

EDITORIAL

IN THESE TIMES

"...with liberty and justice for all"

Editor: James Weinstein
 Managing Editor: Sheryl Larson
 Senior Editors: Patricia Aufderheide, John B. Judis, David Moberg, Salim Muwakkil
 Assistant Managing Editors: Miles Harvey, Peter Karman
 Culture Editor: Jeff Reid
 European Editor: Diana Johnstone
 New York Editor: Daniel Lazare
 In Short Editor: Joel Bleifuss
 Copy Editor: Mary Nick-Bisgaard
 Editorial Promotions: Maggie Garb
 Researcher: Joan McGrath
 Interns: Kira Jones, Michele Mozelio, William Siegel, Ray Walsh

Art Director: Miles DeCoster
 Associate Art Director: Peter Hannan
 Assistant Art Director: Lisa Weinstein
 Photo Editor: Paul Comstock
 Typesetter: Jim Rinnert

Publisher: James Weinstein
 Associate Publisher: Bill Finley
 Co-Business Managers: Louis Hirsch, Finance
 Kevin O'Donnell, Data Processing Accounting
 Advertising Director: Bruce Embrey
 Office Manager: Theresa Nutall

Circulation Director: Chris D'Arpa
 Assistant Director: Greg Kilbane

Concert Typographers: Sheryl Hybert

In These Times believes that to guarantee our life, liberty and pursuit of happiness, Americans must take greater control over our nation's basic economic and foreign policy decisions. We believe in a socialism that fulfills rather than subverts the promise of American democracy, where social needs and rationality, not corporate profit and greed, are the operative principles. Our pages are open to a wide range of views, socialist and non-socialist, liberal and conservative. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

(ISSN 0160-5992)

Published 41 times a year: weekly except the first week of January, first week of March, last week of November, last week of December; bi-weekly in June through the first week in September by Institute for Public Affairs, 1300 W. Belmont, Chicago, IL 60657, (312) 472-5700

Member: Alternative Press Syndicate

The entire contents of *In These Times* are copyright © 1989 by Institute for Public Affairs, and may not be reproduced in any manner, either in whole or in part, without permission of the publisher. Copies of *In These Times* contract with the National Writers Union are available upon request. Complete issues of *In These Times* are available from University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor, MI. Selected articles are available on 4-track cassette from Freedom Ideas International, 640 Bayside, Detroit, MI 48217. All rights reserved. *In These Times* is indexed in the Alternative Press Index. Publisher does not assume liability for unsolicited manuscripts or material. Manuscripts or material unaccompanied by stamped, self-addressed envelope will not be returned. All correspondence should be sent to: *In These Times*, 1300 W. Belmont Ave., Chicago, IL 60657. Subscriptions are \$34.95 a year (\$59 for institutions; \$47.95 outside the U.S. and its possessions). Advertising rates sent on request. Back issues \$3; specify volume and number. All letters received by *In These Times* become property of the newspaper. We reserve the right to print letters in condensed form. Second-class postage paid at Chicago, IL and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to *In These Times*, 1912 Debs. Ave., Mt. Morris, IL 61054.

This issue (Vol. 13, No. 13) published Feb. 15, 1989, for newsstand sales Feb. 15-21, 1989.

Universal Press Syndicate



The great congressional pay-raise caper and why it failed

Now that the federal pay raise has been buried by an avalanche of popular protest, it's time to take a calm look at the issue. The procedure itself—a congressionally created commission whose decision would automatically go into effect, absent a veto by both houses of Congress—understandably angered most citizens. We elect representatives to be accountable for their acts, not to find ways to avoid responsibility, and especially not when it involves their own personal gain. If there were to be a pay raise, it should have been openly discussed and justified.

But what about the raises? There are really two questions here. One has to do with the market, the other with public service and a commitment to the welfare of the American people. A good case can be made for pay increases for those people in government whose jobs are essentially technical—administrators, consultants, lawyers (and therefore judges). In these areas the federal government is competing both with private industry and with state and local governments, many of whose officials are more highly paid than federal officials. There is, of course, more prestige attached to most federal jobs, but it is also more expensive to live in Washington than most

places, and the tenure in government jobs—judgeships excepted—is tenuous. So, in order not to make it a sacrifice to take a government job, it makes sense to keep federal jobs competitive by paying salaries commensurate with those in the private sector.

The question of Congress is another matter. Here there are two conflicting principles. On one hand, legislators should be paid enough so that a person without a private fortune can afford to serve in reasonable comfort. Otherwise, as is true of some city councils and county boards, only the well-to-do can afford to hold office, which reinforces the already predominant influence of the wealthy in our public life. But, on the other hand, the salaries should not be so high as to lead our legislators to identify even more strongly with what used to be called the monied interests. Members of Congress, and especially of the House, after all, are supposed to be representative of the nation at large, yet they already receive salaries that put them in the upper 2 percent of the population. If you make \$89,500 a year, plus an average expense account of \$148,000, have an ironclad pension plan and many other perks, it is hard to remember how most people live, and therefore to represent them honestly.

And there's the rub. The revolt against the pay raise is largely fueled by the belief, for the most part justified, that members of Congress do not represent the interest of the majority of working people in this country, but the special interests of our corporate rulers. And the way Congress went about arranging its pay increase only strengthened that belief. If Congress really does need a pay raise, its members should be able to explain why to the satisfaction of most Americans. If that majority does not think they deserve more pay, they should not have it.

AIDS marriage test yields inevitable results

In September 1987, when the state of Illinois passed a mandatory AIDS virus test for couples applying for marriage licenses, we pointed out that the tests would be a diversion of energy and resources from the task of research, education and care for those at high risk. And we warned that the test requirement would create "widespread and unnecessary anxiety and fear" among marriage license applicants who have false positive test results.

It took only one month of the test program—which went into effect in January 1988—to make it clear that these objections were understated. And yet Illinois politicians playing to the grandstand left the law in effect. Now, after a full year of operation, the results are irrefutable. Marriages in Illinois dropped from 99,212 in 1987 to 77,729 last year. Some 20,000 couples left the state to get married and many others who could not afford the test or a trip out of state put off marriage altogether. The state of Illinois lost hundreds of thousands of dollars in license fees as couples flocked to Wisconsin,

Iowa and other states where tests are not required, while those who got married in Illinois spent a total of \$5.4 million for 155,458 tests. Only 26 of these were positive, and these included several false positives, which in some cases caused panicked couples to break off engagements or abort pregnancies.

To find a single AIDS infection by this method cost \$200,000, and yet 20 of the 26 positive results were from intravenous drug users, recipients of blood transfusions or bisexuals—all of whom could have been found more efficiently through programs directed at high-risk groups.

In the face of this experience, a loud chorus of physicians, state legislators, county clerks and AIDS experts are calling for repeal of the testing program. Even its strongest legislative advocates are bowing to the inevitable. "Enough is enough," the chairman of the Illinois House Human Services Committee says. "We have to bring some sanity to this. We had a chance to test this measure. It's been an embarrassing experience."

And so it has, but one that could easily have been avoided if only the legislators and the media had heeded the suggestions of the medical community and the representatives of people with AIDS. Now, with repeal seemingly assured, an improved program of education and research is in order.

LETTERS

Real women

I TAKE ISSUE WITH MILES HARVEY'S FILM REVIEW OF *Working Girl* ("Popular Girl needs some work," *ITT*, Jan. 11).

Harvey calls this movie an "odd celebration of corruption" which conveys the message: "nice little girls get nice little jobs, while threatening bitches get fired." In this last quote he is referring to the heroine's boss, Katharine Parker (Sigourney Weaver), whom he believes is the "only real woman in the story."

Contrary to Harvey, I do not see this film as a "celebration of corruption," but as a triumph of a working-class woman (complete with a working-class conscience and image of herself) in a capitalist society. Sure, she had to break "the rules," but would Harvey rather see her abide by them and get nowhere?

Harvey states that the "girl," Tess (Melanie Griffith), has "no conscience" in her pursuit of cold cash and a piece of the corporate pie. What we all must understand is that her conscience represents the internalization of working-class values and culture—a culture that fosters self-defeat, denial and passivity in women, not to mention materialism in both sexes.

Tess' boss, Katharine, is not the only "real woman" in the movie. True, she is the only upper-class, well-educated, wealthy woman who was probably given what she needed all her life since birth to attain such a status and the accompanying competitive "successful" capitalist self-image. Tess, on the other hand, carries her working-class self-image with her to the boardroom, but this does not make her less of a woman.

Despite its faults, this film makes a contribution in shedding light on the reality faced by working-class women today—a sorely neglected topic.

Linda K. Biro
Riverside, Calif.

Near miss

THANKS FOR YOUR INSIGHTFUL ARTICLE (*ITT*, JAN. 11) connecting the Pan Am air tragedy in Scotland to the crisis in the Mideast. My experience seems to contradict a critical point in that article, which reported that the Germans checked every bag going on the plane, except for five bags under U.S. jurisdiction.

I flew on a Pan Am flight from Frankfurt to New York City on Dec. 15, 1988, six days before the plane was destroyed (four days before Christmas) and five days after the U.S. Embassy was alerted about the possible bombing. I was startled by the special security ring surrounding the main Pan Am check-in counter but none of the other airlines. Yet, this uniformed security was formidable only in appearance.

The official looked at my U.S. passport, merely asked three questions and got three answers: "Did you pack your own bags?" "Yes." "Were you within eyesight of your bags at all times since you packed them?" "Yes." "Has anyone given you anything to carry onto the plane in your luggage?" "No." I then checked my two big bags at the main Pan Am counter, and they disappeared through the wall on a conveyor belt—obviously toward handlers a few feet away who would put the bags on a flatbed cart to take them to the plane. They never examined my "checked" luggage in person or with an

X-ray! And the same happened to virtually all the other passengers. My carry-on bag, however, was examined with the X-ray machine on the way toward the flight gate.

I am upset that the German and U.S. governments put me at risk—missing the death plane by one week—and, worse, might have been able to prevent the bombing with decent security. They evidently did not want to do much to stop this tragedy.

Finally, Ronald Reagan might have reduced the probability of this mass murder of U.S. citizens by not having our Navy shoot down an Iranian airliner four days before their national holiday.

Bill Moyer
San Francisco

In praise of socialism

THE EULOGIES OR MALEDICTIONS MUTTERED these days as a farewell to socialism are delivered over an empty grave. Socialism hasn't even had a chance yet.

To clear one hurdle, let me remind those who need reminding that the cruel indignities perpetrated in the name of socialism come second to the same indignities perpetrated for 200 years in the name of capitalism. It has taken that long, plus enormous and bloody labor fights, plus two world wars, to instill Western capitalism with some respect for its own citizens—and that only in the advanced and privileged democracies (whose well-being now is still founded on the iniquities of their pasts).

Let us consider then the second and, right now, more relevant flaw of socialist endeavor: its inefficiency. At this junction it has surely been shown that the system of everyone for himself or herself, with self-improvement and profit as society's engine, works better in delivering the goods. That does not mean that it will go on working in the future, though.

Our planet, with its limited resources and elasticity, is being stripped as if there were no tomorrow. If there is to be a tomorrow, this must end, and not even an avalanche of legislation within our profit economy can take care of the staggering changes in attitude this will require.

If the argument that there's no future for socialism, "You can't change human nature," is correct, it also proves there is no future for humanity. In the long run, we simply cannot afford capitalism. Human nature has to change, and some form of socialism has to do the job. We cannot afford a system where the acquisition of ever more and better consumer goods is the reason for working and, indeed, for living.

The problem of the future will not be forcing people to work, but, on the contrary, to keep them fulfilled and unalienated while

there is no useful work for them to do. We must find new rationales (maybe consolations) for our lives beyond those of acquisition and profit. They are to be found in the fulfillment of feelings, of solidarity, shown not in waving the flag, but in being our brother's and sister's keeper, in protecting nature, in service to the common weal.

We have been conditioned to consider statements such as these pious claptrap. But what other choice is there? The importance of owning things has to be scaled down; it is exhausting the planet. And those who fall behind are engulfing themselves, and then all of us, in what they see as their alternative, waves of drugs and of crime. Worldwide, capitalism is not only making the rich richer and the poor poorer, it is also attacking the lives of those rich now, for they are becoming prisoners in their own enclaves of possessions.

The world is crying out for decentralized societies where production and communications must be under daily and direct control of the people, because success cannot be measured any more in increase, in the meeting of private purposes, but only in sharing and conservation. And what better name is there for such systems than socialism?

Hans Koning
New Haven, Conn.

Overcrowded greenhouse

CONGRATULATIONS FOR DICK RUSSELL'S EXCELLENT series on the greenhouse effect, which is possibly the best yet in a non-technical publication.

It is premature, possibly, to question whether, as the editorial comment indicates, the overheating of the Earth can be stopped by "simple sacrifices." Since the Earth is already overheating, it is evident that, with our present energy technology, there are already too many people on our planet relative to the planet's capacity to absorb the carbon dioxide we produce by burning fuels.

Since population experts expect the Earth's population to increase from its present total of something over 5 billion people to 8-10 billion soon after the end of the century, the amount of carbon dioxide being produced will increase by as much as 75 percent (allowing for the lesser use of fuel per capita in countries with the highest rate of population increase). The proposal of prominent world scientists for a 20 percent reduction in the world's current use of fuel obviously will have to be revamped due to the increase caused by growth of population.

This factor has been recognized by some

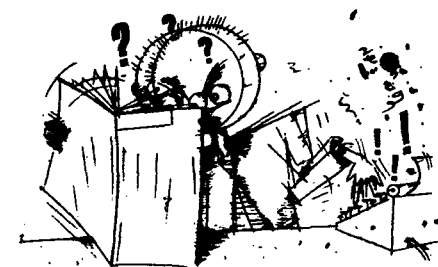
leaders in population-control organizations, but it is not yet an apparent factor in the policies of many nations, religious groups and "right to life" organizations. Indeed, the pope urged the people of Uruguay to have more children last spring, and some Third World leaders are believed to be in favor of larger populations.

Reducing the use of fuel by 20 percent can be approached by energy conservation on a more extensive and intensive basis, but if we have to allow for the growth of population, we presumably will need to have crash programs to develop large-scale generation of electrical energy safely through solar power plants and other alternate systems. Constructing these plants, and also developing more mass transit and minimizing single-home construction are not simple projects. They will require huge capital outlays and altered priorities around the world. The financial and human resources for this can be drawn from the trillion dollars the world now spends annually on military budgets. But there are, of course, both economic and political hurdles to be jumped to achieve this.

The stakes, as Dick Russell notes, are awesome. It is not beyond the realm of scientific estimates to predict that the survival of the human race could terminate if the greenhouse effect and ozone depletion are not contained.

This is a matter that should unite all of us, regardless of our politics. Politics will not mean much, nor will the size of our share of the pie, if the pie vanishes in an ecological catastrophe.

Frederick S. Lightfoot
Greenport, N.Y.



Correction

A review of Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky's book *Manufacturing Consent* (*ITT*, Jan. 25) inadvertently transposed the order of the authors' names.

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.

by Nicole Hollander

SYLVIA

