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Revolutionary Organization of Labor, USA

Obama's Post-Election Honeymoon with the "Republicrat" Congress and the Question of the U.S. Imperialist State*

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I. PRESIDENT OBAMA'S BIPARTISAN AUSTERITY PROGRAM

Our November-December 2010 Newsletter exposed the 2010 U.S. midterm election "charade" as a "lose-lose" proposition for the U.S. and international working class and oppressed nationalities and a "win-win" proposition for U.S. imperialism. That charade had been presented as a fierce, "no-holds-barred" battle between the Republican Party and the Democratic Party to the working people of the USA and the world by the mass media, through hundreds of millions of dollars of paid advertising and much more effective *unpaid advertising masking as "news."* In the less than two months since the U.S. midterm elections saw the Republican Party gain control of the House of Representatives and gain voting strength in the Senate as well, *in direct opposition to the logic of the so-called democratic election process in the USA*, Democratic President Obama has achieved a number of "successes" in cooperation with the Republicans in Congress!

The answer to this conundrum, as we pointed to in that newsletter: *The U.S. ruling class did indeed "throw" the election to the Republican wing of its "Republicrat" Party.* This paved the way for Democrat Obama to rally "the lame-duck Democratic-controlled Congress" to carry out the *Republican* campaign promise *to retain the Bush tax cuts for the rich* in clear opposition to Obama's campaign pledge and the Democratic Party's platform in almost every Congressional race *and* in clear opposition to the wishes of the vast majority of the U.S. voters and population.

Indeed, part of the Obama-Republican deal on keeping the Bush tax cuts for the rich, also provided the wealthy with a much less demanding inheritance tax with a much bigger exemption, exempting all but the 50 richest families in the USA from paying any inheritance tax at all (AFL-CIO Now Blog, 12-17-10). Meanwhile, it also included a reduction of social security contributions for next year “*for everyone.*” In the short run, this is a “bone” thrown to the masses; in the long run, however, it will cost the Social Security system \$120 billion, making social security benefits more vulnerable to being *destroyed* by the bankers and corporate privatizers in the future.

*Also included at end of this issue: **Tribute to Patrice Lumumba, a poem, Tucson Tragedy**

Adds Up

What was surprising was the speed with which these outrageous deeds were carried out in the still Democratic Party-controlled Congress, without even waiting until the newly elected Republican House and Senate members had taken their seats.

Last Spring, *Ray O' Light Newsletter Number 59* discussed an important ruling class article entitled “The Dollar and the Deficits” by C. Fred Bergsten,* a former leading figure in the Republican administration of Richard Nixon and then the Democratic administration of Jimmy Carter, a key architect of the Rockefeller-led Trilateral Commission and currently an employee of billionaire Peter G. Peterson.** We pointed out then that Obama and the Democrats were already implementing Bergsten’s recommended procedural reforms – “pay as you go” rules that required all spending increases or tax cuts be financed by savings elsewhere in the budget and creation of a “fiscal future commission” which could exercise great *bipartisan* influence over Congress’ decisions on Social Security, Medicaid and Medicare, i.e., to cut and gut them.

*NOTE: [C. Fred Bergsten, “The Dollar and the Deficits,”*Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 88 No. 6, November-December 2009]

**NOTE: [Peterson himself is a former Secretary of Commerce under Nixon and long time Chairman of Wall Street giant, Lehman Brothers.]

We stated: “To bolster the U.S. economy Bergsten calls for three immediate reforms:

1. ‘*Containing long-term medical costs.*’ The medical-industrial complex has successfully blocked positive healthcare reform so the impending healthcare bill, with budget rectitude, will mean worse healthcare for the people of the USA.
2. ‘*Comprehensive Social Security reform.*’ Raising the retirement age and shrinking the benefit [forcing older workers to keep working and thus preventing much of the younger generation from obtaining a stable job].
3. ‘*Raising taxes on consumption.*’ Such taxes are always regressive, targeting the working class and the poor, for they spend a bigger share of their money (consume) to survive than the richer and more privileged classes.

“Bergsten’s naked imperialist proposals also include ‘increasing productivity,’ i.e. the intensification of the exploitation of the U.S. working class; and ‘cutting corporate tax rates’ so as to ‘create incentives for both U.S. and foreign firms to locate their production in the United States.’” (*Ray O’Light Newsletter #59*, March-April 2010, “The Tea Party Movement, the Obama Regime and the Growing Fascist Danger in the USA”)

Long before any hint that there would be a Republican election “victory,” when *Democratic President Obama* had a *Democratic* majority in both the House and the Senate, by Executive Order, Obama had appointed an eighteen member bipartisan National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform, *evenly split between Democrats and Republicans!* (Shades of the

2010 election outcome!) To lead this austerity commission, Obama selected former *Republican* Senate leader **Alan Simpson** and former counsel for *Democratic* President Bill Clinton, **Erskin Bowles**, a board member of Morgan Stanley whose wife is on the board of J.P. Morgan Chase. “Republicrats” all, Obama’s commission was loaded with fat cats whose agendas included cutting government benefits to the poor and middle class, privatizing social security and pillaging social security, Medicaid and Medicare.

Taking advantage of the momentum of an alleged popular *Republican* mandate for “shared sacrifice” supposedly expressing the will of the tea party movement and other voters in the 2010 election charade, the Obama-appointed National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform rolled out its austerity plan *for us* in early December.

The fact that Bergsten’s list seems virtually assured of being *fulfilled* in the aftermath of the 2010 midterm election is a reflection of *how firmly in control of the current U.S. political process the financial oligarchy (Wall Street) is!*

Almost one hundred years ago, V.I. Lenin, in his brilliant pamphlet, *The State and Revolution*, explained how in the imperialist stage of capitalism, the state apparatus, the government, principally the bureaucracy and the military, serve to maintain monopoly capitalist dictatorship, whether through a monarchical or a democratic form of government. “Imperialism – the era of bank capital, the era of gigantic capitalist monopolies, the era of the development of monopoly capitalism into state-monopoly capitalism – has demonstrated with particular force an extraordinary strengthening of the ‘state machine’ and an unprecedented growth of its bureaucratic and military apparatus, in connection with the intensification of repressive measures against the proletariat both in the monarchical and in the freest, republican countries.... The forms of bourgeois states are extremely varied, but their essence is the same; all these states, whatever their form, in the final analysis are inevitably the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.”

But there are none so blind as those who will not see. Most of those on the U.S. “left” -- petty bourgeois reformists, social democrats, anarchists, revisionists and Trotskyites -- are still seeking desperately to defend Obama and the Democratic Party and the capitalist system in the face of their outrageous service to the U.S. monopoly capitalist and imperialist system in this lame-duck session of Congress. These opportunists describe defeats for the people as victories .

In an editorial entitled, “Lame Duck Congress Victories,” *The Nation’s* Editors acknowledge that “the lame-duck session saw President Obama and the Congressional Democratic leaders force both chambers to accept a tax cut ‘compromise’ that extended Bush-era tax breaks for billionaires, developed a sweeping estate tax exemption for millionaires and put Social Security at risk.” (*The Nation*, January 10/17, 2011) Nevertheless, these “socialist” editors assert that there were “three high notes and an encouraging note” that presumably made the still Democratic majority-led lame-duck session leading up to the Republican resurgence in the new Congress something worth “pining for” and fighting for a return to over the next few years. These opportunists allege that the passage of the repeal of the “Don’t ask, don’t tell” policy which will allow homosexuals to openly serve in the U.S. military, the passage of food-safety legislation, and New Start, the arms control treaty with Russia, are “three high notes.” And *The Nation’s* editors describe as an “encouraging note” the near passage of the DREAM (Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors) Act, which they characterize as “an immigration reform written to make it easier for undocumented young people to go to college.” *

*NOTE: [It is noteworthy that *The Nation* editors don't even bother to talk about the extension of unemployment benefits as a "high note."]

This Newsletter will expose several of the recent Obama-led, bi-partisan congressional actions that *The Nation's* editors and other opportunists of various stripes characterize as "progressive" and "positive" for the counter revolutionary assaults on the working people of the USA and the world that they actually are. In so doing, we will establish that the U.S. imperialist state remains today every bit as dangerous an enemy of the workers and oppressed peoples of the world as it was when the Bush-Cheney Regime was at the height of its imperialist arrogance and brutality.

II. GAYS IN THE U.S. MILITARY

In November and December 2010, a strange thing happened. The Democratic Party-controlled Congress that had been so "lame" for so long all of a sudden came to life *after* the Republican Party victory in the 2010 election! This "lame-duck" Congress featured the cooperation of the Congressional Republicans with the Congressional Democrats under the inspired leadership of the Democratic President. Alas, it was all in the service of the U.S. monopoly capitalist ruling class.

Together Obama and the "Republicrat" Congress provided bountiful Christmas gifts to the wealthy including the extension of the Bush era tax cuts for the rich. It was in this context of the Congressional "season of giving" (to the rich) that President Obama, backed by Secretary of Defense Gates and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Admiral Mullen, shepherded the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" through Congress. On December 22, 2010, President Barack Obama signed into law the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell Repeal Act of 2010." Thus the seventeen year old policy of banning gay and lesbian service members from serving openly is coming to an end. As Obama said, "... no longer will our nation be denied the service of thousands of patriotic Americans forced to leave the military, despite years of exemplary performance, because they happen to be gay." (Huffington Post, 12-18-10)

Indeed, *what this law provides to the rich is more cannon fodder with which the U.S. military can defend U.S. imperialism and oppress and terrorize the international proletariat and oppressed peoples for the sake of maximum capitalist exploitation and profit.* This at a time when the U.S. military remains overextended and when new U.S. imperialist wars of aggression are already underway. Earlier this year a Pentagon study recommended that the more than 13,500 gay and lesbian soldiers discharged under "don't ask, don't tell" "be considered for re-entry, assuming they qualify in all other respects." ("Gays Ousted From Military Now Hoping to Return," AP, 12-23-10)

President Obama encouraged those who had been discharged to re-enlist once he, along with Secretary Gates and Admiral Mullen certify the military's readiness to implement the repeal. "As commander in chief, I am certain that we can effect this transition in a way that only *strengthens our military readiness.*" (Our emphasis, ROL)

For those on the U.S. left -- petty bourgeois reformists, social democrats, anarchists, revisionists and Trotskyites -- who are seeking desperately to maintain support for Obama and the Democratic Party this new "pro gay and lesbian" law is the latest straw they are grasping at.

For example, in her January 10/17, 2011 column in *The Nation*, Melissa Harris-Perry, tries to justify Obama's season of giving to the rich, saying that "the lame-duck Congressional session of 2010 brought with it hard fought successes, painful losses and the difficult pill of compromise." She refers to the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell as "the week's biggest win."

In the same issue, *The Nation* editors, incredibly, try to cover over the Obama-Reid-Pelosi Democratic Party service to U.S. imperialism by referring to the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell as "historic gay rights reform;" and they credit blood-stained arch U.S. imperialist war criminal and Zionist Senator Joe Lieberman as key to this "victory!" (See "Lame Duck Congress Victories.")

The heroic anti-war and anti-U.S. imperialist activist, Cindy Sheehan, has it right in her 12-23-10 article, "Don't go, don't kill!" Sister Sheehan states: "While I am a staunch advocate for equality of marriage and same-sex partnership, I cannot - as a peace activist - rejoice in the fact that now homosexuals can openly serve next to heterosexuals in one of the least socially responsible organizations that currently exists on earth: The US military. "... The capacity for increased carnage should not be celebrated as a victory! I cannot help but think about those that are on the receiving end of US military aggression. "... Don't equal human rights extend to those that the Empire has mislabeled as the 'enemy'?"

Meanwhile, even the militant, socialistic Workers World Party helped pave the way for this victory for U.S. imperialism and reaction. In a June 23, 2010 WW Pride Statement, Workers World tries to have it both ways. While they call for the complete dismantling of the U.S. military in one breath, in the next they assert: "Workers World Party supports the right of LGBT people to serve in the military free of harassment, intimidation and discrimination. This becomes especially important in this harsh economic climate, when an economic draft is forcing more LGBT workers, to enlist." ("Repeal 'don't ask, don't tell' — and the military") To their shame, Workers World, a self-proclaimed socialist and internationalist party of workers has not one word about the need to oppose military recruitment and enlistment in this article.

Here, Workers World Party (WWP) exposes their social-chauvinist tendencies. For they treat a job in the U.S. military as if it were any job that a worker in the USA has a right to fill. As students of Lenin, WWP has failed to learn the lessons of Lenin's most militant and revolutionary work, *The State and Revolution*.*

*NOTE: [Lenin never finished this brilliant work. He was "interrupted" by the need to lead the successful Russian Revolution which this work helped him and the Bolshevik Party to accomplish.]

In *The State and Revolution* Lenin taught that, "The state arises when, where and to the extent that class antagonisms objectively *cannot* be reconciled." He continues, "according to Marx, the state is an organ of class *rule*, an organ for the oppression of one class by another..." (Lenin's emphasis) Lenin further points out, "A standing army and police are the chief instruments of state power."

In the current world situation – where U.S. imperialism is still the chief bulwark of world capitalism, where, largely due to its military power vis-à-vis its creditors (China, Japan, Germany, etc.), it is still the hegemonic imperialist power despite being the biggest debtor country in the world, where two large and protracted wars of aggression and occupation are being waged by the U.S. military in Iraq and in the Afghanistan-Pakistan theater, and dozens of other covert and overt U.S. imperialist military operations are being carried out around the world – virtually anything that strengthens the U.S. military is counter revolutionary.

Today, the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" objectively *strengthens the U.S. military*, as underscored by unrelenting support for it from Joe Lieberman to the Pentagon to the Obama Regime. It is a blow to the struggle of the oppressed and exploited of the earth, including those homosexuals and lesbians in our ranks, for freedom from imperialist enslavement. In the aftermath of the passage of DADT, the Revolutionary Organization of Labor, USA once again

calls on *all* workers and oppressed in the USA to refuse to enlist and to otherwise resist the U.S. imperialist war machine.

III. DREAM ACT: A WAKE-UP CALL

In their desperation to find something positive with which to defend the Obama Regime and the Democratic Party in this “season of giving to the rich,” *The Nation’s* editors also grasped for the straw of the DREAM Act, which they describe as “an immigration reform written to make it easier for undocumented young people to go to college.” Regarding the DREAM Act, too, the leaders of *The Nation*, as well as most of the U.S. left, revealed their social chauvinist essence.

The DREAM Act, if passed, would have provided for protection from deportation for about 800,000 young people who are long term residents and came to the USA with undocumented parents who either stay in school *or serve in the U.S. military*. Like the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” (DADT) legislation, passage of the DREAM Act would have increased the size and quality of the labor pool for the U.S. military machine thus strengthening the U.S. military. For this reason, as *The Wall Street Journal* reported, “Pentagon officials support the Dream Act.” *The Journal* continues, “In its strategic plan for fiscal years 2010-2012, the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness cited the Dream Act as a ‘smart’ way to attract quality recruits to the all-volunteer force.” (“A Route to Citizenship in Defense Bill,” *Wall Street Journal*, September 18-19, 2010)

Yet, this important reactionary feature of the DREAM Act was entirely omitted from mention in *The Nation* editorial and has been given no more than a passing mention by most of the so-called “left.” Underscoring the importance of this feature is the fact that these youth and their parents are undocumented workers, i.e. among the most vulnerable workers in the USA today, a society with a chronic unemployment problem. Their chances of staying in school are increasingly slim, while their chances of seeking a job in the U.S. military are growing greater by the day.

Furthermore, with growing U.S. imperialist “activism” in Latin America under the Obama Regime, including, involvement in the overthrow of President Zelaya in Honduras, the transition from United Nations troops to U.S. troops in the occupation of Haiti (under the guise of “disaster aid”), and the establishment of seven new U.S. military bases in Colombia, it is clear that passage of the DREAM Act would increase the tragic use of Latin Americans in the U.S. military as cannon fodder in the overt and covert wars that U.S. imperialism is certain to undertake *in Latin America* over the next several years.

In this light it is ironic that the editors of *The Nation* at the end of 2010 point to the “solidarity” between “the DREAMers” and “the gay-rights activists” as what was “most encouraging of all” during the lame-duck Congressional session. For the commonality of the two causes (Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell and the DREAM Act) is the objective support for the U.S. military of both, i.e. the strengthening of the U.S. imperialist Empire! And most of the U.S. left gave their blessings!!

However, unlike DADT, the DREAM Act did *not* pass. It narrowly passed in the House of Representatives, but five Democratic senators joined solid GOP resistance, killing the DREAM Act in the Senate. While *The Nation* editorial and Melissa Harris-Perry’s article each cite the DREAM Act as one of Obama and the Democrats’ positive stands, the real role of Obama and the Democrats in relation to the rights of immigrants was exposed by Congressman Luis Gutierrez, a Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC) member, who has been the most persistent promoter of immigration reform within the U.S. Congress.

Gutierrez is himself a regular Democrat from Obama’s Chicago base; and he had begun as one of Obama’s earliest campaign supporters. Nine months ago, when he was trying to get Obama to

get behind the DREAM Act, Representative Gutierrez spoke of his “anger, disillusionment, dissatisfaction” at Obama’s “betrayal” of his campaign commitment to immigration reform. Gutierrez pointed out that the Obama Administration had adopted an “enforcement-only” policy in which they have deported more undocumented immigrants than George W. Bush did in the final year of his Administration! ICE raids have increased under Obama, an admitted fact that the Obama Regime justified as a means of mobilizing support for the DREAM Act! In reality, the practice of increased raids and deportations only made any substantial immigration reform *less* likely.

Gutierrez also noted the shift in Obama’s rhetoric. During the campaign he used the term “undocumented workers,” but shifted to references to “illegal immigrants” once he became President. Addressing Obama, Gutierrez said, “You went from a humanizing definition of the community to a criminalizing definition of the community.”

Gutierrez threatened Obama and the Democrats with civil disobedience in the tradition of the civil rights movement and with the possibility of abandoning the Democratic Party at the polls. The final straw came in January 2009 when Obama barely mentioned the issue in his State of the Union Address, after Obama had promised on the campaign trail that he would pursue immigration reform in 2009.

In conclusion, under the impetus of the U.S. economic crisis, on behalf of the U.S. monopoly capitalist ruling class, *the U.S. imperialist state needs to keep alive its option of making immigrants and especially Latino immigrants, a scapegoat* as the system comes under greater pressure from the increasingly jobless and impoverished U.S. masses. Thus, the DREAM Act, at least in the short run, is not a popular issue that can be easily defended to the confused, frustrated, angry and chauvinistic U.S. electorate. At the same time, this same ruling class needs to continue to super-exploit the millions of undocumented workers, especially from Latin America, who have become a cornerstone of U.S. imperialist super profits. This is why the immigration question has been such an intractable one for Bush and his real base of the super-rich as well as for Obama who essentially represents the same super-rich base.

One thing the DREAM Act in the 2010 lame-duck session of Congress does show, however, is that the U.S. imperialist state and its “Republicrat” political apparatus does not care about the lives and the prospects of the undocumented workers and youth of the USA any more than it cares for the peoples of Latin America, or those of Afghanistan and Iraq. It is this proletarian revolutionary truth that the loyal “left” opposition — the petty bourgeois reformists and social democrats like those found in the ranks of *The Nation*, as well as the “more militant left” revisionists, anarchists and Trotskyites who have virtually the same position on the DREAM Act, try to conceal.

Hopefully, the substance of the DREAM Act as well as its treatment in Congress, will help the brightest and most ambitious children of undocumented workers in the USA to understand that their prospects for a better future lie in fighting *against* the U.S. imperialist state rather than joining its side against the international proletariat and the oppressed peoples of Latin America and the world.

IV. WIKILEAKS AND FREEDOM OF SPEECH UNDER THE OBAMA REGIME

As discussed above, during the December holiday season, Obama and the lame-duck Congress were clearly uniting around a host of complex issues. And, despite the protestations of “left-wing” apologists for the U.S. Empire, the Obama and lame-duck Congress cooperation

objectively served U.S. imperialism down the line. At the same time, however, other important U.S. imperialist attacks on the international proletariat and oppressed peoples lacked any complexity at all. The ongoing U.S. “global war of terror” continued to destroy peoples and lands from the Middle East to Central Asia. And the Executive Branch of the U.S. imperialist state apparatus --- Obama and the U.S. military, intelligence, diplomatic corps et al. --- was carrying out an unprecedented effort to crush WikiLeaks and its co-founder, Julian Assange.

With regard to WikiLeaks, the U.S. state was and is still attempting to stifle and crush any meaningful freedom of the press and freedom of speech within the USA. Alexander Cockburn put WikiLeaks’ role in some historical context. “You can take the ruling class by surprise every few decades, and the ruling class spends the next few decades making sure it doesn’t happen again.... There have been really big surprises like St. Petersburg in 1917 and Dien Bien Phu in 1954 and ... smaller ones like May/June 1968 in Paris and the anti-WTO demos in Seattle in 1999. This year Julian Assange and his comrades at WikiLeaks managed to take the ruling class by surprise no less than three times — with the two big data files on Iraq and Afghanistan and the diplomatic traffic from late November on.” (*The Nation*, 12-27-10) As Cockburn points out, the quarter of a million diplomatic dispatches to and from the U.S. State Department and the 250 U.S. Embassies and consulates worldwide did not have the sensational revelations contained in the more than 76 thousand U.S. military reports from Afghanistan and the more than 391 thousand such reports from Iraq. But this most recent vast treasure trove exposed to the world’s peoples “how people really talk and think when they’re running an empire, as opposed to making grand speeches about freedom at the UN General Assembly or while accepting a Pulitzer Prize.” (ibid.)

As famed Australian film maker, John Pilger, observed in a 12-15-10 TV interview with Amy Goodman on *Democracy Now!*, “what Julian Assange and WikiLeaks is doing is what journalists should have been doing.” Pilger criticized “very highly paid journalists at the top” who have attacked Assange and WikiLeaks when they “should have been exploiting their First Amendment privilege and letting people know just how government has lied to us, lied to us in the run-up to the Iraq war and lied to us in so many other circumstances.” Amy Goodman then pointed to a memo sent to the thousands of *USAID employees* threatening their jobs if they dared to access the WikiLeaks web site or print or retransmit any of the material. Goodman reported that agencies all over the government received similar orders. This includes *the State Department* whose employees were even prohibited from checking the site to see if any of their personal dispatches were listed. Furthermore, at SIPA, a graduate school at prestigious Columbia University, an administration e-mail communicated a State Department threat that the students should not post anything to Facebook or talk about these documents “if they care about their futures in government.”*

*NOTE: [The Columbia graduate school administration was evidently embarrassed by its craven cowardice toward the government’s attack on academic freedom; the school dean issued a new statement encouraging the discussion of issues, wherever those issues may take one. But, clearly, the hysteria in academia remains substantial.]

The U.S. Air Force went so far as to ban all under its command from reading the British newspaper, *The Guardian*, one of the “offending” newspapers that had published some of the WikiLeaks materials. And the Air Force ban was in line with the call by a number of members of Congress and other prominent politicians to target any news outlets that have the temerity to publish the cables.

Beyond this, well known New York Congressman Peter King called for classifying WikiLeaks as a foreign terrorist organization and Democratic consultants like Bob Beckel called for Julian

Assange to be killed! Referring to these pronouncements, Amy Goodman did her weekly column about “Assanguination: From Character Assassination to the Real Thing.” The solitary confinement of courageous military whistle-blower, Bradley Manning, who is alleged to have provided WikiLeaks with much of its important material documenting the criminal character of the U.S. war of terror, has underscored concern for Manning’s health and well-being as well as for the survival of Julian Assange.

Meanwhile, according to former long time Democratic California state senator and peace activist, Tom Hayden, the Obama Justice Department is “preparing charges of conspiracy to violate espionage and computer protection laws against Julian Assange in order to avoid bringing charges against mainstream media outlets such as the New York Times.” Hayden observes: “The indictment is being prepared by a secret federal grand jury organized by the Justice Department ... and is expected to name imprisoned American soldier Bradley Manning as a co-conspirator. Other American professors and technicians will likely be charged with accessory roles.” Hayden explains that, in order to avoid a head-on fight with defenders of civil liberties and the Constitution and some powerful media over freedom of the press, the Obama Administration is planning to use a 1985 law dealing with computer protection, and, more troubling, is taking out of moth balls the 1917 Espionage Act.

Stephen M. Kohn, one of the leading attorneys in the USA in defense of whistleblowers, reminds us that, “In 1917, in the midst of a war hysteria, the United States passed the Espionage Act. The law has nothing to do with prosecuting spies. From its inception it had everything to do with suppressing dissent. The Great War [World War I] was unpopular with many Americans, very like today’s engagements in Iraq and Afghanistan.” (*Guardian*, 12-15-10) Kohn points out that the Espionage Act wreaked havoc on the American political left, destroying political parties and labor unions and leading to persecution and/or long prison terms for intellectuals, journalists, religious figures, film producers, etc.

As Kohn explains, “The law broadly prohibits any publication by anyone (newspapers included) of information related to national security, which may cause an ‘injury to the United States.’” “In 1917... the first amendment’s protections for freedom of speech were mocked. Opposition to US war policies dictated who was jailed.” Kohn concludes that, “the attorney general should stop trying to resurrect the Espionage Act and instead dust off his copy of the US constitution.”

In the face of this open threat of the Obama Regime to the democratic rights of the people of the USA, *the San Francisco (California) Labor Council (AFL-CIO)* unanimously passed a resolution *in defense of WikiLeaks, Assange and Manning*. These local San Francisco area working class leaders supported WikiLeaks exposure of “the criminal record of the U.S. government in violating international agreements and committing war crimes against people throughout the world including the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.” The San Francisco Labor Council also called on “all affiliated unions to publicly reaffirm and defend our fundamental right to freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and the ability to freely and openly expose and criticize the illegal, corrupt and undemocratic practices of governments and corporations – in conformity with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.”

It is true that such outstanding resolutions have been few and far between in the U.S. labor movement whose national leadership, in particular, has served U.S. imperialism so loyally throughout the post World War II period of U.S. hegemony in the world capitalist system. (With good reason, over the years the AFL-CIO has been referred to by many leftists as the AFL-CIA.) Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that the San Francisco Labor Council took this excellent position since it is only a self-defense organization of the working class under capitalism; it has no

pretensions to being a revolutionary or radical organization. Yet this local self-defense organization of the U.S. working class understood full well the threat to the working class and the masses of the USA in the U.S. imperialist state repression of WikiLeaks.

Clearly, the left in the USA, in accord with the San Francisco Labor Council, should be rallying to the defense of WikiLeaks, Assange, Manning, et al.

Tragically, most of today's largely privileged and petty bourgeois U.S. "left" has too little loyalty and connection to U.S. working people and has too much connection and loyalty to the Obama Regime and U.S. imperialism to make common cause with the San Francisco Labor Council. All of these opportunists have too strong a connection to the U.S. imperialist *state apparatus* to recognize what a ruthless and powerful and far-reaching enemy of the oppressed and exploited of the earth this state really constitutes.

In the January 10-17, 2011 issue of *The Nation*, Katha Pollitt's column is focused on the rape charges brought against Assange in Sweden and the left's attitude toward those charges. Her focus is so narrow in its *bourgeois feminism* that Pollitt makes only one brief mention of the positive exposures that WikiLeaks has achieved. She denies any connection between the U.S. imperialist wars both at home and abroad against the international proletariat and oppressed peoples exposed by WikiLeaks, Assange, Manning et al. and the imperialist state attacks upon these courageous whistleblowers. In fact, the incarcerated Manning is not even mentioned by this radical feminist.

Pollitt's focus on the legal charges against Assange is so hysterical that she is unable even to understand why the fact that Assange accuser Anna Ardin had interacted with an anti-Castro women's group in Cuba and had published anti-Castro diatribes in a Swedish magazine is quite germane. Doesn't it raise a question about the motivation of such a person as Anna Ardin in placing herself in an intimate situation with Assange? The fact that Fidel Castro has been one of the most consistent and effective opponents of U.S. imperialism for the past fifty years and that Assange and WikiLeaks are now occupying a similar position seems beyond Pollitt's area of concern. Thus, the bourgeois feminist Pollitt takes the heat off of the U.S. imperialist state at this critical moment when it is waging an all out campaign (including utilizing the Swedish state) to attack Assange and WikiLeaks as the spearhead of its attempt to crush dissent and keep the tottering and crumbling U.S. Empire intact.

Perhaps even more insidious is the *left-sectarian attack* masquerading as an anti-imperialist critique. In an article entitled, "Who is behind WikiLeaks?" Michel Chossudovsky raises the red herring: "On the surface, nothing proves that WikiLeaks is a CIA covert operation." (Global Research, 12-13-10) Chossudovsky spends most of the lengthy article dealing with U.S. intelligence connections to the imperialist bourgeois press that WikiLeaks had used to help release to the peoples of the world the U.S. State Department dispatches — *The New York Times*, *Time Magazine*, *The Economist*, etc. While some of Chossudovsky's points are illuminating, they could have been raised in an article that had nothing to do with WikiLeaks instead of being examined in relation to WikiLeaks at the very moment when the U.S. imperialist assault on WikiLeaks, its internet supporters, Assange, Manning, et al. is at its height!

Chossudovsky also raises WikiLeaks' financial backers, including a German Wau Holland foundation; and he states that WikiLeaks "acknowledges" that the project was "founded by Chinese dissidents, mathematicians and startup company technologists from the US, Taiwan, Europe, Australia and South Africa ..." None of these "exposures" by Chossudovsky are damaging to WikiLeaks' ability to help achieve its "goal" as Assange described it to *Time*

Magazine a few weeks before Chossudovsky's article appeared. Assange said, "It is not our goal to achieve a more transparent society; it's our goal to achieve a more just society."

It should be clear to anyone who is not a purist or an intelligence agent that to topple the U.S. imperialist state and the world capitalist system, revolutionaries and their allies need to utilize contradictions among the various imperialist powers and groupings. In this light, tactical cooperation with *The New York Times*, a German foundation, etc., is *not only permissible but desirable*. Likewise, such entities as WikiLeaks, while not revolutionary, are valuable allies. Every genuine anti-U.S. imperialist force has a duty to defend WikiLeaks against the current brutal U.S. imperialist campaign.

Chossudovsky's article, by raising up "leftist" doubts about Assange and WikiLeaks at this critical moment when the left should be coming to their defense, is a valuable support for U.S. imperialism. The article is a classic example of "disinformation." In this light, it is likely that Chossudovsky is himself an agent of U.S. intelligence. For, Assange and WikiLeaks have struck mighty blows against U.S. imperialism.

Beyond Chossudovsky, those who have distributed his article, spreading its disinformation to others, are full of self-satisfied "left" sectarianism. One such "comrade," uneasy with his own role in spreading Chossudovsky's article, tried to justify his act by quoting Assange as a believer in the "free market" and in "a more free and ethical capitalism." This "comrade" dismisses Assange by saying, "I guess some people still also believe in Santa Claus." He is oblivious to the needs of the working class and genuine communists for short and long term allies in the bitter struggle to smash the imperialist state apparatus and establish socialism. Failing to appreciate the powerful imperialist state apparatus which stands between the working class and its emancipation, he therefore dismisses the powerful blow which WikiLeaks has struck against U.S. imperialism as well as the massive campaign of retaliation which the U.S. imperialist state is waging against Assange and WikiLeaks *and* freedom of speech. As a result, this self-satisfied sectarian misses the fact that *he has now joined the U.S. imperialist campaign*.

Finally, there is the ***right opportunist, social democratic tendency*** to see Assange, WikiLeaks and the internet "revolution" as a peaceful, technological path to a just world and to socialism. An anti-war professor at the University of the Philippines, Roland Simbulan, has correctly understood that the WikiLeaks' efforts have struck a powerful blow against the U.S. imperialist superpower. But, whereas Pollitt and Chossudovsky and their ilk practically ignore this fact, Simbulan exaggerates the extent of that blow. "The global balance of power has now been altered with a devastating toll on the planet's sole superpower: the United States." ("An accountable world with WikiLeaks," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 12-27-10)

The social democrat, Professor Simbulan, goes even further than that. He concludes with the following: "Total transparency will bring down autocracies and bad governance. Fortunately, with WikiLeaks in our midst, our world will now be more secure and safe from the unaccountable." Simbulan is joining the large social democratic chorus that, for years, has been shouting that the protracted struggle to win the hearts and minds of the working class and the oppressed to the banner of the revolution and armed struggle against the reactionary state, is now unnecessary because we have the liberating democratic technology of the internet. These right opportunists simply "forget" that the monopoly capitalists and imperialists and their comprador allies in the oppressed nations will not surrender their "heaven on earth" without a bitter battle, using the state apparatus wherever it is at their command.

Even though the logic of Simbulan's position, unlike that of Pollitt and Chossudovsky, would lead us to defend WikiLeaks and Assange, the peaceful democratic illusions promoted by the

social democratic Simbulan lead him to ignore the massive attack by the U.S. imperialist state apparatus on Assange and WikiLeaks *and* the need to defend them! This is one indication of how illusory Simbulan's projection of a peaceful, democratic and technological transition away from imperialism really is.

Alexander Cockburn in his article, "Lessons of WikiLeaks," sounds a great alarm about the limits of the peaceful technological revolution the social democrats are counting on. "So far as the Internet is concerned, First Amendment protections appear to have no purchase or even acknowledged standing.... So here we have a public 'commons' — the Internet — subject to arbitrary onslaught by the state and powerful commercial interests, and not even the shadow of constitutional protections. The situation is getting worse. The net itself is going private. As I write, Google and Facebook are locked in a struggle over which company will control the bulk of the world's Internet traffic. Millions could find that the e-mail addresses they try to communicate with, the sites they want to visit ... are all under Google's or Facebook's supervision and can be closed off without explanation or redress at any time." (*The Nation*, 12-27-10)

V. CONCLUSION: STATE AND REVOLUTION

The Obama-led, "Republicrat" post election season of giving to the U.S. monopoly capitalist ruling class, dramatically demonstrated the fact that finance capital firmly controls the U.S. imperialist government. While "left" and right opportunists in the USA and elsewhere are tiptoeing around the need to wage all-out struggle against the U.S. imperialist state apparatus, surprisingly frank and honest assessments of the monolithic dictatorship that is developing in the USA have come from within the ranks of the ruling class itself.

Such forces as former corporate chieftain Lee Iacocca, former International Monetary Fund (IMF) chief economist Simon Johnson and especially Thomas Schweich, former top George W. Bush functionary including deputy assistant secretary of state for international law enforcement affairs, have made clear that this increasingly militarized dictatorship, wielded on behalf of Wall Street capital, is leading U.S. imperialism down the road to ruin. While their concern for saving the system is not shared by us, their insights are invaluable in confirming the need for the international working class and oppressed peoples to be single-minded in our determination "to bring to birth a new world from the ashes of the old."

Last September, Paul Craig Roberts, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury in Ronald Reagan's first term and an Associate Editor of the *Wall Street Journal*, weighed in with an article, entitled, "The True Cost of the War." Roberts observed: "The Bush/Cheney/Obama National Security State has eviscerated the Constitution and civil liberty. Nothing remains. The fascist Republican Federalist Society has put enough federal judges in the judiciary to rule that the president is above the law. The president doesn't have to obey the law against spying on American citizens without warrants. The president doesn't have to obey U.S. and international laws against torture. The president doesn't have to obey the Constitution that mandates that only Congress can declare war. The president can do whatever he wants as long as he justifies it as 'national security.' The president's part of the government, the unaccountable executive branch, is supreme." (VDARE.COM, 9-2-10)

Roberts eloquently continues, "This is the legacy of the Bush/Cheney regime, and this criminal regime continues under Obama. America's 'war on terror,' a fabrication, has resurrected the unaccountable dungeon of the Middle Ages and the raw tyranny that prevailed prior to the Magna Carta. This is the true cost of 'liberating' Iraq, that is, of turning Iraq into an American puppet state that sells out its people for America's interests."

Roberts asks pointedly: “Who will now liberate Americans from the Bush/Cheney/neoconservative/Obama tyranny?”