

EDITORIAL

*Insane dynamic
in the Gulf of Sidra**In Libya,
Reagan likes the
Billy Martin/
Bobby Fischer
theory of
international
relations.*

The Reagan administration's shooting down Aug. 19 of two Libyan warplanes over the Gulf of Sidra was intended to project a new combativeness in its relations to the Soviet Union and its allies. It was also supposed to demonstrate American naval dominance of the Mediterranean Sea. But the administration's actions also revealed a deep and dangerous irrationality that could eventually plunge the world into war.

The Reagan administration has adopted the Billy Martin/Bobby Fischer theory of international relations. Diplomatic success or failure is measured in terms of military victory or defeat. This theory has always had some public support, but it also seems to have won favor among the Reagan administration's higher councils.

George Will Jr., the columnist and close Reagan associate, voiced this approach last October when he spoke on behalf of Reagan before the American Council for Capital Formation. Asked what he thought a new administration's first national security priority should be, Will replied, "We have to win something."

In last month's *New York Times*, William Safire quotes what he describes as a "high geopolitician" (sic) who has a similar view. Referring to the U.S.-Soviet conflict, this lofty strategy says, "If the Reagan administration is to be taken seriously, it will have to take one of their pieces off the board."

The Reagan administration has chosen Libya as the most vulnerable Soviet "piece." Ruled by Colonel Muammar el-Qaddafi, friend of Idi Amin and the Palestinian "rejectionists" and foe of Arab sultans and monarchs, Libya is unpopular among many African and Arab states and is distrusted by the Soviets. Earlier, Reagan broke relations with Libya, ostensibly because of Libyan attempts to kill opponents of the Qaddafi regime residing in Colorado. (The Chilean assassination of exile Orlando Letelier did not deter Reagan from strengthening U.S. ties with the Pinochet government.) Reagan's CIA director William Casey also has tried to initiate a campaign to topple Qaddafi. And beginning last February and climaxing last month, the administration prepared a challenge to Libyan claims over the Gulf of Sidra.

Reagan, wearing a baseball-style cap at his post-battle press conference, declared, "Let friend and foe alike know that America has the muscle to back up its word." *Time* captured the event's essence in its cover headline, "United States 2, Libya 0."

But world politics has different rules than either baseball or chess. With the Soviet Union having become the military equal of the U.S., neither side could "win" an all-out war. And with the decline in American economic power, the

U.S. can no longer count on cooperation from its European, Japanese and third-world teammates.

Faced with this complex reality, the U.S. could recognize its own limitations and develop a foreign policy based on diplomacy and designed to secure its citizen's liberties at home rather than the liberties of its multinationals abroad. Or, like Germany and Japan in the 1930s, the U.S. could try to use military force and bluster to compensate for its economic and military deficiencies. This latter cause has been adopted by the Reagan administration.

There is an insane dynamic to this strategy. Its initial effects, seen in the European responses to the neutron bomb decision or in the moderate Arab response to the Libyan shootout, has been to increase American diplomatic isolation. Even the Saudi Arabian government, which Qaddafi has been openly trying to overthrow, condemned the American attack as "cowboy politics." But growing American isolation only seems to strengthen the argument for military rather than diplomatic action as a means of showing both our friends and our enemies that we "mean business."

A diplomatic approach to Libyan claims over the Gulf of Sidra would have dictated American participation in rather than abstention from the ongoing Law of the Sea Conference, where claims like those of Libya have been on the agenda.

But more fundamentally, a diplomatic rather than military approach might have raised questions about why the U.S. needs to sail its warships in the Gulf at all or fly its planes over North Korea's coastline.



PLAYING HARDBALL

*Compassion for apartheid**In South Africa,
administration
policy is more
passive.*

On Aug. 31, the United States cast a lone veto of a UN Security Council resolution to condemn South Africa's invasion of Angola. The veto, coupled with Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Chester Crocker's Aug. 29 policy speech in which he stated that despite South Africa's racist policies the U.S. would not choose sides between blacks and whites and would not try to undermine the South African government—formalize the Reagan administration's application of "quiet diplomacy" to the apartheid South African regime.

The dictates of quiet diplomacy apparently absolve the South Africans of responsibility for their rampage in Angola, which was a flagrant violation of Angolan sovereignty launched from an illegally occupied territory.

Secretary of State Haig attempted to give a rationalization by saying that it has to "be understood in its full context"—the presence of Cuban and Soviet advisors in Angola along with attacks of SWAPO guerrillas who he said, "inflict

bloodshed and terrorism on the innocent noncombatant inhabitants of Namibia."

The Namibian situation does need to be understood in its full context. But this context shows that SWAPO is not a puppet of either the Soviet Union or Cuba. It is rather an outgrowth of a long resistance struggle that began around the turn of the century under German colonial rule. Conditions hardly got better after the South Africans assumed control in 1921. They proceeded to integrate the Namibian government with their own and install an apartheid regime complete with a system of "pass laws" that required blacks to have permits to move from district to district or to work in cities.

The supporters of SWAPO are not the source of the Namibians' suffering. Indeed, in view of overwhelming South African military superiority, it is possible for SWAPO to operate in Namibia only because it enjoys massive popular support. South African officers in Namibia routinely acknowledge this, and the government of South Africa implicitly attests to this with its refusal to allow the UN to hold elections.

The State Department refuses to recognize these realities. Swayed by the considerable American trade and investment in South Africa, it professes to take a neutral position that balances the evils of supposedly Soviet-dominated Angola and SWAPO with the drawbacks of South African apartheid.

The South Africans have taken full advantage of the Reagan administration's indifference toward their occupation of Namibia and their apartheid policies at home. It is no coincidence that just after Reagan was elected, South Africa reneged on its commitment to abide by the UN resolution to hold elections in Namibia. Developments in South Africa during the first eight months of the Reagan administration—especially the brutal campaign to remove "illegal" blacks from Cape Town—show just what State Department claims that quiet diplomacy will bring gradual reform of apartheid mean. As Rep. Howard Wolpe (D-Mich.), chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, said on returning from a recent trip to South Africa, the consensus of many South African moderates is that the trend is toward a harsher apartheid policy.

Yet for the first time in memory, the State Department has granted visas to a South African rugby team for a tour of the country. The occasion gives Americans the opportunity to protest Reagan's detente with apartheid. Local groups will hold protest demonstrations in Chicago on Sept. 19, in Rochester on Sept. 26, in Albany on Sept. 27 and on Sept. 17 in all three cities to commemorate the murder of Steven Biko. Information about the demonstrations and other activities may be obtained by calling: (312)427-4064 in Chicago, (212)952-1210 in Rochester and (518)457-2952 in Albany.

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.

WHA NABET?

I WISH TO RESPOND TO CHARLES RUDNICK's letter (*ITT*, July 29). As an individual who has worked with many of the members of the National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians (NABET), I respect the spirit of the organization. Godmother Productions gave full hearing to local union members in the making of the film, *Tell Me a Riddle*.

Friends and people unknown to us applied to be in our crew. Individuals who had claimed for years that they would support our effort suddenly came in wanting higher than scale salaries, which we could not afford.

In several meetings with NABET, we indicated that though all basic issues had been part of our hiring practices—such as payroll employees, disability wages, federal and state withholding and above minimum pay for all persons on the set—we were not interested in a single union contract. We were hiring individuals skilled and talented enough to handle the job who were from unions all over the country or who were not unionized.

There were people from NABET who were not chosen, based on talent or cost, for our crew. The basic breach of good negotiating came from those members of NABET who were embittered by this. Up until this time not one union official had contacted Godmother to verify rumors and complaints. Meanwhile, NABET sent telegrams to people, ranging from Tillie Olsen to Lee Grant to Melvyn Douglas, claiming unfairness. After our appearance at an executive board meeting of the union where the claim of less than minimum wages was shown to be false, NABET officially stated that there would be an apology telegram. No such apology was made.

Our crew, though small, had more women in important crew positions than any film made in the Bay Area in 1979. We have had no complaints from people who worked for us, only from those who didn't.

For a group that should want to make it possible for filmmakers to work in the Bay Area, NABET's actions in this case were more of an obstacle than a benefit.

We expect to keep making films in the Bay Area. We also expect to see members of NABET working on our next film.

—Rachel V. Lyon
Godmother Productions
—Mindy J. Afrime
—Susan O'Connell
Berkeley, Calif.

SOCIALISM OR BARBARISM

THE EDITORIAL "NEXT TIME, BUSINESS will be to blame" (*ITT*, Aug. 12) is excellent as far as it goes in explaining why Reaganism will fail and people will soon be looking for some surer solution.

The ruling class will have exhausted their salable options as both liberal and conservative economic policies will have been tried and failed.

Their last option (a police state fascist regime to guarantee profits in a no-growth economy by destroying the American working people's organized ability to defend themselves) will become increasingly their order of the day.

A tactical demand to nationalize oil may be useful, but it is even more important to popularize an understanding of why the military-industrial complex and the international corporations control our economy for their interests and why monopoly capitalism now finds it unprofitable to expand social production and employment while finding it increasingly profitable to invest the shrinking social surplus into military cost-plus contracts and completely non-socially productive speculation in real estate, industry, diamonds and art.

Capital, which at one time went into expanding industry, housing, research, health, education, welfare and generally expanding consumption, is now expended in institutionalized waste.

As the status quo becomes impossible we must clearly demonstrate that the alternatives are socialism or fascism.

—A. Robert Kaufman
Baltimore, Md.

FERTILIZED EGGS

I DISAGREE STRONGLY WITH SHEILA McMullin's disparagement of Italy's vote against compulsory childbearing as "a vote in support of the destruction of physical human life" (*ITT*, Aug. 12). To my knowledge, abortions in Italy are limited to the first 90 days. It takes much longer than that to develop an organism with enough human characteristics, including the capacity to survive without parasitizing another's body, to be rationally classified as "human."

Mere words cannot a "person" make of a fertilized egg, either through legislative decree or papal encyclical. It takes women's bodies, and sometimes even their lives, to do that. Excluding them from any say in the outcome of any unintentional pregnancy is neither wise nor just.

How much of that vote was "pro-abortion" and how much for freedom of conscience and religion (pro-choice)? Defining these issues in terms of "pro-

abortion" and "pro-life" is simplistic. Fr. Dan Berrigan is proof positive that one can be sincerely and passionately pro-life without becoming rabidly intolerant, monomaniacal or tyrannical. I have several anti-abortion friends who readily sign my pro-choice postcards.

It is equally important to note that not all anti-choice zealots can be accurately described as "pro-life." Ron Reagan, for example, is aggressively promoting the biggest military budget in our history, stepping up U.S. support of the murderous regime in El Salvador, and warmly embracing the bomb that destroys only people instead of buildings. To top it off, he cast the lone dissenting vote in the World Health Organization against the code to regulate the marketing practices of infant formula salesmen that are causing so many deaths of undeniably "human" babies. All too often, a "pro-life" banner is only a sanctimonious camouflage for virulent sexism or religious bigotry.

For all of the above reasons, I prefer to define the current political struggles over abortion in terms of "pro-choice" vs. "anti-choice."

—Audrey Patton
Moody, Mo.

INVEST IN US

A SHORT NOTE OF THANKS AND praise for your efforts to publish America's alternative newspaper. I especially enjoyed the Aug. 12 issue. However appreciated words of praise may be, it's nice to receive something more substantial in support. Thus, it occurred to me that R. Reagan's tax rebate legislation has given us all (the opposition) an ironic opportunity to invest in those things that matter. Since supply-side economics expects us to invest our tax rebates into profitable ventures, may I suggest that *In These Times* provide such an investment opportunity by providing a "Pledge Your Tax Rebate" drive. In this drive, readers, subscribers, sympathizers, etc., would be given an opportunity to pledge their entire 1981 tax rebate (i.e., the amount that Reagan's bill provides over and above the usual tax return) to political groups and causes they see as important investments in their own future. While this will not be an extraordinary amount, it will be significant in large numbers of pledges. To kick off the drive, I will pledge my Reagan tax rebate to *In These Times*. Few opportunities exist to turn your adversaries' weapons against themselves. This is a good one.

—Robert Spich
Bellingham, Wash.

OH WELL

"WORKING-CLASS HEROES AT HOME and abroad" by Alexander Cockburn (*ITT*, Aug. 25) is to my mind a shallow piece of journalism. In selecting the quotations, he does not take into account the nature of the two societies and in whose interests they operate. Given the mismanagement and even corruption, the Polish society attempts to correct its errors and is concerned with the interests of the people and not a few millionaires. Aside from that, after all the months of turmoil I have yet to read where a Polish worker was fired from his job, and the government is in constant negotiation with Solidarity.

—Ed. Bender
Oakland, Calif.

THE BUSINESS OF GOVERNMENT

THE PATCO STRIKE. WORKING CONDITIONS and reasonable demands set the stage; Secretary Lewis' lack of constructive and honest bargaining signaled its start; U.S. federal law (in the form of an oath), which falsely differentiates between public and private workers, was the basis for government action; and the anti-labor nature of the national industrialists and their thespian president, has given birth to the visible and painful reality of "infantile" fascism.

The government of the free has fired nearly 13,000 PATCO workers, has jailed scores of their strike leaders, and is about to have the union decertified. Astounding! Talk about the role of the state in capitalism—\$2 to 5 billion to bust a union!

—Robert Norberg
Progress for Labor, San Diego, Calif.

SARCASTIC

ALTHOUGH I FOUND DIANA JOHNSTONE's article on the P-2 scandal (*ITT*, Aug. 12) informative and well researched, I am disturbed when she describes the P-2 scandal as "startling even by Italian standards" and when she asserts that "Italian scandals occur so frequently they are 'exhausting the possibilities of this particular art form.'" These remarks are sarcastic and insensitive. They also reinforce old stereotypes of Italians as bumbling, criminalistic and ineffectual.

—John Crucioff
Minneapolis, Minn.

Roger Baldwin: Founder of ACLU

ROGER BALDWIN, A FOUNDER AND longtime leader of the American Civil Liberties Union, died on Aug. 26 at the age of 97.

Baldwin was born into an aristocratic New England family, but his political and philosophic thinking was most affected by Emma Goldman and other anarchists. Widely known as a crusader for civil liberties, particularly freedom of speech, his main contribution is usually distorted or ignored.

Baldwin's greatest achievement was his organizing and uniting of a coalition of labor and the left that became a viable, largely successful free speech movement. In the organizational memorandum that established the ACLU in 1920 Baldwin called for a "dramatic campaign of service to labor" and a governing board composed of a core of labor leaders and labor sympathizers.

The common view about freedom of speech ignores this history and depicts the nature and development of free speech as a narrowly legal process. As Baldwin told me in a recent interview, "Organization was the basis of our service in the ACLU," and arguments in

court were "secondary." "If we had been a legal aid society helping people get their constitutional rights, as such agencies do their personal rights, we would have behaved quite differently. We would have stuck to constitutional lawyers and arguments in courts. We would not have surrounded ourselves with popular persons. But we did the opposite. We attached ourselves to the movements we defended. We identified ourselves with their demands...and we depended on them for money and support." Under Baldwin's leadership, the ACLU conducted an intense political campaign—including everything from civil disobedience to massive publicity efforts to person-to-person attempts to persuade at all levels of society.

The free speech struggle was not easy. Many died, and many more were injured or imprisoned. Baldwin was arrested during a free speech demonstration in 1924 and some of his writings were banned from the mails (a practice that had been repeatedly upheld by the Supreme Court). The office of the National Civil Liberties Bureau, the predecessor to the ACLU, was also raided

by the federal government and all its files were seized. Following this raid, Baldwin served a year in jail for resisting the WWI draft. With characteristic humor he remarked after being released, "I am a graduate of Harvard, but a year in jail has helped me to recover from it."

While Baldwin later became obsessed with anti-communism (and led a purge of the ACLU in the late '40s and '50s) his extraordinary triumph was as an organizer and strategist. He perceived and organized the potential power of a labor-left coalition at a crucial point in our history. He deserves as much credit as anyone—including our "founding fathers"—for the concept of free speech that we usually take for granted and attribute to the constitution and the courts, but whose origins were much more recent and were the fruits of a long, bitter political struggle. ■
David Kairys practices law in Philadelphia and is local counsel for the National Emergency Civil Liberties Committee. He is the editor and co-author of a book on free speech law to be published by Pantheon in 1982.