

Immigrants, Blacks, Labor in the Cross Hairs

Jane Therese



Kraft/Gamma

“Anti-Terror” Law: Shredding Your Rights

DECEMBER 2—For a capitalist government ever intent on tightening the screws of repression, the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center was an early Christmas gift. America’s capitalist rulers are using the fear born of the horrendous slaughter of thousands of innocent people in New York City to sell the American people the lie that more cops and more restrictions on democratic rights are for their own “protection.”

The new Office of Homeland Security will coordinate spying and repression by dozens of federal agencies, including the CIA and others nominally restricted from operating domestically. The USA-Patriot Act signed into law in October by President Bush mandates a massive expansion of FBI and CIA powers and broadens the definition of “terrorist” to include just about anybody deemed an opponent of the government. Then came the November 13 presidential directive allowing non-citizen “terrorism” suspects to be tried by secret military tribunals. Now Attorney General John Ashcroft has announced plans to eliminate formal restraints imposed in the 1970s on FBI spying on political and religious organizations, threatening a return to COINTELPRO-style provocation and terror.

Using their military adventure against backward, impoverished Afghanistan and their open-ended “war on terrorism,” Bush and Ashcroft have pushed through a series of “war measures” that represent a crystallization of repressive new rules marking a qualitative diminution of democratic rights. Just about every bombing raid on Afghanistan has been accompanied by a new assault on civil liberties in the U.S. The breathtaking sweep of this barrage can be gleaned from a quick

As hundreds of non-citizens are rounded up in “anti-terror” witchhunt, Attorney General Ashcroft pushes through massive assault on rights of all.

glance at recent headlines in the bourgeois press: “FBI Considers Torture as Suspects Stay Silent” (London *Times*, 22 October); “Ashcroft Plan Would Recast Justice Dept. in a War Mode” (*New York Times*, 9 November); “Disappearing in America” (*New York Times*, 10 November); “Seizing Dictatorial Power” (*New York Times*, 15 November).

More than 1,200 immigrants, predominantly Near Eastern and South Asian, have been rounded up. Over 600 continue to be held for nothing more than minor offenses like overstaying their visas. Now Ashcroft has announced that the government will not release people arrested on immigration violations even if ordered to by immigration judges. The FBI has ordered “interviews” of 5,000 young men of Near Eastern descent. According to Ashcroft, the meetings will be “consensual,” i.e., those interrogated in the course of this fishing expedition will not be given Miranda warnings about self-incrimination. Over 200 colleges and universities have turned over names and records of foreign students to the Feds. As illustrated by the legislation “federalizing” airport security, which bars non-citizens from these jobs, immigrants are now presumed enemy “fifth columnists.”

Dr. Ahmed Jaber, chairman of the Islamic Mission of America, spoke to the pervasive fear among Muslims in the U.S.: “If they’re going to tap your phone, watch your e-mail, knock on your door,

question you without legal representation, that reminds me of going back to the Middle East again, because that’s how the Middle Eastern governments operate” (*New York Times*, 18 November). Particularly in the weeks following September 11, the government witchhunt also encouraged a wave of anti-immigrant terror on the streets.

Even right-wing *New York Times* columnist and Bush supporter William Safire wrote of the military tribunals in a November 15 piece: “Misadvised by a frustrated and panic-stricken attorney general, a president of the United States has just assumed what amounts to dictatorial power to jail or execute aliens.... We are letting George W. Bush get away with the replacement of the American rule of law with military kangaroo courts.” And this is coming from a man who was a speechwriter for Nixon when he was ordering FBI and military investigations of black militants and tens of thousands of protesters against the Vietnam War. Perhaps it dawned on Safire, who is Jewish, that there are anti-Semitic elements in the Bush administration and correspondingly there may be a place for civil liberties after all. Safire continued:

“[Bush] seizes the power to circumvent the courts and set up his own drumhead tribunals—panels of officers who will sit in judgment of non-citizens who the president need only claim ‘reason to believe’ are members of terrorist organizations.

“Not content with his previous decision to permit police to eavesdrop on a suspect’s conversations with an attorney, Bush now strips the alien accused of even the limited rights afforded by a court-martial.

“His kangaroo court can conceal evidence by citing national security, make up its own rules, find a defendant guilty even if a third of the officers disagree, and execute the alien with no review by any civilian court.”

The purpose of the tribunals is to make sure that nobody brought before them gets off. Pointing to the acquittal by a Scottish court early this year of one of two Libyan defendants charged with the 1988 bombing of Pan Am Flight 103, an administration spokesman sneered that it was “not an outcome we would want here.” Never mind that there was *no evidence* for the conviction of either of them. As governor of Texas, Bush ordered the execution of over 150 men and women (among them Shaka Sankofa [Gary Graham], a manifestly innocent black man) but in eleven months as president has only been able to send two men to the death chambers. With his new powers to designate who gets tried and executed without what passes for “justice” even in Texas, Bush is like a little boy locked in a candy store overnight. As they proclaim a new “crusade,” Bush, Ashcroft & Co. appear to be guided by the injunction of the 13th-century Roman Catholic commander who ordered Crusaders against the Albigensian “heretics” in southern France: “Kill them all! God will look after his own.”

Capitalist State: An Instrument of Organized Violence

The military tribunals are merely the most spectacular of a panoply of newly minted laws, orders, directives and government agencies to be wielded by the ruling class against the proletariat and all the oppressed. The capitalist state—cops, courts, prisons and army—is nothing but an instrument of organized violence to

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**French Trotskyists Say:
For Class Struggle at Home!
Defend Afghanistan!**

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Free Los Angeles May Day Protesters!

For the “crime” of participating in an anarchist “Carnival Against Capital” march in Long Beach, California last May Day, several activists last month received harsh sentences, including *three years’ imprisonment* in one case. The youthful demonstrators had been attacked, without provocation or warning, by police in riot gear who hit protesters with billy clubs and sprayed others with beanbag rounds and rubber bullets, hospitalizing one. Ninety-five people were arrested at gunpoint.

To justify the police riot, arrestees were hit with various misdemeanor charges and felony charges of resisting arrest, conspiracy to commit a crime and assault on a police officer. On May 7, the Partisan Defense Committee sent a protest letter to L.A. County District Attorney Steve Cooley, calling for the immediate release of all those in jail and dropping all the charges.

In June, Javier Perez, held in jail on \$100,000 bail for several weeks after the march, was told if he pled guilty to two charges he’d be sentenced to 30 days and be released on time served. But when he did so, he was handed over to the Immigration and Naturalization Service, intimidated into signing a “voluntary deportation” paper and deported in the dead of night. In a letter posted on

the Web, Perez wrote, “I was literally dropped off at the border with nothing but the clothes I had on and the few bucks I had when I was arrested. It is as if I was given the death penalty. I came to the United States when I was 3 months old, I am 22 now and I don’t have any family here in Mexico. How do they expect me to survive.”

While most of the other protesters’ cases were settled between May and August, with the defendants receiving sentences of a year’s probation, community service and fines, 37 remaining protesters had planned on fighting the charges. But after September 11, correctly fearing that they would not get a fair trial in the capitalist courts amid the government’s “anti-terrorist” hysteria, most accepted plea-bargains.

Among these was Robert Middaugh (a/k/a Ruckus), who on November 15, after being held for months on \$50,000 bond, was sentenced to *three years* in prison in a plea-bargain deal after pleading guilty to felony assault on a police officer. Middaugh, who has a history of political activism, was previously arrested last year at the Democratic convention protests in L.A. and for his involvement in protests against the 1998 police killing of black teen Tyisha Miller

in Riverside, California. Under California’s “three strikes and you’re out” sentencing laws, Middaugh faces 25 years to life if convicted again after his release.

Another demonstrator, Alec Schwarz, who was also sentenced November 15, got one year in county jail and three years’ probation after pleading no contest to the felonies of resisting arrest and conspiracy to commit a battery as well as a misdemeanor rioting charge.

The repression against the Long Beach

May Day protesters is part of the capitalist state’s assault on the workers movement and all those who would protest against the crimes of capitalism and its international system of exploitation. Although we do not share the same political perspective as these protesters, we defend them against the capitalist state’s repression. We say: An injury to one is an injury to all! Drop all remaining charges against the May Day demonstrators! Free the May Day protesters!■

Hartford, Connecticut: Drop Charges Against Antiwar Protesters!

The following letter was sent by the Partisan Defense Committee to Hartford, Connecticut mayor Mike Peters on November 6.

We demand the dropping of all charges against the 18 people arrested in Hartford on October 25 for protesting the American government’s war of terror against Afghanistan, and that any who remain behind bars be released now. For doing no more than exercising their right to free speech and assembly, protesters were attacked and pepper-sprayed by police. Some were hit with outrageously trumped-up felony charges carrying stiff prison sentences, with bonds of up to \$50,000.

The U.S. rulers’ “war against ter-

rorism” is not limited to bombing the desperately impoverished and benighted people of Afghanistan. It is also a war against working people at home, as the government wields the pretext of “terrorism” to assault civil liberties, further the racial subjugation of the black population, round up immigrants and target any perceived opponents of the capitalists who rule this society.

Drop all charges against the Hartford protesters!

* * *

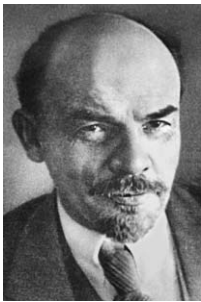
The PDC has made a financial contribution for the defense of the protesters. Send your contribution to: Free Speech Defense Fund, 13 Fairview Avenue, Danbury, CT 06810.



TROTSKY

Trotskyists Fought World War II Smith Act Prosecution

Indicted by the federal government on 15 July 1941, 29 members of the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party and of Minneapolis Teamsters Local 544 became the first victims of the 1940 Smith Act. Charged with “seditious conspiracy,” 18 of the 29, including SWP leader James P. Cannon, were convicted and ultimately sent to prison. But as Cannon made clear in response to the indictment, the Roosevelt administration’s



LENIN

frame-up prosecution would not stop the SWP from maintaining its revolutionary opposition to U.S. imperialism.

As he plunges toward total war, Roosevelt would like first to destroy all leadership and potential leadership of the antiwar forces. Roosevelt and his war party understand very well that an honest workers’ party like ours, with firm principles and cadres steeled and tempered in the class struggle, can tomorrow become the accepted spokesman for the great masses in the struggle to put an end to the war. The Roosevelt war party would destroy us before that tomorrow comes.

We have adhered to the Bolshevik tradition of struggle against war ever since 1917, as every politically literate person knows. But not since the notorious Palmer raids of 1920 has any government official pretended that we could be indicted for that....

We are no pacifists. We Trotskyists have shown, in China, in Loyalist Spain, in the Red Army, that we are ready to fight on behalf of a just cause. But Roosevelt’s war is an imperialist war and we shall oppose it, and nothing shall stop us.

We are no pacifists. We shall not turn the other cheek to Roosevelt’s attack on our party. On the contrary, we shall see to it that every worker and farmer in this country hears our true views and learns how Roosevelt has engineered this vile frame-up against us. This case will be tried by the government in a courtroom in Minneapolis and we shall defend ourselves there. Far more important, however, we shall defend ourselves before our true judges—the workers and farmers of this country. It is their verdict, above all, that concerns us.

—James P. Cannon, “Why We Have Been Indicted,” *Militant*, 26 July 1941; reprinted in *The Socialist Workers Party in World War II* (1975)

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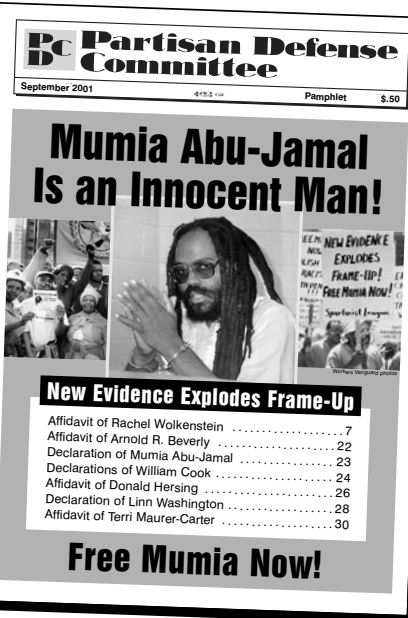
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French Trotskyists Say: For Class Struggle at Home! Defend Afghanistan!

December 3—After two months of massive terror bombing of Afghanistan, in which hundreds of civilians have perished and tens of thousands have been driven into starvation-plagued refugee camps, Washington has sent in more than a thousand Marines to help the Northern

LE BOLCHEVIK

Alliance, particularly in their drive against Kandahar, the last stronghold of the Taliban. The U.S. imperialists gave full vent to their bloodlust last week when they oversaw a massacre of hundreds of Taliban POWs near Mazar-i-Sharif, raining bombs on the prison and pouring burning oil into basements where prisoners were hiding.

We reprint below a supplement to *Le Bolchévique* issued on November 14 by our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyiste de France, French section of the International Communist League. French commandos—along with British special forces—are participating with U.S. forces operating inside Afghanistan. While a small French force is now in Mazar-i-Sharif, for weeks French troops in Uzbekistan had been blocked from entering Afghanistan. The *International Herald Tribune* (26 November) quoted a French government official saying, “The message from Washington is: ‘We’ll do the cooking and prepare what people are going to eat, then you will wash the dirty dishes.’” Meanwhile at home, the Socialist-led coalition government has ratcheted up the so-called “Vigipirate” campaign of racist police terror, particularly targeting North Africans and other minorities. As in the U.S., the French rulers’ war on immigrants and minority populations in the name of “anti-terrorism” is a harbinger of increased state repression against everyone, aiming to regiment the working class and the rest of the population behind the defense of imperialist interests.

* * *

The imperialists’ bloody war against Afghanistan has already claimed more than a thousand victims and created hundreds of thousands of refugees. B-52s have just destroyed one of the country’s few electricity generators and the destruction of a dam brings the direct threat of death for tens of thousands of people. The world’s biggest imperialist power, having taken hits on its own territory during the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, is lashing out to assert its unchallenged supremacy. The U.S. has



Paris, September 29: LTF stages counterprotest as feminists, fake left rally to support Afghan Northern Alliance, lackeys of imperialism. Placard in center reads: “U.S./NATO/EU Imperialists, Hands Off Afghanistan!”

Down With Racist State Terror!

established a military presence in Central Asia (a thousand soldiers are already stationed in Uzbekistan) for the first time since the Civil War waged against the young Soviet workers state born out of the 1917 October Revolution. This will redouble U.S. appetites to seize whatever they can in this oil-rich region and increase the imperialist military threat against the Chinese deformed workers state.

As we go to press, the media has announced that Kabul and Jalalabad have fallen to the Northern Alliance and that Kandahar is under siege. The imperialists, who armed and financed the Taliban, only to then arm and finance the Northern Alliance to overthrow the Taliban, are now afraid that their puppets of today will unleash a bloodbath. French president Chirac has proposed sending French troops in the framework of a multinational force under UN auspices to “keep the peace.” This is the height of imperialist hypocrisy. The “peace” of French imperialist troops thunders from the graves of Vietnam and Algeria. The UN is a fig leaf for the terror and destruction by U.S. imperialism and its allies throughout the world, from Iraq to Somalia and the Balkans. The Ligue Trotskyiste de France demands: *All UN troops and those of France and other imperialist powers out of Afghanistan!*

Pakistan and the other Muslim countries are destabilized; even the most pro-

American regimes face mass demonstrations led by fundamentalists, from Egypt to Indonesia. The U.S.’s imperialist rivals have declared that they will make a bloc with America “against terrorism.” In reality, they have seized on the opportunity to launch in their own countries a campaign of racist and chauvinist mobilization against immigrants and to profoundly call into question democratic rights. The attacks against the working class at home are intended to allow the imperialists to sharpen the competitiveness of their own capitalist trusts on the world market, in the context of an increasingly serious economic recession. These rivalries have been reinforced and intensified since the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92. The U.S. is today dominant because of its military power, but behind the facade of unity, every imperialist bourgeoisie seeks to defend its own interests.

The fissures in the imperialist bloc have become so manifest that Kofi Annan warned that “the longer the conflict is prolonged, the more likely it is that tensions will come to light, while it is important to maintain a united front against terrorism” (*Le Monde*, 3 November). German Social Democratic [SPD] chancellor Schröder explained in the same newspaper that he is pushing for a military intervention as an opportunity to legitimize the use of German combat troops for the first time since 1945. President Chi-

rac, who is working harmoniously with [Socialist] Prime Minister Jospin on the international crisis, insists that “military action is not enough.... It is necessary to do more through the accompanying political and diplomatic means” (*Le Monde*, 3 November).

In France, the social situation is volatile and the consensus around the imperialist war is fragile. Revulsion rises at the sight of the bodies of children massacred in the bombing and the imperialists’ cynicism in air-dropping peanut butter in between fragmentation bombs. This offers an opportunity for Marxists to intervene in the growing uneasiness in order to *broaden* the political consciousness of workers to communist consciousness. Marxists must struggle here to transform the justified anger against an American-led war against a poor country into an understanding of the need to put an end once and for all to the capitalist system which produces war, layoffs, racism and poverty. The beginning of this fight must be recognizing that the main enemy of workers in France is the French capitalist class. The so-called “far left” prevents this raising of consciousness by pushing anti-Americanism, thus tying the working class to the French bourgeoisie.

Bin Laden and the Taliban: Bitter Fruit of the Anti-Soviet Cold War

To find the means to end this war, it is necessary first of all to understand its context and its origin. We condemned the criminal slaughter of thousands of innocent men and women in the attack on the World Trade Center and wrote that “terrorist bombings tend to be carried out by nationalist or religious forces because they are at best indifferent or at worst hostile to the entire population they consider to be the enemy” (*Le Bolchévique* No. 157, Autumn 2001). As for the Pentagon, it is the quintessential administrative and command center of the American Army and thus represents a real military target, but that does not make this attack an “anti-imperialist action.” There is still no proof as to who committed the attacks, but if it is bin Laden, he is a Frankenstein’s monster created by the imperialists themselves: they bought and paid for his services in the “holy war” against the Soviet Army in Afghanistan beginning in 1979.

We hailed the Red Army in Afghanistan and passionately desired the Soviet commandos to take care of the Islamic fanatics who threw acid in the faces of

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French troops heading for Afghanistan. Family in Kabul outside home devastated by U.S. bombers.



AP photos

France...

(continued from page 3)

unveiled women and killed those who dared to teach young women. As we said at the time:

“This was probably the first instance of a shooting war in modern history which was ignited specifically by the question of women’s liberation.... Revolutionists in this conflict must stand on the side of the Red Army, because a victory for the mullah-led rebels means a victory for the bride price, it means a victory for the veil, it means a victory for usury, for feudal serfdom and the continuation of the enslavement of women....

“[The Soviet Union] intervened in Afghanistan to protect its flank from stepped-up military threats.... But in this particular case the Soviet state’s concern for its own security happens to coincide with the interests of proletarian internationalism. If Afghanistan is transformed into anything resembling Soviet Central Asia, this would be an enormous leap forward—especially for women. So the bourgeois press talks about the treachery of the Soviet Union invading Afghanistan, and the Spartacist League says the treachery would be pulling out, if they do it, under pressure and abandoning those people to the perpetuation of the slavery under which they live.”

—*Le Bolchévick* No. 17
(May-June 1980)

The goal of Massoud, bin Laden and the Islamic fundamentalists—supported by the CIA, Mitterrand and Bernard Kouchner (who went on his counterrevolutionary mission to Afghanistan under the cover of “humanitarian aid” with Doctors Without Borders)—was to perpetuate barbarism and enslavement in Afghanistan and to kill the largest possible number of Soviet soldiers.

Today the French fake left wants to hide its shameful history of support to its own bourgeoisie and to the *mujahedin* at the time. Lutte Ouvrière (LO) compared the Soviet intervention to the French imperialists’ and later the American imperialists’ bloody war against the Vietnamese people, and the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR) officially came out for Soviet withdrawal in 1981. We, on the other hand, warned at the time of the possibility that the Kremlin would make a deal with the imperialists and withdraw.

The Stalinists committed this counter-revolutionary crime in 1989 (with cheers from LO, etc.) when Gorbachev withdrew the Soviet forces, even as they were winning on the ground against the CIA-backed *mujahedin*. Gorbachev thought this could buy a new lease on life for “peaceful coexistence” with imperialism. But in fact this was the prelude to counterrevolution in East Europe and in the USSR, and the victory of the mullahs in Afghanistan. While denouncing the Soviet betrayal, we did not give up in 1989. On the international level, the International Communist League continued the fight to defend and extend the gains of the 1917 Revolution, threatened from outside by the imperialists and from within by the Stalinist bureaucracy. Over Afghanistan, when the Afghan government declined our offer to organize an international brigade to fight to the death against all the bin Ladens and Massouds,



AP

Police, military patrol Paris airport. Jospin government has unleashed thousands of cops to terrorize minorities.

we waged an international fund-raising campaign on behalf of the people of Jalalabad, besieged by the *mujahedin* of Bush Senior and Mitterrand.

Afghanistan today is one of the most backward countries on earth, with no industry. It has no proletariat, which is the only historically progressive class in the capitalist epoch, since it is the only class which has both the historic interest to overthrow the capitalists and the social power to do so because of its role in the economy, producing the profits. There can be no solution there for the oppressed and especially for Afghan women apart from an internationalist perspective. It is workers revolutions in the countries of the region that have a working class, like Iran, India and Pakistan, and above all in the imperialist centers themselves, that will allow Afghanistan to emerge from the Middle Ages.

Today as well we take a side against imperialism: we defend Afghanistan against imperialist attack, without giving the slightest political support to the Taliban reactionaries. Any defeat of imperialism facilitates class struggle here. And the converse is equally true: to put an end to wars of imperialist depredation, it is necessary to break down the “sacred union” here and to overthrow the capitalist class in the imperialist countries that dominate the world, like the U.S. and also France. As one of our comrades said on October 10 in San Francisco during a support meeting for the “Charleston Five,” longshore unionists in the American South prosecuted for having defended a picket line against a cop attack:

“The labor movement must wage class struggle at home and defend Afghanistan against imperialist attack! The ruling class is using this patriotic fervor to vastly increase the apparatus of state repression against workers, immigrants and the oppressed.... ‘National unity’ means attacks on jobs, wages and hard-won civil rights, and it means workers are to bear the brunt of the deepening economic crisis.”

Beware of Centrist Impostors!

Some other groups claiming to be Trotskyist have declared like us that they

“defend” Afghanistan. There is first of all an international declaration by the League for a Revolutionary Communist International (LRCI, which Pouvoir Ouvrier in France is part of) along with the Trotskyist Faction-International Strategy group (FT, centered on the Argentine “ex”-Morenoite PTS) and Workers Power of Greece. Their declaration capitulates simultaneously to Third World anti-Yankee bourgeois nationalism (they don’t even denounce the criminal attack on the World Trade Center!) *and* to the bourgeois chauvinism of the Western European countries governed by social democrats. Thus they concentrate their fire against American imperialism and—in virtually their only reference to their own governments—call on the [British] Labour Party or social-democratic parliamentarians of the French Socialist (SP) and Communist (CP) Parties and the German SPD not to vote for war credits for the “Americans’ war.”

These are “*rrr*revolutionaries” of the English pub, the Argentine *peña*, the Parisian café or the Greek *taverna*, whose activity comes down in practice to putting pressure on bourgeois parliaments, notwithstanding some bravado expressed in calls, for example, for “workers in the munitions factories to boycott and sabotage imperialist war production.” One should know that during the Balkans War two and a half years ago, the LRCI marched in demonstrations in London where slogans were prominently displayed like “NATO Good Luck” and “NATO, Now or Never.” As for the Morenoites, in 1980 they were dreaming of “the possibility of extending the Iranian revolution [the obscurantist, anti-woman regime of Khomeini] within the borders of the USSR” (*Avanzata Proletaria*, 12 January 1980)! The LRCI’s only guiding principle is always voting for the social democrats who rule capitalist Europe today.

With the same politics as the LRCI/FT but more sophisticated (they accuse us of “Kautskyism” because in their eyes we don’t proclaim loudly enough that we are for the military defeat of imperialism) is the Internationalist Group (IG), com-

posed mainly of renegades from Trotskyism who left our organization in the last few years. The fraudulent character of their “international” cannot but be evident when we see that since September 11 their French “section” has given no sign of its putative existence except by the cyberspace publication of the French translation of its American organization’s declaration, without the slightest comment against French imperialism.

In *L’Internationaliste* No. 1, their only publication in French in three years, dated June 2001, they call us “defeatists” because our International Declaration of Principles says: “The 1979 ‘Iranian Revolution’ opened up a period of ascendant political Islam in the historically Muslim world.” As we said in *Le Bolchévick* No. 157 (Autumn 2001): “The IG obscures the danger of religious reaction the better to capitulate to the ‘mass movement’ under its existing leadership. Denying the enormous impact capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union had in setting back the consciousness of the proletariat internationally, the IG instead adapted to that lower level of consciousness, willfully misidentifying the will of the workers to struggle with the *revolutionary consciousness* needed to triumph over the bourgeoisie. In practice, this leads to prettifying and tailing forces hostile to the working class.”

These demagogues even talk about “socialist revolution” in Afghanistan, although it has no working class. In reality, the IG isn’t interested in the proletariat. It peddles its wares to a variety of petty-bourgeois nationalist audiences. On its Web site, the IG sneers that “the SL presents itself as the vanguard fighter against Islamic fundamentalism.” Its contempt for our intransigent opposition to Islamic reaction is a tacit rejection of our call for a Red Army victory against the mullahs in Afghanistan in the 1980s. It is also a promissory note to nationalists from those parts of the planet where Islam is dominant to forswear, in the name of a “united front” against American imperialism, the struggle for proletarian power in those countries. It is, in embryo, an abandonment of Trotsky’s theory of permanent revolution, which holds that in the backward countries the proletariat is the only force capable of leading the struggle for social and national justice. As Trotsky stressed, only proletarian revolution can break the imperialist yoke over such countries and, with its extension to advanced capitalist countries, end imperialism forever.

Down With Vigipirate!

Cop minister Vaillant brags about having set up a “tougher Vigipirate” in the 90 minutes following the collapse of the World Trade Center towers. We were the only ones who denounced Vigipirate immediately. Today’s Vigipirate plan is not like the one carried out during the Gulf War or in 1995, when the railroad and subway stations were patrolled by the army and the CRS riot cops. The feeling of living under a brutal military dictatorship in some banana republic, or under a Nazi regime, was certainly disagreeable for the petty bourgeoisie, which believes that France is the country of the Enlightenment and the “rights of man.” What has been set up by the bourgeois popular front of Jospin and [CP minister] Gayssot is a lot more dangerous and a lot more targeted. Today in plebeian neighborhoods people are being stopped and having their papers checked by plainclothes and uniformed cops, *sans-papiers* [undocumented immigrants] are increasingly being deported (deportations have increased by at least 30 percent), and above all youth—mainly those of North African origin—are being terrorized in the working-class neighborhoods, none of which is talked about on TV or in the press.

The government has declared in chorus that one must not confuse Islam and terrorism and that not all Muslims are terrorists. In other words, your neighbor or your Algerian co-worker *might* be one. This insidious campaign aims to pit “French” workers against their “immigrant” class



no credit



Sygma

French colonial troops carried out torture and slaughter of Algerians in war against independence struggle. Right: Hundreds of Algerian protesters in Paris were killed by police in October 1961.

brothers (and among the latter, blacks against North Africans), including those who were born here, to weaken all workers against the capitalists. The North African-derived population is under enormous pressure, often keeping quiet in fear of being suspected of sympathies for bin Laden.

The face of the “war against terrorism” at home is also the popular-front government’s new law on “daily security,” adopted with the benevolent abstention of the CP (only one Green deputy voted against it, in addition to the right, for whom the repression doesn’t go far enough!). The new measures especially target refugees trying to get to England, and they strongly encourage racial profiling. “Gathering” in the corridor of your own apartment building is now banned (the curfews for minors in towns run by the right almost seem like small potatoes compared to this) and body searches by security guards are authorized, not to mention searches of vehicles by the cops. Any serious strike could find itself redefined as a “terrorist act” that destabilizes the state.

We struggle against Vigipirate not simply because we solidarize with the oppressed against the bourgeois state, but because such struggle is crucial for the revolutionary unity of the proletariat, which has a strong component of workers of immigrant origin in numerous strategic sectors of industry. White workers cannot make a revolution if they accept the idea that their “immigrant” class brothers are enemies. That is why a Bolshevik vanguard party undertakes to mobilize the working class against the racist terror of the bourgeois state. Down with the special powers for the capitalist state under the “daily security law”! This is a dangerous attack against everybody’s freedoms.

In the U.S. and throughout Europe the governments have set up similar measures. In Germany, a Turkish militant was fired because he refused to stop work during the five minutes of silence in solidarity with the U.S. decreed by the SPD gov-



Le Bolchévik

June 1989: Fund collection in Paris as part of international PDC campaign to aid civilian victims of mujahedin siege of Afghan city of Jalalabad.

criminalize them and depict them as apostles of bin Laden.

Following the sinister mobilization of 8,000 cops in the streets for the right to unlimited imprisonment of “suspects,” LO denounced the “lack of means of justice which leads to the incredible lengthening of jailing before trial and, generally, the lack of social means to cope with a rise in petty crime” (*Lutte Ouvrière*, 26 October). They want to prove that they are responsible vis-à-vis the capitalist state. Giddy over its electoral score, LO wants to “rake in the votes” and win respectability: now is not the time for “revolutionary” rhetoric, which could also endanger the huge financing that they receive from the bourgeois state (see the *Official Journal*, which every year publishes the figures on the millions of francs distributed to the various political parties).

The Reformists and Centrists Are Obstacles to Class Struggle, Not Partners in Struggle

The reformists and centrists, who in 1997 all voted for the popular front, whether low-key (LO) or not (LCR, Pouvoir Ouvrier), represent an obsta-

sciousness and lead social struggles into support for the popular front, as well as militant trade unionists who reject the need for a revolutionary Marxist party and who, based on a narrow section of the working class, fight to bring struggles back to the level of economism.

In France, on October 11 *Lutte Ouvrière* had a banner against imperialist intervention and explicitly opposing the CP’s calling on the UN (of course without going so far as to defend Afghanistan against imperialist attack). They started criticizing French imperialism. But for them this is an entirely separate question which has nothing to do with class struggle at home. It is precisely in their editorial following the trade-union demonstration of October 16 (*Lutte Ouvrière*, 26 October), in which they challenge the call for “national unity,” that their reformism is most clearly revealed. All that they propose is to channel working-class struggles into seeking reforms from the bourgeoisie: “The unity we need is not ‘national unity’ with our exploiters, it’s the unity of the whole working class to impose on the government another policy, like banning all layoffs.” In the same vein, spreading the illusion that the imperialists could rationally administer capitalism, they explain (*Lutte Ouvrière*, 2 November) that: “The interest of the people, everywhere in the world, in Afghanistan as well as in the U.S. and here, is to rise up to force the imperialist leaders to stop this shameful war!”

But layoffs, wars and racism are an integral part of the capitalist system based on private ownership of the means of production and on profit. You can’t reform capitalism to make it work in the interests of the workers and oppressed. What’s needed is a socialist revolution, led by a multiethnic vanguard party, to create a workers state based on collectivized property and a planned economy to satisfy human needs.

The LCR and the Liquidation of the Revolutionary Party

As for the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire of Krivine/Besancenot, at least it indicates some discomfort about Vigipirate. At bottom, their criticism is no different from that of the bourgeois liberals of the League for the Rights of Man, because like LO they do not seek to mobilize the working class in revolutionary struggle against the racist bourgeois state of Chirac/Jospin.

The LCR was even more openly pro-imperialist than LO. On September 29, they were the backbone and the marshals squad for a Paris demonstration supposedly for Afghan women, which in reality displayed enormous color portraits of the anti-Communist and anti-woman Islamic reactionary Massoud. His regime between 1992 and 1996, when he controlled Kabul, was so horrible that many Afghans welcomed the Taliban victory with relief. The Northern Alliance serves as the “ground troops” of imperialism in Afghanistan today. When the LCR contributes to promoting it under the cover of a “neutral” slogan—“neither Taliban nor bombing”—they provide a left cover for the schemes of French imperialism, which supports the Tajiks of ex-Commandant Massoud, including the

secret agents who have been officially in place at least since last March, when the popular-front government and the European Union rolled out the red carpet for Massoud. For our part, we held a picket line on September 29 counterposed to this pro-imperialist demonstration, with our slogans “Imperialist Hands Off Afghanistan!” and “Down With the Anti-Woman Northern Alliance!” [see WV No. 766, 12 October].

The LCR congratulated itself on signing an “appeal to opinion” which was so grotesque that it caused a stir even in its own ranks. Yvan Lemaître, leader of the former Voix des Travailleurs [Workers Voice] tendency that came out of LO and liquidated into the LCR last year, published in the LCR’s *Rouge* (11 October) a statement denouncing this “appeal”: “There it is asked ‘that everything be done to identify, arrest and try those responsible for the bombing,’ of course ‘within the framework of international law and the UN Charter.’” Lemaître quite rightly notes that “international law, such as the UN Charter, is nothing other than judicial—which doesn’t mean democratic—justification for the relations of domination that the great powers impose.” He adds at the end that the LCR should not “disavow our ideas” for a conjunctural alliance. As if the LCR had principles! A year ago, their entire Central Committee passed a motion (see *Rouge*, 7 December 2000) for a “political battle directed at the European Union and the French government, so that they will respond positively to the urgent demands of the Palestinian national movement,” which as everyone knows means sending a UN “intervention force”!

In fact, the LCR published the Lemaître document not for the purpose of changing the organization’s pro-imperialist line but to show its own members that there can be various opinions in the LCR. The JCR [LCR youth group] fundamentally shares the conception that the construction of a Leninist vanguard party is completely outmoded, not to say basically wrong, even if that means renouncing Lenin’s Bolsheviks. Under the pressure of our revolutionary propaganda, they made declarations against Vigipirate, with a banner at the end of their contingent at the October 11 demonstration saying no to racism and Vigipirate, another world is possible. But no other world is possible with the LCR/JCR’s politics of putting pressure on the bourgeoisie. They occasionally make ringing statements that “there is no other way than to prepare the revolution” and “we must progressively, methodically prepare for a social revolution on a world scale” (*RED*, October 2001). But since they are opposed to the struggle for a Bolshevik party to lead such a revolution, they find themselves instead with the perspective of raising “social and democratic demands,” which means within a capitalist framework. The LCR expresses this more crudely in campaigning to reform the police, demanding that they hunt down the real criminals like the prostitution networks and those trafficking in women or committing white-collar crime (*Rouge*, 13 September). In fact the police, like the army, are the guard dogs of capitalist property who have the monopoly on violence to crush the revolts of the workers and the oppressed.

Always looking for a “third force” other than the proletariat led by a Leninist party, the LCR in 1978 found itself tailing the Iranian mullahs who managed—with the complicity of the Stalinists and the local pseudo-Trotskyists (including the sister organization of the LCR)—to subjugate a combative workers movement (which included an oil strike that brought down the Shah of Iran) and to install an obscurantist theocracy that continues to rule ruthlessly. We were the only ones in 1978 to declare ourselves against the Shah and the mullahs, and for workers revolution in Iran. Shortly thereafter, with the election to the presidency of its anti-Soviet candidate Mitterrand, the LCR came out for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from

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Workers Hammer

London, April 1999: Workers Power joined pro-NATO protesters pushing imperialist war cry of “poor little Kosovo” during bombing of Serbia.

ernment with the enthusiastic support of the PDS [Party of Democratic Socialism]. The European Union envisions systematic extradition between states on simple demand: Basque nationalists find themselves threatened with immediate extradition to Spain; the same for Italian leftist militants; and perhaps even Irish women who have abortions.

In France, the popular front and the right are waging their presidential election campaigns on domestic questions, essentially trying to top one another’s “security” quotient. For the first time, *Lutte Ouvrière* has a chance to outpoll the Communist Party and to replace it at least at the electoral level. But LO is far from presenting the slightest opposition to the racist security campaign. They have not said a word about Vigipirate in more than two months: for them, this is an embarrassing question that divides workers between racists and anti-racists. On the contrary, in her big autumn speech at the Mutualité on October 12, [LO leader] Arlette Laguiller complained of bin Laden’s attractiveness to youth in minority neighborhoods, thereby joining in the government’s racist campaign to

cle to class struggle. Nothing sums it up so well as the three separate demonstrations of October 11, 16 and 17 in Paris. In the space of one week there was an antiwar demonstration where opposition to the French bourgeoisie was practically nonexistent, a workers demonstration to accompany economic strikes where the question of the war was dumped, and a protest demonstration against the 17 October 1961 massacre [of pro-independence Algerians in Paris] where the *current* Vigipirate repression was notably disappeared. We were the only ones to intervene in these three demonstrations with our proletarian internationalist program, denouncing the Vigipirate plan set up by the SP-CP popular-front government and defending Afghanistan against imperialist attack.

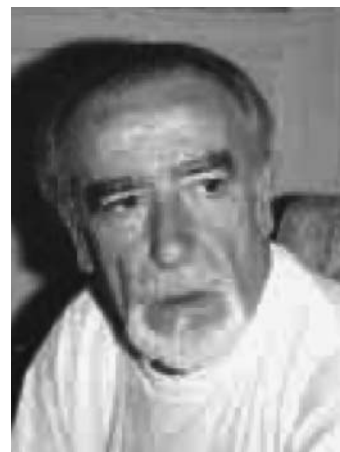
A railway workers strike against layoff plans and against the imperialist war would begin to break the “sacred union” here. In Italy, the COBAS unions organized a general strike against the war on November 9; this is the beginning of a political opposition to the war with class-struggle methods. The obstacle is the reformists who deform working-class con-

Banquet for Seaweed

Islamist Furor in Egypt Over “Heretical” Novel



BBC



Al Hayat

Cairo, Egypt: Mobs led by Islamic fundamentalists rioted in May 2000 against publication of *Banquet for Seaweed*, available only in Arabic, by Syrian author Haydar Haydar (right).

The U.S. terror bombing of Afghanistan has triggered massive reverberations throughout the Muslim Crescent. Tens of thousands have taken to the streets in Pakistan, Indonesia, Egypt, Jordan and elsewhere in protest, targeting their anger not only at the American imperialists and their allies, but also at the bonapartist cronies and monarchs who run the local regimes in the interests of their imperialist masters. What is noticeable about

A Review By Salah Shami

Walimah li-A'shab al-Bahr
(*Banquet for Seaweed*)
by Haydar Haydar
5th edition, 2000
House of Waves, Beirut, Lebanon

these protests is that they have been dominated by Islamic fundamentalists, with nary a peep uttered by the petty-bourgeois nationalists or the Stalinists, both of which were once formidable political forces in the region and peddlers of anti-imperialist rhetoric. The dominance and growth of reactionary Islamic fundamentalism is a direct result of the manifest bankruptcy and failure of the bourgeois nationalists to deliver on their post-independence promises and of the betrayals of the Stalinists who tailed and capitulated to them.

The enormous power that Islamic fundamentalists have in shaping the social, political and cultural discourse in the Near East was in full display in Egypt in April and May of last year. Some months after the Ministry of Culture reprinted *Banquet for Seaweed*, a 1983 novel by the Syrian writer Haydar Haydar, an unprecedented wave of fundamentalist-led pro-

tests, drawn heavily from university students, erupted across the country. The bonapartist regime of Hosni Mubarak responded with riot police, armored cars, tear gas and rubber bullets.

The People, newspaper of the Islamist “Labor Party,” opened the campaign with a rabid, sermon-like front-page article headlined “Who Pledges to Die with Me?” Seizing particularly on a phrase in the book that followed the word “Koran” by “shit,” it pronounced Haydar “sinful, obscene, lewd,” called on Muslims to rise in defense of their faith and demanded the Minister of Culture’s head along with the heads of those responsible for publishing the novel. Succumbing to pressure, the Minister of Culture pulled the book from the shelves and appointed a committee of critics to investigate the charges against it. Despite the acquittal of the book and its author by the critics’ committee, and under pressure from parliament, the Minister of Culture referred the book to the head of Al-Azhar, Egypt’s central religious authority and censor, which issued a five-point condemnation: the Ministry of Culture did not check with Al-Azhar before publication; the novel included phrases scornful to Islam, Allah, the Prophet and the Koran; it was erotic and full of blatant sexuality; it insulted Arab rulers; it violated “divine laws” and “moral values.”

Seizing on the opportunity to extend its grip on cultural life, the head of Al-Azhar demanded that he oversee all the ministry’s future publications. In 1994, following an attack on the Ministry of Culture by an Islamic fundamentalist in parliament for translating “blatantly sexual and offensive foreign books,” it was agreed that all such translations would first be run by Al-Azhar for review. Condemning the “intellectual terrorism” of the fundamentalists, Egyptian writer and

Nobel laureate Naguib Mahfouz issued a furious statement, declaring: “The censor in Egypt is no longer just the state. It’s the gun of the fundamentalists.”

In a powerful piece titled “The Novel, Politics and Islam” on the *Banquet for Seaweed* controversy, professor Sabry Hafez captured the hysteria that grew around the book. Contrasting it to Salman Rushdie’s *The Satanic Verses*, Hafez wrote in *New Left Review* (September/October 2000):

“*Banquet for Seaweed*, on the other hand, is a political novel about communism and nationalism, the Iraqi and Algerian Revolutions—themes which, two decades after its publication, in a context so reactionary that even the memory of these great movements has largely disappeared, were all but completely displaced by a grotesque fixation with an exclamatory aside of no structural significance for the work, as if religion is now the only issue left in Arab public life.”

In response to Al-Azhar’s verdict, Haydar’s book was banned. The State Security summoned the editor and managing editor of Literary Horizons, which published *Banquet for Seaweed*, and formally charged them with blasphemy. To maintain its hold on power, the Mubarak regime has cracked down on the Islamists when they pose a challenge while at other times turning to them when challenged by secular opponents. Around the time of the protests against Haydar’s book, Egyptian writer and humanist Salah-al-Din Muhsin was arrested for publishing a book, *Flickers of Enlightenment*, which openly advocated atheism. His earlier verdict of six months’ suspended imprisonment was revoked and under pressure from Islamic fundamentalists, Muhsin was retried and sentenced last February to *six years’ hard labor*.

The atmosphere of fear that followed in the wake of the violent protests and the subsequent state intimidation of liberal intellectuals was aptly captured by the testimony of Hamdi Abu Gulayyil, a writer and Ministry of Culture employee, after his interrogation by the State Security:

“Since that day I have tried to evade ambushes. I reread any story I write several times. Given the number of prohibitions and my inability to determine them I have resorted to a legal adviser, a young lawyer who is my neighbor. He reads every story I write and every book I publish especially when written by a naïve writer. My agony begins as soon as the book enters the print shop: the book contains a scene of a woman sitting with a man, the book contains someone who thinks, the book contains someone eating with appetite, the book contains people, and wherever there are people, there is sin. I dream, I hallucinate, and I am drowned in nightmares. Once my wife caught me completely dressed, at four o’clock in the morning, at the door of our apartment. I had imagined that one of the books in the print shop contained an inde-

cent scene and was on my way out to stop the printing before morning.”

—*Middle East Report*,
Summer 2001

Feeding off the despair and anger that grew out of the dire misery and degradation of the masses and capitalizing on the ineptitude and corruption of despotic capitalist regimes, in the absence of a viable communist alternative, Islamic fundamentalism emerged in the last two decades as a mass movement posturing as the only anti-imperialist force, the savior from mass poverty and the promoter of social justice through upholding the “word of god” and application of Islamic law. “It’s easy for the average Egyptian to say, we tried modernity but it didn’t take us anywhere and we didn’t become Europe,” Tarek Heggy, an Egyptian political analyst, told the *New York Times* (14 October). “It’s easy for him to say, we tried pan-Arabism and it didn’t work. And, if he’s a simple-minded person, he might say they didn’t work because God wasn’t with us.”

The witchhunt of writers and liberal intellectuals that intensified in the aftermath of the spring 2000 events was not confined to Egypt; it spilled over its borders, in the same way that Islamic fundamentalism, originally an Egyptian phenomenon, spread to engulf much of the Near East. From Morocco, Algeria, Jordan and Yemen to the Gulf sheikdoms, Arab writers are being assailed and hunted by fundamentalist zealots for “disseminating blasphemy.” The Yemeni writer Abd al-Karim al-Razihi was forced to seek asylum in Holland; legal charges were launched against the Kuwaiti women writers Layla al-Uthman and Afaf Shu’aib, as well as against the Jordanian poet Musa Hawamidah. In Algeria, Wasnin al-A’raj’s novel, *The Hostess*, was banned for “impiety.”

When *Banquet for Seaweed* was first published in 1983, it barely got the attention of the fundamentalists. At the time they didn’t have the power they wield now. Today they are already in power in two countries, Iran and Sudan, and vying for state power in Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen and Jordan. The fact that they could mobilize tens of thousands of students against a work of fiction, 17 years after its publication, which most of them hadn’t even read, is a measure of how much sway fundamentalists hold over the minds of youth. It is also a measure of the abysmal depth of obscurantism and regression of mass consciousness in the post-Soviet era. For over 50 years, Naguib Mahfouz grappled with god and wrote passionately about prostitutes and homosexuals. Yet fundamentalists had never made an attempt on his life until 1994, when he was eighty-two years old. Similarly, they were not able to assassi-



New York Times

Baghdad, July 1958: Revolutionary upsurge that brought Iraqi proletariat to brink of power was derailed by Soviet bureaucracy and Iraqi Communist leadership.

nate Faraj Fawdah, a radical liberal intellectual and a lifelong crusader against zealotry and obscurantism, until 1992.

We print below a review of *Banquet for Seaweed*, which is still only available in Arabic, by Salah Shami, a supporter of the International Communist League.

* * *

“The city is beautiful, surrounded by the sea and the forest, but like any Arab city, it is dreary; ruled by tyranny, hunger, bribery, corruption, religion, hatred, ignorance, cruelty and murder.”

With this bleak portrayal of the Algerian town of Buna, Haydar Haydar opens his remarkable novel, *Banquet for Seaweed*. Through two love affairs that take place in Buna during the 1970s, and moving between Iraq and Algeria, Haydar tells with anger and indignation the unwritten history of the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) and its disastrous destruction, and the grim realities of daily life in Algeria under the military regime of Boumédiène.

An intelligent blend of fiction and historical events written between 1974 and 1983, in a fine mix of classical Arabic and local dialects, and published to great acclaim in 1983, the novel details the series of betrayals committed by the ICP and the lost revolutionary opportunities in the period from the overthrow of the monarchy in 1958 to the defeat and bloody annihilation of the party at the hands of the Ba’athists following their 1963 coup. In four chapters devoted to the ICP, Haydar captures the sense of betrayal among its ranks and the militant cadre who split, forming a faction determined to seize power through a strategy combining urban uprisings, guerrilla warfare and military support of Communist officers.

Seething with anger and disgust, militant ICP cadre rail against the “traitorous, revisionist and cowardly leadership who deviated from Leninist practices, tailed the bourgeoisie and refused to seize state power, which was at hand more than once, and erect a revolutionary proletarian dictatorship... supporting instead the dictatorship of the great leader [Qassim]” and who, “heeding the godfatherly advice of Khrushchev, opted to follow the example of the Egyptian Communist Party which dissolved and joined Nasser’s revolutionary democratic party.” In collusion with the regime, the ICP leadership purged the army of militant communist elements who, “afflicted with the infantile disorder of ultra-leftism, dream of erecting a communist regime in that sensitive area of the Near East, ending the alliance with the revolutionary national bourgeoisie that is blessed by the big brother in the Kremlin, bringing to an end the policies of détente and peaceful coexistence and pushing the world to the brink of nuclear war.” Haydar describes in great detail the bloody massacres of communists, workers and peasants in the aftermath of the Ba’athist coup. Tens of thousands were killed, jailed, tortured or forced into exile. He also devotes a chapter to the short-lived guerrilla uprising in the southern marshes of Iraq and its crushing by the Ba’athists in 1968.

Haydar paints a gloomy picture of Algeria in the 1970s, so remote from the glorious war of independence that monuments for the martyrs of that war are buried under layers of sand. The Boumédiène regime doesn’t even make a pretense of belonging to that era. The streets are teeming with gangs of

unemployed and homeless youth whose “source of food is garbage dumpsters and leftovers from fancy restaurants patronized by the thieves of the new class.” The city “is ringed by cardboard and tin shanties, infested with swarms of flies, crawling insects and lice, dysentery and bilharzia.” The dreams that were born in the crucible of the war for independence, of “achieving a democratic revolution in the land of the million martyrs, were thwarted by the generals who handed the country on a silver platter to themselves, the merchants, the bureaucrats and the imperialist exploiters.”

Bankruptcy of Bourgeois Nationalism

Born in 1936, Haydar belongs to the generation of writers and intellectuals whose political consciousness was shaped

thwarted one after another as the bourgeois-nationalist regimes, installed with the aid of Communist parties, crushed workers organizations, leftists and national minorities. Revolutionary opportunities were sacrificed on the altar of the Soviet bureaucracy’s futile pursuit of “peaceful coexistence” with the imperialists and the workers were tied through the dogma of “two-stage revolution” (bourgeois national revolution now, socialist revolution later, i.e., never) to the bourgeoisie. In spite of their “anti-imperialist” rhetoric and “socialist” pretensions, these bourgeois-nationalist regimes were tied by a thousand threads to imperialism. Acting as agents of imperialist domination, they perpetuated the social and economic backwardness of their countries. Vast shantytowns ring the cities of Baghdad, Cairo, Damascus and Khartoum,

on the alert fearing someone will attack him at the next corner...and there are many dark corners in this dreary city that has lost its sense of security.”

Mahdi would soon fall in love with Assya, his student, and the relationship offers him an emotional release from the melancholy of his time in Algeria. Daughter of an FLN fighter who was tortured to death by the French, Assya lives with her mother, Fadila, and her younger sister Manar. Her mother was forced by her family to marry a merchant, Yazid, as his second wife. Yazid, who played no part in the war of independence, realized that marrying the widow of a martyr would enhance his prestige and increase his opportunities with the regime. He spends his days pursuing shady deals in the black market. He regularly beats Fadila and oppresses her daughters. He detests Mahdi, who has begun giving Assya extracurricular lessons in Arabic. He opposes the girls’ education, telling their mother that to protect the family’s honor “your daughters should stay home. The city is full of wolves.”

In a chance encounter, Mahdi meets his compatriot Mihyar, an “intellectual who is infatuated with the glory of the Commune and Che Guevara.” Mihyar also works as a teacher and, like Mahdi, once belonged to the militant wing of the ICP. He participated in the brief guerrilla uprising of 1968. Captured by the army, he spent several years in prison but was able to escape. Mahdi and Mihyar find intellectual support in each other, venting their anger at the ICP and the Algerian regime.

Mihyar lives in a boarding house owned by Fullah, a former militant FLN fighter. She was a victim of rape by French officers. As a woman in post-independence Algeria, she has to submit to the traditional Islamic order imposed by the new regime. However, Fullah is very defiant; she takes lovers among the Arab teachers who lodge in her house, drinks alcohol and smokes in public. When she is scoffed at, she explodes, “Men are allowed everything...the only thing women are allowed is to open their legs!”, giving them the finger and emphasizing her disgust with a powerful spit. She constantly expresses her bitterness toward the “pimps who strangled the revolution and stole its fruit...they didn’t even participate in the fighting.” Fullah is drawn toward Mihyar because he is capable of seeing her personal predicament as an FLN fighter denied her share in the gains of independence, as a victim of women’s oppression and because he identifies with her sense of defeat as he sees the social deterioration engulfing the country.

Along with these characters the narrative includes a group of expatriate teachers from Palestine, Syria and Egypt. Their presence gives the novel a wider scope, implying that the dimensions of misery and the sense of failure and defeat extend beyond the boundaries of Iraq and Algeria. “By 1977 [Cairo] was bursting with more than five million exuberant Cairenes. Brightly painted carts of garbage collectors, herds of goats and sheep competed with the city’s 250,000 private cars,” writes Mary Anne Weaver in *A Portrait of Egypt* (1999). “I was told that it was a difficult, if not impossible, place in which to live. There were recurrent power failures; food shortages were sometimes acute.... It was often impossible to telephone an apartment downstairs. Cairo specializes in a state of total pandemonium.... I remember one evening in particular as I watched with friends the flickering lights of a funeral procession passing through Imbaba. The next morning, we read in the newspaper that two children had been eaten alive by rats.”

In *Banquet for Seaweed*, Haydar succeeds not only in capturing the palpable sense of failure, bitterness and defeat as expressed by the characters of Mahdi, Mihyar and Fullah, but also foreshadows the coming upheavals that exploded in the late 1980s: “The times of civil wars

continued on page 11



Henissart



Above: December 1960 protest in Algiers against French colonial rule. Left: 1974 commemoration of independence struggle included veiled women. Bourgeois nationalists in power promoted reactionary Islamic law.

by the social upheavals and ferment of the 1950s and ’60s. The victories of the Red Army were a recent memory; the salvos of Stalingrad echoed in Dien Bien Phu and the Atlas mountains of Algeria; revolution triumphed in China and Cuba; liberation movements seemed to have been successful in driving out the colonial powers from most of Africa and Asia; the monarchies were overthrown in Iraq and Egypt; millions of workers, students, radical intellectuals and peasants were flocking into the ranks of Communist parties from Indonesia to Iraq to Iran; nationalist leaders—from Sukarno to Nasser to Nkrumah to Lumumba—filled the airwaves with anti-imperialist rhetoric and promises of egalitarian societies free from oppression. Aspirations were high and expectations boundless.

By the late 1960s and early 1970s, however, the masses saw their hopes

inhabited by millions of landless peasants driven off their lands by wealthy landlords. The streets of these cities crawl with millions of unemployed youth and lumpen elements. Desperate, disappointed and failed by both bourgeois nationalists and Stalinists, they turn to Islam as a kind of consolation and hope. Among these elements and among students with no visible future, Islamic fundamentalists found an inexhaustible recruiting pool.

The main character in the novel is the militant Iraqi Communist Mahdi Jawad, who rebelled against the ICP leadership when it refused to overthrow the regime of Abd al-Karim Qassim, paving the way for the Ba’athists to take power. Once in power, the Ba’athists unleashed an unprecedented terror against the Communists. After spending a few years in jail, Mahdi managed to escape and found his way to Algeria, working as a teacher in a country where he thought “the Arabs have surprised themselves and made a genuine revolution.” He dreamed of being part of that country’s egalitarian society, “where a commune was erected...where nobody is oppressed or exploited.” To his disappointment, he would soon discover that life in Iraq was not different from that in Iraq. “The revolution lost its fertility and reached its menopause; Boumédiène rules the country with tyranny and murder”; Communists, leftists and intellectuals are being tortured and raped in prison; gangs of unemployed youth roam the city streets. He is “always walking hurriedly; always apprehensive; always

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الأعداء على مركز التجارة الدولي

بيان من المكتب السياسي للعصبة الاشتراكية بالولايات المتحدة الأمريكية

١٧ سبتمبر-الأعداء الذي نفذ بالأمس على مركز التجارة الدولي بواسطة أختطاف طائرات مدنية والذي أودى بحياة المئات من الركاب وطواقم الطائرات كان عملاً أرماليا مجرماً لا يمكن تبريره أو الدفاع عنه. أن مركز التجارة الدولي، على الرغم من إمكانية اعتباره رمزاً لتراء الأميركية والاشتراكية والتشاركية العالمي، فإن المبنى يعمل في داخله أعمال من مختلف الجنسيات والأصول العرقية والدينية. وفي الساعة التاسعة من صباح كل يوم عمل يعبر من خلال الممرجين التوأمين وما جاورهما آلاف من العمال الآخرين الذين يتعمون لمختلف الوظائف-مواصلات، بناء، مكاتب وعدد آخر لا يمكن حصره أن الحقيقة لا تكمن فقط في أن هدف العدوان (مركز التجارة الدولي) ليس هو بالمؤسسة التي تمثل حكام أمريكا الإمبرياليين، الفتنة المتوحشين بل في أن الذين ارتكبوا هذا الأعداء المروع (ولا يوجد دليل قاطع على تكونوا) يتجهون إلى نفس الأهداف التي يتبعها حكام أمريكا المفسدون والتي تتناوى بين جماهير المعلمين

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protect the interests of the filthy-rich capitalists against the workers who produce the wealth of this society. Having secured a fabulous increase in their riches and profits over the past two decades through increasing the exploitation of the working class and slashing virtually all social programs benefiting the poor, particularly the black ghetto masses, America’s rulers are quite cognizant that they have been sitting on top of seething discontent among the masses at the bottom of this society. And with the economy reeling into recession, they fear that the flame under that cauldron is rising.

The purpose of the new measures is to revive and deepen the broad-ranging repression and intimidation that marked the Cold War McCarthyite witchhunt of 50 years ago. The aim today as then is to coerce the entire population into ideological conformity, with the government wielding the spectre of seemingly pervasive “Islamic terrorism” as a surrogate for Communism. In the 1950s, schoolkids were instructed to turn their parents in if they were reds. Now, in calling for a “volunteer civil defense service,” Bush lectures that the “terrorism alert” is “a call to be vigilant, to know that your government is on high alert and to add your eyes and ears to our efforts to find and stop those who want to do us harm” (*New York Times*, 9 November).

When the anti-Communist Cold War consensus of the 1950s was shattered by the mass struggles for black equality and protests against the imperialist war in Vietnam, the government took its secret police operations against leftists and black activists underground. This was exemplified by the COINTELPRO operation against leftists and black militants, in which 38 Black Panther Party members were assassinated and hundreds more railroaded to prison. At the same time, well before Ashcroft’s latest proposal the government had sought to undermine the legal restraints imposed on its secret police operations. For nearly 30 years, legislation and court decisions have chipped away at the rights of labor, black people and immigrants. A series of Supreme Court decisions whittled down the Fourth Amendment proscription against unlawful search and seizure by allowing for the use of evidence illegally obtained by the cops in an ever-expanding number of circumstances. Thanks to Clinton’s



Spartacist contingent at October 7 SF protest on eve of U.S. bombing of Afghanistan. Defense of immigrant rights is crucial to class struggle against imperialist rulers.

As sinister as the new “anti-terror” measures are, what the government is actually able to get away with will be determined by the level of social struggle. That was seen not only in the 1960s but in the tumultuous labor battles of the 1930s that, in the wake of an extended period of right-wing reaction in the 1920s and early ‘30s, won many of the union rights workers have today. By the same token, militant class struggle today would throw a monkey wrench into the government’s draconian moves. And it is in the direct interest of the working class to fight these moves.

The new laws and directives that today target immigrants will ultimately be used against black people and the whole working class. The danger that the anti-immigrant witchhunt poses to the labor movement as a whole can be seen by the fact that the Arab American community of Dearborn, Michigan, which includes many members of the United Auto Workers, has been targeted for investigation of supposed “terrorist sleeper cells.” Postal strikers who mobilize to stop scabs or who disable a scab truck could fall under the USA-Patriot Act’s definition of “terrorists” as those who commit unlawful acts that “appear to be intended to intimidate or coerce a civilian population” or “to influence a policy of a government by intimidation or coercion.”

The capitalists’ campaign of “national unity” must be punctured by the struggle of the working people and the oppressed

stone of American capitalism. Black and immigrant workers are not just victims of capitalist repression but a vital component of the multiracial working class. We seek to forge the workers party that will lead the fight not merely for more crumbs from the capitalists but to overthrow the entire profit system.

Various reformists who sometimes masquerade as Marxists raise the call: “No to war! No to racism!” Even when such calls are cloaked in verbiage about class struggle, implicit in them is the view that the capitalist state is fundamentally “democratic” and can be pressured to serve the interests of working people and the oppressed. As Lenin noted in *The State and Revolution*, “A Marxist is solely someone who *extends* the recognition of the class struggle to the recognition of the *dictatorship of the proletariat*.” All historical experience has shown that the working class cannot reform the capitalist state and use it in its own interests but must create its own state, a workers state where the tremendous resources of this society are used to serve the needs of the many as opposed to the profits of a few.

Imperialists’ Blitzkrieg on Civil Liberties

In their rush to bolster the forces of repression, Bush & Co. are not only trampling on the Bill of Rights but walking over the constitutional “separation of powers” as well, increasingly ruling by executive fiat. Cashing in the blank check given him by Congress to prosecute the “war on terrorism,” Bush exercised his powers as Commander in Chief of the armed forces to authorize the military tribunals without even informing the Congress. This has caused some anger among Congressmen, but Bush’s actions only deepen a longstanding trend.

As the U.S. emerged as an imperialist power with the end of the 19th century, much constitutional power originally given to Congress has been transferred to the imperial presidency. The increasing concentration of power in the presidency corresponds to the needs of the U.S. imperialist rulers to assert themselves as the world’s top cop, without having their wars and military adventures held up by the bother of seeking the approval of Congress, much less that of “the people.” The invasion of Somalia, repeated bombing raids on Iraq, the terror bombing of Serbia were all carried out without anyone in Washington raising the need for a formal declaration of war.

The deepening worldwide recession, which began before September 11, not only means even harder times ahead for millions of workers and others, but a sharpening of antagonisms between the world’s leading capitalist powers. That’s why the rulers of the capitalist “democracies” internationally are cracking down on workers and immigrants, to regiment the populations as the bourgeoisies intensify exploitation in an attempt to ensure competitiveness on the world market.

Though they are likewise stepping up

domestic repression, America’s European allies have bridled against assisting the U.S. in enforcing its military tribunals. Spain initially declared that it would refuse to extradite eight people held on suspicion of assisting the September 11 hijackers without a guarantee that they would not be tried in Bush’s star chamber military courts; other European Union countries have made similar noises. Not that the U.S.’ imperialist “coalition” partners have been slouches in the “war on terrorism.”

Both France and Spain have escalated their attacks on the Basque nationalist ETA, and the French parliament has authorized wider search powers for the police, including body-searches at airports, stadiums and stores. In Germany, Social Democratic Party interior minister Otto Schily proposed dismantling restrictions on wiretaps, monitoring e-mails and bank accounts. In Canada, Bill C-36 would allow for indefinite detention of anyone the cops claim has “information” relating to an “investigation” and would eliminate the “right to remain silent” by forcing so-called “material witnesses” to give evidence in closed hearings.

In Britain, Tony Blair’s “New” Labour government is proposing legislation declaring a “state of public emergency” and calling for detention without trial of immigrant “terrorism” suspects. Those who are charged would be tried in secret courts, denied the right to see the “evidence” against them and denied virtually any means of appeal. The proposed measure comes atop laws enacted earlier this year that severely restricted the right of asylum and outlawed nearly two dozen mainly refugee and immigrant political groups—threatening even British citizens who financially supported these groups with imprisonment.

Vast Expansion of Police Powers

Apart from his sartorial tastes and choice of prophet, U.S. top cop John Ashcroft shares an outlook not far from that of the *mujahedin*, including the Taliban, bankrolled by Washington in its war against “godless Communism.” A devout evangelical Pentecostal, he declared in a speech at the rigidly segregationist Bob Jones University that the U.S. has “no king but Jesus.” According to the *New York Times* (18 November), one of Ashcroft’s favorite maxims is, “For every crucifixion, a resurrection is waiting to follow.” They could easily have added, “So, let’s get on with the crucifixions.” Ashcroft keeps in his barn a seven-foot replica of the Statue of Liberty made out of *barbed wire*, fitting for the man who just ordered a reorganization of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to make it an even more effective deportation machine.

Ashcroft is an open admirer of the Confederacy and an opponent of desegregation, abortion, contraception and gay rights. Heretofore a strict proponent of “state’s rights,” the segregationists’ battle cry, Ashcroft has no qualms about employing federal powers to enforce the dictates of the religious right. Extending the war against infidels to the medical profession, Ashcroft has tried to nullify an Oregon law allowing physician-assisted suicide for the terminally ill by ordering that doctors who assist in such suicides have their medical licenses revoked. He has also, despite a California referendum allowing marijuana for medical use, ordered raids of medical offices that prescribe it. During his Senate confirmation hearings in January, the *New York Times* (12 January) pointed to Ashcroft’s efforts as a Senator “to streamline the process of altering the Constitution” to make it easier to undermine protections codified in the Bill of Rights.

Though there was broad bipartisan support for some kind of “anti-terrorism” legislation following September 11, there was a fair bit of opposition to Ashcroft’s original bill. Coming from quite different directions, liberals like black Detroit Congressman John Conyers and right-wing Republicans like Robert Barr from Georgia offered alternatives to certain



UPI



Chicago Tribune

FBI COINTELPRO terror, 1969: Body of Black Panther leader Fred Hampton. He (left) and Mark Clark were gunned down in their beds by Chicago cops.

1996 Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, the right of *habeas corpus* for death row prisoners has been virtually gutted. And local police forces in a number of cities have openly resurrected red squads in recent years.

The rapidity with which the government rammed through the new laws and executive orders was made possible by the illusion that they were intended for a specific small and vulnerable sector of the population—immigrants from Muslim countries. In the government’s gun sights, however, is just about everyone perceived as an opponent by the capitalist rulers—from those who oppose U.S. imperialist wars abroad to those who speak out against racist oppression or fight to defend their unions and livelihoods against attacks by the employers.

in defense of their rights and livelihoods against the bourgeoisie’s onslaughts. This requires a fight for the class independence of the proletariat from the capitalists and their political parties. Particularly through its support to the Democratic Party, the pro-capitalist AFL-CIO bureaucracy, led by John Sweeney, obstructs class struggle by pushing the lie that the interests of the workers are compatible with those of the capitalist exploiters.

Critical to a class-struggle perspective is the mobilization of labor’s social power to defend immigrant rights and to fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants. In this country, the raw exploitation of labor has always come wrapped in the envelope of racial and ethnic-religious hostilities fomented by the capitalist rulers. Black oppression is the corner-

provisions in the law. In authoring a compromise that allowed non-citizens to be detained for seven days instead of indefinitely and imposing a two-year “sunset clause” on certain provisions, Conyers helped push the legislation through the House.

But after six weeks of deliberation, the final version of the bill was far closer to Ashcroft’s original proposal than the House compromise. Revised by Ashcroft and his cronies in the middle of the night, the bill was given to House members the next morning, and passed a few hours later. Many Congressmen did not even read it and no debate was allowed. In the end, 66 House members (including Conyers) voted against, while Wisconsin Democrat Russell Feingold cast the lone opposing vote in the Senate. Seeking to maintain the image of the Democratic Party as a “friend” of labor and black people, liberals like Conyers and Feingold are positioning themselves to get ahead of and contain the increasing discontents that the capitalists’ war at home and abroad will generate among workers and minorities.

Expanding upon proposals first put forward by Democratic president Clinton and the Reagan/Bush administrations that preceded him, the new law represents a vast expansion of police powers:

- It provides for indefinite detention of non-citizens declared to be a threat to “national security”;
- It expands the legal ability of the FBI to break into homes and offices to conduct secret searches;
- It eliminates formal restrictions on CIA spying within the U.S.;
- It gives the government power to designate domestic organizations as “terrorist” and deport any non-citizen who is a member or provides financial support;
- It opens up to government scrutiny the financial records of such organizations without requiring even a scintilla of evidence that a crime has been committed;
- It authorizes broad wiretapping and Internet surveillance, allowing the government to monitor what Web sites an individual visits (similar to forcing a librarian to turn over a list of books a “suspect” reviewed).

This will mean a vast expansion of the forces of repression overall—more cops with greater powers and immensely greater restrictions on the right and means of protest. The law will be used against labor, blacks and immigrants on issues far removed from the pretext of fighting “terrorism.” The 1940 Smith Act, ostensibly passed to go after Nazi sympathizers in the U.S., was first used to imprison Trotskyists and later leaders of the Communist Party. The 1980s RICO “anti-racketeering” laws, which supposedly targeted “organized crime,” were used to break strikes and exert total government control over unions like the Teamsters. The “war on drugs” has meant a war on the ghetto poor—with black people making up more than half of a skyrocketing prison population of over two million—and the transformation of police departments into small armies outfitted with high-tech military weapons.

What the FBI and CIA used to do surreptitiously is now utterly legal. Criminal investigations and prosecutions will be based on what you read on the Internet, whom you communicate with, where and how often you travel. To trip the anti-terror wire you need only hold political views and engage in activities displeasing to the ayatollahs now running Washington. To trigger the law’s wiretaps, searches, detentions, etc., the Feds need only “certify” to a judge that there is reason to believe the target is involved in terrorism—and in most instances the judge *must* grant the order. Get your picture taken at an antiwar or anti-Klan demonstration, protest the mistreatment of Arab Americans, demonstrate for Nike to stop using sweatshop labor in the Third World, and you too can be in the government’s vise.

According to the *New York Times* (9 November), “Some senior career officials at the Justice Department and the F.B.I. have privately complained that Mr. Ashcroft, in his insistence on cracking down on terrorists, may go too far to weaken rules that bar investigations of people and

groups based solely on their political leanings.” Ashcroft has now also authorized federal prison authorities to listen in on attorney-client conversations involving people suspected of posing a threat to “national security.” This recalls FBI director J. Edgar Hoover’s declaration in the 1960s that the Black Panther Party represented “the greatest threat to internal security.”

Well before the September 11 attacks, then-FBI director Louis Freeh declared at a May Congressional hearing that among those deemed “domestic terrorists” are Puerto Rican nationalists and “left-wing” groups which “generally profess a revolutionary socialist doctrine and view them-



Pathfinder

SWP leader James P. Cannon addresses 1941 New York meeting protesting Smith Act convictions of 18 Trotskyists.

selves as protectors of the people against the ‘dehumanizing effects’ of capitalism and imperialism” (FBI “Congressional Statement,” 10 May). By Freeh’s terms, this includes just about any leftist political organization:

“Anarchists and extremist socialist groups—many of which, such as the Workers’ World Party, Reclaim the Streets, and Carnival Against Capitalism—have an international presence and, at times, also represent a potential threat in the United States. For example, anarchists, operating individually and in groups, caused much of the damage during the 1999 World Trade Organization ministerial meeting in Seattle.”

Bloody Trail of Capitalist State Terror

The only rights sacred to the bourgeoisie are the right to own property and exploit labor. The rights cherished by working people and the oppressed were never freely granted by the capitalist rulers, but were won through hard and often bloody struggle. In his 1935 treatise *The State in Theory and Practice*, Harold Laski noted

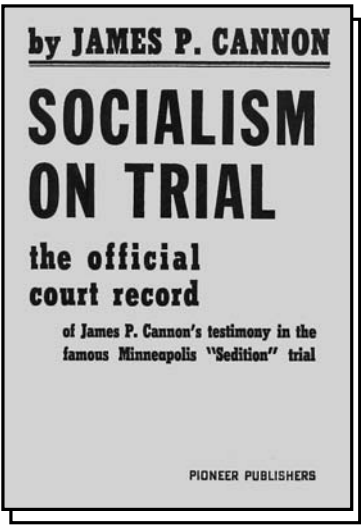
“how accidental was the union of capitalism with democracy. It was the outcome, not of an essential harmony of inner principle, but of that epoch in economic evolution when capitalism was in its phase of expansion.... It would offer social reforms so long as these did not jeopardize the essential relations of the capitalist system. When they did as occurred in the post-war [World War I] years, the contradiction between capitalism and democracy became the essential institutional feature of Western civilization.”

Thousands of socialists, anarchists and other opponents of the U.S. entry into the first interimperialist world war were imprisoned under the Espionage and Sedition Acts. Among them was Socialist Party leader Eugene V. Debs, imprisoned for telling workers the truth: “You need to know that you are fit for something better than slavery and cannon fodder.” After the war, fearing the spread of Bolshevism following the 1917 Russian Revolution, the Democratic Wilson administration rounded up thousands of foreign-born radicals (including American citizens) and dumped them overseas during the 1919-20 Palmer raids.

Emerging from World War II as the pre-eminent imperialist power, the U.S. aimed its guns (and nuclear weapons) at its erstwhile ally against Nazi Germany, the Soviet degenerated workers state. An anti-Communist witchhunt was launched to regiment the “home front,” as America’s rulers erected a whole edifice of

laws targeting reds, union militants, Hollywood screenwriters and just about anyone else perceived to hold views contrary to the stultifying ideological consensus of the Cold War.

Some 25,000 union members, many of them key leaders of the CIO organizing drives of the 1930s, were purged from the labor movement, leading to the destruction of whole unions in some cases. Thousands of others were tracked down by the FBI and driven from their jobs, only to continue to be hounded and witchhunted due to secret employer blacklists. Augmenting the 1940 Smith Act, the McCarran Act of 1950 legitimized secret FBI record-keeping on



“subversive” individuals and called for the registration of organizations and individuals who purportedly “advocated violent overthrow” of the government. It also provided for the deportation of non-citizens who had been Communists at any time in their lives. Hundreds of Communists were jailed. American citizens who were “or had ever been” members of the Communist Party were barred from obtaining passports—even the act of applying for one carried a penalty of five years in prison! Nearly 12,000 people were listed on a “Security Index” kept by national FBI headquarters and another 17,000 on the “Communist Index,” while FBI field offices held lists of an additional 200,000 considered to constitute a danger in times of “national emergency.”

The government’s current call for preventive detention has evoked the World War II incarceration of 120,000 Japanese Americans in concentration camps under Democrat Franklin D. Roosevelt. For decades, liberals considered this an aberration that could never happen again. But it is notable that the Supreme Court has never overturned its wartime decision endorsing that heinous crime. In fact, the capitalist rulers have always prepared plans for mass roundups of immigrants and leftists in times of “national emergency.”

Furthermore, immigrants have been subjected to massive state repression also in “normal” times when their labor is considered economically superfluous by the capitalist class. Thus in the mid-1950s, *over one million* Mexican men, women and children (some born in the United States and therefore legally American citizens) were rounded up and deported in “Operation Wetback,” a military-style operation commanded by a retired U.S. army general.

A direct precedent to the current schemes for “homeland security” and preventive detention was a 1984 plan by the Reagan administration empowering the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to appoint military commanders to run state and local governments in the event of a “national emergency.” Drawn up as the U.S. sponsored a death squad regime in El Salvador and the CIA’s *contras* waged a war of terror in Nicaragua, the FEMA plan established ten “military detention camps” for jailing 400,000 Central American “aliens” as well as some 28,000 U.S. citizens. A similar plan following the 1986 bombing of Libya called for INS roundups

of thousands of Arab immigrants, for which a concentration camp was prepared in Louisiana. Since September 11, FEMA has played a prominent role in the government’s domestic “anti-terror” operation.

Trotskyists in World War II

In our fight to build a revolutionary workers party that will act as a tribune of the people, we Marxists are intransigent in our opposition to any infringement on democratic rights. Not least, we have resisted every effort by the government to criminalize Marxist political activity. We stand in the tradition of the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) of James P. Cannon, which fought tooth and nail to defend its right to function legally when it came under government attack for its opposition to U.S. imperialism during World War II.

The SWP’s Marxist line stood in sharp contrast to the social-patriotism of the AFL and CIO labor bureaucracies, the Stalinist Communist Party and the Socialist Party, all of which lined up behind U.S. imperialism when it entered the war in December 1941. Months before that, in July 1941, the federal government had indicted 28 Trotskyist leaders, including Cannon and other prominent SWPers as well as leaders of the militant Minneapolis Teamsters Local 544. While fighting for unconditional military defense of the USSR, the Trotskyists made clear their revolutionary opposition to all the imperialist powers and especially to U.S. imperialism.

Cannon and 17 others were ultimately convicted of “seditious conspiracy” and sentenced the day Roosevelt declared war on Japan, serving prison terms of up to 18 months after a series of appeals. In November 1942, the Post Office seized and burned two issues of the SWP newspaper, the *Militant*. Four months later, as part of its ongoing effort to silence the party, the government invoked the wartime Espionage Act to cancel the SWP’s second-class mailing permit, restoring it only after a yearlong legal battle. But the SWP persevered, recruiting widely on the basis of its revolutionary defeatist line during World War II, including through the distribution of Cannon’s court testimony, published under the title *Socialism on Trial*.

Facing the government prosecutor, he forthrightly upheld the stand taken in the 1940 “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 fraternization 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.”

Cannon effectively rebutted the government’s bogus charge of “conspiracy to advocate the overthrow of the government by force and violence.” While explaining that for Marxists “the most desirable method of social transformation, by all means, is to have it done peacefully,” he said that “it is the opinion of all Marxists that it will be accompanied by violence” because “the outlived class, which is put in a minority by the revolutionary growth in the country, will try by violent means to hold on to its privileges against the will of the majority.” He added, “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.”

An ultraleft critic within the Fourth International named Grandizo Munis subsequently denounced the defensive formulations used by the SWP leader as “decidedly opportunist,” particularly

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chastising Cannon for not stressing the need for the “organized violence of the poor masses.” Cannon derided Munis for his radical phrasemongering, explaining: “We had to address ourselves to the workers not in general, not as an abstraction, but as they exist in reality in the United States in the year 1941. We had to recognize that the forms of democracy and the legality of the party greatly facilitate this propaganda work and must not be lightly disregarded. It was not our duty to facilitate the work of the prosecuting attorney but to make it more difficult, insofar as this could be done without renouncing any principle.” Moreover, as Cannon wrote:

“Defensive formulations prepare and help to create genuine mass actions, while ‘calls to action,’ not so prepared, usually echo in the void. It is not by accident that those revolutionists who understand this are precisely the ones who have shown the capacity to organize actions when the conditions for them are present. The ultraleft sectarians, meantime, who do not understand the best mechanism for the organization of actions—that is, precisely, defensive formulations—always remain alone and isolated with their impatient slogans and their self-imagined intransigence.”

The Workers Party Has a Right to Organize!

The Spartacist League has likewise fought every attempt by the capitalist government to brand Marxists as “terrorists.” When we discovered in 1981 that the California attorney general’s office had listed us as “left-wing terrorists” in a “Report on Organized Crime,” we waged a legal battle that forced them to retract the terrorist smear and distribute a



WV Photo

San Francisco, July 1981: Protest against California attorney general’s attempt to witchhunt Marxist SL as “terrorist.”

statement to that effect to police and FBI offices nationwide. We subsequently filed a lawsuit against the FBI’s 1983 Domestic Security/Terrorism guidelines, which equated left-wing political activity with terrorism and organized crime. It was speech, “advocacy” and political program rather than criminal acts which were the targets of the FBI, as FBI director William Webster made clear in arguing that groups which “produce propaganda, disinformation and ‘legal assistance’ may be even more dangerous than those who actually throw the bombs” (*New York Times*, 24 June 1982).

In announcing our court suit, we wrote (WV No. 340, 21 October 1983):

“We are compelled to undertake this legal battle, not only to defend ourselves against the new FBI red-hunt but also to fight to preserve the existing democratic rights of the working-class movement. We do not intend to be blown away—

faceless, nameless victims in the dead of night. As the organization which embodies the continuity of revolutionary Marxism in the U.S. today, our task is too important: the liberation of the workers and oppressed from the chains of this decaying, racist system through victorious socialist revolution. A Workers Party Has a Right to Organize!”

As a result of our lawsuit, the government conceded the central aim of our legal challenge—that Marxist advocacy cannot be equated with violence or criminal terrorism. The FBI and attorney general agreed to change their former definition of our organization, which read in part that the SL “does not *openly* advocate the violent overthrow of the U.S. Government *at this time*” (our emphasis). That definition maliciously attributed to us conspiratorial putschism (if not “openly” then secretly) wholly at variance with our Marxist principles, aims and then 20-year history of political

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a deep strain of pacifism in broad segments of the population. He looks to the Japanese constitution imposed by the American occupiers after World War II, which is referred to as the “peace constitution” by the reformist left and liberals, as the only way to prevent Japanese participation in wars.

Many workers and youth distrust imperialism and hate war but are led by the fake left into wrongly believing that Japanese imperialism, unlike American imperialism, can be pressured to pursue a peaceful road. In the mouths of the reformist left, this argument is an attempt to divert the struggle against war away from class struggle and into parliamentary channels. Such “pacifism” is a mask for imperialism, as the reformists line up with those in the bourgeoisie who argue that it is important to put forward a more “gentle” face for Japanese imperialism so as not to irreparably damage “Japan’s relations with its Asian neighbors” and its investment opportunities. No bourgeois constitution can stop imperialist war—imperialism is not the product of the appetites of a particularly bloodthirsty set of capitalist rulers but rather the highest stage of capitalism. Japan has the second most technologically advanced military, with the second largest military budget in the world. The Spartacist Group Japan (SGJ) says: Not one person, not one yen for the imperialist military! Smash the counterrevolutionary military alliance between Japanese and U.S. imperialism through workers revolution!

The Japan-U.S. security treaty codifies an anti-Communist alliance which was initially directed against the former Soviet Union. Today, the Japan-U.S. military alliance targets the bureaucratically deformed workers states of China and North Korea. The reformists express their opposition to this alliance by denouncing what they consider to be Japan’s subordination to U.S. imperialism and calling for a stronger, more independent Japan. The SGJ stands for the unconditional military defense of the Chinese, North

Korean, Vietnamese and Cuban deformed workers states against imperialism and counterrevolution.

On November 28, only two days after U.S. president Bush singled out Iraq and North Korea as the next targets of the “war on terrorism,” police arrested a 40-year cadre of Chosen Soren on allegations of financial malfeasance. The next day, more than 400 ethnic Koreans battled with police to prevent the raiding of Chosen Soren’s central headquarters for the first time since its founding in 1955.



Spartacist Japan

SGJ placard (at right) at October 7 Tokyo antiwar demonstration reads: “Down With Imperialism! For Class Struggle at Home! Against Imperialist Retaliation! Not One Person, Not One Yen for the Imperialist Japanese Military!”

Hands off Chosen Soren! For full citizenship rights for everyone who lives here!

Acting as loyal advisers to Japanese imperialism, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) has been the main organizer of the bourgeois-pacifist demonstrations in Tokyo, seeking to pressure the ruling class not to participate in “Bush’s retaliatory war.” This appeal for “peace” is addressed to the imperialists responsible for the 1937 Rape of Nanjing and the enslavement of the “comfort women.” We have intervened into these rallies to win workers, minorities and youth to the Marxist understanding that economic crisis, chauvinist repression of minorities and war are integral to capitalist society and cannot be combatted outside of and apart from the class struggle. The

way to end the threat of a third imperialist world war is to fight to end the social system that breeds war, through socialist revolution.

The Japanese Communist Party (JCP), a mass reformist workers party, has joined in the bourgeoisie’s terror scare, issuing an October 11 letter to heads of state calling for “sanctions with the United Nations at the center and bringing the perpetrators to justice.” The United Nations is a den of imperialist thieves, their henchmen and their victims. It was

under the UN flag that three million Koreans were killed during the 1950-53 Korean War. For more than a decade, UN-sponsored sanctions have killed over 600,000 children in Iraq.

Much of the left resorts to cheap anti-Americanism to cover its loyalty to “its own” bourgeoisie. The Kakumaru group grotesquely praises the attack on the WTC as an “epoch-making act.” In fact, it was an indiscriminate act of terror that resulted in the deaths of several thousand ordinary people of all races, religions and nationalities. The ostensibly Trotskyist Japan Revolutionary Communist League, whose main slogan at antiwar demos has been “Make Peace, Not War,” writes: “Around the world the fight against the Bush regime’s retaliatory war must be strengthened” (*Kakehashi*, 24 Septem-

activity in the U.S. Noting that only “a group of suicidal psychopaths” would fit that conspiratorial definition, we wrote in the above article: “In fact, the capitalist government is not ‘overthrown’ violently or non-violently. The historical probability is that in a revolutionary situation there may well be little government to ‘overthrow’ and surely not this government in its present form.”

The FBI’s new definition described the SL as what we are—a Marxist political organization—and stated, “The SPL [sic] was once the subject of an FBI domestic security investigation. The investigation was closed in 1977, however, and it did not result in any criminal prosecution.” That stipulation was a modest but genuine blow to the government’s new efforts to criminalize leftist political dissent. But as we wrote at the time (WV No. 368, 7 December 1984):

“We have no illusions that the government’s secret police have stopped or will stop their harassment, infiltration and disruption of Marxist political organizations and other perceived political opponents of the government. We do know that the secret police have not changed since Karl Marx was harassed by secret agents of Prussia, that as long as the capitalists hold state power, their police agents will continue their dirty work against any real or perceived challenges to their class rule.”

Today, the very right-wing Bush administration avails itself of the frenzy of bipartisan “national unity” to crystalize a new set of rules and regulations to police the population. We fight to forge the necessary instrument to lead the socialist revolution that is the only means to ending this system of racism, repression and war, a workers party that champions the cause of all the exploited and oppressed as part of its fight for an egalitarian socialist society.■

ber), burying any opposition to “its own” bourgeoisie at the end of the article. And the 22 October issue of its paper uncritically reprints an interview with an “Afghani leftist” who supports the Afghan king returning to power!

At a November 27 antiwar demonstration in Tokyo, whose core was trade-union contingents from all three federations, *Spartacist* salesmen found that the dock workers action was immensely popular among those who knew of it. Many agreed with our explanation of the necessity to spread the hot-cargoing action—from Okinawa to Hokkaido, from the docks to the warehouses, from truckers to maintenance workers. Unfortunately, this action has been isolated to the port of Sasebo, which sets up the longshoremen for state repression and limits the effect of their labor action. The reformist trade-union leaders are incapable of waging a fight against imperialist militarism because they accept the capitalist system, acting as the political police of the bosses inside the labor movement. What’s necessary is a political struggle in the unions against the reformists and the forging of a class-struggle leadership that would mobilize the social power of labor, not only against imperialist war but also against chauvinism at home directed against ethnic Koreans, the *burakumin* caste of “untouchables” and immigrant workers.

The proletariat of Japan, the industrial powerhouse of Asia, holds the key to the fate of this region. Japanese workers must join with their class brothers and sisters from Indonesia to the Philippines in the struggle for a socialist federation of Asia and in class solidarity with the U.S. proletariat. Key to a revolutionary perspective is the defense of the deformed workers states and the struggle for proletarian political revolutions to oust the Stalinist bureaucracies that undermine the gains of those revolutions. It is the task of the Spartacist Group Japan, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), to build a Leninist-Trotskyist party whose goal is to sweep the bloodsoaked Japanese imperialists into the dustbin of history.■

Banquet...

(continued from page 7)

whose fodder will be the hungry, the orphans, the workers, the peasants and the unemployed,” and predicted the rise of Islamic fundamentalists who were able to channel the anger of the unemployed urban youth into religious obscurantism.

The novel ends tragically with the death of Mahdi. With his hopes shattered by the defeat of the revolution in both Iraq and Algeria, faced with the increasing hostility of Algerian society and tailed by agents of the Iraqi regime, “he could see only darkness and death.” Consumed with despair, he committed suicide by flinging his body from a cliff into the sea to become a “banquet for seaweed.”

Contrary to the claims of the former Egyptian Stalinists, bourgeois liberals and Arab leftists who came to Haydar’s defense, *Banquet for Seaweed* is revealingly blasphemous and Rabelaisian in character; this is what makes it powerful. Unlike the Arab Stalinists who long ago capitulated to the Muslim bourgeoisie and its reactionary ideology, Haydar is uniquely and profoundly irreligious. His heroes are advocates of a secular society based on “science and not on religion.”

The famous passage which Islamic fundamentalists used to ignite the riots in Cairo against the book in the spring of 2000, no matter how it is punctuated by apologists, is an unambiguous cry against religion: “In the age of the atom, space exploration and the triumph of reason, they rule us with the laws of the Bedouin gods and the teaching of the Koran. Shit.” On several occasions, Mahdi talks Assya, who is soft on religion and tends to abide by the traditional family rules, into “breaking with religion, god, marriage sanctioned by Islamic laws, traditional values, the fairy tales of heaven and hell and all the centuries-old myths.” One of the reasons why the novel is so popular is its anti-religious theme. And, contrary to claims by Max Rodenbeck in the *New York Review of Books* (16 November 2000) about Haydar’s obscurity, his books generally run seven or eight editions, in spite of the ban imposed on them in most of the Arabic-speaking countries. Accord-

ing to *Middle East Report* (Summer 2001), *Banquet for Seaweed* is in its eleventh edition as of March of this year.

Egyptian Stalinists, who remained silent during the Salman Rushdie affair, perpetuated Islam as a “progressive revolutionary force that throughout history helped to galvanize the masses.” Abd al-Rahman al-Sharqawi’s books, *Mohammed, the Prophet of Freedom* and *Al-Husain: The Martyr* (about the prophet’s cousin), were their bibles. Algerian Stalinist leader Baschir Haj Ali once told his audience: “We will uphold the Koran with the right hand and *Capital* with the left hand.”

Women’s Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

Against the array of ruling cliques sustaining the “carcass of this sacred world and protecting the temple of the desert monster floating on oil wells and incantation of Islam,” Haydar evokes images of historical events and names—the Paris Commune, the Quarमतians, the Zanj and Ibn Rushd (Averroës)—that send shudders down their spines and whose significance should be explained.

The Quarमतians were egalitarians who broke with the Ismaili sect and rose against the Abbasid state at the end of the ninth century. They established a secular state based on communal property in what is today Bahrain. They abolished the religious rites of fasting and Haj. Their elected government included a woman. It took the central government in Baghdad over 70 years to subdue them, killing over 60,000. Official history textbooks never mention them.

The Zanj were the black slaves brought from East Africa to work the plantations of Basra in southern Iraq. Led by a Persian peasant, they also took up arms against the Abbasids in the ninth century, seizing the plantations and establishing their own state. They were crushed after surviving for 20 years.

Ibn Rushd (Averroës), the great chemist, astronomer and materialist philosopher of Muslim Spain, was one of the sources of atheism during the Renaissance. In his treatise titled *Incoherence of the Incoherence*, a polemic against the theologian and defender of dogma Al-

Ghazali’s *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, Averroës professed the eternity of the world, implying the existence of uncreated matter, and affirmed the primacy of reason over faith. He was exiled to the North African desert and his books were burned. His followers were condemned and persecuted during the Inquisition.

Against the prudish and pious self-image presented by Islam, Haydar presents profane sexual love themes, in contrast to the abstraction of religion, with its hostility to the senses and its supposed happiness in the afterlife.

What adds more strength to *Banquet for Seaweed* is the unique way Haydar presents the woman question, threading its text with issues that the Stalinists, who pay no more than lip service to the oppression of women and whose ranks teem with wife-beaters, wouldn’t deal with. Through Mahdi, Haydar rages against the family, its traditions and Islamic laws. The novel opens with Mahdi and Assya strolling on the beach. They are accosted by a gang of louts who taunt them for walking together: “Decent women don’t mix with strangers.” The “stranger” is anyone other than a husband or a close relative and a woman in the company of a stranger is up to no good.

Both Mahdi’s and Assya’s mothers are widows who were forced into remarriage. According to tradition, a young widow, without a man watching over her, will bring shame and dishonor to the family. This not only frees the family from the terrible responsibility of having to protect her but of having to be in charge of her economically for the rest of her life. Both mothers suffer from constant beating and oppression by their second husbands.

Yazid is opposed to the education of his stepdaughters, Assya and Manar. He complains to their mother about their talk on the phone and watching Western soap operas which are corruptive and against religion. He imposes a 7 p.m. curfew on them because “the city is full of wolves.” One of the reasons for the high illiteracy rate among women in the Muslim world is that young girls, before reaching the dangerous age of puberty, are pulled out of schools and kept in the confines of home as the only way to save them from scandal and a lost life until they are

forced to marry the men whom they didn’t even get the chance to know.

One of the characters in the book who took part in the failed guerrilla uprising in Iraq is Abu Sabri, who was the military organizer. He was recruited in prison while serving a short term for slaying his young cousin, who shamed the family by having sex outside marriage. He has to wash the family’s shame in blood and restore its honor. This is what is called “honor killing,” a heinous crime committed against tens of thousands of women throughout the Muslim world every year for the “crime” of having sex, eloping, insolence or disobedience. Even raped women should die; they are a dishonor and a disgrace to their families. They asked for rape by leaving the house without the company of a relative or by the way they dress. Recently a young woman was killed in Jordan by her younger brother for kissing a neighbor. He was released from jail after serving only six months. The Jordanian parliament voted down a bill that would criminalize “honor killing.” In countries where it is illegal, it is a socially acceptable act. A former Palestinian official told UNICEF that “honor killings” constitute 70 percent of all murders in the Gaza Strip and West Bank. Soap operas glorifying the heroes who “wash the family’s shame in blood” are regularly broadcast on national television. In Assia Djebbar’s novel *Children of the New World*, the revolutionary hero fighting the Algerian war of independence must kill his “loose” sister before the *maquis* would admit him to their ranks: a man who cannot restore his honor cannot defend the honor of the country!

In the *Manifesto: Towards a Free Revolutionary Art*, signed by André Breton and Diego Rivera, Leon Trotsky wrote, “The artist cannot serve the struggle for freedom unless he subjectively assimilates its social content, unless he feels in his very senses its meaning and drama and freely seeks to give his own inner world incarnation in his arts.” For doing this, from the artist’s independent standpoint, Haydar got his book banned. However, the uniqueness of the book, its power and its literary merit will compel it to be read by young Arabs, especially women.■

France...

(continued from page 5)

Afghanistan. The JCR adds to that today, writing that “during this period [1979] some Afghan women wore the veil as a sign of resistance” to the “totalitarian regime” that the Soviets protected (*RED*, October 2001)! Today the LCR and all the French pseudo-“left” are shedding crocodile tears over the terrible fate of Afghan women, but they were

all opposed, including LO, to everything that 20 years ago opened up a way out for these Afghan women. And in this they bear their part of the responsibility, on their minuscule scale, for the hell that these women have suffered for ten years.

The pseudo-“left” tailed the mullahs who reduced women to slavery. We were on the other side. Today we defend Afghanistan, a small country attacked by imperialism. The anarchists of the CNT, on the other hand, put the Afghan regime

and the imperialists on the same plane. Their leaflet (6 October) was titled, “No War Between Peoples—*No Peace Between Classes*.” They say, in between two anti-American tirades:

“Their war will not be ours! In this anti-militarist struggle the CNT reaffirms its support to the deserters who, often risking their lives, refuse to participate in the massacres perpetrated by the armies, the armed groups and the police who will participate in the conflict. The struggle to be waged is not situated on any moral plane, it is not a struggle between ‘good’ and ‘evil,’ but between two sides, the side of the exploited and the side of the exploiters. Bush and bin Laden are both in the latter camp...we are not.”

In the 1930s, Trotsky answered this type of argument when he explained that Ethiopia under the Negus, a reactionary monarch, had to be defended against Italy:

“When war is involved, for us it is not a question of who is ‘better,’ the Negus or Mussolini; rather, it is a question of the relationship of classes and the fight of an underdeveloped nation for independence against imperialism.”

We have a side. We defend Afghanistan against imperialism without giving any support to any of the Afghan factions created and supported by the imperialists. The hypocrisy of a “war against terrorism” led by the biggest terrorists on the planet, well known for their acts of genocide from the war in Algeria to the war in Vietnam, is obvious. The “terror” the imperialists are worried about is resistance to their domination and their class prerogatives. Defense of Afghanistan against the imperialist attack is entirely related to the defense of the working masses against intensification of oppression and exploitation. This defense requires overthrowing the imperialist

order through workers revolution. Our task is to educate and mobilize the proletariat for this goal by breaking the workers’ loyalty to their social-chauvinist leaders and their class-collaborationist politics.

During the First World War, Lenin explained in “Socialism and War”:

“Today *unity* with the opportunists *actually* means subordinating the working class to their ‘own’ national bourgeoisie, and an alliance with the latter for the purpose of oppressing other nations and of fighting for dominant-nation privileges; it means *splitting* the revolutionary proletariat of all countries.”

—“Socialism and War”
(July-August 1915)

And he added:

“To rally these Marxist elements, however small their numbers may be at the outset; to reanimate, in their name, the now forgotten ideals of genuine socialism, and to call upon the workers of all lands to break with the chauvinists and rally about the old banner of Marxism—such is the task of the day.”■

CORRECTION

In our article “No to Bosses’ ‘National Unity’! For Class Struggle at Home!” (WV No. 768, 9 November), we incorrectly reported that “both the ILWU [International Longshore and Warehouse Union] on the West Coast and a lash-up of more than 400 New York City trade unionists, including 12 local presidents, have come out in opposition to the war” against Afghanistan. In fact, the ILWU has not to our knowledge publicly opposed the war.

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Mumia Abu-Jamal Is an Innocent Man!

State Judge Rejects New Evidence

For the third time in five months, a judge has ruled that a court of law is no place for evidence that Mumia Abu-Jamal is an innocent man. On November 21, one day before Thanksgiving, Pennsylvania State Court judge Pamela Dembe threw out Jamal's Post-Conviction Relief (PCRA) appeal, which contains a wealth of evidence confirming beyond the shadow of a doubt that he did not shoot Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner in December 1981.

That evidence—centered on the sworn testimony of Arnold Beverly that it was he, not Mumia, who shot Faulkner—blasts through all the cover-ups and lies used by the state to put Jamal on death row for a crime he did not commit. Beverly's confession is accompanied by a series of affidavits powerfully corroborating his account (see the Partisan Defense Committee pamphlet, *Mumia Abu-Jamal Is an Innocent Man!* [September 2001]). Yet it has been ruled out of order by Dembe, and twice earlier by federal district court judge Yohn, including in October, when Yohn claimed Mumia could not present the evidence in federal court because he had not yet submitted it in Pennsylvania state court.

These outrageous rulings come from the same capitalist courts that framed up Jamal, barred him from his own trial, forced on him an incompetent lawyer

who didn't even want the case and sentenced him to death on the basis of his political beliefs. For years, liberal and reformist defenders of Jamal have focused their efforts on appeals for a new trial, claiming that notorious lynch law judge Albert Sabo, who presided over Mumia's original 1982 trial and 1995-96 PCRA, represented an aberration in an otherwise fair justice system. But as Dembe and Yohn's rulings make clear, the entire capitalist "justice" system is one of frame-ups and racist victimization.

In her decision, Dembe wrote: "It is hornbook [text] law that witnesses...who mysteriously appear long after trial are regarded with suspicion by the courts." Only two years ago, Anthony Porter, a black man who had been wrongfully convicted of murder in Illinois, was released after 16 years on death row when Northwestern University students produced evidence exonerating him; the real killer then came forward with a confession. Nationwide, 21 people have been released from death row in the past three



WV Photo

years after new evidence put their convictions in doubt.

What sets Mumia's case apart is that he is a defiant and outspoken opponent of this racist system, an award-winning journalist, MOVE supporter and former Black Panther Party spokesman. That is why the FBI targeted Jamal, like other Panthers, for COINTELPRO surveillance, frame-up and terror, and why the Philly cops stalked him and finally railroaded him to death row.

The latest ruling brings Mumia an ominous step closer to the legal lynching that for two decades the forces of racist "law and order" have been screaming for. It also underscores that fighters for Jamal's freedom can place no reliance in this racist capitalist "justice" system. Mass mobilizations centered on the power of the working class to demand freedom for Mumia are all the more urgent in the face of the barrage of new "anti-terrorist" laws aimed at stripping away the rights of all. *Free Mumia now! Abolish the racist death penalty!*

* * *

Send urgently needed contributions for Mumia Abu-Jamal's legal defense, earmarked "Mumia Abu-Jamal," to: Humanitarian Law Project, 8124 W. 3rd Street, Suite 105, Los Angeles, CA 90048. ■



WV Photo

Revolutionary Contingent in August 18 SF Jamal rally. For mass mobilizations centered on labor's social power to fight for Mumia's freedom!

In Protest Against Resurgent Militarism

Japanese Longshoremen Refuse to Load Warships

We print below an article submitted by our comrades of the Spartacist Group Japan.

TOKYO—Some 200 dock workers at Sasebo port in Nagasaki Prefecture have been refusing to load armaments and military supplies onto Japanese navy ships headed to assist the U.S.-led war of terror on Afghanistan. This type of class-struggle action by members of Zenkowan (All Japan Dockworkers Union) has more potential to thwart Japanese imperialism's military ambitions and plans for increased domestic repression than all of the dozens of "antiwar" demonstrations held recently across the country. The Sasebo dock workers have vowed to continue this "hot-cargoing" indefinitely and have expanded their activities to include a one-hour strike every morning against Japan's participation in the war on Afghanistan and the enactment of domestic "anti-terrorism" laws.

These actions by the Sasebo longshoremen challenge the "national unity" appeals of the Japanese bourgeoisie, which seeks to bind workers to the interests of their bosses under the banner of the "war against terror" and "aiding refugees." The attack on the World Trade Center was a "gift from the gods" for the

Japanese rulers, providing an excuse to speed legislation through the Diet [parliament] to expand the scope of the military and increase the state's power to repress domestic dissent. Six naval vessels, eight aircraft and 1,600 personnel have been dispatched to the Indian Ocean region to engage in a military conflict for the first time since World War II, when Japan invaded and brutally conquered much of Asia. In late September, even before revising the coast guard law allowing the use of weapons against "suspicious" ships, a Japanese maritime patrol boat rammed and sank a South Korean fishing vessel.

The Japanese rulers are seeking to bring back imperialist militarism under the cover of bogus "humanitarianism." As the state prepares to deport five Afghans who have lived here since 1998 and raids offices of the pro-North Korean Chosen Soren [Chongryon in Korean] organization, many people who live in this deeply racist and segregated society understand that the dispatch of the Self-Defense Forces, as the military is called,

has nothing to do with "humanitarianism" but is intended to accustom the population to seeing the *hinomaru* [rising sun] battle flag flying around the world. Meanwhile, 700 troops are preparing for their tour of duty in East Timor, which starts at the beginning of next year.

The bourgeoisie is pushing nationalism to deflect social discontent caused by the ever-worsening economic recession, which has left more than four million unemployed. The visit by right-wing nationalist prime minister Junichiro Koizumi this summer to the Yasukuni shrine—a memorial to Japanese militarism—was a deliberate provocation against the working people of Japan and all of Asia. That visit—together with the Education Ministry's approval of history textbooks that blatantly cover up the crimes of Japanese imperialism and attempts to revise the constitution, which bans the use of the military overseas—is a message to Japan's former colonies and to its imperialist rivals: Japanese imperialism is on an aggressive campaign to

overcome the "defeated nation" syndrome, the World War II chapter of Japanese history.

This revanchism comes in the context of heightened competition between the Japanese, U.S. and West European imperialists, which will only intensify as the world economy sinks deeper into recession. By denouncing the evils of *American* imperialism in Afghanistan and elsewhere, the reformist left tails a section of the Japanese imperialist ruling class which seeks more independence from Washington.

The Sasebo hot-cargoing is a concrete example of our slogan "Defend Afghanistan against imperialist attack! For class struggle at home!" In an interview with Japanese *Spartacist*, Katsuyoshi Hayami, chairman of the executive committee of the Nagasaki branch of Zenkowan, which is independent of Japan's three major labor federations, explained that he and his members are deeply worried about the militarization of the ports and more generally about a return to Japanese imperialism's aggressive past. Sasebo is sandwiched between Nagasaki and Hiroshima, and Hayami noted that the atomic-bombing of Nagasaki has left

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