

Defend the Iraqi peoples against US/British occupiers!



Imperialists devastate Falluja

The word Falluja must be seared into collective memory and consciousness as a monstrous war crime by the US and British imperialist rulers. In what was known as the “city of mosques”, medical authorities guess that at least 800 civilians were killed, but nobody knows the full story. Water and power lines to the city were cut in advance of the blitzkrieg; the city was bombed and then stormed by troops. One of the first acts by the military was to seize the city’s main hospital to prevent “insurgent propaganda”, ie word of massive civilian deaths and casualties, from reaching the outside world. Despite the news cover-up, NBC correspondent Kevin Sites videotaped Marines murdering a wounded, prostrate man in a mosque. Some physicians report evidence of the use of chemical weapons and cluster bombs.

Flattening Falluja was the first act of the second coming of George W Bush. It was also the opening shot in Tony Blair’s campaign for Labour’s reelection in Britain. The Scottish Black Watch regiment was ordered to Falluja to reinforce the US troops and was given the job of preventing males of “fighting age” from fleeing the city. When forced back to Falluja, many who didn’t die in the assault were arrested. Of those who did manage to get out of the city, many were then killed as they fled to refugee camps or to the homes of relatives elsewhere. US forces sank boats ferrying refugees across the Euphrates. AP photographer Bilal Hussein watched in horror as, before his eyes, a family of five was shot dead while trying to swim across. Then, he “helped bury a man by the river bank, with my own hands”.

While thousands of Iraqis outraged by the destruction of Falluja braved beating and arrests to protest in the streets of Baghdad, Basra and Heet,

Troops out now!

guerrillas launched large-scale attacks in Ramadi and Mosul. In response the Bush administration is planning to militarily “pacify” several other areas of Iraq. This is in preparation for the sham elections that are designed to slap a veneer of legitimacy on the bloody occupation.

Following the atrocity in the Falluja mosque, on 19 November, 200-300 Iraqi National Guard troops, backed up by American forces, stormed Baghdad’s al-Hanifa mosque, one of the most important Sunni mosques in Iraq, when it was filled with worshippers, killing two and wounding at least nine. These acts are a huge affront to every Muslim in the region and the world. They indicate that the deranged Christian fundamentalist Bush administration, backed by Christian soldier Blair, regard nothing as sacred and nothing will be spared in their savage occupation of Iraq. In a *Guardian* article (23 November 2004) Rana Kabbani described the racist degradation being inflicted by the occupiers on the peoples of Iraq:

“All Iraqis watch as their homes and mosques are desecrated by soldiers who shoot injured men in the stomach in preemptive lunacy that mirrors that of their leader. They and a billion Muslims watched as Americans forbade families from burying their dead, and allowed stray dogs to gnaw the corpses of pregnant women and toddlers on the mean streets of what was once Falluja, during Id al-Fitr, Islam’s Holy Feast. No one is taken in by the lies and arrogance and greed of this racist war.”

In a *New Statesman* article (11 November 2004) John Pilger noted that to justify crimes such as Falluja requires a level of racism on par with that of the Nazis. He says: “According to a senior

British officer, the Americans view Iraqis as *Untermenschen*, a term that Hitler used in *Mein Kampf* to describe Jews, Romanies and Slavs as sub-humans. This is how the Nazi army laid siege to Russian cities, slaughtering combatants and non-combatants alike. Normalising colonial crimes like the attack on Fallujah requires such racism, linking our imagination to ‘the other’.”

Among the British public, opposition to the occupation of Iraq is undiminished. In fact, it now includes families of those serving in the military. Rose Gentle, mother of Scottish soldier Gordon Gentle who was killed on duty in Iraq, has spoken on many anti-war platforms. James Buchanan, a former RAF warrant officer and father of two Black Watch soldiers currently serving in Iraq, was so incensed with defence secretary Geoff Hoon for ordering his sons’ regiment to Falluja that he said: “If I see him in the street I would kill him” (*Guardian*, 11 November 2004).

We demand the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of all US, British and allied troops from Iraq! We call for the defence of the Iraqi peoples against the imperialist occupiers and their puppet Iraqi troops and police. Insofar as the forces on the ground aim their blows against the imperialist occupiers and the mercenaries, we call for their defence. Every blow struck against the US and British military in Iraq is a blow in the interests of the international proletariat.

Labour’s racist “war on terror”

“Democracy” is of course the pretext given by Bush and Blair for the slaughter of over 100,000 Iraqis. At home, the centre-piece of Labour’s election cam-

paign is yet another attack on the democratic rights of the population, particularly targeting anyone deemed to be the “enemy within”, which now includes Muslims, asylum-seekers, anti-globalisation protesters, striking unions and “anti-social” teenagers. Barely a week after passing the draconian Civil Contingencies bill that gave the government sweeping powers in the event of a “major emergency”, Labour presented eight new crime bills which will bring the total number of such bills since 2001 to 34. The proposals include compulsory ID cards, allowing the government to track the entire population; a new FBI-style “serious crime” agency and compulsory drug tests for those arrested. Also in the works is yet another anti-terrorism bill that will introduce no-jury courts that were once notorious in the oppression of Catholics in Northern Ireland.

Under the existing “anti-terror” laws, at least 22 “foreign nationals” are being held without charges or trial dates in Woodhill, Belmarsh and Broadmoor prisons. In a *Guardian* (11 September 2004) article, headlined “Guantánamo in our back yard”, Rachel Shabi described the conditions they face:

“The detainees occupy small cells, 3m by 1.8m, for 22 hours a day, rarely see daylight and are strip-searched each time they are visited (a particular humiliation for devout Muslim men)... Not even their solicitors can establish why these men have been detained—the evidence, for reasons of national security, cannot be disclosed. The men are in a surreal no man’s land specific to foreign nationals: they cannot be tried because there is not enough evidence against them; although labelled suspect terrorists, they are free to leave Britain; but they cannot be deported because they face persecution, torture or death in their countries of origin.”

The reason Blair and Blunkett are

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Iraq...

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obsessed with beefing up the machinery of state repression is not simply that the Iraq war is deeply unpopular with the population. It also stems from the fact that the British capitalist economy offers nothing but poverty and despair for a vast swathe of the population. Blair's privatisation of the public sector and the "flexible labour" economy means long hours, job insecurity and extremely low pay for those lucky enough to have work. As of December 2003, some 759,000 manufacturing jobs had been lost since Labour came to power, to which must be added the enormous job losses in the public sector. Britain already has the most draconian anti-union laws in Europe; the battery of new laws is further designed to intimidate and regiment the population.

The government's "war on terror",

which amounts to a wholesale attack on civil liberties, is wrapped in racism. Britain's Muslims face "soaring levels of Islamophobia and discrimination" (*Independent*, 22 November 2004). Between 2001 and 2003 the numbers of Asians stopped and searched under the Terrorism Act rose by 302 per cent. As *Guardian* journalist Jeremy Seabrook noted, "Islamophobia is the only form of prejudice to which the middle class can readily admit", given that "even secular liberals increasingly define 'Britishness' in opposition to 'medieval' Islamic values" (*Guardian*, 23 July 2004).

Labour has taken over much of the Tories' right-wing, racist "law and order" agenda. An article published by IRR (Independent Race and Refugee news network) titled "New Labour's new racism" (6 October 2004) noted:

"Blunkett's obsession with English language classes as a means of coercive assimilation for those who do not 'integrate' makes Norman Tebbit's racist

cricket test seem rather quaint and benign. Citizenship ceremonies, those most bizarre and archaic of rituals imposed from above, require prospective citizens to pledge allegiance to the Queen, the national anthem and the Union flag. Even Tebbit couldn't have dreamt that one up."

The article notes that since 1997 three major pieces of legislation on asylum and immigration have created 28 new offences that apply exclusively to immigrants or asylum-seekers, adding: "We are now faced with the end of asylum as we know it in this country. Asylum seekers' rights and protections have been gradually abolished and are being replaced by a system of managed migration." The number of people being granted asylum has been halved over the past two years, while the number of migrant workers has increased dramatically. The reason is the capitalist economy's need for cheap labour, as the article explains: "Those workers are imported either because they are desperately needed to fill understaffed professions such as nursing, or because the agriculture, construction and catering industries need them to do the dirtiest, most dangerous and lowest paid jobs. Often they are virtually indentured and forced to work on poverty wages."

As we wrote in "Down with Labour's racist witch hunt!" (*Workers Hammer* no 185, Autumn 2003):

"A fundamental starting point for such a class-struggle opposition must be the defence of immigrants, minorities and asylum seekers who are first in the firing line of the so-called 'war against terror'. This is not simply a question of defending helpless victims of the government's racist witch hunt but of the unity and integrity of the working class as a whole.... It is long overdue that the unions actively champion the rights of immigrants and minorities in this country. We fight for: *Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! No deportations! Free the detainees! Shut down the detention centres! Unionise the unorganised!*"

Union bureaucrats forsake Stop the War Coalition

The magnitude of the crimes of US and British imperialism in Iraq demands international protests. We have consistently called for mobilising the social power of the working class internationally, not least in the US and Britain, in class-struggle actions, demonstrations, strikes and blacking of war matériel. The refusal of Scottish train drivers in the ASLEF rail union to transport ammunition on the eve of the Iraq war provides a courageous example of the kind of action needed. However this perspective requires a political fight against the trade union bureaucrats, from the TUC to the putatively militant "lefts". At the height of the mass mobilisations against the war, union bureaucrats flocked to the Stop the War Coalition (StWC) to polish their "anti-war" credentials. This disguised their real role which was to preserve social peace for Blair at home by making sure that class struggle was derailed.

Without exception, the so-called "awkward squad" union leaders got elected by posing as opponents of Labour's attacks. But the workers they represent have fared no better under their leadership. There have been 34,000 job losses in the postal service in the last few years, while the 2003 postal strikes were stabbed in the back by the CWU leadership under Billy Hayes. Gordon Brown is axing the jobs of 100,000 civil servants and decimating their pension scheme, while the PCS leadership under Mark Serwotka has merely organised token one-day strikes. In the TGWU Tony Woodley presided over massive job losses in the car industry, from Ford to Vauxhall to Rover and now Jaguar, without any effective fight. In the fire brigades strike, which was

potentially crippling for the government on the eve of the Iraq war, the FBU's Andy Gilchrist sold out his members. Meanwhile, RMT leader Bob Crow's promises that his union would back the FBU by shutting down London Underground were shown to be nothing but hot air. Today many of these bureaucrats are preparing to back the blood-soaked Labour Party, yet again, in the election and some are severing their connections to the StWC.

According to the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), "unity" with union bureaucrats and Labour MPs was the greatest strength of the StWC. From their reformist perspective, the sheer weight of numbers in the streets would be enough to convince the Blair government not to support the war. This peddled illusions in the "democratic" credentials of British imperialism and obscured the pro-imperialist politics of the "left" and some not-so-left Labour MPs and TUC bureaucrats. The TUC did not oppose war against Iraq in general or on principle, but merely objected that *this war* was not authorised by the UN and did not have the agreement of the European imperialist powers. In order not to "alienate" such forces, the SWP never raised a peep of opposition to British troops in Northern Ireland from the platforms of the mammoth demonstrations they built, nor did they even make Sunday speeches advocating their pale pink brand of "democratic socialism". But that didn't save them from the wrath of trade union bureaucrats when the StWC was perceived as getting in the way of their deals with the Labour government.

Dave Prentis of Unison and the other leaders of the "big four" unions — Tony Woodley, Derek Simpson of Amicus and the GMB's Kevin Curran — have agreed to back Labour in the election. Blair bought them off by promising to facilitate union "recognition" (but not union-negotiated working conditions) among private contractors in the public sector. This appealed to the bureaucrats as a way to reverse the decline in union membership, which for them means a falling dues base. In exchange, they ensured that the 2004 Labour Party conference backed Blair over Iraq. To give this a "working-class" cover, the bureaucrats wheeled out a representative of the Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU).

The StWC issued a statement protesting that the IFTU rep had "energetically lobbied the trade union affiliates of the Labour Party to oppose a motion, reflecting the unions' own agreed policies, calling on Blair to set an early date for the withdrawal of British troops from Iraq". While correctly noting that "the IFTU representative worked as the direct instrument of the government and the Labour Party apparatus", the statement omitted the fact that it was the *British* trade union leaders, notably Dave Prentis, who brought the IFTU to address union delegations and succeeded in getting a motion calling for the early withdrawal of troops from Iraq voted down!

But it was not the SWP who broke with Prentis over Iraq. Rather Prentis has threatened to pull Unison out of the StWC. Mick Rix, former ASLEF leader and organiser of the "awkward squad", has already resigned demanding an apology for the "vitriol" against the IFTU and union delegations at the Labour Party conference. In fact the SWP's Lindsey German, leader of StWC, pathetically pleaded with Prentis not to split, arguing that the StWC's position is "the same as that adopted at the TUC conference, is that an early date be set for the withdrawal of British troops from Iraq" (*Guardian*, 25 October 2004). But as German doubtless knew full well the TUC motion itself was a fudge. Its call

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Marxists and religion



TROTSKY

In a climate where religious reaction is on the rise, it is necessary to reassert the Marxist attitude towards religion. All institutionalised religions are key to reinforcing women's oppression. As Marxists we are materialists — dialectical materialists — which therefore means irreconcilable atheists. In the article quoted below, Lenin explains the Marxist approach to the question of religion. Lenin criticises those who call to wage

"war on religion" without considering the material basis of religious beliefs and practices. He also condemns the opportunist conciliation of religious backwardness, and lays out the policy of revolutionaries (then known as Social-Democrats).

Social-Democracy bases its whole world-outlook on scientific socialism, i.e., Marxism. The philosophical basis of Marxism, as Marx and Engels repeatedly declared, is dialectical materialism, which has fully taken over the historical traditions of eighteenth-century materialism in France and of Feuerbach (first half of the nineteenth century) in Germany — a materialism which is absolutely atheistic and positively hostile to all religion.... Religion is the opium of the people — this dictum by Marx is the corner-stone of the whole Marxist outlook on religion. Marxism has always regarded all modern religions and churches, and each and every religious organisation, as instruments of bourgeois reaction that serve to defend exploitation and to befuddle the working class.

At the same time Engels frequently condemned the efforts of people who desired to be "more left" or "more revolutionary" than the Social-Democrats, to introduce into the programme of the workers' party an explicit proclamation of atheism, in the sense of declaring war on religion.... Engels blamed the Blanquists for being unable to understand that only the class struggle of the working masses could, by comprehensively drawing the widest strata of the proletariat into conscious and revolutionary social practice, really free the oppressed masses from the yoke of religion, whereas to proclaim that war on religion was a political task of the workers' party was just anarchistic phrase-mongering....

"Religion is a private matter": this celebrated point in the Erfurt Programme (1891) summed up these political tactics of Social-Democracy.

These tactics have by now become a matter of routine; they have managed to give rise to a new distortion of Marxism in the opposite direction, in the direction of opportunism. This point in the Erfurt Programme has come to be interpreted as meaning that we Social-Democrats, our Party, consider religion to be a private matter, that religion is a private matter for us as Social-Democrats, for us as a party.... Social-Democrats regard religion as a private matter in relation to the state, but not in relation to themselves, not in relation to Marxism, and not in relation to the workers' party.

—VI Lenin, "The Attitude of the Workers' Party to Religion" (1909)



LENIN

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London: anarchist protests enrage social democrats

European Social Forum ends in uproar

The following article is adapted from Workers Vanguard no 835, 29 October 2004, newspaper of the Spartacist League/US. The social democrats' rage over the anarchist protest against Ken Livingstone has continued unabated in the intervening period. The SWP's Lindsey German co-signed a 29 October "Statement on the third European Social Forum in London" with a number of union bureaucrats including postal union leader Billy Hayes, NATFHE lecturers union leader Paul Mackney as well as leading lights from the TGWU, the RMT and the Muslim Association of Britain. This statement scurrilously violence-baits the anarchists and condemns the protest against the Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions, declaring: "The censorship of views by premeditated physical violence at the ESF is completely unacceptable."

The idea of the SWP defending "democracy and inclusiveness" is a bit rich to say the least from an organisation that is notorious on the left for bureaucratism, exclusionism and thuggery. Our comrades have been excluded from the SWP's annual "Marxism" event virtually since it began in the early 1980s. Last year in response to our criticism of the reformist politics of the Stop the War Coalition, Chris Bambery threatened us saying that anyone who doesn't politically support Stop the War "deserves a bullet in the head". Similarly today's slanders of the anarchists for "premeditated physical violence" demonstrate the political bankruptcy of the SWP in defence of their grovelling reformism and their alliances with union bureaucrats and the other forces they are currently lashed up with.

LONDON, 24 October—The European Social Forum (ESF) came to London last weekend, bringing in over 20,000 people, overwhelmingly from continental Europe. But those who bought into the standard ESF promise that "another world is possible" found themselves trapped in "Ken's World". That is Ken Livingstone, New Labour's Mayor of London. This event was bankrolled, orchestrated and tightly controlled by the Mayor's office with the able assistance of supporters of Socialist Action who are highly paid executives in his administration and the unpaid services of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). This "anti-capitalist" shindig was so tame that it was endorsed by the labour statesmen and House of Lords hopefuls of the Trades Union Congress (TUC). At the recent Labour Party conference the TUC tops were instrumental in defeating a motion calling for withdrawal of British troops from Iraq.

Amidst the ongoing carnage in Iraq under the savage occupation by US and British imperialist forces, a plenary session on the opening day of the ESF featured a stooge of the imperialists' stooge government, Sobhi Al-Mashadani, representing the Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU). The IFTU achieved notoriety at the Labour Party conference as a shill for Tony Blair and British imperialism. Invited by British trade-union bureaucrats, IFTU representative Abdullah Muhsin's intervention was key to defeating the motion calling for early withdrawal of British troops from Iraq.

In an (undated) open letter to "trade union delegates at the Labour Party conference", Muhsin argued that "the multinational force is there to help our democracy" and opposed the call for the early withdrawal of troops, saying it

World Is for Sale". Various anarchist speakers addressed the assembled for about half an hour, protesting about harassment by Livingstone's cops and the FBI seizure of Indymedia servers in Britain and elsewhere (see *WV* no 834,



London, 16 October: Anarchists (above) leaving Alexandra Palace after staging gutsy protest at ESF meeting where Labour Mayor Livingstone was due to speak. Banners said "Ken's Party, War Party" and opposed police repression.

"would be bad for my country, bad for the emerging progressive forces, a terrible blow for free trade unionism, and would play into the hands of extremists and terrorists".

Now the IFTU was being trotted out at the ESF for a session calling to "End the occupation of Iraq"! Small wonder that enraged Iraqi exiles and others kicked up a storm of protest against Al-Mashadani. As Iraqi novelist Haifa Zangana, who had encouraged people to protest, argued: "If he is the trade union secretary he should have been elected by the workers but he has been appointed by the government. He is part of the puppetry" (*Guardian*, 18 October).

In the aftermath, the TUC issued a public statement condemning "the attempts of a few to prevent the views of Iraqi trade unionists from being heard". While even this labour apologist for imperialist occupation has the right to be heard—and to be vigorously challenged—as proletarian revolutionary internationalist opponents of the imperialist occupiers, our sympathies lie with the protesters. At the same time we can't help but note that there were no protests against the British trade-union tops like Dave Prentis of Unison, who also spoke at the ESF. Prentis was among the union bureaucrats who invited the IFTU to the Labour and TUC conferences. These labour lieutenants of capitalism were the real skills for British imperialism—and hardly for the first time: it was their votes that saved Blair from embarrassment at the Labour Party conference by defeating the motion opposing the occupation.

A very British coup

The following night a group of 150-200 anarchists staged their own "palace coup" at Alexandra Palace, the citadel of Livingstone's ESF. Marching into a meeting where Livingstone was scheduled to speak, the anarchists got on the platform, hoisted banners reading "Ken's Party, War Party" and "Another

and secretary of the National Assembly Against Racism, in trying to portray the anarchist protest as a racist attack. In a letter to the *Guardian* Jasper says: "It was carried out by an exclusively white group of anarchists who had no involvement in the ESF. They entered the building, stormed the platform of black and Jewish speakers, punched the black chair of the session and stole his mobile phone" (*Guardian*, 19 October). This cut no ice with well-known leaders of anti-racist organisations such as Suresh Grover, secretary of the National Civil Rights Movement, and others who witnessed the protest. They replied in the *Guardian* that:

"As members of some of the UK's leading anti-racist organisations dealing with the daily reality of racial violence for minority communities and its impact on our society we feel compelled to ask Lee Jasper to stop using accusations of racism to provide political cover for what was clearly political dissent aimed at his employer the GLA [Greater London Authority] and the Mayor of London."

— *Guardian*, 20 October

But even the bourgeois *Guardian*—which had special status as "media partner of the ESF" and thus was hardly sympathetic to the protest—noted (18 October) that "Saturday night's storming of the stage by several hundred people denouncing mayor of London Ken Livingstone for hijacking the event reflected genuine anger about the way the event had been organised". After their half-hour political protest the anarchists led a walkout from the ESF and the meeting continued.

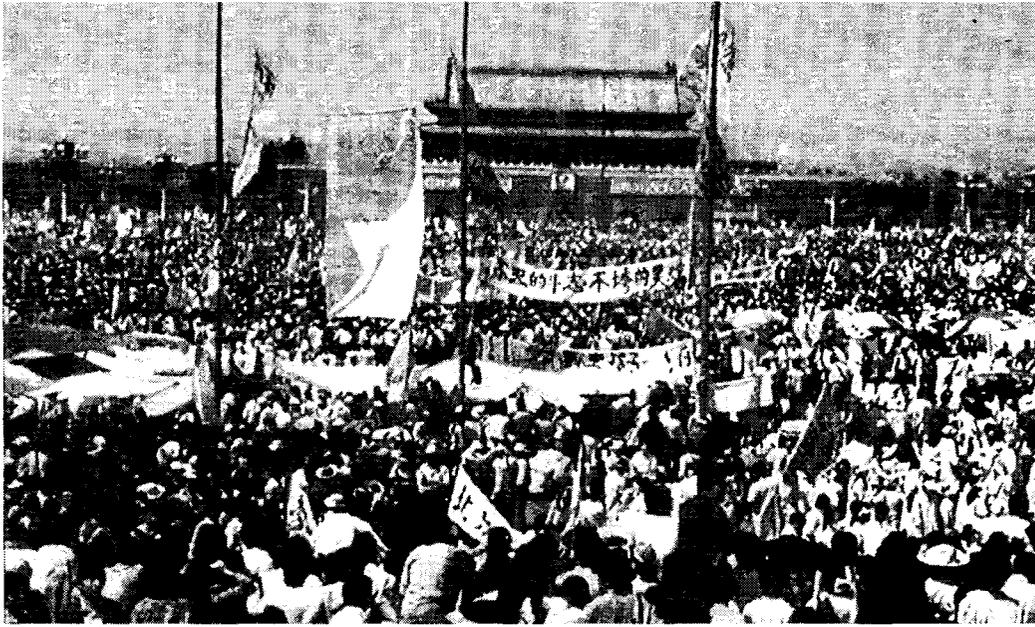
For our part, we have to give the anarchists an "A" for audacity for protesting Livingstone and trying to lead a walkout from the bureaucratic reformist circus of the ESF. At the same time we have to point out that they are hardly an alternative politically, and certainly not to the "authoritarianism" they claim to disdain. On the contrary, when it comes to anti-communist exclusion, the anarchist grouping known as the Wombles proved themselves to be more than equal to the bureaucratism and thuggery of the SWP whom they so despise. As soon as our comrades set up a literature table outside the Wombles' alternative event, "Beyond ESF", at a north London campus, the organisers shut it down, grabbing our papers and telling us to get "that Spartacist shit" out of here. They howled anti-communist abuse and, with no sense of irony, condemned us as "authoritarian" while hounding us out of the grounds of a public campus. Nonetheless we defend *them* against the forces of the capitalist state and the scurrilous charges being hurled by the SWP.

Blood line in Genoa

In the aftermath of the ESF, Alex Callinicos in *Socialist Worker* despicably revived the slander campaign against the anarchists that blamed them for the police-state violence that led to the murder of protester Carlo Giuliani in Genoa in 2001. He writes: "There was a downside to the ESF. There were a few ugly incidents that marked the re-emergence of the anarchist Black Block whose thuggish behaviour during the Genoa protests of July 2001 played so disastrously into the hands of the

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Defend, extend gains of 1949 Revolution!



Beijing, May 1989: Mass student protests in Tiananmen Square drew detachments of workers (right).

The spectre of Tiananmen and working-class struggle in China today

We print below an abridged version of a 9 October forum in Oakland, California, by Spartacist League spokesman Keith Markin. A fuller version was published in *Workers Vanguard* nos 836 and 837 (12 November and 26 November 2004).

One of the most hotly debated subjects throughout the world, especially in China, is whether China is capitalist or socialist. The significance of the Tiananmen uprising in the spring of 1989 is another subject of debate in China. What is going to happen there? One thing is certain: it's not very stable. There's a book, appropriately entitled *One China, Many Paths*, which has contributions from the intelligentsia within China, that deals with these questions. I'll refer to articles from this book.

China's economy continues to grow. It has emerged as the number one steel producer in the world. At the same time, there is an increasing gap of social inequality exceeded by only a few countries. While there are some people that can buy a \$30,000 car with cash, many more live in abject poverty, especially in the countryside and in the west of China. The wealthy living on the east and southern coasts have access to the most modern comforts.

The lie of building "socialism with Chinese characteristics" has led to China losing 15 million manufacturing jobs in state-owned enterprises (SOEs) between 1995 and 2002. Prostitution is skyrocketing, and female infanticide is rampant in the countryside. There are over 100 million people living on less than \$106 per year. The United States has about 40 per cent more acreage under cultivation than China, yet the Chinese agricultural labour force is 100 times larger than that of the US. And the



Workers employed by Computime, a Hong Kong-mainland joint-venture company, protest harsh working conditions and low pay outside factory in Shenzhen, October.

US has over six times as many tractors as China. These dire conditions have forced as many as 130 million rural Chinese to become migrant labourers in search of work on the eastern and southern coasts.

The workers no longer have their "iron rice bowl", which guaranteed a job and benefits for workers in SOEs. A journalist travelling in the northeast of China, where millions of workers have been laid off, explained that in the past an "average worker could—just based on a letter of introduction, something equivalent to current credit card or privileged position in these times—get excellent treatment at a hospital". He

says, "This is something of a legend to young people [in China] who do not know their history".

After crushing the Tiananmen uprising in 1989, the Stalinist regime waited a few years before they began more aggressive market policies, such as the increase in free-trade zones, where a section of the Stalinist bureaucracy functions as labour contractors for the imperialists and offshore bourgeoisie. But the proletariat and peasantry have been far from silent. It is reported by the police that from 1993 to 1999 there was an increase of protests from approximately 8,500 per year to 32,000. According to unofficial Chinese

reports, the number of public protests has probably risen each of the last three years.

In the spring of 2002, thousands of workers from the northeast provinces protested against the massive layoffs and the failure to receive back pay and pensions. This area used to be the industrial heartland of China; it has become a rust bowl. During the protests, banners proclaimed such slogans as "The army of industrial workers wants to live!" and "It is a crime to embezzle pensions!"

The spectre of the Tiananmen uprising looms large. This has led the ruling Hu Jintao-Wen Jiabao regime to adopt a more "populist" style than the technocratic Jiang Zemin regime which preceded it. The central government has since promised to invest in the northeast region to appease the workers. What happens in China is not a foregone conclusion. It will be determined through social struggle.

Peter Taaffe, leader of the Socialist Party, a left group centred in Britain, commented on the 16th Chinese Communist Party Congress two years ago: "China is on the road to complete capitalist restoration, but the ruling clique are attempting to do this gradually and by maintaining their repressive authoritarian grip" (*Socialist*, 22 November 2002). Maoists and neo-Maoists outside China believe that China is capitalist, and has been for some time.

Neo-Maoists *within* the bureaucracy want to reform the bureaucracy by changing its policies. They are opposed to the "market socialist" economy, though they believe China is still "socialist". The Chinese "New Left" is heterogeneous. Most support the market economy, but they are critical of the

For proletarian political revolution!

ramifications of the market: corruption, the gap between rich and poor, etc. They consider themselves part of the anti-globalisation movement. Wang Hui, a prominent spokesman of the Chinese "New Left", says that after Tiananmen China "has completely conformed to the dictates of capital and the activities of the market". We Trotskyists sharply disagree with all of these characterisations of China and the conclusions drawn by the Chinese "New Left".

China is a bureaucratically deformed workers state because the core of the economy is based on collectivised property. This is the basis for the International Communist League's unconditional military defence of China against imperialism and internal counterrevolution. There is a privileged bureaucratic caste that politically rules the workers state. The bureaucracy's policies of "market socialism" are paving the way for either capitalist restoration or for a new revolutionary explosion. What happened during the Tiananmen uprising, as well as the current class struggle in China, shows the contradictions of the deformed workers state and the dual character of the bureaucracy. The historical task of the Chinese proletariat is to build a revolutionary party—not its Stalinist or Maoist perversion. A revolutionary party is necessary to lead workers, peasants and the oppressed to defend the gains of the 1949 Revolution through a proletarian political revolution that establishes workers democracy. The key political question for such a party is to break the Chinese proletariat from the nationalist dogma of "socialism in one country" and win them to an internationalist, proletarian perspective.

In our article "China: Defeat Imperialist Drive for Counterrevolution!" (WV nos 814 and 815, 21 November and 5 December 2003), which is now out in Chinese, we explain that China remains a bureaucratically deformed workers state. It is the core collectivised elements of the economy that continue to be dominant, though not in a stable, coherent manner. The private (including foreign-owned) sector consists for the most part of factories producing light manufactures by labour-intensive methods. Heavy industry, the high-tech sectors and modern armaments production are overwhelmingly concentrated in state-owned enterprises. It is these enterprises that have enabled China to build an arsenal of nuclear weapons and long-range missiles to ward off the American imperialists' threat of a nuclear first strike. Also, all major banks in China are state owned. Government control of the financial system has been key to maintaining and expanding production in state-owned industry and to the overall expansion of the state sector. The Beijing bureaucracy's abandonment of the strict state monopoly of foreign trade serves to facilitate Wall Street's plans for counterrevolution. It is precisely these core collectivist elements of China's economy that the forces of world imperialism want to eliminate and dismantle.

The ICL fights for unconditional military defence of all the deformed workers states—China, Vietnam, North Korea and Cuba—against imperialism and internal capitalist counterrevolution because these states are based on collectivised property. That means we don't pose as a condition for defence that the Stalinist bureaucracy be overthrown before we will defend China. Why is this so important here in the US and other capitalist countries in the world? If the proletariat of the US, Japan and Germany don't understand

the historic significance of the gains of the Chinese Revolution, like the collectivised economy, then they will never understand the importance of making a revolution against their "own" bourgeoisie. We are for the revolutionary reunification of Taiwan with China: this means socialist revolution in Taiwan, expropriating the bourgeoisie in Hong Kong, and proletarian political revolution on the mainland.

Tiananmen, incipient proletarian political revolution

First, the background—three key events in China shaped the Tiananmen uprising: the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), China's anti-Soviet alliance with US imperialism, and the market reforms begun in 1978.

Mao's Cultural Revolution is important because it significantly shaped the political consciousness of Chinese workers, peasants, students and intellectuals through the 1980s. Essentially it was a fight between two wings of the Stalinist bureaucracy. The Maoists had to purge the conservative wing of the bureaucracy (led by Liu Shao-chi and Deng Xiaoping), who had led China during its recovery from the devastating results of Mao's Great Leap Forward in the late 1950s.

Millions of students were mobilised as Red Guards, supposedly to fight against bureaucratism. It played out quite differently in the real world. In January 1967, when workers in Shanghai organised a general strike to defend their standard of living, along with a national railway strike, Mao sent his Red Guards and they smashed the strikes. The orders the Red Guards were given by Mao could be summed up as the "Two Whatevers": "Support whatever policy decisions Chairman Mao made and follow whatever instructions Chairman Mao gave."

There is a prejudice derived from class society that the rulers would only work with their brains while the slaves would only work with their hands. The idea of resolving this class prejudice of the Chinese intelligentsia by sending students, intellectuals and professionals out to the countryside for a period of time to learn by toiling with the peasants has real merit. But, implemented by Mao's bureaucracy, this became brutal punishment for long periods of time for many of those who disagreed with Mao, especially intellectuals and professionals.

The Cultural Revolution polarised Chinese society along the wrong lines by pitting subjectively revolutionary student youth against workers defending their standard of living. There was no side for revolutionaries in this fight within the Stalinist bureaucracy. More people died in the Cultural Revolution than in the suppression of Tiananmen.

After Mao died, the Deng wing of the bureaucracy resumed control of the government. The market reforms, begun in 1978, spawned a new class of rich peasants in the countryside and petty entrepreneurs. This, along with increasing unemployment in the cities, has laid the basis for the huge disparities in wealth that exist in China today.

Students and the intelligentsia were fervent supporters of the market reforms. Deng denounced the Cultural Revolution, and this sparked a period of debate within the intelligentsia in the early 1980s. The mainstream outlook for Chinese intellectuals became what is called the "New Enlightenment", which was in large measure seen as emancipation from what they thought was orthodox Marxism. The intellectuals of the "New Enlightenment", which greatly influenced the students

protesting at Tiananmen, knew very little about Chinese history. They had simply imported Western ideas into the reform process. In particular, the students and intellectuals had a lot of illusions that "democracy" would necessarily go together with a market economy.

For Marxists, democracy is one of the political forms of a state. As I said earlier, the class nature of the state is determined by what type of property ownership over the means of production is defended by the cops and army. When we Marxists refer to "democ-

Soviet Union. Mao argued that the Soviet Union, not US imperialism, was the greatest threat to the world. This led to Richard Nixon's visit to Beijing in 1972, where he embraced Mao at the very moment that US warplanes were bombing Vietnam! Vietnam was a close ally of the Soviet Union. In addition to invading Vietnam in 1979 (by the way, they got whopped by seasoned Vietnamese troops), China aided the CIA-backed *mujahedin* in Afghanistan.

Both Mao and Deng shared great



1979: Spartacists demonstrate at Chinese Mission in New York City against Chinese government's invasion of Vietnam which was a shameful illustration of US-China anti-Soviet axis.

cracy", we ask: for what class? Many students and intellectuals had illusions in the bourgeois democracy of the US. This was conditioned by China's alliance with US imperialism.

Wang Hui of the Chinese "New Left" points out in "The New Criticism" that, while China has always been involved in foreign trade, "The Open Door policies of Deng Xiaoping demanded a much deeper insertion of China into the world market. How did that happen? A key step in the process was China's invasion of Vietnam in 1978 [sic—1979]—the first war of aggression by the People's Republic of China after 1949." When China invaded Vietnam, the Spartacist League/US raised the slogan: "China: Don't Be a Cat's Paw of U.S. Imperialism!" But why did China invade Vietnam? In the first place, it was only four years after the Vietnamese workers and peasants drove US imperialism out of their country. This was a historic military defeat for US imperialism. China had volunteers fighting in Vietnam against US imperialism, too.

During the Cultural Revolution, Mao's China became very hostile to the

power aspirations based on the nationalist and anti-Marxist dogma that socialism could be built in one country. China's criminal anti-Soviet alliance with the US happened because the US changed its policy toward China, not the other way around. "Socialism in one country" necessitates accommodating to imperialism. China's alliance with US imperialism contributed to the downfall of the Soviet degenerated workers state. The fact is that without the Soviet nuclear shield the Chinese Revolution would have very likely faced nuclear destruction by US imperialism.

The increase in wealth from the market reforms only affected a very small fraction of the Chinese population. Skyrocketing inflation exacerbated this economic disparity and corruption became rampant. The "New Enlightenment" began to diverge on this issue. The government, led by Zhao Ziyang, implemented anti-corruption campaigns, but students wanted a more effective campaign.

Within China, illusions in American "democracy" and the benevolence of

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SYG...

(Continued from page 12)

united front protest against Labour's "anti-terrorist" and anti-immigrant witch hunt. Our aim was to raise the need for the mobilisation of the working class to defend immigrants, minorities and workers, whom the "anti-terrorist" laws target. Contrary to this class-struggle perspective, the SWP's Respect Coalition aims to pressure the racist capitalist state to "respect" the minorities they are targeting in their "war on terror"—while remaining, at best, silent on religious obscurantism. The party we are fighting to build is one that champions the defence of all minorities and immigrants; the fight for full democratic rights for gays; and emblazons on its banner the struggle for women's liberation through socialist revolution.

As Leon Trotsky, co-leader of the 1917 Russian Revolution, wrote in 1940: "It is the duty of revolutionists to defend every conquest of the working class.... Those who cannot defend old positions will never conquer new ones." In the late 1980s and early 1990s, young members of our tendency, the International Communist League, were active in our fight to mobilise the working class against capitalist counterrevolution from East Germany to the Soviet Union. At the same time we fought for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist misleaders. The collectivised property forms that were the basis for these states, as opposed to the capitalist mode of production for profit, provided jobs, education, health care



Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth Group contingent on 12 April 2003 London anti-war demonstration.

and other gains for the working people. These were undermined and ultimately sold out by the parasitic Stalinist misrulers who, in the name of the nationalist, bankrupt dogma of "socialism in one country", looked for "peace" with imperialism, destroyed the revolutionary consciousness of the working class and opened the way for the capitalist onslaught.

We did not prevail against counterrev-

olution. But we fought. Groups such as the SWP, Workers Power and the Socialist Party cheered the forces of counterrevolution whose victory brought historically unprecedented devastation throughout the former Soviet Union and eastern Europe, and was an unparalleled blow to the interests of the working class and oppressed internationally. The anti-globalisation movement was born from the protests by radical youth against the

heightened imperialist exploitation of the masses of the world that followed the destruction of the Soviet Union. But the ideologues of the anti-globalisation movement—liberals and self-proclaimed "socialists" alike—refuse to defend the gains of those workers states that remain: Cuba, China, North Korea and Vietnam. They point to the grotesque exploitation of workers in China in "special economic zones" that have criminally been leased out by the bureaucracy to the imperialists. But it is necessary to defend the gains that remain embodied in the collectivised property forms against the imperialist drive to turn the country into a massive sweatshop.

Repelled by the parliamentary reformism of the social-democratic left, many youth have turned to "direct action" and anarchism. But the anarchists also drink from the poisoned well of anti-communism. Reviling Marxism as "totalitarian", their ideas of somehow establishing liberated "autonomous zones" without eradicating capitalist exploitation share a belief in the inherent "democracy" of this system. The rejection of all leadership as "authoritarian" only serves to reinforce the existing misleaderships and leaves anarchists disarmed in the face of the organised, violent and ruthlessly efficient forces of the bourgeois state. To prevail against that might requires an organised and disciplined vanguard party that can mobilise the power of the one class that can defeat capitalist rule—the proletariat. The SYG, fighting to win a new generation of youth to a revolutionary Marxist perspective, is dedicated to the fight to build such a party.

Join the Spartacus Youth Group!

1 Down with the colonial occupation of Iraq! All US, British and allied troops out now! UN troops stay out! All British/UN/NATO troops out of Afghanistan and the Balkans! For class struggle against the capitalist rulers at home! Not one man, not one penny for the imperialist military! For the defeat of British imperialism through workers revolution! Defend the Palestinian people against Zionist terror! For a socialist federation of the Near East! We oppose the European Union because it is an imperialist trade bloc, a vehicle for capitalist co-operation against all the working classes of Europe. Down with national-chauvinism and protectionism! Down with racist "Fortress Europe"! For a Socialist United States of Europe!

2 For the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of British troops from Northern Ireland! We oppose any imperialist "peace" deal. Full democratic rights for the Catholic minority! Down with discrimination in housing and hiring—jobs for all! Not Orange against Green but class against class! For workers revolution on both sides of the Irish border and both sides of the Irish Sea!

3 Defend the gains of the 1949 Chinese Revolution, which smashed the rule of landlords and capitalists, and established collectivised property! For unconditional military defence of China and the other deformed workers

states—Cuba, Vietnam and North Korea—against imperialism and internal counterrevolution! For workers political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucrats and establish workers democracy based on the power of workers councils and revolutionary internationalism!

4 Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! Down with racist immigration laws! Organise foreign-born workers into the unions! Shut down the government's refugee detention centres! No deportations! For mass trade union/minority mobilisations to stop the fascists and race terrorists! Fascist terror is not a question of free speech!

5 Down with the racist "war on terror", which targets immigrants, minorities and the working class! Free the detainees! The capitalist state—at its core consisting of the cops, courts, prisons and standing army—is the executive committee of the ruling class, an instrument of organised violence by the capitalists against the working class and the oppressed. Down with "anti-social behaviour orders"! Defend the victims of racist cop terror and police frame-ups! No illusions in "community control" of the police! For the right to bear arms and the right to self-defence! There is no justice in the capitalist courts! The capitalist state is not neutral and cannot be reformed—it must be smashed

through workers revolution!

6 For women's liberation through socialist revolution! For free abortion on demand! For free, quality 24-hour child care! Equal pay for equal work! We oppose the privatisation of the NHS and welfare system. For free, quality health care for all! Down with reactionary age of consent laws and the criminalisation of consensual intergenerational sex! Government out of the bedroom—all forms of consenting sexual activity are private matters! Down with "family values" and anti-gay legislation! Full democratic rights for gays! Down with all laws against consensual activities such as "crimes without victims" like pornography, gambling, drugs, prostitution and "statutory rape"!

7 Mobilise youth and students behind the social power of the multiethnic working class! Picket lines mean don't cross! Jobs for all at union wages! Organise the unorganised! Down with multi-tier wages which pit younger and older workers against each other! No to New Deal "work for dole" schemes and all benefit crack-downs! The trade union bureaucracies are agents of the capitalist class within the workers movement—for a class-struggle leadership of the unions! Cops, screws and security guards out of the unions! Keep the capitalist government and courts out of the unions! For class struggle to smash the anti-

union laws!

8 Abolish the monarchy, the House of Lords and established churches! For the separation of church and state! Defend science against superstition and mysticism! Down with the licensing laws! Down with English chauvinism! For the right of self-determination for the Scottish and Welsh nations, including the right to independence! For a voluntary federation of workers republics in the British Isles!

9 For free, quality education for all! No tuition fees! For open university admissions with a state-paid living grant! Abolish the administration—the universities should be run by those who work and study there! Drive police and army recruiters off the campuses! For an end to class discrimination in education—nationalise the so-called public schools such as Eton!

10 Workers of the world unite! For the expropriation of the capitalist classes through socialist revolution internationally! Break with Labourism—build a Bolshevik party! Old Labour-style nationalisation of failing industries amounts to a cash bailout of the capitalist owners at the expense of workers. For an internationalist, revolutionary, multiethnic workers party that fights for socialist revolution! Look to the example of the heroic, Bolshevik-led workers of 1917 Russia! For the international rule of the working class!

China...

(Continued from page 5)

US imperialism began to take off in 1972. In mid-February 1989, Gorbachev withdrew the Red Army from Afghanistan. The Tiananmen protests began about two months later.

The occupation of Tiananmen began with a memorial gathering for former Chinese Communist Party (CCP) secretary general Hu Yaobang, who had died on 15 April. Hu had been widely respected for the simple fact that he was one of the few leading officials not personally tainted with corruption. Teams of youth took their demands to working-class neighbourhoods to stress that they did "not oppose the government or the party".

By 4 May, 300,000 people had flocked to Tiananmen. It was the 70th anniversary of the May 4th Movement of 1919, which began with anti-imperialist student demonstrations and led to the founding of the Chinese Communist Party two years later. At the 4 May 1989 protest students and workers were singing the revolutionary workers' anthem, the "Internationale". Following the 4 May protest, student leaders decided to launch a hunger strike to force concessions from the government.

Sympathy with the hunger strikers led to another huge demonstration on 17 May. At this demonstration, there was massive participation of factory workers from around Beijing. The students, with very little social power, had sparked the seething economic discontent of the Chinese proletariat. The workers wanted to do something about the attacks on their "iron rice bowl" of previously guaranteed jobs and social benefits, and about rising inflation. They began organising independently of the bureaucracy, like the Beijing Workers Autonomous Federation (BWAf). The BWAf demanded a wage increase, price stabilisation, and opposed corruption within the CCP. They called to "make public the personal incomes and possessions of top party officials". The social power of the working class gave the protests their potentially revolutionary nature.

Li Peng, hatchet man for Deng Xiaoping and his regime, went to Capital Iron and Steel to discourage and intimidate workers there sympathetic to the students' protest. It was the threat of a general strike that led Li and Deng to declare martial law on 20 May. The 38th Army was ordered to put down the so-called "counterrevolutionary" uprising. However, these troops were based

in Beijing and refused to move on the crowds.

The fledgling Chinese workers organisations began to organise resistance to the declaration of martial law. They formed "workers picket corps" and "dare to die" teams to protect protesting students against repression. Students and workers fraternised with the troops. The streets of Beijing were crowded with ordinary people arguing about politics, expressing their opinions on the way forward. The police vanished from the streets.

After governmental authority in Beijing evaporated, workers groups began to take on responsibility for public safety, taking over essential services like transporting food and other vital necessities. A group of People's Liberation Army generals sent a letter of protest to Deng Xiaoping. The army was politically split. Not horizontally, as in a social revolution where the ranks split from the officers, but vertically. This is what an incipient proletarian political revolution looks like. For two weeks the order of martial law was not implemented.

On 3 June, Deng was able to mobilise the 27th Army to implement the orders for martial law. The bloodletting began. It is reported that when the troops reached Tiananmen in the early morning of 4 June, their first target was the workers' station at the western end. One student leader saw tanks flatten the tents of the BWAf, killing 20 people. In contrast to the war waged against the working people of the city, most of the students were allowed to leave Tiananmen Square without punitive actions being taken.

Why the savage repression at the very first signs of working-class protest? The Stalinist bureaucracy is a parasitic caste resting upon a collectivised economy. The bureaucrats do not own the means of production. They do not have the myriad threads of social control of a ruling capitalist class, such as the right to pass property ownership to their children. Their power stems from monopolising political control of the governing apparatus. Since they claim to rule in the name of the workers, they cannot tolerate any independent workers organisation. Any real workers movement necessarily challenges the legitimacy of the Stalinist bureaucracy. This is the contradiction of every deformed workers state.

The exact toll of the massacre is impossible to determine, but it is likely that several thousand were killed or wounded. Yet the army's terror failed to quell the rebellion. In fact, it served to

generalise proletarian resistance, at first, as "dare to die" corps erupted all over China. Protests spread to over 80 cities, and that was only the official count. However, lacking a cohered leadership, the uprising was eventually smashed through state repression. During this period, this is what *WV* said: on 26 May, "Upheaval in China: Oust the Bureaucrats—For Lenin's Communism! Workers and Soldiers Soviets Must Rule!" (*WV* no 478). On 9 June,

Lenin described soviets (workers councils) as "the direct organization of the working and exploited people themselves, which helps them to organize and administer their own state in every possible way". Migrant workers would be critical to help spread this type of organisation into rural communities. Coordinated nationally, these organisations could have been the basis for a revolutionary regime of workers democracy counterposed to the Stalin-



Peter Turnley

Beijing, May 1989: Workers and students fraternise with troops called in to suppress uprising which marked incipient political revolution against Stalinist regime.

"Beijing Massacre—Civil War Looms; For the Unity of China Under the Leadership of the Workers!" (*WV* no 479). On 23 June, "Defend Chinese Workers! Stop the Executions!" (*WV* no 480).

The lessons of Tiananmen

Wang Hui argues in his article "The 1989 Social Movement and the Historical Roots of China's Neoliberalism": "The direct cause of the movement's failure was violent suppression by the state. However, the indirect cause lay in the movement's own inability to bridge the gap between its demands for political democracy and the demands for social equality that had been its mobilizing force." This is very perceptive. What political programme could bridge this gap?

During the Cultural Revolution, society was polarised between students and workers. At Tiananmen, both students and workers protested together, not without their differences, against the bureaucracy. Only a Leninist and Trotskyist party fighting for a proletarian political revolution could have bridged the gap between the demands for political democracy and social equality. But the workers groups did not go beyond upholding "democracy" as freedom from bureaucratic constraint. A revolutionary party that could instil the lessons of past struggles into the political consciousness of the workers was necessary.

The two weeks during which the army refused to implement martial law were a critical juncture. There was a political vacuum. Even a tiny Chinese Bolshevik organisation could have been decisive in 1989, especially during those two weeks. The nascent situation of dual power—in which working people were beginning to take control of the cities in their own hands—needed to be developed into a fight for political power. This would have meant struggling to transform the informal workers assemblies into workers councils open to all except openly counterrevolutionary tendencies.

ists and pledged to fight to the death against capitalist restoration.

Because there was a lack of clear leadership, overtly reactionary elements were allowed on some occasions to make their voices heard, including some who raised slogans in favour of the Guomindang. Socialist aspirations were often mixed with great illusions in the US and bourgeois democracy—exemplified by the "Goddess of Democracy" statue. But from the beginning, the protesters' demands, centrally for more democratic rights and an end to corruption, were egalitarian in nature and within the framework of a workers state. Workers marched into Tiananmen Square carrying pictures of Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai, not Chiang Kai-shek.

In order to win workers, soldiers and students, a Bolshevik party would have to argue head-on against the nationalism of "socialism in one country" and clarify the fact that Mao and Deng were merely two sides of the same anti-Soviet bureaucratic coin. It would have been important to make an appeal to the workers of the world for the unconditional military defence of the Soviet degenerated workers state and the deformed workers states of East Europe, China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba. A political revolution in China would have been a spark for the workers of the world, from Japan and South Korea to West Europe and the US, but especially in the Soviet Union.

In an interview published by *Revolutionary Worker* in 1999 (they recently reprinted it this June), Li Minqi, a student protester at Tiananmen in 1989, explains the lessons he learned from the uprising and how he was won to what he believes was Marxism (that is, a sort of neo-Maoism): "Initially I shared the general dominance of bourgeois ideology among Chinese students. The student movement did not expect to become a mass democratic movement. But by May 17, when the workers really came into the streets, I began to

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China...

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realize that this was totally different from what I expected. I was saying to myself: this is more and more like a revolutionary situation."

Explaining his political development, Li says: "In the movement, I already sensed that something was wrong. The student leadership did not dare to mobilize the workers, did not dare take steps to organize to take political power, and that resulted in the failure of the movement. So I began to rethink what I had believed, what I had taken for granted—Western ideology and Western-style democracy. I began to think maybe some alternative ideas are needed. And the most obvious alternative idea is Marxism."

Li was arrested by the Deng regime and spent two years in prison. He's now an émigré. Without seeing an alternative to Maoism, Li drew some wrong conclusions from the defeat. He blames the increased nationalism in China on the new Chinese capitalism. This is wrong on two counts: China isn't capitalist, and "socialism in one country" is the basis for today's Chinese nationalism. In a dialogue transcribed in *One China, Many Paths*, when Li was asked about his view of China's war with Vietnam in 1979, he said he had nothing to say on the issue. But Li's experience shows how the impact of the working class wielding its social power during Tiananmen changed the political consciousness of some students. With a revolutionary Marxist leadership, the working class can change the course of history.

The spectre of Tiananmen, the intelligentsia and working-class struggle today

A few years after crushing the uprising, the bureaucracy went on the offensive with their market policies. Between 1993 and 1999, protests against the market reforms quadrupled. By the late '90s, there was a divergence within the Chinese intelligentsia reflecting the renewed social struggle against the market reforms: neoliberal intellectuals and hardliners within the CCP essentially support the repression at Tiananmen. They argue that if the movement had not been stopped, China would not have become a wealthier nation. The neoliberal intellectuals dubbed their antagonists the "New Left" to imply they are Marxists, because the "New Left" opposed the worsening conditions of the masses. They opposed the repression of the Tiananmen uprising, too.

The neoliberals complain that there hasn't been enough privatisation and that, therefore, China is still "socialist". The "New Left" believes there is enough privatisation to call China capitalist. Wang Hui recognises, however, that China is not like other capitalist states because it was the only state to navigate successfully through the 1997-98 East Asian financial/economic crises. Wang says that this is because of the nation-state. But Thailand and South Korea were nation-states, too. Wang Hui believes that internationalism and Marxism are old-fashioned.

It is the collectivised property that is responsible for the ability of China to have navigated successfully through that financial/economic crisis. Continued state ownership of the financial system has enabled the Beijing regime up to now to effectively (though not totally) control the flow of money-capital in and out of mainland China. China's cur-

rency, the yuan (also called the renminbi) is not freely convertible. It is not traded (legally) in international currency markets.

Knowledgeable spokesmen for Western imperialism recognise that the privatisation and especially internationalisation of the financial system is a necessary step in breaking the CCP regime's grip on the banks. However, the bureaucracy can't control the fact that the capitalist enclave of Hong Kong is an ever-widening breach through which illegal currency transactions flow in both directions. The expropriation of Hong Kong's financiers and other sections of its bourgeoisie is vitally necessary to protect China's economy from the destructive onslaught of the imperialist bankers.

Referring to the savage privatisations that followed the counterrevolution in the former Soviet Union, Wang Hui commented on the debate about amending the Chinese constitution to render "private property rights inviolable": "A decade later, the question of property rights has become the most pivotal social issue in China. The principle that private property should receive protection under the law does not divide intellectuals." Wang Hui understands that the key question is private property, but he and the "New Left" draw the wrong conclusion. Their difference with the neoliberals is how one gets the property. The neoliberals condone illegal expropriations; the "New Left" is opposed. This amounts to being for capitalism with a human face. Where Wang runs into his own contradictions is on the question of privatising land. He recog-



Unemployed workers in Shenyang, part of China's "rust belt".

nises that if land were privatised, ordinary peasants would be ruined overnight. Marxists understand that the only class, besides the poor peasants themselves, whose interests are against the privatisation of the land is the proletariat.

The National People's Congress this spring passed a law that stated: "Citizens' lawful private property is inviolable." It was only a matter of time before such a law was passed. Last year they legitimised party membership for entrepreneurs. In fact, that law did not introduce a significant change in either the social composition of the CCP, which has 66 million members, or its functional ideology. According to an official survey, of China's two million private business owners, 600,000 are party members and have been for some time. The overwhelming majority of these were longtime CCP managerial cadre who took over the small state-owned enterprises they were running when these were privatised over the past several years.

Following bloody suppression of Tiananmen uprising, Beijing bureaucracy singled out workers for repression. Signs accuse two workers of "rumour mongering".



State-owned industrial enterprises can to a degree be buffered from increased import competition by additional government financing via the banks. But there is no way that China's peasant smallholders can compete with the capital-intensive, scientifically managed agribusiness of the US and other major food-exporting countries. The basic line of the regime's agrarian policy is not to protect the multitude of peasant smallholders. It is rather to move toward large-scale, de facto privately owned farms.

Ultimately, the only way to resolve the shortage of arable land in China in the interests of workers and poor peasants is by extending the revolution to an industrially advanced capitalist state

dire living conditions suffered by Chinese peasants and their view that conditions will only get worse is the reason why over the last decade China has seen many large-scale peasant protests and riots, especially against increased taxation and corruption.

An indication of serious problems for the Stalinist bureaucracy was reported in a *Herald Tribune* article (3 June 2004): "In contrast to Tiananmen in 1989, the police increasingly admit that most demonstrators are motivated by legitimate grievances against rapacious managers and corrupt local officials, and are not just pawns of anti-Communist conspirators. Conceding that protest is widespread and enjoys growing popular sympathy, the police are scrambling to learn new anti-protest techniques aimed at containing and defusing, rather than brutally squelching, demonstrations."

The bureaucracy's pace of market reforms is limited by its fear of the proletariat, especially the spectre of another Tiananmen. Fuxin, which is northwest of Shenyang, in the northeast, by late 2000 had produced 530 million tons of coal. That's enough to fill trucks with 60 tons each and line them up end to end until they encircled the earth 4.3 times! On 31 January 2003, Wen Jiabao spent the Chinese New Year's Eve together with miners 720 metres underground. He had a very good reason. Official statistics claim that 200,000 of the Fuxin Mining Bureau's 400,000 miners have been laid off. One article points out: "In the workers' way of thinking, there is one bond that may not be broken: China's mining resources belong to the state, and 'the working class is the master of the state and the master of industry,' so why is it that in actual experience the 'masters' jobs can be bought off one by one in exchange for a paltry 'subsistence provision'?" This goes to the heart of the contradictions of the Chinese deformed workers state.

Workers are not prepared to raise the white flag concerning collectivised property. They have an answer to the question "democracy for what class?": democracy for the workers to fight in defence of collectivised property. An important political limitation is that they need to defend the collectivised property of the workers state in general, not just of their factory.

An important misconception that I'd like to deal with is that maximising productivity and egalitarianism are counterposed in a workers state. This view contends that only the market can discipline managers and workers in order to maximise production and that egalitarianism is only possible through a command-planned economy. The false political framework of this narrow view is that the *only* political form of a

workers state is the political monopoly of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

The only thing the neo-Maoists within the bureaucracy can offer is a command-planned economy. Its limitations are that the workers, technical intelligentsia and managers don't identify themselves with the government that issues the plan, which leads to ignoring and subverting the plan at its base. Thus there is an inherent tendency for Stalinist regimes to replace centralised planning and management with market mechanisms in order to discipline the workers and managers. Trotsky, commenting in *The Revolution Betrayed* on the command-planned economy under Stalin, stated that "The Soviet products are as though branded with the gray label of indifference. Under a nationalized economy, quality demands a democracy of producers and consumers, freedom of criticism and initiative — conditions incompatible with a totalitarian regime of fear, lies and flattery". Workers democracy is key to bridging the tasks of maximising productivity and egalitarianism within a

workers state. This necessitates a revolutionary proletarian party.

Workers of the world, unite!

The programme of proletarian political revolution, based on unconditional military defence of the Chinese deformed workers state and the establishment of genuine workers democracy, is no pipe dream for Chinese workers. Building a revolutionary internationalist, Leninist-Trotskyist party is necessary to make it a reality. This is the most fundamental historic task of the Chinese proletariat. For such a party, a political revolution establishing a workers democracy and instituting a centralised planned economy with a strict monopoly of foreign trade is part of the programme of international proletarian revolution. Workers in the SOEs must tie their struggle to the struggle of workers in private enterprises — to expropriate those enterprises — to migrant workers, to the poor peasants, to women, and to oppressed minorities. The party must be a tribune of all the people. Nationalism is false

consciousness.

It is critical to understand that the Japanese proletariat can be an ally of the Chinese proletariat. There is a history of the Japanese proletariat's opposition to Japanese imperialism's aggression against China. In 1927 the Japanese Communist Party called for unconditional withdrawal of Japanese troops from Manchuria and for the right to strike and organise of Chinese, Korean and Japanese workers. In 2001, the Sasebo dock workers refused to load a ship with arms bound for US troops in Afghanistan. Workers of the world can unite. The ICL fights to reforge Trotsky's Fourth International, the world party of socialist revolution.

The question of "democracy" cannot be separated from the class nature of the state. For example, the fake-Trotskyist affiliate of the United Secretariat in Hong Kong, Pioneer, blazoned in the headline of its New Year's Day 2004 statement in support of the protest that day: "For General Elections Through Universal Franchise and Free Nominations!" This call is virtually identical to

the demand issued by US imperialism's representative in Hong Kong the month before. The first order of business in Hong Kong is the expropriation of the bourgeoisie there. These calls for "democracy" with no intention of defending collectivised property on the mainland are a cover for not-so-"democratic" counterrevolution.

For all those who call China capitalist, here's a short anecdote from a novel by Ha Jin, *The Crazy*. During the Tiananmen protests a reactionary shouted to the workers: "Don't be slaves anymore!" A locksmith responded: "How dare you call me a slave." Chinese workers are not prepared to surrender; they are not slaves. They want to fight to defend collectivised property. They can be the masters of their state, but they need leadership.

The lessons of Tiananmen must be assimilated by the international proletariat. The key question is not how to modernise China, but how to establish an international soviet system that can resolve the problem of scarcity in the world. ■

ESF...

(Continued from page 3)

police" (*Socialist Worker*, 23 October). As exposed in a 19 October statement by the Italian COBAS unions, marshals at the 17 October ESF demonstration sponsored by the SWP-dominated Stop the War Coalition called the cops on anarchists and others who wanted to inform the crowd that anarchists had been arrested on the way to the march. From their vantage point at the front of the march, representatives of the COBAS unions wrote:

"The closing rally for the European Social Forum in London has been deeply marred by the intolerable behaviour of the British Organising Committee, and in particular by the forces that dominate it: the Socialist Workers Party, Socialist Action (the group behind London's Mayor Ken Livingstone) and some trade unions. Several hundred young people coming from the 'autonomous spaces'... were coming to the demonstration when the police attacked them making four arrests (two Italians and two Greeks).

"Despite the insistent requests from the Italian delegation at the head of the march to demand their liberation, the British Committee did not say a word.

"At the end of the march, when trying to give news of these events from the stage, we discovered that access to this was restricted to the British Committee....

"At this point the young people previously surrounded by police were trying to access the stage, upsetting the stewards of the rally, who called the police provoking further arrests, bringing the total to a number of nine."

We demand: Drop all the charges!

Despicable as the behaviour of the British Labourite left is, they hardly have a monopoly on appealing to or alibiing the forces of the capitalist state. In the aftermath of Genoa everyone from Susan George of ATTAC to Rifondazione comunista to Alain

Krivine of the French Ligue communiste révolutionnaire howled against the anarchists, blaming the victims for the murderous violence of the capitalist state. As our comrades of the Lega Trotskista d'Italia wrote in a protest statement, "Berlusconi and the G-8: Imperialist Butchers!":

"With such statements these miserable misleaders prove their loyalty to the capitalist class and its police assassins and expose their attacks on 'globalization' as rooted in social-chauvinist, reformist support to their 'own' bourgeoisies. Their 'movement' aims not to overthrow capitalism but to mask its monstrous reality."
—reprinted in *Workers Vanguard* no 762, 3 August 2001

Indeed, from their inception in Porto Alegre, Brazil in 2001 the entire purpose of these social forums has been to take radical youth off the streets and to corral them behind the "democratic alternative" of promoting the electoral fortunes of out-of-power parliamentary reformists. The most notable beneficiary of this was Lula's Workers Party in Brazil, which is now in government viciously attacking the workers and peasants. The renegades of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International organised the first World Social Forum where they held mock "participatory budgets", designed to school young radicals in administering the budget of the capitalist state. Now they have a minister in Lula's popular-front government that is administering budgets on behalf of the IMF and the World Bank while viciously attacking peasants in the countryside as well as blacks and ghetto poor in the cities.

On the eve of the war against Iraq the Florence ESF issued a resolution promoting the most grotesque illusions in the "peace-loving" credentials of their "own" imperialist bourgeoisies. It appealed to "all citizens of Europe and to all their representatives. Together let

us stop the war on Iraq." It called on "all the European heads of state to publicly stand against this war, whether it has UN backing or not, and to demand that George Bush abandon his war plans" (*Weekly Worker*, 12 September 2002).

While there was plenty of belly-aching over how the London ESF was tightly controlled by Livingstone's office, amidst cries of "he who pays the piper calls the tune", the fact of the matter is that all of these gatherings have been bankrolled by various capitalist agencies and institutions (including by the Chirac government in Paris last year).

The Wombles got the number of the ESF in their call for "Beyond ESF", which says that these social forums simply "parallel the development of capitalist institutions of governance" and "merely asks for 'capitalism with a human face'". But while posturing as an anti-capitalist alternative, anarchists reflect all the prejudices of Cold War anti-communism, chanting in unison with bourgeois democrats that "absolute power corrupts absolutely" and that state power was the original sin of the Russian Revolution. Their call for building "autonomous zones" somehow free of capitalist exploitation buys into the myth that the oppressed can find liberation within the confines of bourgeois "democracy", ie, the dicta-

torship of the bourgeoisie. Rejecting what they view as the "Leninist tyranny" of a unitary revolutionary programme and party seeking to mobilise the social power of the proletariat for the conquest of state power, the anarchists are impotent in the face of the highly organised, ruthlessly efficient forces of the bourgeois state. The end result simply paves the way for a return to the "politics of the possible" espoused by the very social-democratic sell-outs the Wombles claim to reject.

The Spartacist League/Britain and the Spartacus Youth Group intervened at this ESF to win youth and others to a proletarian, revolutionary internationalist perspective. We recognise that the fundamental conflict in society is the conflict between capital and labour. Because of its central role in production, the working class is not just another "social movement" but has the social power to bring down the capitalist exploiters and their whole system of racism, national oppression and women's oppression as well as imperialist war. The proletariat has the power and the class interest to create a society based on collectivised property and a rational, planned economy, a workers state leading to a classless communist society and the withering away of the state. To achieve this we are dedicated to building an international Leninist-Trotskyist party. ■

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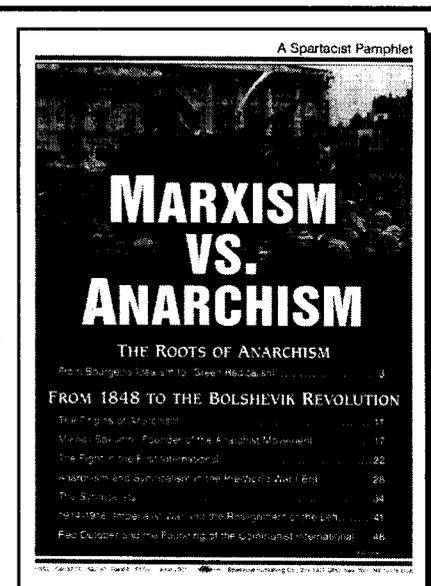
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Iraq...

(Continued from page 2)

for "speedy withdrawal of the coalition forces" was coupled with support for the IFTU. The IFTU backs the imperialist occupation, arguing that "the multinational force is there to support our democracy".

At the same time the SWP also faced blowback from right-wing Labour MP Harry Barnes, another of their erstwhile allies in StWC. The pretext for his attack was a draft statement which allegedly included the phrase (subsequently deleted) that StWC "recognises once more the legitimacy of the struggle of Iraqis, by whatever means they find necessary, to secure such ends". Barnes put an early day motion in parliament which scurrilously implied that StWC endorsed the killing of British hostage Ken Bigley, which was calculated to whip up a chauvinist backlash against opponents of the war.

Parliamentary reformism meets Islamic fundamentalism

As revolutionary Marxists we have a side in Iraq, against the US and British forces and their Iraqi lackeys. The terror, destruction and racist subjugation by foreign imperialist occupation is the immediate threat confronting the peoples of Iraq. When US troops went after the forces of Shi'ite cleric Moktada al-Sadr and his Mahdi Army last August, laying waste to Najaf and killing up to one thousand people, our comrades of the Spartacist League/US declared: "Despite the insurmountable divide in politics and worldview between ourselves, secular Marxists, and the Islamic fundamentalists around the reactionary Shi'ite leader al-Sadr, in the battle for Najaf the side of the working class was clearly with the Mahdi Army." As we wrote in "Imperialist Massacre in Najaf" (*Workers Vanguard* no 831, 3 September 2004):

"During the past month's military assault by U.S. troops against Najaf, it was the duty of proletarian forces internationally to offer military defense to the forces of the Mahdi Army against the imperialists' onslaught. This would include acts of solidarity, such as halting U.S. arms shipments through work stoppage actions internationally. There is growing sentiment in the U.S. against the occupation, but American workers have to go beyond that and actively champion the military defense of those fighting the occupation."

But while we take a side for the military defence of such forces when they are aiming their fire against the imperialist occupiers, this does not mean we invest these forces with any kind of "anti-imperialist" credentials. This is in contrast to groups like Workers Power which, during the assault on Falluja, issued a statement fatuously declaring that: "a victory for the resistance could open up the road to an Iraqi revolution and a socialist federation of the whole Middle East". This is criminal insanity! Blair and Bush try to dismiss any of those fighting the occupation as simply a handful of Saddam supporters, Islamic fundamentalists and "foreigners". Here Workers Power simply puts a plus where the imperialists put a minus. This ignores the political character of the forces that are competing for influence in Iraq. The Shi'ite clerics, their Sunni counterparts and former Ba'athists who appear to be leading the "resistance" are sworn enemies of working-class struggle. The Islamic fundamentalists are committed to the enslavement of women. All of these forces are also viciously communalist against other religious, ethnic and national populations. As we have

warned, in the absence of working-class struggle in Iraq and internationally against the occupation, the victory of one or another of these reactionary forces is more likely to come about through an alliance with US imperialism and at the expense of the other ethnic, religious and national populations.

While making clear that the main enemy is US/British imperialism, a revolutionary party in Iraq today would mobilise against the imposition of Islamic *sharia* law, against communalist sectarian attacks, for organising the vestiges of the workers movement and the legions of unemployed on a class basis through strikes and workplace



November 2004: In aftermath of assault on Falluja, British troops terrorise civilian population near Baghdad.

occupations against the thieving imperialists and the parasitic clerics. Despite idiotic calls for "victory to the Iraqi resistance", the real face of Workers Power's politics can be seen much closer to home where they are ensconced in the StWC alongside the Labour MPs and union bureaucrats.

In an effort to reconcile its prostration before Labourite trade union bureaucrats and "anti-war" MPs with capitulation to Islamic fundamentalism, the SWP has created the Respect coalition. An electoral vehicle launched together with expelled Labour MP George Galloway, sundry liberals and some Muslim leaders, Respect disavows any reference to socialism. At its founding conference, SWP leaders ensured that a motion calling for the abolition of the monarchy was voted down. In last May's local and EU elections, Galloway got support from the Muslim Association of Britain after professing his Catholic "faith-based" opposition to abortion.

Respect's most recent conference voted down a motion to adopt secularism—one of the most basic premises of scientific socialism, not to mention humanism. According to *Weekly Worker* (25 November 2004) SWP honcho Chris Bambery argued he would be "concerned about Respect calling itself secular" because "secularism" was the pretext used by the French government to ban Muslim girls wearing the *hijab* from state schools. Bambery neglected to mention that this was a grotesque perversion of secularism—a principle which issued out of the French Revolution and its struggle for the separation of church and state. We oppose this state ban, which is nothing other than a cynical cover for the persecution of Muslims. But equally cynical are Bambery's arguments. Under the cover of opposing racist Islamophobia, the SWP is pandering to Muslim leaders who enforce the oppression of women symbolised by the *hijab*. And that too

we militantly oppose!

Seemingly trying to combine the most reactionary aspects of religious fundamentalism and Labourite chauvinism, the recent Respect conference decided to run candidates against Labour in a handful of seats in the general election, and to consider voting *Labour elsewhere!* Voting Labour would be nothing short of an endorsement of British imperialism's carnage in Iraq not to mention the racist "war on terror" at home! Respect is not even a working-class formation to which Marxists could consider giving critical support in elections. But even if it were, we wouldn't dream of giving electoral

support to an organisation that calls for a vote to this blood-soaked, racist, anti-working-class Labour government.

The Worker-communist Party of Iraq and "democratic" imperialism

In a polemic titled "The class essence of the current conflict in Iraq and the position of the European left" (29 July 2004) the Worker-communist Party of Iraq (WCPI) takes on the capitulation of the SWP and others to Islamic fundamentalism, arguing:

"[the] left is divided into two camps; a camp that joins alliance[s] with the most reactionary forces as long as they 'fight against imperialism'. Many sections of the left who do not have socialist perspectives no more believe in the power of workers and therefore rely on nationalist and Islamic movement[s] to fight imperialism...."

"The other camp of the left spearheads the struggle of the working class and progressive people to achieve their urgent and fair demands. This camp has no illusion in the anti-human nature of nationalist and Islamic movements. It represents a third force. In Iraq the Worker-communist Party of Iraq represents this third force and it is in the fore."

To their credit, the WCPI have a record of fighting against Islamic reaction and are notable for their emphasis on women's rights and opposition to the veil. However, far from upholding working-class independence, the most elementary precondition for any genuine socialist perspective, the WCPI are in fact anti-clericalist reformists who foster terrible illusions in "democratic" Western imperialism.

They place an equal sign between US imperialism, the richest and most powerful country on the face of the planet, and the Islamic fundamentalists who hold sway (or aspire to do so) in some of the poorest nations on earth. Asked in an interview why it "puts the terrorism of the almighty power of America and the terrorism of small

Islamic groups in Iraq in the same basket", WCPI leader Khasro Saya replied: "Terrorism perpetrated by Sharon's government and American troops on the one hand and the Islamic groups in Iraq and Palestine on the other is part of a very reactionary and anti-human war between these two international poles of terrorism" (wpiraq.org). And what is the WCPI's alternative to these "two poles of terrorism"?

Early on in the occupation of Iraq, the WCPI agitated for replacing US and British forces with "the intervention of the United Nations" to "safeguard free and secure conditions" (*WPI Briefing*, 28 April 2003). The UN had already "intervened" enforcing a decade of starvation sanctions that killed over a million and a half Iraqis while its weapons inspectors literally set up the country for the imperialist slaughter. This is more than testimony that the UN is not neutral but an instrument for enforcing imperialist subjugation of the oppressed masses of the world.

More recently, a statement titled "The third pole: Appeal by the Worker-Communist Party of Iraq" printed in *Solidarity* (20 April 2004), newspaper of the Alliance for Workers Liberty (AWL), demands that "a provisional government in cooperation with multinational forces, excluding America and its war allies, should provide security and order in the country".

In the same issue of *Solidarity*, the AWL goes one better than the WCPI. Declaring "we condemn slogans like 'troops out now' as inappropriate to the situation in Iraq", the AWL argued that it was "inconceivable" that "liveable conditions for the Iraqi labour movement could survive if the US occupation somehow suddenly collapsed"! Evidently this nakedly pro-imperialist line has been somewhat contentious in the AWL. But it would have been music to the ears of Abdullah Muhsin, the IFTU leader who achieved such notoriety as a stooge of the Iraqi stooge government at the Labour Party Conference, and who was also an invited speaker at the AWL's 2004 summer school.

Finding itself in the company of the imperialists and their stooges is hardly new for the AWL. This was the "camp" of these so-called "third campists" throughout the anti-Soviet Cold War. The AWL has found it convenient to promote the WCPI and its so-called "third pole" in Iraq to alibi imperialist occupation. The WCPI might at least consider that the "third camp" was one which stood on the side of Islamic reaction against the Soviet Union.

The Western imperialists who today fulminate against Islam are responsible for fuelling the growth of political Islam. In their drive to destroy the Soviet Union—the state that issued out of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution—the imperialists allied with the forces of Islamic reaction as a bulwark against "godless Communism". In Afghanistan in the late 1970s, the CIA launched the most massive covert operation in its history, arming and bankrolling the *mujahedin* as a direct provocation against the Soviet Union. When the Soviet Army entered Afghanistan in late 1979 at the invitation of a modernising Afghan government, we Trotskyists said: "Hail the Red Army in Afghanistan!" and called for extending the gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan peoples, particularly its hideously oppressed women. Although bureaucratically deformed and degenerated through Stalinist misrule, and no longer the beacon of liberation it was at the time of the October Revolution, the Soviet Union was still a workers state

whose collectivised property forms and planned economy represented an enormous gain for the world's working people.

At the time, the AWL's forerunner claimed that the Soviet Union's defence of the left-nationalist Afghan government, which sought limited reforms including for women, was "unconditionally reactionary"! Instead, they stood on the side of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan, backing the woman-hating *mujahedin* that skinned school teachers alive for the "crime" of educating girls. Today, the AWL has "discovered" the evils of Islamic fundamentalism and affected a Johnny-come-lately concern for women's rights in Afghanistan—just about the same time the imperialists did. Journalist Rana Kabbani captured such hypocrisy, scathingly indicting "all that manufactured outrage over the burka, which rose to a climax precisely as bombs fell on Afghanistan" (*Guardian*, 23 November 2004). Raising a rhetorical question that ought to put the AWL to shame, Kabbani asks: "where are the cries of outrage now, when Iraqi women are being incarcerated and raped in US dungeons, where tens of thousands of their menfolk are also being held; when they are being starved, denied drinking water, bombed, buried alive in the rubble of their homes, maimed and killed?" These crimes perpetrated by the imperialists are alibied by the AWL which grotesquely argues that "the establishment and consolidation of the sort of bourgeois-democratic rights that now exist de facto, despite the bloody chaos in Iraq" are "the best possible option for the Iraqi working class"! (*Solidarity*, 21 October 2004).

For a revolutionary internationalist party!

The WCPI's "two poles of terrorism" analysis is particularly absurd in today's world where the US, with a military arsenal that far outstrips any of its rivals, is riding roughshod over any country it pleases. Bush is again sabre

rattling over Iran and North Korea. Genuine communists insist that the North Korean deformed workers state has the right to develop nuclear weapons to defend itself against the imperialists. We also call for unconditional military defence of North Korea and the other remaining states where capitalism has been overthrown—China, Cuba and Vietnam, just as we fought to defend the gains of the Russian Revolution which remained embodied in the Soviet Union despite its Stalinist degeneration. The restoration of capitalism through counterrevolution that destroyed the Soviet Union in 1991-92 was a disaster for the world's working masses. Furthermore, the absence of the Soviet nuclear arsenal, which once stayed the hand of US imperialism, has emboldened the US ruling class for the subjugation of Iraq.

The WCPI, which upholds the anti-Marxist "theory" that the Soviet Union became state capitalist sometime in the 1920s, writes that the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) was established "following the bourgeois model which prevailed in the Soviet Union" ("Our differences", wpiraq.org). There is no doubt that the leadership of the ICP subscribed to the class-collaborationist programme of the Kremlin Stalinists. This is what ultimately led to their support for the occupation today and their participation in the US puppet governing council. But 50 years ago the ICP's base was the most proletarian of all the Communist Parties in the Near East and it had a significant component of national, religious and ethnic minorities, particularly Kurds. However the working class suffered a major defeat with the failure of a revolution in Iraq. In 1958, the fall of the British-backed Iraqi monarchy triggered a huge proletarian upsurge. Armed, highly organised and led by the ICP, the working class literally had power within its grasp. But the opportunity was squandered by the ICP's Stalinist leadership on direct orders from Moscow, sacrificed on the altar of "peaceful co-existence" with imperial-

ism and alliance with a mythical "progressive" bourgeoisie in Iraq. The Iraqi working class never recovered from this defeat. When the Ba'athists took power in the 1960s, they, in cahoots with the CIA, outlawed and shattered the ICP, killing and imprisoning thousands of Communists and trade unionists. Subsequently the Iraqi proletariat was decimated by the decade-long UN sanctions and now under the brutal imperialist occupation where unemployment is 70 per cent.

Under these conditions what increasingly came to the fore were the communal, ethnic and national divisions that are the legacy of the "divide and rule" policies of British imperialism. Iraq is not a nation but a patchwork of different peoples, deliberately carved out of the old Turkish Ottoman Empire by the British imperialists at the end of WWI. For decades the Sunni minority lorded it over the Shi'ite majority under Ba'athist rule, and now it looks like the terms of oppression may be reversed. Shi'ites are demanding that the sham January elections should go ahead, while Sunnis are threatening to boycott them. Al Jazeera cites the deputy commander of the US Central Command, Lieutenant General Lance Smith, as imperiously stating that elections will likely not take place in predominantly Sunni Falluja at all, and that additional troops will be deployed to "secure the country" before the vote.

Last spring, shortly before the US launched its April attack on Falluja, the occupiers moved against Shi'ite cleric Moktada al-Sadr, shutting down his Baghdad newspaper. This sparked protests around Iraq and temporary expressions of unity between Shi'ites and Sunnis against the occupation. Around the same time, according to liberal writer Naomi Klein, the imperialists manipulated murderous communalist violence to further their own agenda. US representative Paul Bremer was preparing to sell off Iraq's state assets in what Klein describes as "the largest state liquidation sale since the collapse of the Soviet Union". But he was blocked by Shia leader Ayatollah al-Sistani who opposed Bremer's "interim constitution" which sought to legalise the sell-off. Klein writes: "Then, on March 2, with the Shia members of the Governing Council refusing to sign the interim constitution, five bombs exploded in front of mosques in Karbala and Baghdad, killing close to 200 worshippers. General John Abizaid, the top US

commander in Iraq, warned that the country was on the verge of civil war. Frightened by this prospect, al Sistani backed down and the Shia politicians signed the interim constitution" ("Baghdad Year Zero", *Business Plus*, November 2004).

Today Washington is again taking advantage of longstanding ethnic and religious divisions in the country, from deploying Kurdish army forces in Falluja to dangling the carrot of serving as anointed satraps before the Shi'ite leaders. Many Iraqi Kurds (part of the Kurdish nation which also geographically spans parts of Iran, Turkey and Syria) wrongly look with hope to the

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Afghanistan, July 1989: Soviet Army opened the possibility of liberating women from Islamic fundamentalists who were massively backed by CIA.

American occupation as a rampart against Arab re-conquest. But the just struggle of the Kurdish people for their independence can only go forward through intransigent opposition to the occupation and to the Kurdish nationalists who collaborate with US imperialism. Equality for all the peoples of Iraq, and the Near East more broadly, will only come about through the overthrow of capitalist rule in the region and the establishment of a socialist federation of the Near East. This is the Trotskyist programme of permanent revolution. It means combining the struggle against the occupation with a struggle against all manner of bourgeois nationalism as well as religious fundamentalism and poses the need to construct genuine Marxist parties to lead the fight for workers rule in the region and for its international extension to the imperialist countries.

The subjugated masses in Iraq face the same racist and anti-working class enemy faced by working people and the oppressed in the US and in Britain. It is in the class interests of British workers to fight for the withdrawal of all British and US troops from Iraq. The chief barrier to effective class struggle against British imperialism under this vicious Labour government is the union bureaucracy, who tacitly or openly support Labour's "war on terror". These "labour lieutenants" of British imperialism have acquiesced to the wholesale slaughter of jobs—from the former coal fields to former textile centres like Bradford and Oldham and most recently the Jaguar car manufacturing plant. We seek to win the working class to the understanding that it alone has the social power to defeat British imperialism and that a Marxist perspective is the only way forward. Our job is to forge a revolutionary multiethnic workers party to lead the hard struggles ahead to victory. ■

Diego Garcia...

(Continued from page 12)

issued that banned the islanders from ever returning to their homes.

The savage expulsion of the Chagossians from Diego Garcia was integrally linked to the imperialists' anti-Soviet Cold War drive, aimed at overthrowing the gains of the world's first workers state that remained despite its Stalinist degeneration. The establishment of a military base on the island was critical to US imperialism's aim of securing hegemony over the Indian Ocean as a staging ground for control of the Indian subcontinent and Persian Gulf and as part of its military encirclement of the Soviet workers state. Similarly, their ambition to gain control of the strategically important deep-water harbour of Trincomalee in Sri Lanka was prepared through the removal of Tamil peoples from the area which in turn paved the road for the genocidal anti-Tamil pogroms in the mid-1980s.

Today, in the words of the US State Department, Diego Garcia is an "all but indispensable platform" for the "fulfilment of defence and security responsibilities in the Arabian Gulf, the Middle East, South Asia and East Africa". It was a launching pad for the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, the base from which US B2 stealth bombers have

British imperialism and Diego Garcia Removing a people from history

In one of the least known crimes of British imperialism, between 1968 and 1973 the people of the Chagos islands in the Indian Ocean were expelled from their homes, forced into ships' holds and dumped thousands of miles away in the Seychelles and Mauritius, where they were left to die in poverty. This racist atrocity against the 1500-strong black population of the Chagos islands was prepared by the Harold Wilson Labour government in the service of the anti-Communist Cold War drive against the Soviet Union. Diego Garcia, the largest island, was leased as a military base to US imperialism. Recently a group of Diego Garcian campaigners, fighting against the British authorities' refusal to grant them accommodation in Britain, protested in Downing Street, chanting "Tony Blair is a thief. Give us our islands back." *US/British imperialism out of Diego Garcia now! For the right of return and compensation to the islanders!*

Diego Garcia is located halfway between Africa and Indonesia, and encloses one of the largest deep-water harbours in the Indian Ocean. At the height of the Vietnam War, the establishment of a military base there was considered to be of strategic importance by the imperialists. In 1965, the British rulers created the "British Indian Ocean Territory", with Diego Garcia as the main island, including by annexing the Chagos islands from Mauritius before that country was granted independence in 1968. This annexation resulted from a secret deal to lease Diego Garcia to US imperialism as a military base for the next 50 years.

Mark Curtis in his book *Web of Deceit* (2003) quotes recently declassified For-

US/British imperialism out of Diego Garcia now!



Lee Besford/Reuters

A group of islanders from Diego Garcia (above) arrive at the High Court in London. Families protest against British imperialism's racist expulsion of islanders (right).

eign Office documents, suffused with racist imperialist contempt for the people of the Chagos islands, demonstrating that the depopulation was calculated to suit the aims of British and US imperialism. One official wrote that the removal of the islanders "was made virtually a condition of the agreement when we negotiated it in 1965". In return, Britain would receive



Scotland on Sunday

cut-price Polaris missiles.

The expulsions were brutal. Lizette Tallatte, who was one of those expelled, told journalist John Pilger that by way of a chilling threat as to what would happen if the islanders did not acquiesce, over a thousand of their pets were rounded up and gassed using the exhaust fumes from US military vehi-

cles. "They put the dogs in a furnace where the people worked...when their dogs were taken away in front of them, our children screamed and cried." One islander, Lindsey Collen, describes the anguish of forced exile in her article "The island of Diego Garcia, B52's and you and me" (focusweb.org). Families who had lived on the islands for generations were "shoved into ships' holds against their will and transported to Port Louis and dumped on the quayside. Homeless and lost, mothers and fathers and grannies and children and grandfathers wandered into the slums of the Mauritian capital. By the thousand. The poor of Port Louis took them in. But many people from Diego Garcia died. Others ended up in prison. Children ate green mangoes and salt. That is rock-bottom poverty in Mauritius. Emptiness in their hearts."

The Wilson Labour government went to extraordinary lengths to fabricate the lie that there were no local inhabitants on Diego Garcia. Curtis writes, "British policy was: after removing the islanders from their home, to remove them from history". However, for over thirty years the Chagossians have fought desperately for justice through the courts only to be denied time after time. Responding to a High Court ruling in 2000 that the expulsions were illegal and that the Chagossians could return to the outlying islands, the Foreign Office announced it would be impossible to abide by this ruling because of treaty obligations with Washington. Last June the Blair government invoked the archaic royal prerogative to crush the 2000 judgement, and a decree was

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For a new generation of Marxist fighters!

Spartacus Youth Group 10 point programme

In a climate where the imperialist lie that "communism is dead" is imbibed by everyone from anti-globalisation ideologues to self-professed Marxist organisations, the Spartacus Youth Group (SYG) proudly flies our own colours as a revolutionary youth organisation that fights to win a new generation to the communism of Lenin and

Young Spartacus

Trotsky. Through struggle and education, the SYG is a training ground for the future cadre of a revolutionary workers party capable of overthrowing this rotten capitalist system of imperialist war, poverty, racism and all-sided oppression.

Alongside the Spartacist League/Britain, the SYG intervened into the mass protests against the war on Iraq with revolutionary internationalist contingents under the banner: "Defend Iraq against US/British attack! Labour government means racism, union-

bashing and war! For a multiethnic revolutionary workers party!" We argued that what was needed was to mobilise the working class in defence of the Iraqi peoples against the common enemy—the British bourgeoisie. The social power of the working class lies in its numbers, its collective organisation and most importantly the fact that it produces the wealth of this society. While it was a good thing that two million people came out to protest the war, in the largest demonstration this country has ever seen, it did nothing to alter the government's war plans. But imagine the impact that a strike by the powerful tube workers unions would have had. It could have shut down London, the financial capital of British imperialism, which would have had a serious impact on the government's war drive.

We fought for *class-struggle* unity against the war. In contrast, the "broad unity" pushed by the Stop the War Coalition (StWC) was based on the class-collaborationist lie that this gov-

ernment is supposed to represent the "will of the people", and can be pressured to do so through mass protest. This is the same lie used by the ruling class to lull working people into believing that this system is "democratic". In fact, it is the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. As Lenin explained, "the state is an organ of class rule, an organ for the oppression of one class by another" (*The State and Revolution*). The state is the executive committee of the ruling class, and the police and standing army are "special bodies of armed men" which enforce the class rule and interests of the bourgeoisie.

Understanding this elementary truth is crucial to the fight to make the working class conscious of its social power and historic interests in the overthrow of a system that is based on its exploitation. But the StWC, run by the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and adhered to by the likes of the Socialist Party and Workers Power, obscured such consciousness among workers and militant

youth. Their "broad unity" not only fed illusions in the capitalist state but also in the trade union bureaucrats who serve as the "labour lieutenants" of capitalism. Bob Crow, leader of the RMT, blew a lot of hot air against the war on StWC platforms while on the ground he would not call out the union ranks who wanted to strike in solidarity with the firefighters' union on the eve of the war. Subordinating the struggle of workers to the class rule of the capitalists is the role of the trade union bureaucracy.

The continued rule of a small number of capitalists is also maintained by keeping the working class divided and confused about the reality of its situation. Key to this is whipping up racial and ethnic hostilities. The SYG fights to win youth to an understanding of the need for a revolutionary party that will be a "tribune of the people", fighting every instance of capitalist oppression wherever it occurs. At the London SOAS campus in March 2002 we initiated a

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