

# 1917

"To face reality squarely; not to seek the line of least resistance; to call things by their right names; to speak the truth to the masses, no matter how bitter it may be; not to fear obstacles; to be true in little things as in big ones; to base one's program on the logic of the class struggle; to be bold when the hour of action arrives—these are the rules of the Fourth International"

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CHIN ALAN—GAMMA

*U.S./UN Out of the Middle East!*

## Imperialists Run Amok

The "New World Order" proclaimed by Bush the Elder after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 has been marked by a string of brutal neo-colonial wars. Under *Pax Americana*, the U.S. claims as its manifest destiny permanent, unchallenged supremacy over every region on the planet. Washington's role as self-appointed global policeman is all about making the world safe for American capitalism, frequently at the expense of its imperial rivals. But the world is too big

and too complex for the belligerent American "superpower" to successfully control.

The central slogan raised by the International Bolshevik Tendency in protests against the latest U.S.-led aggression has been, "Defend Iraq Against Imperialist Attack!" Today only a handful agree with this perspective, but the growth of anti-imperialist militancy among youth, and particularly within sectors of the organized workers' movement in the



KARIM SAHIB—AFP

### Iraqi oil worker

capitalist heartland, could create the conditions for going beyond passive protest to organizing mass struggles that bring the war home and make business as usual impossible. These actions could range from mass meetings, marches and campus sit-ins; to occupations and blockades of government buildings; to hot-cargoing military matériel and, ultimately, mass political strikes. If carried out aggressively and on a sufficiently large scale, mobilizations of this sort could dramatically change the political terrain, shake the self-confidence of the ruling class, and create a major social crisis of potentially revolutionary dimensions.

*Reprinted below is a slightly abbreviated version of a 22 October 2002 IBT statement:*

George W. Bush's proclamation to the United Nations General Assembly on 12 September that the United States has "no quarrel with the Iraqi people" was a signal that the world's most powerful military would soon be dispatched on a mission in which thousands, and perhaps tens of thousands, of Iraqi civilians will be killed. American and British jets have been bombing Iraqi installations for over a decade, while a U.S.-initiated embargo has blocked dialysis machines, incubators, water-treatment equipment, as well as food and medicine. The sanctions have killed an estimated million and a half Iraqis, but have not dislodged Saddam Hussein. So Washington has now opted for "regime change" via military conquest.

Saddam Hussein is a blood-soaked dictator who has massacred thousands of Iraqis and ruthlessly crushed all political opposition. In other words, he is a typical Third World U.S. ally. America has long propped up feudalist monarchies in Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates, as well as military dictatorships in Egypt and Algeria. The sudden enthusiasm about "liberating" Iraq and bringing "democracy" to its benighted citizens is a transparently cynical public relations exercise.

Originally the rationale for going after Iraq was that one of Saddam's intelligence agents had supposedly met Mohamed Atta (the purported leader of the horrific Sep-

tember 11 attacks) in Prague a few months earlier. When this story was discredited, the White House began warning of the dangers posed by Iraqi chemical, biological and nuclear weapons. But Scott Ritter, the former U.S. Marine who headed the UN weapons inspection program in Iraq until 1998, considers it very unlikely that the Iraqis still possess either operational "weapons of mass destruction" or the means to deliver them.

To bolster its case, the Bush gang points to Saddam's use of poison gas against Iranian soldiers and Iraqi Kurds in the 1980s. What they don't mention is that Iraq's "weapons of mass destruction" program was launched, like Osama Bin Laden's original network, with American assistance. In 1980, shortly after he took power, Saddam got a green light from Washington to attack the Islamic Republic of Iran. The United States provided intelligence and logistical support to Iraq throughout the 1980s as the brutal conflict dragged on. Hussein hoped that defeating Iran would make Iraq the dominant power in the oil-rich Persian Gulf.

Washington did not want either Iraq or Iran to win, and sought to prolong the conflict to bleed Iran, and thereby curb the influence of Ayatollah Khomeini's "Islamic Revolution." Whenever it seemed the Iraqis were gaining the upper hand, the U.S. provided covert support to Iran, but through most of the conflict Iraq's military was under pressure from the more numerous and highly-motivated Iranians. The U.S. helped Saddam develop a chemical and biological weapons program to level the killing fields:

"The Iraqi bio-weapons program that George W. Bush wants to eradicate got its start with help from Uncle Sam two decades ago."

"The CDC [Atlanta-based Centers for Disease Control] and a biological sample company, American Type Culture Collection, dispatched strains of all the germs Iraq used to make weapons, including anthrax, the bacteria that make botulinum toxin, and the germs that cause gas gangrene. Iraq also got samples of other deadly pathogens, including the West Nile virus.

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## 1917

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# Lessons from Working-Class History: State Repression & the Left

The aggressive neo-colonial wars being waged by the Bush administration are accompanied by a massive reorganization and expansion of the domestic security bureaucracy and heightened activity by America's political police. The "war on terror" has made major incursions on democratic rights and constitutional protections of all U.S. residents, particularly for immigrants, Arab-Americans and critics of government policy. It is no accident that the U.S. Border Patrol has recently set up rotating checkpoints in the Detroit area, home to 350,000 Arab-Americans, the largest concentration in the country.

In a 15 November 2002 *Salon.com* article, Dave Lindorff reported that the assistant legal director of the left-liberal Center for Constitutional Rights, Barbara Olshansky, discovered her name is on a list maintained by the new post-9/11 "Transportation Security Administration" (TSA) of people subject to intensive investigation any time they attempt to board an airplane. It is unclear how many others are on the list with Olshansky, but authorities admit maintaining another list of 1,000 people who are deemed "threats to aviation" and not allowed to fly at all.

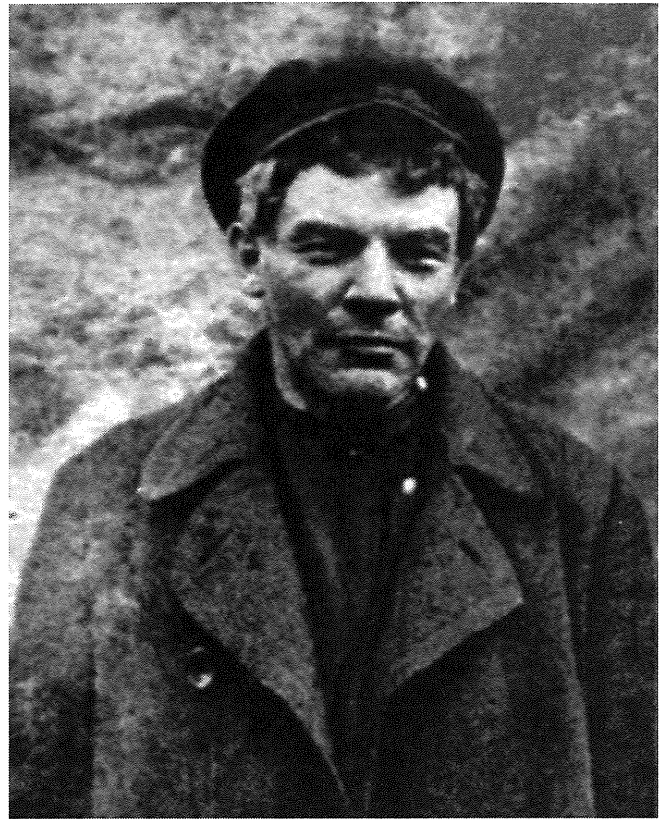
David Steigman, of the TSA, who told *Salon* that U.S. federal intelligence agencies (the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Central Intelligence Agency and National Security Agency) supply names for the list, admitted that there are no legal avenues through which to launch an appeal. According to Lindorff, so far the feds are "netting mostly priests, elderly nuns, Green Party campaign operatives, left-wing journalists, right-wing activists and people affiliated with Arab or Arab-American groups."

The ostensibly revolutionary left, weak as it is, will automatically be a prime target of all new police-state measures, as the manufactured terror scare is used as justification for going after any and all opponents of the American ruling class. The fact that most of America's supposed Marxists are pursuing a strategy that combines pacifist bleating with appeals to the imperialists to behave more humanely will not spare them the attention of the architects of a rightist security state.

The Marxist movement has confronted the issue of political repression under bourgeois-democratic regimes many times in the past. The right of socialist organizations to advocate revolutionary views, won through the struggles of earlier generations of militants, must be energetically defended today. The successful defense of the legal status and democratic rights of the left requires both political courage and tactical intelligence. In some cases, Marxist organizations have been forced to make important adjustments in the presentation of their ideas as a result of bourgeois repression.

## Russian Revolutionaries vs. Czarist Repression

The Russian revolutionary movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, developed under a regime of constant police repression, and was forced to produce much of its literature underground. This increased organizational overheads, limited circulation and resulted in the imprison-



ALEXANDER POGREBINSKY JR. LENIN ARCHIVE

### Lenin in disguise to evade arrest, August 1917

ment of hundreds of militants involved in the printing, transportation and distribution of illegal publications. Where possible, the revolutionaries therefore attempted to publish their materials legally. This required certain terminological accommodations to the sensibilities of the censors. Georgi Plekhanov's classic, *The Development of the Monist View of History*, written in 1895 as a polemic against the Russian Narodniks (populists), was published under a pseudonym (N. Beltov) and given an "intentionally clumsy" title by the author to get by the czarist censors who prohibited "materialist" (i.e., Marxist) works. The defensive formulations employed by Plekhanov throughout the book permitted its legal publication and ensured broader distribution, but did not change the content of his arguments.

In the preface to *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Lenin noted:

"This pamphlet was written with an eye to the tsarist censorship. Hence, I was not only forced to confine myself strictly to an exclusively theoretical, specifically economic analysis of facts, but to formulate the few necessary observations on politics with extreme caution, by hints, in an allegorical language—in that accursed Aesopian language—to which tsarism compelled all revolutionaries to have recourse whenever they took up the pen to write a 'legal' work.

"...In order to show the reader, in a guise acceptable to the censors, how shamelessly untruthful the capitalists and



### German Chancellor Bismarck's 1878 Anti-Socialist Law: an unsuccessful tool for political repression

the social-chauvinists who have deserted to their side (and whom Kautsky opposes so inconsistently) are on the question of annexations; in order to show how shamelessly they screen the annexations of *their* capitalists, I was forced to quote as an example—Japan!"

The opportunist wing of the Russian socialist movement, the Mensheviks, who had also been forced underground by police repression, were inclined to adapt politically to the requirements of the censors, and gradually abandoned all illegal activity. This tendency was characterized as "liquidationism" by the Bolsheviks, who maintained an underground apparatus while attempting to maximize the opportunities for legal activity. In a speech in New York in November 1942, when the American Trotskyist movement was facing considerable government persecution, James P. Cannon described how prior to World War I the Bolsheviks managed to elect six deputies to the Duma (the czar's pseudo-parliament) and published several daily newspapers:

"The daily paper of the Bolsheviks was published in what you call the Aesopian language.... They called themselves 'consistent democrats.' And the paper did not espouse the cause of the Bolshevik party and did not propound its whole program. It did this only by implication. It wrote in parables. It modified its language to get through the tsarist censorship. But they managed to do it skillfully enough so that around that paper the Bolshevik party was organized. So that when the time came, more favorable conditions, and the chance to break out in the open, the Bolsheviks had previously created a wide sentiment for their basic ideas among the advanced workers of Moscow.

"All this time, however, they maintained the underground party. They did not confine themselves to this limited Aesopian legalistic propaganda; that was a supplement of the illegal program of the party. In the underground circles of the party they talked frankly about everything,

clarified their program, and through it were able to maintain control over this vast network of legal activities."

—"On Legal and Semilegal Work," 19 November 1942

Sometimes the Bolsheviks were able to get around the censors by publishing important statements as signed discussion articles instead of official party decisions. In other cases, newspapers declared formal independence from the party. In their legal activity, the Bolsheviks could only convey parts of the Marxist program, and generally chose to avoid subjects that would not pass the censors. When possible, they attempted to find other ways to comment on such issues; when not, they remained silent rather than revise or repudiate the Marxist position.

### Marx, Engels & the German Social Democracy

The Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD), the leading section of the Socialist (or Second) International, with a membership in excess of one million at the outbreak of World War I in 1914, was consistently to the right of the Russian Bolsheviks. One index of the SPD's non-revolutionary character was its tendency to put the "defense of the party" (and its assets) ahead of Marxist principle. Rosa Luxemburg, the leader of the SPD's Marxist left wing, was critical of the party's refusal to raise the demand for a German republic, i.e., abolition of the monarchy. Karl Kautsky, who was a collaborator of Frederick Engels and widely regarded as the leading exponent of Marxism in the Second International, rejected Luxemburg's proposal to introduce this plank into the party's program on the grounds that it was too dangerous. Kautsky claimed to be upholding the position of Marx and Engels on the question:

"...the [1875] Gotha Program said nothing of a republic, and Marx, as much as he condemned this program, acknowledged in his letter that it wouldn't do to openly demand a republic (*Neue Zeit*, IX, 1, p. 573). Engels spoke on the same matter regarding the [1891] Erfurt Program (*Neue Zeit*, XX, 1, p. 11).

"I don't have time to set forth to you the grounds which Marx and Engels, Bebel and Liebknecht acknowledged to be sound. Enough, that what you want is an entirely new agitation which until now has always been rejected. This new agitation, however, is the sort we have no business discussing so openly.... We cannot and will not proceed in this manner. A single personality, however high she may stand, cannot pull off a fait accompli on her own hook which can have unforeseeable consequences for the party."

—quoted by Rosa Luxemburg in  
*Theory and Practice* (1980)

Luxemburg responded that the "entirely new agitation" amounted to a call for universal adult suffrage and a democratic republic, and was aimed at the monarchy as the "visible head of the reigning reaction." She pointed out that in his critique of the Erfurt Program, Engels made an "allusion to the 'opportunism prevalent in a great part of the Social Democratic press,'" and asserted:

"But the fact that one cannot even draw up an openly republican party program in Germany proves how colossal the illusion is, that we can genially, peacefully install a republic there—and not only a republic, but communist society.

"...On all these subjects, not much can be said in the program. I call this to your attention chiefly to characterize both the situation in Germany, where it will not do to say



WILLY RÖMER

### Germany 1919: Armed workers and soldiers in Berlin

such things, and the self-delusion that would transform this situation into a communist society by legal means.”

—*Ibid.*

Luxemburg also cited Marx’s comment in the “Critique of the Gotha Program” that if it were impossible to openly advocate a democratic republic in Germany, it would be absurd to put forward other, derivative, democratic demands:

“Since you do not feel yourselves in the position...to demand a democratic republic as the French workers’ programs did under Louis Philippe and Louis Napoleon, you should not have tried to hide behind the...dodge [the dots are substituted for a boisterous adjective of Marx’s—R.L.] of demanding things which only make sense in a democratic republic, from a state which is nothing but a military despotism embellished with parliamentary forms, alloyed with a feudal admixture, obviously influenced by the bourgeoisie, shored up with a bureaucracy and watched over by the police.”

—*Ibid.*

The difference between the revolutionary intransigence of Luxemburg and the Bolsheviks and the cringing legalism of Kautsky and the “orthodox” Marxists of the SPD foreshadowed their subsequent divergence over “defense of the fatherland” in World War I, and their respective responses to the collapse of the Romanov and Hohenzollern dynasties. After the overthrow of the czar, the Bolsheviks, who had refused to support the imperial war effort, went on to win a majority in the workers’ councils (soviets) based on a program of ending the war, distributing the landed estates to the peasantry and expropriating the capitalists. On 9 November 1918, the Kaiser was forced to abdicate as a result of a revolt by German workers and soldiers who

formed revolutionary councils in every major center across the country. Luxemburg and a small group of revolutionaries, who would soon found the German Communist Party, proposed to establish a new state power based on the rule of these councils. But the SPD’s rightist leadership, supported by Kautsky’s centrist bloc, formed a provisional government, thereby saving the capitalist state and derailing the German Revolution.

### Trotskyists in World War II: ‘Socialism on Trial’

The question of revolutionary legality was posed quite sharply for the Trotskyist movement during World War II. In the U.S., the Socialist Workers Party (SWP—the leading section of the international Trotskyist movement at the time) anticipated that America’s entry into the war would be accompanied by severe repression. James P. Cannon, the party’s leader, predicted that: “During the war, especially the first stages, there is nobody going to be talking against the war without being in the jug the next hour. You can’t do it in the paper or in private conversation.” North of the border, in Canada, the Trotskyist organization had been outlawed as soon as war was declared in September 1939. Shortly afterwards, one young Trotskyist, Frank Watson, was arrested when he dared to speak against the inter-imperialist slaughter on a soapbox in downtown Toronto. Watson’s comrades did what they could to publicize his case, but he was quickly tried and convicted, and after losing a subsequent appeal, was sent to jail for six months.

On 15 July 1941, 28 prominent members of the SWP and the militant Minneapolis Teamsters union they led, were



MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### Minneapolis, 21 May 1934: striking Teamsters rout police and deputized strikebreakers

indicted by a grand jury for violating the reactionary Smith Act, passed a year earlier, which outlawed "seditious" ideas. They were also charged under an 1861 law with conspiracy to overthrow the government. At a special conference in October 1941, the SWP passed the following resolution as a directive to the comrades facing trial:

"The policy of the party in defending itself in court, obligatory for all party members under indictment, can only be one that is worthy of our movement and our tradition; no attempt to water down or evade our revolutionary doctrine, but, on the contrary, to defend it militantly. At the same time we maintain that we have legal right under the Bill of Rights to propagate our principles."

—*Defense Policy in the Minneapolis Trial*

During their trial, the SWP defendants argued that they were being persecuted for exercising their constitutional rights to free speech and free assembly. The defense presented testimony on a wide variety of issues, including the question of expropriation of the capitalist minority, and the likelihood that during the revolutionary transition from capitalism to a socialist regime, the old ruling class would attempt to initiate violence. The national media paid close attention to the trial proceedings, which in Cannon's view presented:

"the opportunity, for the first time, to speak to the masses—to the people of the United States. We seized upon the opportunity and made the most of it, and applied in practice without a serious fault the basic principles which had been assimilated in a long preparatory period."

—*Ibid.*

Cannon characterized the trial as "by far our greatest

propaganda success" and noted with pride that "even those workers who disagree with our program, have approved and applauded our conduct in court as worthy of people who take their principles seriously." The party published Cannon's testimony at the trial and the closing statement of SWP attorney Albert Goldman (who was also one of the defendants) as pamphlets for use in educating new recruits.

The SWP cadres refused to renounce their principles and offered a political defense of their party, while at the same time employing "defensive formulations." At points during their testimony, the defendants missed opportunities to take the offensive against their persecutors, but on the whole the SWP's defense strategy in this trial provides a model for revolutionaries.

### Grandizo Munis' Critique

Grandizo Munis, a Spanish Trotskyist exiled in Mexico, criticized the way the SWP defendants conducted themselves during the trial; he felt they missed an opportunity in:

"replying to the political accusations—struggle against the war, advocacy of violence, overthrow of the government by force—where it was necessary to have raised the tone and turn the tables, accuse the government and the bourgeoisie of a reactionary conspiracy; of permanent violence against the majority of the population, physical, economic, moral, educative violence; of launching the population into a slaughter also by means of violence in order to defend the Sixty Families."

—*Ibid.*

Cannon responded that a distinction had to be made "between 'maneuvers' which serve principle and those which contradict it" and explained:

"we planned to conduct our defense in court not as a 'criminal' defense but as a propaganda offensive. Without foolishly disregarding or provoking the jury or needlessly helping the prosecutor, it was our aim to use the courtroom as a forum to popularize the principles of our movement. We saw in this second proposition our main duty and opportunity and never for a moment intended to let purely legalistic considerations take precedence over it."

—*Ibid.*

Cannon's testimony at the trial was an excellent exposition of the Marxist attitude toward violence. In his reply to Munis, he summarized his remarks as follows:

"1) The Marxists prefer a peaceful transition. 'The position of the Marxists is that the most economical and preferable, the most desirable method of social transformation, by all means, is to have it done peacefully.'

"2) 'It is the opinion of all Marxists that it will be accompanied by violence.'

"3) That opinion 'is based, like all Marxist doctrine, on a study of history, the historical experiences of mankind in the numerous changes of society from one form to another, the revolutions which accompanied it, and the resistance which the outlived classes invariably put up against the new order. Their attempt to defend themselves against the new order, or to suppress by violence the movement for the new order, has resulted in every important social transformation up to now being accompanied by violence.'

"4) The ruling class always initiates the violence, 'always the ruling class; always the outlived class that doesn't want to leave the stage when the time has come. They want to hang onto their privileges, to reinforce them by violent measures, against the rising majority *and they run up against the mass violence of the new class*, which history has ordained shall come to power.'

"5) That is our prediction. But 'of course, we don't limit ourselves simply to that prediction. We go further, and advise the workers to bear this in mind and prepare themselves not to permit the reactionary outlived minority to frustrate the will of the majority.'"

—*Ibid.*

As Cannon observed: "That is all any Marxist really needs to say on the question of violence in a capitalist court....It tells the truth, conforms to principle, and protects the legal position of the party." He rejected Munis' suggestion that the defendants should have raised their voices to: "call upon the workers to organize their own violence against the reactionary violence" as neither necessary nor advisable. Cannon cited Lenin and Trotsky on the advantages of using defensive formulations, and explained that his testimony had been intended "for the benefit of the uninitiated worker" who:

"is by no means waiting impatiently for our call to violent action. Quite the contrary, he ardently believes in the so-called democracy, and the first question he will ask, if he becomes interested in socialism, is: 'Why can't we get it peacefully, by the ballot?' It is necessary to *patiently explain* to him that, while we would prefer it that way, the bosses will not permit it, will resort to violence against the majority, and that the workers must *defend* themselves and their *right* to change things. Our *defensive* formula is not only legally unassailable....It is also the best formula for effective propaganda."

—*Ibid.*

During cross-examination, the prosecutor asked Cannon if the May 1934 "Battle of Bulls Run" in Minneapolis, when strikers routed thousands of police and special deputies, was "Trotskyism demonstrating itself." Cannon replied: "I am mighty proud of the fact that Trotskyism had some part in influencing the workers to protect themselves against that sort of violence." The cops and deputies had been organized to drive the workers off the street, and: "They got a dose of their own medicine. I think the workers have a right to defend themselves. If that is treason, you can make the most of it."

While the Trotskyists' role in leading the Minneapolis Teamsters to victory gave them a working-class base in that city and resulted in an important regroupment with A.J. Muste's left-centrist American Workers Party, small revolutionary propaganda groups rarely have the opportunity to demonstrate the superiority of their ideas through leading mass struggles. Munis all but ignored this and derided the emphasis the SWP defendants placed on winning a majority for socialism through education and propaganda:

"But we are a party of revolutionary action—economic, political and educative—in essence and potentially, because our propaganda itself can tend only to action and only through action will we conquer the majority of the exploited and educate them for the taking of power."

Cannon responded:

"The bourgeoisie has always tried to picture communism as a 'criminal conspiracy' in order to alienate the workers who are profoundly democratic in their sentiments. That was the aim once again in the Minneapolis trial. It was our task at the trial to go out of our way to refute this misrep-

James P. Cannon, 1947

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY





PATHFINDER PRESS

**December 1943: SWP leaders on their way to federal prison in Sandstone, Minnesota**

resentation and emphasize the democratic basis of our program; not in order to placate our enemies and persecutors, as is assumed, but in order to reveal the truth to our friends, the American workers."

—*Ibid.*

One weak formulation in Cannon's testimony came when he suggested: "The reason we do not support a declaration of war by American arms, is because we do not believe the American capitalists can defeat Hitler and fascism." Munis observed that this implied: "we would support it if we believed in that defeat." Cannon might better have responded by pointing to the enthusiasm with which major sections of the U.S. capitalist class greeted both Mussolini and Hitler as bulwarks against the spread of Bolshevism.

Cannon made no claim to perfection, and commented, "we did only the best we could within the narrow limits prescribed by the court." He forthrightly defended the SWP's position of refusing to support either the Axis or Allied imperialists, and in response to a question from Goldman about whether the war was essentially a struggle between democracy and fascism, he responded: "It is absolutely true that Hitler wants to dominate the world, but we think it is equally true that the ruling group of American capitalists has the same idea, and we are not in favor of either of them." Later, during cross-examination by the prosecutor, Cannon solidarized with the revolutionary position of the Fourth International:

"Q: Now, on June 29, 1940, the *Socialist Appeal* published this from the report of the *Manifesto of the Fourth International*: 'Independently of the course of the war, we fulfill our basic task: We explain to the workers the irreconcilability between their interests and the interest of blood-thirsty capitalism; we mobilize the toilers against imperialism; we propagate the unity of the workers in all warring and neutral countries; we call for the fraterniza-

tion of workers and soldiers within each country, and of soldiers with soldiers on the opposite side of the battlefield; we mobilize the women and youth against the war; we carry on constant, persistent, tireless preparation of the revolution—in the factories, in the mills, in the villages, in the barracks, at the front and in the fleet.' You want the soldiers to do that, don't you?"

"A: Yes, I think that is a summation of the idea, for the soldiers and everybody to do that. That is the way to put an end to this slaughter."

—*Socialism On Trial*

The prosecution introduced as evidence large quantities of SWP literature, as well as writings by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. In his summation to the court, Albert Goldman said that, as he sat listening to the prosecution the day before:

"my thoughts drifted far afield. What are we on trial for, I asked myself? Certain men wrote books many years ago, and we are on trial because these men had ideas and wrote about them. We are on trial because a man by the name of Marx spent most of his lifetime in the library of the British Museum, digging into statistics, statistics concerned with economics and with politics. We are on trial because this man, after reading the mass of statistics...formulated general laws—laws that he thought, and laws that we think, operate in the social system."

—*In Defense of Socialism*

Goldman also addressed the question of "violence" upon which the prosecution had laid heavy emphasis:

"Everywhere in society there is violence of one sort or another, culminating in the dreadful violence which sacrifices millions of human beings upon the altar of war. It is this violence which we hate that drives us into a movement which has as its ideal the creation of a world free from violence, where human beings will cooperate in the production of goods to satisfy their needs, where peace



and security will prevail.

"We are, of course, not pacifists. We do not believe with Gandhi that it is wrong for three hundred million people in India to use violence to drive out the British oppressors who claim to be fighting a war for democracy. As much as we hate the violence that exists in society, we see no alternative to the necessity of destroying the violence of the minority with the violence of the majority. But to accuse us of wanting and advocating violence is to accuse us of something that is revolting to our very nature."

—*Ibid.*

The charge of conspiring to overthrow the American government was thrown out, but on 8 December 1941, the day the U.S. declared war on Japan, 18 of the defendants were convicted under the Smith Act of conspiring to advocate the overthrow of the government, and sentenced to jail terms ranging from 12 to 16 months.

### An Injury to One...

The SWP immediately organized a Civil Rights Defense Committee, which was chaired by James T. Farrell, a popular novelist and SWP supporter, with John Dos Passos (another famous author) and Carlo Tresca (a prominent anarchist) as co-chairs. Other well-known figures who signed on as official sponsors were John Dewey, W.E.B. DuBois, Mary McCarthy, A.J. Muste, Adam Clayton Powell, Max Shachtman and Edmund Wilson. The defense committee ran a vigorous and effective campaign that won support from the American Civil Liberties Union, much of the organized left, and over 100 local and national union bodies representing millions of workers. The rabidly anti-Trotskyist Communist Party (CP), at that time the largest and most influential organization on the left, stood virtually alone in applauding the prosecution of the SWP. Ironically, the government's successful use of the Smith Act against the Trotskyists provided a precedent for its use in the subsequent persecution of scores of CP cadres beginning in 1949. The SWP, to its credit, was one of only a few groups in the workers' move-

ment to defend the Stalinists against the witchhunters.

The Smith Act was eventually declared unconstitutional and struck down, as were various other mechanisms used by the McCarthyites. One victory in this struggle was won through the efforts of Max Shachtman's rightward-moving Workers Party which, in 1948, launched a legal campaign challenging its inclusion on the U.S. Attorney General's list of subversive organizations. It was ten years before the Shachtmanites were finally successful, and in the meantime, they had devolved from ostensible Leninists to State Department socialists. But regardless of their political trajectory, the Shachtmanite campaign played a central role in the eventual decision by the U.S. Justice Department to scrap its infamous list.

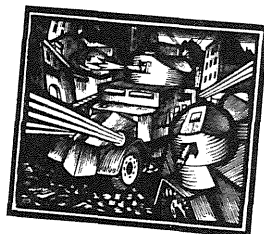
A more recent case involved the degenerating Spartacist League (SL) which, in 1981, filed suit against California's right-wing Republican Attorney General George Deukmejian for including it on a 1979 list of "terrorist" groups. Labeling leftist groups as "terrorist" creates an atmosphere conducive to wholesale repression of anyone who dares mobilize the workers and oppressed in defense of their own interests. The Spartacist League's vigorous response to Deukmejian's smear was supported by many civil liberties advocates and even black Democratic politicians. They created enough of a stir that in December 1981, the state Attorney General's office issued a formal retraction of its allegation. This was a small but significant victory for the Spartacist League and the entire workers' movement.

The persecution of leftist political dissidents typically begins with the malicious and deliberate misrepresentation of their aims and objectives. The intent is to isolate those who are courageous enough to resist the manifest injustices of the imperialist world order by depicting them as violent crazies and/or terrorists. In response to attempts to frame-up any members of the left and workers' movement, it is incumbent on all to offer their active solidarity. For, in the words of the pioneers of the American labor movement, "An injury to one is an injury to all!" ■

## Anarchism vs. Bolshevism



**VICTOR SERGE**  
'Lenin in 1917'



**KRONSTADT &  
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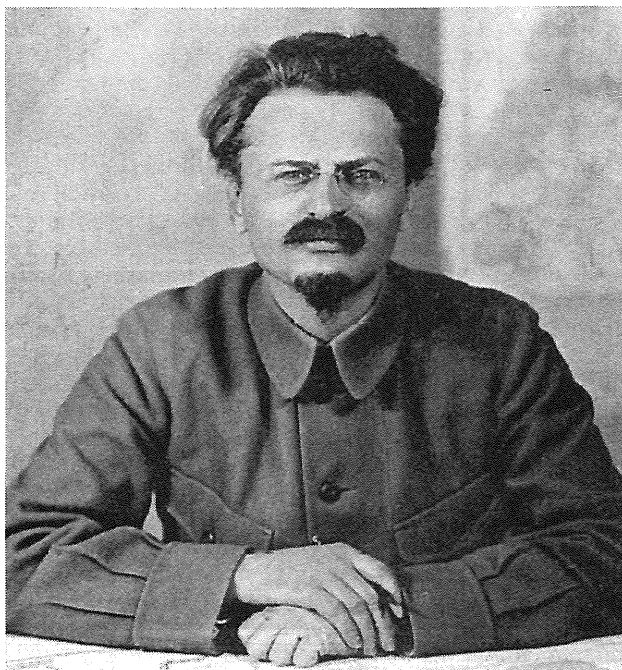
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## *Pacifism as the Servant of Imperialism*



INTERNATIONAL NEWS PHOTOS

**Leon Trotsky, Soviet Commissar of War, 1922**

*Excerpts of an article from Communist International, English Edition, No. 5 New Series, transcribed for the Trotsky Internet Archive by J.J. Plant. While undated, it was clearly written in mid-1917.*

There were never so many pacifists in the world as now, when in all countries men are killing one another. Every historical epoch has not only its own technique and its own political form, but also a hypocrisy peculiar to itself. Once peoples destroyed each other in the name of the Christian teaching of love of humanity. Now only backward governments call upon Christ. Progressive nations cut each others' throats in the name of pacifism. [U.S. President] Wilson drags America into the war in the name of the League of Nations, and perpetual peace. Kerensky and Tseretelli [leaders of Russia's Provisional Government] call for an offensive for the sake of an early peace.

Our epoch lacks the indignant satire of a Juvenal. In any case, even the most potential satirical weapons are in danger of being proved powerless and illusory in comparison with triumphant infamy and groveling stupidity; which two elements were unfettered by the war.

Pacifism is of the same historical lineage as democracy. The bourgeoisie made a great historical attempt to order all human relations in accordance with reason, to supplant blind and dumb tradition by the institutions of critical thought. The guilds with their restriction of production, political institutions with their privileges, monarchistic absolutism—all these were traditional relics of the middle ages. Bourgeois democracy demanded legal equality for free competition, and for parliamentarism as the means of governing public affairs. It sought also to

regulate national relations in the same manner. But here it came up against war, that is against a method of solving all problems which is a complete denial of "reason." So it began to advise the people in poetry, in philosophy, in ethics, and in business methods, that it is far more useful for them to introduce perpetual peace. These are the logical arguments for pacifism.

The inherited failing of pacifism, however, was the fundamental evil which characterizes bourgeois democracy. Its criticism touches only the surface of social phenomena, it has not the courage to cut deeper into the underlying economic facts. Capitalist realism, however, handles the idea of perpetual peace based on the harmony of reason, perhaps more pitilessly than the idea of liberty, equality and fraternity. Capitalism, which developed technique on a rational basis, failed to regulate conditions rationally. It prepared weapons for mutual extermination which would never have occurred to the dreams of the "barbarians" of medieval times.

Theoretically and politically, pacifism has just the same basis as the doctrine of social harmony between different class interests.

The opposition between capitalistic national states has just the same economic basis as the class struggle. If we are ready to assume the possibility of a gradual toning down of the class struggle, then we must also assume the gradual toning down and regulation of nationalistic conflicts.

English and American pacifism, despite all the variety of social conditions and ideology (despite also the lack of any ideology as in America) carry out essentially the same work: they provide an outlet for the petty bourgeois citizens' fear of world-shaking events, which after all can only deprive him of the remnants of his independence; they lull to sleep his watchfulness by useless notions of disarmament, international law, and arbitration tribunals. Then, at a given moment, they hand him over body and soul to capitalistic imperialism which has already mobilized every means necessary for its end: i.e., technical knowledge, art, religion, bourgeois pacifism and patriotic "Socialism."

"We were against the war, our deputies, our Ministers, were all against the war," cry the French petty bourgeois: "Therefore, it follows, that we have the war forced upon us, and in order to realize our pacific ideals we must pursue the war to a victorious end." And the representative of French pacifism, Baron d'Estournel de Constant, consecrates this pacifist philosophy with a solemn "jusqu'au bout!"—war to the end!

The thing which above all others the English Stock Exchange required for the successful conduct of the war, was pacifists like the liberal Asquith, and the radical demagogue Lloyd George. "If these men are running the war," said the English people, "then we must have right on our side."

And so pacifism had its allotted part to play in the mechanism of the war, like poison gas, and the ever-rising pile of war loans.

# Imperialists...

*continued from page 2*

"The transfers came in the 1980s, when the United States supported Iraq in its war against Iran. They were detailed in a 1994 Senate banking committee report and a 1995 follow-up letter from the CDC to the Senate."

—Associated Press, 2 October

On 27 March 1984, the *New York Times* reported that Donald Rumsfeld, the current U.S. Defense Secretary, had visited Baghdad as Ronald Reagan's emissary and "met with Iraq's Foreign Minister today to discuss the Iran-Iraq war and other issues." The same issue reported that the United Nations had determined that Iraq had been using "chemical weapons, in the form of aerial bombs" in Iran. The weapons included "mustard gas and nerve agents." The U.S. was neither particularly concerned by this, nor by the news in 1988 that Saddam's forces had killed 5,000 Kurdish civilians with poison gas in the town of Halabja. Only in 1990, as American troops prepared to invade Iraq, did the U.S. express alarm about Saddam's "weapons of mass destruction" and threaten massive retaliation if the Iraqis dared use them.

Under mounting pressure from the U.S. and Britain, in September the Iraqis agreed to allow United Nations weapons inspectors to re-enter their country. This was a major concession, as it was widely acknowledged "that American spies had worked undercover on teams of United Nations arms inspectors" (*New York Times*, 7 January 1999). Washington was clearly irritated by Saddam's response as it complicated public relations preparations for war. So the U.S., backed by Britain, countered by proposing a series of conditions designed to be unacceptable to Baghdad and thus provide a pretext for an attack. This was the same tactic used against the Serbs at the Rambouillet "peace" negotiations in 1999 when the U.S. demanded the Yugoslavs grant NATO troops "unimpeded access" to roam throughout their country. When Belgrade refused, the bombing began.

## 'Liberated' Iraq: A U.S. Oil Colony

Following World War Two, the U.S. pushed for the dissolution of the remaining colonial holdings of its European rivals. Washington's "anti-colonial" posture created opportunities for American corporations to move into territories previously closed to them while simultaneously burnishing its "democratic" image in the ideological competition with the USSR for the hearts and minds of the colonial masses. But the Soviet Union is no more, and the White House seems to have concluded that its high-tech military will make the indefinite occupation of Iraq's lucrative oil fields a low-risk undertaking:

"In the initial phase, Iraq would be governed by an American military commander—perhaps Gen. Tommy R. Franks, commander of United States forces in the Persian Gulf....

"Until now it had been assumed that Iraqi dissidents both inside and outside the country would form a government, but it was never clear when they would take full control.

"Today marked the first time the administration has discussed what could be a lengthy occupation by coalition forces, led by the United States."

—*New York Times*, 11 October

It is clear that U.S. plans to invade Iraq have little or nothing to do with Saddam Hussein or his hypothetical arsenal:

"Asked what would happen if American pressure prompted a coup against President Hussein, a senior official said, 'That would be nice.' But the official suggested that the American military might enter and secure the country anyway, not only to eliminate weapons of mass destruction but also to ensure against anarchy after Mr. Hussein's departure."

—*Ibid.*

So, all the talk of "democracy" and "freedom" boils down to replacing an Iraqi military dictatorship with an American one. Saddam Hussein is a vicious dictator, but at least under his rule, Iraqi oil revenues in the 1980s funded a significant modernization program and considerable industrial development (most of which has since been destroyed by imperialist military attacks). Under U.S. occupation Iraq's natural wealth will flow to the shareholders and coupon clippers of the international oil cartels. The imperialists are not concerned about the quality of life for their neo-colonial subjects—they offer death squads, not land reform.

The Pentagon considers Afghanistan to be a model for the conduct of all future colonial wars because the combination of indigenous surrogates and U.S. air power defeated the Taliban with minimal American casualties. The thousands of Afghan civilians killed during the bombing campaign and subsequent "mopping up" operations are shrugged off as mere "collateral damage." For those who survived, life is even worse under the feuding warlords than it was under the reactionary Taliban, and there is little prospect that it will improve in the foreseeable future. In the first flush of victory President Bush talked grandly of a new "Marshall Plan" to rebuild that devastated country, but ended up committing a paltry \$300 million, less than a fifth of what the U.S. currently spends *every month* to maintain its garrison in Afghanistan.

Iraq, unlike Afghanistan, possesses valuable and easily exploitable resources, so the U.S. anticipates a lengthier, and more lucrative, occupation:

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TAHA AL-RUBAYYH—GETTY IMAGES

### Women volunteers in Iraqi militia, Baghdad

"For as long as the coalition partners administered Iraq, they would essentially control the second largest proven reserves of oil in the world, nearly 11 percent of the total. A senior administration official said the United Nations oil-for-food program would be expanded to help finance stabilization and reconstruction."

—*New York Times*, 11 October

If all goes according to plan, after Iraq, the next target could be Saudi Arabia, the only country that has more oil. The U.S. already has several military bases in the eastern part of Saudi Arabia, ostensibly to safeguard the kingdom from an Iraqi attack. But things do not always go according to plan, as the U.S. discovered in Vietnam in the 1960s. More recently, in Somalia in 1993 and Lebanon a decade earlier, resistance from indigenous "terrorists" resulted in the ignominious withdrawal of American forces. These reverses have evidently not been forgotten:

"Richard Armitage, the US Deputy Secretary of State, last week decided to include the Lebanese Hizbollah [on a U.S. list of "terrorist" organizations]. With a vague, though unspecified, reference to the 291 [sic] American servicemen killed in the suicide bombing of the US Marine base in Beirut [in 1983], he announced that 'they're on the list, their time will come, there's no question about it. They have a blood debt to us.'"

—*Independent* (London), 11 September

Armitage does not consider that any "blood debt" was incurred when 17,000 Lebanese (mostly civilians) were killed during Israel's U.S.-approved 1982 invasion. But the drivers of the Islamic Jihad truck bombs that blew the imperialist troops out of Lebanon took a different view. At the time we wrote that revolutionaries must "defend any military actions by the oppressed aimed at the imperialist presence, regardless of the political character of those who launch them."

### U.S. Military Doctrine: Nuclear First Strike

The United States has repudiated an earlier pledge never to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear powers and now approves the use of tactical nuclear weapons against underground bunkers, troop concentrations and other un-

specified targets. This provides a powerful incentive for countries not currently possessing "weapons of mass destruction" to get some. If Saddam had a few nukes, and the means to deliver them, Bush might be taking a slightly less aggressive approach.

The assertion of an American right to take "preemptive" action against any country Washington decides may be attempting to develop chemical, biological or nuclear armaments is complemented by a withdrawal from existing international conventions limiting the development and deployment of such weapons. Most of these agreements were originally designed by U.S. policy makers to prevent proliferation and lock in existing U.S. advantages. Today the White House rejects them as an infringement on American sovereignty, along with the Kyoto Protocol on global warming, the International Criminal Court and the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty.

The celebration of an openly imperial role for the U.S. in the Third World includes a threat to prevent any other country ever getting close to military parity. In his 20 September report to Congress, Bush proclaimed: "Our forces will be strong enough to dissuade potential adversaries from pursuing a military buildup in hopes of surpassing or equaling the power of the United States." Like the bid to take control of the oil reserves of the Persian Gulf, this is directed at the U.S.'s European and Japanese rivals. In the September issue of *Foreign Affairs*, Michael Hirsh bluntly sums up the new policy as "ne imperialism":

"This belief holds that the unilateral assertion of America's unrivaled hard power will be the primary means not only winning the war on terror, but of preserving American dominance indefinitely, uncompromised for the most part by the international system or the diplomatic demands of other nations. Hailing mainly from the anti-détente right wing that dates back at least to the 1970s, the Bush hegemonists feel that for too long America has been a global Gulliver strapped down by Lilliputians—the norms and institutions of the global system. They feel vindicated in their assertion of U.S. power by the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and of the Taliban a decade later...."

Jay Bookman of the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* described the Bush doctrine as “a plan for permanent U.S. military and economic domination of every region on the globe” through “a stark expansion of our global military presence.” He notes that the pending war on Iraq:

“is intended to mark the official emergence of the United States as a full-fledged global empire, seizing sole responsibility and authority as planetary policeman. It would be the culmination of a plan 10 years or more in the making, carried out by those who believe the United States must seize the opportunity for global domination, even if it means becoming the ‘American imperialists’ that our enemies always claimed we were.

“Once that is understood, other mysteries solve themselves. For example, why does the administration seem unconcerned about an exit strategy from Iraq once Saddam is toppled?

“Because we won’t be leaving. Having conquered Iraq, the United States will create permanent military bases in that country from which to dominate the Middle East, including neighboring Iran.”

—*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 29 September

## Cracks in the Colossus

Contrary to “anti-globalization” theorists who chatter about the supposed impotence of governments in the face of the inexorable process of global economic integration, the current U.S. campaign against Iraq demonstrates that economic, as well as military and political, power is ultimately exercised through nation states.

France and Germany are openly displeased by the American bid to control Middle Eastern oil production. Yet at this point the U.S. is too powerful to openly defy. When Socialist Party members proposed that France use its Security Council veto to block UN support for any attack on Iraq, the French foreign minister, Dominique de Villepin responded: “If France waves this veto, it will deprive us of influence and the capacity to be part of the international game” (*New York Times*, 9 October). The “game” is dividing up Iraq’s oil after its “liberation”:

“Government sources say they fear—existing concessions aside—France could be cut out of the spoils if it did not support the war and show a significant military presence. If it comes to war, France is determined to be allotted a more prestigious role in the fighting than in the 1991 Gulf war, when its main role was to occupy lightly defended ground. Negotiations have been going on between the state-owned TotalFinaElf company and the US about redistribution of oil regions between the world’s major companies.

“Washington’s predatory interest in Iraqi oil is clear, whatever its political protestations about its motives for war. The US National Energy Policy Report of 2001—known as the ‘Cheney Report’ after its author Vice President Dick Cheney, formerly one of America’s richest and most powerful oil industry magnates—demanded a priority on easing US access to Persian Gulf supplies.”

—*Observer* (London), 6 October

The mercenary calculations over Iraq’s future are so transparent that even the *New York Times* (9 October) admits: “The idea that American lust for oil is the overriding motive for war with Iraq has been a persistent theme in global opinion in recent weeks.” Despite the hoopla accompanying the anniversary of “9/11” and a non-stop barrage of pro-war propaganda in the media, there is very little popular enthusiasm among Americans for attacking Iraq.



WALT HANDELMAN—THE TIMES-PICTAYUNE

## News management: U.S. weapon of mass deception

Saddam is simply not seen as much of a threat by millions of working people who are far more concerned about disappearing jobs and pension funds. At this point, however, active resistance is largely confined to the campuses. The prevailing attitude seems to be that Bush can have his war if he wants, but it had better not produce many American casualties nor have a negative economic impact. If things begin to go wrong, domestic opposition to a failed adventure could mount very quickly.

The White House is concerned about widespread public skepticism regarding the “threat” posed by Iraq and has been leaning on U.S. intelligence agencies to produce assessments to back up its public relations campaign. This has reportedly been causing resentment:

“Basically, cooked information is working its way into high-level pronouncements and there’s a lot of unhappiness about it in intelligence, especially among analysts at the CIA,” said Vincent Cannistraro, the CIA’s former head of counter-intelligence.”

—*Guardian* (London), 9 October

Important elements of the American bourgeoisie have expressed the view that the White House’s “go-it-alone” posture on Iraq is reckless and unnecessary. Brent Scowcroft, George Bush Sr.’s national security adviser, went public with his reservations in the 15 August *Wall Street Journal*. Others who have dissented include General Wesley Clark (a former NATO commander), General Anthony Zinni, former chief of U.S. Middle East forces and George Tenet, the director of the CIA. They don’t object to seizing Iraq’s oil, but think that it should be done more decorously with more international cover. There are risks associated with “hot” wars, and it is conceivable that Bush Jr. and his gang might still stop short of an actual invasion if they gain enough leverage in the region through threats alone.

## Bush’s War Targets Left, Labor and Minorities

Imperialist jingoism goes hand in hand with attacking democratic rights at home. From “no fly” lists of known anti-war activists, to “preemptive” arrests of peaceful protesters, to the creation of a corps of civilian government informers, the Bush administration is using the “terrorism” bogey for a wholesale assault on civil liberties. The official



IBT contingent at 16 November 2002 anti-war demonstration, Toronto

xenophobia hits minorities, immigrants and undocumented workers particularly hard, especially those of Middle Eastern extraction. But organized labor is the most important target of the current "national security" drive.

Using the supposed "national emergency" as a pretext, the Republican administration wants to strip collective bargaining rights from 170,000 government employees slated for assignment to the new "Homeland Security" department. If they get away with this, their next step will be to try and level down other federal employees, which would soon ripple down to state and municipal workers. Meanwhile, the White House is participating, along with the shipping companies and a number of major retailers, in a carefully orchestrated attack on the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU). In an October 14 article, David Bacon, a well-known California labor reporter, observed:

"Despite the fact that they themselves had locked the gates of their own terminals, the Bush administration got a Federal judge to order the union to work under its old contract, with no interruption, for 80 days.

"The administration's legal brief voiced a startling new philosophy to defend the action, elaborated by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. He held that all commercial cargo could be considered important to the military, not just specifically goods intended for military use abroad. Any stoppage on the docks, therefore, was a threat to national security. 'The DoD increasingly relies upon commercial items and practices to meet its requirements,' he stated. 'Raw materials, medical supplies, replacement parts and components, as well as everyday subsistence needs of our armed forces, are just some of the essential military cargo provided by commercial contractors that typically are not labelled as military cargo.'"

This is tantamount to proposing the de facto militarization of the docks—which would threaten the very

existence of the ILWU. A successful attack on this powerful and historically militant union would be a signal for a generalized assault on all other unions, just as the cheap victories won in Yugoslavia and Afghanistan set the stage for Bush's pending terror war on Iraq. The defense of the ILWU and the federal civil service unions is of vital interest to every American worker. Socialists in the American workers' movement must seek to demonstrate the links between attacks on democratic freedoms and union rights at home and attacks on Iraq and other neo-colonies abroad. Faced with an impending assault on Iraq, class-conscious workers in the imperialist countries must seek to utilize all the weapons of class struggle, including political strike actions, to derail the war-drive of their "own" predatory rulers.

### For Proletarian Internationalism— Not Social-Pacifism!

Various pseudo-Marxist organizations, like the International Socialist Tendency and the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI), advocate anti-imperialism in the fine print of some of their propaganda, but concentrate their practical activity on cobbling together "broad" (i.e., multi-class) coalitions on a simple program of "Stop the War." This inevitably results in political adaptation to popular illusions in the more "progressive" imperialists. The September issue of the CWI's *Socialism Today*, for example, suggests that the Democrats, one of the twin parties of racism and imperialist war in the U.S., should be opposing Bush more vigorously:

"Short-sighted opportunists, they lack the political courage to warn of the disastrous repercussions for US workers of war with Iraq. They give no lead in mobilising mass opposition to a pre-emptive military attack that would bring US casualties and have bloody consequences for the people of Iraq and surrounding states."

It is hard to think of anything more ridiculous than self-proclaimed socialists denouncing imperialist politicians for not providing a "lead" in the struggle against imperialist aggression. The imperialist war machine can only be seriously resisted if the working class is imbued with the understanding that its historic interests are *counterposed* to those of its rulers, and its fate bound up with that of the oppressed masses of the neo-colonies.

The idea of simply building a movement to demand that the imperialists "Stop the War" overlooks the fact that wars end for different reasons—some in victory and some in defeat. Pacifists oppose war in general, but Marxists take sides in conflicts between imperialist predators and their victims. Revolutionaries want to see the *defeat* of imperialists in their wars of aggression against oppressed peoples. For this reason we reject the simplistic equation of Saddam Hussein and George Bush, expressed by anarchists as a "plague on both your houses". In defending Iraq Marxists extend no political support to Saddam Hussein, but we insist that the job of ousting the oppressive Ba'athist regime belongs to the Iraqi workers and the oppressed, not the imperialists.

The task of Marxists is to chart a path out of the horrors of the poverty, brutality and exploitation endemic to capitalism. The first step is to recognize that the essential axis of

the struggle for human liberation is not found along lines of nationality, religion, sex, race or ethnicity—but rather of social class. The exploiters and their hangers-on have interests that are diametrically opposed to those of workers and the oppressed. American working people have far more in common objectively with ordinary Iraqis than with Cheney, Rumsfeld, Bush and their ilk. A setback for the U.S. imperialist aggressors in Iraq will strengthen the position of the American labor movement, just as the transformation of Iraq into an American protectorate will weaken it.

The multi-racial American proletariat is potentially an extremely powerful ally for the workers and oppressed of the neo-colonial world. That is why in opposing American imperialism Marxists also combat anti-Americanism—the ideology of nationalist demagogues in America's imperialist rivals and in the neo-colonies. The social liberation of the oppressed and exploited masses of the Middle East, Latin America, Africa and Asia is inextricably connected to the fight for socialist revolution in the imperialist heartland. This is the perspective with which revolutionary internationalist workers' parties must be constructed in every country, including the United States, the citadel of imperialist reaction. There is simply no other way forward for humanity in this, the epoch of wars and revolutions. ■

## *Blair's New Labour:* **A Party Fit for Imperialism**

*The following is the British introduction to the above statement:*

Tony Blair's Labour government is the major imperialist supporter of the pending US-led attack on Iraq. Despite considerable popular opposition both internationally and nationally, the British government has confirmed its 'solidarity' with George W. Bush. Unlike their French or German counterparts, the British bourgeoisie appear to believe that their imperialist appetites can best be satisfied by unwavering support of the US. The common reference to Blair as 'Bush's poodle' misses the point. Blair supports Bush because he believes that the best way to obtain a bigger 'piece of the cake' for British capital is, at the moment, through collaboration rather than opposition. The British bourgeoisie know that he has their interests, not those of the US capitalists, at heart. Once again the Labour Party shows its true (nationalist) colours as a party fit for imperialism.

In Britain the anti-war opposition is an amorphous mass. Most trade unions have formally adopted an anti-war stance. However, the recent TUC congress showed that the union leaders are stopping well short of taking a principled position of defending Iraq against imperialist attack and instead peddle illusions in the United Nations, an imperialist-controlled den of thieves. A motion passed by the [TUC] General Council reads: 'To avoid the desperate human cost that would arise in the event of war, every effort should be made to find solutions through diplomatic and peaceful means with the UN playing a central role to ease tension and avoid war.' A vaguely pacifist hope for a 'solution' is no substitute for a forthright condemnation of the predatory Anglo-American plan to occupy Iraq to steal its oil. Because the union leaders have no intention of offering any serious opposition to the pending attack (and will attempt to throttle any attempt by militants to initiate such

actions) their motion contains no hint of any trade-union organised action against the war. On the contrary, it virtually endorses UN-sanctioned war against Iraq: 'In addition, military action should only be an option if there is evidence made generally available which clearly demonstrates that Saddam Hussein is developing weapons of mass destruction and delivery systems and poses a real threat to world peace.'

The TUC General Council, composed of agents of the capitalists within the workers' movement, naturally seeks to obscure the fact that the 'real threat to world peace' comes from the imperialist powers, specifically in this case the US and British governments. Once again the leadership of the unions stands shoulder to shoulder with the Labour warmongers. In order to provide an outlet for justified outrage about the plans for war, the rank and file is encouraged to attend pacifist protests like the 28 September [2002] demonstration in London, where the large number of demonstrators showed the widespread opposition to the imperialist war drive, but the leadership provided no perspective for an active struggle against British militarism.

Various so-called 'revolutionary' organisations consciously oppose any suggestion that the defeat of British imperialism in this predatory colonial war would be a good thing, and insist on trying to impose bourgeois-pacifist lowest-common-denominator politics on their 'Stop the War Coalition'. War is endemic to imperialism and the duty of Marxists is to win the most advanced elements of the working class to understand that only through the revolutionary overthrow of the entire international capitalist system will it be possible to eliminate war, along with hunger, poverty, racism and all the other social pathologies associated with the rule of capital over labour. ■

## SPD's Peace Initiative: 'The Better to Eat You With'



RALF HIRSCHBERGER—DPA

### Schröder, Bush: conflicting interests

The following is an edited excerpt from an article on Germany's national election that was originally published in *Bolschewik* No.18, September 2002

The subordination of the SPD (Social Democratic Party) to capital jeopardizes its popularity with its working-class electoral base. However, as the SPD does not currently face a challenge from its left, the German bourgeoisie is not prepared to countenance a left turn by the chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, merely to pick up votes. The bourgeoisie's reformist agents within the workers' movement only put forward class-struggle demands in order to contain working-class radicalizations—not to prevent an openly bourgeois party like the CDU/CSU [Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union] from forming the government.

Before last summer's floods lifted the SPD (and its chancellor) up on a wave of national unity, it was languishing at the bottom in the opinion polls. Schröder's previous efforts to promote capitalist austerity had failed to win support from the intended victims. So he played the Iraq card. His aim was not only to turn a looming international crisis into a national truce, but to find some political ground where the

current interests of German capital did not appear starkly counterposed to the interests of the masses. Opinion polls show that up to 80 percent of the population oppose German participation in any war on Iraq.

The chancellor of imperialist war against Yugoslavia and Afghanistan has not morphed into a chancellor of peace. It is simply that, at this point, a war on Iraq is not in Germany's interests. A successful military campaign against Iraq, even with German participation, would only increase the influence of the U.S. in this strategic oil-rich region, at the expense of German and European capital because of the disparity in military might. Schröder is peddling his policy as a program for peace, but in reality it is based on a sober recognition that Germany is not yet properly prepared to wage war. This is why Schröder's new-found pacifism is embroidered with rhetoric about the "German way."

### German Arms Drive vs. U.S. War Drive

The *Bundeswehr* [German Army] is not currently equipped to play a role as anything but an extra in a "massive attack" on Iraq. If Germany does not participate in such an attack, however, its interests in the Middle East will suffer. Throwing all its available military assets into a short-term campaign in Iraq would drain resources from the *Bundeswehr's* longer-term project of systematically upgrading its capacity for intervention outside Germany. A war against Iraq therefore presents a choice between two unpalatable options, both of which involve the risk of Germany falling further behind its chief imperialist rival. So the "red"/green government is promoting international opposition to an attack on Iraq:

"Faced with increasingly concrete U.S. war plans, the German government was forced to take a position. In contrast to Kosovo and Afghanistan the circumstances allow this to range from skeptical to oppositional. Schröder's red/green coalition is saying 'no' to war against Iraq at a time when criticism in the U.S. is getting louder...with U.S. military chiefs pointing out that the operation that is really necessary goes beyond what even the mightiest military power in the world can achieve while all other operations are too risky and ineffective. It is saying 'no' when, for the first time, it appears possible that the major European powers can agree on a common line and thereby become a factor of significant weight. Despite the recent differences between French president Jacques Chirac and Chancellor Schröder over recent EU agrarian reforms, they are clearly supporting each other in opposing a military strike against Iraq."

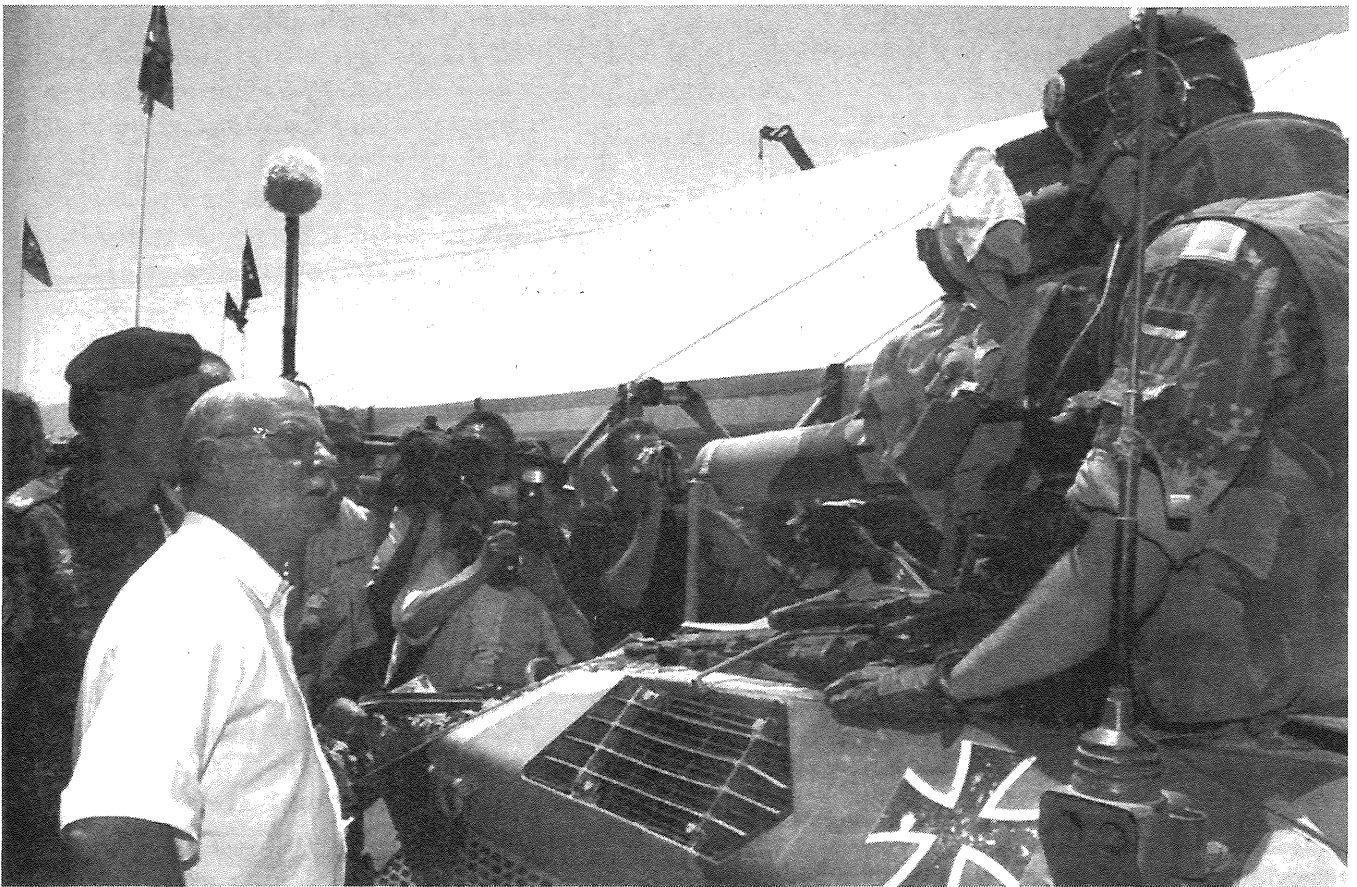
—*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 5 August 2002

"France has advocated a relaxation of sanctions against Iraq for years. Iraqi debts to France are so high, that for this reason alone France is interested in a normalization of relations in the long-term."

—*Ibid.*

In addition to a debt of approximately \$5 billion, French companies are believed to have negotiated lucrative oil agreements with Saddam Hussein. These agreements are





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### German defense minister Struck visits expeditionary force in Kabul

blocked so long as UN sanctions are in place, and would be threatened by U.S. domination of Iraq.

The U.S. is attempting to use its economic strength and immense military superiority to gain geo-strategic control of the Middle East and Asia. In the aftermath of the war in Afghanistan, America secured agreements to expand its military presence in countries stretching from former Soviet republics in the Caucasus to the Philippines. This represents significant progress toward solving a key problem outlined in a 2001 Pentagon strategy paper:

“The distances are vast in the Asian theater. The density of U.S. basing and en route infrastructure is lower than in other critical regions. The United States also has less assurance of access to facilities in the region. This places a premium on securing additional access and infrastructure.”

—*Quadrennial Defense Review Report*

Since the end of the Cold War the military strength of each imperialist state has become an increasingly important factor in determining its share in the redistribution of global markets and economic resources. The “appeal” by CDU politician Karl Lamer to his “American friends” at a February 2002 NATO defense meeting in Munich to “include us in the strategy as well” was dismissed by the U.S. representative: “If you put more money into defense, then we can again talk seriously” (*Rheinische Post*, 4 February 2002). The extent of the imbalance is evident in the fact that, according to NATO general secretary George Robertson, the U.S. annual military budget is \$379 billion compared to only \$140 billion for the rest of NATO.

The rearmament of German imperialism is fraught with

difficulties. To project military power globally, Europe, and particularly Germany, must significantly expand its air transport capacity. One suggestion made during the Munich meeting was to solve this problem by simply purchasing planes from the U.S.:

“The appeal by [SPD defense minister] Scharping that the U.S. not keep its technology a secret, but make it accessible to its allies, provoked a sympathetic response from the U.S. representatives: the Europeans could simply buy excellent American products instead of themselves spending years developing military cargo planes like the ‘Airbus.’ Of course, this division of labor was not at all to the liking of the Europeans. This did not bother the U.S. representatives in Munich.”

— *Rheinische Post*, 4 February 2002

Both sides are putting forward perfectly “normal” positions for imperialist rivals. European money spent on U.S. weaponry benefits the American arms industry (and enhances its technological edge) at the expense of European producers. Providing funds for U.S. companies to develop new weapons programs would strengthen their monopoly. The U.S. already uses its leverage to demand that American replacement parts (rather than cheaper Asian substitutes) be used in all American weapons systems and to insist that all repairs are carried out by American technicians. As a result, many planes are grounded until the monopoly holder delivers. If European armed forces were entirely dependent on American cooperation, it would mean that all imperialist interventions would require Washington’s approval, thus eliminating Germany as a serious global competitor.

On the other hand, a precondition for European govern-

ments striking out on an independent path of development, as with the "Airbus," is the prospect of stable, long-term cooperation amongst competing states with divergent interests. If one state (e.g., Britain, which has reportedly been considering buying Boeing's C-17 Globemaster instead) opts out, or cuts its order significantly, the whole project could be jeopardized by a soaring cost per unit. The resulting shortage of engineering and production capacity could also force the Airbus project to involve Russian and Ukrainian enterprises, which would mean sharing sensitive military "know-how" with non-NATO countries. In the end, there is no guarantee that all the technological problems would be solved, nor that the project would stay on budget. While U.S. planes can be ordered immediately, developing and deploying the Airbus would take at least until the middle of this decade—and the redivision of spheres of influence is already underway. It is hardly surprising that the German bourgeoisie, and those of the other European states, is divided on how best to proceed. No final decision has been reached, but all parties agree that the *Bundeswehr's* capacities must be upgraded.

### No Third Way

Just as the promotion of imperial interests lies at the root of all capitalist politics, a complete break with one's "own" imperialist rulers is the basis of proletarian, class-struggle politics. A truce with one's "own" bourgeoisie is the hallmark of class traitors.

Four years of social-democratic government have left a legacy of social cuts, racism, repression and war. The social-patriotic leaders of the ex-Stalinist Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), such as Gabi Zimmer, have made it clear that they are not opposed to military interventions in principle, but that they should not be the main, or only, means of advancing German foreign policy. In other words, they believe military intervention should be supplemented by political interference, economic blackmail and diplomatic pressure. The PDS's role in the govern-

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MARTIN SCHUTT—DPA

### Metalworkers' warning strike against SPD austerity

ment in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Berlin and, until recently, Sachsen-Anhalt leaves no room for confusion regarding their domestic social and economic program. They have proved to the German bourgeoisie that they are democratic "socialists" who can be relied upon.

Neither of the bourgeois workers' parties (the SPD and PDS) have even pretended to have any intention of acting in the interests of the working class and oppressed. At the local and regional levels where they hold office, their everyday behavior shows that despite their proletarian base, they are parties that serve capital. Workers have no expectations that either of these parties will lead any sort of resistance to the capitalists. This means that, once they take office, their betrayals are unlikely to disappoint their base and lead a section of it to break to the left in the direction of class-struggle politics.

Some workers are vaguely afraid that things would be worse under Stoiber [the Christian/Conservative candidate] than if some combination of the SPD, PDS and Greens were to form the government. Whether carrying out an imperialist military intervention, attacking democratic rights, or imposing another round of austerity, the reformists will always claim that under Stoiber it would have been even worse. The "logic" of lesser-evil politics is a Catch-22. The only reason revolutionaries offer critical electoral support to reformist workers' parties is to dispel any illusions workers may have in the capacity of these organizations to fight in their interests. If workers are to draw revolutionary conclusions from the inevitable betrayals of the reformists, they must first have expectations to be disappointed. For class-conscious workers there is no choice in this election: No vote to SPD or PDS! For class struggle against Stoiber



CHRIS KRAEGER—CITY PRESS

### May Day 2002, Berlin: anti-capitalist youth clash with police

and Schröder! Smash German imperialism through workers' revolution!

### Whose World Is This?

Class-conscious workers in Germany must demonstrate their opposition to imperialism through active solidarity with the oppressed. If Iraq is attacked tomorrow, they must stand for its military defense and the defeat of the imperialists. The main enemy is always at home—the German bourgeoisie and its state. Revolutionary anti-militarism has nothing in common with pacifism. Communists do not call on the conscripts in the *Bundeswehr* to throw away their guns, but to turn them around—the enemy of these workers in uniform, as of all the exploited and oppressed, is their “own” German bourgeoisie. Together with an insurgent workers’ movement, they can play a crucial role in replacing the capitalist state with one based on workers’ councils with elected (and recallable) representatives who are paid no more than an average worker’s wage. The working class has the power to expropriate the exploiters and create a democratically-controlled, planned economy oriented to meeting the needs of everyone in society, instead of maximizing profits for the benefit of a tiny minority. A workers’ state would act to promote international solidarity and support liberation struggles around the globe. The spread of workers’ power internationally will make it possible to uproot the entire imperialist world system, and to employ the huge productive forces developed under capitalism to satisfy the needs of the entire human race.

We are well aware that this program is not immediately realizable—not because objective conditions are not ripe, but because the political consciousness of the vast majority of the working class (and most of the left) does not transcend the political framework of reformism, i.e., what is acceptable

to the bourgeoisie. We cannot determine our policy on the basis of the existing reformist consciousness of the workers. There is a deeper social reality. If the workers follow the bourgeoisie they do so in opposition to their own interests, and at the expense of their own living standards, and ultimately their lives. The reality of life under capitalism forces the working class to resist. Those spontaneous outbursts of struggle cannot overthrow capitalism on their own. Moreover, the reformists—the labor lieutenants of capital—are always ready to derail any serious working-class rebellion.

Through conscious intervention into these elemental upheavals, communists can deepen them, radicalize them, and ultimately help turn the struggle against the capitalist social order itself. Revolutionaries must demonstrate to the workers through propaganda, as well as through lessons drawn from their own practical experience, that socialism is the only alternative to free market barbarism, and that the only way to get to socialism is through workers’ revolution. In doing so, communists must draw the lessons of the important struggles of the past; develop a revolutionary, class-struggle program; demonstrate how every critical social issue points to the necessity of socialist revolution; and consistently struggle to establish the organizational and political independence of the working class from the bourgeoisie. Both social democracy and Stalinism, as reformist ideologies, are in the final analysis, agencies of the bourgeoisie within the working class. Trotskyism alone represents the tradition that began with the publication of Marx and Engels’ *The Communist Manifesto*. The Leninist vanguard party is the necessary instrument for the realization of the Marxist program. The only road from the capitalist reaction of today, to the world socialist revolution of tomorrow, lies through the struggle for an authentically communist international party, deeply rooted among the oppressed and exploited masses of the world—the future gravediggers of imperialism. ■

# Following the Line of Least Resistance: Imperialist War & Socialist Pretenders



ENRIO MARTI-AP

Mass protest in Cairo, June 2002

"The struggle against war and its social source, capitalism, presupposes direct, active, unequivocal support to the oppressed colonial peoples in their struggles and wars against imperialism. A 'neutral' position is tantamount to support of imperialism."

—Leon Trotsky, "Resolution on the Antiwar Congress of the London Bureau," July 1936

The current U.S. bid to seize direct control of Iraqi oil has shredded years of official cant about the rule of law, the peaceful resolution of differences and the role of the United Nations in mediating disputes within the world community. The American leviathan has made clear its intent to pursue narrow national self-interest without regard for international law, diplomatic niceties or even the sensibilities of major players like Germany and Japan.

This new unilateralism of the U.S., which is resented by America's imperial allies, has popularized a sort of ersatz anti-imperialism among many in the international radical/liberal circuit. At a recent gathering of anti-globalization activists in Florence for the European Social Forum (ESF), Susan George observed: "After Iraq the US wants a presence in many places around the world. It wants to create a world empire based on economic domination" (quoted in *Socialist Worker* [Britain], 23 November 2002). The U.S. already has an empire, but George is right that the conquest of Iraq, by tightening U.S. control over Middle East oil, will set the

stage for further acts of brutal attacks by the world's only "superpower."

## Bolshevism and Neo-Colonial Wars

Imperialist aggression against Iraq poses a test for every ostensible socialist. The issue is simple, and the Marxist position is unambiguous:

"For example, if tomorrow, Morocco were to declare war on France, or India on Britain, or Persia or China on Russia, and so on, these would be 'just', and 'defensive' wars, *irrespective* of who would be the first to attack; any socialist would wish the oppressed, dependent and unequal states victory over the oppressor, slaveholding and predatory 'Great' Powers."

—V.I. Lenin, *Socialism and War*

The Third (or Communist) International, launched by Lenin and the Bolsheviks after the social-patriotic betrayal of social-democratic parties in World War I, set "21 Conditions" for admission, one of which stipulated that revolutionaries in all imperialist countries had:

"the obligation...of demanding that their imperialist compatriots should be thrown out of the colonies, of cultivating in the hearts of the workers in their own country a truly fraternal relationship to the working population in the colonies and to the oppressed nations, and of carrying out systematic propaganda among their own country's troops against any oppression of colonial peoples."

This position was upheld by Trotsky and the Left Opposition after the Stalinist degeneration of the Communist International. When Mussolini attacked Ethiopia in 1935, Trotsky immediately responded:

"Of course, we are for the defeat of Italy and the victory of Ethiopia, and therefore we must do everything possible to hinder by all available means support to Italian imperialism by the other imperialist powers, and at the same time facilitate the delivery of armaments, etc., to Ethiopia as best we can."

—"The Italo-Ethiopian Conflict," 17 July 1935

Trotsky had no more fondness for Haile Selassie, under whose rule chattel slavery persisted, than revolutionaries today have for Saddam Hussein, a bloody dictator and long-time imperialist asset. But Marxists unconditionally oppose any and all imperialist attacks on "underdeveloped" countries, for reasons that Trotsky outlined over the Ethiopian conflict:

"If Mussolini triumphs, it means the reinforcement of fascism, the strengthening of imperialism, and the discouragement of the colonial peoples in Africa and elsewhere. The victory of the Negus, however, would mean a mighty blow not only at Italian imperialism but at imperialism as a whole, and would lend a powerful impulsion to the rebellious forces of the oppressed peoples. One must really be completely blind not to see this."

—"On Dictators and the Heights of Oslo,"  
22 April 1936

Trotsky addressed the same issue a few years later from a slightly different angle:

"In Brazil there now reigns a semifascist regime that every revolutionary can only view with hatred. Let us assume, however, that on the morrow England enters into a military conflict with Brazil. I ask you on whose side of the conflict will the working class be? I will answer for myself personally—in this case I am on the side of 'fascist' Brazil against 'democratic' Great Britain. Why? Because in the conflict between them it will not be a question of democracy or fascism. If England should be victorious, she will put another fascist in Rio de Janeiro and will place double chains on Brazil. If Brazil on the contrary should be victorious, it will give a mighty impulse to national and democratic consciousness of the country and will lead to the overthrow of the Vargas dictatorship. The defeat of England will at the same time deliver a blow to British imperialism and give an impulse to the revolutionary movement of the British proletariat."

—"Anti-Imperialist Struggle Is Key to Liberation,"  
23 September 1938

The above scenario is entirely applicable to the present if we substitute "Iraq" for Brazil, and "the U.S." for England. Yet most "Leninist" and "Trotskyist" organizations in the world today regard the positions advocated by Lenin and Trotsky as absurdly sectarian. Their attitudes parallel those of Karl Kautsky, the original "democratic socialist" opponent of Bolshevism, who viewed imperialism as merely a bad policy choice that could be corrected with enough popular pressure.

### Healyite Cheerleaders & Iraqi Quislings

While the response of most left groups to the threats against Iraq can be characterized as social pacifist, there are exceptions. The British Workers Revolutionary Party—a fragment of Gerry Healy's political bandit operation of the same name—hailed Saddam Hussein's recent 100 percent



**British candidate for king of Iraq, Amir Faisal ibn Hussain, at 1919 Paris Peace Conference. British adventurer T.E. Lawrence to his left.**

endorsement in a crudely rigged referendum as "an absolutely unprecedented demonstration by the whole Iraqi people" (*Newline*, 19 October 2002). According to the WRP, imperialist bullying has only "succeeded in reigniting the Iraqi national revolution" under Saddam's leadership, "an achievement that will cost them [the imperialists] dear."

The unfortunate truth is that the brutality of Hussein's rule has predisposed many Iraqis to welcome the installation of a U.S. puppet regime, or even outright U.S. occupation, a sentiment the Iraqi Communist Party seems eager to tap. In a 28 September 2002 statement entitled "Solidarity with the Iraqi People for Peace and Democracy," these quislings call for "Tightening the political and diplomatic isolation of Saddam's dictatorial regime" in the name of "human rights."

The ex-Stalinist humanists of the Workers Communist Party of Iraq at least oppose a U.S. attack, but insist on equating Saddam Hussein with George Bush Jr. and refuse to take sides between the two. This view is shared by various "left communists" and anarchists who march under the banner "No War But the Class War!" This leftist-sounding slogan is nothing more than a declaration of neutrality in conflicts between oppressed and oppressor nations. While many youthful militants advocate this formula for Iraq, they do not apply it in the case of the Palestinian struggle against Zionist ethnic cleansers, or Irish Republican resistance to British occupation.

### "Mass" Popular Frontist Anti-War Movements

A common view among supposedly "revolutionary" organizations is that imperialist aggression can best be countered by "broad" (i.e., liberal, reformist) anti-war mobilizations. In the U.S. the Stalinophilic Workers World



ZABCI—SIPA PRESS

### U.S. soldiers with Afghan prisoners

Party (WWP) has been the prime mover behind the big national anti-war demonstrations. In Britain the same role has been played by the late Tony Cliff's Socialist Workers Party (SWP), and in France by the Ligue communiste révolutionnaire (LCR—flagship of what remains of the United Secretariat). In every case the "revolutionaries" get the permits, set up the sound systems, do the publicity, print up the placards and organize the stewards. But political analysis is left to the eminent persons (liberals, social-democrats, clerics and union officials) invited to grace the platform and lend respectability and legitimacy to the event. If members of the "revolutionary" group doing the work appear on stage, they do so as representatives of some anodyne front group and rarely make any references to Marxism, socialism or "revolution." They are never so rude as to criticize any of the guest speakers.

In the U.S., talk of a "broad" anti-war movement means angling for support from "progressive" bourgeois politicians like Jesse Jackson or Teddy Kennedy. At events organized by WWP front groups there are no harsh words for liberal Democrats. Outside the U.S., the reformists' class-collaborationist appetites are expressed through appeals to their "own" imperialist masters to save Iraq from the wicked Americans. The divisions between the U.S. and its weaker imperialist rivals have no progressive social content—they merely reflect the divergent interests and specific weights of the different national bourgeoisies. The recent furor about "unilateral" U.S. bullying of Iraq, only lent legitimacy to the UN Security Council's eventual endorsement of Washington's campaign.

In France, the LCR's anti-war activity began with a 9 September 2002 call for unity of "all pacifists" (presumably including themselves) in a movement to "force" the Euro-imperialists to block a U.S. attack:

"In the streets, in the workplaces, the neighborhoods, let's unite the forces of all pacifists. Let's organize united committees and demonstrations. Let's force our governments,

Chirac and Schröder, to break with Bush and prevent this dirty war."

The LCR initiated a national day of protest on 12 October 2002, based on a joint statement co-signed by 20 organizations that affirmed:

"We do not accept the idea of 'preventative war' advanced by the United States, which is absolutely contrary to the United Nations Charter....France must oppose this war. It can and must use its veto in the United Nations Security Council. It must also act with its European partners for a negotiated political solution."

—Rouge, 3 October 2002 (our translation)

Bowing to imperialist propaganda regarding Iraqi weaponry, the joint statement also called for "the renewal of global and regional processes of disarmament, particularly in the Middle East..." The LCR was apparently mildly embarrassed by this, but went along with it anyway: "If, in several of its formulations, this call represents a compromise, its broadly united character anticipates the success that can mark the first day of protests...."

### British SWP: Social Pacifism's Best Builders

In London on 28 September 2002, the SWP's "Stop the War Coalition" (StWC) held a massive demonstration that drew some 300,000 people. Speaking to 2,000 radicals at the recent European Social Forum in Florence, Lindsey German, the SWP leader who doubles as convenor of the StWC, gave it a left spin:

"Lindsey argued that the anti-war movement in Britain was so strong because it had taken 'a clear stand on the question of imperialism. We understood that this was a war for oil and for US power. We refused to take the view that the Taliban or Saddam Hussein are equal enemies with US and British imperialism.'"

—*Socialist Worker* (Britain), 16 November 2002

However, in an article in the November 2002 issue of *Socialist Review*, German noted that one of the "important decisions" that laid the basis for the success of the StWC was that:

"It rejected a specifically anti-imperialist programme, arguing that all those who opposed the war, racist attacks or attacks on civil liberties were welcome to join. To limit membership of the coalition to those who had an understanding of imperialism would be to cut it off from a genuinely broad level of support."

It is perfectly principled for Leninists to participate in united fronts with Labourites, pacifists and clerics on the basis of shared opposition to a particular imperialist adventure. But for revolutionaries, such blocs provide an opportunity to demonstrate the superiority of the Marxist program to muddled reformism. What the SWP has done is organize a "movement" from which any sort of Marxist politics are effectively excluded. SWP interventions in the StWC are carefully tailored to fit the reformist lowest common denominator shared by the Labourites, bishops and union bureaucrats whose endorsements are seen as so important to the "success" of the movement. The absence of any hint of "godless communism" from coalition events also makes it easier for the SWP to pursue a bloc with Islamic obscurantists. Ever since they embraced Ayatollah Khomeini's 1979 anti-working class "Islamic Revolution," the Cliffites have been inclined to see a "progressive" side to Islamic fundamentalism (see "Islam, Empire and Revolution," 1917 No. 17).

In addition to Baroness Uddin of the House of Lords, the

speakers at the 28 September demonstration included the Reverend Peter Price, the Bishop of Bath & Wells, who took the opportunity to condemn Saddam and commend the "legitimate role" of UN weapons inspectors:

"Let there be no mistake we regard Saddam and his regime as a real threat to his own people, to neighbouring countries and to the world. Saddam must end repression of his people, abandon his efforts to develop weapons of mass destruction and respect the legitimate role of the United Nations as it ensures that he does."

While the self-effacing "revolutionaries" of the SWP did not appear on the platform in their own name, German, speaking as StWC convenor, told the crowd: "This war is about oil, it is about the strategic interests of America. It is about the rich waging war against the poor." Yet instead of drawing the obvious conclusion—that it is necessary to side with "the poor" against "the rich" (i.e., defend Iraq against the Blair/Bush axis of evil), German made an abject pacifist appeal: "The message of this demonstration is not war under the United Nations, it is no war under any circumstances." However, for revolutionaries the "message" should be that working people and the oppressed have a vital interest in the defense of Iraq.

In her *Socialist Review* article, German airily suggests, "the Coalition cannot rest until we have stopped the war" and asserts:

"We have the potential to stop war. Bush and Blair have set a determined course and they will not allow one demonstration to stop them. But we have shaken them, and we have the power to keep shaking them until they are forced to retreat, as they did over Vietnam."

Is the SWP leadership foolish enough to believe this, or is it simply trying to energize the ranks? The U.S. retreated from Vietnam because 50,000 of its soldiers who were sent to Indochina to crush a social revolution came home in body bags. Over time, the overwhelmingly working-class and minority youth in the conscript army were becoming increasingly mutinous, and a mood of disaffection with the ruling class and its counterrevolutionary war began to grow. The organization of massive social-pacifist "peace" demonstrations by reformist "Trotskyists," with bourgeois Democratic Party politicians setting the tone, played a negligible role in ending the war, but did help channel popular anger back into the framework of bourgeois politics. The size of the demonstrations provided an index of the extent of opposition to the war, but the overtly anti-imperialist sentiments developing within layers of the U.S. working class, particularly among Vietnam veterans and black youth, found no expression in the official "peace movement."

The most successful "anti-war" movement in history was led by the Bolshevik Party in Russia during World War I. That movement was not built on the social-pacifism pushed by the SWP. Indeed, Lenin's 1915 denunciation of pseudo-socialists who refused to link the fight against imperialist war to the struggle to overturn the capitalist social order reads like a polemic against the SWP:

"Pacifism, the preaching of peace in the abstract, is one of the means of duping the working class. Under capitalism, particularly in its imperialist stage, wars are inevitable...."

"At the present time, the propaganda of peace unaccompanied by a call for revolutionary mass action can only sow illusions and demoralise the proletariat, for it makes the proletariat believe that the bourgeoisie is humane, and turns it into a plaything in the hands of the secret di-

plomacy of the belligerent countries. In particular, the idea of a so-called democratic peace being possible without a series of revolutions is profoundly erroneous."

—"The Conference of the RSDLP Groups Abroad,"  
19 February 1915

The International Socialist Organization (ISO), the former American section of the International Socialist Tendency that was excommunicated by the SWP in a squabble over pecking order, is involved in campus anti-war activity in the U.S. The 25 October 2002 issue of the ISO's *Socialist Worker* talks about the "drive to expand America's empire," noting that "even right-wing commentators now refer to... 'imperialism'." The article criticizes "some well-known voices in the antiwar movement" who have illusions that "U.S. imperialism could wage a 'just' war in some cases, but not in others."

But rather than pointing out that in resisting a U.S.-led attack, Iraq would be waging a "just war," the ISO delivers a standard social-pacifist pitch: "Socialists have always played a leading role in the struggle against war—and there's no reason why this should be any different today." In fact socialists have *not* always "struggled against war." The Bolsheviks did not propose to "struggle against war" but rather to "turn the imperialist war into a civil war," i.e., a fight for socialist revolution. In *Socialism and War* Lenin wrote, "we regard civil wars, i.e., wars waged by an oppressed class against the oppressor class, by slaves against slaveholders, by serfs against land-owners, and by wage workers against the bourgeoisie, as fully legitimate, progressive and necessary." Trotsky organized the Red Army that defeated the Whites and their "democratic" imperialist backers, including the U.S. and Britain. Real socialists *take sides* when imperialists attack colonial or neo-colonial countries—they don't chatter about a "struggle against war" in the abstract.

### LRCI: Working Both Sides of the Street

The British Workers Power group, which, like the ISO, originated in the International Socialist Tendency, presents itself as a serious, orthodox Trotskyist alternative to the opportunism of the SWP. Workers Power, and its co-thinkers in the League for a Revolutionary Communist International (LRCI), issued a statement dated 23 September 2002 declaring:

"We seek to stop this war by mass mobilisations that will shake the system to its foundations and topple the warmongers. First and foremost this must happen in the imperialist countries themselves. When fighting breaks out we must call clearly and unequivocally for the total defeat of the imperialist invasion and victory for the Iraqi resistance to it.

"This alone distinguishes revolutionary opposition to the war from those [who] simply call for 'peace' or for UN intervention or mediation. The reformist left will oppose us on the grounds that it means supporting Saddam Hussein...."

This sounds pretty good, but only a few weeks earlier Workers Power co-signed an 8 September statement issued by a preparatory meeting of the European Social Forum which stated:

"Those who show solidarity with the people of Iraq have no hearing in the White House. But we do have the chance to influence European Governments—many of whom have opposed the war. We call on all the European heads



Demonstrators in front of White House, 1990

of state to publicly stand against this war whether it has UN backing or not, and to demand that George Bush abandon his war plans."

Moderately intelligent people might wonder why serious socialists would call for "toppling" a gang of imperialist warmongers while, at the same time, appealing to them to "stand against" war. This is the LRCI's idea of "tactics"—working both sides of the street at the same time. For these centrists nothing is more important than avoiding "isolation." So when the LCR, the SWP and dozens of Stalinist, social-democratic, Green and other petty-bourgeois groups signed the statement, Workers Power did not want to be left out. Trotsky was familiar with this sort of political double-bookkeeping:

"The correspondence between words and deeds is a distinguishing mark of a serious revolutionary organization. For a serious revolutionary organization, the resolutions it adopts at its assemblies are not mere formalities, but the recorded result of the experiences it has accumulated in action, and a guide for its action in the future. For the centrists, a 'revolutionary' thesis, adopted on a ceremonial occasion, is meant to serve as a deceptive decoration, as a cover for irreconcilable divergences in their own ranks, as a cloak for their nonrevolutionary deeds in the preceding period as well as in the period to come."

—"Resolution on the Antiwar Congress of the London Bureau," July 1936

The SWP is happy to have Workers Power aboard its "Stop the War Coalition" and even allows them a seat on its steering committee. Workers Power constitutes a tame left wing which can be trusted to conduct any "revolutionary" activities discreetly and inoffensively. In hailing the "brilliant" 28 September 2002 demonstration in London, Workers Power did not comment on its pacifist political character, nor on the absence of anything approximating the call for "the total defeat of the imperialist invasion and victory for the Iraqi resistance" which it purports to uphold.

A recent (undated) draft "Manifesto for World Revolution" posted on the LRCI web site provides a hint as to how these centrists reconcile their participation as a silent junior partner in a bourgeois-pacifist bloc with their supposed commitment to revolutionary defeatism:

"We do so by building a huge anti-war movement based on the mass organisations of the working class, and rallying around it young people, women, the progressive middle classes and the immigrant communities.

"This movement will probably contain many people motivated by religion and by pacifism. Whilst we will march alongside them against the bosses' wars, we are not ourselves pacifists. We do not spread the illusion that war can be abolished under capitalism...."

This is immediately recognizable as the hoary old "stages" theory. During the first stage, the LRCI eagerly participates in building a "huge" movement on a pacifist-reformist basis. The anti-imperialist positions the LRCI supposedly champions only become the basis for rallying the masses with the advent of a glorious second stage at some point in the indefinite future. The SWP doubtless offers a similar explanation to any of its youthful supporters who take its revolutionary rhetoric seriously.

### Another SL Flip-Flop

The Spartacist League/U.S. (SL) and its affiliates in the International Communist League (ICL) are advocating a position of revolutionary defeatism toward any imperialist attack on Iraq. This represents a dramatic reversal of their assertion in 2001, during the U.S. attack on Afghanistan, that a defeatist position toward the imperialist aggressors was "illusory and the purest hot air and 'revolutionary' phrase-mongering" (*Workers Vanguard* [WV], 9 November 2001). This flies in the face of Lenin's observation that:

"During a reactionary war a revolutionary class cannot but desire the defeat of its government.

"This is axiomatic, and disputed only by conscious partisans or helpless satellites of the social-chauvinists."

—"The Defeat of One's Own Government in the Imperialist War," 26 July 1915

At the time, the SL rationalized ditching defeatism on the grounds that the Afghan "Taliban has no possible military redress" (WV, 9 November 2001), but today they acknowledge that, "neocolonial Iraq is in no position to militarily prevail over the U.S. imperialist war machine" (WV, 18 October 2002). So why two different lines? Apparently the SL leadership thinks that the hysteria over the destruction of the World Trade Center has died down enough that it is safe to again be identified with Lenin's position on neocolonial wars. This is not the first time the SL has flinched at critical moments (see "Where is the ICL Going?", 1917 No. 24), nor is it likely to be the last. As for the SL's occasional whining about being "chicken-baited," (see WV, 25 January 2002) all we can say is that if the shoe fits, sometimes you have to wear it.

### 'No Middle Course'

The assault on Iraq is, at bottom, a link in a chain of predatory struggles for the redivision of the world among the imperialist powers. War is endemic to capitalism and will continue until either the capitalist world system is uprooted through social revolution, or human civilization is destroyed. It is impossible to oppose brutal neo-colonial wars of conquest without addressing the character of the social system which perpetrates them. Imperialism *can* be defeated—but only through social revolution. As Lenin asserted:

"Instead of leaving it to the hypocritical phrase-mongers to deceive the people by phrases and promises concerning the possibility of a democratic peace, socialists must explain to the masses the impossibility of anything resembling a democratic peace, unless there are a series of revolutions and unless a revolutionary struggle is waged in every country against the *respective* government.

"There is no middle course. The greatest harm is caused to the proletariat by the hypocritical (or obtuse) authors of the 'middle-course' policy."

—"The Question of Peace," July-August 1915



# LRCI on Argentina: 'Blunting the Edge of Revolutionary Criticism'

The following letter was sent to Workers Power on 30 March 2002:

To the Editor:

The international workers' movement has a vital interest in the dramatic developments in Argentina. In discussing the question of the constituent assembly with Workers Power comrades at your public meeting in London on 21 March, it was suggested that I should write to you for clarification.

Since the beginning of Argentina's current political crisis in December, Workers Power has intermittently raised calls for the convocation of some sort of constituent assembly, while simultaneously advocating the creation of workers' councils, a revolutionary party and a workers' government. Revolutionaries raise the slogan of a constituent assembly in situations where the masses of working people have illusions in bourgeois electoralism – typically after a period of right-wing dictatorship. But Argentina has had a functioning bourgeois-democratic regime for almost 20 years, and there is widespread anger at the entire spectrum of the capitalist political establishment. In this case, campaigning for a constituent assembly can only create, rather than undercut, popular illusions.

It is entirely possible that at some point the reformists, trade-union bureaucrats or Peronists may themselves propose a constituent assembly, or some other parliamentary gimmick, in order to contain the struggle of the masses within the framework of capitalist 'democracy'. In that case, it would be necessary for revolutionaries to seek to expose the reactionary content of such demands and counterpose the necessity of organs of proletarian dual power.

But in a statement dated 21 December 2001, the International Secretariat [IS] of the LRCI [League for a Revolutionary Communist International, led by Workers Power] took a different approach, and proposed that if the bourgeoisie sought to escape its difficulties with new elections:

'revolutionaries must argue for the election of recallable deputies to a sovereign constituent assembly. In such elections it would be vital for workers delegates, delegates of the urban and rural poor, to stand to make sure that it was not dominated by the corrupt politicians of the rival oligarchies.'

This position was tacitly reversed in an LRCI statement of 19 January [2002] entitled 'The Struggle Against Duhalde Continues' which sharply criticised all talk of participation in any sort of multi-class formation:

'The slogan for workers assemblies and committees (co-ordinations) [is a] crucial one in the current situation. It has to be advanced in all partial, local, regional and national struggles occurring [in] the next period. Given the current situation the slogan of popular assemblies or similar multi-class bodies actually runs the danger of



Anti-government protest at Plaza de Mayo, Buenos Aires

leaving the workers open to other class forces and populist demagogues.'

'The confusion of the centrists is represented in their confusion of mass meetings with soviet-type bodies, composed of delegates: it is represented in using the constituent assemblies as the basis for a workers government....'

All that was missing was an explanation of your earlier 'confusion' over the use of this demand. But then, in the February issue of *Workers Power*, the constituent assembly demand reappeared in the middle of a lengthy statement by the LRCI's International Secretariat ('From rebellion to revolution', 28 January). This time it was given a more leftist spin as 'a sovereign, revolutionary, constituent assembly', but it was still posed as a means of responding to the 'continuing mass mobilisations in which the middle classes play a prominent role whilst the organised working class...have not entered the political scene in an organised fashion.' Workers Power's 'revolutionary' constituent assembly is clearly projected as a bourgeois formation:

'The popular masses—despite their disillusion with all parties and politicians still have major democratic illusions.



FOTOFIX

**Buenos Aires protest organized by the *Piqueteros* (unemployed) movement, November 2002**

'Many people demand new elections because the Duhalde government called off the elections planned for March. Any new political crisis for Duhalde will raise the issue of the illegitimacy of his administration in terms of a popular mandate.'

At the same time, the statement suggests: 'To make such an assembly respond to the will of the people it would need intervention and control by workers' organisations and democratic popular bodies....' The idea of calling for a bourgeois parliamentary assembly under workers' control is a classic example of what Trotsky called 'crystalised confusion'.

The key task of Trotskyists in Argentina today is to struggle to forge a revolutionary leadership based on a programme of proletarian political independence from all wings of the bourgeoisie. The influence of Peronism (bourgeois nationalist populism) within the Argentine workers' movement cannot be combated by attempts to project demands for a constituent assembly as the road to a workers' government. This can only create confusion and help set the stage for defeat.

Your infatuation with the constituent assembly demand appears to be linked to your pursuit of the Partido de los Trabajadores por el Socialismo (PTS). It seems that adaptation to the PTS has produced political confusion around more than just the constituent assembly question. On page five of the February [2002] issue of *Workers Power*, in the midst of an interview with a PTS member, there is a box advocating the creation of 'a revolutionary workers' party with real influence' in Argentina. It is suggested that to real-

ise this goal, the 'Partido Obrero, the Movimiento Al Socialismo (MAS) and to some extent the Movimiento Socialista de los Trabajadores (MST) should combine forces' to launch a new political party with a 'revolutionary programme according to the actual situation'. In other words, a mutually-amnestying swamp.

On page eight in the same issue, a statement by the LRCI's International Secretariat praises the PTS for 'put[ting] forward the fundamental elements of a revolutionary strategy' and calling 'on all militant working class and popular forces to come together to create a mass revolutionary workers party'. Yet to cover its left flank, the LRCI's IS also warns against a "regroupment" of those who call themselves "revolutionaries" or "Trotskyists" as something that could:

'be much worse because it will lead the revolutionaries straight into the opportunist swamp. Such a fusion can only be realised on less than [a] revolutionary programme. This would not strengthen the revolutionary forces but fatally weaken them. It would prove a rotten block [sic], breaking down at the first serious challenge. It would blunt the edge of revolutionary criticism precisely when it was most needed.'

It strikes me that the PTS is not the only one willing to 'blunt the edge of revolutionary criticism' in pursuit of a rotten bloc.

Comradely regards,  
Alan D.  
for the IBT [Britain]

## Innocence...

*continued from page 32*

ficer's widow and a mouthpiece for the Fraternal Order of Police unless the videotaped confession of Arnold Beverly, the man who committed the crime for which Mumia was sentenced to death, was aired. Although the network played less than the first minute of the 5-minute videotape, the force of Arnold Beverly's confession—which you will see in its entirety at the conclusion of the presentation of this paper—effectively deconstructed the media's misconstruction of this case....

Arnold Beverly's confession has been censored out of any national news coverage although it took over the entire front page of the sensationalistic Philadelphia *Daily News* when we filed it in federal court on May 4, 2001. That day the *Daily News* ran a full-page photograph of Mumia with the headline "Abu-Jamal Attorneys Drop A Bombshell: Affidavit from self-described hit man says mob hired him to kill Faulkner." Even "Project Censored," which purports to be a vaguely leftist critic of the bourgeois press, has censored the Arnold Beverly story, leaving it out of its list of the "25 Most Censored News Stories of 2001."

### From Sacco and Vanzetti to Mumia Abu-Jamal

The invitation to Mumia Abu-Jamal's attorneys to present a paper at this symposium was motivated, in part, by our having filed in Mumia's *habeas corpus* proceedings in federal court a memorandum of law drawing a direct historical parallel between the Sacco/Vanzetti case and that of Mumia. We attached to that legal memorandum a copy of Felix Frankfurter's classic article on the Sacco and Vanzetti case from the March 1927 issue of the *Atlantic Monthly* and we urged the judge not to permit the same injustice to be perpetrated upon Mumia Abu-Jamal.

We were inspired to file that legal memorandum by a retired longshoreman [Howard Keylor] who played a significant role in motivating his union's political strike in support of Mumia which shut down West Coast ports for eight hours in 1999, and who brought to our attention the fact that, in the case of Sacco and Vanzetti, as in that of Mumia Abu-Jamal, one of the professional criminals responsible for the crime for which these innocent men were convicted and condemned to death had confessed and exonerated them of any participation in the crime. We will return to the subject of Celestino Medeiros' confession in the Sacco/Vanzetti case and Arnold Beverly's confession in the Mumia Abu-Jamal case after comparing some key elements of the grotesque unfairness of the trials in both cases.

### The Rigging of the Trials

The Sacco/Vanzetti and Mumia Abu-Jamal trials were both rigged against the defendants from the very beginning. In the case of Sacco and Vanzetti, the early stages of jury selection resulted in only seven jurors being selected and the remainder of the pool of 500 potential jurors being rejected. The trial judge then dispatched the local sheriff's department to round-up more potential jurors overnight. The sheriffs admitted on subsequent cross-examination by defense counsel that they hand-picked the new jury pool from persons personally known to them whom they thought would be "good" jurors. Many of these hand-picked



Philadelphia, 4 July 2002: rally to free Mumia

jurors were not even on the jury lists.

Mumia Abu-Jamal repeatedly demanded a line-up during pretrial proceedings in his case, but these defense motions were all denied. The prosecution initially opposed a line-up as irrelevant because they had no witnesses who could identify Mumia as the person who shot the police officer. Instead, the prosecution announced that it would seek to prove its case by process of elimination and would show that he was the only person present who could have committed the crime. Three days after the first defense motion for a line-up was denied, however, the prosecution put street prostitute Cynthia White on the witness stand at the preliminary hearing to falsely identify Mumia as the shooter.

The jury selection process was also manipulated by the trial judge in Mumia's case. Judge Sabo flagrantly violated Mumia's constitutional right to personally question the potential jurors when he was defending himself, by taking the *voir dire* out of Mumia's hands and forcing him to choose between Sabo or his court-appointed attorney completing it. Sabo wrongly denied a challenge for cause of a biased white alternate juror who admitted that he could not give the defense a fair trial and Sabo then improperly refused a defense peremptory challenge of the alternate. After the jury was selected, Sabo and the prosecutor, with the connivance of Mumia's court-appointed attorney, manipulated a Black woman off the jury for alleged violation of the sequestration rules without affording her a hearing. As a result, the biased white alternate took the Black juror's place.

The prosecution in the Sacco/Vanzetti case used the defendants' political opinions, particularly their opposition to World War I, to inflame the jury against them. In his cross-examination of Sacco, the lead prosecutor asked if he "loved this country" when he fled to Mexico in May of 1917 to avoid the draft. This irrelevant and highly prejudicial line of questioning went on and on, over repeated objections by defense counsel, all of which were denied. Judge Thayer reinforced the prosecution's tactics in his final



ARCHIVE PHOTOS

### Bartolomeo Vanzetti and Nicola Sacco: victims of a political frame-up

charge to the jury by commending them for responding to the call for jury service "like the true soldier, [who] responded to that call in the spirit of supreme American loyalty." Thayer continued with a paean to the word loyalty which drew an implicit but unstated comparison between the disloyal foreign and atheistic anarchists on trial and the loyal God-fearing jurors whose patriotic duty it was to decide their fate.

The prosecution at Mumia Abu-Jamal's trial used a political statement by Mumia when he was 16 years old, quoting Mao Zedong's aphorism that "political power grows out of the barrel of a gun," to argue for the death penalty. This cross-examination was improperly permitted by Judge Sabo after Mumia made a statement to the jury in exercise of his right to "allocution." The right to allocution is the right of a convicted person to personally address the sentencer before sentence is pronounced. Although that right was protected under both the common law and by statute in Pennsylvania, so that cross-examination should not have been permitted, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court reinterpreted the law to retroactively repeal the right to allocution in death penalty cases when this issue was raised in Mumia's direct appeal.

### The Bias of the Judges

In the Sacco/Vanzetti case numerous prominent witnesses testified in support of the clemency petition to the Governor of Massachusetts as to Judge Thayer's vitriolic statements and prejudice against the defendants and their

counsel. Robert Benchley, then drama editor of *Life Magazine*, who knew Thayer well, recounted a conversation with a mutual friend who enthusiastically reported the judge's private comments at the time of the trial that "these bastards down in Boston were trying to intimidate him. He would show them that they could not and that he would like to get a few of those Reds and hang them too." A Dartmouth College professor and attorney of conservative views recounted that Thayer told him after denying defense post-trial motions: "Did you see what I did with those anarchistic bastards the other day. I guess that will hold them for a while....Let them go to the Supreme Court now and see what they can get out of them." The Italian Counsel in Boston reported his impressions from having attended the trial: "he [Judge Thayer] was sure that those two men were guilty...and this feeling of his was evident all through the trial." The special commission created by the Governor of Massachusetts to review Sacco and Vanzetti's clemency petition gave short shrift to this evidence, in part because it must have made little impact on the commission chairman, Harvard University President Abbot Lawrence Lowell, who was "an anti-Italian bigot and an avowed racist" whose accomplishments included the introduction of racial and religious quotas into Harvard's admission policies (see Alan M. Dershowitz's introduction to a 1990 reissue of Fraenkel's book).

In the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal, a court stenographer, Terri Maurer-Carter, came forward in August of 2001 and submitted a declaration under penalty of perjury that,

while passing through the antechamber of Judge Sabo's courtroom at the time of Mumia's trial, she overheard a conversation in which Sabo said, in reference to Mumia, "Yeah, and I'm going to help 'em fry the n——r." Sabo's unremitting hostility to Mumia was evident throughout the trial. Newspaper reports of the 1995 post-conviction proceedings before Sabo uniformly criticized his contemptuous treatment of the defense.

In both cases the purported ballistics evidence was misrepresented by the prosecution at trial, is highly suspect, and may have been tampered with, if not fabricated, by the police. In both the Sacco/Vanzetti and Mumia Abu-Jamal cases, the prosecution used the term "consistent with" to describe the relationship between the purported fatal bullet and the defendant's handgun, creating the false impression that there was scientific evidence to prove that the bullet was fired from that particular gun when there was no such evidence. In both cases the use of this term was for the express purpose of misleading the jury since the bullet at issue was also "consistent with" having been fired by numerous other handguns available in the United States at the time. In the clemency hearings held before the governor's special commission in the Sacco/Vanzetti case, the defense presented evidence that the purported "fatal bullet" was not genuine and argued that it had been substituted for the real bullet by the police. In the Mumia Abu-Jamal case, what the medical examiner described as a "bullet fragment" removed from the officer's fatal wound mysteriously disappeared from the envelope in which it was sent to the police ballistics lab, and photographs of what is purported to be the fatal bullet do not match its description in the ballistics report.

### The 'Eyewitness' Testimony

Of the witnesses in the Sacco and Vanzetti case who purported to identify the defendants as present at the crime scene, only one witness claimed to have seen the shooting and he admitted to both the prosecution and the defense before trial that he could not identify the shooters. All the other eyewitnesses to the shooting either refused to identify the defendants or testified that neither defendant was involved. None of the witnesses who purported to locate Sacco or Vanzetti at the crime scene had an opportunity for careful observation of the perpetrators. All of these witnesses, except for one, either qualified their identification at some time or were reported by others to have said they could not identify. Other witnesses, with as good or better opportunities for observation, refused to identify or appeared for the defense. In ruling on (and rejecting) post-trial motions by the defense in 1924, the original trial judge, Judge Thayer, expressed the opinion that the jury's verdict did not rest on the eyewitness testimony.

In the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal, two purported eyewitnesses, Robert Chobert and Cynthia White, testified that they saw Mumia shoot the police officer. Chobert, a white taxi driver, was a convicted felon on probation for firebombing a school. He was particularly vulnerable to police and/or prosecution pressure as he was in daily violation of his probation conditions for driving his cab without a license and was subject to over 30 years in state prison if his probation were revoked. According to private investigator Mike Newman, Chobert recanted his trial testimony to him in 1995, but despite Newman's reporting this to Mumia's ex-Chief Counsel Leonard Weinglass, Weinglass

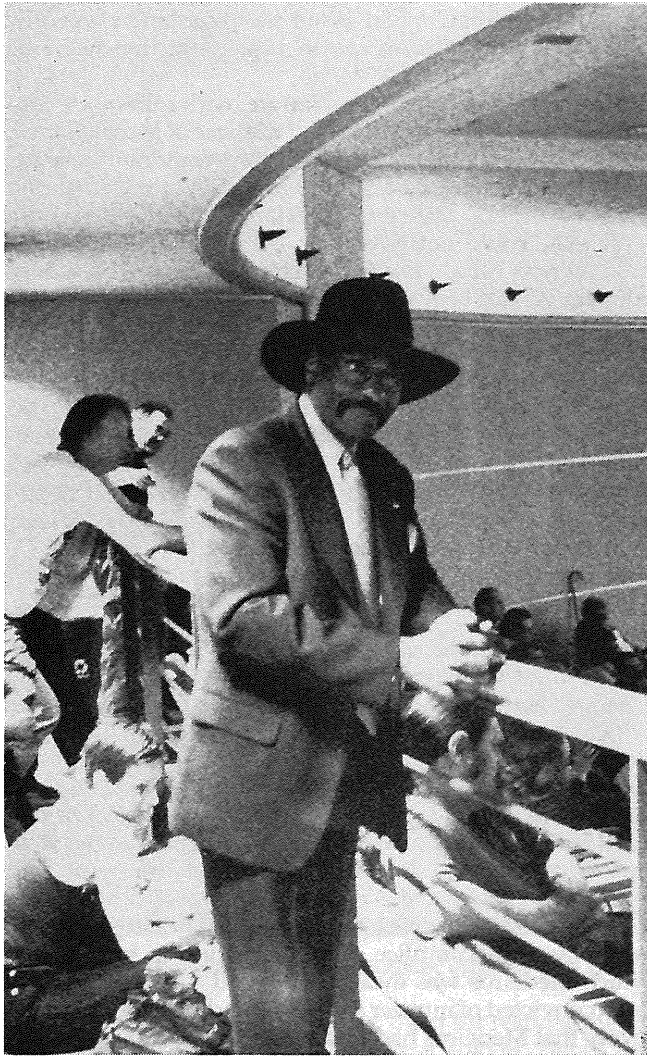
did not question Chobert about the recantation when he called Chobert as a witness in post-conviction hearings held that same year.

Cynthia White, a street prostitute, with numerous convictions and several open cases at the time of Mumia's trial, was just as vulnerable to police or prosecutorial pressure. Despite her testimony against Mumia, White was placed by one witness, William Singletary, in a position from which she could not have seen the shooting. Recently, a new witness came forward, Yvette Williams, who was in jail with White shortly after the incident for which Mumia was prosecuted and convicted. Williams swears that White admitted to her that she did not see the shooting and was high on drugs at the time, but was coerced and bribed by the police to falsely identify Mumia as the shooter. Williams submitted a sworn affidavit in which she states that whenever White returned from "interrogation" sessions with Philadelphia police detectives Williams observed her to have contraband articles including sandwiches, sodas, "white powder," and syringes.

### The Irrelevance of Innocence

In the Sacco/Vanzetti case a young Portuguese immigrant named Celestino Medeiros, who was confined in the same jail with Sacco, sent him a note in November of 1925 which read: "I hear by confess to being in the south Braintree shoe company crime and Sacco and Vanzetti was not in said crime." Medeiros later signed a sworn affidavit for the convicted men's attorneys which stated that he had participated in the robbery with four other men who were Italian, and provided various details of the crime, but would not identify the other men. Sacco and Vanzetti's attorneys subsequently obtained an affidavit from a man who was an accomplice of Medeiros in the hold-up for which Medeiros was incarcerated, and for which he had been convicted of murder and sentenced to death. The man swore that Medeiros had told him on numerous occasions that the South Braintree robbery had been the work of the Joe Morelli gang, which consisted of five brothers.

There was substantial corroboration for the theory that the Morelli gang was responsible for the crime. Indeed, there was so much evidence of the Morelli gang's role in the robbery and murders that the defense brief to the Massachusetts Supreme Court printed in parallel columns a table comparing the strength of the case against the Morellis to the weakness of the case against Sacco and Vanzetti. However, despite this and other evidence of Sacco and Vanzetti's innocence [both Sacco and Vanzetti presented alibi witnesses at trial and in post-conviction proceedings who testified that they were far from the crime scene on the date of the crime] neither the governor, his special clemency commission, Judge Thayer or the Massachusetts Supreme Court gave it serious consideration. Against the backdrop of Medeiros' confession, United States Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, the paragon of American jurists, rejected a *habeas corpus* petition and application for stay of execution based on Judge Thayer's bias against the defendants and their counsel. Justice Brandeis, another of America's greatest jurists, refused to take any action to stop the executions because his wife and daughter had shown interest in the case. Justice Stone cited Holmes' opinion in refusing an application for a stay of execution. Chief Justice Taft was in Canada and refused to cross the border to consider an application for a stay. Sacco and



**Rubin 'Hurricane' Carter at 'Mumia's Lawyer Speaks' meeting in Toronto, June 2002**

Vanzetti's innocence was irrelevant to these judges. The two men were executed on August 22, 1927, immediately following the execution of Celestino Medeiros.

In the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal a man named Arnold Beverly came forward in June of 1999 and signed a written confession under penalty of perjury that he shot and killed Police Officer Daniel Faulkner. Beverly exonerated Mumia of any participation in the crime. This confession was suppressed by Mumia's previous attorneys, Chief Counsel Leonard Weinglass and Chief Legal Strategist Daniel Williams, and never presented to any court. Mumia was forced to fire Williams in mid-2001 when he discovered that Williams was about to publish a book which misrepresented the facts of his case and repeatedly suggested that he was guilty—in direct violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct which forbid an attorney from negotiating or entering into a contract to publish a book about one of their active cases because of an inherent conflict of interest. Mumia fired Weinglass at the same time because he refused to take any action to stop Williams from publishing. Mumia's present attorneys, upon taking over his case, found the confession in the files of prior counsel along with a mountain of corroborating evidence including the results of a lie detec-

tor test administered to Beverly. All of this evidence has now been filed with the courts and is analyzed in detail in the post-conviction petition we filed in state court in July of 2001 [available at: [www.bolshevik.org/mumia/pcra.doc](http://www.bolshevik.org/mumia/pcra.doc)].

When the federal judge hearing Mumia's *habeas corpus* petition refused to authorize us to take Arnold Beverly's deposition, we arranged for his confession to be videotaped and filed the videotape in state and federal court....

Arnold Beverly states in his confession that he and an accomplice were hired by corrupt police officers and organized crime to kill Officer Faulkner because the officer was an obstacle to the pay-off racket the police ran in downtown Philadelphia in the 1980s. This involved shaking down the owners of after-hours clubs and gay bars, prostitutes and pimps, drug dealers and others to pay "protection" against police raids or other interference with their illicit activities. There were three independent FBI investigations of corruption in the Philadelphia Police Department in the 1980s which resulted in the convictions of 30 police officers including the Assistant Commissioner of Police, the captain in charge of the downtown division that Officer Faulkner worked out of and in which the incident in which he was killed occurred, and the highest ranking officer at the crime scene investigation. The head of homicide was an unindicted co-conspirator in these federal prosecutions.

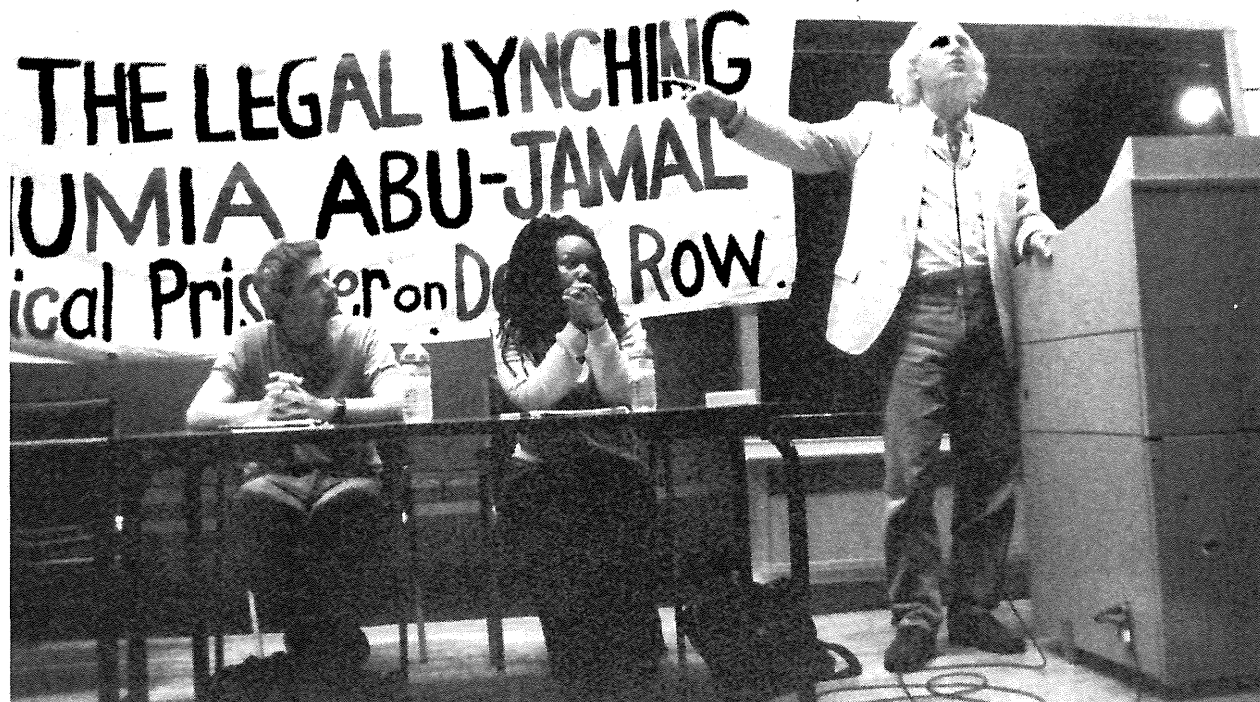
In his confession, Arnold Beverly recounts in detail how he and an accomplice lay in wait for Faulkner; how Faulkner clutched his chest, fell to one knee, and then onto his back when shots rang out; and how Beverly walked over to where Faulkner lay, stood over Faulkner and shot him between the eyes, and then used the underground subway system to leave the scene.

Why Mumia's previous attorneys suppressed this evidence is not yet fully known, but it is known that they were subjected to death threats to dissuade them from presenting evidence that might point to the real killers. And it must have been obvious to these attorneys that to present this evidence would put them up against ruthless and powerful forces who posed a very real threat to their professional reputations and physical safety. The manner in which the actions of Mumia's attorneys undermined and effectively sabotaged his defense is detailed in the post-conviction petition we filed in state court in July of 2001.

Thus far, neither the state nor the federal judges to whom the evidence of Mumia Abu-Jamal's innocence has been presented have given it serious consideration. Rather, as in the case of Sacco and Vanzetti, the judges have considered Mumia's innocence to be irrelevant. They have used Weinglass' and Williams' suppression of this evidence as a justification for their refusal to permit Arnold Beverly to testify in open court.

Mumia's case is now on appeal before the Pennsylvania Supreme Court and the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit. The result of these appeals cannot presently be predicted. Whether history will repeat itself and visit upon Mumia Abu-Jamal the same injustice perpetrated upon Sacco and Vanzetti depends upon each of you who are members of the public as much as it depends on each of us who are Mumia's attorneys. To compare the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal to that of Sacco and Vanzetti is to do more than engage in an academic exercise, it is simultaneously to issue and respond to a call to action: *Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!* ■

## 'Mumia's Lawyer Speaks'



On Saturday 8 June 2002, over 200 people (including Rubin "Hurricane" Carter) attended a public talk at the University of Toronto (UofT) by Eliot Grossman, one of Mumia Abu-Jamal's lawyers. A day earlier Grossman spoke to 85 people at two meetings in Ottawa. People in both cities who attended the talks commented that they felt they had learned a lot about both the mechanism of the original frame-up of Mumia and the perfidious role subsequently played by Leonard Weinglass and Dan Williams (his previous attorneys) in sabotaging an effective defense.

Grossman explained how the prosecution's case was a pastiche of perjured "eyewitnesses," tampered ballistics "evidence" and a manufactured "confession." The audience watched a videotape of Arnold Beverly confessing to having been hired by organized crime to kill Officer Daniel Faulkner on behalf of crooked cops who feared that Faulkner was cooperating with FBI investigations into police corruption in Philadelphia. The defense team is currently attempting to have the Beverly confession admitted into evidence. One of the themes of the meeting was that there should be "no statute of limitations on innocence."

The Toronto meeting was initiated by the International Bolshevik Tendency (IBT) and organized on a united-front basis. The Ottawa talks occurred as a spin-off of the Toronto meeting, and were coordinated through the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) and Industrial Workers of the World. Participating groups in Toronto held three preliminary planning sessions to sort out logistics, postering, publicity, finances and security. The forum was introduced by Darashani of the Urban Alliance on Race Relations and chaired by John Clarke of the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty.

In addition to the IBT, the Friends of MOVE were among the most active participants, along with Socialist Alternative (Committee for a Workers International) and members of the New Socialists. Union support included CUPW, the National Union of Public and General Employees, the Toronto District Council of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), CUPE Locals 1230 and 3903, the Canadian Autoworkers Local 199 Human Rights Committee and the St. Catharines & District Labour Council. Both the undergraduate Students' Administrative Council and the Graduate Students' Union at UofT sponsored the talk, as did the Ontario Public Interest Research Group. Other endorsers included the Angola 3 Support Committee, Anti-Racist Action, the Brock Socialists, the Freyheyt Collective (Platformist anarchists), International Socialists, Socialist Action (United Secretariat), the Trotskyist League (International Communist League) and the Committee to Stop Targeted Policing.

In his remarks, Grossman noted that:

"Even though there are a number of organizations that disagree with each other on many issues, we were able to work together toward a common goal and I think it is a wonderful model that we have here tonight...."

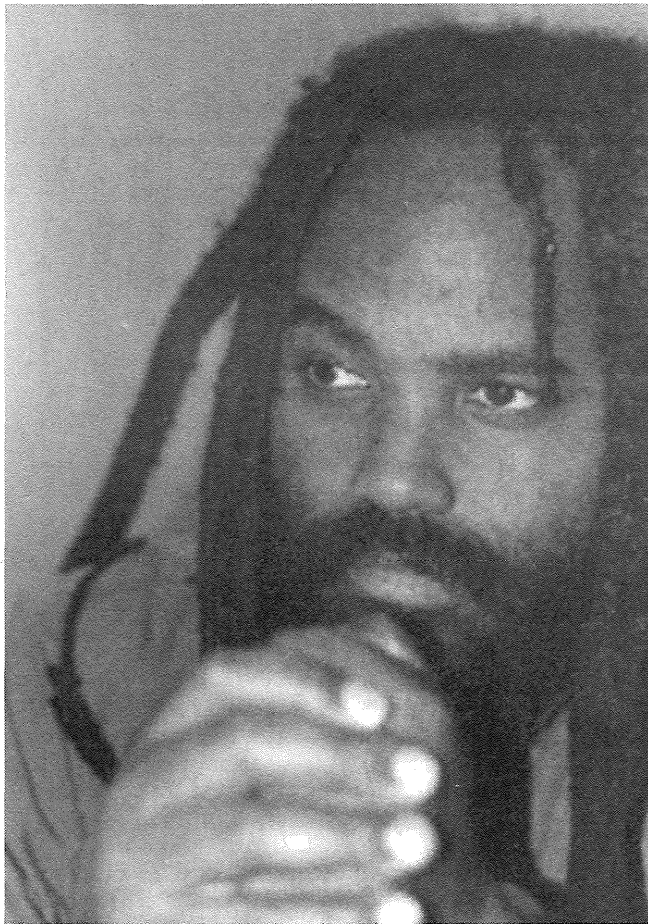
"Thank you very much for overcoming your political differences and working together to put this event together. I think this is a lesson we can take back to the United States."

*Contributions for Mumia's defense should be sent to:*

Social and Environmental Entrepreneurs ("SEE")  
20178 Rockport Way  
Malibu, CA 90265 USA

*Make checks payable to "See Mumia Free"*

# From Sacco and Vanzetti to Mumia Abu-Jamal: Is Innocence Irrelevant?



**Mumia Abu-Jamal: 21 years on death row**

The following is a slightly edited version of a paper presented by Eliot Lee Grossman, one of Mumia Abu-Jamal's lawyers, at Hofstra University, on 4 October 2002, at a symposium on Sacco and Vanzetti.

"Interest in the guilt or innocence of an accused person or in the adequacy of the legal machinery employed in determining a problem of this nature reaches at times the intensity of a social question. The conscience of a community, sometimes that of the whole civilized world, may feel itself under such circumstances involved in the fate of a person otherwise obscure; and partisanship may run so high that in the locality whose courts are under scrutiny the case at issue can hardly be discussed with reason."

—Osmond K. Fraenkel, *The Sacco-Vanzetti Case*, 1931

While the foregoing quotation could well describe the contemporary case of Mumia Abu-Jamal, it is taken from prominent New York attorney Osmond Fraenkel's introduction to his classic study of the case of Sacco and Vanzetti, published four years after their 1927 execution. Sacco and Vanzetti were convicted of the murder of a paymaster and a guard during a hold-up in South Braintree, Massachusetts in 1920, carried out by a gang of five robbers. The two anar-

chists were convicted and sentenced to death in an atmosphere of post-World War I patriotic fervor, prejudice against draft-resisters, xenophobia and anti-communism.

Mumia Abu-Jamal was convicted of the murder of a police officer in downtown Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1981. Mumia was convicted and sentenced to death in the context of local hysteria against the MOVE organization, of which he was the most prominent supporter, and a trial in which the prosecutor used against Mumia political statements made at age 16 when he was Minister of Information of the Philadelphia branch of the Black Panther Party. In December of 2001, a federal judge threw out Mumia's death sentence, but affirmed his conviction. Mumia's life still hangs in the balance, however, as the state is appealing this decision and has announced its intention to again seek the death penalty if there is a new sentencing hearing.

A mass political movement grew up around both cases which has made them internationally known and enlisted the support of prominent individuals and numerous organizations throughout the world....

## The Construction of the Other

Newspapers played the predominant role in the mass media in Sacco and Vanzetti's time. The manner in which the newspapers constructed the defendants as "other" flowed directly out of their hostility (which is to say, that of their owners) to these foreign-born "Reds" whose fractured English, refusal to serve as soldiers in the World War, and despised political opinions not only marked them as "other" to the prevailing patriotic ideology, but whose political defense campaign directly challenged the validity of the prevailing myths about the legitimacy of American democracy in general, and the fairness of the American legal system in particular. Illustrative of this were two *New York Times* editorials in 1921 which praised Judge Thayer's decision denying a new trial and defended his handling of the original one from the "indignation manufactured and manifested against it in Europe" which the newspaper attributed to the efforts of "Communist comrades of the defendants." The *Times* went on to viciously attack "domestic Reds" who were raising a "fat [defense] fund" to insure that "every legal technicality will be used."

Despite, or perhaps because of, television's dominant role in the mass media of our time, television coverage of Mumia's case has been almost nonexistent, with the exception of a vicious hit piece perpetrated by pseudo-journalist Sam Donaldson on ABC's "20/20," and short items broadcast immediately after a federal judge threw out Mumia's death sentence [in December 2001], the spin of these stories being the consternation of the slain police officer's widow that Mumia had not been executed years before.

The only exception to this construction of Mumia as "convicted cop-killer"—the ultimate "other" for the defenders of "law and order" American-style—took place on NBC's "Today Show" the day after the federal judge's decision, when the author of this paper and Pam Africa from the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal refused to be interviewed opposite the slain of-

*continued on page 27*