

**O**n November 7, 2001, the U.S. government's Office of the Coordinator of Counterterrorism issued a list of some 62 organizations and individuals suspected of involvement in terrorist organizations, in particular with 'Usamah ibn Ladin's al-Qai'dah network. Number 56 on the list was Achmed Albert Friedrich Armand Huber, a former Swiss journalist with close ties both to Islamic fundamentalists and far-right extremists.<sup>1</sup> A longtime convert to Islam, the 74-year-old Huber was cited by the government for his presence on the five-man managing committee of Nada

The closing of Al Taqwa's doors, however, has done little to eliminate interest in Huber's own ties to Islamic extremism. Shortly after September 11, Huber himself drew attention to a possible Al Taqwa link to ibn Laden when he stated that while attending an Islamic conference in Beirut, he had encountered some of ibn Laden's cadre, whom he described as "very discrete, well-educated, highly intelligent people — an entirely different quality than earlier." Huber also described 9/11 as an act of "counter-terror" against the World Trade Center, a "tower of godlessness," and the Pentagon, "a symbol of Satan." However, he denied having any

Nasir government was hostile to the Muslim Brotherhood. He recommended that Huber make a second *shahada* in Egypt, which Huber did in February 1962 at Cairo's famous Al-Ahzar University.

After spending more time in the Middle East, Huber abandoned his earlier pro-Israeli views with a vengeance. He told the French investigative journalist Pierre Péan that in 1965 he began to accept the views of the Egyptian-based Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Amin al-Husayni, who gave Huber "a totally different version" of the history and nature of the Third Reich. The Grand Mufti knew Hitler personally and actively collaborated with the Axis powers

## THE MYSTERIOUS ACHMED HUBER: FRIEND TO HITLER, ALLAH...AND IBN LADIN?

Management, a Lugano-based financial institution, which was known as Al Taqwa (Fear of God) Management prior to March 2001. Al Taqwa was specifically placed on the list due to suspicions that it may have played a key role in laundering money for ibn Laden. A few hours before the official announcement from Washington, police officials raided Al Taqwa's offices in Switzerland and Liechtenstein, as well as Huber's home in Muri, a suburb of Bern, and the homes of Yusuf Nada and 'Ali Ghalib Himmat, two other Al Taqwa directors who were also on the U.S. list. Al Taqwa's accounts were frozen as well. A few weeks later, on November 29, Italian investigators shut down a Milan-based Islamic Cultural Center suspected of being al-Qai'dah's logistical center for European operations. The Center's key financial supporter, Ahmad Idris Nasr al-Din, a wealthy businessman and Kuwait's former honorary consul in Milan, was yet another Al Taqwa director. Finally, in early January of 2002, Al Taqwa announced that it was closing its doors for good.<sup>2</sup>

financial dealings with ibn Laden and stressed that Al Taqwa was strictly involved in financing development projects in Third World countries. In a September 20, 2001 interview with the Swiss publication *FACTS*, Huber claimed that attempts to link Al Taqwa to ibn Laden were "an invention of the Mossad."

To those familiar with Huber, his statements regarding September 11 were hardly surprising. Born in Freiburg, Switzerland, to Protestant parents in 1927, Huber's penchant for political extremism began in the late 1950s when, as a member of the Swiss Socialist Party, he helped shelter a group of Muslims who had come to Switzerland to buy weapons for the Algerian struggle against French rule. Huber was so impressed by his conversations with them that he began studying Islam. He then made *shahada* (the profession of faith in Islam) at an Islamic center in Geneva founded by the Muslim Brotherhood. Huber, however, was warned by Fathi al-Dhib, Egypt's then-ambassador to Switzerland (whose secretary Huber would later marry), that the

in World War II. (The Mufti was even responsible for creating the Bosnian-based 13th Waffen-SS Division that was composed of Muslim recruits.) Huber further told Péan that, while he was in Egypt, he also grew close to Johann von Leers, a fanatical Jew hater, former Nazi Propaganda Ministry official, and the Grand Mufti's good friend. Leers had relocated to Egypt in the mid-1950s, where he converted to Islam and changed his name to 'Umar Amin von Leers. He remained in Cairo until his death in 1965, helping to direct Nasir's propaganda apparatus, which regularly churned out Nazi-like anti-Semitic propaganda throughout the Arab world.

Back in Switzerland, Huber next became close friends with the Swiss banker François Genoud, whom Huber recalls first meeting in "pro-Arab associations." Best known for funding SS "butcher" Klaus Barbie's legal defense team, Genoud held the legal copyright to writings by Hitler, Goebbels, and Martin Bormann. Genoud, who committed suicide in 1996, is also believed to have played a



key role in the postwar management of Nazi funds. In the late 1960s he also worked closely with radical Palestinian groups, particularly the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). Along with organizing legal support for captured PFLP militants, he even helped coordinate the PFLP's hijacking of a Lufthansa Boeing 747 en route from Delhi to Aden. Through his ties to the PFLP's leader, Dr. Wadi Haddad (who affectionately dubbed him "Shaykh François"), Genoud befriended Ilich Ramirez Sánchez, better known as "Carlos the Jackal." Both men remained in close contact right up to Genoud's death.<sup>3</sup>

by  
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At the same time that Genoud was developing close ties to the leftist PFLP, Huber was actively promoting pro-Arab views inside the Swiss left. While working as a Social Democratic journalist whose beat was the Swiss parliament, he became involved with the "Bern Nonconformists." The Nonconformists were a mix of 1960's counterculture activists, poets, painters, and New Leftists. Inside the Nonconformists, Huber used leftist rhetoric to push an anti-American, anti-Israeli, and strongly neutralist line.<sup>4</sup> In the 1970s, however, he found it increasingly difficult to operate inside the Left. The Swiss Socialist Party finally expelled Huber in 1994 for "Khomeinism, anti-Feminism, and contact with radical rightists."

Huber's statements regarding September 11 reflect a broader consensus inside the far right. They also echo the remarks of his friend Horst Mahler, a former leader of the far left terroroist group, the Rote Armee Fraktion (RAF: Red Army Faction, also known as the Baader/Meinhof Gang), who is today a

**A**chmed Huber is not only a devout Muslim and supporter of political Islam; he also a leading member of the avowedly

## ACHMED HUBER, THE AVALON GEMEINSCHAFT, AND THE SWISS "NEW RIGHT"

pagan Swiss-based Avalon Gemeinschaft (Avalon Society — also known as the Avalon Kreis or Avalon Circle). Avalon's estimated 150 members include aging Swiss SS volunteers, youthful far right fanatics, and died-in-the wool Holocaust deniers. Each summer solstice this motley mélange of characters journeys deep into the Swiss woods to ritually worship the pre-Christian Celtic gods of ancient Europe. They then spend the rest of the year bemoaning the Enlightenment and denying the Holocaust.

Although Huber is one of Avalon's leading members, he was not involved in founding the group. Avalon began as a curious mixture of Old Right and New Right currents that reflected its founding members involvement in a neo-Nazi youth group known as the Wiking-Jugend Schweiz (WJS), as well as their later rejection of cadre-based politics for the creation of Avalon as a self-proclaimed elite society. Besides being steeped in mystical imagery, Avalon's founders also embraced the "New Right" jargon most frequently associated with the French theorist Alain de Benoist, his Paris-based think-tank GRECE (the Groupement de Recherche et d'Etudes pour la Civilisation Européenne), and GRECE's German counterpart, Pierre Krebs' Thule Seminar.

Avalon's origins begin in the end of 1986 with the formation of the WJS by two young far rightists, Roger Wüthrich and Andreas Lorenz. After Wüthrich and Lorenz returned from a winter camp in Germany sponsored by the Wiking-Jugend Deutschland (WJD), they were granted permission by the WJD to form a Swiss branch of the organization. The WJS was formally launched in April 1987, and thence began publishing a paper, *Nordwind*, that specifically targeted Swiss youth. As WJS propaganda put it,

Have you had enough of degenerate art, jungle music, environmental destruction, immorality, and Coca-Cola culture? Then

come to us! Work with us for a better worthwhile future. Travel, camps, sports, adventure, comradeship, and love of our home belong to our program. Hard work, discipline, good manners, courage, and honor are things that for us again have meaning. The zero (Null) bloc of youth is already shuffling off to its decline with a Walkman in its ears and hamburgers on its brains. Not us! Join us! Viking Youth! That is the youth movement faithful to the people of Switzerland.<sup>1</sup>

In the summer of 1988 the WJS, with help from the WJD, organized a summer camp in Seelisberg, Switzerland. Participants were told that they would learn things like folk dancing, old German letters, and sports like boxing. The WJS promised all those who signed up an experience of "forced marches in ankle deep mud" until the "dead tired" finally reached their goal "filthy, soaked with sweat, with a banner in hand, and a proud smile on [their] face." The forced marches were a necessary camp experience, *Nordwind* explained, because "in the all masculine cultural circles to which we belong, discipline and morals are the keystone of our view of life."<sup>2</sup>

Alas, few Swiss youth seemed willing to part with their blue jeans and Coke cans for folkdance lessons and forced marches. In February 1991, at the WJS's fourth convention in Worblaufen, Switzerland, the group voted to dissolve itself. Along with its failure to recruit youth cadres, the WJS was equally concerned about possible adverse publicity. Just a month earlier, a Swiss far rightist named Robert Burkhard — president of the Nationalrevolutionären Partei der Schweiz (NPS) — had been arrested



for a hand grenade attack on a journalist in Winterthur, Switzerland. After the police discovered WJS material inside Burkhard's apartment, the group feared that it too might now come under scrutiny by the Swiss authorities. Equally troubling was the development of ideological dissent inside the WJS itself. The Aargau Canton branch, for example, openly broke with the WJS's leadership and embraced a "national revolutionary direction" complete with open overtures to the Swiss Left. Roger Wüthrich, the WJS's co-founder, was particularly appalled by this move because he considered National Bolshevism a political dead end, particularly given the fall of Communism.<sup>3</sup>

### The Birth of the Avalon Gemeinschaft

Following the official dissolution of the WJS, Wüthrich and another rightist named Andreas Grossweiler decided to build a new elite cadre organization, the Avalon Gemeinschaft. They structured their new group on the New Right models espoused by de Benoist

of the Thule Seminar while serving as the Swiss correspondent for GRECE's journal, *Nouvelle École*.<sup>4</sup>

In his book *Strategie der kulturellen Revolution*, Pierre Krebs, head of the Thule Seminar, gives a useful overview of New Right thinking when he embraces the theory of "intellectual hegemony" taken from the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci and "detoured" by the New Right. Krebs also articulated New Right themes when he attacked the "principle of equality" and instead demanded a "War against Egalitarianism and Rootlessness: For Originality and Identity! Against Americanism and Collectivism: For Culture and Organic Humanism! Race is Class! For a Heterogeneous World of Homogeneous Peoples! *Vive la difference!*"<sup>5</sup>

Starting in 1987, members of the Swiss branch of the Thule Seminar took part in a pagan gathering around the Celtic holiday Lughnasad, along with a delegation from the WJS and various neo-Nazis from across Europe. In 1988 the Swiss branch of the Thule Seminar, along with the Circle Proudhon, organized seemingly schol-

and GRECE in France and by Pierre Krebs and the Thule Seminar in Germany.

Wüthrich and Grossweiler's turn from a failed cadre-based political activist model to a self-proclaimed elite structure did not occur out of the blue. The formation of the Avalon Gemeinschaft came after the Swiss far right had learned about French and German "New Right" theory, which primarily occurred through the activity of a young Geneva-based rightist named Pascal Junod. In 1983 Junod first established the Centre National de la Pensée Européenne with former members of the New European Order (NEO)-backed student group, the Nouvel Ordre Social, to help popularize New Right ideas in Switzerland.<sup>6</sup> One year later, Junod established another Geneva-based organization, the Cercle Proudhon, in 1984.<sup>7</sup> Junod also helped organize the Swiss branch

arly-sounding talks on topics like "The History of the Templers and "The Heritage of the Indo-Europeans" on the grounds of Geneva University.<sup>8</sup>

Although lacking the scholarly chops of a de Benoist or a Krebs, Avalon's founders were quick to proclaim their own elite status as well as their embrace of pagan ideas. Grossweiler, for example, said that Avalon's members "consider ourselves as an intellectual/spiritual elite and know that our ideas are incomprehensible to simple people." Avalon's emergence also came wrapped in a heavy dose of Celtic mysticism. One Avalon tract began,

*Avalon* — white mist covered island in an icy sea. *Avalon*, land of inner rest and the confident, holy land of the Celts. *Avalon*, original homeland and secure pole of our European culture. The land of King Arthur gives

leading spokesman for the far right Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (NPD: National Democratic Party of Germany). Shortly after the WTC attack, Mahler issued a statement entitled "Independence Day live." In it, he argued that 9/11 "marked the end of the American Century, the end of global capitalism," and with it, the end of the secular "Yahweh-Cult of Mammonism." Huber is also a popular speaker at NPD events. In October 2000, for example, he addressed the seventh "European congress" of the NPD's youth organization, the Junge Nationaldemokraten (JN: Young National Democrats), on the topic "Islam and the New Right." On September 8, 2001, a few days before the WTC attack, he lectured on "Israel and the Muslim World" to another NPD-sponsored gathering in Saxony that attracted well over 1,000 radical rightists. The September issue of the NPD publication *Deutsche Stimme* also carried a lengthy interview with Huber (conducted before 9/11) in which he praised the Bush Administration for not having any "Jewish Zionist" advisors. "That's very important for us," he remarked. Huber's friendly feelings towards George, Jr., changed radically after he was publicly identified as a potential terrorist supporter. "It is for me an honor," he told the press, "to be put on the list from the USA gangster regime."

While until now there has been no "smoking gun" directly linking Al Taqwa to ibn Ladin, what is clear is that Al Taqwa is far from an ordinary financial institution, even without Huber's presence on its board. Al Taqwa has served for years as a key financial institution for the Muslim Brotherhood. Founded in Egypt in the late 1920s by Hasan al-Banna, the Muslim Brotherhood has fought for over seventy years for the formation of a pure pan-Islamic theocratic state. Yusuf Nada and 'Ali Ghalib Himmat, the two Al Taqwa directors cited along with Huber on the U.S. list, are acknowledged longtime Brothers. According to the German newsweekly *Der Spiegel*, Himmat is also the president of the Bavaria-based Islamische Gesellschaft Deutschlands (IGD: Islamic Society of Germany), an organization founded by the Muslim Brotherhood that German authorities consider to be an ideological breeding ground for Islamic extremists. Himmat also serves as a director of the Geneva branch of the International Islamic Charitable Organization (IICO), headquartered in Kuwait. Another IICO director, the Qatar-based Yusuf al-Qardawi, is president of Al Taqwa's counsel of religious advisors,



which ensures that the bank does not violate any teachings of the Qur'an.<sup>5</sup> Qardawi, a fiery speaker who is considered one of the Muslim Brotherhood's top spiritual leaders, is also an open supporter of the Palestinian terrorist group Hamas. He even issued a *fatwah* declaring Hamas suicide bombers to be martyrs and their acts to be "the highest form of  *Jihad*." Al Taqwa's financial involvement with Hamas became known after a 1997 scandal involving the disappearance of a large part of Hamas's treasury led to an internal investigation by Hamas that included a careful examination of Al Taqwa's role in the affair.<sup>6</sup>

Inside the Middle East, Egypt has been the most vigorous opponent of the Muslim Brotherhood. The Egyptian government has been at war with the Brotherhood since the early 1950s, when then Egyptian president Jamal 'Abd al-Nasir banned the group and arrested many of its leaders. As an organization committed to the establishment of a pan-Islamic state, the Muslim Brotherhood bitterly opposed Nasir's secular form of pan-Arab nationalism. The Brotherhood's staunch opposition to secular nationalism has also attracted financial support, particularly from Saudi Arabia. Saudi funds have also flowed into Al Taqwa's coffers. Huber himself even boasted about Al Taqwa's Saudi connection to Swiss journalist Richard Labévière. Asked by Labévière about Al Taqwa's finances, Huber replied:

As for the money, I cannot give details — except for Saudi Arabia, because that will change the bad perception people have of this country. Of course, the government is under American surveillance, but the kingdom has the great advantage of being a feudal state that leaves the great families total freedom to manage their oil funds as they wish. That's great! And today, the Saudis are very active, the details of their funds that come to the bank are a matter of bank secrecy.<sup>7</sup>

The Muslim Brotherhood's close links to Al Taqwa, it is important to note, have also been cited as evidence of Al Taqwa's political moderation. This argument asserts that in countries like Egypt, Algeria, and Turkey, the Muslim Brotherhood has supported the movement for political democracy precisely because the ruling regimes in these nations have used anti-democratic measures to prevent Islamist parties from gaining political

power. In Egypt, for example, while the Muslim Brotherhood is still technically banned, it remains that nation's largest opposition party, and 17 Brothers hold seats in Egypt's parliament as independents. The Brotherhood contends that it represents the moderate wing of political Islam, as opposed to overt terrorist groups like Islamic Jihad. To the Muslim Brotherhood's critics, however, the allegedly sharp division between the "moderate" Brothers and the jihadist militants is far from clear.

Even if one accepts the notion that Al Taqwa may have the same highly ambiguous relationship to Islamist terror as the Muslim Brotherhood itself, there can be little doubt about Huber's involvement with a highly visible terrorist regime. While Huber has worked closely with the Sunni wing of Islam represented by the Muslim Brotherhood and Al Taqwa, he has also long been a leading supporter of the Shi'ite fundamentalist regime that took power in Iran in 1979 under the leadership of the Ayatollah Khomeini. Since then, Iran has sponsored countless acts of terrorism, including the Iranian-backed Hezbollah movement's destruction of the U.S. Embassy in Lebanon and — it would appear — the subsequent bombing of Israel's embassy in Argentina. Iran's continuing use of violence led the U.S. State Department to identify Iran as "the most active state sponsor of terrorism in 2000."

Huber's own ties to Iran are hardly secret. In 1989, amid a flurry of publicity, he lost his journalistic position with the Swiss press group Ringier after he openly supported Iran's *fatwah* condemning Salman Rushdie to death for his book *The Satanic Verses*. Huber's services to Iran are so highly valued that he is reportedly the only European Muslim ever to give a speech before the tomb of Imam Khomeini. Iran has also given political sanctuary to Huber's comrades in the Holocaust denial movement, and Radio Tehran regularly broadcasts interviews with "Holocaust revisionists." Huber is also a prominent speaker at Iranian-allied Islamic gatherings across the world, including America. He even explained how easy it was for him to visit the U.S. undetected: "Because I was registered in all the CIA computers as Achmed, but my passport still remains Albert, I can enter and exit the USA without any problem."<sup>8</sup> Huber has presented talks to pro-Khomeini groups like the Persian Speaking Group of the Muslim Students' Association (MSA). At the 27th MSA convention held in Chicago in December 1997, for example, Huber spoke on Islam

our society its name. Many of our way and beliefs shall find the power in the circle to resist the time of the wolf (the destruction of value). This is our spiritual place of refuge, [the] place of the calling to mind of Europe's eternal values, Courage, Honor, Loyalty."

### Huber and Avalon

Achmed Huber's later emergence as a key Avalon leader no doubt reflects both his well-developed networking skills and his powerful contacts inside the European right. Huber's particular association with Avalon, however, may also be due in part to Avalon's New Right trappings. New Rightists are almost by definition extremely anti-American, and many look favorably on collaboration with the Islamic world. In traditional Islam they see a culture that has resisted the siren song of the Enlightenment. GRECE leader Alain de Benoist (who has visited both Iran and Libya) also regularly criticizes Jean-Marie Le Pen's Front National for its harshly anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant views.

That said, Avalon appears to be a rather poor copy of the GRECE model. The New Right, it should be recalled, emerged in Paris in the late 1970s and early 1980s as a response not just to the cultural Americanization of Europe but also as a reaction by a post-'68 generation of young right-wing activists to the failed Old Right's tedious embrace of Hitler nostalgia and crude anti-Semitism. Against this, the New Right reveled in rediscovering unorthodox theorists, particularly from the 1920s "Conservative Revolutionary" movement in Germany; thinkers like Carl Schmidt, Moeller van den Bruck, Ernst Niekisch, and Ernst Jünger. All of these men's ideas had either been highly marginalized or actively suppressed during the Nazi era. Under Huber and Wüthrich, however, Avalon is far closer to intellectually spurious groups like the California-based Institute for Holocaust Review than with the elite Parisian salon world of de Benoist.

Still, Huber and Wüthrich have tried to give Avalon some veneer of respectability. In March 1998, for example, on the two hundredth anniversary of his death, Huber and other Avalon members laid a wreath at



the memorial to General von Erlach, who was killed by Napoleon's troops in 1798. Von Erlach's death symbolized not just the end of Bern's *Ancien Régime* and the triumph of Napoleon's army, but also the victory of the Enlightenment ideals of equality, democracy, and brotherhood associated with the French Revolution that both Avalon and the New Right so despise. By laying a wreath at von Erlach's tomb, Huber and Avalon were suggesting that they were willing to fight once more to recapture a world once thought hopelessly vanished.

Huber and Wüthrich have also portrayed Avalon in a press communiqué as a highly respectable group that sponsors gatherings dedicated to scientific and cultural themes — particularly the honoring of Europe's "Celtic Germanic inheritance" — as well as to groundbreaking critical research into questions of contemporary history.<sup>10</sup> Avalon's eager embrace of Holocaust deniers, even more than its strange celebrations of the summer solstice, have stripped it of even a vague sense of legitimacy as a serious organization engaged in historical research.

Avalon functions as a kind of umbrella organization for the Holocaust denial movement in Switzerland. Under the cover name of the Studiengruppe für Geschichte (History Study Group), for example, Avalon sponsored a 1993 presentation by leading French Holocaust denier Robert Faurisson at a hotel conference room in Bern. Some 70 people, including the NEO's Gaston-Armand Amaudruz, attended the gathering.<sup>11</sup> Huber's close friend Jürgen Graf, a leading Swiss Holocaust denier who is now living in Tehran, provided the simultaneous translation from French to German when Faurisson spoke. Robert H. Countess, an American editor of the *Institute for Historical Review*, also addressed an Avalon gathering in April 1995. Huber's later participation (along with Graf and the German NPD's Horst Mahler) in an IHR conference that was to have occurred in Beirut in the spring of 2001, can be seen as a logical extension of the kind of Holocaust denial activity that both Huber and Avalon have been involved with for years.

Finally, it seems particularly ironic that a self-proclaimed Muslim like Huber would be associated at all with any "New Right" grouping, even with a pale parody of the New Right such as

Avalon appears to be. Huber, after all, is a self-proclaimed devotee of Islam, an utterly monotheistic religion. In the pagan New Right canon, monotheism has always been portrayed as the original sin. This has been so ever since de Benoist identified the Enlightenment's universalistic values as a secular extension of a monotheist worldview; namely the Judeo-Christian tradition with which Islam claims to complete.

New Right theorists insist that they embrace paganism and the pagan notion of a universe of pluralistic gods precisely out of their desire to dethrone the monotheistic thought structures which they see as essential to the future elimination of American "monoculture." That a fanatical Islamic monotheist like Huber could spend each summer solstice out in the woods worshiping Celtic gods is one more bizarre twist to his already bizarre life. —KC

#### NOTES

1 *Nordwind*, as quoted in the July 1999 issue of *Megafon*, published by the Worblaufen, Switzerland, branch of Antifa. Worblaufen is also the hometown of Avalon's founder, Roger Wüthrich.

2 *Ibid.*

3 Peter Niggli & Jürg Frischknecht, *Rechte Seilschaften* (Zurich: WoZ im Rotpunkt, 1998), 618-19.

4 The Geneva branch of the Thule Seminar had the same post office box that the far right NOS held in the 1970s.

5 Junod's groups also maintained close ties to the Belgian New Right and publications like *Orientation* and *Vouloir*.

6 Claude Cantini, *Les Ultras* (Lausanne: En bas, 1983), 114-15.

7 *Rechte Seilschaften*, 686.

8 Jürg Frischknecht, "Schweiz wir kommen" (Zurich, Limmat, 1987), 164-66.

9 *Rechte Seilschaften*, 686.

10 *Ibid.*, 688.

11 *Ibid.*, 687-88.

at two panels with Imam Abdul Alim Musa and Sheikh Mohammad al-Asi, both of whom are associated with the pro-Khomeini Institute of Contemporary Islamic Thought (ICIT). Huber also appeared with both men earlier at another pro-Khomeini conference organized by the Muslim Parliament (MP), which was held in London in November 1996 and which advertised participation by representatives from both Hezbollah and Hamas."

Even as Huber plays a major role in Islamist networks, he remains highly active inside Europe's far right elite. Along with a poster of Imam Khomeini and a framed quote from Hitler denouncing modern art, Huber's house contains a photo of his friend Jörg Haider, Austria's leading electoral rightist. But Huber's most eye-opening picture displays both himself and Genoud at a meeting in Spain with Léon Degrelle, a Waffen-SS General who Hitler once said he wanted to adopt as a son. Degrelle, who lived in Spain in order to escape war crimes charges in his native Belgium, was a top leader of the postwar ultra right.

Inside Switzerland, Huber helps direct the Avalon Gemeinschaft (Avalon Society), an elite far right group whose members include former Waffen-SS volunteers.<sup>10</sup> Each year Avalon's cadre retire to the woods during the summer solstice and conduct ritual celebrations of Europe's pagan past. Jürg Frischknecht, a leading expert on the Swiss far right, reports that Avalon — using the cover name Studiengruppe für Geschichte (History Study Group) — regularly sponsors lectures from leading Holocaust deniers, such as France's Robert Faurisson, which are held at four star hotels in Bern. Huber has also worked tirelessly to forge alliances between European rightists and Islamists, telling his fellow Europeans that their "enemies are not the Turks, but rather the American and German politicians with an American 'brain.'" Huber hopes to establish an alliance between the anti-immigration European right and the Islamists based on the understanding that once Islamist parties take power, large-scale Muslim emigration to the West would end. Huber even organized a meeting between Jean-Marie Le Pen, head of France's largest "national populist" party, the Front National, and Huber's close friend Necmettin Erbakan, the head of the now banned Turkish Islamist party Rifah (Welfare), to develop a joint position on immigration.

In order to promote closer ties between the Euro-right and Islam, Huber regular-



ly points out to his rightist comrades that the Arabs were some of Nazi Germany's strongest supporters and indeed remain so to this day. In his September 2001 interview in *Deutsche Stimme*, for example, Huber proudly reported that at a large Palestinian congress held in Tehran, Iran's supreme religious leader, the Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, publicly rejected claims by "Zionists and Marxists" concerning German war crimes. Ayatollah Khamenei then stated that Muslims saw Germany differently both because the Nazis fought against colonial powers like England, France, Belgium, and Holland, and also "because the Third Reich, in the view of Muslims, contained some interesting Islamic elements," by which Khamenei was almost certainly referring to the Grand Mufti's role in World War II.

Huber has also tried to establish direct organizational links between U.S.- and

entitled *Der Unbekannte Islam* that still serves to define his political views today. In it, Huber identifies the "triple aggression" that he sees directed against Islam. The first aggression, naturally, is Zionism, whereas the second is Marxism, which Huber condemns both for the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and for its corruption of Islamic intellectuals. He then identifies the third and final aggression as "the 'American Way of Life, which many Muslims have felt as specifically 'New-York-ish' and thus essentially 'Jewish.'"<sup>11</sup>

Clearly, Huber is convinced that the "New-York-ish" American Way of Life is destroying Islam. Now it is the task of investigators in both America and Europe to determine whether or not Huber and his friends in Al Taqwa have used "Islam" to destroy both New York and the American way of life. †

he believed that the 9/11 terrorist money trail would ultimately lead back to Swiss bank accounts set up by an organization founded by Genoud. Reports of a possible Genoud trail cite the involvement of a Swiss lawyer named Baudoin Dufour on the management committee of the Geneva branch of the Saudi Investment Company (SICO), which handles much of the bin-Laden family's investments abroad. Dufour is also alleged to have defended Genoud in a legal proceeding in 1983 against charges of terrorism although the details remain highly murky. At this stage, one can only say that any claim that links banking networks set up by Genoud before his 1996 death remain highly speculative.

4 See references to Huber in a recent study of the Bern Nonconformists by Fredi Lerch entitled *Muellers Weg ins*

European-based "Holocaust revisionists" and their Arab allies. Earlier this year, Huber and three of his closest collaborators, the NPD's Horst Mahler, Jürgen Graf (a leading Swiss Holocaust denier who fled to Iran to avoid serving a 15-month jail sentence for his activities), and the Swedish-based Ahmad Rami, a former Moroccan military officer who in 1987 founded Radio Islam to disseminate anti-Semitic, Holocaust denial, and pro-Nazi propaganda, teamed up with the California-based Institute for Historical Review (IHR) — the world's leading "Holocaust denial" organization — to organize an IHR-sponsored conference that was scheduled to take place in late March in a Hezbollah-controlled section of Beirut, Lebanon. Protests from Jewish groups, however, eventually forced the Lebanese government to ban the proposed gathering.

Looking back on Huber's career, it seems clear is that he has been most concerned with finding allies in the Muslim world to help him wage war against both Israel and the West. From the late 1950s until the 1970s, he publicly cast his lot with secular pan-Arabists like Nasir. In the wake of Egypt's military defeats in both the 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israeli wars, and after Nasir's successor Anwar Sadat signed a peace accord with Israel, Huber discovered an even more virulent form of anti-Western fanaticism in Iran. In 1982, he wrote an essay for a book

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#### NOTES:

1 Huber's first name is also frequently spelled "Ahmed" in reports on him. Technically, it should be Ahmad.

2 See a report from Reuters carried in the January 10, 2002 *New York Times* on Al Taqwa's closing.

3 Carlos has recently been in the news after his French lawyer Isabelle Coutant-Peyre, who has recently announced her intention to marry the jailed terrorist, was asked by Aicha Moussaoui, the mother of suspected 9/11 hijacker Zacarias Moussaoui, to represent her son. Coutant-Peyre is a member of the law firm of Jacques Vergès, the radical French lawyer and longtime Genoud ally who Genoud had hired to represent Klaus Barbie.

Genoud's name has also resurfaced in connection with September 11th. Ernest Backes, a leading European expert on money laundering, told the Luxemburg-based financial journal Plus Minus that

*Paradies* (Zurich: Rotpunkt, 2001).

5 *Der Spiegel*, 46/2001.

6 See Richard Labévière, *Les Dollars de la Terre* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1999), 152-55.

7 *Ibid*, 151.

8 Huber quoted in an August 27, 1993 article in the *Wochen Zeitung* by Jürg Frischknecht.

9 Musa and al-Asi made news more recently when they participated in an October 31, 2001 "town meeting" held at Washington's National Press Club entitled "War on the Muslims/Attack on America." The meeting (broadcast by CNN) was sponsored by the New Black Panther Party, an organization founded by the late Khallid Muhammad after he was banished from the Nation of Islam for vitriolic attacks on Jews, Catholics, and whites that even Louis Farrakhan found too extreme.

10 For a more detailed examination of the Avalon Gemeinschaft, see the insert on the group.

11 See Alfred Jäger & Armin Wildermuth, eds., *Der Unbekannte Islam* (Zurich: Benziger, 1982).





## **THE INTERNATIONAL ACTION CENTER: “PEACE ACTIVISTS” WITH A SECRET AGENDA**

**BY KEVIN COOGAN**

### **INTRODUCTION**

**O**n 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 for 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.

The IAC owes its current success to Ramsey Clark, a former Attorney General





# =WWP?

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 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'at 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 Husayn'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 organizing, 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 Husayn invaded Kuwait in an attempt to dominate the Middle East's oil supplies.



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 Husayn 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 Husayn to withdraw his forces or face military defeat.

The Bush Administration made it clear to Husayn 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 Husayn'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

## THE IAC AND THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST SANCTIONS: HELPING THE IRAQI PEOPLE OR SADDAM HUSAYN

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 Husayn to generate sympathy for Iraq, both in the West and especially within the Muslim world. Husayn, 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 Husayn'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 Husayn 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](http://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 an 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 Husayn 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?

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 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 Husayn and other top Iraqi officials. The close ties between the IAC and Husayn 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 Husayn), 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 Husayn 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 defended Radovan Karadzic, the notorious Bosnian Serb warlord allied with Milosevic, 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 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 shockwave 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

## "ANSWER" AND THE "POD PEOPLE"

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. ANSWER is now calling for renewed nationwide anti-war actions on October 27th.

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. CNN's 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 comments 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-night-



stick 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 Böhnelt, 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 black '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.

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 União Nacional para a Independência 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 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 his 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 "counterrevo-



lutionary" 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 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

### **THE WWP: 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 Communists groups, including a Stalin-worshipping sect called the Russian Communist Workers Party (RCWP) (Rossiskaia Kommunisticheskaja Rabochaia Partia, or RKRP), 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 naïve 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 Partiya (National Bolshevik Party). Today, Anpilov is promoting a new party, the CPSU Lenin-Stalin that backs Stalin's grandson as Russia's new leader.

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 a "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 founding 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

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, the it also fiercely opposed the Polish Solidarity movement in the 1980s.

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

## **AS MUCH AS THE WWP ADMIRERD 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."**

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

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

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 Husayn.

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 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. ☺

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