

Third Rail

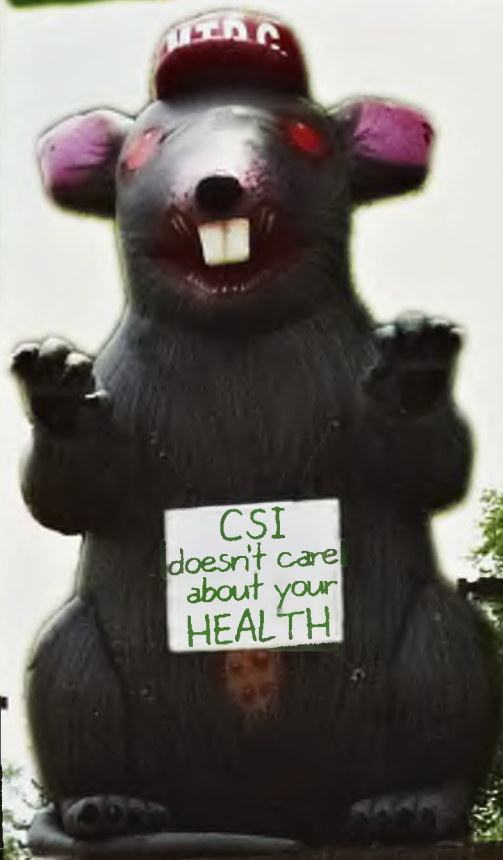
The Political Arts Magazine of the College of Staten Island

Summer 2002

www.ThirdRailMag.com

RATS INVADE CSI!

WELCOME
STUDENTS & SCABS



THE COLLEGE OF STATEN ISLAND
THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

God can tell us what to do

God bids us only

Choose—



Emily XYZ

URINE



THE LATEST FRAGRANCE FROM CALVIN KLEIN

CATCH A WHIFF

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Third Rail

EDITORIAL COLLECTIVE

NEIL SCHULDINER
JEFF MCGRAHAM
GEORGE SPRINGER
COLLEEN MCGRAHAM

STAFF & CONTRIBUTORS

OLUSOJI "SUJI" OLUWOLE
ANTHONY GARGISO | TIMOTHY JENKINS
MELISSA MOLINA | SHAWN FISHER
KELLY REINHART | PERRI DRESNICK
BORIS KOYFMAN | PETER MARSH
NANCY FAMA | A. VENESKY
RACHEL RICHARDS
FRANK DUFFY
WAHEED KHALAYKH

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LAYOUT | DESIGN | COPY EDITING
NEIL SCHULDINER | ANTHONY GARGISO
JEFF MCGRAHAM

MORAL SUPPORT

KATHY MCHUGH | MARIA VELLA
FRANK DUFFY
PROFESSOR IRA SCHOR
RONALD B. MCGUIRE,
CUNY STUDENT LEGAL
DEFENSE PROJECT

THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED TO THE OFFICE
STUDENT LIFE. THANK YOU CAROL BROWN
FOR TREATING STUDENTS LIKE SHIT AND
GIVING AWAY THE KEYS TO OUR OWN OFFICE

COMMENTS & SUBMISSIONS

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COMMENTS, CRITICISMS & SUBMISSIONS
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MAIL@THIRDRAILMAG.COM

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THIRD RAIL MAGAZINE
C/O COLLEGE OF STATEN ISLAND
2800 VICTORY BOULEVARD
CAMPUS CENTER ROOM 207
STATEN ISLAND, NY 10314

DROP OFF IN PERSON:

ROOM 231 IN THE CAMPUS CENTER
TEL: (718) 982-3105
FAX: (718) 982-3104

CSI & CUNY Students To Pay More Money

CSI President Marlene Springer In Favor Of Increased Fees

by Peter Hogness

On February 25, the CUNY Board of Trustees approved an end to its decade-old “last semester free” program, under which students receiving a bachelor’s degree were not charged tuition for their final term. “We just can no longer afford it,” Chancellor Matthew Goldstein told the Board of Trustees. The Board also voted to impose a “technology fee” of \$75 per semester for full-time students, and \$37.50 for those who attend part-time.

Both changes were opposed by the Professional Staff Congress. “Ending ‘last semester free’ has been under discussion at 80th Street for over two years,” said PSC Secretary Cecelia McCall. “The fact that the Chancellor now wants to ‘self-fund’ certain budget items is being used as an excuse to push it through.”

Goldstein said that the additional semester of tuition was needed to pay for more full-time faculty. But the PSC warned that there is no guarantee as to how the money will be used: while the BOT resolution on the tech fee specifies that those funds must be spent on improving computer services, the resolution ending “last semester free” leaves the use of that money wide open.

CUNY spokesperson Michael Arena told Clarion that the union had no cause for concern. “The Chancellor has indicated that replenishing full-time faculty is his highest priority,” Arena said, “and the Board has voted on that. I think that’s a very strong statement.”

CUNY management justified the

end of “last semester free” in part by pointing out that since the policy was adopted in 1992, the City Council established the Vallone scholarship program that gives a 50% reduction in tuition to students with a “B” average or better. However, Mayor Bloomberg has called for axing the Vallone program.

Students in the audience were both amused and irritated by Goldstein’s insistence that the move “is in no way a tuition increase.” When the Chancellor explained that the Governor has not requested nor is the Legislature expected to pass any change in tuition this year, a student called out, “If we pay more money, it’s a tuition increase!” Some Albany legislators expect Pataki, if re-elected, to ask for a tuition hike next year.)

“We know from research that the major reason students drop out of CUNY is not academics, but economics,” said Lawrence Rushing, professor of psychology at La-

Guardia, representing the National Action Network at a BOT hearing February 19. At the public hearing, most who spoke on “last semester free” opposed ending the program. The opposite was true for the new technology fee, though UFS observers said that 80th Street has made many calls urging people to speak in its support.

Five CUNY college presidents spoke in favor of the tech fee,



computer labs and librarians all urged the Board to adopt the fee -though most said they did so with regret.

“How can we compete in the job market when we’re using Windows 95 or 98, and now Windows XP is out?” asked Donna Quinn, majoring in computer information systems at John Jay.

COMPUTER HELP

“For the price of a moderately priced textbook,” the fee will double the amount of money for computer services at City College, said Douglas Troeger, chair of CCNY’s Computer Science Department. Improving computer help facilities is especially important at City, said Troeger, who said that students spend too much time “sitting stymied at the terminal.”

But Queens College student Donald Passantino said that the tech fee “amounts to a back-door tuition hike,” one that asks students “to shoulder the burden of two decades of disinvestment.” He noted that the fee would fall most heavily on the poorest students: “Unlike actual tuition hikes, the burden of these fees cannot be offset by student financial aid.” Most importantly, he said, the tech fee “moves CUNY yet another step farther from its long-standing commitment to providing afford-

able, accessible higher education to New Yorkers.”

The vice chair for disabled student affairs at the University Student Senate, Passantino closed by arguing that if this fee was imposed, CUNY’s 9,000 students with disabilities should have a proportional share dedicated to making computer services accessible.

The most fundamental argument against the tech fee came from a tongue-in-cheek presentation from Hunter student Liam Flynn-Jambeck, calling it “an ingenious way to raise money.” She went on: “This fee thing seems kinda cool I’m not sure if you know, but many students use the bathroom at some point during the day and they don’t pay a dime for this. I thought a little \$55 per semester bathroom fee would be appropriate. But why stop there?... Let’s face it, chairs aren’t free, and students sit on chairs in almost every classroom. Let’s do a \$20 chair fee What about a \$10 door fee?”

“Budgetary cannibalism from within our University serves no one,” declared Valerie Vazquez, student government president at Queens. “We need to work together to find a better way!”

Assembly Higher Education Committee Chair Ed Sullivan has introduced a bill that would limit CUNY and SUNY fees to no more than 15% of tuition.

From the April edition of the Clarion.

I want you to love me
I want you to hold me
you can't leave

My whole attitude changes
when you are near me

Nothing's better

There is no fear and anguish when you are with me

INSECURITIES

by Melissa Molina

Everything goes away there is no time

I want time to stop

Freeze

So I can stay in a moment forever with you

I don't want to face the world alone

IN A SMALL COLLECTION OF WATER
WAS A BEAST BEYOND IMAGINATION.
TWO BLACK AGATES OF EYES FLANKED HIS HEAD,
AND TWO CURIOUS HOLES OPENED UP ON HIS
SHINY THICK CLEAR SLIPCOVER BACK.
FOUR FEET.

HE WAS SMALL, I GUESS. SMALL ANYWAY FOR A PORPOISE.
SMALLER THAN THE DOG.

WHERE THE WATER ENDED THE CEMENT BEGAN,
BUT THE IMAGE WAS SMALL.
AND, THE TARMAC BLEED INTO STARCHY, PLAIN VANILLA-WHITE.
AREN'T'S NIGHT VISIONS FLEETING? AT LEAST UN-WHOLE?

HE HAD THE FAINTEST SMILE, AS DOLPHINS MIGHT.
(AS IF A JOKE WERE KNOWN, BUT NOT TO BE TOLD)

NO, NO, NOW HE WAS ALTOGETHER TOO HARD TO DISCERN-
LIKE RAIN, ONE DROP FROM ANOTHER,
LIKE A WATER'S EDGE.

IT'S SAID THAT TIME HEALS,
BUT AS I WOKE FROM AN OCEAN OF SLEEP -
WHEREFROM MOMENTS AND SPECTACLES WHISH AND CHURN US
UP AND OVER - TIME HURT.

INTO WHATEVER VESSEL HOLDS THESE MOMENTS, THOSE SPECTACLES
ALL WENT AND FAST,
LEAVING ME STILL AND BEREFT OF MY WILL TO REMEMBER,
WITH AN IMAGE OF A PUDDLE
AND A POODLE OF A PORPOISE.

F R A N K I D R E A M T A D U F F Y

I DREAMT A
LAND PORPOISE

HUNDREDS OF HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE STUDENTS TOOK TO THE STREETS OF NY TO PROTEST ONGOING BUDGET CUTS AT CSI & CUNY.

STUDENTS

march

AGAINST

CUNY

Budget cuts

by
A.
Venesky

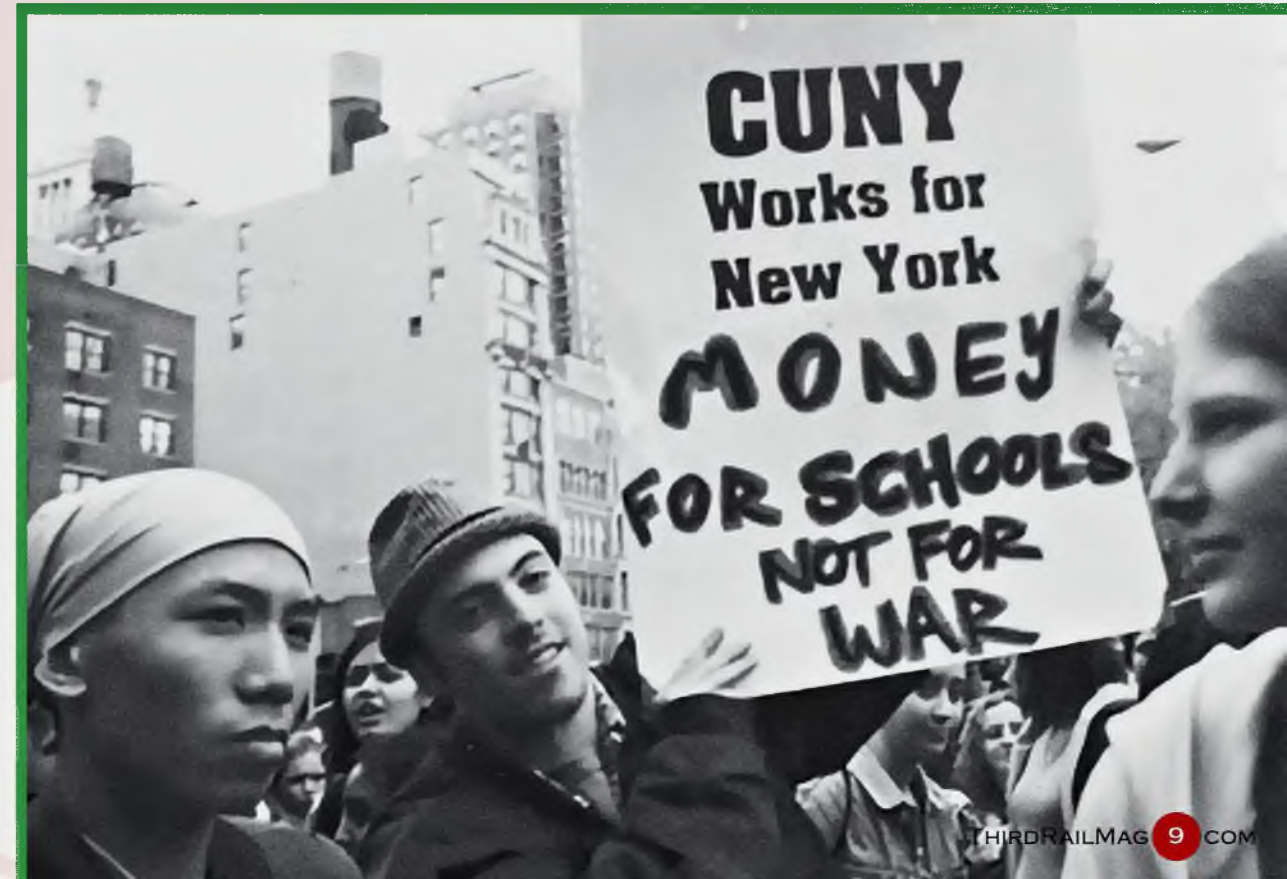
From the
Independent

Fed up with years of multiple budgetary onslaughts by city and state administrators to CUNY funding, about 1,000 CUNY high school, undergraduates, graduate students and supporters, organized by the CUNY 4 All coalition, staged a lively rally and march from Union Square to City Hall, despite an unsympathetic rainstorm.

Although protestors emphasized the threat posed on their education by budget cuts, the demonstration expressed a broader predominant theme—the injustice and peril of downsizing public education in

favor of militaristic measures, such as the building of youth prisons, racial profiling and funding war. “Education Not Bombs” read one sign in the colorful and spirited crowd.

The purported “war on terror” held additional significance for many CUNY students, who also demanded an end to the tuition hike levied on undocumented students at CUNY, who are now charged the out-of-state rate of \$3,400, rather than the in-state rate of \$1,700.



Daniel, a Hunter College computer science student and an organizer with Jobs with Justice, attended the rally and spoke of how he has had to reduce his full-time course load from five classes to one class because of the immigrant tuition increase. Garcia, who is depending heavily on three bills currently being deliberated in the State Assembly to restore the in-state tuition rate to immigrant students, said, "If nothing works out, it will take me something like eight to ten years to graduate."

Another Hunter College student, "John," who studies political science and did not wish to be identified by his real name, felt that his ability to perform academically has been compromised by budget reductions, and said, "It's gonna bring my GPA down... it's going to be harder to graduate without TAP."

The CUNY marchers gained

enthusiastic support from NYU students who waved from the windows of their tall, brick dormitories high above Broadway as demonstrators passed by 8th Street.

Perhaps the most

According to students, walk-outs were staged at Stuyvesant High School, where about half of its 3,000 students left class, Beacon High School, LaGuardia High School, Martin Luther King High School, as well as the High School for Environmental Studies, all occur-

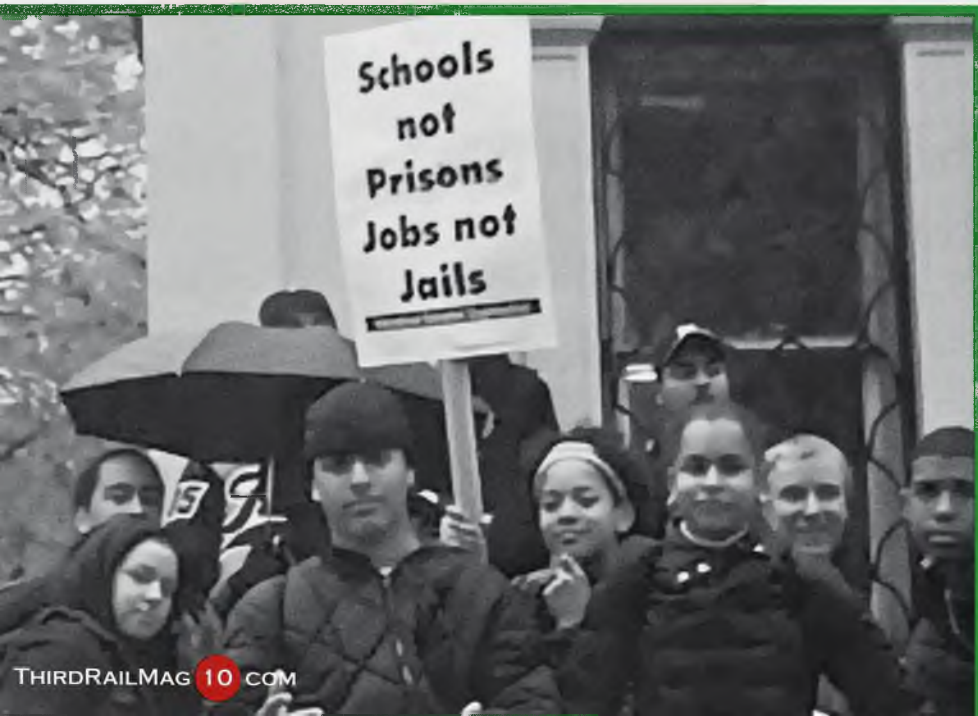
**THE CUNY MARCHERS GAINED
ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORT FROM
NYU STUDENTS WHO WAVED FROM THE
WINDOWS OF THEIR TALL, BRICK
DORMITORIES HIGH ABOVE**

remarkable presence at the demonstration, however, was made by CUNY high school students, who comprised at least half of all protesters. In opposition to a proposed \$358 million, or 7 to 10 percent reduction in city funding to the Board of Education, according to the Board's web site, the high school students staged a city-wide walk-out earlier Tuesday morning before the main rally in Union Square.

ring shortly after 11 a.m. Hundreds of students from the various high schools then congregated in Herald Square, including 400-500 from Stuyvesant, and rallied there for about an hour. About 500-600 students from the different schools later joined the larger CUNY rally in Union Square.

Teachers and school officials did not encourage the walk-out, but neither did they interfere with it, according to Stuyvesant student Tim Reilly, "My teachers said that even though they don't encourage us to cut classes, [they told us]... they will not penalize us if we go to the walk-out. Teachers are receiving the short end of the stick as well, not just students."

Reilly's Stuyvesant peer Stephanie Lo told, however, of one teacher's



attempt to deter students from walking out, “Mr. Sand was guarding the door [of the school] and he told students that were filing past as I went out, ‘We’re taking photographs of everyone who’s going out and it’s going to be held against you.’”

At the High School for Environmental Studies, where about 300 of 1,300 students also walked out of class, and, according to student Jennifer Lipschitz, “three of the girls that were promoting it [the walk-out] the most were threatened with suspension.”

At Environmental Studies, students’ electives, which include many environmentally-oriented courses such as AP (Advanced Placement) Environmental Science, are slated to be axed from the budget. Environmental Studies student Lipschitz attested, “Teachers wanted

to start an AP Philosophy and they had a large backing... but we are losing these new electives, half our old electives and probably our sports teams.”

Several non-CUNY students also attended the demonstration in a statement of solidarity with their CUNY peers and large immigrant and minority population. “As a minority in New York City,” said Joliz, a high school student, “I feel I should have the same right ... to be able to have an education and even though I am not an immigrant, I support the rights of other people to get an education also.”

As has become the norm at New York City protests which challenge local or national governmental policies, police presence was heavy,



with at least a hundred patrolmen on foot, cars and bikes around Union Square. A long chain of about fifty officers walked alongside the demon-

stration, unable to perform to many students’ disappointment, Tuesday’s rally provided an opportunity for city-wide

SEVERAL NON-CUNY STUDENTS ALSO ATTENDED THE DEMONSTRATION IN A STATEMENT OF SOLIDARITY WITH THEIR CUNY PEERS AND LARGE IMMIGRANT AND MINORITY POPULATION.

strators strictly confining them to the sidewalk along Broadway, while a group of about fifteen patrolmen followed directly behind the crowd. At least twenty NYPD vehicles, by eyewitness estimates, similarly sought to keep the crowd in check.

Although the march’s concluding rally at City Hall had to be abbreviated due to heavy rain, and musical performers Dead Prez were

alliances to be formed and strengthened.

The demonstration also highlighted, however, the gravity of the threats to public education in New York City. As Hunter student, John, asked, “How is New York City going to rebuild if you don’t invest in education?”

CROSSING

Kathy Ebel

Consider brave yellow. She keeps
the automobiles from the highways,
hair, tears and rubber

Brave yellow, she blinds
despite chaos passing crazy bold
through holes in the cheesecloth.

In defense of brave yellow, she does
her best to give this action city
an electric breath, some kinda slow.

Brave yellow, she shoots
away a bloody afternoon.

Consider faith as compass
points, bereft of a scarecrow,
teetering n a steeple,

and the citizens, doing their daily dance
along its grid, heads bent to the curb,
praying for points west.

From clapping the gibberish noise
through the airless playground where
the planets rock,

sharks from jets. And yet, princes
bottomless in grace are stuck to their
roller skates. The go round

and around the block, block, battered city
memorized, empty, party passports in
their blue jeans.



The gymnasium floor at the College of Staten Island is being ripped up and replaced, after water leaking from an adjacent shower room seeped underneath it — creating a perfect breeding ground for mold in the insulation under the floor.

The contracting company (AWL Industries) recently sealed off the southwest corner of the building and is now removing the mold, tearing up the floor and decontaminating the area. The project is scheduled to be finished by mid-June.

However, what is extremely suspicious is the fact that CSI officials would not disclose the specific type of mold detected in the gym.

In addition, the repair project is not without controversy. As AWL employees inside the gymnasium continue with their work, members of the Asbestos, Lead and Hazardous

Waste Laborers, Local 78, of the Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA) inflated a 15-foot rat in front of the campus because a non-union contractor was awarded the job.

They passed out flyers blasting the Dormitory Authority and detailing health hazards associated with mold, and insist they are more qualified in handling mold remediation. The state agency countered that employees do not need to be trained in asbestos removal and are qualified to perform the job at hand.

“The rat shows up at any public works project that does not use union labor,” Ms. Hutton said. “The nice thing about the rat is that you can deflate him and bring him to the next site and he makes a nice photo.”

“For the sake of the students, I pray to God that they are doing the right thing,” said Bill Doscher, a union organizer who was stationed next to the inflatable rat yesterday. “In our opinion, they are not qualified.”

STUDENT, FACULTY & STAFF BEWARE!

SERIOUS HEALTH ISSUES MAY ARISE IF YOU ARE EXPOSED TO MOLD.

AWL Industries, Inc., is a NON-UNION company that is using UNLICENSED, UNTRAINED workers to perform mold remediation.

Is the NYS Dormitory Authority and CSI's decision to hire a company with no experience and unlicensed workers putting students and faculty at risk?

Is AWL Industries, a company with no experience in this field, acting in a responsible manner in this school?

Should a company that doesn't pay its workers a living wage, thus undermining all wage earners, be awarded CSI's contract to remove mold?

Do you trust AWL Industries?!?!?!? YOU DESERVE BETTER!

Call Anil Raut at (212) 273-5054 and CSI Vice President John Hudacs at (718) 982-2240 and demand that they hire responsible, unionized contractors to perform this hazardous work!



How can mold affect your health

Too much exposure to mold may cause or worsen conditions such as asthma, hay fever, or other allergies. The most common symptoms of overexposure are cough, congestion, runny nose, eye irritation, and aggravation of asthma. Depending on the amount of exposure and a person's individual vulnerability, more serious health effects - such as fevers and breathing problems - can occur but are unusual.

How can you be exposed to mold?

When moldy material becomes damaged or disturbed, spores (reproductive bodies similar to seeds) can be released into the air. Exposure can occur if people inhale the spores, directly handle moldy materials, or accidentally ingest it. Also, mold can sometimes produce chemicals called mycotoxins. Mycotoxins may cause illness in people who are sensitive to them or if they are exposed to large amounts in the air.

What is *Stachybotrys chartarum*?

Stachybotrys chartarum (also known as *Stachybotrys atra*) is a type of mold that has been associated with health effects in people. It is a greenish-black mold that can grow on materials with a high cellulose content - such as drywall sheetrock, dropped ceiling tiles, and wood - that become chronically moist or water-damaged, due to excessive humidity, water leaks, condensation, or flooding.

How can you tell if *Stachybotrys chartarum* is present?

Many molds are black in appearance but are not *Stachybotrys*. For example, the black mold commonly found between bathroom tiles is not *Stachybotrys*. *Stachybotrys* can be positively identified only by specially trained professionals (e.g., mycologists) through a microscopic exam.

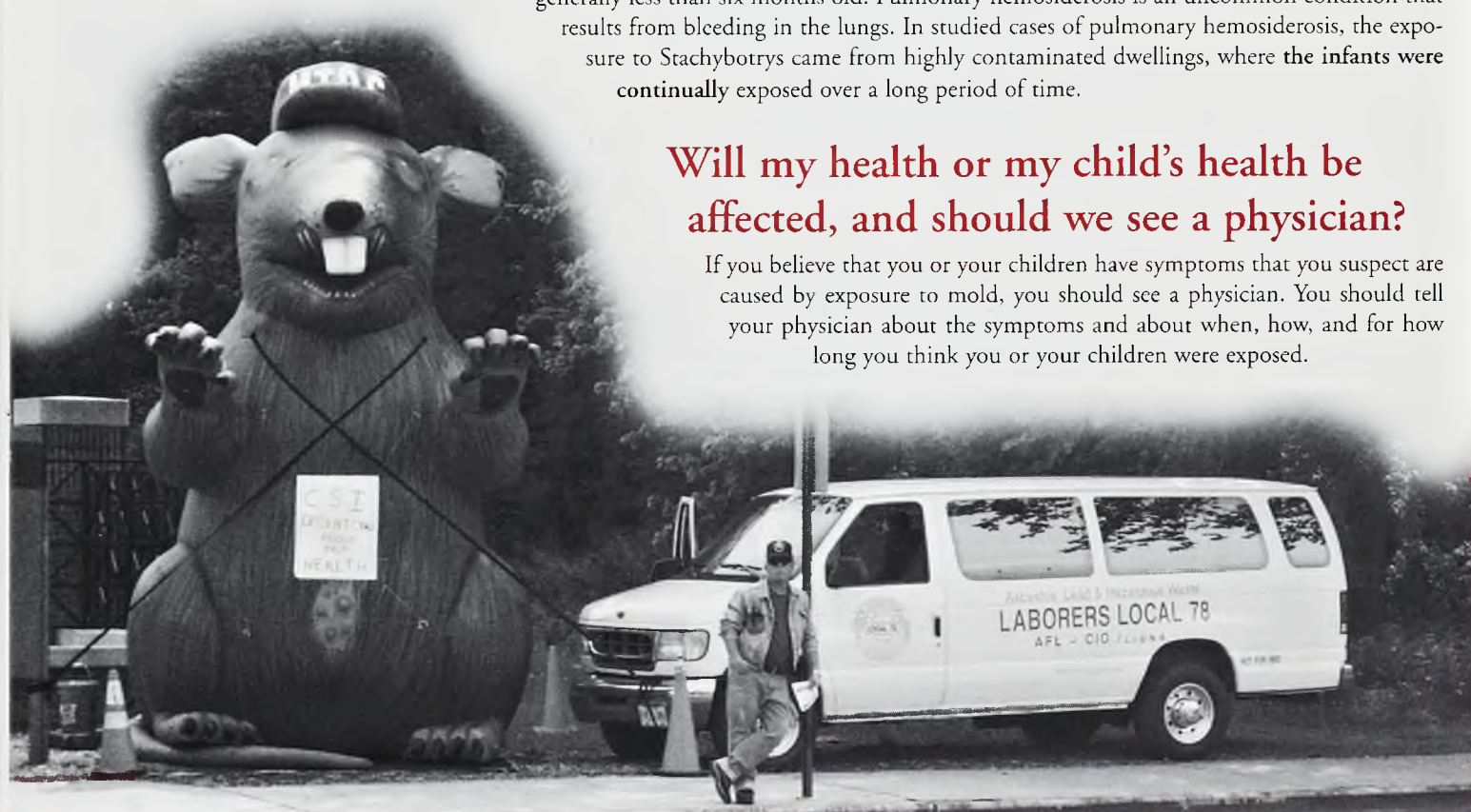
How can *Stachybotrys chartarum* affect your health?

Typically, indoor air levels of *Stachybotrys* are low; however, as with other types of mold, at higher levels health effects can occur. These include allergic rhinitis (cold-like symptoms), dermatitis (rashes), sinusitis, conjunctivitis, and aggravation of asthma. Some related symptoms are more general - such as inability to concentrate and fatigue. Usually, symptoms disappear after the contamination is removed.

There has been some evidence linking *Stachybotrys* with pulmonary hemosiderosis in infants who are generally less than six months old. Pulmonary hemosiderosis is an uncommon condition that results from bleeding in the lungs. In studied cases of pulmonary hemosiderosis, the exposure to *Stachybotrys* came from highly contaminated dwellings, where the infants were continually exposed over a long period of time.

Will my health or my child's health be affected, and should we see a physician?

If you believe that you or your children have symptoms that you suspect are caused by exposure to mold, you should see a physician. You should tell your physician about the symptoms and about when, how, and for how long you think you or your children were exposed.



The Bones of September

Mitchell Cohen

*Two vast and trunkless legs of steel
Like silent Pharaohs stood over Wall Street
Scraping the vast canvas of immortality*

*How many died erecting those towers:
Welders of iron, exoskeletal beams?
How many died as they came down?*

*Manhattan is missing its two front teeth
Can you help me find them?*

*World Trade Center burned and then collapsed.
Dozens leapt from upper floors -- Beat, you wings!
Just another few breaths! -- What were their thoughts*

*On that long morning's fall? Millions of fingers --
Fingers of Flesh, fingers of Memory -- endlessly sift
and sift again that ancient dust*

Can you help me find them?

*Now, only a torn, disfigured pedestal remains
and on it these words appear:*

*"My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.**

*Autumn, impervious,
Perhaps mocking our imperial pretense, whips her hips,
Swirls her bluest skirt, and casts the bones of September*

*Like I-Ching sticks against Horizon
Throwing sunsets
To die for.*

*Stanza recycled from Percy Bysshe Shelley, "Ozymandias", 1817.



leaning to left on my
skateboard
in order to turn
i feel as
aimless as a
bird
in flight

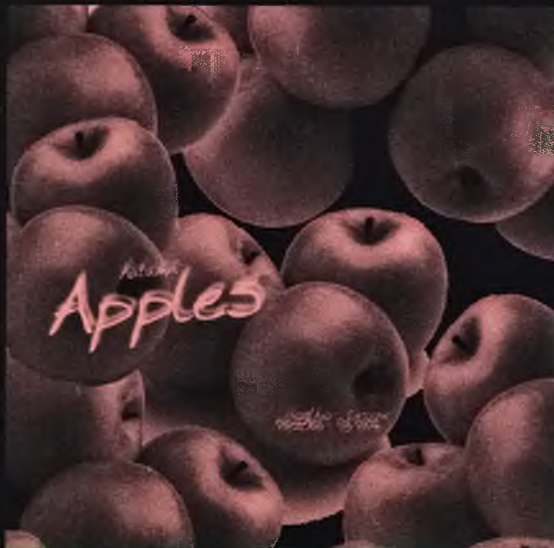
i ride my bike
into the biggest puddles
instead of the road

open road
bright blinding sun
mountains left and right
tortoise sets
the sound track...
i could drive forever

image by:anthony gargiso
words by: rachel richards



THIRD RAIL



FRUIT BASKET

IMAGINE ENORMOUS STRAWBERRIES,
IN HEALTHY NUMBERS,
SAGGING FROM THE
BRANCH SICK WITH
WEIGHT

TAKE ONE.
YANK IT.
APPRAISE ITS
ROUSING MAJESTY,
DIMPLES, FUR AND LIFE.



Strawberries

FRANK DUFFLEY
Frank Duffley

IDENTIFY
WITH
ITS
TAUT
SKIN,
STRONG, NUBILE, SUPPLE AND BERRY YOUNG

CRUNCH DOWN ON
ITS TENDER MEAT
TART TO TART,
BUT SWEET, SO
SWEET.

JOY, I DID LOCK THEE UP: BUT SOME BAD MAN
HATH LET THEE OUT AGAIN:
AND NOW, ME THINKS, I AM WHERE I BEGAN
SEV'N YEARES AGO: ONE VOGUE! AND VEIN,
ONE AIRE OF THOUGHTS USURPS MY BRAIN
I DID TOWARDS CANAAN DRAW; BUT NOW I AM
BROUGHT BACK TO THE RED SEA, THE SEA OF SHAME.

FOR AS THE JEWS OF OLD BY GODS COMMAND
TRAVELL'D, AND SAW NO TOWN;
SO NOW EACH CHRISTIAN HATH HIS JOURNEYS SPANN'D:
THEIR STORIE PENNES AND SETS US DOWN.
A SINGLE DEED IS SMALL RENOWN.
GODS WORKS ARE WIDE, AND LET IN FUTURE TIMES;
HIS ANCIENT JUSTICE OVERFLOWS OUR CRIMES.

The bunch of

Grapes

BUT CAN HE WANT THE GRAPE, WHO HATH THE WINE?
I HAVE THEIR FRUIT AND MORE.
BLESSED BE GOD, WHO PROSPER'D NOAH'S VINE,
AND MADE IT BRING FORTH GRAPES GOOD STORE.
BUT MUCH MORE HIM I MUST ADORE,
WHO OF THE LAWS SOWER JUICE SWEET WINE DID MAKE,
EV'N GOD HIMSELF BEING PRESSED FOR MY SAKE.

George Herbert

THEN HAVE WE TOO OUR GUARDIAN FIRES AND CLOUDS;
OUR SCRIPTURE-DEW DROPS FAST:
WE HAVE OUR SANDS AND SERPENTS, TENTS AND SHROWDS;
ALAS! OUR MURMURINGS COME NOT LAST.
BUT WHERE'S THE CLUSTER? WHERE'S THE TASTE
OF MINE INHERITANCE? LORD, IF I MUST BORROW,
LET ME AS WELL TAKE UP THEIR JOY

A KIWI HAS A KAKA IN HER GARDEN,
WHEN IT ARRIVED I'M NOT EXACTLY SURE WHEN.
AND THOSE IT SEEMS WEIRD,
THAT MISMATCHED PAIR,
OVER THE MONTHS,
HAVE BECOME FIRM FRIENDS.

AT FIRST THEY EACH KEPT THEIR DISTANCE,
THE KAKA HURT IN SOME UNKNOWN INSTANCE.

AND THOUGH HE CAN'T TALK,
BOY, CAN HE SQUAWK!

HE LETS HER KNOW HE'S UPSET,
BY PUTTING ON SUCH A SHOW,
WITH THE ODD LOW FLYING BLOW.
ONE SHE WONT QUICKLY FORGET.

AND WILL ENDEAVOUR NEVER TO BE LATE WITH HIS BREAKFAST AGAIN.

KIWI

and the kaka

TAKEN TO HANGING OFF ROOF EAVES,
PRETTY MUCH DOING AS HE PLEASURES.
MADE HIMSELF AT HOME IN THE SURROUNDING TREES.
STANDING UP TO THE DOG WITH RELATIVE EASE.

KIWI HAS TO REMEMBER TO PUT HER CAR IN THE GARAGE,
OR BE FOREVER CLAIMING INSURANCE.
AS KAKA SHOWED KIWI HIS FINESSE,
BY DISMANTLING THE RUBBERS ON HER CAR NO LESS.

WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT,
THAT IN A SUBURBAN STREET.
A KAKA WOULD FIND A WELCOME RETREAT.
YET TO FEILDING HE FOUND HIS WAY,
TAKEN UP RESIDENCE IN KIWI'S BACKYARD.
LOOKS LIKE HE'S SETTLED IN TO STAY,
WELL MAYBE FOR A WHILE ANYWAY.

CJA

HMM YOU CAN'T REALLY CALL AN ENDANGERED BIRD A PEST,
HOWEVER HE IS A TAXING GUEST.
PUTTING KIWI'S PATIENCE TO THE TEST.

YET THIS KAKA KNOWS HIS LIMITS,
MAKES HER LAUGH WITH HIS ANTICS.
FIXES HER WITH HIS BEADY GAZE,
AND COMING CLOSER WITH EACH PASSING DAY.

HE WAS THE BOY-NEXT-DOOR,
MOWING THE LAWNS FOR \$10
AND A TALL GLASS OF COKE
ON HOT SUMMER DAYS.
IT WASN'T UNTIL HALLOWEEN

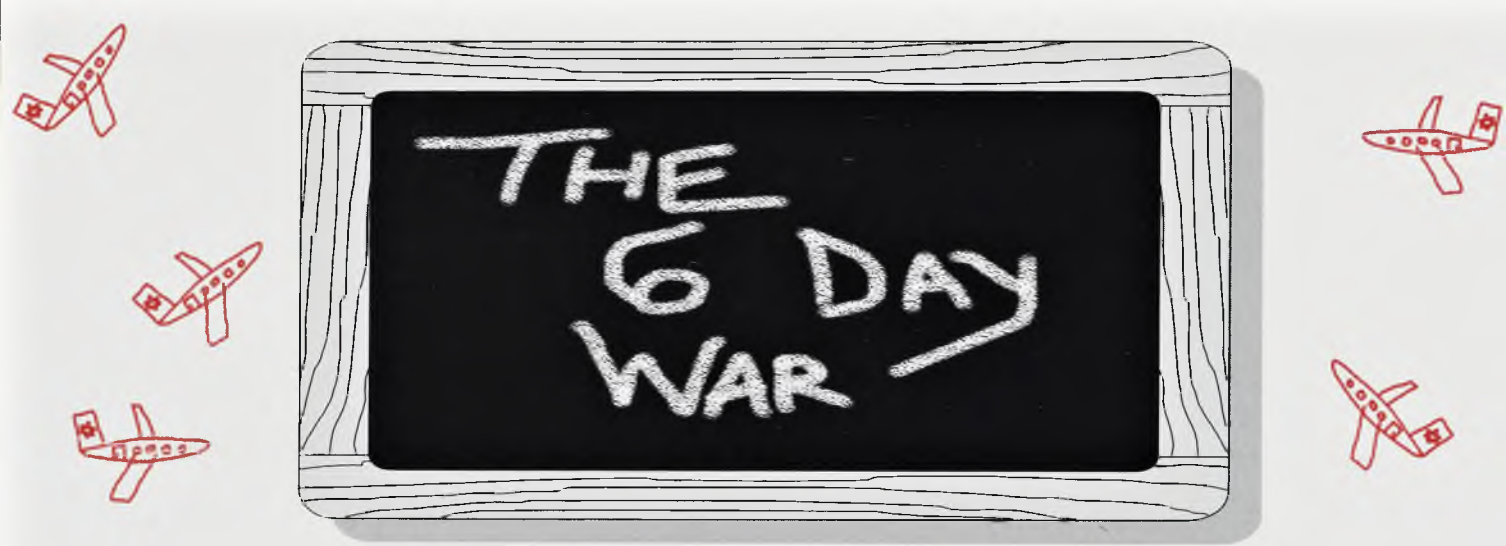
THAT HE CAME INSIDE.
I'D WARNED HIM THE DAY BEFORE,
FEELING A LITTLE BIT GUILTY;
TOLD HIM THERE WERE
SICK PEOPLE AROUND --

Autumn
Apples

Heather Grove
Hecker Grove

HE SHOULDN'T EAT ANYTHING
WITHOUT CHECKING IT FIRST.
YOU NEVER KNOW
WHAT CRAZY PEOPLE WILL DO.
BUT HE TOOK THE APPLES
WHEN I OFFERED THEM

AND BIT DEEPLY,
UNFLINCHINGLY,
INTO THE RAZOR-BLADES.
NOW I HAVE A BLOODY
BODY TO HIDE,
STREWN ACROSS THE BEDROOM
FLOOR.

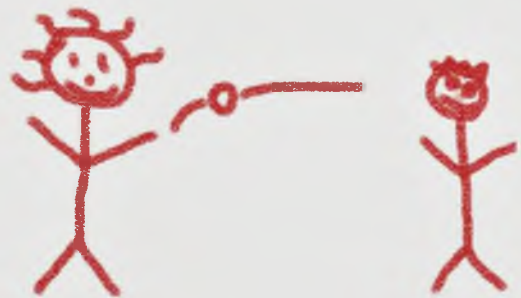


by Waheed Khalayleh

My memories of kindergarten days back in 1967 are still vivid in my mind. A two room white-stone building was rented to accommodate the kindergarten classes. It was about half a mile away from the rest of the elementary school. On the inside, the rooms were decorated with two strings of colored papers, which were hung diagonally over our heads. The small wooden chairs and the low square tables were lined in single rows, one child to a table. Poster size pictures of the alphabet, cars, crosswalks, policemen, doctors, and words of wisdom that we couldn't read or relate to covered the walls of both classrooms.

There was an outdoor bathroom that belonged to the landlord, who lived next door. Only the teachers were allowed to use it. The rest of us just took a walk behind the building and looked for a clean spot between the bushes in the open field. In those days it was acceptable for the little ones to do their business out in the open. A page or two of any newspaper, regardless in what language it was printed—Turkish, English, Hebrew or Arabic—would do the job of wiping. And if newspapers were not in our immediate reach, a few smooth, rounded stones would be sufficient. This was not during the Stone Age. This was only thirty-three years ago, when Israel was already established for nineteen years on the land of Palestine. I am sure the Jewish kindergarten schools must have had toilet papers, and probably in different colors. The Palestinians, however, who were called the Israeli-Arabs, had plenty of stones in their fields, so they managed.

Stones came in handy in many different ways for Palestinians, both at war and at peace. It has been since the battle of David and Goliath that we have learned to value stones—even the smallest of them. Stones were and still are used as weapons in battles to settle conflicts until this very moment. As children, we had many games that involved stones. One game was called the



"Seven Stones." It is a game where we piled seven flat stones in a tower. One team would take the ball and stand behind a line about fifteen feet away. The players of that team then took turns throwing the ball at the stone tower.



Once the stones were knocked down, the defending team would get the ball and starts the chase. Their objective was to hit their opponents with the ball before the opponents rebuilt the tower. A mother game I played a lot was called the "Rolling Ball". This was a torturous game. The losing team would line up facing a wall, if there was one, and the winning team would stand behind them, about thirty to forty feet away, and strike at them with a tennis ball. The losers were only allowed to cover their heads with their hands. This was a war scene, and there was nothing fun about getting a fastball crashing against one's ribs, but we used to laugh. Once in a while a boy would collapse from a curved ball aimed at his kidneys, but this would not deter him from going on after he felt better.

A dusty yard stretched in front of the white stone building. The two classes shared the yard for play. The teacher used to splash water so we wouldn't kick too much dust into the air. I remember very well this kindergarten day, early in June 1967. We were playing a game we called the Cat and the Mouse, a game that we played almost every day. The class would squat in a big circle as cats. We would chant a song while someone playing a mouse would circle the cats holding a hat. Once the mouse dropped the hat on one of the cats, the cat would chase the mouse and try to catch it before it stole the vacant spot. If the cat failed, then it would turn into a mouse and begin to circle around.

We had just started the game when war airplanes started to thunder over our heads. They would disappear so fast, but the loud noise would stay with us much longer. We began to sing louder and louder while we covered our ears with our little hands. But it got to the point where a new plane's thunder would start to approach before the previous one would completely disappear. Some kids began to cry. The game was disrupted, and the teacher ordered us back into the classroom. In less than ten minutes, parents started to appear at the classroom door to take their kids home. My father was at work, and my mother was watching over my three younger sisters. One of my uncles came to pick me up. I was among the last ones to leave the classroom. I was not scared. All the schools were closed for six days, until a cease-fire went into effect. At that age, I hadn't the slightest idea of what was going on, but what I really missed was my game at the school. Once the "Six Days War" was over, we went back to play more of the "Cat and the Mouse."



CONSIDER THE DISCOURSE

Penny Arcade

There are people with black skin.
There are people with red skin.
There are people with white skin.
There are people with brown skin.
There are people with olive skin.
There are people with yellow skin.
That's it.
Some are assholes.
Some aren't

CONSIDER THE DISCOURSE
FORMALLY CLOSED.

INTERPRETING DREAMS

I dreamed I was dead
I lay on a lawn chair
in a yard in the country
it was night, quiet and dark
except for a lit-up window
on the second floor
which I stared at
I wanted to go up to that room
to listen to music
I awoke remembering the silence
that's how I knew I was dead
then I heard a story read
over the radio saying
dreams about death mean
there's new life coming
I felt better

richard august

Laverne and Shirley Bash

WSIA

By Shawn Fisher

One day, while lounging around in her tacky yellow robe, doing her nails and listening to the radio, Laverne was visited by her friend Shirley. Possessing the short attention span that most CSI students have, Shirley asked if Laverne wanted to go to the mall. "I would love to, but it's Sunday and the mall closes at six," replied Laverne.

"That's not fair, I wanted to spend more of Daddy's money," whined Shirley.

Then, hearing a song that's not on the top forty Shirley asked if she could change the radio station. "You know I don't listen to anything unless MTV tells me too,"

whined Shirley again. After rolling her eyes back Laverne agreed, and the two fiddled around with the radio for a number of minutes listening only to bits and pieces of various pop-fluff songs trying to find that perfect cookie-cutter Back Seat Boys song that's on New

York radio stations. Of course, since radio stations love to edit and re-edit songs until a five-minute tune is only thirty seconds long, the girls were forced to flip endlessly around the dial.

Then suddenly a horrible

noise came from the radio. After the nausea and throbbing in her head subsided, Shirley asked if she broke the radio, but Laverne informed her that it was only WSIA the college's own radio station.

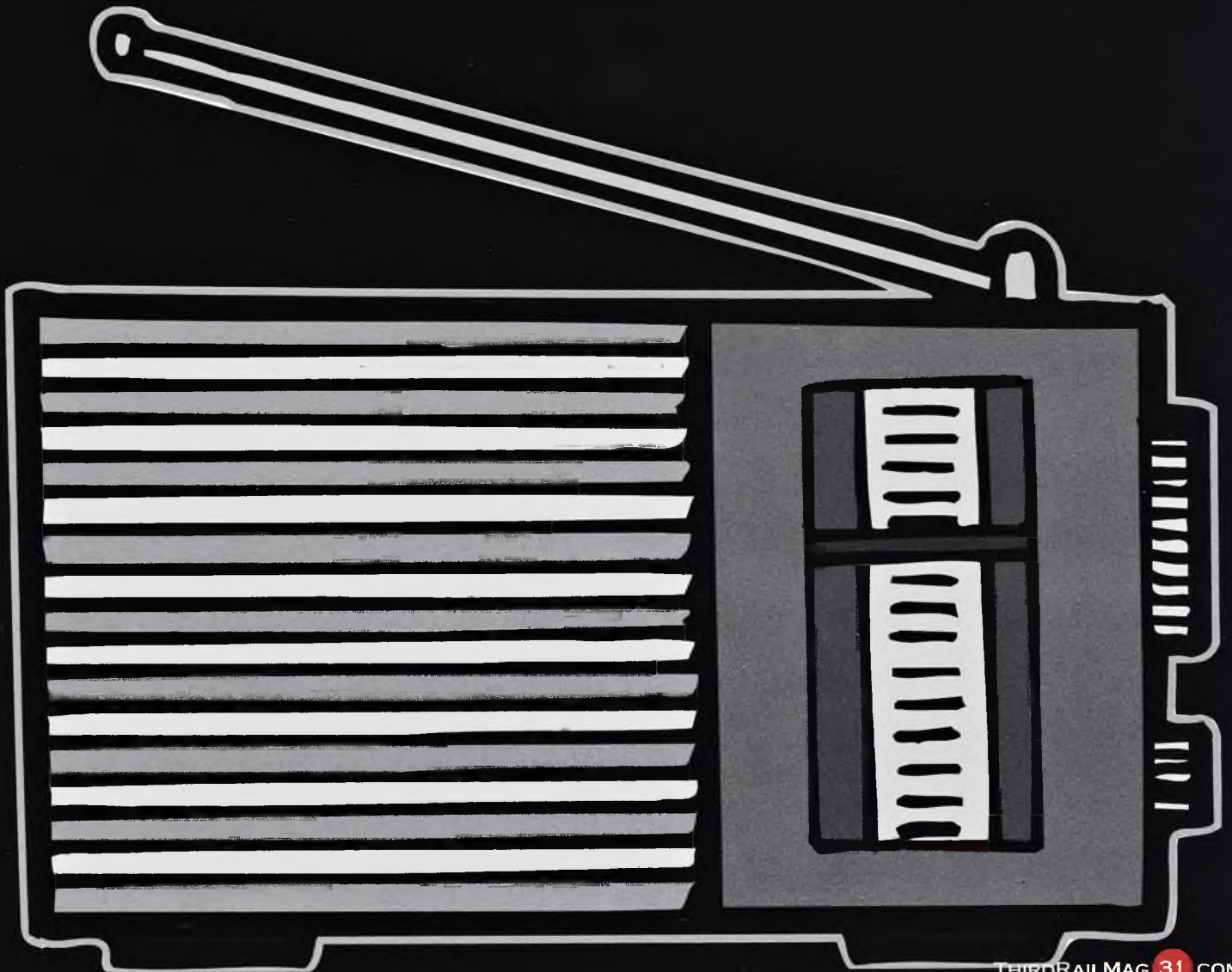
Like all CSI students, Shirley's apathy for school was quickly revealed as she told Laverne that she never knew they had a radio station. Laverne responded, "Most people don't, which is why those who work at the station get away with playing the most obscure, incompre-

hensible, God-awful music on the planet."

Outraged, Shirley went on a rant about how the DJ's at the station should be strung up for what they're playing. "But it's not on MTV, how can they play anything that hasn't been on MTV!" ranted Shirley. She went on to tell Laverne how they should join the station, recruit more students and rally to improve the format of the station. So the two worked long and hard for a whole twenty minutes to write out their plans before Melrose Place came on. By the time were done,

they were proud of the ideas they developed. Laverne and Shirley swore first thing tomorrow they would go down to the station and shake things up.

One week later, Laverne and Shirley were sitting around doing their nails and listening to the radio. While switching around the stations, after getting, bored Shirley came upon a horrible noise. After finding out that it was WSIA she said someone should do something about the bad format. Laverne just looked at her and sighed....



iac

WWW

INTERNATIONAL

ACT NOW

: PEACE ACTIVISTS WITH

CENTER

In our last issue, Third Rail Magazine presented an essay investigating the non-democratic nature of the largest “leftist” organization on college campuses today—the International Socialist Organization.

This issue, in Kevin Coogan’s excellnet investigative article, the International Action Center, ANSWER and Workers World are exposed.

On September 29th, 2001, just a few weeks following the September 11th terrorist attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, a large peace rally was held in Washington, D.C., to oppose an American military response to the attack. The main organizer of the D.C. rally, ANSWER (Act Now to Stop War & End Racism), was officially established shortly after the 9/11 attack. The leading force behind ANSWER’s creation is the International Action Center (IAC), which represents itself as a progressive organization devoted to peace, justice, and human rights issues. The IAC’s organizational clout is considerable: for the past decade it has played a leading role in organizing protest demonstrations against U.S. military actions against both Iraq and Serbia. After the September 11th attack, the IAC decided to turn its long-organized planned protest against the International Monetary Fund and World Bank gathering, scheduled for the 29th, into an action opposing any use of U.S. military power in response to terrorism.

A SECRET AGENDA?

BY KEVIN COOGAN

The IAC owes its current success to Ramsey Clark, a former Attorney General during the Johnson Administration, who is listed on the IAC's website as its founder. Clark's establishment credentials have caused many in the mass media to accept the IAC's self-portrayal as a group of disinterested humanitarians appalled by war and poverty who are working to turn American foreign policy towards a more humane course. On its website the IAC says it was "Founded by Ramsey Clark" and then describes its purpose: "Information, Activism, and Resistance to U.S. Militarism, War, and Corporate Greed, Linking with Struggles Against Racism and Oppression within the United States."

Yet since its inception in 1992, the IAC's actions have given rise to serious doubts about its bona fides as an organization truly committed to peace and human rights issues. Behind the blue door entrance to the IAC's headquarters on 14th Street in Manhattan can be found deeper shades of red. When one looks closely at the IAC, it becomes impossible to ignore the overwhelming presence of members of an avowedly Marxist-Leninist sect called the Workers World Party (WWP), whose cadre staff holds virtually all of the IAC's top positions. Whether or not the IAC is simply a WWP front group remains difficult to say. Nor is there any evidence that Ramsey Clark himself is a WWP member. What does seem undeniable is that without the presence of scores of WWP cadre working inside the IAC, the organization would for all practical purposes cease to exist. Therefore, even if Clark is not a WWP member, he is following a political course that meets with the complete approval of one of the most pro-Stalinist sects ever to emerge from the American far left.

Part One: Ramsey Clark from Attorney General to the IAC

Before analyzing the role of the WWP in both the creation and control of the IAC, it is first necessary to explain just how the IAC managed to link up with Clark, a 74-year old Texas-born lawyer and the IAC's one big name media star. The son of Supreme Court Justice Tom Clark (himself a Attorney General in the Johnson administration), Ramsey Clark radiates "middle America" with his puppy dog eyes, short hair, jug ears, Texas twang, plain talk, and "aw, shucks" demeanor. Clark backs up his folksy public persona with some dazzling credentials that

include serving as the National Chairman of the National Advisory Committee of the ACLU, as well as serving as past president of the Federal Bar Association.

Despite his prominence within the establishment, Clark also maintains close ties to the Left. After he ceased being LBJ's Attorney General in 1969 when Nixon became President, Clark visited North Vietnam and condemned U.S. bombing policy over the "Voice of Vietnam" radio station. He also served as a lawyer for peace activist Father Phillip Berrigan, and led a committee that investigated the killing of Chicago Black Panther leader Fred Hampton by local police in collusion with the FBI. At the same time, Clark remained politically active inside the more moderate ranks of the Democratic Party. In 1976, however, his defeat in the New York Democratic primary campaign for Senate ended his political ambitions. From the mid-1970s until today, the Greenwich Village-based Clark has pursued a career as a high-powered defense attorney who specializes in political cases.

Some of Clark's current clients, including Shaykh Umar `Abd al-Rahman, the "blind Sheik" who was convicted and sentenced to a lengthy prison term for his involvement in helping to organize follow-up terrorist attacks in New York City after the first World Trade Center attack in 1993, are a far cry from Father Berrigan. Shaykh `Abd al-Rahman, of course, deserves legal representation. What makes Clark's approach noteworthy is that in the case of `Abd al-Rahman (as well as those of Clark's other political clients), his approach is based more on putting the government on trial for its alleged misdeeds than actually proving the innocence of his clients. While completely ignoring Shaykh `Abd al-Rahman's pivotal role in the Egyptian-based Islamist terror group al-Jama`a al-Islamiyyah, as well as the central role that the Shaykh's Jersey City-based mosque played in the first World Trade Center attack, Clark tried to portray the blind Shaykh as a brilliant Islamic scholar and religious thinker who was being persecuted simply as a result of anti-Muslim prejudice on the part of the American government.

Clark appears to be driven by intense rage at what he perceives to be the failures of American foreign policy; a rage so strong that it may well be irrelevant to him whether his clients are actually innocent or guilty as long as he can use them to strike back at the American establishment which once welcomed him with open arms.

After losing his 1976 Senate bid, Clark deepened his opposition to American foreign policy. In June 1980, at a time when American hostages were in their eighth month of captivity in Iran, Clark sojourned to Tehran to take part in a conference on the “Crimes of America” sponsored by Ayatollah Khomeini’s theocratic Islamic regime. According to a story on Clark by John Judis that appeared in the April 22nd, 1991 *New Republic*, while in Iran Clark publicly characterized the Carter Administration’s failed military attempt to rescue the hostages as a violation of international law. By the time Clark was sipping tea in Tehran, American foreign policy was in shambles. In both Nicaragua and Iran, U.S.-backed dictators had fallen from power. In Europe, the incoming Reagan Administration would soon be faced with a growing neutralist movement that was particularly strong in Germany. Inside the U.S., the anti-nuclear “freeze” movement was then in full swing. Meanwhile, in Afghanistan, the Soviet Union had deployed massive amounts of troops into a formerly neutral nation for the first time since the end of World War II.

By the mid-1980s, however, the combination of Reagan in America and Margaret Thatcher in England had brought the Left to a screeching halt. Huge sums of covert CIA aid allowed the mujahidin to turn Afghanistan into a cemetery for Russian soldiers, while in Central America the U.S. managed first to destabilize and then to bring down Cuban-allied states like Nicaragua and Grenada. In the Middle East, the U.S. (with help from Israel) successfully encouraged both Iraq and Iran to fight a long bloody war

against each other, a war triggered by Saddam Hussein’s attempted invasion of Iran. In 1986 American planes even bombed Libya to punish Colonel Qadhafi for backing terrorist groups in the West. As U.S. power began to reassert itself globally, Clark became even more extreme in his opposition to American foreign policy. He first astonished many on the Left when he agreed to defend former Grenada Defense Minister Bernard Coard, leader of the ultra-leftist clique responsible for the assassination of Maurice Bishop. (It was Bishop’s 1983 murder that had supplied the pretext for the U.S. invasion of Grenada.) After the U.S. attack on Libya, Clark journeyed to Tripoli to offer his condolences to Colonel Qadhafi. That same year he defended Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) leaders from a legal suit brought by the family of Leon Klinghoffer, an elderly retired man in a wheel chair who was murdered by Palestinian terrorists on the Italian cruise ship “Achille Lauro” simply because he was Jewish. Clark even became the lawyer for Nazi collaborator Karl Linnas, who was unsuccessfully fighting deportation to his native Estonia to face war crimes charges.

Clark’s next legal client was equally surprising. In 1989 he became Lyndon Larouche’s lead attorney in Larouche’s attempt to appeal his conviction on federal mail fraud charges. Larouche, who began his political career in the late 1940s as a member of the Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP), had by the late 1970s embraced the far right, anti-Semitism, and Holocaust denial. Clark claimed that the government was persecuting Larouche solely to suppress his political organ-

izing, and even went so far as to express “amazement” at the personal “vilification” directed at his client! A report from the left-wing watchdog group Political Research Associates suggests that Clark’s fondness for Larouche may have been rooted in Larouche’s aggressive support for Panamanian dictator General Manuel Noriega, who had been forcibly removed from power by the Bush Administration. Both Larouche and Clark participated in the movement opposed to American military intervention in Panama. Clark even visited Panama in January 1990 as part of an “Independent Commission of Inquiry” to examine American “war crimes.” (Not surprisingly, the Commission found America “guilty.”)

Clark’s willingness to defend political clients so long as he felt he could use their cases to put the American government on trial meant that he was less interested in proving that his clients were saints than in proving that members of his own government were sinners. Clark’s logic now began to extend beyond his choice of legal clients to encompass groups that he was willing to collaborate with who he felt might help advance his political agenda. By 1990, Clark decided he was even willing to ally himself closely with an ultra-left Marxist-Leninist sect called the Workers World Party (WWP).

Clark’s ties to the WWP first became apparent during the 1990-1991 foreign policy crisis in the Middle East that began unfolding after Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in an attempt to dominate the Middle East’s oil sup-

THE IAC AND THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST SANCTIONS: HELPING THE IRAQI PEOPLE OR SADDAM HUSAIN?

One of the IAC's best-known campaigns is aimed at lifting all economic sanctions against Iraq. By raising this issue, the IAC is trying to appeal to many people who have no sympathy for Iraq but who are rightly concerned that the way sanctions are currently imposed only ends up punishing ordinary Iraqis, particularly children, who are deprived of food and medicine while the ruling elite remains unharmed. UN agencies involved with Iraq believe that as a result of the way the sanctions policy has been implemented, thousands of innocent Iraqi civilians are needlessly dying every month. The sanctions policy has also been seized upon by Saddam Hussein to generate sympathy for Iraq, both in the West and especially within the Muslim world. Hussein, of course, wants an end to all sanctions so that he can go about rebuilding his war machine. From his point of view, humanitarian concerns about sanctions serve as a perfect "wedge" issue to force an end to any UN-imposed restrictions on Iraq's sovereignty, restrictions that were heightened after he violated his promise to allow UN inspectors to freely examine potential nuclear, biological, and chemical warfare sites on Iraqi soil.

In an attempt to rectify the injustices caused by sanctions, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell appeared on March 7th, 2001 before the House International Relations Committee to argue for "humane, smart sanctions" that "target Saddam Hussein not the Iraqi people." A similar view was reflected in a report on Iraq from the Fourth Freedom Foundation authored by David Cortright, a former executive director of the anti-war group SANE. Cortright proposes a revised sanctions policy that specifically targets Hussein's ability to use Iraqi oil revenue to either build or import weapons and "dual use" goods while letting commercial companies, not the UN, be responsible for certifying and providing notification of civilian

imports into Iraq. The proposal would also permit the ordering and contracting of civilian goods on an "as-required basis" to overcome cumbersome UN regulations.

While by no means perfect, Powell's support for "smart sanctions" met with enormous resistance from both Congress and the Pentagon, both of whom fear being seen as overly "soft" on Iraq. Given this political reality, one would have thought that the IAC might have given at least some of Powell's or Cortright's proposals a degree of critical support, since they would materially improve the conditions of ordinary Iraqis — something the IAC itself claims to be so concerned about — as well as open up a broader discussion of the sanctions issue. Yet in a March 20th statement, Richard Becker, the IAC's "Western Regional Coordinator" (and a leading member of the WWP), denounced smart sanctions as a "poisonous fraud," claimed that smart sanctions were a form of colonialism, and renewed the IAC's demand "to unconditionally lift the genocidal sanctions against Iraq" which, coincidentally enough, is exactly what Saddam Hussein himself would like so that he can rebuild his military machine.

The manipulation of the Iraq sanctions issue by the far left for its own political goals may have hurt the campaign against sanctions, according to Scott Ritter. Ritter, a former Marine Captain who led the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) disarmament team in Iraq for seven years, is today a leading advocate of ending the type of sanctions that only hurt the Iraqi people. In an interview with Ali Asadullah (available from iviews.com) that appeared on February 2nd, 2000, Ritter stated that one of the problems which genuine sanction critics have been taking seriously is that the issue "has been embraced by, I would say, the fringe left of the United States. . . Because the issue

has been embraced by the left — including radical elements of the left — it's lost a little bit of its political credibility." Due to the fringe left's radical beliefs, "virtually all of what they say [about Iraq] is wrong, factually; or heavily slanted with a political ideology that most of Americans don't find attractive. When one fringe left group claimed that American policy in Iraq was equivalent to Auschwitz, Ritter told them that such a statement not only alienated people but that "[it was] about as grossly irresponsible statement as I can imagine. This isn't Auschwitz, this isn't genocide. . . This is a horrible policy that's resulting in hundreds of thousands of dead kids. But there's a big difference between the two." Ritter also said that it was almost impossible to get a legitimate debate in the U.S. about sanctions because while one side "demonizes Iraq, the opposition views 'the regime' as some sort of nice little genteel Middle East nation."

When specifically asked about Ramsey Clark, Ritter replied: "I wouldn't be in touch with Ramsey Clark. . . I fought in the Gulf War. I was in that war. I know what went on during that war, and we're not war criminals. I'm not a war criminal. And none of the people I served with are war criminals. And yet he's accusing the U.S. of committing war crimes because A-10 aircraft fired depleted uranium shells at Iraqi tanks. That's horribly irresponsible. I don't want to be associated with that man. That's the kind of thing I'm talking about. He may have a point when it comes to economic sanctions, but he hasn't a clue of what's involved in modern warfare and why we targeted certain targets. . . He's grossly irresponsible in some of the things he says." Apparently, Saddam Hussein disagrees with Ritter's assessment of Clark. Otherwise why would he continue to welcome Ramsey Clark-led IAC delegations to Baghdad year after year with open arms?

plies. During the Winter 1990-91 Mideast crisis, two separate “anti-war” coalitions arose to protest the first Bush Administration’s policies. Before the military attack on Iraq took place in January 1991, the Bush Administration (with support both from Congress and many other nations) imposed an economic embargo on Hussein in an attempt to pressure him to voluntarily withdraw his forces from Iraq and avoid a full-scale war. The embargo policy was strongly endorsed by Democrats in Washington. Although the Russians had long maintained strong ties to Iraq, even Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev tried to persuade Hussein to withdraw his forces or face military defeat.

The Bush Administration made it clear to Hussein that he was on a tight deadline, and that any failure to meet that deadline and withdraw his forces would result in war. The first anti-war coalition, the National Campaign for Peace in the Middle East, strongly opposed the idea of a deadline and advocated the extension of the sanctions policy against Iraq as an alternative to military action. The

National Campaign also made it clear that no matter how much it was opposed to a war against Iraq, it also considered Hussein’s invasion of Kuwait to be an undeniable act of aggression. The National Campaign’s stance on the Gulf War was challenged by a rival organization, the National Coalition to Stop U.S. Intervention in the Middle East. The National Coalition bitterly opposed the National Campaign’s support for the extension of sanctions. The Coalition argued that Iraq itself was the victim of “U.S. Oil Imperialism,” which was working in cahoots with reactionary states like Israel, Saudi Arabia, and the ruling class of Kuwait itself. The Coalition demanded, instead, that the Left uncritically defend “the Iraqi people” against both continued economic sanctions and direct American military intervention. The divisions inside the Left over this issue became so deep that both groups were forced to hold rival rallies in Washington in January 1991.

The hard Left National Coalition came out of a long-standing Workers World Party front organization known as the People’s Anti-War Mobilization (PAM), which quickly reorganized itself into the National Coalition. The WWP’s prominent role in the National Coalition was made evident by the group’s

choice of a leader, a WWP member named Monica Moorhead (the WWP’s candidate for President in the 2000 elections). The Coalition’s office was adjacent to Clark’s Manhattan law office, where another WWP cadre member named Gavriella Gemma (Coalition Coordinator) worked as a legal secretary. The National Coalition (most likely through Gemma) extended an invitation to Clark to serve as its official spokesman. To the astonishment of many, he accepted. Yet Clark and the WWP, at least publicly, had so little in common that as late as 1989 the WWP’s official mouthpiece, Workers World (WW), never even mentioned Clark in a favorable light.

Clark’s decision paved the way for his subsequent involvement in the WWP-allied International Action Center. After the Gulf War ended, Clark established an “International War Crimes Tribunal” to denounce U.S. actions against Iraq. When the Tribunal held its first hearings in New York on May 11th, 1991, the speakers included WWP members Teresa Gutierrez (“co-coordinator” of yet another WWP front, the International Peace for Cuba Appeal), Moorhead, and WWP stalwart Sarah Flounders. One year later, on July 6th, 1992, Workers World announced the creation of a “center for international solidarity” (the IAC) with Clark as its spokesman. Clark told WW that “the international center can become a people’s United Nations based on grass-roots activism and the principles of peace, equality and justice.” With Clark as spokesman and Sarah Flounders as a coordinator, the IAC sheltered a myriad of WWP front

Brian Becker



groups and allied organizations, including the National Coalition to Stop U.S. Intervention in the Middle East, the Haiti Commission, the Campaign to Stop Settlements in Occupied Palestine, the Commission of Inquiry on the US Invasion of Panama, the Movement for a Peoples Assembly, and the International War Crimes Tribunal.

From 1991 until today, the IAC/WWP has led repeated delegations to Iraq with Clark at their head to meet with Saddam Hussein and other top Iraqi officials. The close ties between the IAC and Hussein have led other critics of U.S. foreign policy toward Iraq, such as former UN inspector Scott Ritter (who, like the IAC, opposes the continuation of sanctions as being far more harmful to the Iraqi people than to Hussein), to distance himself from any association with the IAC. Ironically enough, a few years before the Gulf War broke out, the WWP had no qualms about labeling Saddam Hussein as a genocidal war criminal. In a September 22nd, 1988 WW article entitled "Iraq launches genocidal

attack on Kurdish people," WWP cadre (and current IAC honcho) Brian Becker denounced Iraq's "horrific chemical weapons attacks on Kurdish villages," citing "ample evidence" from Kurdish sources and "independent observers" that "mustard gas, cyanide and other outlawed chemical weapons have been used in a massive fashion" not just against the Kurds but also against "thousands of rebelling Iraqi forces who deserted from the army in 1984 during the Iran-Iraq war, and took refuge in the marshland areas in southern Iraq." Becker then noted that the Iraqi attempt to crush the Kurds "by a combination of terror and systematic depopulation" has been "the hallmark of the government's policy for the last several years."

More recently both Clark and the IAC have played a leading role in uncritically defending former Serbian leader Slobodon Milosevic's brutal attempts to dominate both Bosnia and Kosovo. (Clark even

d e f e n d e d
R a d o v a n
Karadzic, the
n o t o r i o u s
Bosnian Serb
warlord allied
w i t h
M i l o s e v i c ,

against a civil suit brought against him for the atrocities carried out by his forces.) While

accusing NATO of committing war crimes against Serbia, neither the IAC nor the WWP criticized Serbia's

notorious record of terror against civilians, one which includes both the infamous massacre at Srebrenica and the displacement of a million Muslim refugees from Kosovo. The Clark/IAC War Crimes Tribunal's hatred of American policy, which comes coated in legal jargon, borders on the comic as well as the megalomaniacal. One IAC "legal brief," for example, accuses President Clinton, the U.S. Secretaries of State and Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and "U.S. personnel directly involved in designating targets, flight crews and deck crews of the U.S. military bombers and assault aircraft, U.S. military personnel directly involved in targeting, preparing and launching missiles at Yugoslavia" with war crimes. Nor does the IAC indictment ignore the political and military leadership of England, Germany, and "every NATO country," not to mention the governments of Turkey and Hungary. It then charges NATO with "inflicting, inciting and enhancing violence between Muslims and Slavs," using the media "to demonize Yugoslavia, Slavs, Serbs and Muslims as genocidal murderers," and "attempting to destroy the Sovereignty, right to self determination, democracy and culture of the Slavic, Muslim, Christian and other people of Yugoslavia." The Alice in Wonderland quality of the "war crimes indictment" is further highlighted by its demand for "the abolition of NATO"!

No matter how surreal the IAC's actions sound, there can be little doubt that they are well-funded, since IAC/WWP cadres regularly fly to Europe and the Middle East to attend conferences and political

Monica Moorehead



meetings. Through a 501(c) 3 organization called the People's Rights Fund, a wealthy Serbian-American who may even have business connections to Belgrade can freely donate to both the IAC and its related media propaganda arm, the Peoples Video Network. Nor are foreign diplomats terribly shy about being publicly associated with IAC events. Iraq's UN Ambassador, Dr. Sa'id Hasan, for example, even spoke at the IAC's "First Hearing of the Independent Commission of Inquiry to Investigate U.S./NATO War Crimes Against the People of Yugoslavia," held in New York City on July 31st, 1999. One foreign official who will not be attending any IAC conferences in the near future, however, is former Yugoslav leader Slobodon Milosevic, who is currently on trial for war crimes in the Hague.

Part Two: The Crisis of the Marxist Left and the Rise of the WWP

Although Ramsey Clark greatly contributed to the IAC's credibility with respect to the outside world, the emergence of the WWP inside the American radical movement essentially stems from resistance inside the U.S. Left to the radical changes in the Soviet Union begun by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. Gorbachev's attempts to reform the Soviet system sent a shock wave throughout the American Left not unlike that which had followed the partial revelations of Stalin's crimes in the famous 1956 20th Party Congress of the CPSU. Gorbachev's new policies bitterly split the American Communist Party (CPUSA), whose aging leadership clearly opposed the new turn. The CPUSA crack-up also had a profoundly disorienting effect on many of the "peace" fronts long associated with the party, as well as on its fellow travelers inside the "Rainbow Coalition"/Jessie Jackson wing of the Democratic Party.

Starting in the 1960s (when it played a major role in organizing anti-Vietnam peace demonstrations), the CPUSA managed to establish cooperative relationships with left/liberal groups like the National Commission for a Sane Nuclear Policy (SANE), the War Resisters League, the American Friends Service Committee, Women's Strike for Peace, sections of the labor movement and the peace, civil rights, "social justice" and social gospel groups associated with the National Council of Churches; all of whom helped form the base of the "progressive" wing of the Democratic Party. When dealing with Democrats and

left-liberals along "Popular Front" lines, the CPUSA carefully avoided spouting radical dogma even as its sister parties in Moscow and Havana encouraged Marxist-led revolutions in the Third World. While the CP extended its influence into left-liberal circles, particularly during the Reagan years, party "hardliners" rested content in the knowledge that the more clout the CPUSA had inside the Democratic Party and its allied constituent groupings, the less likely the Reagan Administration would be able to generate the political will needed to use military force against revolutionary regimes and movements throughout the Third World. Needless to say, this "two tier" approach met with Moscow's full approval.

All that changed with the shift of Soviet foreign policy under Gorbachev. Hardliners were infuriated with Gorbachev's decision to end Russian support to its client states in Eastern Europe. Many of these regimes were run by ideological hardliners willing to devote considerable resources to encouraging insurgent Marxist movements in the Third World. Not surprisingly, party bosses in regimes like East Germany (whose hold on power was ultimately based on Soviet military might) now became Gorbachev's harshest critics. Gorbachev's decision to distance the Soviet Union from Cuba also dealt a serious blow to Cuban-allied insurgency movements throughout both Central and Latin America. Since the romanticization of the Cuban Revolution, combined with Cuban military aid to the Sandinistas and the deployment of Cuban troops to help the government of Angola in its war against Jonas Savimbi's Union Nacional para a Independencia Total de Angola (UNITA, a brutal South African-, U.S.-, and Chinese-backed opposition movement) had led many American leftists into the Soviet camp in the first place, Gorbachev's actions against Cuba came as a particularly bitter blow. The crisis inside the Soviet-allied Left became even more pronounced after Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait, when Soviet foreign policy began to tilt more towards Washington than Moscow's longtime ally Baghdad.

In the midst of this larger crisis over Gorbachev and Iraq, the WWP became the first avowedly left sect more or less ideologically allied with Moscow to offer its unconditional support to Saddam Hussein as a victim of "U.S. imperialism," while it attacked Gorbachev as "a counterrevolutionary" (if not a CIA agent). Until 1988 Sam Marcy, the WWP's three-decades long undisputed leader and theoretical guru, had taken a relatively benign

view of Gorbachev, glasnost and perestroika. By the fall of 1988, however, Marcy had decided that Gorbachev's decision to embrace both market reforms and political accommodation with the West was an unmitigated disaster. In a February 10th, 1989 forum on Soviet policy that included a spokesman from the Communist Party, the Soviet UN Mission, the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), the African National Congress, and the now-defunct Line of March grouping, WWP spokesman Larry Holmes confessed to being "worried by perestroika" and other ideas advanced "to justify policies that seem to be alien to socialism." On September 29th, 1989, the WWP convened an "emergency conference" (entitled "In Defense of Socialism") to unify the party around the new anti-Gorbachev line. A few weeks later, in late October 1989, the WWP National Committee met to discuss Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze's October 23rd speech to the Supreme Soviet, in which Shevardnadze announced that the Soviet Union had

decided to disengage from Eastern Europe. The meeting ended with the WWP sending out "messages of solidarity" to the Communist Parties of East Germany and Czechoslovakia, according to a report in the November 9th, 1989 WW. Nor did the WWP shy away from publicly defending Romania's Dracula-like dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, whom the WWP worked vigorously (but with little success) to turn from monster to mensch inside the pages of Workers World.

The WWP was equally consistent when it came to Asia. The sect even applauded the brutal Chinese repression of pro-democracy students and workers at Tiananmen Square. In the April 12th, 1990 WW, Sara Flounders (currently a leader of the "human rights" organization IAC), wrote: "Now the significance of the suppression of the right-wing movement in Tiananmen Square" could be seen from a "clearer perspective"; namely, that China had "smashed the plot of international anti-China forces to subvert the legal government and the socialist system

WORKERS WORLD PARTY

FROM KIM IL SUNG'S BIRTHDAY PARTY TO THE RUSSIAN "RED-BROWN ALLIANCE"

The Orwellian absurdity that is the WWP reaches its summit with the group's well-known love for that well-known bastion of human rights and free thought, North Korea. Longtime WWP leader Deirdre Griswold captured the sect's admiration for the world's last remaining Stalinist state when she wrote as follows in the April 20th, 2000 Workers World: "In the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — the socialist north of the divided land — no date is more important than April 15, the birthday of Kim Il Sung. . . this year as Koreans celebrate Kim Il Sung's birthday — and in the U.S.-occupied south, where such actions must be taken in secret because of repressive 'national security' laws — they will also be telling the world that they are proud of and confident in their new leader, Kim Jong Il [Kim Il Sung's son and heir — KC], who is following in the socialist footsteps of Kim Il Sung." A frequent visitor to North Korea, Griswold regularly goes into fits of literary rapture when relating her experiences in the North. Her December 22nd, 1986 WW report on her visit to Pyongyang (entitled "A visit to People's Korea where there is housing for all") begins "What

a success story!" She then describes a nation where there is "no homelessness, no hunger, no poverty." The fact that North Korea is one of the poorest countries in the world and that North Korea's population faces the threat of famine on a regular basis has somehow escaped Griswold's notice.

Ever since its beginnings as the Global Class War tendency inside the SWP, Sam Marcy's clique has regularly singled out North Korea for special admiration. The WWP's direct "party to party" relations with the North, however, only began to blossom fully after the WWP started attacking Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. The WWP's big break came in May 1990, when the first official WWP delegation headed by Marcy visited North Korea "for 12 days in May" at the invitation of the Central Committee of the Workers Party of Korea. While in Pyongyang, the WWP delegates "had the great honor of meeting and exchanging views with Kim Il Sung." The June 7th, 1990 issue of WW even included a photo op of the WWP delegates with their North Korean friends, including Kim Il Sung, who stood in the center of the photo flanked by Marcy

and Griswold.

In April 1992 another U.S. delegation led by Marcy that included Sue Bailey (a WWP'er who heads the "U.S. Out of South Korea Committee"), as well as delegates from the CPUSA, the SWP, and the American Democratic Lawyers Association, again visited North Korea to attend a "Joint Meeting of Parties, Governments, National and International Organizations" organized by CILRECO, an organization that "promotes solidarity with the Korean people." (As the official leader of the U.S. group, Marcy received the North Korean equivalent of a papal blessing.) The Americans, along with delegates from 130 other countries, traveled to the North "to attend mass public celebrations of the 80th birthday" of Kim Il Sung, according to a report in an April 1992 issue of WW by Sue Bailey and Key Martin datelined Pyongyang.

While in the North for Kim's birthday party, the WWP entered into discussions with other hardline Communist groups, including a Stalin-worshipping sect called the Russian Communist Workers Party (RCWP) (Rossiskaia

of China.” How did Flounders know this to be true? Because Chinese Premier Li Peng said so in a March 20th speech to the National Peoples Congress in Beijing.

The WWP’s public opposition to Gorbachev made it a potential vehicle for hard Left elements then trying to construct their own line independent of Moscow. Left stars like famed radical lawyer William Kunstler openly endorsed the WWP line on Gorbachev in blurbs for Sam Marcy’s April 1990 book *Perestroika: A Marxist Critique* (essentially a compilation of his articles written for WW). Spurred on by the favorable response, the WWP intensified its attack. A September 8th, 1991 WW editorial even claimed that the introduction of

capitalism into Eastern Europe “has been a tyranny as bad as any terror.” On September 28-29th, 1991, the WWP held an “emergency conference” in New York “in response to the Gorbachev-Yeltsin takeover” in Russia. According to an article in the October 10th, 1991 WW, “over 45 comrades” spoke on an open microphone at the conference about the “counterrevolutionary” events in Russia and — surprise, surprise — “not one of them found cause to oppose the party’s analysis.” One WWP’er even expressed pleasure about the way that China had “stopped in Tiananmen Square” the “so-called democracy movement,” while another praised the former East Germany as “a haven for gay liberation”!

Part Three: Stealth Trotskyism and the Mystery of the WWP

One of the many ironies of the IAC/WWP story is that a group now aligned with some of the most dogmatic elements in what’s left of the Left is itself most likely run by secret Trotskyists. Given the hermit-like quality of the WWP, it’s hard to know for sure. Even accurate estimates of the group’s members are hard to come by. In the 1980s most conventional estimates were that it had somewhere between three and four hundred followers. Thanks to the IAC in particular, the WWP’s recruiting efforts over the past decade have met with some success, especially in New York and San

Kommunisticheskaia Rabochaia Partia, or RKRPP), which emerged from the anti-Gorbachev, “anti-revisionist” Movement of Communist Initiative in November 1991. On September 3rd, 1992, WW ran an article by Viktor Tyulkin, the group’s top leader and the Secretary of its Central Committee. The introduction to the article explained that Tyulkin and Marcy had first met in Pyongyang during the April festivities for Kim “and [had] discussed the political situation in the USSR and the U.S.” They remained in contact, and on Marcy’s 85th birthday Tyulkin sent him a “message of solidarity” from the RCWP that was reprinted in the October 17th, 1996 WW. Tyulkin’s comrade Victor Anpilov from the Executive Committee of Working Russia also enclosed his own message of solidarity.

Although the RCWP doesn’t receive much press coverage in WW, it seems clear that the WWP has a sympathetic view of its activities. In a January 13th, 2000 WW article on Russian politics, the RCWP was singled out for its leadership role both in the strike movement as well as inside the “Communist Workers of Russia” voting bloc. The RCWP “left” is also contrasted favorably to Gennadi Zyuganov’s far larger KPRF. Workers World’s reluctance to devote extensive press coverage to the RCWP, however, may stem from the

fact that any overt alliance with the RCWP would be rather difficult for the WWP’s more naive rank-and-file members to stomach, since the RCWP is a textbook example of a radical “left fascist” group.

The anti-globalization movement was recently confronted with the problem of the RCWP after it was learned that two RCWP members were officially invited to take part in the recent Genoa protests by the international association ATTAC (the Association for the Taxation of Financial Transactions for the Aid of Citizens, which is best known for supporting the proposed “Tobin tax” on speculative transactions.) The leftist International Solidarity with Workers in Russia (ISWoR-SITR-MCPP) group immediately alerted other anti-globalization activists that the RCWP was an extremely racist and homophobic party whose members worship Stalin, campaign against black people in general and rap music in particular, issue material calling for homosexuals to be jailed, and published a party document in 1997 that blamed Russia’s economic crisis on “American imperialism and international Zionism.” The group also attacked Russian President Vladimir Putin for being so close to “the Jews that he ignores true Russian ‘patriots.’” According to ISWoR, the RCWP could be best described as “a

pseudo-Communist anti-Semitic organization.” At the same time that the RCWP appeals to the far right, it maintains a pro-Stalin analysis of Russia that is almost identical to the one promoted by the WWP. According to the RCWP program, for example, “The RCWP completely rejects the revisionist, opportunist, traitorous line that was promoted and adhered to by the CPSU leadership from 1953-1991, which brought about the temporary collapse of the Soviet Union in a counter-revolution. The XX Congress of the CPSU (1956) was the breaking point in the history of our country and the communist movement.”

Victor Anpilov, a former Soviet journalist who became co-secretary of the RCWP in 1992 (but who broke with Tyulkin in 1996-1997 over electoral strategy), also sent his greetings of solidarity to Marcy on his 85th birthday in 1996. However, if anything Anpilov is even further to the right than Tyulkin. After leaving the RCWP, he first entered into an alliance with the notorious Eduard Limonov and his *Natsionalno-Bolshevistskaia Partia* (National Bolshevik Party). Today, Anpilov is promoting a new party, the CPSU Lenin-Stalin that backs Stalin’s grandson as Russia’s new leader.

Francisco. If both actual WWP members and fellow travelers are counted, the group may now deploy up to a thousand cadres, if not more.

Insofar as the WWP has had difficulty in recruiting, it may be due in part to the extremely closed and clannish nature of its leadership. Nowhere is this fact more evident than when it comes to discussing the group's origin. For some reason the WWP exercises great circumspection when it comes to acknowledging its origins as a faction inside the Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP). The WWP's leaders even obscure their background to their own members. In the May 6th, 1986 WW, for example, the paper began a lengthy four-part series ostensibly dedicated to explaining the WWP's history. Not once in the entire series was it ever mentioned that the WWP first emerged out of the Socialist Workers Party or that the group's founders had spent over a decade as a faction inside the SWP. Yet the WWP's analysis of the Soviet Union strongly suggests that the sect never abandoned the worldview that its founding leaders first acquired while still inside the SWP. This issue, however, remains so sensitive that following the death of WWP founder Sam Marcy on February 1st, 1998, not one WWP memorial speech mentioned that Marcy had ever been in the SWP, much less a former member of the party's National Committee. The bizarre nature of the WWP's attempt to conceal its origins is only heightened by the fact that virtually everything written about the group by outside commentators notes its beginnings inside the SWP. One of the rare academic discussions of the WWP's history comes in a survey book by Robert Alexander which is aptly titled *International Trotskyism*.

The mystery of the WWP begins with Sam Marcy, who dominated the organization from its official inception in 1959 until his death at age 86 in 1998. Born in 1911 in Russia into an extremely poor Jewish family, "Comrade Sam" grew up in Brooklyn. After spending time in the CPUSA's Young Communist League (YCL), Marcy joined the SWP in either the late 1930s or 1940s. Trained as a lawyer, he served as a legal counsel and organizational secretary for a local United Paper Workers Union. During this time he met his wife Dorothy Ballan, who also came from an immigrant Russian-Jewish family.

Although Ballan (who died in 1992) graduated from Hunter College with a degree in education, she joined the United Paper Workers to spread the Marxist gospel. Following traditional Left "industrial colonization" tactics, Marcy and Ballan next moved to Buffalo and began recruiting workers in industrial plants there into the SWP. By the late 1940s, however, the anti-communist backlash that would culminate in McCarthyism made their work inside the trade union movement virtually impossible.

Despite these political setbacks, Marcy and his fellow Buffalo SWP comrades (most notably Vince Copeland) became increasingly convinced that the world had entered a new period of revolutionary class struggle, particularly following the Chinese Revolution. The outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 hastened the emergence of what was known in the SWP as the Marcy/Copeland "Global Class War" tendency. The Buffalo-based "global

class warriors" called on the SWP to downplay its differences with Stalinist regimes and forge a joint front against "U.S. Imperialism." Global Class War's fundamental point was that the geopolitical defense of "really existing socialism" took priority over the Trotskyist

argument that put a premium on promoting class struggles inside the Soviet bloc against the dominant Stalinist bureaucracy. Marcy and Copeland's position might be best described as "semi-entrism" because although they very much wanted to court the Stalinist states, they rejected any argument that called on Trotskyists to enter the CPUSA en masse.

What the Global Class War argument meant in practice became clear during the 1956 Hungarian Revolution. The SWP majority supported the uprising as a student and worker-led revolt against Stalinist oppression. The Global Class War faction, however, completely disagreed. A Trotskyist named Fred Mazelis recalled Marcy telling him in 1959 that "the Hungarian workers were hopeless counterrevolutionaries and that we should support the Stalinists in their crushing of the Hungarian workers councils." According to another former SWP'er named Tim Wohlforth, "Marcy had decided that the Hungarian Revolution was basically a Fascist uprising and that as defenders of the Soviet Union, Trotskyists had a duty to support Soviet intervention." The WWP's 1959 found-

Sam Marcy



ing statement (reprinted in a 1959 issue of WW under the heading “Proletarian Left Wing of SWP Splits, Calls for Return to Road of Lenin and Trotsky”) explained that while it was OK to support demands for “proletarian democracy,” once the Hungarians began demanding “bourgeois political democracy,” the correct Trotskyist policy was to support “the final intervention of the Red Army which saved Hungary from the capitalist counterrevolution.” In other words, if 99.9% of the Hungarian people wanted to overthrow Russian domination and prevent Hungary from being a satrapy of Moscow, introduce a democratic parliamentary system, and adopt an economic system that worked, they were morally wrong; in contrast, the Soviet troops who shot down unarmed Hungarian student and worker protesters were morally right.

In its founding statement, the WWP also denounced the SWP’s attempts to engage in coalition electoral campaigns with a group of former CP’ers (known as the “Gates faction” after its leader, John Gates) who had broken from the CPUSA after the 20th Soviet Party Congress’ partial revelations about Stalin’s massive crimes. According to WW, however, the real “rightwing” trend inside the Soviet Union actually began after Stalin’s death with the rise of Khrushchev! The WWP’s founding statement further noted that while Stalinism “may be theoretically as wrong as social democracy,” social democrats were “considered friendly to American imperialism and the Stalinists are considered hostile.” Ergo, Stalinism was better than social democracy.

After breaking with the SWP, the tiny WWP sought to ally itself with pro-Stalinist and anti-Khrushchev elements still inside the CPUSA who were angry about American CP leader William Foster’s refusal to openly criticize the Khrushchev “revisionists.” Around the time that the WWP was created, a splinter group called the Provisional Organizing Committee to Reconstitute a Marxist-Leninist Party in the United States (POC) – better known as the “Vanguard” group – split from the CPUSA and embraced China’s anti-Khrushchev, “anti-revisionist” line. Although the WWP supported the Chinese position, the Vanguard group refused all of its political overtures because they viewed the WWP as treasonous “Trotskyites”! Not long thereafter, the WWP began removing Trotsky’s picture along with any references to him in party publications. Now thoroughly isolated from the rest of the Left, Marcy led his little group with a strong hand. Tim Wohlforth met Marcy in 1959 at an SWP convention held at a New Jersey summer camp shortly before the Global Class War clique broke with the SWP. As Wohlforth later recalled in his memoir, *The Prophet’s Children*, while at the camp he had come upon a small mass of people “moving like a swarm of bees” and deeply engaged in conversation. In the middle of the mass “was a little animated man talking nonstop” who had a “high-pitched voice” and “spoke in a completely hysterical manner.” Yet Marcy’s devoted followers seemed “enthralled by his performance. . . It was my first experience with true political cult followers.”

From its inception, the WWP

attacked any and all liberalization tendencies in Communist Bloc nations and scrambled to be first in line to applaud crackdowns on dissident movements. The April 1959 issue of WW even ran an editorial praising the brutal Chinese suppression of Tibet’s independence movement. As for the Soviet Union, the WWP regularly attacked the entire spectrum of dissident thinkers from Solzhenitsyn to Sakharov. The WWP line was that the dissidents really reflected broader “rightwing forces” percolating inside the Soviet CP itself. In a February 22nd, 1974 essay, Marcy noted that Khrushchev’s “so called democratization” had “opened up a Pandora’s box of bourgeois reaction, not only in the Soviet Union but even more virulently in Eastern Europe.” The WWP fully supported the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, when Russian tanks crushed the Dubcek Regime and with it “Prague Spring.” Needless to say, it also fiercely opposed the Polish Solidarity movement in the 1980s. The WWP’s true love throughout the 1960s was Maoist China, with North Korea a close second. The WWP even opposed the signing of the 1963 U.S.-Soviet Test Ban Treaty because it would bar China from acquiring nuclear weapons! When the Chinese exploded their first H-bomb in 1967, WW declared it to be “a major victory for socialism.” The party was particularly enthusiastic about China’s disastrous “Cultural Revolution,” so much so that as late as the WWP’s 1986 party conference, Mao’s wife Chang Ching (a Cultural Revolution enthusiast and “Gang of Four” leader) was singled out for special praise.

As much as the WWP admired China, it despised Israel. WWP cadre proudly carried signs in support of al-Fath that read "Israel = Tool of Wall Street Rule" and "Hitler-Dayan, Both the Same." A June 24th, 1967 WW editorial following the Six Day War stated that Israel "is not the state of the Jewish nation," but a state "that oppresses Jewish workers as well as Arabs." The fact that Israel was largely created by Socialist Zionists and in 1967 was led by Labor Party Premier Golda Meir (a woman – something unthinkable in the Arab world), whose political base was the Social Democratic Israeli trade union movement, did not matter. Nor did it matter that every Arab state that opposed Israel had systematically crushed all independent labor unions or that "progressive" Arab governments like Jamal `Abd al-Nasr's Egypt had a long record of employing Nazis both to train its military and security forces and to spread anti-Semitic hate propaganda throughout the Middle East. As the WW editorial explained, "The fact that many of the Arab states are still ruled by conservative or even reactionary regimes does not materially affect this position" of support, because the Arabs "are struggling against imperialism, which is the main enemy of human progress," whereas Israel "is on the side of the oppressors." This same editorial went on to assert that "When the bosses on a world scale – i.e., the imperialists – go to war with the oppressed colonial and semi-colonial nations, it makes little difference who fires the first shot, as far as the rights and wrongs of the matter are concerned. . . Naturally, the imperialists were the original aggressors in every case." Some two decades later, the WWP would use virtually identical arguments to justify supporting Saddam Hussein. The WWP's remarkable capacity for Orwellian "double think" was by no means limited to the issue of the Soviet Union or Israel. Take gay liberation, for example. Starting in the early 1970s the WWP actively recruited many gay and lesbian followers, since paradoxically enough the group had a fairly advanced position on this issue. The sect's recruitment successes in this area came about in part because most of the other ultra-left groups competing with the WWP were orthodox Maoists who endorsed the Stalinist/Maoist line that homosexuality was a sexual perversion caused by decadent capitalism that would be swiftly cured come the revolution. Yet even though WWP cadres frequently promoted themselves as gay or lesbian, the WWP refused to criticize the notoriously repressive practices directed against homosexuals in China, North Korea, and Cuba, much less in Serbia or Iraq.

Perhaps the ultimate absurdity of the WWP, however, is that the stealth Trotskyism of its leadership actually saved the sect from collapse in the late 1970s. In the 1960s the WWP, primarily through two key front groups, Youth Against War and Fascism (YAWF) and the American Servicemen's Union (ASU), managed to recruit a fair amount of new members who were drawn to the group less by its theories than by the extreme militancy of its street actions. Indeed, YAWF's one notable contribution to the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) was that it was

The IAC/WWP's new group, *International ANSWER (Act Now to Stop War & End Racism)*, coordinated the September 29th protests in Washington and San Francisco that drew close to 20,000 participants.

There can be little doubt about ANSWER's ties to the WWP. ANSWER's September 23rd press release, for example, listed as "press contacts" Richard Becker and Sarah Sloan. A director of the West Coast IAC, Becker was one of the WWP leaders chosen to give a presentation honoring the memory of the WWP's founder, Sam Marcy. As for Sarah Sloan, "Youth Coordinator for ANSWER," she is also the "Youth Coordinator" for the IAC. Wearing her WWP hat, Sloan gave a presentation on the evils of capitalism at a WWP conference held at New York's Fashion Institute of Technology on December 2nd and 3rd, 2000. Teresa Gutierrez, another ANSWER leader, a speaker at the September 29th Washington demo and the "Co-Director, IAC," is further described in an ANSWER press release as the "co-chairperson of the National Committee to Return Elian Gonzalez to Cuba, and [as] a coordinator of the International Peace for Cuba Appeal." Unmentioned in the press release is the fact that Gutierrez is also a long-standing WWP leader who, in her March 14th, 1998 speech at a WWP memorial to Sam Marcy held in New York, gushed, "As a lesbian, as a Latina, as a woman and as a worker, I feel compelled today to express my utmost gratitude to this man [Marcy]." Yet another ANSWER statement came from one Brian Becker (not to be confused with Richard Becker), a "Co-Director of the International Action Center," national coordinator of the January 20th, 2001 "Counter-Inaugural Protest" in Washington, D.C., and "a frequent commentator on Fox TV." In the WWP paper *Workers World*, Brian Becker is identified as a member of the WWP's Secretariat.

The WWP/IAC/ANSWER network is now pushing its own paranoid Marxoid

line on the war by claiming that U.S.-led military actions against "Usamah ibn Ladin and other Islamist terrorists is really part of a U.S. imperialist plot." An IAC statement on the current crisis begins: "As the U.S.-led bombing campaign against the people of Afghanistan continues and civilian casualties mount, the International Action Center condemns in the strongest terms this latest terror bombing of a civilian population." Of course, only the most hardened leftist ideologue (or Muslim extremist) could believe that the U.S. attack in Afghanistan is a "terror bombing" campaign that is intentionally directed at Afghanistan's "civilian population" and not at the Taliban. The IAC statement then calls for opposition to "this imperialist war" and concocts a conspiracy theory blaming the "U.S. military-oil complex" for using the 9/11 attack as "a cynical opportunity" to beat its "rivals in Germany and Russia, for the oil resources of the former Soviet Union," thereby ignoring the obvious fact that both Germany and Russia completely support U.S. actions against Islamist terrorist fanatics.

Given the sheer crudeness of the WWP and its allied organizations, one would have thought that the "capitalist imperialist" press would play a key role in exposing the WWP's central role in both the IAC and ANSWER. Yet nothing could be further from the truth. Indeed, ANSWER itself reprints reports from both Reuters and the Washington Post about the Washington protests that treat both the IAC and ANSWER as if they were perfectly legitimate groups. C-SPAN even covered the September 29th Washington demonstration in its entirety. Until now, virtually nothing has been written about the IAC/WWP, even in the upscale left/liberal press — with two notable exceptions. The first was John Judis' article on Ramsey Clark for the April 22th, 1991 issue of the *New Republic*. More recently, *The Nation* magazine's UN correspondent, Ian Williams, wrote a June 21st, 1999 article for Salon entitled "Ramsey Clark, the war criminal's best friend," which com-

ments on the IAC/WWP. Outside of these two articles, in order to find any real commentary on the IAC and WWP, one has to turn to the left sectarian and anarchist press. Perhaps the most detailed article dealing with Ramsey Clark, the IAC, and the WWP appeared in the Lower East Side New York-anarchist journal *The Shadow* a few years ago, in an article by Manny Goldstein entitled "The Mysterious Ramsey Clark: Stalinist Dupe or Ruling-Class Spook?" (to which one is tempted to add "or Flat-Out Kook"). This article has recently been widely circulated on the Internet. Self-described "council communist" Lefty Hooligan has also exposed the WWP/IAC in the punk rock publication *Maximum RocknRoll*. In his February 1998 MRR column, for example, Hooligan commented on longtime WWP honcho Gloria LaRiva, whose "handcuffs-and-nightstick Leftism is also evident in her unapologetic support for Saddam Hussein's brutality." (This is the same Gloria LaRiva who, according to a report in the August 9th, 1990 *Workers World*, told a San Francisco audience that "Cuba is far more democratic than the U.S.") Hooligan's remarks, however, did not prevent MRR from later running a virtual press release from the IAC attacking American perfidy in its misnamed "News" section. The WWP/IAC connection has also been repeatedly exposed by the WWP's rivals in the fringe Trotskyist movement, most notably in the Spartacist League paper *Workers Vanguard*, which in its September 28th, 2001 issue casually refers to the "Stalinoid Workers World Party" as well as the "WWP's International Action Center" without further elaboration, presumably since the WWP's role in the IAC is already so well known to fringe leftists. The April-May 1999 issue of *The Internationalist* (from yet another Trotskyist splinter group) devotes an entire page to attacking the WWP and "its creation the International Action Center" for serving as a "leftist front for reactionary Serbian nationalist politics." The WWP's presence inside the IAC is equally transparent to European leftists

like Max Bohnel, a writer for the German Communist paper *Neues Deutschland*. In describing the IAC in a June 23rd, 1999 article, he wrote: "Hinter dem IAC steht die 'Workers World Party' (WWP), die den langsamen Zusammenbruch der US-Restlinken bemerkenswert gut überstanden hat." ["Behind the IAC stands the Workers World Party, which has withstood the gradual collapse of the remaining US left remarkably well."] *Neues Deutschland* then points out that both Ramsey Clark and the WWP have even come under criticism from other leftists because of their lack of criticism ["wegen mangelnder Kritik"] for the governments of Iraq and Yugoslavia.

Even activists on the libertarian/isolationist right like Justin Raimondo of *antiwar.com* have noticed the heavy hand of the WWP. In a July 2nd, 2001 column, Raimondo pointed out that Ramsey Clark "is nothing if not a walking stereotype, ever since he joined up with the Workers World Party cult that runs his 'International Action Center'." Raimondo then continues: "The WWP pod people, having taken over the body of an ex-U.S. Attorney General, use Clark as a front to push their own zealous defense of virtually every tyrant on earth, from Saddam Hussein to the 'anti-imperialist' militias of Rwanda, to Slobadan Milosevic." After describing Clark as "positively spooky," Raimondo notes that the IAC "not only defends tyrants against US intervention — it glorifies them as heroic fighters for 'socialism'."

Of course it should be pointed out that the WWP's radical critics themselves often promote views that are almost as wacky as those of the WWP. Nonetheless, up until now it has primarily been voices from the fringe Left that have pointed out the ties between the IAC and WWP, ties that are utterly transparent to anyone with even the slightest knowledge of the Left, but which appear to be utterly opaque to big "capitalist" media outlets like Reuters, the Washington Post, and CNN.

the only group which supported the Weatherman at the disastrous SDS convention in Chicago in the summer of 1969. YAWF also participated in the Weatherman-organized “Days of Rage” protest that same autumn. With the end of the Vietnam War, however, the entire American Left began to suffer an enormous downturn, and the WWP was no exception to the rule. The cadre-based Left was further weakened by the rise of new social movements like women’s liberation, gay liberation, and the anti-nuclear and ecology movements, all of which operated organizationally and ideologically outside the traditional framework of orthodox Marxism, much less that of authoritarian Marxist-Leninist sects.

Faced with the challenge of widespread de-radicalization, as well as the growth of new social movements, the WWP (like many other Marxist sects) took an “industrial turn” and ordered its followers back into the labor movement. The WWP even created the Centers for United Labor Action (CULA) to help coordinate these efforts. Yet ironically, what ultimately gave the WWP a second lease on life was the death of Mao and the subsequent ideological crisis inside post-Mao China that finally resulted in the defeat of the “Gang of Four.” The WWP’s competitors in orthodox Maoist grouplets like the October League rapidly ran out of ideological steam as the new post-Mao Chinese leadership moved even closer to the United States. After China began aiding American and South African-backed movements like UNITA, and Chinese troops tried to invade Vietnam, orthodox Maoism became even harder to rationalize. Thanks to

the WWP’s stealth Trotskyism, however, the group managed to escape political oblivion by reorienting itself away from China and toward the Soviet Bloc with relative ease.

The WWP’s great advantage in the post-1977 period was that throughout its entire history it only concealed – but never abandoned – its basic Trotskyist ideology. Orthodox Maoism, it should be recalled, maintained that with the death of Stalin the Soviet Union had ceased to be socialist state. Maoists even went so far as to claim that, thanks to “Khrushchevite revisionism,” the USSR had been transformed into “a social-imperialist state” not unlike Tsarist Russia. The WWP, however, completely rejected this view even while it was busily glorifying ultra-Maoist groups like China’s “Gang of Four” for their revolutionary zeal. In a May 1976 WW article, for example, Marcy reasserted the Trotskyist position (naturally without identifying it as such) against the standard Maoist argument. More specifically, he rejected the idea “that there is a new exploiting class in the Soviet Union,” and that there had been a “return to the bourgeoisie to power there.” The reality was that the USSR still remained “a workers’ state” whose “underlying social system. . . is infinitely superior to that of the most developed, the most ‘glorious’ and the most ‘democratic’ of the imperialist states.” At the same time (again following Trotsky) he admitted that Russia had undergone “a severe strain, deterioration, and erosion of revolutionary principles, and [was] moreover headed by a privileged and absolutist bureaucracy.” Marcy’s later rejection of Gorbachev as a “capitalist restorationist” in the late 1980s was not all

that dissimilar to Trotsky’s attack on Bukharin – not Stalin – in books like *The Revolution Betrayed* as the main threat to socialism in the Soviet Union in the 1930s.

The WWP’s brand of covert Trotskyism would prove crucial to its future growth. In the late 1970s, its ideology allowed the sect to attach itself like a pilot fish to Soviet and Cuban-allied organizations and avoid political annihilation either from the atrophy of its membership or from a devastating political schism. The WWP’s switch from Mao’s China to Brezhnev’s Russia was so remarkable that in 1984 the sect, which not long before was singing the praises of the Gang of Four, now publicly endorsed Jesse Jackson for President! Finally, when the CPUSA itself split into pieces in the late 1980s, the WWP was in a position to exploit the new situation for maximum political profit.

Conclusion

Given the WWP’s worldview, the notion that a group as closely linked to the WWP as the International Action Center could ever be taken seriously, either as a “human rights” or “peace” organization, seems comical as well as grotesque. The all too “resistible rise” of the IAC/ WWP, however, only makes sense when it is viewed in the context of the broader collapse of Soviet-style Marxism and all of its ideological variants. Left to its own devices, the WWP would have remained on the political margin as a quirky Left sect whose weirdly messianic ideology combined the worst aspects of Trotskyism, Maoism, and Stalinism into a unique and utterly foul brew. That a bizarre outfit like the WWP

could become a serious player in American left-wing radicalism in the year 2001 is above all a testament to the existing ideological, intellectual, and moral bankruptcy of the broader Left, which still insists on living in a decrepit fantasy world where criminals are good, the police are evil, blacks are noble, whites are all racist, heterosexual men are sexist, all women are victims, Israel is always 100% wrong, the Palestinians are always 100% right, America is "objectively" reactionary, and

America's enemies are "objectively" progressive and therefore worth defending. If this were not the case, the IAC never could or would have emerged as a serious force.

There is no reason, at least in theory, why a new movement from the Left could not both support a U.S.-led war against Islamist fanatics and fight to preserve civil liberties and social justice, both at home and abroad. The entrenched knee-jerk anti-American mindset of so many

on the Left, however, makes such a development highly unlikely. At the very least, however, the rational elements within the Left should be willing to critically examine the propagandistic claims emanating from a variety of self-styled "human rights" and "anti-war" groups that are as politically compromised and morally dubious as the IAC, ANSWER, and the WWP. While the future role of the Left after 9/11 may not be clear, surely that much ought to be obvious.

International Action Center: Peace Activists With A Secret Agenda?

I AM THE PEOPLE, THE MOB

by Carl Sandburg

I AM the people - the mob - the crowd - the mass.

Do you know that all the great work of the world is done through me?

I am the workingman, the inventor, the maker of the world's food and clothes.

I am the audience that witnesses history. The Napoleons

come from me and the Lincolns. They die. And then I send forth more Napoleons and Lincolns.

I am the dead ground. I am a plume that will stand for much plowing. Terrible storms pass over me.

I forget. The best of me is picked out and wasted.

I forget. Everything but Death comes to me and makes me work and give up what I have. And I

forget.

Sometimes I growl. I see myself and gather up the dead

drop for history to remember. Then I forget.

When I, the People, learn to remember - when I, the

People, use the lessons of the Jews, and no longer

forget who robbed me last year, who plundered me

a fool - then there will be no speaker from the mob.

Say the name: "The People," with an American

cheer in his voice or any far-off mile of American

The mob - the crowd - the mass - will answer them.



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