“Iraq poses no threat to any of its neighbors. It does not threaten its region. It does not threaten the United States. It does not threaten the world.”

Nathaniel Baker

The above quote is not from Saddam Hussein or any of his officials, nor is it from a government-owned propaganda station in the Middle East. It is not from some swarthy, disaffected youth sporting a beard, turban, and “down with America” t-shirt. In fact, it is not even from a liberal. The above quote is from Scott Ritter, the Republican ex-marine and former chief weapons inspector of Iraq. According to Ritter, Iraq was effectively disarmed in 1998, and if it so much as started to rebuild factories for the production of chemical weapons, then not only would the US government have concrete evidence of this, but that evidence would be on the front page of every leading newspaper.

One might get a slightly different impression from listening to US officials. Between the stupefying mantra of “weapons of mass destruction,” the demagogic comparisons of Hussein to Hitler, and the conceited, Jesuitical rhetoric of good vs. evil, it is clear that we’re going to war regardless of any evidence, consequences, or opinions outside of Dick Cheney’s bald, missshapen head. And if you don’t consider the fact that he, George W. Bush, or Donald Rumsfeld said something as ample proof of that something’s validity, then you’re flat out of luck. Hearsay is the only standard of evidence for the statements of this administration.

Formation of Students for International Socialism (SFIS)

To the comrades of our new Connecticut branch, welcome to the YFIS!

Youth For International Socialism is the youth section of the Workers International League. We warmly welcome and look forward to working with each and every one of you!

For those of you unfamiliar with our tendency, we are a young but growing socialist group operating within the United States, with strong connections to similar groups in many countries around the world. Our international movement’s theoretical core revolves around the website marxist.com and the literature, analysis, and news produced there.

While we in the states have only been formally active for about
a year, we are proud of our accomplishments. We now have a bi-monthly newspaper, Socialist Appeal, which reaches hundreds of readers with each pressing. We have comrades spread all throughout the United States, in major cities and the most rural of areas. Despite distances, financial restraints, and the lack of experience, we’ve steam rolled ahead, holding high the banner of revolutionary Marxism and workers’ democracy.

We live in a decisive epoch. The world revolution has already begun, with revolution sweeping Latin America, political and economic meltdowns all over the world, and a general crisis of instability. Here in the US, in the “belly of the beast” we are faced with the bankruptcy of capitalism daily - from Enron to the skyrocketing levels of poverty.

Trotsky said very clearly that one of the key factors which precedes a revolution is the bourgeoisie’s inability to solve its own problems. Now, as the future seems grimmer with every news report, it is up to the working class of America to unite with it’s class brothers and sisters internationally and to implement a new world, free of war, poverty and oppression.

Be proud of your accomplishment, whether your interest in socialism is one of curiosity or of the deepest conviction, you’ve clearly chosen the correct path to lead humanity.

I urge everyone to become more acquainted with the WIL. Please read our materials, on the aforementioned www.newyouth.com, and www.marxist.com, but also on www.socialistappeal.org (the website of our newspaper), and our newest anti-war effort, www.notothewar.org.

If you have questions, please email them to wil@socialistappeal.org.

Toby Shepherd
For the Editorial Board of Socialist Appeal.

It’s Deplorable, Really

Asher Jerolman

It’s time that the United States of America faced up to the fact that privatized healthcare doesn’t work. The idea is that putting health insurance in private hands will allow customers to get the best service at the lowest rates. This, of course, hasn’t happened. We have all heard the horror stories about huge medical bills piling up because the problem wasn’t covered in the plan. Or of companies refusing to insure people with a higher risk of severe illness, the very people who need insurance most. And guess what, it’s all true. This is because, no matter the intent of the people who originally thought up the plan, the companies are out to make money, not help people. This means that they will provide service at the lowest rates, but to them, not the customer. This means that the service they provide is of inadequate quality for exorbitant rates. The do not wish to pay out to customers, as this cuts into their profits. The solution is to remove healthcare from private hands. The government should be the organization that provides money to the people who need it. This system has been already proven in many of the western European nations and in Canada. People there pay virtually nothing out of their own pockets for their healthcare. They do pay higher taxes and Americans would have to be willing to put up with a tax increase in order to pay for the new system. However, the reduction in out-of-pocket expenses, less hassle in dealing with the system and the already high costs of insurance more then compensate for the higher taxes. The change cannot be made overnight, nor should such an attempt be made as it would surely end in disaster. The switchover would have to be gradual, as with any such change but should begin as soon as possible so that people will not have to suffer under this ineffectual system any longer than necessary. Making people’s health a business in which it is more profitable to NOT help them is inhumane and can only cause tragedy. The situation must be changed as soon as possible in order to improve the lives of the people living in this country. It has been proven that there is an effective alternative and this alternative should be taken as soon as possible.

Governor’s Layoffs

Liang Pei

On the morning of Friday December 7, hundreds of Connecticut State employees were handed pink slips for their layoffs. Governor Rowland has cut 2834 state jobs to cover his $500 million budget deficit this year—a deficit mostly caused by a loss in state revenues.

This is a big hit for Connecticut employees. Some unions lost up to 11.5% of their members. Christine Moscatelli who works for the Department of Administrative Services in Wethersfield was devastated when she found out that she had lost her job. "It's the holidays. I have a baby and a mortgage. I thought I was bettering myself for my family. Now I don't know what's in store."

The layoff frenzy would hurt Connecticut in the long run. Entire agencies have been eliminated. This means the leftover workers would be overworked to cover for the lost jobs. Over 100 disabled and blind workers have lost their jobs. Where else are they supposed to find work?

My mother who is an employee of the State Department of Labor fears her potential job loss. Ovet thirty of her colleagues had already lost their jobs before Friday. Ironically, the Department of Labor would soon be accepting an influx of unemployed workers seeking welfare and help with finding new jobs. Eliminating jobs at such departments is simply stupid.

Rowland appeared on television Thursday night saying that he was forced to cut the jobs. Rowland does not merely want to take the wages of the laid off state employees. He wants their health insurance and pensions. Why else would he take such drastic measures when he could promote early retirement or wage freezes? Furthermore, Rowland gave himself a $72,000 raise while other state workers receive their last paychecks.
Layoffs

Probably many families in this school are affected by this decision. Virtually all employees of UConn except for tenure professors are in danger of job loss. What should we do about this? If you know anyone who had been recently laid off, encourage them to fight back. There have been rallies at the capital and in front of the governor’s house. We cannot let the governor take away jobs from innocent workers so easily.

Iraq

There has been and is a great burden of proof, however, on the regime in Baghdad. They have to demonstrate that Iraq does not possess chemical or biological weapons—that there are no such weapons within an area of 167,795 square miles. As ridiculous a task as this is, especially when you throw in the US' hypocrisy in insisting upon Iraqi compliance while maintaining tremendous stockpiles of anthrax, smallpox, nerve gas, and every “weapon of mass destruction” you can imagine and demanding the exemption of its soldiers and officials from international law, Iraq has still expressed a willingness to go through with it (again). This willingness is not something Mr. Cheney and his ilk have been counting on. Their aim is to give Iraq a series of demands that it, nor any nation on the face of the earth, is willing or able to meet, then use its refusal to comply with these demands as a pretext for war. This is why, when Iraq announced it would allow inspectors to return, the US has pushed for a “tougher” resolution, calling for troops to accompany the inspectors into Iraq in such a fashion as to occupy the country without firing a single shot.

Not surprisingly, this resolution has faced opposition from nearly every country whose opinion used to count (read: “Europe”), who, though not without imperialistic appetites of their own, are at least bound by some semblance of international law. It is hard to say whether, in the end, they will agree to rubberstamp the Bush agenda, or whether they will hold their ground. But it is of little consequence. The Bush administration has already demonstrated that it has no qualms about waving a big fat American middle finger in the face of world opinion, and with its war authorization passed by an overwhelming majority in both the House and the Senate; it has everything it needs to move unilaterally. But why is it so hell-bent on doing so?

The myths emanating from the Whitehouse as to why war with Iraq is necessary are specious at best, and disintegrate at the slightest critical touch. Chief among these myths is the claim that Iraq is producing “weapons of mass destruction.” This notion has been done such damage by the statements of people such as the above mentioned Scott Ritter, that the best that can be said for it is that Iraq might have chemical and biological weapons. While possibly suggestive of an investigation by inspectors (although even that is a stretch), the fact that a country might have certain weapons is hardly grounds enough for a full-scale invasion. And even if it were proven that Iraq had these weapons, so what? As I’ve already pointed out, the US has an abundant supply of chemical weapons, and any capability Iraq has for creating them was given to it by the US during the eighties to use in the Iran-Iraq war, which brings us to the next “reason” for war.

You see, Saddam Hussein is a ruthless dictator. We all know that. He used chemical weapons on the Iranians and has gassed his own people. This line is a favorite of the government and media hawks, as it appears very effective at its surface. I think, however, that drawing so much attention to this issue is a peculiar choice, seeing as it’s doubly hypocritical. Not only did the US give Iraq chemical weapons and then support their use against Iran and the Kurds (when our special envoy was none other than Donald Rumsfeld), but the US government has also used chemical and biological weapons on its own people.

Test data released by the Department of Defense five months ago, along with more recently declassified records, have shown that between the years of 1962 and 1973, the US military conducted tests in which it sprayed nerve gas on manned navy boats and e-coli bacteria on unsuspecting civilians. Only one third of the navy men and none of the civilians exposed have been informed. Although these substances were allegedly distributed in “non-lethal” doses, many can cause damage in small amounts and were believed at the time to be less dangerous than we now know them to be. Several years ago, Pentagon officials flat out denied the existence of these tests, then they changed their story, saying that only stimulants were used. Now they've admitted to having used real poisons. This pattern suggests that they are hiding even more, but more importantly, it exposes the US government’s indifference to the lives of its citizens.

Underlying the assertions of “weapons of mass destruction” and the substantiated yet sensationalized tales of Hussein using chemical weapons on his own citizens, is the assumption that Iraq presents a military threat not only to its neighbors, but to the world at large. This laughable notion, when combined with the popular fiction that Hussein is some kind of modern day Hitler bent on world domination, drips of unintended irony. Iraq is the 46th largest nation in terms of population, the 56th in land mass, and it has a GDP of $57 billion (which about equals the wealth of Bill Gates alone, and Man wears costume: "Drop Bush not bombs"
is 1/200 of the US’ $11 trillion.) Its military, thanks to the Gulf War and US-imposed economic sanctions, has been diminished to 1/3 of its size in 1990, while America’s military has expanded to the point where it’s larger than the next nine nations’ combined. Given these facts, I don’t know whether the claim that Iraq is an expansionist menace that the liberals and Europeans are trying to “appease,” as floated in far-right publications such as the Washington Times and the Weekly Standard ought to produce tears of laughter or tears of sadness.

There is, however, a kernel of truth in these stories. The liberals and Europeans are most certainly engaged in appeasement: the appeasement of the Bush administration in its policy of reckless war in pursuit of world domination. To find the modern-day Nazis, we need look no further than the Whitehouse. Home to the world’s most powerful military and a system of ruthless corporate capitalism incapable of solving the various social ills it’s confronted with (poverty, unemployment, drug abuse, etc., etc.), the US is forced to focus its attention to external enemies such as Bin Laden and Hussein, in the same fashion Nazi Germany invaded Poland and Czechoslovakia under the rationale that they were “threats to national security.” As Clausewitz once observed, “War is the continuation of politics by other means.”

Of course, there’s more to this than the frantic lashing out of a socially, politically, and morally bankrupt ruling elite bedeviled by its own contradictions, and there are some notable differences between Bush and Hitler (one being that Hitler, unlike Bush, was elected.) But the similarities by far outweigh the differences. For one, Bush with 9/11, like Hitler with the Reichstag fire, has seized upon a catastrophe to beat the drums for war, and whereas the Nazis turned out to have made the fire themselves, the Bush administration was either complicit or showed criminal negligence in regard to the September 11th attack, which now serves as the main justification for waging aggressive war on any corner of the globe and carrying out sweeping attacks on democratic rights at home.

[For those of you who are surprised and or offended by my accusing the Bush administration of such a thing, consider the following: we are meant to believe that after the US received warnings from at least six other countries, over a dozen known terrorists were allowed to travel freely in and out of the US, train in flight schools, purchase one-way first class tickets with cash, then hijack planes and fly them into buildings without the least bit of resistance from American air defense despite the eastern seaboard being the most heavily protected region in the country and the Air Force and FAA having specific procedures for when planes are hijacked or fly off course (none of which were followed, despite the FAA having an open line with the secret service at about the time the first plane hit the WTC), and that NONE of this was carried out with the cooperation or even the knowledge of government officials- that the Bush administration was being completely honest when they claimed they were “caught off guard.” Then it was almost immediately decided by the same intelligence apparatus that claimed to be utterly clueless in the face of the attacks that they knew beyond any reasonable doubt that the perpetrator was one Osama bin Laden. Sounds double-plus good to me!]

I will expand upon the above theme in a later article, but let us now return to the issue at hand. Following the second world war, Nazi officers were tried for their crimes at the Nuremberg trials. Obviously, you would expect that they were prosecuted for their involvement in the atrocities committed against Jews at the time. But the charge that took precedence even over this involvement was that of planning unprovoked, or “aggressive war.” If this precedent still pertains today, then the Bush administration, in its planning unprovoked, aggressive war with Iraq, is in the process of committing a war crime, and its members are thus war criminals. This is one of the main factors in the administration’s insistence that its soldiers and officials be exempt from facing charges before any international tribunal. It is also illustrative of yet another similarity between the Bushies and the Nazis. They are both practitioners of the “big lie” technique, pioneered by Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels, in which you accuse your opponent of doing exactly what you yourself are doing. As Hitler accused the communists of burning the Reichstag, so Bush accuses Saddam Hussein of being a threat to the world.

So what is the Bush administration’s motivation for attacking Iraq? Bush is seeking political gains at home, oil from Iraq (which has reserves second only to Saudi Arabia’s), and another step on the way to complete dominance. The US military is going to bomb every major city and all of Hussein’s palaces while alleging they are “chemical weapons factories” or something of the sort. Then the ground invasion will begin, and as the Iraqi soldiers move to cities for protection, brutal urban warfare will ensue, with our forces most likely slaughtering both soldiers and civilians alike in droves. Once this revolting bloodbath finally comes to an end, and we really don’t know when that will be, Bush will install a military dictatorship in Iraq modeled after General Macarthur’s leadership of Japan after the Second World War, and his corporate friends will move in to take the oil. Unless Hussein actually does have chemical weapons, in which case he’ll probably release them on US soldiers. But hey, you never know- gambles like this are what arrogance, irresponsibility and downright madness in government are all about.✔

[Note from Author: This is an article I have written concerning the probable US invasion of Iraq. If anyone would like to respond to my position or see sources for the statistics that I refer to in this article, they may do so by emailing me at kickassmcawesome@yahoo.com. Also, keep in mind that this article was written on October 20th, so some things have changed since then.]

November 3rd rally brought together thousands of people against the Iraqi War
**Why Socialism?**

By Albert Einstein

Is it advisable for one who is not an expert on economic and social issues to express views on the subject of socialism? I believe for a number of reasons that it is.

Let us first consider the question from the point of view of scientific knowledge. It might appear that there are no essential methodological differences between astronomy and economics: scientists in both fields attempt to discover laws of general acceptability for a circumscribed group of phenomena in order to make the interconnection of these phenomena as clearly understandable as possible. But in reality such methodological differences do exist. The discovery of general laws in the field of economics is made difficult by the circumstance that observed economic phenomena are often affected by many factors which are very hard to evaluate separately. In addition, the experience which has accumulated since the beginning of the so-called civilized period of human history has--as is well known--been largely influenced and limited by causes which are by no means exclusively economic in nature. For example, most of the major states of history owed their existence to conquest. The conquering peoples established themselves, legally and economically, as the privileged class of the conquered country. They seized for themselves a monopoly of the land ownership and appointed a priesthood from among their own ranks. The priests, in control of education, made the class division of society into a permanent institution and created a system of values by which the people were thenceforth, to a large extent unconsciously, guided in their social behavior.

But historic tradition is, so to speak, of yesterday; nowhere have we really overcome what Thorstein Veblen called “the predatory phase” of human development. The observable economic facts belong to that phase and even such laws as we can derive from them are not applicable to other phases. Since the real purpose of socialism is precisely to overcome and advance beyond the predatory phase of human development, economic science in its present state can throw little light on the socialist society of the future.

Second, socialism is directed toward a social-ethical end. Science, however, cannot create ends and, even less, instill them in human beings; science, at most, can supply the means by which to attain certain ends. But the ends themselves are conceived by personalities with lofty ethical ideals and—if these ends are not stillborn, but vital and vigorous—are adopted and carried forward by those many human beings who, half-unconsciously, determine the slow evolution of society.

For these reasons, we should be on our guard not to overestimate science and scientific methods when it is a question of human problems; and we should not assume that experts are the only ones who have a right to express themselves on questions affecting the organization of society. Innumerable voices have been asserting for some time now that human society is passing through a crisis, that its stability has been gravely shattered. It is characteristic of such a situation that individuals feel indifferent or even hostile toward the group, small or large, to which they belong. In order to illustrate my meaning, let me record here a personal experience. I recently discussed with an intelligent and well-disposed man the threat of another war, which in my opinion would seriously endanger the existence of mankind, and I remarked that only a supranational organization would offer protection from that danger. Thereupon my visitor, very calmly and coolly, said to me: “Why are you so deeply opposed to the disappearance of the human race?”

I am sure that as little as a century ago no one would have so lightly made a statement of this kind. It is the statement of a man who has striven in vain to attain an equilibrium within himself and has more or less lost hope of succeeding. It is the expression of a painful solitude and isolation from which so many people are suffering in these days. What is the cause? Is there a way out?

It is easy to raise such questions, but difficult to answer them with any degree of assurance. I must try, however, as best I can, although I am very conscious of the fact that our feelings and strivings are often contradictory and obscure and that they cannot be expressed in easy and simple formulas.

Man is, at one and the same time, a solitary being and a social being. As a solitary being, he attempts to protect his own existence and that of those who are closest to him, to satisfy his personal desires, and to develop his innate abilities. As a social being, he seeks to gain the recognition and affection of his fellow human beings, to share in their pleasures, to comfort them in their sorrows, and to improve their conditions of life. Only the existence of these varied, frequently conflicting strivings accounts for the special character of a man, and their specific combination determines the extent to which an individual can achieve an inner equilibrium and can contribute to the well-being of society. It is quite possible that the relative strength of these two drives is, in the main, fixed by inheritance. But the personality that finally emerges is largely formed by the environment in which a man happens to find himself during his development, by the structure of the society in which he grows up, by the tradition of that society, and by its appraisal of particular types of behavior. The abstract concept “society” means to the individual human being the sum total of his direct and indirect relations to his contemporaries and to all the people of earlier generations. The individual is able to think, feel, strive, and work by himself; but he depends so much upon society—in his physical, intellectual, and emotional existence—that it is impossible to think of him, or to understand him, outside the framework of society. It is “society” which provides man with food, home, the tools of work, language, the forms of thought, and most of the content of thought; his life is made possible through the labor and the accomplishments of many millions past and present who are all hidden behind the small word “society.”

It is evident, therefore, that the dependence of the individual upon society is a fact of nature which cannot be abolished—just as in the case of ants and bees. However, while the whole life process of ants and bees is fixed down to the...
smallest detail by rigid, hereditary instincts, the social pattern and interrelationships of human beings are very variable susceptible to change. Memory, the capacity to make combinations, the gift of oral communication have made possible developments among human beings which are dictated by biological necessities. Such developments manifest themselves in traditions, institutions, and organizations; in literature; in scientific and engineering accomplishments; in works of art. This explains how it happens that, in a certain sense, man can influence his life and that in this process conscious thinking and wanting can play a part.

Man acquires at birth, through heredity, a biological constitution which we must consider fixed and unalterable, including the natural urges which are characteristic of the human species. In addition, during his lifetime, he acquires a cultural constitution which he adopts from society through communication and through many other types of influences. It is this cultural constitution which, with the passage of time, is subject to change and which determines to a very large extent the relationship between the individual and society. Modern anthropology has taught us, through comparative investigation of so-called primitive cultures, that the social behavior of human beings may differ greatly, depending upon prevailing cultural patterns and the types of organization which predominate in society. It is on this that those who are striving to improve the lot of man may ground their hopes: human beings are not condemned, because of their biological constitution, to annihilate each other or to be at the mercy of a cruel, self-inflicted fate.

If we ask ourselves how the structure of society and the cultural attitude of man should be changed in order to make human life as satisfying as possible, we should constantly be conscious of the fact that there are certain conditions which we are unable to modify. As mentioned before, the biological nature of man is, for all practical purposes, not subject to change. Furthermore, technological and demographic developments of the last few centuries have created conditions which are here to stay. In relatively densely settled populations with the goods which are indispensable to their continued existence, an extreme division of labor and a highly productive apparatus are absolutely necessary. The time—which, looking back, seems so idyllic—is gone forever when individuals or relatively small groups could be completely self-sufficient. It is only a slight exaggeration to say that mankind constitutes even now a planetary community of production and consumption.

I have now reached the point where I may indicate briefly what to me constitutes the essence of the crisis of our time. It concerns the relationship of the individual to society. The individual has become more conscious than ever of his dependence upon society. But he does not view dependence as a positive asset, as an organic tie, as a protective force, but rather as a threat to his natural rights, or even to his economic existence. Moreover, his position in society is such that the egotistical drives of his makeup are constantly being accentuated, while his social drives, which are by nature weaker, progressively deteriorate. All human beings, whatever their position in society, are suffering from this process of deterioration. Unknowingly prisoners of their own egotism, they feel insecure, lonely, and deprived of the naive, simple, and unsophisticated enjoyment of life. Man can find meaning in life, short and perilous as it is, only through devoting himself to society.

The economic anarchy of capitalist society as it exists today is, in my opinion, the real source of the evil. We see before us a huge community of producers the members of which are uneasingly striving to deprive each other of the fruits of their collective labor—not by force, but on the whole in faithful compliance with legally established rules. In this respect, it is important to realize that the means of production—that is to say, the entire productive capacity that is needed for producing consumer goods as well as additional capital goods—may legally be, and for the most part are, the private property of individuals.

For the sake of simplicity in the discussion that follows I shall call "workers" all those who do not share in the ownership of the means of production—although this does not quite correspond to the customary use of the term. The owner of the means of production is in a position to purchase the labor power of the worker. By using the means of production, the worker produces new goods which become the property of the capitalist. The essential point about this process is the relation between what the worker produces and what he is paid, both measured in terms of real value. In so far as the labor contract is "free," what the worker receives is determined not by the real value of the goods he produces, but by his minimum needs and by the capitalists' requirements for labor power in relation to the number of workers competing for jobs. It is important to understand that even in theory the payment of the worker is not determined by the value of his product.

Private capital tends to become concentrated in few hands, partly because of competition among the capitalists, and partly because technological development and the increasing division of labor encourage the formation of larger units of production at the expense of the smaller ones. The result of these developments is an oligarchy of private capital the enormous power of which cannot be effectively checked even by a democratically organized political society. This is true since the members of legislative bodies are selected by political parties, largely financed or otherwise influenced by private capitalists who, for all practical purposes, separate the electorate from the legislature. The consequence is that the representatives of the people do not in fact sufficiently protect the interests of the underprivileged sections of the population. Moreover, under existing conditions, private capitalists inevitably control, directly or indirectly, the main sources of information (press, radio, education). It is thus extremely difficult, and indeed in most cases quite impossible, for the individual citizen to come to objective conclusions and to make intelligent use of his political rights.

The situation prevailing in an economy based on the private ownership of capital is thus characterized by main principles: first, means of production (capital) are privately owned and the owners dispose of them as they see fit; second, the labor contract is free. Of course, there is no such thing as a pure capitalist society in this sense. In particular, it should be noted that the workers, through long and bitter political struggles, have succeeded in securing a somewhat improved form of the "free labor contract" for certain categories of workers. But taken as a whole, the present-day economy does
not differ much from "pure" capitalism. Production is carried
on for profit, not for use. There is no provision that all those
able and willing to work will always be in a position to find
employment; an "army of unemployed" almost always exists.
The worker is constantly in fear of losing his job. Since
unemployed and poorly paid workers do not provide a
profitable market, the production of consumers' goods is
restricted, and great hardship is the consequence.
Technological progress frequently results in more
unemployment rather than in an easing of the burden of work
for all. The profit motive, in conjunction with competition
among capitalists, is responsible for an instability in the
accumulation and utilization of capital which leads to
increasingly severe depressions. Unlimited competition leads
to a huge waste of labor, and to that crippling of the social
consciousness of individuals which I mentioned before.

This crippling of individuals I consider the worst evil
of capitalism. Our whole educational system suffers from this
evil. An exaggerated competitive attitude is inculcated into the
student, who is trained to worship acquisitive success as a
preparation for his future career.

I am convinced there is only one way to eliminate
these grave evils, namely through the establishment of a
socialist economy, accompanied by an educational system
which would be oriented toward social goals. In such an
income, the means of production are owned by society itself
and are utilized in a planned fashion. A planned economy,
which adjusts production to the needs of the community,
would distribute the work to be done among all those able to
work and would guarantee a livelihood to every man, woman,
and child. The education of the individual, in addition to
promoting his own innate abilities, would attempt to develop
in him a sense of responsibility for his fellow men in place of
the glorification of power and success in our present society.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to remember that a
planned economy is not yet socialism. A planned economy as
such may be accompanied by the complete enslavement of the
individual. The achievement of socialism requires the solution
of some extremely difficult sociopolitical problems: how is it
possible, in view of the far-reaching centralization of political
and economic power, to prevent bureaucracy from becoming
all-powerful and overweening? How can the rights of the
individual be protected and therewith a democratic
counterweight to the power of bureaucracy be assured?

[Monthly Review, May, 1949]

"The working class, which is the principle supplier of
soldiers, and which bears the brunt of the material sacrifices,
is in particular the natural enemy of wars, because wars
contradict the aim it pursues, namely, the creation of an
economic system founded on socialist principles, which in
practice will give effect to the solidarity of peoples..."

- V.I. Lenin, *Bellicose Militarism and the Anti-Militarist
Tactics of Social-Democracy*

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**THE ARTS**

**Art and Socialism**

Nathaniel Baker

Just this past week, it occurred to me that there
ought to be an artistic branch of Students for International
Socialism. Such a branch would heighten the consciousness
and expand the horizons of the artistically inclined (of which
there are quite a few at E.O. Smith), create a stronger sense of
community through a series of artistic events, and introduce a
number of students to the world of art. However, the idea has
faced skepticism. It is this skepticism that I would like to
address.

From members of SFIS, the general attitude seems to
be "Okay... but what does art have to do with socialism?" It is
my opinion, as it was that of Marx, Trotsky, and historically
the Marxist movement in general, that the aims of art and
socialism are absolutely inseparable. There is more to Marxism
than understanding class relations, commodities, and surplus-
value. Marxism is about seeing and understanding the world
on the basis of humankind's greatest intellectual achievements-
be they in science, philosophy, or art- and then using this
understanding to transform society and thus ourselves into
something more just, noble, and more humane. It is about
liberation from the vicious circle of class oppression that has
plagued humanity for the past two thousand years (at least),
which at times was of historical necessity, but is becoming less
necessary and more outmoded each day. It is about man
seizing control of his creative and productive facilities and
using them to their fullest potential to shed light on both the
farthest reaches of the external universe and the most remote
areas of his own psyche. It is in this desire for liberation, this
striving to build a better, more beautiful world that art and
socialism find their common ground.

To quote David Walsh's lecture on *The Aesthetic
Component of Socialism*:

'A true work of art appeals to and sets loose powerful forces
within the beholder. It brings to the point of highest tension,
if only in what Freud called "the deepest layers of the psychic
mechanism," the conflict between life as it is and life as it has
hitherto appeared only in humanity's dreams. The products of
art unleash libidinal and destructive energy, evoke needs and
desires which cannot be satisfied within the immediate
circumstances of the individual or within the existing
oppressive social structure as a whole, needs and desires which
demand a response, a response which in the end can only be
found in the social revolution.'

This brings me to the skepticism of the artistically
inclined who are not members of the group. Their attitude is
one of "Okay... but I'm not a socialist." I would beg to differ.
As Walsh explains, art is by its very nature subversive. The
artist cognizes the world through moods and images, not only
passively portraying life, but creating an impulse which
demands a response.' The genuine work of art transcends

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capitalist society, as it presents its audience with something that is not a commodity, does not have a concrete use-value, yet has an indisputable worth. It creates its own value; one which stands in irreconcilable contradiction to the status quo, infects its viewers with their own interpretation of this value, and imbues them with an inspiration that is alien to their prior understanding of life and to the system upon which this understanding has been founded. It is in this way that art breaks the chains which force us into subhuman roles, isolate us from meaningful contact, and alienate us from our true selves. These are the very same chains which the socialist movement means to break: the chains of commodification that serve as the binding force of capitalist society.

So I call on every last person in this school that feels they have a vocation, a gift, or even a mild interest in any of the arts to involve themselves in this endeavor. I strongly encourage them to attend SFIS meetings and discussions, to contribute to this newsletter, and to collaborate for the purpose of putting on concerts, plays, exhibitions, readings, screenings, lectures, forums, or anything else that I might have neglected to mention. And I stress the importance of learning about social issues and the Marxist method. Doing so will enrich your art and it will enrich your life.

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**UNTITLED**

**Liang Pei**

This is Lunacy.
The walk down the alley with no hands
But bound hands
No thoughts
But the dregs of dreams
Never to be forgotten
Yet never revealed completely
In the seemingly endless walk down this path
Which opens its mouth
With every step
Every tap of the cobblestone
Reverbs along the walls
Until it reaches that last day
Which broke its promise to come
Until then,
The vultures continue to circle
Over the rooftops of countless residents
Still on their second chapter
Of their nightly delusions
The puddles await
The inevitable splash from the shoes
That see only floors
Over there,
The crimson stare from within
Those familiar eyes of darkness
The blind perception that sees everything
Corrupts the heart of innocent souls
Who wander into this alley
Dark and unforgiving.

(automatic writing)

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November 3rd – "No Blood for Oil" (top) "Stop the War Against Iraq" (bottom-left) A boy wears a socialist flag (bottom-right)
For Your Information
Nathaniel Baker

The only true opposition to war is a Socialist opposition.

War is the inevitable result of contradictions in the capitalist system. It stems from the moral, political, and economic bankruptcy of the ruling class, and from imperialist tensions between rival nations. Armed conflict erupts when these tensions become too great to be contained within the so-called norms of diplomacy. War is not some sourceless and eternally self-replicating evil that sweeps like a storm over the inviolable paradise of diplomatic norms; rather, it is symptomatic of their inadequacy. We need a system that is actually capable of preventing war, not one that merely flinches at its unpleasantness after it has already begun. This need can only be met by a socialist planned economy democratically controlled by the working class.

The Democratic and Green parties are not adequate vessels for genuine opposition to war.

They both stand as defenders of the capitalist system and thus defenders of the ruling class. The Democratic Party has long abandoned any semblance of its “progressive” program of the 1960s and 70s, its members now reduced for the most part to corporate lapdogs, alienated from broad layers of the population by their reliance on pollsters, spin-doctors, and lobbyists. The Green Party is a middle class protest group, its program a resurrection of the very ideas the Democrats have left behind. It fails to provide any principled alternative to the capitalist system and only attempts to build a “better” capitalism. The Greens try to lobby for changes here and there, never looking to the source of the social rot that comprises corporate America, suggesting boycotts and support for local businesses, methods that are designed to “oppose” corporations, but are ineffective and instead only run contrary to the historic development of the means of production. The Green Party, by virtue of its own design, can never be a dominant political party in this country. The present electoral system works in such a way as to exclude even this sort of moderate pressure group from having a meaningful say in the workings of the government, and Nader has made a point of working within this system. One need only connect the dots to understand the implications of such a position: though they would very much like it to change, and would bring about such change if only the elites would be so nice as to give them a chance, the Greens have no qualms about acquiescing to a system that is profoundly anti-democratic.

Peace can be achieved only through the independent mobilization of the working class based on a Marxist Internationalist perspective.

To understand why the Democrats and Greens are so politically impotent, it is necessary to note which classes comprise their social base. The Democrats draw their support from the ruling elite—often the very same elites as their Republican counterparts—whose interest it is to hold on to power at all costs. This is why the Bush administration is proceeding with sweeping attacks on our civil liberties and pursuing a policy of reckless military aggression with little to no opposition from the Democrats in congress—although the liberal elites may be a bit more squeamish than their reactionary Republican counterparts at the outset, they will go along with whatever measures are necessary to perpetuate their position in the ruling class. Their cowardly (at best) response to the impeachment drive, the theft of the 2000 election, and the “war on terror” is indicative of how they will behave in the face of the oncoming wave of reaction and terror fueled by criminal elements within the Bush administration, the military brass, and the top levels of corrupt multinational corporations. Ralph Nader's reaction has been at least as deplorable as the behavior of the Democrats. He actually supported the impeachment drive and his response to the theft of the 2000 election was one of deafening silence. He correctly observes the flaws of the present war drive on a superficial level, but doesn't bother to address its obvious class character. The Green Party's social base is primarily in the upper middle class and within a very narrow portion of the ruling class. The motivation of these social layers, though at times rebellious, is ultimately subordinate to the wealthy elites, and mainly focused on self-preservation in the face of historical trends that have proven to be running contrary to such an interest. Their historic position is one of desperation and confusion, which finds its expression in the scatterbrained character of the Green Party and the immersion of its members in so many shades of mysticism. The only class with genuinely progressive credentials is the working class, whose interests are egalitarian in nature, due to its comprising the vast majority of the population and its desire to have control over its own destiny. To genuinely oppose war and work for a society based on democratic principle rather than greed requires the working class to become aware of the various class tendencies and to mobilize and seize the power on this basis. Only when this happens will we begin to see the end of war and the dawning of true civilization.
POP QUIZ ON THE MIDDLE EAST

by Charlie Reese

Question: Which country alone in the Middle East has nuclear weapons?
Answer: Israel.

Q: Which country in the Middle East refuses to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and bars international inspections?
A: Israel.

Q: Which country in the Middle East seized the sovereign territory of other nations by military force and continues to occupy it in defiance of United Nations Security Council resolutions?
A: Israel.

Q: Which country in the Middle East refuses to prosecute its soldiers who have acknowledged executing prisoners of war?
A: Israel.

Q: In which country in the Middle East was a high-ranking military officer admitted publicly that unarmed prisoners of war were executed?
A: Israel.

Q: What country in the Middle East routinely violates the international borders of another sovereign state with warplanes and artillery and naval gunfire?
A: Israel.

Q: In what country in the Middle East was a high-ranking United Nations diplomat assassinated?
A: Israel.

Q: In what country in the Middle East did the man who ordered the assassination of a high-ranking U.N. diplomat become prime minister?
A: Israel.

Q: What country in the Middle East blew up an American diplomatic facility in Egypt and attacked a U.S. ship in international waters, killing 33 and wounding 177 American sailors?
A: Israel.

Q: In what country in the Middle East employed a spy, Jonathan Pollard, to steal classified documents and then gave some of them to the Soviet Union?
A: Israel.

Q: In what country on Planet Earth has the second most powerful lobby in the United States, according to a recent Fortune magazine survey of Washington insiders?
A: Israel.

Q: What country in the Middle East is in defiance of 69 United Nations Security Council resolutions and has been protected from 29 more by U.S. vetoes?
A: Israel.

Q: In what country in the Middle East is the United States threatening to bomb because "U.N. Security Council resolutions must be obeyed?"
A: Iraq

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If you have any articles, artwork, anything to add to this newsletter, please send them to editor@sfis.cjb.net. Feel free to send commentary or responses to articles too. If you would like to join our organization, please send an email and we will give you further details. This newsletter is downloadable from our website. Please spread the word.

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