerospace plants in England in 1975 responded to the threatened closure of their worksites by drafting a plan to convert production toward socially useful goods. Lucas was, and still is, Europe’s largest aerospace equipment manufacturer. Although Lucas finally rejected the workers’ proposals, the confrontation came to be seen as the birth of the movement. Several leaders of the Lucas workers’ committee are now running “enterprise boards” for British municipalities with