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Attacks*

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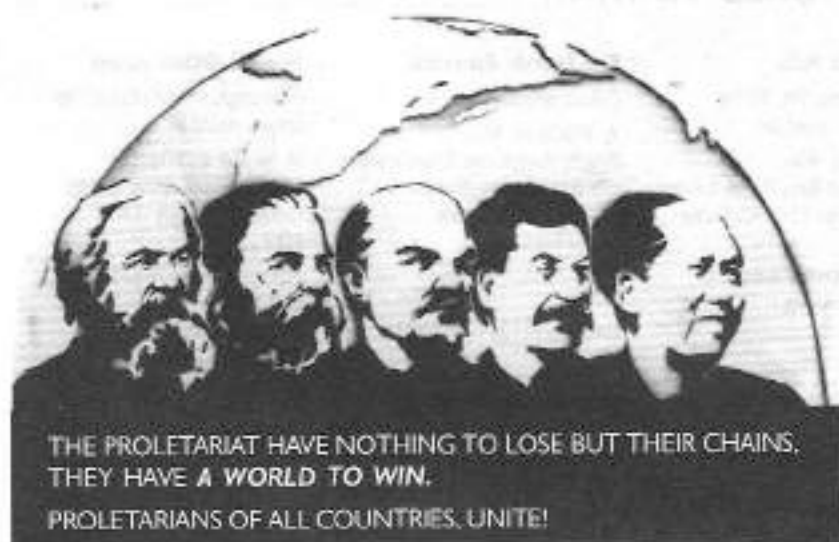
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2002/28

America's Global Rampage and the People's Resistance

The US imperialists' unprecedented bid for global hegemony – "one world, one empire" – poses the challenge to advance amidst intensifying repression and war to lead the people of the world to meet new dangers and seize the new opportunities that are bound to emerge for equally unprecedented advances in world revolution. A special section examines the initial phase in this war waged in Afghanistan.

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Dangers and Opportunities

America's Global Rampage and the People's Resistance

By Fatima Resolucao

1. A NEW CHAPTER OPENS

Tuesday, 11 September 2001 may be remembered in history as the day the US declared war against the world. Like the Reichstag fire in Nazi Germany,¹ the day's events at a minimum provided an eagerly-awaited opportunity to implement moves already in preparation. George Bush, who had begun assembling a war cabinet long ago, stepped forward to announce a new consensus uniting much of the US ruling class. The aim is without precedent: one world, one empire.

America's attempt to recast world relations by force is the central feature in today's politics, from the countries where the US military is already killing people or getting ready for that, to the world as a whole. It is throwing a dark shadow on every facet of social life, including movies and sports, as was witnessed in the politically-obsessed, bloodthirsty Salt Lake City Olympics.

The principal aspect of this is that it represents a new level of undisguised violence against the oppressed nations and peoples. The US is out to play "policeman of the world" in a qualitatively new way, to use its ability to project global military force to enforce and organise globalised exploitation through military intervention in a manner no other power can rival. Bush announced that the oppressed nations do not have any rights that America is required to respect. He proclaimed an open-ended war against all those who fail to "share our values" – that is, bow to US dictates. With little regard for sovereignty, international law or any other restraint, the US is sending in its armed forces and declaring its right to set up and knock down Third World

governments at will to enforce its interests.

The other aspect is that the crusade is also directed against the US's erstwhile "allies". In attempting to stabilise the "global business environment", the US is acting in the interests of all the monopoly capitalist countries, great and small. But at the same time, although Bush has been careful to avoid isolation so far, most of the powers once considered US allies have now been demoted to the status of members of ad-hoc coalitions, to be admitted at America's pleasure and on the condition that it gets the lion's share of the plunder. Now even NATO is a mere shadow of its former self.

For the world's people, the dangers in this situation are obvious. Imperialism, through the US's self-imposed leadership, is willing and more able to intervene directly wherever its interests require it, applying concentrated force on a scale not previously possible in recent years, and also applying internal repression in a way, until recently, considered too costly in political terms.

Although the people of the world are the imperialists' ultimate target, so far their immediate targets have largely been former flunkies and other minor reactionaries who have escaped their control to one degree or another. This has helped spread confusion and even cynicism, since the masses find themselves offered a choice that is no choice at all. The mobilisation of imperialist military power under American leadership and the concomitant political situation (including the mixture of confusion and fear, and even demobilisation among some opposition forces) mean that right now we are facing a formidable enemy spoiling for battle,

at least battles it can fight on favourable grounds.

Battle against revolutionary masses and people's wars is unfavourable ground for the imperialists and they know it – which is part of why the imperialists welcomed 11 September as a special opportunity. But no matter what they may want, they are making themselves the target of the world's contradictions and uniting the people of the world against them. They are once again demonstrating to the world's people that, as Mao put it, "political power grows out of the barrel of a gun."

The US imperialists are determined to seize the opportunities provided by the unprecedented imbalance of military forces in today's world, yet the dangers they face are no less historic. They understand that in order to get to the new world order they dream of, first the world will have to go through a great deal of disorder. They are getting ready for that, including by preparing to crush resistance in their own "homeland". But it is a perilous gamble, and it has an edge of desperation to it. If they fail to blast their way to "full-spectrum dominance", as the Pentagon puts it, in the military, political and, ultimately, economic spheres, then they risk losing everything. In the long or even the medium term, US hegemony over the other imperialists cannot last. As a French representative bluntly put it in a discussion of present US-European relations, "This is unsustainable." Even more importantly, America's striving for a new world order is putting all existing power relations into question, generating turmoil and calling into being and focusing resistance on a global scale. The spiralling whirlpool of these different



An artist's rendition of the American flag.



The US imperialists' new warlord.

contradictions may send the situation spinning out of the imperialists' hands altogether, even in the US itself, and who will emerge victorious out of the storms and chaos that lie ahead is yet to be written.

2. 1989-2001: THE ECONOMICS, POLITICS AND GUNS OF GLOBALISATION

Politics is the concentrated expression of economics, as Lenin pointed out, and war is the continuation of politics by other means. US war aims

have little to do with the fall of the World Trade Center and much to do with world trade and global investment.²

The imperialist system has not changed fundamentally since the late nineteenth century, when industry and banking merged to form monopoly capitalism and the rich countries came under the domination of a handful of financial magnates. Since then the world has been marked by the most intense competition between rival monopolies and monopoly capitalist countries, the export of capital in search of a level of profits unobtainable in the imperialists' own countries, the split of the world into imperialist countries and the countries they oppress, the division of the world among the great powers, and the constant striving of the imperialist countries to redivide the world in ways more favourable to them. And most importantly in the final analysis, it is marked by the emergence of the world proletarian revolution.

This is a system that lives off the natural resources torn from a mangled planet and especially the labour of the world's peoples, including both exploitation in the imperialist countries and the super-profits gained in countries where wages are kept extremely low through the persistence of semi-feudal conditions, a disarticulated economy, national oppression and the complete lack of political rights. It is

also a system where peace and profit are incompatible, where "world orders" rise and fall as the imperialists' hold on their prey and their own constantly changing relative strength is tested through war.

In short, it is a system of global power relations based on force.

During the "Cold War" period, US hegemony among the Western powers was undisputed. There were two relatively-clearly defined rival blocs, and on each side only one country could lead a nuclear war. Some European countries may not have been happy playing junior partner to the US, but the only alternative was playing junior partner to the Soviet Union – and even that kind of switch was not going to be allowed.³ Likewise, the oppressed countries were, for the most part, clearly divided between the two blocs, and the slightest challenge to this line-up led to fierce reactions. When the 1970 election of Allende in Chile threatened to extend Soviet influence in Latin America, Washington unleashed mass murder.⁴

Then suddenly, one superpower bloc shrivelled like a spiderweb with a match.

Put simply, the USSR had military and political control or influence over a large part of the world but lacked sufficient capital resources to fully take advantage of this fact, while the West could not profitably export capital to regions where it did not have the political and military control it needed (such as India, for instance), and its economic options were limited by the need to avoid shoring up its Soviet rivals (in Eastern Europe, for example). The demise of the USSR, a victim in many ways of the underlying economic crisis bubbling up throughout the whole imperialist system, East and West alike, sprang formerly frozen geopolitical arrangements into the air in large parts of the world. This, along with application of new technologies developed largely in preparation for the world war to which respite was suddenly granted, unleashed new opportunities for global expansion that brought a decade of prosperity to people in some quarters and dramatically worsening misery to billions more.

The fall of the USSR produced the political conditions for economic trends already at work to take a qualitative leap. New imperialist capital

could more thoroughly penetrate much of the world's markets, exploit labour previously denied it and do so more intensely than previously possible. Many people came to call this "globalisation". Manufacture and distribution could be organised worldwide to a new degree; finance capital began to flow over national boundaries at an unprecedented speed and volume; and even macroeconomic policies could be co-ordinated among the imperialist powers and imposed on the countries dependent on them. Indonesia, Thailand, Korea and the other South-east Asian countries, considered the "success stories" of world development in the 1990s, for instance, may have seemed to have their own independent industries and economies, but when imperialist finance capital was abruptly shifted out of those countries in search of new speculative opportunities somewhere else, the resulting collapse revealed the underlying relations.

The export of capital has long been a feature of the imperialist system, both in direct forms, such as British ownership of India's railway system, French rubber plantation holdings and Belgian ownership of the Congo's mines, and in indirect forms, like the private and public loans that bleed a country's labouring people and allow foreign finance capital to extract profit in the form of interest even where it does not have formal ownership over the means of production. But imperialist capital has moved beyond agriculture and raw materials, and beyond indirect control of production for the local market (through the fraud of "export substitution" where the local government owned production but imperialist capital called the tune and reaped the benefits), to new kinds of globally-organised labour for the global market.

Very often this involves direct foreign investment (US and Japanese-owned manufacture in China, for instance). Another increasingly common form is "outsourcing", in which the individual manufacture of parts and components and sometimes even whole product lines is taken up by Third World "independent contractors" entirely dependent on the import of Western capital goods and finance. In these cases, the imperialist "customer" is king, controlling every aspect of the process in real time and detail just as surely as McDonald's

controls the retail outlets of its supposedly independent franchisers. Now not only large-scale multi-nationals but medium-sized firms and even some small-fry Western capitalists can enjoy the privilege of exploiting men, women and children in the Third World.

With the advent of digital communications, new sectors were created to pump profits westward. One of the most dynamic is "outsourced business services". All sorts of corporations have established "offshore" customer-service call centres, data input plantations, software development parks, etc. Thus much of the "back office" labour once performed at Western wage levels now costs much less, thanks to the backwardness and misery in which these countries as a whole are imprisoned, boosting profitability for the companies involved and for imperialist capital as a whole.

The prosperity of the "Clinton boom" was made not on Wall Street or in the Silicon Valley but in the maquiladora plants along the border in Mexico, the factories in the "free trade zones" of south-eastern China and the Dominican Republic, the garment sweatshops in Turkey and Bangladesh, the computer code-writing compounds in Bangalore, and so on. It was also rooted in the further polarisation of the exploited proletariat within the imperialist countries, perhaps most dramatically in the US itself.

However, this globalised development has run up against several inter-related but different problems in the economic and political spheres.

The first has to do with the laws of capitalism itself as a system whose very survival depends on ever more extensive and intensive exploitation. For all the prosperity for some and propaganda for all regarding the 1990s boom, and the real advances in growth and profitability made by the imperialist system overall, in comparison to the period from the early 1970s through to the end of the USSR, the world's growth rate has never returned to the averages of the three decades after the Second World War. The relatively low level of overall profitability remains a serious obstacle to further expansion. By the end of the decade it became clear that the "Clinton boom" could not be sustained without a further qualitative leap in the penetration of the oppressed countries.

Further, for the US, like any capitalist, the problem is not the overall profitability of the system, but its own share of the profits. European and Japanese capital are pressing the US as never before. The US accounted for half the world's production in 1950; by 1996 that share had fallen to 20 per cent. This figure is not exactly what it may seem, for US capital controls much production elsewhere in the world. But it has become indisputable that US economic strength alone cannot allow it to grab greater market share and investment opportunities from the other imperialist players. Even in its own historic sphere of influence, Latin America, US capital no longer enjoys anything like a monopoly position.⁵

At the same time, the process of globalisation itself has been generating roiling turmoil and resistance. The penetration of imperialist capital is tearing apart the social fabric in country after country, undermining the economic, social and political basis for the regimes on which that penetration depends. Certain features of this situation are common throughout the Third World.⁶ The strength of imperialist capital and its battering down of market barriers has swept some countries from grain self-sufficiency to import dependency, whilst in others, peasant livelihoods were destroyed by imported wheat and wheat products. In many countries whole sections of the middle classes are watching the promises held out by globalisation fizzle out like the air in a balloon. They have MTV and Internet cafes but no hope whatsoever of the kind of life seen in American television series and, sometimes, hardly any future at all. Even among the upper classes there has been a growing sense of humiliation. For example, as everyone now knows, sections of the upper strata in Saudi Arabia have found the national degradation imposed by the US intolerable.

It has proven difficult to replace some of the key regimes that for decades kept their countries safe for imperialism. Suharto in Indonesia, for instance, brought to power by the CIA over the bodies of many hundreds of thousands of murdered communists and other people, had been an anchor for the US in South-east Asia. The increasing integration of Indonesia's economy into the imperialist investment and financial system, which was supposed to be a source of stability as

well as profits, instead created greater instability. When the regime was forced out amid riots and street fighting, the US put in a new puppet, but the system of class alignments and cliques on which US domination depended could not be put back together again like before. The fall of Mobutu in Zaïre posed similar problems for the imperialists.

Mexico, Algeria (especially the Kabyle people) and South Korea were also swept by rebellion and upheaval. In the Middle East, the determination of the Palestinians to stand up as human beings at any cost has turned the whole structure of imperialist domination through Israel and its arrangements with the oil-dependent regimes into a problem for the imperialists that has no solution. North America and Europe have witnessed protests of a size and militancy unseen in recent decades against globalisation.

Heightening instability, growing discontent, waves of resistance and, in some places, armed struggle and even people's war – this describes much of the world on the eve of 11 September. As the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement analysed in 2000, "While we are not yet experiencing the same high tide of revolutionary struggle on a world scale that we have witnessed in the past and will surely see again, we can speak with confidence of an emerging new wave of the world proletarian revolution." ("Interview with the RIM Committee", *AWTW* 2000/26.)

All of the imperialists have been facing similar problems, to varying degrees, impeding them from just sending in troops and "crushing the natives". First of all, most of them could not even if they wanted to – their militaries were structured for fighting an inter-imperialist world war, specifically with the Soviet Union, and not, as we will see, for the kind of wars they actually need to fight. Related to that, all of them, in different ways, have to deal with strong popular feelings against these kinds of wars, a legacy, among other things, of the long and failed colonial wars they fought in the 1950s and 1960s, especially Vietnam.

But the need for more direct imperialist intervention had become increasingly clear to all of them. For most of the 1990s, it took place under the pretext of "humanitarian tasks" and protecting "human rights". In France,

there arose the concept of the "right to interfere", meaning that the national sovereignty of particular countries should be considered secondary to the universal importance of human rights. The practical meaning of this concept under current world circumstances was concretised when the French ex-radical and estranged founder of Doctors without Borders, Bernard Kouchner, was appointed civilian administrator of the NATO occupation of Kosovo. The Anglo-Saxon world, as usual, is more blunt: the English translation of "the right to interfere" is what that bard of British colonialism, Rudyard Kipling, called "the white man's burden". This idea is now being recycled with a humanitarian veneer as the West's painful duty to run less fortunate nations. Some pundits began to bandy around the term "re-colonisation", symbolised by Tony Blair's 2002 tour of British former colonies in Africa. Even the arrest of Pinochet, the leader of the 1973 coup in Chile, can be seen as part of creating an atmosphere in which the imperialist countries' self-proclaimed moral superiority could be extended to legal superiority... with subtle but very real political and military implications.⁷

At the same time, rivalry between the imperialist powers has been a major factor impeding the imposition of the orderly conditions for exploitation they all need. This is plain to see in the dismantling of Yugoslavia, where Germany, France, Russia and the US each vied for the spoils;⁸ in the horrendous proxy wars in Central Africa, where US-French rivalry played a major genocidal role; and in Colombia, where occasional European backing (especially German) for the guerrilla movements has helped prevent the US from "pacifying" the country and "making it safe for foreign investment". But it also seems to be true in a far broader way in much of the Third World – the rivalry between the imperialists has been a hindrance to the imposition of the political stability they all need.

The question of regimes in the oppressed countries is key in all this. Local capital cannot be subordinated and the people's aspirations cannot be suppressed without the political and military structures to enforce them. The neo-colonial state is the most fundamental of imperialism's structures of domination. There are few places in today's world where any imperialist power, other than the US, can impose

its own regime. This has serious consequences in terms of opportunities for exploitation by the dominant power and its relations with the other imperialist exploiters. As Lenin said, under imperialism the world cannot be divided in any other way except in relation to the respective military strength of the powers looting it.

3. UNEVEN DEVELOPMENT

A report written under US Defence Secretary Rumsfeld's direction in 2001 predicted that increasingly globalised investment would produce a further "widening between the haves and have-nots", but America's "synergy of space superiority with land, sea and air superiority" could "protect US interests and investment" and give it "an extraordinary military advantage". An advantage against those who resist being globalised, for one thing. An advantage over the US's imperialist rivals, for another.

When the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were hit, for the first time in its existence the NATO powers invoked a treaty clause that meant that they considered it an attack on all of the member states. But when the US invaded Afghanistan and they all wanted to join the blood feast, they were unceremoniously told, "Don't call us; we'll call you." Offers to send troops by France, Germany and Italy were initially scorned. Finally the US put the UK in charge of a distinctly non-NATO force limited to Kabul and took the rest for itself. Then the US sent troops to the Philippines, its former colony, without inviting anyone else along, and declared that the next target was Iraq, despite opposition to such a war from nearly every other NATO country. American relations with its former NATO allies became so strained that Germany's Foreign Affairs Minister complained that "alliance partners are not satellites", implying that the US was treating the new unified Germany the same way as the USSR previously treated East Germany.

Does the German minister oppose America's war on the world? Like the rest of his European counterparts, he has actually defended it and done his best to get his country in on it.⁹ The problem is that the European countries are not in any position, militarily, to join

the US assault in a way that would make a difference, and in the absence of that firepower, the US is not only uninterested in their help but using its superiority to serve its own interests independently of, and in opposition to, theirs. At this time, the other imperialists have no choice but to pay a price they hate for a service they cannot do without.

No other country can contest with the US in terms of "power projection" – the capacity to dispatch troops and equipment quickly and massively. This now includes Russia – and that marks a significant change in the world since the Gulf War. The former USSR has further disintegrated and its military power came crashing down as the economic base on which it stood proved unable to sustain it. The debacle associated with the sinking of the submarine Kursk, for example, demonstrated just how little of its once mighty nuclear navy Russia is able to maintain.¹⁰ Germany's early attempts to set a precedent by sending combat troops into Afghanistan were humiliated when its transport aircraft were nailed down for days by bad weather. It ended up borrowing Russian-made Ilyushins to get supplies to Afghanistan. In fact, at this point at least, Europe does not even manufacture military transport planes to compete with the US long-range tank and troop carriers, and if Europe had to buy them from Boeing it would spell the end of Europe's joint efforts to rival the US's efforts to monopolise the making of large aircraft (a monopoly of strategic economic and military significance). Attempts to knock together a joint European strike force have come to nothing so far. Only France has perfected its ability to send in enough special forces troops to massacre and bully small countries, especially in Africa.¹¹ Aside from Russia, only two other powers, Britain and France, have nuclear missiles and a nuclear navy.¹² Today, Britain is the US's only long-term ally, due to the "special relationship" in which British and American capital are thoroughly intertwined.¹³ London is closer to Manhattan than to Paris. As for France, sometimes described as the closest thing the US has to a rival at the moment, its sole nuclear-powered aircraft carrier and icon of France's nuclear status, the Charles de Gaulle, has spent as much time in repairs as sailing the seas.

Why should the US rulers abide

by "coalition politics" when they have a near-monopoly on the means for massive military intervention? Its military budget is greater than that of all its potential rivals combined; now its spending is to jump by 15 per cent in the next budget year alone, by \$50 billion dollars, the biggest single increase in two decades and an amount that alone dwarfs the military spending of most NATO powers. At the Munich international conference on security in February, the NATO secretary-general complained that the European powers risked being reduced to the status of "a military pigmy". The *International Herald Tribune* reported the following exchange there: "When a German participant voiced his uneasiness about US threats against Iraq, [US official] McCain snapped back, 'I would tell our German friend to go out and buy some weapons' before questioning US intentions or power."

Much has been said about the development of a new military doctrine in which the combination of sheer manufacturing power (giant troop-transport aeroplanes, ultra-long range bombers, war helicopters and other specialised aircraft) and hi-technology (pin-point bombs and cruise missiles guided by satellites and the aptly-named Predator drones, enhanced digital communications and electronic intelligence) could make it possible for small numbers of special operations troops operating in conjunction with local cannon fodder to fight in such a way as to reduce the need for co-operating with other imperialists and still keep the number of American casualties low. This is a military doctrine specifically designed to fight in, and for, the former colonies, not an inter-imperialist world war. No other imperialist power has such a military, and none, at least now, can afford the kind of fast recast of its armed forces that the Bush administration is determined to achieve in the next five years, at a cost of a quarter of a trillion dollars.

But this military imbalance exists to a great extent for historical reasons, in particular the military division of labour developed by the NATO powers during the period when they were preparing for a war against the Soviet bloc in central Europe, and this imbalance cannot last. The US spends over 3 per cent of its gross domestic product every year on direct military spending (not counting payments of loans for

past spending, military pensions, etc.). This is about twice the European average – but the UK and France have not been far behind and sometimes even ahead in recent years. Germany and Japan are also on a new trajectory. In fact, the Bush doctrine can only give Europe and Japan fresh militaristic incentive. Recently, for instance, French President Chirac called for Europe to develop its own European satellite ground positioning system, called Galileo, at enormous cost, rather than find itself dependent on the US for its GPS system in a military conflict, and risk becoming, as Chirac said, US "vassals". After initial reluctance, Germany decided to support this major effort.

One fact is that, economically, Europe is roughly equal to the US, and there is no reason why the present military imbalance should continue indefinitely. The other fact is that right now such imbalance does exist. That is one reason why the US had to act, if not on any specific day in September, then at least soon.

4. FROM SUPERPOWER TO UNIPOWER

A number of war buffs now comfortably established in the Bush cabinet began theorizing a new world order in the early 1990s. Their main point is that the surrender of the US's main rival, the USSR, came so easily that the US neglected to carry out the other half of what it needed to do – cut itself loose from concerns about its "allies" and take over the whole world.

In 1992, Paul Wolfowitz, now Rumsfeld's deputy, and L. Lewis Libby, now Vice-President Cheney's national security advisor, wrote a confidential report for the Pentagon entitled *Defense Policy Guidance 1992-1994*. It called for "preventing any 'hostile power from dominating regions' whose resources would allow it to attain great power status, discouraging attempts by the advanced industrial nations to challenge US leadership or upset the established political and economic order, and precluding the emergence of any potential future global competitor".¹⁴ It coined the phrase, "benign domination" – that is, benign towards the other imperialists.

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After 11 September 2001

Oppose Bush's "Anti-Terrorist" Crusade against the World's People!

By the Committee of the
Revolutionary Internationalist Movement

On 11 September, thousands of innocent people were killed on United States soil. In the murky waters of terrorism and the intelligence services, where intrigue and double-dealing are the currency, it may never be possible to know exactly who organised the attack or their motives. But two things are clear: first, the victims in New York join the millions of direct and indirect victims of the policies and actions of the US ruling class. Second, even greater crimes are in preparation.

The US has declared a "war against terrorism". With this, they are declaring their right to attack any and all forces and governments in a wide arc stretching from the Middle East through South Asia. Targets will be determined by how well and how quickly one bows to US dictates — a lack of democracy or a regime's use of terror against their own people or others need not exclude them from being an honoured US accomplice, as we can see in Pakistan's sudden transformation from potential victim to a US staging-ground. This war will be met with a storm of resistance, not only in those countries designated as targets, but throughout the whole world, including in the US and other aggressor countries themselves. It is a reflection of the conflict that pits world imperialism, led by the US, against the oppressed peoples and nations, the principal contradiction in the world today.

It is not surprising that many people moved by fear, ignorance or selfishness have been taken in by the attempts to march "Western civilisation" off to yet another bloodthirsty crusade. But even now, as the situation is just beginning to unfold, a growing number of people feel that the rulers are trying to hijack their sorrow at the loss of innocent lives to win

support for a criminal war.

Why doesn't the US tell the victims that America's designated "number one suspect", Osama bin Laden and his movement, were sponsored by the US government: financed, armed and nurtured for a decade by the CIA, the United Kingdom's MI6 and their partners in the Saudi Arabian secret services, for use by the Western bloc against their Soviet rivals? Why don't they tell the world that the US also had the thoroughly reactionary Taliban recruited and trained in a subservient Pakistan and sent Pakistani troops into Afghanistan to put them in power? And now the same powers that inflicted the Taliban on the Afghani people want to unleash even more punishment!

Bush originally called the US's "new war" "Operation Infinite Justice", but it is infinitely unjust. After all, he represents a country that used the first atom bomb against the people of Japan in order to consolidate their empire at the close of Second World War in a monstrous crime against humanity. It was US bombs and soldiers that killed well over a million Vietnamese and 600,000 Cambodians, and it was the CIA that stood behind the massacre of as many as a million people when Sukarno was overthrown in Indonesia in 1965. The very day of 11 September was already carved into the hearts of the people of Chile and the world as the horrifying moment in 1973 when the CIA toppled Salvador Allende and applauded whilst Pinochet proceeded to slaughter 30,000 opponents in that small country. The US government also backed the military and death squads who hacked and shot 150,000 people to death during the last four decades in Guatemala and provided lifelines for the infamous *Contras* in neighbouring Nicaragua and for the El Salvadoran regime's death squads in the 1980s. During the Gulf War it was US planes that rained "death from above" on tens of thousands – perhaps as many as 200,000 – Iraqis, including surrendering soldiers. The US-led blockade, as well as the systematic, planned destruction of the Iraqi economy, has caused the death of at least half a million children according to United Nations statistics. Israel is the US's well-fed guard dog in the Middle East; the US has provided weapons and backing for each and every Zionist crime from the founding of the state of Israel on the land of others to the mowing down of Palestinian youth today and "smart" bombing of political leaders. Bush represents a country whose police wage a merciless war on its own minority nationalities, one that sends helicopters to patrol its own ghettos and even bomb its own people (the MOVE commune in Philadelphia in 1985, killing 11 men, women and children). It has 3,500 people on death row, including one of the world's best-known political prisoners. US "democracy" has responded to the 11 September events by proposing laws to allow the indefinite detention of any non-citizen. Abortion doctors are murdered there, and the most fundamentalist religious fanatics have the ear of the President.

Why don't Bush, Blair, Chirac, Schroeder, Berlusconi and the rest of them tell us that this war will not be for justice but for empire? What is going on is not a "clash of civilisations" but the efforts of these barbarous rulers, flying the banner of "Western civilisation", to consolidate their control and contend amongst themselves for regions of strategic importance and for world domination. Other imperialist powers are supporting the US war moves whilst sometimes grumbling over the US's heavy hand toward even its partners-in-crime – these are two sides of the same effort to protect their own place at the imperialist banquet table, where the labour and lives of human beings is the first, last and only course, washed down with the planet's natural resources.

In the last decade the basic tendencies of the world imperialist system have been intensified under the signboard of "globalisation". The powers are exploiting every corner of the globe more deeply than ever before – and this has inflicted unbearable violence everywhere, through both force of arms and the grinding out of profit in daily life. If this has brought some prosperity for some of the people some of the time in the imperialist countries, the decent lives and happiness they promised their own middle classes in return for silence have proved to be an illusion. In the oppressed countries, electronic gadgets and a taste of

the worst of Western culture have been offered to a minority in hopes of purchasing their acquiescence, whilst the masses of workers and peasants are driven further into poverty and the dignity of nations is trampled into the dust.

The US's towering crimes and its swaggering domination of the world made many people around the world glad that a big blow had been delivered at the heart of its empire. But those who want out from under the heel of the US boot, and not just a fleeting and degrading revenge, must look to history when the masses of people were able to take on and defeat even the mightiest of enemies. Most important to remember today is the heroic struggle of the Vietnamese people, which defeated the American army in the context of a world-wide revolutionary upsurge centred in Maoist China, which not only rocked all the colonialist and imperialist powers but also saw unprecedented militant opposition and revolutionary mass movements in the rich countries themselves, including the US. That is a history lesson few dare talk about lately. But it is not just history. Maoist-led people's wars—wars that rely on the people and embody the whole new kind of society they aim to bring into being, without oppressive relations—are being waged today in Peru, Nepal and other countries.

Whilst support for an attack on peoples of the oppressed countries is one goal of today's war fever, the other is a widespread suspension of many rights and freedoms within the imperialist democracies themselves, along with a sweeping crackdown against all opposition to imperialism in the countries run by their lackeys—all under the banner of suppressing terrorism. In some countries, the authorities are proclaiming that they will no longer tolerate the kind of opposition they have so far been unable to squelch by more indirect means. Cowardly attacks on Muslims and foreigners are being unleashed in the US and across Europe in an effort to create a generalised climate of fear.

Whether the resistance to the announced "crusade" advances as part of the world-wide battle to rid the earth of imperialism, or whether the struggle is hijacked by reactionaries, depends ultimately on what programme and vision lead the people's struggle. We can never allow people to be presented a false choice between exploitation and oppression in its modern, imperialist form and packaged as Western-style "democracy" or an impossible return to an oppressive medieval form of existence under the signboard of Islam or other religious movements. In the last two decades, history has proven again and again in Iran, Algeria, Afghanistan itself and elsewhere that Islamic movements will never liberate the people or defeat imperialism. On the contrary, history has shown that it is only when the masses have political power in their own hands, in socialist states or new-democratic republics led by the working class and its communist vanguard, that it is really possible to shape a new future.

The need for the communist vision of a world society based on the free and voluntary association of all human beings—no longer divided by classes and into oppressed and oppressor nations, no longer marked by the subjugation of women to men—cries out as never before. Even as we unite in struggle with masses who still embrace other ideologies, our scientific vision provides the backbone to stand firm in the cross-currents of a tumultuous world and gives strength and courage to rally the people to meet the trials of the moment, to rise to the occasion.

The Revolutionary Internationalist Movement calls upon the people of all countries to unite in their millions to oppose and resist every act of US aggression. Reject the hypocrisy of the imperialist enemies. Aim high and fight for genuine liberation. Remember that the darkest hour comes right before the dawn.

24 September 2001

Afghanistan and its peoples are the first victims in the new round of US imperialist aggression unleashed in October 2001 on the heels of the 11 September events. It has been a test case for the US's new self-proclaimed right to intervene, launch military assaults, overthrow governments and install puppet regimes wherever the needs of its empire dictate — in this case, turning Afghanistan into a military outpost in an unstable but strategically important Central Asia, which links the Middle East and South Asia. Yet while the US imperialists celebrate what they call a victory, this new crime against the oppressed people of the world has enraged and awakened many to the realities of a US-dominated world and its fast-changing "rules", calling forth new waves of resistance.

The presence of Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan has been used as the justification by the US for a brutal and barbaric assault. But bin Laden is a figure created by the CIA and the Pakistani intelligence service, the ISI, who was recruited to mobilise and train Moslems from all over the world to fight in Afghanistan. Bin Laden's motivation was to defend Islamic rule through a crusade against "the godless communists", as the US State Department put it. According to the leading French daily *Le Monde*, his personal fortune originated not from his wealthy Saudi family connections so much as from the CIA payroll itself and his alleged "pocketing" of one of his many deliveries of US money to Islamic anti-Soviet forces. It was only when the Saudi regime agreed to allow US troops to be stationed in Saudi Arabia, land of Mecca, the "house of god", that Bin Laden began to oppose the Saudi rulers and turned against the US he had been serving.

Whether or not Osama bin Laden was responsible for the bombing of the US Embassy in two African countries in August 1998, these incidents coincided with the US's declining hopes that the Taliban could actually sponsor security in Afghanistan. This provided the US with a lever to use against the Taliban, illustrated by the pressure Bush applied on them after he took office to expel bin Laden from the country.

The 11 September 2001 events did not fundamentally change US imperialism's plans. Rather, they set into motion the application of a new strategy

The US's Savage against the



Aerial bombardment in November 2001 of a village outside Kabul. The US dared to claim it was not targeting civilians.

in the region, the first phase of which was launching a savage war against the peoples of Afghanistan.

The most advanced military technology has been used against one of the weakest and poorest nations in the world to demolish the already devastated cities, streets and houses, and bring greater misery, injury, death and mourning, along with massive displacement, to a people who had already suffered such imperialist interventions for many decades.

The US deployed new weapons systems it was itching to test in the field¹ as part of its cowardly method of fighting, just as its Zionist puppets use tanks against Palestinian stone throwers in the Middle East. This revealed once again its absolute contempt for, and non-compliance with, international rules of engagement and the treatment of prisoners of war, and its utter hatred of the masses of people in the region. The civilian population was consistently a target of its indiscriminate bombing, and it was

clear from the early days that creating widespread fear was an integral part of the wider war offensive the US was declaring against "unfriendly" regions of the world.

Whether the victims were children or the elderly, "friendly forces", hospitals or prisons, the US arrogantly made up the rules as it went along and rained down huge numbers of bombs on non-military targets, despite the high precision-instrumented guidance systems. Fazal Rabi, 30, who had lost 12 family members in the bombardment on 21 October of Tarin Kot that killed at least 21 people, told the *Washington Post* in February 2002, "The Americans say they can see anything on the ground. But these were children. We are not Mullah Mohamed Omar or Osama bin Laden, we are poor farmers."

The Pentagon maintained a steady stream of cover-ups and made intense efforts to block media access to the area and to prevent any on-the-ground reports on the war. Even so, the scale of the attacks on the people is such

War of Vengeance

Peoples of Afghanistan

that it cannot be completely covered up or denied. Repeated examples of stories have pushed their way to the surface.

In Karam in Nangahar Province, according to survivors, US bombs killed between 50 and 100 of their families and neighbours, demolishing one village. In the village of Chowkar-Karez, which had no military presence whatsoever, one man lost 19 of his relatives in a US raid. According to a German relief organisation, in an attack on 1 November in Ishaq Suleiman 12 people were killed and 14 others wounded. On 8, 9 and 10 November the bombardment of Khakriz, a village north of Kandahar, killed 70 people. A US bombing raid on 29 December on the village Qalaye Niazi outside Gardez killed at least 52 civilians, including 25

children, according to the UN, though some local survivors reported a higher figure of 100 villagers. Many of those killed were families who had gathered for a wedding.

It became even more difficult for the US to hide the killing of civilians when on 20 December they attacked a convoy of cars carrying local tribal elders to participate in the inauguration of the new government. In another attack on 24 January they killed more than 20 and captured 27, who were handcuffed and tortured. Some were reportedly executed by the US forces.

As for the US respect for medical installations during wartime, its forces bombed the Red Cross warehouse in Kabul in October, issued a denial of the attack, then recanted their denial in the face of the obvious facts, apolo-

gised for it as a "mistake", and finally showed what this meant by bombing it a second time, all within ten days. On 28 January, US Special Forces and allied troops attacked Kandahar Hospital, killing non-Afghan fighters.

Although figures undoubtedly are low, including because of the US block of media access, it is estimated that in the first six months more than 18,000 bombs, missiles and other ordnance were pounded on the country. Totals of civilian casualties range from 3,000 to 8,000 (the high end from a de-mining expert) during the first several months of the war. Through February 2002, it is estimated that over 10,000 outmatched and surrounded fighters were killed by US carpet-bombing.

Even the US's treatment of prisoners of war – many dozens of whom were



For ten days this family marched across the desert to reach a camp near Herat in northwest Afghanistan. The war drove hundreds of thousands from their homes.

openly executed whilst being transported in trucks that were tightly sealed so they would suffocate on route to prisons – illustrates plainly the murderous intentions of the Pentagon leaders and their complete hypocrisy towards international conventions. At the prison in Mazar-e-Sharif, US and British-led troops massacred almost all of the 300-500 prisoners there.

"RESURRECTING" THE WARLORDS THE IMPERIALISTS HAD DEFEATED TO BRING IN THE TALIBAN

Although the US war alliance repeatedly claimed victory over the Taliban, they constantly renewed the bombardment campaigns, then "estimated" they had again killed hundreds more fighters. Victory came more easily in the cities, especially in the north. This mainly reflected the unpopularity and isolation of the Taliban rather than the strength of the Northern Alliance or US advanced technology. In many cases the Northern Alliance met with essentially no resistance.

The US itself had given a green light to the Pakistani training and piloting of the Taliban armed forces in order to further divide and defeat (or incorporate and control) the regional and often tribally-based armies to bring the Taliban to power in the mid-1990s. In September 2001, apart from the relatively more organised Northern Alliance, which included most groups that fought the Soviets but also at least some generals, such as the notorious General Dostum, who were part of the pro-Soviet forces, many of the weakened *Walis* (chiefs) and their local forces were disorganised, scattered and only willing to fight on a mercenary basis.

Haunted with memories of high US losses in Korea and Vietnam, the US sought to limit casualties amongst its own forces in the ground fighting, despite amassing a large military presence in Afghanistan. For example, when the US wanted to enter and search the long stretches of caves where Taliban and al-Qaeda forces were believed to be hiding, US Defence Secretary Rumsfeld preferred to offer money and other "favours" to let Afghanistani "volunteers" do the dangerous work in order to spare the lives of his marines and special troops. At the same time, the US military needed to train and purchase the help of the experi-

enced Afghanistani fighters, who were organised under the command of local warlords, some of whose support the US would also need in any case for a post-Taliban political solution.

An article in *Shola*, the organ of the Communist Party of Afghanistan, exposes the weakness of these regional warlord commanders and feudal armies. It maintains that it was only after the heavy two-month long bombardments by the US and their allies had dealt decisive blows to the forces and military fortifications of the Taliban and al-Qaeda, causing the collapse of their front lines, that these tribal and feudal forces got a "new lease on life" and were belatedly mobilised for service in the US-led war.

Their assessment is that the Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters put up hardly any resistance in the North and in fact throughout most of the country, with the exception of Kandahar and the Tora Bora mountains, either escaping the barricades or openly capitulating with little fighting.

In the Jalalabad area in the east, which the Taliban and al-Qaeda had evacuated without a fight, the US had to hire a mercenary force from amongst Afghanistani immigrants in Peshawar. They were mobilised with the aid of Pakistani officials in order to strengthen the position of the weak commander there, Hajji Qadir.

In the southern Pastun areas that were the Taliban's stronghold, *Shola* states that the local reactionary anti-Taliban warlords were defeated and basically had no forces under their command, as the local *wali* had been in Pakistan. As is well known, attempts to send in CIA envoys Abdul Haq and Hamed Karzai (with the ill-fated goal of wooing "moderate" Taliban figures to expedite the collapse of national power) ended in Abdul Haq's arrest and execution by the Taliban, while Karzai barely escaped with the help of American helicopters. As a result, the military forces linked to the United Islamic Front became the main Afghanistani ground force under US leadership. In fact, it was only after the Taliban and al-Qaeda lost the areas in the north, north-east, west, centre and Kabul that Karzai could safely return to his home area in the south under US air cover and with the support of its ground forces, and gather political support of his own. After the surrender of Kandahar was negotiated be-

tween the Taliban and Karzai, this *wali's* (named Gol Agha) tribal forces, backed up by hired fighters from Quetta across the Pakistani border and American commandos, mounted an attack on Kandahar to occupy important government buildings (particularly the *Welayat*, the provincial government headquarters) in order to force Karzai and the local council to recognise him as the *wali* of Kandahar.

The final strongholds of al-Qaeda in the Tora Bora mountains south of Jalalabad faced not only heavy US bombardments, but also some commando attacks by US ground forces. The role of local Afghanistani forces linked to the Eastern Council in Tora Bora had totally been for show during this fighting, but these forces, or at least sections of them, started bargaining in exchange for bribes under the guise of sending a large number of "encircled" forces towards Pakistan. After the collapse of al-Qaeda in Tora Bora, the American forces not only took charge of those who were arrested or capitulated, but as soon as the local Eastern Council forces left the area, the US occupied the natural and military fortifications, turning it into one of its main bases in Afghanistan.

Shola notes that, as soon as the US invasion was announced, the Russian imperialists, too, immediately set about buying a section of these local fighters to ensure they would have a say in future developments. They provided tens of millions of dollars to forces linked to the United Islamic Front.

History has repeatedly shown that anti-people forces can be defeated by the struggle of the people who are determined to fight a just war. Afghanistan itself has been the graveyard of many reactionary forces and invaders who were equipped with much superior weapons. As a result of the long history of battle with foreign invaders, the people of Afghanistan are famous for being good fighters. In addition, very favourable terrain exists, especially in the east where high mountains render modern hi-tech weapons less efficient. Numerous US helicopter crashes and "equipment" failure casualties provided several examples of this.

THE US "ELECT" THEMSELVES AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT

The new interim government headed by Hamed Karzai is another

product of the imperialists' war against Afghanistan. The imperialists wanted to rapidly put together a semblance of a central government and strike a relative balance between the two main groups courted by the US and contending for political influence in a post-Taliban settlement. (The first group, Rabanni's government, which held power before the Taliban seized Kabul, and the second, the circles around the former king, Zahir Shah, who was overthrown by a coup in 1973.) They called a meeting in November 2001 in Bonn, Germany, adding two other groups (the "Cyprus meeting", mainly supported by Iran, and the Peshawar group, mainly supported by Pakistan). Bonn was in fact a continuation of a previous meeting, chaired by US senators, between the Rome circle (supporters of Zahir Shah) and the United Islamic Front, one of the main organisations within the Northern Alliance, during which the US invasion and the formation of a post-Taliban government was tacitly agreed upon. (This analysis is drawn from *Shola*. For more information, see the excerpt from *Shola* on AWTW's web site, as well as the sidebar excerpts in this issue about political and administrative restructuring, including the organisation of the feudal council, the *loya jirga*.)

Militarily, the US applied pressure on the forces at the meeting to reach an agreement and to elect its own man, Hamed Karzai, as the head of the interim government, by deliberately maintaining Taliban rule in some areas of the south, whilst at the same time carrying out heavy bombing and bringing ground troops to the area. By the same token, as soon as the meeting ended, air attacks and ground operations by US forces around Kandahar intensified, additional forces were mobilized, and in a short time Taliban and al-Qaeda were forced to evacuate Kandahar.

Reconstruction then became the subject of the day. The very same countries that had helped devastate Afghanistan promised some \$3 billion in aid and reconstruction.

Political reconstruction for US imperialism means establishing a state that is unconditionally in the service of US policy in the region. A government committed to democracy means being ready to imprison and torture the people and any voice of opposition, to oppress the national minorities and

women like the other "democracies" it has sponsored for such ends in Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt, Chile, Turkey, and of course that bloodiest bastion of "democracy", Israel.

Economic reconstruction means to intensify the exploitation and oppression of workers and peasants and all the toilers, whilst having a free hand to plunder Afghanistan's natural resources to maximise the profit of the multinationals. Foreign minister Abdullah said in an interview that constructing the oil pipeline through Afghanistan would be one way to help independence. Considering that the interim chairman, Karzai, and the US special envoy to Afghanistan, Zalmay Khalilzad, have been consultants to the Unocal oil company, which spent much of the 1990s seeking to build this oil pipeline, clearly demonstrates the new hand-picked government's orientation. The International Monetary Fund's assistant director for monetary and exchange affairs suggested that Afghanistan should just abandon its currency and adopt the dollar instead. This would, he explained, be a "temporary" measure, but he admitted, "when an economy dollarises, it takes a little while to undollarise".

As for military reconstruction, US imperialism and its puppet regime seem to have in mind building an army that can better protect their interests and guard any pipeline built. But in the war-torn semi-feudal semi-colony of Afghanistan, scarred and divided by imperialism's successive rapes, the new army must become centralised and uniformly (better than the Taliban) able to suppress, imprison and torture any opposition or rebellion and revolutionary organisations/parties that might challenge the fragile ruling coalition in any way.

In sum, the new government will be a tool for imposing terror and repression on the masses. If needed, like Turkey, the rear flank of NATO, it will participate in imperialist wars to kill masses in other countries. The US has begun to train and advise Northern Alliance forces, as well as recruiting new soldiers from the Afghanistani population, and its marines are helping to build more prisons. But more than that, the military reconstruction of Afghanistan has to serve the broader interests of US imperialism in this strategically important region. A commentator in the British daily, *The*

Guardian, wrote on 12 February: "US military 'tent cities' have now been established in 13 places in the states bordering Afghanistan. New airports are being built and garrisons expanded. In December, the US assistant secretary of state Elizabeth Jones promised that, 'when the Afghan conflict is over we will not leave central Asia. We have long-term plans and interests in this region.'" In addition, to ensure that the field is not completely controlled by the US head of the imperialist pack, Britain, Germany, France and Russia have all agreed to assist in the training of the army and to provide aid and equipment. *Shola* reports that modern arms are flowing from the US and Russia to the regional commanders, each seeking to strengthen different military factions and their overall position of influence within the new Afghanistani army.

The ugly face of a puppet regime that is being restructured to more efficiently ensure imperialist domination of the people, national resources and economy, whilst enshrining backward and oppressive social relations, can be seen from every angle.

NO SAVIOURS

There has been much debate generated internationally over whether the new fundamentalists, under "pressure" from their more modern counterparts in Washington, are serious about freeing women from the tyrannies of the Islamic Taliban the US rulers supported yesterday. (See 8 March 2002 CoRIM statement on International Women's Day in this issue.)

Far from caring about the suppression of women, the US government always supplied generous aid to build up the most fanatic and anti-woman *mujahedeen* groups like the one led by Golbedin Hekmatyar (infamous for his especially ruthless targeting of the Maoist armed forces) during the years of Soviet occupation, and others which came to power later. Indeed, a pillar of this new regime is none other than the Northern Alliance, a group of Islamic thugs whose record of mass rape against women was so outrageous that it helped pave the way for the Taliban's rise to power. When the people of Afghanistan were suffering under one of the most barbaric fundamentalist Islamic groups, the Taliban, the people of the world in solidarity with their

brothers and sisters in Afghanistan broadly opposed the regime's harsh treatment of the people and of women in particular, whilst the US argued against "isolating" the Taliban regime.

The Islamic veil symbolises the tribal and feudal patriarchy that still underpins the subjugation of Afghan women. Under the US-backed regime, the veil is going to continue in some form. Perhaps the *burka* textile prison that physically enfolds women and literally stifles their participation in society will add a "window" to the world to become a *chador* or different garb, as in the Iranian or Saudi model. Some women may be able to show their faces to be able to sell their very cheap labour to the rare new capitalist investor hoping to profit from a stable Afghanistan. Just as in Iran, where the Islamic republic turned the political clock backwards in many ways, suppressing

women's rights, the semi-feudal oppression of women in Afghanistan became doubly cruel after the arrival of the Islamic regimes. (See "Islam: Ideology and Tool of the Exploiting Classes", in this issue.)

As the Afghanistani women interviewed by the March Eighth Organisation of Iranian and Afghanistani Women declared righteously, the whole society must change. "We all have a Mullah Omar at home...and we have no choice but to struggle against this system."

WHOSE FUTURE?

It is true that the centuries-long heroic struggle of the people of Afghanistan has not resulted in any true liberation and independence for the people. They have been fighting for centuries against foreign powers. They

have taught important lessons to the invaders. But, in the absence of real revolutionary leadership, the fruits of people's struggles have been stolen time and again by the feudals, Khans and tribal leaders who ultimately were in the service of imperialism and never hesitated to sell out the nation's sovereignty. This tragedy is being repeated once more. During a century of colonisation, the British never saw peace in Afghanistan. The Soviet social-imperialists did not have a moment's peace and were drawn into a deadly war with the masses. The US imperialists will certainly face the same fate, but with what future for the masses?

In November 2001, an important statement appeared calling for all the genuine Maoist forces in Afghanistan to work together to form the single, united Marxist-Leninist-Maoist party

A History of the Imperialist "Great Game"

Afghanistan has been the victim of conspiracy and contention between the imperialists for more than a century. The term "the Great Game" was first used to describe the sparring between the British imperialists and Tsarist Russia over control of Afghanistan in the early part of the nineteenth century. One side of Afghanistan is the gate to central Asia and the other opens towards the Indian peninsula and to the open seas long coveted by Russia. The first Western colonialists to invade Afghanistan, the British occupied Kabul in 1839 in their rivalry with Russia.

The Afghan people drove the British out in three successive British-Afghan wars. These heroic struggles of the people could not liberate the country from colonialism and exploitation, and each time tribal chiefs and feudal lords traded the future of the people for small concessions from the colonialist overlords. Following the First World War and the victory of the proletariat led by the Bolshevik Party in Russia, which exhilarated the oppressed masses of the world, the third of these anti-colonialist wars succeeded in establishing independence under the rule of Amanullah Khan, ushering in a new era characterised by semi-feudalism and semi-colonialism.

The British continued to pursue their influence in Afghanistan, even more wary now given the existence of a socialist country to the north. Yet the British Empire was beginning to decline, overshadowed by the rising strength of US imperialism, through the aftermath of the Second World War. In the mid-1950s the new revisionist rulers in the Soviet Union, who had overthrown socialism, pushed to extend their influence by entering the "Great Game" in Afghanistan. The appetite for Soviet social-imperialism grew geometrically in the 1970s as contention with the US imperialists and their Western allies for controlling greater parts of the world intensified.

The Soviets used their economic leverage but also worked through pro-Soviet revisionist parties within Afghanistan. Between 1956 and 1973 they gave Afghanistan close to \$3 billion in economic and military aid. A coup in 1978 brought one of the two main pro-Soviet revisionist groups, the Khalq Party, to power. The Soviets' aim was to open the way towards the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf through its control of Afghanistan. Some forces opposed the coup, making it difficult for the revisionists to control the country on their own. So in an attempt to consolidate its hold, the Soviet Union

invaded and occupied Afghanistan with their own troops and brought to power a new lackey from the other revisionist group, the Parcham Party.

The blood-soaked Soviet occupation of Afghanistan not only outraged the people and gave rise to fierce popular resistance but also represented a major challenge to the Western imperialist bloc. So Afghanistan became the focus of two of the most intense contradictions of the world. Revolutionary forces and masses all over the world supported the heroic struggle of the people of Afghanistan, whilst feudal and other reactionary forces directly or indirectly linked to the US and Western imperialists were also mobilising themselves on a world scale to defeat the Soviet social-imperialists' threat to their global domination.

The US imperialists acted quickly. They poured in immense quantities of military and financial support to bolster the feudal and tribally-based warlord armies. They tried to mobilise the Islamic forces and regional reactionary regimes within their orbit to wage jihad against "godless communists", as they liked to call the revisionist social-imperialists. Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, with its intelligence service, the infamous ISI, as well as the new revisionists of Deng Xiao-ping's China,

the country so painfully lacks. "The Communist Party of Afghanistan and the Unity Committee of the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist Communist Movement of Afghanistan, with the aid of the RIM Committee, have reached agreement: in order to achieve ideological-political and organisational unity in a single communist party, we are launching a common struggle for a unified party programme and constitution, as well as increasing co-ordination of united practical struggles in other spheres."

The Communist Party of Afghanistan, a participating party in RIM, has called for linking up with a powerful broad anti-war movement world-wide. They have already declared their commitment towards a struggle to the end against the invaders. A genuine revolutionary struggle under the leadership of the proletariat and its

Marxist-Leninist-Maoist vanguard party is the crucial way to build unity amidst the divided people to drive these bloodthirsty forces out of Afghanistan, uproot semi-feudalism and establish new democracy. A new-democratic state is the only state that can really liberate the country from the rule of feudalism and imperialism. In the final analysis, only this will allow the people to take their destiny in their own hands, including by imposing their dictatorship over the handful of reactionary feudals and bureaucrat bourgeoisie, who are so content to do imperialism's dirty work and who hold back the people and their struggle by enforcing the most backward, misogynist and oppressive relations. Only then will the shadow of the Mullah Omar dominators disappear from every doorway and the people's energy and potential be unleashed to transform

society in their own interests. That is the sole path to liberation for the people of Afghanistan.

ENDNOTES

1 One of the imperialists' new war toys for mass murder is a 2,000 pound laser-guided thermobaric bomb known as "Big Blue Two", the BLU-118, dropped for the first time in Afghanistan by US Navy planes. It is designed to kill people in caves and bunkers without collapsing the structures. The blast sucks up oxygen, creating a vacuum that collapses lungs, breaks eardrums, and pulls out eyes. A barbaric weapon matched only by the barbaric character of the imperialists themselves. ■

backed the various *mujahedeen* and reactionary forces within the Afghanistani resistance. This devastating and merciless war lasted for a decade and claimed over 1.5 million lives. It left millions of wounded and handicapped, and uprooted a huge section of the population, one-third of whom became refugees in neighbouring countries and parts of the world.

When the last pro-Soviet regime, led by Najibullah, was overthrown in 1992, various *mujahedeen* groups then fought amongst themselves for the upper hand in ruling Afghanistan. From Massoud (favourite of the European imperialists), Rabbani and others from the Tajik minority, to Hekmatyar, darling of the ISI and CIA who was stronger in Pashtun areas, to the Shiite Muslims of the Wahdat Party from the Hazara area and central region, to Ismail Khan in the west and General Dostum in the Uzbek area, each of these warlords commanded his own region and ruthlessly oppressed people of other nationalities. The next few years was a period of feudal tribal-based warlordism and terror, with uncontrolled banditry and looting of the people, as well as the widespread rape of women. It was also the ugly reactionary playground for marauding regional interests – the major imperialist powers and reactionary neighbours, such as Pakistan, India and Iran – each deployed funding and arms to try to

make use of the local warlords for their own interests. Commanders continually changed sides, "betraying" their clan for a higher bid elsewhere, fueling the escalation of local conflicts.

More than 10,000 civilians were killed in the war between Hekmatyar, leading the main Pashtun force, Rabbani and Massoud. Kabul was destroyed by the attacks of the forces of Hekmatyar and Dostum.

SHARPENING CONTENTION

Although the Soviets' dream for a passage to South Asia and the seas failed and they were forced to withdraw as their own empire collapsed, Afghanistan nevertheless continued to be of strategic importance, due in large part to the discovery of new oil and natural gas fields in Central Asia and the Caspian Sea. Amidst sharpening inter-imperialist rivalry, oil was more than ever not just an object of plunder, but a strategic resource, control over which began to shape the conflict in the whole region. For the imperialists, denying their rivals access to energy supplies became as important as ensuring this access and control for themselves.

As the Soviets retreated in the early 1990s, the US imperialists thus embarked upon a policy to replace Soviet influence over the Central Asian countries with their own, to connect them

into the world market and to break up the Russian monopoly over the pipelines to that market. They also set out to build an alternative to the Persian Gulf region as a key energy supply in order to reinforce the US's dominant global position. One of the key aspects of this was, of course, preventing Russia from re-emerging as a major rival in the region. The pipeline the US needed had to cross through Afghanistan to Pakistan to the open seas in order to freely access the Western market.

Politically and financially weak after the collapse of its bloc, Russia attempted to protect its sphere of influence territorially in Central Asia and control the export of the oil and natural gas of the region by passing pipelines through its own country.

Iran, Turkey and Pakistan also became involved in the contention over the pipeline project in order to advance their own interests. At the same time, European imperialist powers were contending for influence in the area and often clashed with the US's scheme for domination, whilst over the past decade oil companies from all over rushed to the battlefield to enter into the fray of constructing the pipeline.

The great instability of Afghanistan warlordism became totally unsuitable for the US imperialists' new strategy in the region, and despite these fiefdoms' long support by the CIA and ISI, it fell to Pakistan, the US's most

CPA Chairman on the Responsibilities of the Maoists

What follows is an excerpt from an interview with a spokesperson of the Communist Party of Afghanistan which appeared in *Haghighat* (Truth, organ of the Communist Party of Iran (Marxist-Leninist-Maoist)) March 2002. The interview was given shortly after the US invasion of Afghanistan. -AWTW

Haghighat: Our last question for you is: in the present situation, what are the tasks and responsibilities of the Maoists in Afghanistan and all over the world?

Answer: The situation is extremely tense. If the masses in Afghanistan think that they should either surrender to imperialist invasion or support the "Taliban" or "al-Qaeda" and their supporters, the misery of the people of Afghanistan will continue. The task of the Maoists is to show the true path for the emancipation of the masses of Afghanistan, and to mobilise them to achieve it.

Our Party has declared that it is fiercely determined to resist with maximum effort the imperialist invasion, to mobilise and establish the people's resistance and to fight under an independent revolutionary banner. We must carry forward the war of resist-

ance against US imperialism and their allies as a stage of people's war and new-democratic revolution in Afghanistan. Although at this stage the resistance against the imperialist invasion is our principal task, we must also consider the reactionary "pan-Islamism" and "theocracy" that is currently ruling Afghanistan, consisting of either the Taliban or Jihadi, as one of the main targets of the revolutionary struggle, and to carry out this struggle in different forms and ways. In carrying this out, it is essential that the positive and negative experiences of the war of resistance against Soviet social-imperialism should be vigorously evaluated.

The immediate task of the Maoists in Afghanistan is to overcome our weaknesses, urgently and principally, in order to be able to be practically present in the battlefields of Afghanistan. Fulfilling this task is our principal responsibility. The task of Afghanistani Maoists abroad is to join this struggle in Afghanistan; if this is not possible for them then they must support and strengthen the struggle in the many ways that they can.

It is also our task to struggle to establish a broader national-democratic anti-imperialist movement, which not only consists of Maoists but also consists of individuals and national,

democratic and revolutionary Afghanistani groups, both in and out of the country. To carry out this task on the basis of our principles, and to do it correctly, is related to our advances and struggles in carrying out our central tasks. This must be in the service of, and subordinate to, the necessities of carrying out our central tasks. It is the duty of the Maoists of Afghanistan to be closely linked with the anti-war movements within the imperialist countries and, together with the Maoists of other countries, to struggle to lead these movements on a revolutionary path.

It is the task of the Maoists around the world to strengthen in every way the struggles of the Maoists in Afghanistan to establish the people's resistance against the invasion of US imperialism and its allies, to propagate the positions and activities of the Maoists in Afghanistan, to heighten the anti-imperialist struggles, to actively participate in the anti-war movements and to closely and directly co-operate with the Maoists in Afghanistan and their struggles. The struggle and resistance against the invasion campaign of the US imperialists and their allies must be struggle and resistance on a world scale. ■

Continued from p. 17

servile regional lackey, to organise the displacement of the warlords and put political power in the hands of a central, more unified regime.

ENTER THE TALIBAN

The Taliban represented primarily the Pashtun feudal classes and tribes. Most of them were born in Pakistan and, according to Ahmed Rashid, author of *Taliban: Islam, Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia*, were educated in religious schools in Pakistan under the supervision of a fundamentalist named Molana Fazlul Rahman. Rahman in turn had ties to the Bhutto government in Pakistan and was the key figure in linking up the Pakistani army and the ISI with the Taliban leadership. The Taliban had little experience fighting the Soviets and only a few of

their leaders had collaborated with the *mujahedeen*, mainly with one faction of the Islamic Party. Without the intelligence and military aid of the US and Pakistan, including the latter's direct combat involvement, along with Saudi financial support, the Taliban would never have been able to defeat the warlords who had 10 years hard experience of fighting the Russian army and of civil war behind them. In November 1994, the Taliban gained control of Kandahar, and using Pakistani and Saudi help, attacked Kabul with missiles, killing and injuring thousands. On 26 September 1996, the Taliban seized Kabul, and set up a central power structure.

The Taliban's extreme fundamentalism prevented the US from openly recognising its authority. Yet they maintained warm relations through Islamabad and began to prepare US oil

companies to launch the pipeline project. When the harsh Islamic laws were put into force, when thousands of girls and women were shut out of the schools, sacked from their jobs and locked up in their homes unless accompanied by a close male relative, when massacres of non-Pashtun minorities took place, and hands and heads were being cut off in the name of Islamic justice, there was no US demagoguery about democracy and freedom.

The US state welcomed the new relative stability once the Taliban succeeded in controlling two-thirds of the country, even if at times, pressured by public opinion, it tried to publicly distance itself from the Taliban. As late as May 2001 with Bush already in office, the US administration approved over \$40 million in financial aid to the Taliban. ■

International Women's Day - 2002

Tear Off Every Veil of Oppression!



November 2001. The authorities of the new Afghanistan government denied these women the right to demonstrate in Kabul.

By the Committee of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement

"Let us once again on this day turn our fury into a fighting force and continue our struggle with perseverance and firmness against the oppression of women and all other oppression..." – at an earlier International Women's Day programme of Afghanistani women in Pakistan

The emancipation of the international proletariat is inseparable from the liberation of women, just as the oppression of women cannot be ended without remaking society on a new and different basis – without exploitation or social classes. As has been starkly shown once again by the US war in Afghanistan, which the US threatens to expand by invading other parts of the world, the links in the chains of women to their oppressors are links in the chains between the oppressed world-wide and the imperialist system.

"Today our work is to struggle against this imperialist invasion and raise the consciousness of women and mobilise them for this struggle. Despite the great pressure of the present situation, the ground is more favourable for our activities."
– Fatemeh, midwife.

The italicised statements of Afghanistani women here and on the next two pages are taken from an interview conducted by the Eighth of March Organisation (Iranian and Afghanistani) in the autumn 2001 issue of *March Eighth*. –AWTW

After the recent exposure of the Taliban's brutal treatment of women under its fundamentalist religious rule, the Western bourgeois media suddenly spread the myth that one of the US rulers' goals was to "liberate" the women of Afghanistan. The captains of the empire itself, Bush and his junior partner Blair, had their wives give speeches about the importance of "ending tyranny" and even "stopping women's oppression" there. This supposed discovery of the oppression of women in Afghanistan turns hypocrisy into crime, for this is coming from the mouths of those who created and brought the reactionary Taliban forces to power through the CIA and the US puppets in Pakistan. These imperialists never raised a single objection to the Taliban stripping women of public posts and placing them under "house arrest" or beating or executing them for defiling "vice and virtue" laws. They never withdrew a single bloody dollar of the millions they used to prop up the Taliban government and other "traditional" reactionary warlords and woman-hating Mujahedeen forces over the past 15 years – whether such money was delivered by Osama

bin Laden, himself at one time on the CIA payroll, or other Saudi collaborators.

It was in truth the US-backed Mujahedeen who opposed women's education and public activity and who made the *burka*, the suffocating head-to-foot veil, obligatory in 1992 when they took over the government. The new US stooge Karzai and the whole circus line-up of reactionary feudal rulers the imperialists put in place in Bonn are more similar to the Taliban than they are different. When reporters ask about their policy towards women, today Karzai says "we are Muslims" and thus will apply Muslim principles and practices. Even if some of the most outrageous anti-women rules are modified, such changes will be minor and cosmetic, and will tend to benefit a relatively small number of professional women in the largest cities. They have no plan to fundamentally change the situation of the overwhelming majority of poor and rural women. The underlying social relations between women and men, between oppressed sex and oppressor, are clear to anyone who looks. The subjugation and oppression of women in Afghanistan is deeply woven into the backward semi-feudal fabric of the society itself. While American bombs, backed by British special forces, have killed thousands of the women they profess to "liberate", they could not eliminate semi-feudalism even if they had the slightest intent or interest in doing so – which they do not. This unbearable tissue of relations stifling women can only be destroyed and new liberating relations created by the masses of women and all the new-democratic forces in Afghanistan themselves overthrowing the semi-feudal system altogether and kicking out the imperialists, who will sustain it as long as it furthers their global aims.

It is a dangerous lie that imperialism, despite its repugnant ways – like this brutal war of terror against those seen as opposing the US empire – can at least bring some "progress" to oppressed women. Such illusions only tighten the chains on women by obscuring reality and strengthening the hand of Bush and company. In truth, clear evidence of just how concerned the US (and other) imperialists are with improving the lives of women around the world can be seen in their long and bloody trail of tyranny, in the way they overthrow regimes not to their liking or that interfere with their plans, in their murderous exploitation of extremely low-paid women workers in the pursuit of super-profits in the Third World, as well as in their military's practice of "rest and recuperation" wherever their troops are stationed – meaning the massive sexual assault of women from places like Korea, Panama, Thailand or even Japan's Okinawa. Ask Filipino women whether they welcome the return of US troops!

Even if the Western imperialists send more blood-soaked dollars to repair the glass their bombs have shattered in the public schools of Afghanistan that some girls (in a few cities) may be able to attend, the imperialists are no more interested in equality for women today than they were yesterday, when they belittled the deaths of hundreds of Afghanistan's women and children and the devastation of civilian villages as so-called "collateral damage". The US is intent on bringing this and other unstable regions of the world under its control, and as crass and naked as their warmongering has become, they



Woman of Tartar nationality.

"We must struggle against family pressure but social chains prevent this. It is the society that has to change. I am a 15 year-old girl. I want nothing short of total liberation for the women of Afghanistan and all the women of the world. And I am struggling to get it."

– Sadaf, born in exile

"We don't want to live under a veil. This is called prison. A Cage. Or worse. In Afghanistan women don't even have the right to visit a doctor. And everybody has a Mullah Omar at home. Every man has become a Mullah Omar. And every woman has to struggle against this... If we struggle and unite, our strength will be greater to fight against this government. We don't want the future generation to be so backward. That is why I think there is no way but to struggle against this system."

—Kolsum, 19, painter and primary school teacher, five years a refugee.

will continue to stoke the illusions of anyone who will listen – to pretend that they can bring democratic rights and genuine progress to the same oppressed masses who every day are subjected to brutality and savage repression by the very workings of the imperialist system.

For those who genuinely want to support the struggle of the Afghani women to shed their veils – along with many other shackles and reactionary traditions – *for good*, their first contribution should be to actively oppose and expose the hypocrisy of the imperialists and their war of aggression against the world's people, and to refuse to allow their righteous anger to be used by the likes of Bush and Blair to cover up their bloody crimes in the name of women's "liberation".

Note the similarity between the Christian fascist fanatics advising Bush and the feudal Islamic fundamentalists – both of whom, in or out of government, treat women like property and sexual objects, using their religion as an excuse for the most degrading forms of social and patriarchal subordination.

The Maoists say, "Break the chains, unleash women as a mighty force for revolution!" This means breaking *all* the chains holding back women from liberating society. It means the chains of the world's wealthiest imperialist countries directly strangling the life of the poor countries in a thousand ways, as well as the visible and less visible chains reinforcing men's domination of women in particular, whether in modern Western metropolises or the most backward of the world's villages, whether through widespread but intolerable social practices and the control of women's labour, or within the male supremacist strongholds of family and marriage.

The People's War in Nepal is proving what has already been shown in Peru and other revolutionary movements – the tremendous outpouring of the revolutionary potential of women. Women are discovering what it is like to be equal fighters in the struggle for liberation. No longer humiliated for being uneducated and poor, they are welcomed and trained, including with weapons, and are participating in transforming their poor villages into base areas of people's power. Led by the proletarian party, they are fighting for a new kind of society; they will never be satisfied to return to the semi-feudal degradation and misery the system has reserved for the millions of people like them throughout Nepal. They are changing and so are their soldier-brothers in the course of this historic people's war. Together they are aiming for political power so as to uproot all of the oppressive relations of the old society from the top of the Himalayas to the lowest plains, as part of the international struggle to emancipate the people of the world.

Women's oppression afflicts women of all social classes, and rebel sisters all over the earth are building movements to fight against every kind of stultifying veil. The workings of the system are further impoverishing the feminine population. At the same time, growing numbers of women are filling the ranks of the international proletariat, better enabling our class to wage fierce battle, together with others, against all aspects of women's oppression and male chauvinism and to carry out its revolutionary task of remaking the world.

Tear Off Every Veil of Oppression!

8 March 2002

Afghanistan

The New Interim Government's Political and Military Restructuring

This is an excerpt from an article prepared for *Shola*, a publication of the Communist Party of Afghanistan. A rough English translation of the entire article will be made available on the AWTW web site: www.awtw.org

The puppet government, not only in terms of its conception, formation and take-over of power, but also in terms of the continuation of its work, is heavily dependent on the military support of the imperialist powers. The two main tasks assigned to the "interim government" – as well as to the transitional government – are "establishing law and order" and "political and economic restructuring", which are related and mutually interconnected. This is ridiculous! This government does not have its own security force or armed military force....

The reality is that, at present, the main forces providing security for the puppet government and the main military forces in Afghanistan are the imperialist war forces, and, in comparison, the role of the United Nations forces is secondary and subordinate and fundamentally reliant on and conditioned by the former. Moreover, the UN forces are under the command of the US-led military forces in Afghanistan and, as such, are really part of that. In addition, as far as the question of "securing law and order" for "restructuring" is concerned, the military forces of Russia cannot be ignored either.

Thus the tasks of the armed forces and police in Afghanistan are mainly to be carried out by the imperialist

forces. They will also restructure the reactionary army and police so that the puppet government can carry out its military and security tasks as a semi-colonial government. As the armed forces (police and army) in any state play the central role and this puppet government lacks the capacity to play this role, it cannot even be considered a semi-colonial government, but only a puppet, lackey government....

The US-led military forces continue to consolidate and expand their bases in and around Afghanistan. These forces have now established their bases in most cities and in important strategic points in the country and are expanding and strengthening them. In addition, they send their soldiers and reconnaissance groups and air patrols anywhere at anytime. Demands to stop the bombardments and military operations that take such a heavy toll on the population and even on those related to the interim government have now become relatively wide-spread....

In addition to military and police restructuring, the interim government is concerned about administrative restructuring... which in Kabul is also being carried out directly under the supervision of the international security forces. Two months after taking power, the interim government has not even been able to solve the problem of appointing *walies* (administrative chiefs) in different *welayats* (administrative districts) of the country. The reason is obvious. The interim government does not have effective power to appoint *walies*. In *welayats* like Paktiya,

armed struggle broke out against the *walie* appointed by the interim government. He was kicked out of the *welayat* and the central government was forced to come to an agreement with local officials on a third person. In places like Paktia, Khost, Logar, Loghman, etc., the *walies* appointed by the interim government also faced widespread disapproval by local officials.-

THE LOYA JIRGA

Another important aspect of the central political restructuring is the plan to hold an emergency *loya jirga*, which is to form the transitional government when the interim government's term ends. The Bonn Agreement says that the UN will help in the formation and activity of the commission to form the emergency *loya jirga*. But in practice the representative of the UN has personally appointed all 22 members of this commission, including its chair. Considering the present situation, the "election" or appointment of the members of the emergency *loya jirga* is sure to be marked by so much chaos, disputes and in-fighting that here too the final decision in most cases will be that of the UN representative. In any event, the main criteria for the election or appointment of the members of the emergency *loya jirga* is that they agree with the imperialist-sponsored protectorate and guardianship of the fate of this country and that they do not disagree with the direct rule of imperialist forces, including in the form



Fear and uncertainty at a Kabul market.

of the so-called UN forces. Naturally these people will be the representatives of reactionary authorities and lackeys of imperialism in local and regional government in different parts of the country, so that their gathering will reflect in full the true historical and social meaning of the *loya jirga* in the present situation.

The first *loya jirga* in the history of Afghanistan was formed in 1707 by Mirvis Khan Houtak in order to confront the domination of the Safavi rule of Iran. Ahmed Shah Ebdali called the second in 1747, considered to be the beginning of the Darani monarchy in Afghanistan. Other *loya jirgas* were formed up until the rule of Amanullah Khan, all of which, like the first one, had a completely feudal-tribal and court composition, including the clergy. During Amanullah Khan's rule, for the first time some intellectuals entered the *loya jirga* but their views and suggestions were not taken into consideration, as Shah Amanullah generally deferred to the opinion of feudal lords and dark-minded clerics.

The last *loya jirga* was during the Najibullah government, which passed the constitution he proposed and elected him President of Afghanistan.

A *loya jirga*, in fact, is a feudal-

tribal gathering, basically of the Pashtun tribal system, and its participants are the tribal chiefs. In the present situation, where the traditional tribal authorities have suffered extensive blows throughout the country and their place has been taken by reactionary warlords dependent on imperialism, the *loya jirga* has taken another meaning and form. Never in the history of Afghanistan has a *loya jirga* been created in order to approve the occupation of the country by foreign powers. Even the one held under Najibullah was formed after the withdrawal of the Soviet forces. The emergency *loya jirga* of Zaher Khan put forward by the Bonn meeting will be the only one in the history of Afghanistan that results in approving the occupation of the country by imperialist forces. The main *loya jirga* that will follow will be another gathering of national traitors and lackeys of the imperialist occupiers and will approve them, just as has the Bonn meeting and the emergency *loya jirga*.

Even using bourgeois criteria the *loya jirga* cannot be considered a democratic institution. The criteria for participation is appointment by powerful reactionaries from family and tribe to national level, and the masses of people cannot participate in it, even

with the bourgeois refinement of one person one vote. It is such an old and decayed body that the reactionary clergyman, Sheikh Asef Khandehari, once said that, "it is shameful to adhere to the *loya jirga* in the twenty-first century".

Acceptance of the *loya jirga* as a mechanism to decide the transitional government, pass the constitution and decide the political system for the future of Afghanistan shows what position is being cooked up by the imperialists and their lackeys and mercenaries for the country and its people.

It is being widely said that women will participate in the emergency *loya jirga*. The fact is that it is fundamentally a male gathering, although certain women participated in the one called by Najibullah and in the following ones that approved Najibullah's "national conciliation line". In the emergency *loya jirga* also, the women who participate will be those that consider the invading imperialists to be the saviours of Afghanistan's women. It is clear that these women will neither represent the labouring and oppressed women nor defend their demands and interests. But they will help apply make-up to the ugly, bloody faces of the imperialist occupiers.



8 November 2001 in Bogotá, Colombia. "Yankees out of Afghanistan, Colombia and the whole world."

Worldwide the People Resist...

We thank all those who sent in reports to AWTW. While this short section is far from complete, it is important to keep the reports and photos coming about all the various types of resistance to imperialism.

New York, 7 October 2001.



At the first signs of a murderous revenge by the US imperialists for the 11 September events the resistance of the people around the world began to take shape. Even before the bombs started to fall students, artists, intellectuals and other progressive and revolutionary groups and individuals organised protests and found ways to oppose the belligerent arrogance of the US and European bourgeoisies and their various lackeys, many of whom tried from the very beginning to outlaw or suppress opposition to this new crime in the making.

As usual, the bourgeois media actively played its role in widely blocking out the outrage and organised protest against the war and in solidarity with the peoples of Afghanistan.

Santiago, Chile, "No to the US War".





At the US embassy in Mexico City, 28 September 2001.

People in New York City were among the first to raise their voice against this war of retribution. On 21 September, 5,000 marched in Manhattan against the US going to war. On 22 September, 100 artists wearing black with white masks filed into Union Square, staging an hour-long silent performance with placards stating, "Our grief is not a cry for war". Other early demonstrations took place in Portland, Oregon, Chicago, Seattle, Washington, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Honolulu, as well as smaller towns around the US. On 20 September, students organised a national day of action on 140 campuses across the country to protest the US's military response and to oppose the backlash

against people of Arab and Muslim backgrounds.

Across the world protests erupted in anticipation of the US war during the week of 21-29 September in places such as Baghdad, Manila, Istanbul, Tokyo, Calcutta, Jakarta, Johannesburg and several cities in the UK and Canada. In Athens, 8,000 marched to demand the government refuse any support to the US; whilst in Naples, 20,000 marched against the build-up of NATO forces in Italy.

Going against the ugly tide of forced patriotism in the USA, at least 10,000 people descended in the streets of Washington DC to protest US war preparations on 29 September. A large banner read, "Destroy imperialism not Afghanistan".

After the US and British imperialists launched their vicious attack on Afghanistan, resistance against them within the US and other parts of the world escalated. In New York, 10,000 joined a march on 7 October organised by the coalition "Not in our name". Community and religious leaders of different faiths and family members of people killed in the World Trade Center spoke, along with Arab-Americans and long-time anti-war activists and well-known intellectuals.

After the first bombs fell, protests were quickly organised in other US cities and towns and across Europe and Asia during the weekend of 7 October. In Toronto, a march against the war on Afghanistan took place each week.

Early activities opposing the war in the large cities of Europe - London, Rome, Berlin, Paris, Lisbon, Amsterdam and many others - brought out people from broadly different social strata and different political views. In Britain, the US's

Istanbul, Turkey, 29 September 2001.



closest ally, political meetings and pickets were held in various cities around the country, and towards the end of October 20,000 marched in London. One month later, this number swelled to 40,000 under the theme, "Not in our name".

Hundreds of students, mainly women, mostly from the University of London marched on November 4. A speaker from the Eighth of March Organisation (Iranian and Afghanistan) exposed the imperialists' war goals and their role in the oppression of women in Afghanistan at a conference following the march.

At the end of October, there were several demonstrations in Italy, including a massive one in Rome on 10 November against the World Trade Organisation and the war on Afghanistan. On 18 November, one thousand people protested the departure of Italian warships for Afghanistan at the Taranto naval base.

Germany saw an enormous outpouring from a wide range of political forces and peace activists on 13 October, with over 40,000 people in Berlin and 5,000 marching in Stuttgart. The lead banner read: "USA, [dripping with blood] out of Afghanistan!"

On 15 November, the day before the parliament decided to send 3,900 German soldiers to Afghanistan, anti-racist and anti-war groups occupied the office of the Green Party in Göttingen. On 10 November 5,000 people gathered in Berlin against the war in Afghanistan and the WTO and denounced new "anti-terrorist" bills. Demonstrations in Frankfurt burned the German flag and ended in clashes with security forces. On 8 December, a large demonstration took place in Cologne.

Demonstrations against the war were held on 8, 9 and 27 October in Copenhagen, Denmark, followed by a march of several

immigrant workers in Rome, Italy. 10 November 2001.



hundred through the city on 2 December. Youth blocked a bridge to stop people and inform them about the effects of the war on the people of Afghanistan. Others took action against a Danish arms factory. A demonstration of 5,000 people took place in Bern, Switzerland.

Many of these protests throughout the world linked up directly with anti-globalisation struggles. In early November 2001, hiding from the world's protestors they could no longer control, the World Trade Organisation met in Doha, Qatar (which wasn't issuing tourist visas), provoking demonstrations in more than 40 countries around the world against globalisation and the US imperialists' war, including New Delhi 50,000, South Korea 20,000, Rome 150,000, Berlin 5,000, Geneva 10,000, Barcelona 1,000, as well as other actions in England, France, Philippines, Thailand, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Africa, Iran, Bolivia, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Turkey and Bangladesh.

In Canada on 16-18 November, many thousands gathered for a successful determined protest in Ottawa against the International

London, mid-October.





10 November. Paris. OMC stands for WTO in French.

Monetary Fund and World Bank. Another action in solidarity with Ottawa brought 10,000 people to Fort Benning, Georgia to demonstrate against the US School of the Americas (popularly known as the "School of the Assassins", or "training school for terrorists"), where the military trains soldiers and police from Latin America.

On 14 December a colourful crowd of 25,000 anti-capitalist globalisation demonstrators gathered to march against the European Union summit in Brussels. One of the most highly spirited contingents was a group of refugees from Nepal who carried a bright red banner that read "For a world without imperialism!", played drums and danced and chanted slogans in English and Nepalese along the march route while others handed out statements by RIM and the Communist Party of Afghanistan.

Throughout Asia, Latin America and the Middle East protests were organised and the masses turned out in large numbers, burning US flags and other symbols and effigies of imperialist domination. In Patna, the capital of Bihar, India a demonstration of thousands of peasants, labourers, students and youth carrying red banners

angrily chanted, "US decoits [bandits], hands off Afghanistan! America is genocidal". The action united the Maoist forces in an area where there had previously been clashes amongst them.

On 1 October, 250 people marched in the rainy town of Moga, in the Punjab to protest against the impending attack on Afghanistan by the US and Britain. After the attack was launched one week later, 1,000 people gathered to protest in Jalandhar. Other rallies and demonstrations were organised by this coalition on 8 November in Moga District, on 9 November in Guruhar Sahai and on 11 November Bhatinda, as well as in other district headquarters.

In late November and early December in three Punjabi towns revolutionaries organised a series of seminars against the war of aggression in Afghanistan, as well as the reactionary Indian BJP government's complicity, including its using the "war on terrorism" to go after revolutionary movements in India.

In Hyderabad, India an October anti-war demonstration ended in street fighting with Indian police.

In South Korea, the memorial

8 October 2001. Berlin. "Civilisation is Genocide, Stop the War".





Patna, Bihar, India.

demonstration of Jung Ta Ill (the worker who in 1970, in protest against the exploitation of the workers, burned himself) was combined with protest against the war. In Tokyo, Japan and Melbourne, Australia some 1,500 people took part in initial demonstrations against the war.

When US troops were deployed in the Philippines in mid-January 2002 to train Filipino troops, massive protests in Manila greeted them demanding, "US troops out now!" Signs read, "Arroyo, coddler of terrorists, US imperialists N° 1 terrorists!"

A statement by the Communist Party of Afghanistan, along with many other RIM parties' statements, were translated into many languages and distributed in many countries.

Amongst the many political meetings organised to expose and debate the war were those held in Canada and Europe by supporters of the Communist Party of Afghanistan and the Communist Party of Iran (Marxist-Leninist-Maoist). Programmes in the Netherlands, Germany, England and Canada formed part of a tour organised by the Eighth of March Organisation (Iranian and

Punjab.



Afghanistani). Immigrant associations held a forum in The Hague where a Communist Party of Afghanistan supporter exposed US crimes.

In January 2002, three Americans who lost family members in the "twin tower" attack made a courageous visit of "reconciliation" with families of victims of US bombardments in Kabul, to the chagrin and trepidation of the US State Department.

In New York City from 31 January to 5 February, 25,000 people took part in 6 days of anti-globalisation and anti-war protests against the World Economic Forum. Far from a separate cause, the war has fuelled hatred and fury against the US ruling class, linking this crime against the people to others. As one protestor said, "Every day 19,000 people die from malnutrition, while in the past five years the top 200 corporations have doubled their



Bangkok, Thailand, 9 November

profits...We're out here in the streets and we're fighting for people to unionise in Colombia and Mexico, we're fighting for people who have had their villages bombed in Afghanistan and who have had their country invaded in the Philippines..."

On 16 February 2002 a demonstration was held in Vienna to oppose sending Austrian troops to Afghanistan.

In Barcelona, Spain in March 2002, some 300,000 people marched against the European Economic Summit. Prisoners inside a large cage included Afghan women, Guantanamo prisoners and Palestinians. Representatives of "capital" guarded the cage. Immigration police stopped at least 1,000

people at the French-Spain border, where an impromptu demonstration was held. ■



Bandung, Indonesia. Burning the US dollar and its flag. 26 September

Fishermen near the US embassy in Manila, Philippines. 7 February 2002.



Excerpts of statements by participants and supporters of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement on the events of 11 September and the so-called war on terrorism:

The Horrors That Come from This Horrible System

By the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA

11 September 2001. USA. Shock. Mountains of steel and concrete falling, crushing. Loss. Lives shattered in a moment. Searching for loved ones buried under mountains of debris....

In an instant New York City reminds us of Baghdad, Belgrade, Sudan, the West Bank, Vietnam, Panama, Indonesia, Hiroshima, Vieques....

And who is responsible? Who has put the masses in the U.S. in harm's way?

The US power structure points the finger to the Middle East. But the answer lies on US soil. These imperialists – who have perpetrated countless crimes and rained havoc on the people of the world through their relentless global exploitation and their military actions – have created a situation where millions of people all around the world hate the government of the United States....

These hegemonic dominators do not have the right to continue on their warpath. They are the source of so much pain and suffering around the world....

They talk of ending terror, through war, and ready their armed forces to bring about great horrors. They want us to unite with them and wave their flag. No....

And, as we build our resistance, we need to be crystal clear on the nature of these oppressors who are hurtling towards a new war: these arrogant lying creatures do not rule in the interests of the people of this country or the world. As long as they continue in power the horrors that come from their system will continue to rain from the sky.

14 September 2001

Against the Race War Hysteria of the Big Powers! Stop this War of Conquest! No to a Police State!

By the Revolutionary Communists (Germany)

The attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon on 11 September 2001 threw up a huge cloud of dust – dust that we need to wipe from our own eyes in order to understand what really happened here, and to understand and prevent what the powers here in Germany and in the US are now planning....

The US rulers immediately threw their war machine into motion. Now it is being said, "whoever is not with America, is against us". As for the imperialist NATO allies, the US rulers are clear that their allies have to bow down in order to keep getting a piece of the pie. Whoever wants to join in the feasting must first join in the killing....

The rulers here in Germany are also seizing the moment to expand their new "Fourth Reich". They want to strengthen their pre-eminent position within Europe. It is now supposed to be acceptable, once again, that German soldiers can be deployed anywhere in the world. One politician after another has been standing up and swearing their "unconditional solidarity with America" – which, in plain language, means that German imperialism wants to get in the action, to serve their own interests. What is needed is not "unconditional solidarity" with the US imperialists, but the unity of people throughout this world against the imperialists' criminal system....

Forward in Organising and Unleashing People's Resistance to Imperialist Aggression!

By the Communist Party of Afghanistan

...It is the absolute right and responsibility of the people of Afghanistan to resist the invasion and occupation of the US imperialists and their allies, just as it was to resist the invasion and occupation of the Soviet social-imperialists. But the nature of this right and responsibility puts them into contradiction with the imperialist lackeys, whether obedient or disobedient, including the [Taliban's] "Islamic Emirate". The experience of the war of resistance against Soviet social-imperialism must be studied more deeply and applied in the present situation.

The Communist Party of Afghanistan strongly condemns US imperialism's threats of aggression and strongly resolves to stand against it if such an imperialist invasion and occupation takes place, and will strive to organise and unleash the people's resistance under the independent revolutionary banner as part of the world revolution. Only if this just cause becomes a material force and is increasingly strengthened and expanded can we advance the anti-US imperialist war of resistance as a stage of people's war and the new-democratic revolution in Afghanistan. A crucial condition of this cause is that "pan-Islamism" and the present ruling reactionary "theocracy", whether of the Taliban or non-Taliban variety, continue to be one of the main targets of the revolutionary struggles, and that the struggle against it be carried out in different forms. Otherwise, once again the precious blood of the masses will be wasted and the chains of oppression and slavery will remain intact....

17 September 2001

The Start of the Second Round of Bloodshed and Destruction in Afghanistan by the US

By the Communist Party of Iran (Marxist-Leninist-Maoist)

...In this war the imperialists' Middle Eastern servants, including the Islamic Republic of Iran, are wholeheartedly in the service of the US. The reactionary Khatami [the Iranian President] has informed Western diplomats that the Islamic Republic is in complete agreement with the US's military campaign and will co-operate with them in every way....

The working class and the people of Iran must never forget the crimes of both US imperialism and the Islamic Republic of Iran against the people of Afghanistan, and now, together with the masses of the rest of the world, must stand against this war waged against the Afghanistani people and fight against the interventions and crimes of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Afghanistan. The Islamic Republic of Iran is extremely scared of any development amongst the Iranian people of feelings and actions in solidarity with the immigrants and refugees from Afghanistan. Developing such a spirit and internationalist relations are important tasks for the revolutionary and communist forces in Iran....

The imperialist states and the reactionary regimes in the Middle East are sowing the wind, but they will reap the whirlwind. This is the verdict of history. 8 October 2001

Against the Reactionary Barbaric War and the Imperialist Mask of "Civilisation", the Only Way is Proletarian Revolution

By the Communist Party of Turkey (Marxist-Leninist Maoist) (TKP(ML))

...The great terrorist, US imperialism, which is the principal enemy of the oppressed people of the world, along with the other imperialists and their puppets, is using bin Laden as an excuse for imperialist aggression....

The US aim is not bin Laden but to re-shape the world in its own interests, against the various poles that are arising, such as Russia, China and Japan. Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Caucasus have yet to be reshaped in the new world order of the US. Afghanistan has an important strategic geo-political position for the implementation of US goals....

In the name of the "war against terrorism", terrorists like the US are carrying out war mainly against the world proletariat, oppressed nations and people; in the name of "democracy and human rights" they want to turn the oppressed into slaves without opposition; and in the name of "public order and security" they want to take back the rights that were gained by the oppressed through history. While they are dropping bombs on Afghanistan, the imperialist reactionary savages, from their imperialist capitalist "civilisation centres", are launching entirely strategic offences against the oppressed countries that depend on them. The implementation of disinformation and manipulation has become the norm for them....

Yes, it is not only the oppressed in the areas of Kabul, Kandahar, Jelalabad and Mazar-e-sharif and Herat, but the proletariat and oppressed people in every corner of the world that are being attacked....

Condemn, Oppose and Resist US War Efforts!

By the Co-ordination Committee of Maoist Parties and Organisations of South Asia (CCOMPOSA)

Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)
Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) (People's War)
Maoist Communist Centre (MCC)
Revolutionary Communist Centre of India (MLM)
Revolutionary Communist Centre of India (Maoist)
Communist Party of India (ML) (Naxalbari)
Purba Bangla Sarbajit Party (CC)
Purba Bangla Sarbajit Party (Maoist Punargathan Kendra)
Bangladesh Samyabadi Party (ML)
Communist Party of Ceylon (Maoist)

...We emphasise the fact that it is ridiculous and unbecoming of the American butchers to shed tears for the dead ones. It is US imperialism that always trampled underfoot aspirations of democracy, equality and freedom for so many decades, and is now masquerading as saviour against terrorism....

In the course of this development, people world-wide are gradually registering their protests against this heinous act of US imperialism. Even a good number of US citizens are raising their voice against this declaration of war. It indicates that in future all peace-loving democratic people world-wide will put up a strong resistance against war.

A black pall is descending on this part of the world. Not only the people of America and the likely victims of the American beastly attacks, but the whole of the international community is drifting towards a bloodbath of unimaginable proportions.

We strongly condemn the warmonger US trying to drag the world towards a massive war. We appeal to all peace-loving democratic people to oppose US war efforts in every possible way. We condemn the servile role of the reactionary governments of this region, including India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Pakistan, who dance to the tune of US imperialism in the name of countering terrorism....

24 September 2001

Against Imperialist "Global War" – People's War Until Communism!

By the Maoist Communist Party – Italy (Pcm)

...We, as Marxist-Leninist-Maoist communists, as vanguard proletarians, share the feelings of the oppressed peoples. We shall never hesitate about which side to stand on, and we strongly proclaim: "Down with US imperialism!" "It reaps what it sows!"....

The Holy War of Mr Bush is global imperialist aggression that, while seemingly targeted on "Islamic terrorism" and "rogue states", is really against people's wars, anti-imperialist armed struggles, the uprising of the Arab-Palestine-Muslim people who still lack the red, proletarian leadership that would lead them to victory, and against any government not aligned with imperialist rule. They are launching global war to suffocate the aspirations of the oppressed peoples and countries....

Within the Western imperialist countries, the Holy War is bringing about a war state, a police state, modern institutional fascism and Nazism based on racial defence of the values and way of life built up on the hunger of most of humanity. They need a police state to make war against the anti-globalisation mass movements in which – from Seattle to Genoa – a new generation is entering the field of struggle and challenging the interests of the masters of the world, of the warlords, their values and way of life, the "civilisation" worshipped by Bush and Berlusconi. They need a war state to make war against the proletarians and oppressed masses in the metropolitan heartlands, the African-Americans, Hispanic, Turkish, Arab, Asian and African immigrants who, through riots and resistance – from the US to the United Kingdom, France, etc. – are resisting exploitation, discrimination, racism and slavery....

In response to the imperialist global war, we must advance the global people's war, applied in different and distinct ways according to the kind of country – imperialist or oppressed – until the victory of the proletarians and the people, and the achievement of a world without imperialism and war: Communism....

8 October 2001

The Homeland Front in the "War on Terrorism"

Almost all governments have unleashed new repression since 11 September, some with US encouragement, some following American orders and others because it suits their own interests. But while there is an overall trend, it is not necessarily the same everywhere. This is for two reasons.

First, this new global situation does not cancel the basic difference between the imperialist countries and the countries they oppress. As the *Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement* explains about the latter, "In these countries the exploitation of the proletariat is severe, the outrages of imperialist domination constant, and the ruling classes usually exercise their dictatorship nakedly and brutally and even when they utilise the bourgeois-democratic or parliamentary form their dictatorship is only very thinly veiled." It is significant that India, sometimes called the Third World's outstanding parliamentary democracy, has become an outstanding example of open political repression with the "Prevention of Terrorism Act". This March 2002 law makes permanent a series of measures already in force by presidential decree. It outlaws two Maoist organisations engaged in armed struggle, the Maoist Communist Centre and the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) (People's War), which until now were illegal only in the states where fighting has been focused. Among other provisions, the law allows police to detain suspected members or supporters of groups defined as "terrorist", or even people who unknowingly help them, for up to six months without trial. Evidence can come from unidentified witnesses or from "confessions" signed in police custody, even if not backed up in court. This simply

amounts to permission to torture. This is a very serious threat to legal political activity and publications in the big cities. But as a method of repression it is supplementary to the ongoing police murder of revolutionaries in staged "encounters" and the ordinary workings of a society where the broad masses of people, especially in most of the countryside, in practice have no rights at all.

Second, although vicious and often violent campaigns against foreigners are now a feature of most imperialist countries, from Scandinavia to Australia, there are immediate reasons that necessitate a qualitative increase in broader political repression in the countries most involved in the new wars. This means above all the US and its close ally Britain, although this trend is far from unique to these two states.

THE NEW POLITICAL TERRAIN IN THE US

Bush's talk about the "two fronts" in the "war against terrorism" is accurate: in order to carry out their war against the world's people, his government has launched an unprecedented offensive on what he likes to call "the home front".

More than a wave of repression, it involves what Revolutionary Communist Party USA Chairman Bob Avakian has called, "a highly repressive social and cultural agenda.... Sections of the ruling class, in particular those that are right at the key levers of power now (the crew that's grouped around Bush - whoever's actually running things), are now setting the terms within the ruling class as a whole. And... there is a feeling among this same crew that

what they want to have happen, and the kind of terms they want to set, within the US itself, has got to be radically different than what it has been since the end of the Cold War." (*Revolutionary Worker*, 17 March 2002)

Three of the main ingredients of this reactionary offensive are the mass detention of immigrants, the overturning of what were formerly considered democratic rights and a broad attempt to censor and stifle political, social and cultural dissent.

Some legal commentators note that the US has basically abolished habeas corpus (the Anglo-American legal concept that people can only be imprisoned if there is some basis in law to do so, and not just arbitrarily) wherever American force can reach. This is also true for foreigners in the United States itself.

Over 1,500 foreigners residing in the US were rounded up shortly after 11 September. They come from Pakistan, Egypt, Turkey, Yemen and a very broad range of countries on every continent. Many were beaten, abused and threatened with military tribunals. Some were held in isolation, subject to what an Amnesty International report called "cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment". The exact number of people detained, their names, their location, the charges against them (if any) - all this has been kept secret. On 15 February, the government said 327 people would be kept in jail for violations of their immigration status (often petty), and more than 100 for crimes allegedly uncovered whilst they were imprisoned. Many have been deported. In addition, the authorities drew up an initial list of 5,000 foreign-born people to be subjected to aggressive FBI interrogation and other forms of bully-

ing and intimidation, although none of them were considered to have violated any laws. The government has demanded the death penalty against the only person residing in the US accused of any connection to the 11 September events, Zacarias Moussaoui, a French citizen who was in jail when the events occurred.

As an article in the *Revolutionary Worker* (RW) pointed out, there is a difference between these and similar mass roundups of the twentieth century (the infamous Palmer raids in the early 1920s, when 4,000 immigrants suspected of being revolutionaries were jailed and many deported, and the

internment of 110,000 Japanese-Americans during the Second World War). These latest outrages have been accompanied by new laws that would make the constant threat of such treatment a permanent fact of life in America. "Anti-terrorist" legislation, passed with only one opposing vote in the US Congress, authorises the government to hold foreigners in prison without charges indefinitely.

It also overturns what the RW called "remaining vestiges of Fourth Amendment [Constitutional] protection against search and seizure" by vastly expanding the government's legal powers to intercept communications,

search homes openly or secretly, monitor bank accounts and other records and carry out other forms of surveillance. Prisoners are no longer to be allowed to communicate privately with their counsel. Organisations that are otherwise legal can be shut down if a member is convicted of "terrorism", even if the only evidence is a "confession". Previous restrictions against the use of the armed forces to perform police actions within the US itself have been overturned, and the President may now "deploy the military against organisations and individuals domestically", as the RW puts it.

Continued on next page

Guantanamo:

America's "Ground Zero" for Repression

When it comes to administering its empire, the basic rule the US wants everyone to understand is that there are no rules. The concentration camp in Guantanamo, Cuba, is a model – a model in miniature and an extreme one, but very real – of the US's self-proclaimed right to disregard international law, trample on the sovereignty of other states and exercise brutal dictatorship over those who get in its way.

Some 300 men of 26 nationalities are reportedly held at this American naval base on land seized from Cuba when the US occupied the island in the early twentieth century. Journalists are not allowed to see the prisoners. According to sparse press accounts, they are confined in rows of wire cages measuring 2.4 by 2.4 metres with corrugated metal roofs, exposed to the tropical sun during the day and damp breezes at night, with a bucket for a toilet. They are never out of sight of their captors. Exercise time is limited to a maximum of two 15-minute sessions a week. When taken out of their cells, they are chained hand and foot and their faces are hooded. US officials say that FBI and US military personnel are interrogating them. Two-thirds of the Guantanamo prisoners went on hunger strike against humiliating regulations on 27 February. They challenged rules against "talking loudly" by chanting and threw objects out of their cells. Many resumed eating after winning

some concessions, such as the right to wear glasses, and to cover their heads during prayer, whilst others were eventually drugged and force-fed.

Under the Geneva international conventions (which even Nazi Germany abided by when it came to American and British prisoners), prisoners of war may be detained for the duration of hostilities but not punished for having been soldiers. The US refuses to recognise these captives as prisoners of war. Instead, some or all will be sent before military tribunals, where American officers (answerable to their own military superiors) can decide who to execute. The US announced that if any happen to be acquitted they may be kept in Guantanamo indefinitely. "If we don't have any interest in a person, we'll let them go," a US Defence Department official bragged.

The US does not consider this a temporary situation. The camp is being expanded. As of early April, hundreds of prisoners at two US military camps in Afghanistan were waiting shipment to Cuba, and the FBI was grabbing other potential Guantanamo inmates in Pakistan and elsewhere.

Conditions for prisoners in Afghanistan being held by warlords under US authority are far worse. An account of a visit to Jowzjan jail (*New York Times*, 15 March 2002) describes a scene more like a death camp than an

internment centre. Most of the 3,000 men there are soldiers and civilians who surrendered to the US-led forces after the battle of Kunduz in late 2001, when they were told they would be turned over to the United Nations. American soldiers brought them to this prison camp, sorted out some for Guantanamo, and left the rest to die slowly. They are held 75 men to a cell in 40 cells, with no medical attention for their wounds and with the sole prospect of slow starvation. (The official explanation given to the reporter was plain enough: the new US-installed government has not allocated food rations for them.) American military officials say that about 8,000 prisoners are being held in camps in Afghanistan.

Further, carrying out torture and murder through third countries, a practise the US has increasingly resorted to in the last few years, has now become all but official US policy. Dozens of people have been kidnapped in various Asian countries and taken secretly to third countries, often Egypt and Jordan, where their American captors or their local apprentices can torture or murder them freely. "Since September 11, these sorts of movements have been occurring all the time", a US diplomat was quoted as saying. ■

This legislation alone does not convey a full sense of the climate in a country where a Bush spokesman direly warned, "People have to watch what they say and watch what they do." Demonstrations are met with official threats, massive police deployments and sometimes attack. The use of torture is discussed in scholarly terms in leading newspapers. The government and the media (which in most cases seems to be the same thing nowadays) have worked to whip up a lynch mob/pogromist atmosphere among certain sections of the middle classes against everything considered insufficiently patriotic, or even insufficiently consistent with "Christian" (or sometimes "Judeo-Christian") virtues. The wife of the US Vice-President, Lynne Cheney, sponsored a report entitled, "Defending Civilization: How Our Universities are Failing America and What Can be Done About It". It documented "professors across the country [who] sponsored teach-ins that typically ranged from moral equivocation to explicit condemnations of America" and gave the names of 40 professors to be punished. "Multiculturalism", which refers to university teaching and research from the point of view that white Christian men are not the centre of the universe, has come under attack politically and practically. This has been accompanied by a wave of racist, fascist radio chat-show diatribes against Arabs and/or Muslims.

THE UK IN THE REPRESSION VANGUARD

Although the Blair government has not and could not stir up the same degree of hysteria as in the US, in some ways it is ahead of the US in legislating political repression. Its harsh anti-immigrant policies against asylum seekers are hypocritical, since this is currently a main form of immigration into a labour-hungry UK. The "Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act" passed in December permits non-citizens to be detained indefinitely without charge or trial if the Home Secretary "believes and suspects" them to be a national security risk and/or a suspected "international terrorist". This suspicion may be based on secret evidence and then confirmed by a judicial body that can hold hearings in secret, excluding the detainees and

their counsel, and basing its decision on secret evidence. The British police already had wide powers to intercept communications in the course of investigating alleged crimes. With this new legislation, the authorities will keep records of all electronic communications, regardless of any reason to suspect anything, in addition to their other, more targeted monitoring activities.

This trend is far from new in the UK. The "Anti-Terrorism Bill" of 2000 already provided for people to be classified as "terrorists", based not on the seriousness of their alleged offence, but on their "political, religious or ideological cause". The authorities can interpret this as they like and could use it against almost any variety of political or social protest. The clause against "inciting overseas terrorism" is specifically aimed at any form of support for proscribed national liberation struggles and people's wars, even verbal support, or the wearing of a T-shirt. Much of this particular bill and the laws and practices that proceeded it were aimed at the struggle against British rule of Northern Ireland, where Britain has set world standards for viciousness and arbitrary cruelty in the name of the law, including imprisonment without trial.

ITALY AFTER GENOA... AND 11 SEPTEMBER

Italy has also done its best to become involved in the war against Afghanistan, particularly in terms of sending naval forces, as well as bombers and troops. But as described in the Maoist publication *Rossoperaio* (RO), October 2001, a particularity in Italy is the way in which the post-11 September situation has allowed "the government to face the consequences of Genoa [the mass anti-globalisation protests of July 2001]. The Genoa days represented the entry of a new generation onto the field, which has begun to redraw the map of social conflicts and put a new force at the centre of a scene characterised by an increasingly sharp class conflict (an end to *concertazione* [labour union-employer 'partnership'], the metal workers' contracts, etc., and a growing consciousness that it is right to rebel. The war climate facilitates the bourgeoisie's moves to criminalise this movement and drive it off the political stage. It also helps justify repression

against the movement's more advanced wing to be able to target the movement and the proletariat separately and facilitate the political and social reconstruction [the ruling class] has been striving for....

"The new anti-terrorism law calls for the persecution of foreign 'terrorists' even if they have done nothing (a way to persecute the representatives of all the movements for the liberation of oppressed countries). It also calls for the extension of the use of wire-tapping and searches, and arrests without any obvious crime."

In the November-December issue, RO continues: "In Italy, the Berlusconi government first issued a decree establishing the crime of 'international terrorism', punishable by 7-15 years in prison for 'promoting, constituting, organising, directing, leading, financing even indirectly, an association' whose object is to attack another state or international organisation.... In the course of an anti-terrorist investigation, the judicial police can imprison people for 48 hours as an emergency preventative measure.... This is a royal invitation to the forces of order, who before and after Genoa were carrying out generalised repression against social [protest] centres, immigrants, workers, revolutionary groups and anyone protesting against the way things are today, to clear them out through searches and arrests."

WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS

How far the imperialists and other reactionaries go in these attacks against the people cannot presently be predicted. It depends on many factors, including the unfolding of the war situation, the blows waged against them on the battlefield and people's resistance at home. But if the present situation is interpreted only in light of the immediate, "peacetime" past, we will fail to grasp its potential horrors – and the potential for revolution.

The more evil the imperialists do, the more they make it possible to unite the world's people against them, despite the difficulties in the situation, and the more they drop their mask and resort to open repression and terror, the more they provide the context to make it clear just what their rule rests on and what it will take to overthrow them. ■

Build the World People's Resistance Movement!

By the Provisional Organising Committee, World People's Resistance Movement

The people of the whole world are confronted with a global challenge by a dangerous enemy aiming to solidify and expand a world-wide empire. This enemy has declared its right to use military force to intervene anywhere and everywhere, to destroy peoples and their lands, to slander the people's struggles as "terrorist" in order to legitimise snuffing out any resistance to their vicious military, political and economic order. They have proclaimed their "right" to replace regimes at will. But even when they attack the most despicable of tyrants (most of whom they themselves have created and fed), the ultimate victim and target is not these tyrants but the peoples themselves. The previous smokescreen of human rights and democracy has been largely replaced with the naked gangster logic of national self-interest and the resurrection of the "white man's burden" of nineteenth century colonialism and holy wars pitting Christianity (or the "Judeo-Christian tradition") against the "heathens". And this reactionary crusade carried out in the name of the "war on terrorism" is backed by the most powerful weapons of terror and mass destruction that have ever existed on earth.

The progressive forces in every country are confronted with a great challenge. The chieftain-in-crime has said people are either "with us or

against us". Long before 11 September the injustice of the world order, in which a relative handful live off the labour and misery of the world's peoples, was screaming out for resistance. Millions were already in motion and the need for world-wide unity was already apparent. Now it is all the more clear that the road to social progress and liberation cannot side-step a direct confrontation with the US-led machine.

It is the urgent duty of all progressive forces to dare to resist and unite against this common enemy of the world's people, whose name is imperialism.

When the masters openly praise the virtues of torture, it is a green light for every despotic regime in the world to use it freely. When the imperialists declare that there are no national frontiers that they need to respect, the people, too, are required to unite their forces across national lines. Powerful movements against the global institutions of the wealthy states calling the shots, bring together demonstrators from many backgrounds and countries. The actions of even a relative few reverberate throughout the empire, and the blows struck in distant corners strengthen the resolve of those fighting in the belly of the beast itself. The courageous stand taken by prominent writers and artists in one country in-

spire counterparts the world over. The protectors of a vicious system want a global struggle – so be it!

We can never allow our foes to determine which struggle is legitimate and which is not. All struggles against imperialism and reaction must be supported, including those where the oppressed and exploited have taken up arms against the enforcers of the old order. We can never accept that the biggest criminals on earth can burn down whole cities, whilst the people are forbidden to light candles.

The World People's Resistance Movement (WPRM) is being formed to help the struggles all over the globe flow together into a mighty torrent. The WPRM provides an international vehicle to promote and facilitate the world-wide unity against our common foe. Today's focus must be opposing the imperialist crusade carried out under the slogan of the "war on terrorism".

The WPRM does not seek to supplant or compete with any other people's organisation on a national or international level. All those on the same side of the barricades are welcome. Help form branches of the WPRM in every country with individuals, circles, associations and political parties. North and south, east and west, unite the people's struggles! ■



Left: Demonstration following the burial of a youth killed by Israeli soldiers.

Right: Palestinian youth from Yarmuk refugee camp, south of Damascus, demonstrate in support of the Intifada.

Palestine on the Front Line

By V. K. Sin

As the magazine goes to press in mid-April 2002 the Israeli reoccupation of the major population centres on the West Bank is continuing. It is the biggest Israeli military operation since the invasion of Beirut in 1982 and has been met with fierce resistance by the Palestinians and a great wave of support from progressive people the world over. Despite unprecedented attempts by Israel to prevent any access by journalists or aid workers, reports are beginning to filter out of hundreds of victims massacred in the Jenin refugee camp alone. Witnesses speak of mass graves and persons buried alive by bulldozers. Ambulances are stopped from rescuing the wounded and medical personnel have repeatedly come under fire, a war crime under the Geneva Convention.

While fury intensifies all over the world, the US has stood, almost alone, behind its Middle East attack dog ostentatiously refusing to pull back on the leash. Yasser Arafat, yesterday's "peace partner" of the US and Israel, is blockaded into two rooms of what is left of his headquarters as Israeli tanks control even if and when he has any

running water. The European Union's top diplomat is unceremoniously denied permission to meet with Arafat.

The US began by dealing the "anti-terrorist" trump card to the Israeli state, which grants the holder immunity while carrying out any horrendous anti-people crimes it wants. As world outrage increased daily, Bush was forced to add a few words of deception to his naked support of "Israel's right of defence" when he publicly asked Sharon to withdraw from the West Bank population centres while making it clear to everyone that the latter would have all the time he needed to finish his bloody work. Colin Powell was sent to meet Arafat whom he left bitter and betrayed whilst Israeli atrocities continued on his doorstep and throughout occupied Palestine.

Although the US and Israel may have overwhelming force on their side, they are spreading and intensifying the hatred and resistance of millions throughout the Middle East and beyond and may yet provoke events that neither master nor puppet can bring under control. - AWTW

The struggle in Palestine now stands at the most critical juncture since 1948. At end March 2002, in the most massive incursion into the Occupied Territories – the West Bank and Gaza – since 1967, Israel is re-occupying territory it withdrew from years ago under the Oslo agreement. More than 1,200 Palestinians have already been killed and many thousands wounded since the Second Intifada ("uprising") broke out in September 2001, and the numbers are rising rapidly under the brutal Israeli aggression. Israel is using its vastly superior firepower to bombard Palestine's cities at will, its US F16 fighters scream over the skies of Palestine sowing terror, its tanks roll through Palestinian cities and refugee camps, blasting through the barrages of rocks hurled against them by the courageous but dramatically outmatched teenagers on Palestine's streets. Ramallah, often called the most beautiful of Palestine's cities and symbolic headquarters of the Palestinian Authority, is being reduced to rubble. Captured Palestinian security forces are being executed in cold blood. Israel's prisons groan with thousands of Palestinian prisoners who suffer routine torture, under the approving eye of Israel's highest courts.¹ Israeli



Prime Minister Sharon blusters that he will "beat the Palestinians into submission", that he will teach "the savages" a lesson, and publicly asks his US masters for permission to assassinate Yasser Arafat, who has been all but imprisoned in a single room, in his Ramallah headquarters by Israeli troops, with Israeli tank turrets mere feet away. Regardless of whose finger happens to be on the trigger, the blood of the Palestinian people is on the hands of the US imperialists, whose full backing is indispensable to Israel's very existence.

The response by the Palestinians has in turn claimed over 400 Israeli lives and shown to the whole world, and to Israel too – as if this needed showing yet again – that the Palestinians will never accept living under the yoke of the imperialist-Zionist state. Israel's

escalating repression of the Palestinian people is a high-risk undertaking, and is provoking mounting protest world-wide, especially in the neighbouring Arab countries. It could turn out that it has unleashed a series of events that escape its control and pull it into a broader conflict that it does not have the resources to handle – it may have, as Mao Tsetung put it, picked up a rock only to drop it on its own feet.

Over and over again the struggle of the Palestinian people has burst through the iron fist of Israeli control, seized the front pages of the world's media and upset the imperialists' plans for the region.² Their struggle has fuelled resistance and stoked the fires of liberation around the world; it has inspired the oppressed of every country. Yet their numbers are no greater

than the population of a working class district like South Central Los Angeles or of medium-sized cities like Hyderabad or Milan. What miracles could be accomplished with the spread of the fire and determination that burns in the hearts of the Palestinian people!

At a time when the proletariat is still emerging onto the world scene and undertaking the titanic, uphill fight to overthrow the most powerful reactionaries in human history and carry through the world-historic mission of uprooting all oppression and exploitation, at a time when the great bastions of the proletarian revolution, the USSR and China, have fallen to the enemy, time and again the Palestinian people have flung themselves into unequal battle against the US-Israeli regime. Emboldened by the courage born of a just cause, they have sacrificed many thousands of their best sons and daughters in one-sided combat against a vastly superior force. This has made inestimable contributions to the cause of world revolution: most fundamentally, it has helped clarify friend from foe in the eyes of the world's oppressed, exposing the US imperialists' claim to represent progress in the region, and showing instead that they stand solidly behind reaction and national subjugation. Likewise, it has shattered their claim that their regional puppet Israel is an island of civilisation and democracy amidst a sea of "backward Arabs", revealing instead the cruel reactionary heart of the Zionist state.

The verdict that the Palestinian cause is a just cause, and that the US-Israeli cause is unjust, is seared into the hearts of the world's oppressed. This verdict is reaffirmed with each crime that the US-Israeli state commits against the Palestinian people, just as it is with every rock thrown or bullet fired in the Palestinians' fight. Today, as the imperialists beat the drums of war for another crusade in the Middle East, the unyielding struggle of the Palestinian people stands as a sharp reminder to progressive forces around the world that this crusade is an unjust cause, and that this will be yet another unjust war.

Yet only a few years ago the imperialists were hoping, and maybe even believed, that things were going to be different for them in the Middle East. They marshalled their power to knock together the Oslo peace agreement,

and made grandiose promises of peace, independence and prosperity for the Palestinian people, sealing this with the infamous handshake on the White House lawn in 1993 between Palestine's Arafat and Israel's Yitzhak Rabin, as US President Bill Clinton beamed his approval. The imperialists pushed acceptance of the Oslo accords by a combination of the lure of self-rule in the form of the "Palestinian Authority" and dire threats of further repression in the form of Israeli storm troopers. The upsurge of the Palestinian people in the Second Intifada represents an unambiguous rejection of the imperialists' peace process, and powerfully exposes the lies and treacherous claims behind it. While the Oslo leaders received Nobel peace prizes and tributes from the official international community, what this peace process has brought the Palestinian people above all is impoverishment, repression and national humiliation. And what the imperialists have on their hands now is not a people who have been corralled into submission, but a furious rebellion whose fires will not be easily extinguished.

BACKGROUND TO THE OSLO AGREEMENT

The collapse of the Soviet bloc a decade ago and the emergence of US imperialism as the world's only superpower led to a series of efforts to restructure power relations, particularly in some of the main hot spots around the globe. Unfettered by the removal from the scene of their long-time rival, the US imperialists struck out dramatically in the Gulf War against Saddam Hussein's Iraq to reassert their global hegemony and threaten recalcitrant Third World regimes. One important factor in this process was that now the same order of threat to US interests was no longer posed by political forces formerly associated with the Soviet Union such as the African National Congress in South Africa, the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). The result was a series of "peace processes" ranging from South Africa to Central America, the Kurdish "safe havens" in Iraq, and into Palestine itself.

In Palestine, the US imperialists sought to respond to the blows of the First Intifada and to follow up the mo-

mentum they developed with their victory over Iraq to force into place new arrangements that would create greater stability in this tumultuous part of the world. But the peace process in Palestine differed in certain crucial ways from many of the others brokered by the imperialists. For there was no question here of threatening or even tinkering with the unchallenged supremacy of Israel. The Zionist outpost has been the keystone in the structure of US imperialist domination in the region for decades now. It has faithfully served US imperial interests through reactionary wars and thuggish interventions and is its key "regional cop on the beat", as former US President Nixon called lackeys like this.

Furthermore, this region, with its vast oil resources, is still key to the lifelines of the world economy, and thus occupies a strategic place of unrivalled importance. The US has no intention of doing anything that could undermine Israel's role in maintaining the current US-dominated power relations here; on the contrary, as the US strikes out on its war against the world, it will need to draw on its regional gendarmes, especially Israel, as never before.

So the kind of changing of the guard that took place in South Africa, which, while it had nothing to do with liberating the masses, did involve an actual restructuring of ruling power relations, was never in the cards for Palestine.³ Instead, a key measure envisioned in the Oslo peace process was the setting up of a repressive Palestinian apparatus to fulfil the Israeli goal of keeping a lid on the Palestinian struggle.

OSLO: THEORY AND REALITY

The story about the Oslo peace agreement that was sold to the world was that Israel and Palestine were trading land for peace. In other words, Israel was to pull back from some of the Palestinian territory it had occupied, in return for which the Palestinians were to recognise Israel's legitimacy and cease to attack it. This would in turn permit Israel to normalise its relations with the Arab states.

First, it is important to recognise that nothing in Oslo or any subsequent agreement has ever called into question Israel's borders before the 1967 war against the Arab regimes. In other

words, the most that Israel has ever put on the negotiating table is the 22 per cent of historic Palestine that it occupied following the 1967 wars, mainly the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. So even the maximum concession on the bargaining table would leave Israel occupying 78 per cent of historic Palestine, that is, Palestine as it existed under British rule up through the Second World War, also called Mandate Palestine.

This in turn means that the maximum that the Palestinians would ever obtain under the Oslo process is for the approximately three million Palestinians now in the West Bank and Gaza to be able to live under some form of formal Palestinian government in less than a quarter of historic Palestine, while the Israelis, with a Jewish population that constituted no more than one-third of the population before 1948, and only five per cent of the population at the end of the nineteenth century, before large waves of imperialist-sponsored immigration, would occupy more than three-quarters of the country. In addition, these figures leave out some three million Palestinian refugees who do not live in Israel or the Occupied Territories.

Yet at every negotiation session the Israelis pointedly refused to give up even the sliver of historic Palestine constituted by the Occupied Territories. The reasons underlying this refusal go a long way to illustrating exactly what the Oslo peace process is all about.

The parts of the Occupied Territories that Israel is insisting on keeping consist of a series of heavily fortified "illegal settlements" that it has built up and garrisoned over the preceding decades in order to strengthen its decisive military domination of the bulk of the Occupied Territories. (These settlements are, outside the imperialist media, commonly referred to as "illegal" because they are in contravention of UN resolutions, as well as of the Geneva Conventions, which prohibit settling on a militarily occupied territory. We have adopted the terminology "illegal" in this article without implying the legality or justice of the previous existing settlements.) Formally, the Oslo agreement divided the Occupied Territories into three categories: area A (17.2 per cent of the Occupied Territories), where the Palestinian Authority supposedly governs and han-

dles security; area B (23.8 per cent of the Occupied Territories), where the Palestinian Authority governs but there is joint security, meaning in practice that Israel determines security; and area C, where Israel openly governs and handles security (59 per cent of the Occupied Territories).⁴ A look at a map showing these areas reveals that Israel has structured them so that "A" areas are systematically bordered by "B" areas, which are in turn surrounded at key points by "C" areas. In other words, Israel has surrounded the Palestinian-controlled areas with a system of fortifications at crucial points of control.

These settlements are actually vast fortresses surrounded by barbed wire, electric fences and other protective facilities, and garrisoned by volunteers who tend to have a high degree of ideological commitment to the Zionist cause. The settlers are also granted certain material privileges to entice them to their front-line position, such as heavily subsidised housing, much like the initial settlers in the US West were enticed to the frontier with the promise of free land. The settlers are all provided with arms, and frequently act as lynch mobs, dispensing Nazi-style "justice" on the streets. Beyond that, the settlements serve as logistics centres, safe outposts used by the Israeli military for surveillance and staging grounds for attacks, including by the elite death squad assassins, as well as for positioning artillery. For instance, Arafat's headquarters were shelled by artillery positioned in an illegal settlement.⁵

These garrisons are linked by what are called "bypass roads", because they bypass the vast majority of the area's inhabitants, the Palestinians, and instead directly link the various Israeli settlements and Israel itself. One of their main purposes is to permit the rapid movement of troops. The method here is similar to the system of forts that the US military used in the West to subjugate the Native Americans, but in a much more concentrated geographic area. In fact, today no Palestinian in the Occupied Territories lives further than 10 km from some form of Israeli-controlled territory. The Palestinian people are broken up into seven discontinuous islands on the West Bank and are unable to move freely even within the Occupied Territories. They are forced to pass through a se-

ries of Israeli checkpoints where they are subjected to degrading searches and lengthy waits. By analogy, in a prison too, even if the prisoners have the great majority of space, the guards' tiny portion is the key to total control.

Besides serving as security outposts, the illegal settlements are also part of Israel's overall policy of "creating facts on the ground". What they mean by this is making the Israeli presence increasingly "irreversible" in larger and larger parts of Palestine. Today, 40 per cent of the Gaza strip is occupied by settlements, which contain less than one per cent of the Gaza population. The population of the illegal settlements has grown steadily over the Oslo years, under Labour and Likud governments alike. In fact, the pace of illegal settlement has accelerated since Oslo, and now amounts to some 200,000 people in the West Bank and Gaza, and almost 200,000 more in illegal settlement areas in Jerusalem. These settlements have been erected in defiance of numerous United Nations resolutions and condemnation world-wide – except from the US imperialists.

The Israelis have implemented this same policy with regard to Jerusalem. Despite having been proclaimed an "open city" by the UN, in respect of its position as a historic site for three of the world's main religions, Israel has imposed its own laws in the city, annexed Palestinian areas in and around Jerusalem, built new housing and brought in some 200,000 illegal settlers to establish a stronger Jewish presence in the city and strengthen its control there.

The Israelis have thus seized on the peace process to strengthen their military position vis-à-vis the Occupied Territories through this illegal settlement system and through breaking up and weakening the internal cohesion of the Palestinian areas. But the Oslo process also aimed at setting up another mechanism to keep the Palestinians in check, or, as the Israeli negotiators and the imperialist media always put it, to "ensure Israel's security". And that is the Palestinian Authority itself.

Palestine is one of the most policed states in the world, with 35,000 police for its three million people, a rate some four times higher than the police per capita ratio in Israel itself.⁶ Yet the only weapons these forces have are small

arms, and when Israel captured a ship bringing in a quantity of weapons that dwarfs what the Israelis themselves are given every day by the US, they went into a rage. There has been one overwhelming purpose for this lopsided concentration on lightly armed security forces: to ensure the Palestinian Authority's ability to control its own population and, at the same time, to prevent attacks on Israel. For several years after Oslo, this is what Arafat and the Palestinian Authority managed to do, as the guns and prisons of the Palestinian Authority targeted the Palestinian people themselves. This was the period when the US imperialists and the Zionists thought the peace process was making "good progress".

The main aspects of the Oslo agreement were designed to set up and legitimise a set of agreements that locked Palestine into a position of subordination and dependency. The central role of any Palestinian government that Israel permitted to exist would be to keep its own people in line.

THE PALESTINIAN ECONOMY: MILITARY SUBORDINATION

What has emerged under the Oslo agreement is not the promised increasing autonomy of the Palestinian economy, but increasing dependence on Israel.

Any capitalist country would "naturally" create, foster and enforce these kinds of relations of dependency with an oppressed nation on its borders. But what differs in the situation of Israel and Palestine is that economic exploitation is far from the top of Israel's priorities in Palestine.

As noted above in the discussion of illegal settlements, Israel has carved Palestinian areas up into discontinuous islands. It has used its military domination to prevent the development of a harmonious interlinked Palestinian economy and instead fostered this situation of separate economic islands. This process has gone so far that, in the words of one economist, "by 1998, almost all physical, demographic and commercial interaction between the West Bank and Gaza had ceased."⁷

This has rendered the Palestinian economy heavily dependent on economic relations with Israel. The overwhelming majority of Palestine's exports go to Israel (88 per cent), while the Palestinian territories are the sec-

ond destination of Israeli exports, after the US. Israel is also the source of most capital investment in Palestine.⁸ One of the rotten fruits of the peace process has been the rise of the type of factories common along the US-Mexican border (*maquiladoras*). Unfinished Israeli components are "sold" to the Palestinian sub-contractors who have set up these factories and who then assemble the components using cheap Palestinian labour, then "re-sell" them back to Israelis for a profit. This has led to the emergence of a small class of well-off Palestinian businessmen who are entirely dependent on trade with Israel and on super-exploiting cheap Palestinian labour, mainly women, in these maquiladora-style factories, where average wages are about \$3 per day, less than a tenth of what Israeli production workers earn.

It must be remembered, first of all, that part of the reason for Palestinian dependency on Israel has to do with the theft by Israel of almost all the Palestinian land, which thereby not only robbed Palestinians of their chief means of subsistence but also created a nation of refugees. Even today, over 50 years later, 60 per cent of Palestinians are still refugees.⁹ Israel has used its occupation of the West Bank and Gaza to further strip away the people's economic resources, destroying half of Palestinian olive groves and uprooting hundreds of thousands of trees during the Second Intifada alone.

In addition to controlling transport, Israel has control of the water resources of the entire area, and reserves most of the water for its own illegal settlers. Palestinians in the Gaza Strip lack running water and sanitary facilities, while on the adjacent hilltops settlers swim in their pools and water their roses. Eighty per cent of the water resources in the Occupied Territories go to Jewish citizens, and only 20 per cent to Palestinians, though the latter are many times more numerous.¹⁰ US politicians and the media like to wax lyrical about the "miracle" of how Israel has "made the desert bloom", but Palestine's orange groves were famous long before Israel even existed. The secret of agricultural productivity there is not so much Israeli resourcefulness, as their theft of Palestinian resources – combined with billions in imperialist aid.

Whenever Israel wishes to hit the Palestinians, it uses its vice-like con-

trol of transport, water and communications to simply shut down the Occupied Territories, including their economy. The Palestinian economy loses far more from these closures than it receives in aid from donor nations.¹¹ Between 1993 and 1996, for instance, it has been estimated that Israel closed the West Bank and Gaza to all physical and economic movement almost one day out of every three. This has led to devastating economic losses and deterred almost all foreign investment.¹²

Since Oslo, while the Israeli economy has forged ahead, with the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) rising by 50 per cent in 1995-1999 (GDP per capita now stands at about \$17,000), Palestinian GDP per capita fell 20-30 per cent between 1993 and 1999, and is now less than 10 per cent that of Israel's at \$1,350.¹³ Unemployment has grown massively in the Occupied Territories, and is now 40 per cent in the Gaza Strip. Today, 80 per cent of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip live below the official poverty line, spending 58 per cent of their income on food alone.¹⁴ Israel has cut down on its dependency on Palestinian migrant workers by importing 300,000 foreign workers from Romania, Thailand and other places and expanding the maquiladora-style system.¹⁵

This web of dependency has also enshrouded the Palestinian Authority itself, the supposed representative of the Palestinian people. US and European aid, the rise of a strata of Palestinian compradors, and the buffeting of the Palestinian economy by the US-Israeli regime have led to a situation where the Palestinian Authority increasingly answers to outside forces. At the insistence of the US and Israel, one-third of the Palestinian Authority budget goes to security spending, making it bigger than the health, education and social services budgets combined. One mainstream Palestinian commentator concluded that the Palestinian Authority "was more accountable to Washington, Israel and the World Bank than to its own citizens."¹⁶

The peace process was hailed as heralding the development of a Singapore of the Middle East. Instead it has produced what one commentator described as "Soweto on the Mediterranean".¹⁷ Meanwhile Israel has prospered. Supporters of Israel and the imperialist-brokered peace process have long ago mastered the art of seeing a

fat overfed man and a skinny malnourished man living on the same land and concluding that there is no relationship between the bloated condition of the one and the malnourished condition of the other.

THE RIGHT OF RETURN

Israel has refused to even consider putting the right of return of the Palestinian refugees to their homes on the bargaining table. It is the great "un-thinkable". And with good reason. For this issue goes right to the heart of the crime at the origin of the imperialist-Zionist state.¹⁸

There are 3.7 million refugees registered with the UN, meaning the majority of Palestinians are refugees. Some 3 to 4 million Palestinians still live outside historic Palestine. Well over a million of them still live in refugee camps, including most of the 400,000 in Lebanon and the slightly larger number in Syria, as well as most Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.¹⁹ The majority of these refugees live in great poverty, and the position of those abroad is inherently precarious, as was demonstrated when 300,000 Palestinian migrant workers in Kuwait were expelled in the wake of the Gulf War. The very existence of these refugees is a constant reminder that the Israeli settler army drove out the land's initial inhabitants, the Palestinians, and colonised it for themselves.²⁰

Nothing in the Oslo process has ever addressed the right to return of these refugees. Prominent Israeli spokesmen have repeatedly argued that it cannot implement the internationally accepted demand for the right to return of the Palestinian refugees as this would mean the end of Israel as it exists today.²¹ Indeed – the Zionist's own argument is a tacit admission that Israel's very foundation was premised on taking another people's land and driving them out.

The fact that the imperialists and Zionists refuse to even consider the refugee problem would be, in itself, sufficient to guarantee that there will be no peace in the Middle East.

The results of the Oslo agreement are as one-sided as its original terms. In the almost nine years since Oslo, the Palestinians have seen themselves impoverished, locked up and surrounded by increasing numbers of illegal Israeli settlements, while the Is-

raelis treat Palestinian elected leaders like a warden treats the representative of the prison inmates. Since Oslo, the US-Israeli regime has used its state power to "move the goalposts" repeatedly – for instance, putting on the bargaining table a withdrawal from a certain percentage of settlements, while in the meantime it builds even more illegal settlements, so that even if there were an agreement the actual number of settlers remaining in the Occupied Territories would grow.²² What was sealed on the White House lawn was not an agreement between two equal powers, in a neutral process of give-and-take, but the terms of surrender of the leadership of a small nation to the much more powerful occupier.

**US IMPERIALISM: SEASONED
SWINDLER PLAYS
"HONEST BROKER"**

The US has long portrayed itself as an "honest broker" standing above the fray in Palestine. But at every step of its existence the US imperialists have given indispensable support to the state of Israel.²³

Two telling indications of the extent of US support for Israel are, first, the records of votes on the numerous UN General Assembly resolutions on Palestine, where the final tally has usually been more than 100 to 2 – over and over again the two being the US and Israel (this is one reason why the UN is governed by the Security Council in which the US has a veto). Since 1983, the US has vetoed 20 UN Security Council resolutions condemning general Israeli practices in Palestine, as well as three specifically on the Occupied Territories. It has also twice vetoed Security Council motions calling for the application of the Geneva Conventions in the Occupied Territories and more recently blocked the presence of international observers.²⁴ Second, and more importantly, the US gives more military and financial aid to Israel than to any other country, and has done so for decades. Since 1967 the US has given over \$92 billion to Israel, and in 2000 it sent over \$5 billion in aid – more than \$1,000 per Israeli Jew.²⁵ US aid has been set since the days of Nixon to guarantee that Israel has a military edge in every aspect of war-fighting, especially in the air, and to give it the capacity to produce itself much of the lighter armaments it needs.²⁶

Some observers, especially in Europe, have tended to view the Palestinian conflict in terms of a US-backed Israel versus a European-backed Palestinian Authority. They point to substantial European Union aid and the large number of European NGOs active in the Occupied Territories and to the way that Israeli forces have bombed a number of Palestinian facilities paid for by European aid, sometimes, it seems, purposefully. While there is some truth to this, the US has given more financial aid to the Palestinian Authority than is generally recognised: \$3 billion in the period 1993–2000.²⁷ This actually puts Palestine towards the top of the list of recipients of US foreign aid. The purpose of this substantial aid is two-fold: one, to ensure that the Palestinian Authority is capable of playing the role required of it by the Oslo accords, chiefly keeping the Palestinian people in line; and two, to foster a stratum of compradors and a middle class, including large numbers of NGO personnel. These people, who are linked to, and look to, the West, are to act as a buffer against rebellion from below. While US aid to Israel vastly exceeds that to Palestine, and goes in large part to fund military power – which is strictly off-limits to the Palestinians – the policy of providing substantial aid to both sides reflects US determination that no other major power will have a substantial say in developments in this critical region.²⁸

**PALESTINE'S ISLAMIC
FUNDAMENTALISTS AND THE
DEMOCRATIC SECULAR STATE**

Back in the 1960s the Palestinian liberation movement formulated the goal of the struggle as the destruction of the Zionist state of Israel and its replacement by a democratic secular state in Palestine. This was to be a state in which all the inhabitants of Palestine, regardless of their religion, would be treated equally. That formulation stood in stark contrast to the theocratic orientation of Israel, which, as a "Jewish state", excludes Palestinian citizens from important affairs and openly discriminates against them. The goal of a democratic, secular state gained the support of Maoist China and much of the rest of the world, and stood as a symbol of the far-sighted vision of the Palestinian liberation forces. They refused to allow

themselves to fall to the level of their imperialist-Zionist enemy and be sucked into the dynamic of limiting their own vision to that of their opponent.

As part of entering into the imperialist-brokered Oslo peace process, Yasser Arafat led the Palestinian resistance leadership to repudiate this historic achievement. In fact, as far back as 1974, Arafat had made it clear he would accept a "mini-state" on only a small part of historic Palestine, but at that historic juncture it was impossible for Israel and the US to accept his surrender.²⁹

A number of factors besides Arafat's long-standing desire for an accommodation with the imperialists were involved in launching the Oslo process. First, the collapse of the Soviet social-imperialists and the accompanying global campaign by the imperialists to use the failures of Soviet revisionism to attack communism and revolution in general led to weakening the more radical secular forces in the Palestinian liberation movement.³⁰ This was made easier by the fact that too much of the Palestinian left, instead of practising the Maoist theory of self-reliance, had portrayed the Soviet social-imperialists as friends of the Palestinian struggle and allowed themselves to become dependent on handouts from the Soviet "big brother" and its regional allies like Assad's Syria, along with financial handouts from openly reactionary Arab regimes.

These developments, along with the emergence of the US as the world's only remaining superpower, its pummelling of Iraq during the Gulf War, and the series of imperialist-brokered "peace agreements" it secured (such as in South Africa, for example) on the one hand, and on the other Israel's continuing ability to secure peace with the main Arab regimes in the region, combined with the Zionist state's continuing need for stability, all set the stage for the Oslo peace process.

These same dynamics and in particular the weakening of the Palestinian left, created fertile soil for the Islamic forces to prosper. Their growth was also nourished by the general reaction to further imperialist penetration of the region, which brought intensified oppression to broad numbers of the Arab masses. Also fuelling the Islamic forces was reaction against Israel.

But the rise of the Islamic forces was not just a spontaneous development. It was also consciously and cynically supported by the imperialists and Zionists themselves. In the 1980s, the Israeli army brutally drove deep into Lebanon in an effort to expel the forces centred on the PLO, which allowed Islamic fundamentalist forces to move into the resulting power vacuum. The Israeli army consciously favoured this development, viewing the Islamic forces as a "lesser evil" to the radical secular forces that it had been fighting so bitterly for so many years.³¹ At this same time, the US imperialists were providing massive aid to the Islamic forces in Afghanistan, which had a spillover effect and boosted the Islamic forces throughout the region. Ironically, the imperialist boost to the Islamic forces came just as conditions were ripening for a settlement with the secular forces around Arafat, thus setting the stage for the former to emerge as stronger opponents of the US-Israeli regime.

The Islamic forces thus profited from widespread disillusionment with the pro-Western secular forces and have attracted some masses who want to fight Israel.

Ultimately, though, however militant Hamas and Islamic jihad may appear, their programme is not one that will lead to the defeat of the US-Israeli state and liberation for the Palestinian people. Hamas declares that it wishes to erect an Islamic Palestinian state and destroy Israel, which it denounces as a "Jewish infiltrator" on Arab land. But the core of the Hamas programme, including its fighting strategy and its relations with Arafat and the Palestinian Authority, indicates that ultimately it aims no higher than accommodation with imperialism under a religious cover. This should be no surprise: no Islamic political force, whether Khomeini's Islamic Republic in Iran or the Taliban in Afghanistan, has ever managed to thoroughly rupture with imperialism – more to the point, they have not even attempted this.

The Hamas programme unleashes and reflects the interests of feudal forces. It is built on the continuing oppression of women.³² There is no programme for land reform or agrarian revolution. Moreover, Hamas and the other Islamic fundamentalists lower the nature of the fighting to a war between religions and in so doing obscure the

national liberation interests and the social liberation interests of the Palestinian masses – not to mention the fact that it is hard to see how turning the struggle into a battle of Muslims versus Jews will ever prove capable of mobilising the hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who happen to be Christians.

So even if Hamas were somehow to go against its feudal nature and genuinely fight to defeat the US-Israeli regime, it could never mobilise the full forces of the Palestinian people that are indispensable to the uphill battle to defeat the enemy's far superior military forces. Its tactics, including targeting Jewish civilians, reflect that its actual goal is instead to simply make Israel pay too high a price for continuing its occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.³³

The policy Arafat and the Palestinian Authority have adopted towards the Islamic forces has been to try to use them as much as possible, while keeping them in check. They turn a blind eye to certain attacks on Israel when this suits their interests, and imprison Islamic militants when that serves their purposes. The Arafat forces and the Islamic forces thus jockey for position on the basis of fighting for better terms for negotiating a settlement with the imperialist-Zionist enemy, and not in an effort to overthrow the Israeli state and achieve full liberation. This policy has been followed for many years in Lebanon by the Islamic party there, Hezbollah. When, with backing from Syria, they finally managed to force an Israeli withdrawal there, they dropped any remaining radical pretensions and became part of the reactionary ruling structure in Lebanon.

Before leaving Hamas and the Islamic fundamentalists, a word must be said here about the Western media's barrage of attacks on the suicide bomb tactics used mainly by the Islamic forces. These imperialists who are responsible for uprooting several million Palestinians and hurling them to the winds, whose Israeli puppets carried out the invasion of Lebanon and bombing of Beirut in which over ten thousand civilians died, who helped Israel build up a nuclear arsenal in a region that experiences more frequent wars than any other, and who slaughtered some 200,000 Iraqis in the Gulf War and then watched hundreds of

thousands of children die under their subsequent blockade, who have just killed thousands more Afghanistani civilians and who today close their eyes to Israeli missile bombardments of densely populated areas in Palestine, and then belittle the inevitable civilian casualties as "collateral damage" – these imperialists have no right to denounce the "terrorism" of such a poorly-armed force which is resisting brutal occupation.

They wail about "civilian casualties" on both sides but try to portray the Palestinians as worse because they are said to "target" Israeli civilians, whereas Palestinian civilian casualties are supposedly not intentional. This is a blatant lie. Do they really expect people to believe that when Israeli jets drop 1,000 pound bombs in the middle of densely populated Gaza City civilian casualties are "accidental"? Would they like to explain why there are almost four times as many Palestinians dead as Israelis? And why the ratio of Palestinian wounded to Israeli wounded is even higher?³⁴ Israeli soldiers have testified over and over that they have been ordered to fire on children, and the Israeli high command has even tried to justify shooting Red Cross workers, ambulance drivers, doctors and nurses who are trying to rescue the wounded, despite global condemnation.³⁵

One of the most outrageous arguments of the Zionists is that the Palestinians "brought it on themselves". In speaking of the elevated numbers of Palestinian children among the victims of the Israeli army, Bernard-Henri Lévy, a French philosopher, argued, "Is it quibbling to ask who put these children on the front lines in the first place, and as part of what gloomy martyrs strategy?" – a transparent effort to point the finger of blame in some direction other than the Israeli armed forces who gun down rock-throwing children in the streets.³⁶

This is not a "cycle of violence" or a feud between neighbours that erupted over some long-forgotten trifle. This is a fight between occupier and occupied, between possessor and dispossessed. It pits a rich, powerful capitalist state with 200,000 active troops and 400,000 reservists backed by jet fighters, missiles, tanks and even nuclear bombs – not to mention the support of the largest foreign military assistance scheme in the world today

— that is trying to “beat into submission”, as Sharon puts it, a poor oppressed nation that instead of an army is allowed only a police force of 35,000, armed with little more than Second World War era rifles. The fact that there has been almost no condemnation by the “official” international community of Sharon’s outrageous threats is revealing of the double standards systematically applied to reporting on Palestine. Imagine the outcry if Arafat blustered that he would “beat the Israelis into submission” or openly mused that he should “liquidate Sharon”!

NO LIBERATION WITHOUT THE DESTRUCTION OF ISRAEL

The biggest hurdle for those who want to see the struggle for liberation and justice for the people of Palestine go all the way to victory has centred on the question of whether it is possible to somehow obtain liberation without defeating Israel. And here is the fundamental point of Middle Eastern politics: there will be no justice for the Palestinians until the state of Israel is destroyed. This is simply another way of saying that the Palestinians will never enjoy true liberation until imperialism has been overthrown, because what Israel represents above all is not a “home for the Jews” but the key outpost of US imperialism in the Middle East.³⁷ The pivotal point of the strategy of every force involved in the Palestinian struggle is how it views imperialism.

For over 50 years now, the Palestinian people have been waging struggle, fighting the Israelis under one banner or another, suffering setbacks, picking themselves up, then fighting again. But up to now the struggle has been led by various combinations of the Palestinian elite, representatives of the national bourgeoisie and even feudal forces. In the era of imperialism and world proletarian revolution, as Mao analysed, these classes can never carry the bourgeois democratic revolution through to victory. They are too weak, vacillating and linked to imperialism to carry through the fight to break with imperialism completely and establish genuine national independence. This is even truer today, when imperialism is more tightly knit and highly integrated, than when Mao first analysed this 70 years ago.

There is no easy answer to dealing with the overwhelming superiority of the US-Israeli regime, but several things must be said. First, to go beyond the mere assertion that the US imperialists and their Zionist settler state can be defeated and Palestine liberated requires that a Palestinian vanguard arms itself with the science of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, turns this into a material force on the battlefield and develops the strategy and tactics that can ultimately win. In short, theory has to advance through practice.

Second, the Palestinian revolution is part of the world revolution, and its advances and setbacks are bound up with the advances or setbacks of the world revolution. Thus figuring out how to carry on the fight against the US-Israeli state requires situating the Palestinian revolution within the overall fight against the US-led imperialist system, and developing a strategy and tactics that take that into account and enable the struggle to advance as much as it can at any given point along the path to ultimate victory. The notion that the US imperialists and the Zionist state could be quickly toppled independently of regional and global developments would quickly lead to demoralisation as the struggle inevitably proves to be more protracted. But the far greater danger has been to think that the US-Israeli set-up is so strong that there is little that the Palestinian people can accomplish today to advance along the path to victory, thus leaving no choice but to confine the struggle to the goal of compelling some larger benevolent power, usually the US, to pressure Israel to grant concessions to the Palestinians, leaving Israeli domination intact.

In terms of the basic path to revolution, Palestine is an oppressed nation where the strategy of the revolutionary forces requires waging protracted people’s war. But it has certain unique features, including that the bulk of the nation is occupied by a highly developed, militarised settler state. This state is backed heavily by US imperialism; it has a population of settlers roughly equal to the number of dispossessed Palestinians; and the territory is small.³⁸ So the Palestinian revolutionaries face the task of finding a way to implement the strategy of people’s war in difficult circumstances. Waging this kind of warfare means not tailoring the strategy and tactics of the

struggle to the demands of the bargaining table, but instead fighting with the long-term strategy of actually defeating the US-Israeli state, and maximizing the gains that can be made on that path at every given point in the struggle.

Already today the dynamics of the fighting cry out for consciously moving the struggle to a qualitatively higher stage. Recently, Palestinian Member of the Knesset (the Israeli Parliament) Azmi Bishara, no advocate of war with Israel, analysed that, “The Israeli government is trying to narrow the space of resistance: it is offering the choice between accepting Israeli dictates and an overall war.” Frederick Engels, the collaborator of Karl Marx, pointed out that every advance in the fighting of the revolutionary forces called forth an intensification of the battle by the reactionaries, and vice versa, in a spiral that eventually led to the defeat of one side or the other. Seeking some third way that avoids this dialectic ultimately means ceding victory to the reactionaries, because their escalation of the fighting cannot be met.³⁹

No one can say now what combination of developments in the struggle and in the objective situation in the region and the world as a whole would bring about a situation where it would actually be possible to defeat the US-Israeli state. Such a prospect would almost certainly involve other major upheavals in the region, perhaps a combination of war and revolutionary upheaval in one or more of the neighbouring Arab countries. It is worth considering, for example, what a vanguard with real roots and military strength in Palestine might have been able to accomplish during the fiasco of Israel’s occupation of southern Lebanon. Israel has never been embroiled in a regional conflict when on the home front it faced the kind of determined resistance from the Palestinians that it does today.

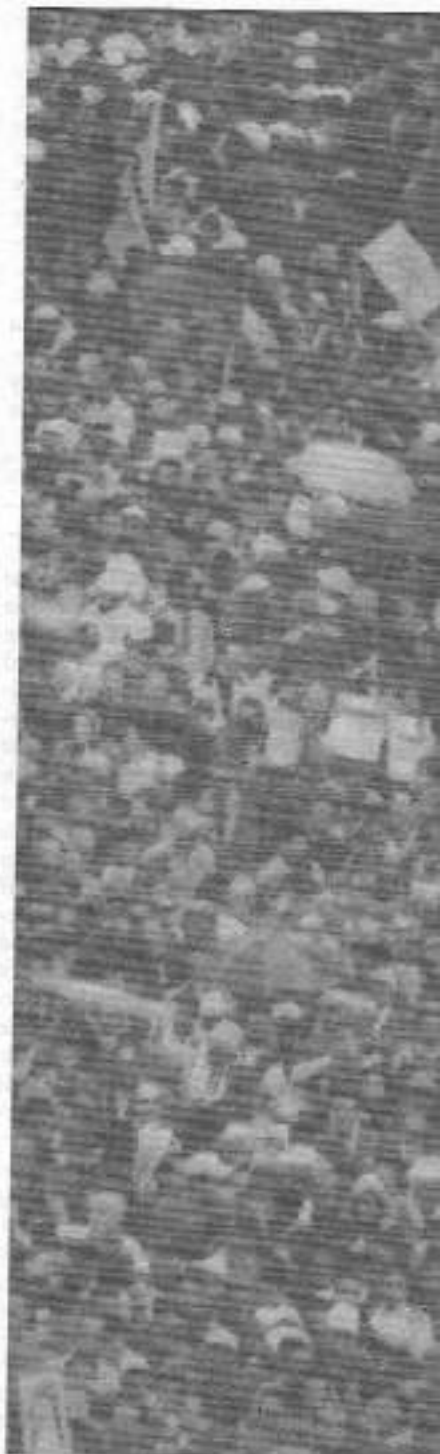
In any case, what is certain and what the tragic results of the peace process have shown again and again is that seeking an accommodation with the US-Israeli regime will not bring liberation. There is no other path to freeing Palestine than defeating Israel on the battlefield. This demands the formation of a vanguard that can seize every opportunity to keep the coals of the armed struggle alive and advance



Shatila refugee camp in Beirut.

Demonstrations in Support of the Palestinian People and against Israeli Terror

People all over the world exploded in anger as the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza escalated murderously: throughout the Middle East and Arab world, from Iraq to the Atlantic, demonstrators marched and in many places fought police near American embassy compounds. In Morocco, one to three million people were finally allowed to demonstrate. In Rome on 10 March, 100,000 people demonstrated in heavy rain in support of the Palestinians. In France, the country with the highest population of Arabs and Jews in Europe, tens of thousands of people of many nationalities took to the streets of Paris, shouting, "We are all Palestinians". This number doubled on 6 April in Paris, and in other French cities large numbers chanted "Bush-Sharon Assassins!" In April, many thousands demonstrated in London, Amsterdam and other European cities and in Egypt, Turkey and Jordan, furious masses fought the authorities. There have also been many demonstrations in the US, including in Detroit, home to thousands of people of Arab origin, and even in Bush's



Millions demonstrated against Israel in Rabat, Morocco in April 2002.

ranch in Texas where demonstrators protested against his threat to invade Iraq and for an end to Israeli occupation.



Top left: International supporters confront Israeli troops in Ramallah.
Top right: Palestinian youth in Ramallah.
Bottom left: Women participate in stone throwing in the West Bank.

as much as possible along the path of building up the party and the revolutionary army under its leadership so that when, and as, more favourable alignments of regional and global forces do emerge, as they have and will again, the revolutionary war can be led towards final victory. And while it is also certain that the path to liberation will be exceptionally arduous, it is no less the case that the possibilities for carrying out this kind of all-the-way revolutionary struggle tend to be underestimated and have yet to even be examined properly, above all this is due to the lack of a Maoist vanguard there.

In this light, it is worthwhile examining the way that the accepted wisdom guiding the Palestinian struggle in recent years deals with a few key issues. One crucial question that would have to be resolved to make significant advances is the relationship to the struggle in other Arab states, such as Lebanon and in particular Jordan, a large part of whose people are Palestinians. If this is handled successfully it could be a source of tremendous strength. But all too often, based in part on the nationalist outlook of the PLO leadership, the hopes of the Palestinian struggle have been pinned to

the existing Arab regimes, which have been portrayed as vacillating friends of the Palestinian struggle instead of deadly reactionary enemies, themselves abject lackeys of imperialism. The results have been to subject the Palestinian people to deception and betrayal.

Again, determining the specific features of what kind of relationship is possible, and necessary, with the struggle in the surrounding Arab countries requires the development of a vanguard Palestinian organisation. But two points are clear: first, the core of the struggle would have to be the self-

reliant struggle of the Palestinian masses themselves. This is no cause for pessimism. Look at the way the forces at the heart of the struggle against Israel have shifted over time. Initially the main forces fighting Israeli troops on the battlefield were the armies of the Arab regimes. They seemed big and powerful, but were decisively beaten. Then the core of the forces contending with the US-Israeli regime shifted over to the Palestinians abroad. Now, with the two Intifadas, the heart of the battle has moved again, into Palestine itself, and ominously for Israel, it has for the first time drawn in substantial open support from Palestinians living inside the "green line" (the pre-1967 borders), i.e. in Israel itself. And with each shift in this struggle, as the core of the fighting against Israel moved closer to home and became more rooted among the Palestinian masses themselves, the vulnerability of the US-Israeli regime has stood out more starkly.

If led by a correct line that clearly identified friend and foe, brought the interests of the oppressed masses to the fore, exposed the narrow interests behind those involved in conciliation and betrayal, and targeted the struggle squarely against the imperialists and on that basis drew out the common interests of all the oppressed masses, then there is no doubt that such a struggle would rouse the hopes and sympathies of the oppressed around the globe, and in particular in the Arab world, as never before. The Palestinian masses have to rely on themselves, but they would not be fighting the imperialist-Zionist state alone.⁴¹

Just as there has been a strong tendency to view the Arab countries through the lens of nationalism and neglect the class nature of the Arab regimes, so too have there been strong tendencies to portray Israel in nationalist terms, seeing it principally as a "Jewish state" and not as an outpost of imperialism. This has led to neglecting some of Israel's particular features that need to be considered carefully in developing a revolutionary strategy, including the heterogeneous character of its population; its extreme reliance on US backing, and its consequent isolation in the region, where Israel is universally hated, even if temporarily tolerated; along with this, its great reliance on the superiority of its

hi-tech arsenal, and the way it is consequently compelled to fight⁴²; and, based on its reactionary character and imperialist backing, its extreme arrogance.

Consider the character of Israeli society. It is not like the "usual" capitalist oppressor country. Most such states have arisen historically over many generations, and have at their core a large class of proletarians that have nothing to lose and that are oppressed and exploited by the bourgeoisie. Israel, on the other hand, was set up only two generations ago by the imperialists, and ripped out of the land of another people. Even today as many as half of Israel's non-Palestinian inhabitants were not born there. One million Russians came to Israel in the 1990s alone, and a few hundred thousand in the preceding two decades.⁴³ As previously mentioned, half of those arriving in the 1990s did not even have a Jewish father or mother. Few arrive speaking any Hebrew. So why did they come? Israel's average per capita income is at West European levels, almost \$20,000 – Russia's is closer to \$1,000. While this is not the entire story, it is abundantly clear that what led these people to Israel was not Moses' call from the "Promised Land" but the much more tangible appeal of US-backed hard currency.⁴⁴

What is being constituted in Israel is not a historically developed nation with a full class structure but a garrison state of mercenary settlers, rewarded handsomely for serving on the front lines in the fight to control the Arab world and ensure the steady supply of the oil that the West depends on. Israel is filling the ranks of its garrison settler state by offering the "right of return" to anyone with even the most tenuous claim to be Jewish, while Palestinians, whose families lived in Palestine for generations, are forced to watch over the electric fences as these foreigners set up new lives in their old villages.⁴⁵

All this means that the character of Israeli society divides into two: on one hand it is highly militarised and garrisoned by many people who have settled there in the full knowledge of their criminal role – which makes Israel a formidable foe – whilst on the other hand it is a heterogeneous society, made up of a multitude of different cultures and nationalities (e.g. there are over 20 regular Russian-language news

publications in Israel, not to speak of Romanian, Ukrainian, etc.), large numbers of whom have no real roots in the society and consequently no real sense of national unity. How they will respond to the protracted and more resounding blows of a genuine people's war remains to be seen.

The public refusal of increasing numbers of Israeli reservists to serve in the Occupied Territories, and their denunciation of their mission there is indicative of the kinds of cracks that can appear in fortress Israel. Over 300 Israeli reservists have signed a petition declaring that they refuse to fight "beyond the green line [the pre-1967 borders] in order to rule, expel, destroy, blockade, assassinate, starve and humiliate an entire people."

THE BATTLEFRONT TODAY

The US-Israeli regime faces a serious dilemma. The Palestinians' thirst for national liberation has proved unquenchable. If the Zionists continue to step up their repression and permanently re-occupy the Occupied Territories, they will only increase the Palestinians' desperation and fury through more misery, more bombings, more prisons, more assassinations ... and in the process will also create more targets for Palestinian fighters. The Israeli generals are understandably anxious, and a flurry of repressive programmes are on the agenda, including giant systems of concrete walls, electric fences and canals and trenches to separate and ghettoise the Palestinians. One Israeli officer has told his colleagues that they must study the tactics of the Nazis in the Second World War. If, he argues, "it is the job of an Israeli officer to seize a refugee camp or take over the Nablus *kasbah* ... then he must before all else analyse and bring together the lessons of past battles, even – shocking though this might appear – to analyse how the German army operated in the Warsaw ghetto."⁴⁶ Can there be any more telling indication of how the Israelis regard the Palestinians as an "inferior people", "subhumans" – like their US masters' prisoners in Guantanamo, Cuba – deprived of the most elementary rights? Does this account for the numbers stamped on the arms of the Palestinian prisoners taken in March in the refugee camps? And just what does this herald for the future?

Indeed, just as their US masters have shifted the terms of mainstream political debate "to the right" since the 11 September attacks, so too have Israel's rulers shifted the terms of debate on solving the "Palestine problem". There is increasing talk in Israeli policy circles, including the Cabinet itself, of "transfer", which means expelling the Palestinians from the West Bank and perhaps even the one million Palestinians who are citizens of Israel itself. This is nothing but naked "ethnic cleansing" – and there is no other country on Earth where such discussion is supposedly acceptable. This solution holds a strong attraction for the Zionist bosses, for it was, after all, the ethnic cleansing of 1948 that enabled them to found the Israeli state in the first place, when their "Jewish

jihad" drove out two-thirds of all the Palestinian inhabitants. But unlike Serbia's Milosevic, who is being tried as a war criminal for his far less extensive programme of ethnic cleansing, the Israeli founding fathers were not punished for their crime, but rewarded. Hence the attractiveness today of what some Israelis call "finishing the job" – driving all Palestinians out of their native land.

The imperialists are at the same time also giving some prominence to yet another peace proposal, this time advanced by that great friend of American democracy, the bootlicking imperialist lackey at the head of the Saudi sheiks, Crown Prince Abdullah. Like its predecessors, this plan too would only work to the benefit of Israel and the reactionary Arab states, at the expense of the Palestinians.

**SUPPORT THE JUST STRUGGLE
OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE!**

Today, the Palestinian struggle is linked as never before to world revolu-

tion. Imperialist relations in the region are wound tight as a drum. Any substantial move by a major power can give rise to unintended and unforeseeable consequences that reverberate around the world – as the US found out so dramatically when it was hit by the "blowback" generated in large part by its own power plays in the Middle and Near East. The Middle East, which accounts for 60 per cent of the world's arms purchases, is as much as ever the world's "minefield", where a wrong step can be deadly.

The Second Intifada is forging ahead, refusing to concede the battle field, despite Israel's unquestioned military superiority. Rage is seething throughout the Occupied Territories and the refugee camps of Lebanon and beyond. The stakes are higher than ever for the struggle in Palestine. One Palestinian fighter, when asked by a Western journalist whether he was fearful at the renewed invasion of Gaza by Israeli armed forces, responded, "Why should I be? We have nothing to lose."⁴⁶

The Palestinian people do indeed have nothing to lose, they have no stake in the peace process, nothing to gain in the honeyed words of the imperialists, which disguise only more dead-ends and traps. The blows dealt to the imperialists by the Palestinian struggle have weakened them and strengthened the struggle of the oppressed world-wide, particularly in the Arab world, where there is a deep reservoir of hatred of US imperialism. While these sacrifices have not yet led to victory, the achievements of the Palestinian struggle, in particular preventing the success of the capitulationist Oslo accords, have created better conditions for the advance of revolutionary and liberation struggles around the world, and especially in Palestine itself. The logic of the Palestinian struggle is the logic of the struggle of every oppressed people. As Mao Tsetung summed up, "Make trouble, fail, make trouble again, fail again... till their doom; that is the logic of the imperialists and all reactionaries the world over in dealing with the people's cause, and they will never go against this logic.... Fight, fail, fight again, fail again, fight again... till their victory; that is the logic of the people, and they too will never go against this logic."

The young generation that has

***"We shall drive them out
and take their place."***

– David Ben Gurion, labour Zionist and founder of the State of Israel, in a letter to his son in 1937

Ariel Sharon - "the Butcher of Beirut"

In 1982, the Israeli Defence (sic) Forces, under the command of General Ariel Sharon, invaded southern Lebanon in an effort to subjugate the Palestinian resistance forces that had regrouped there, including Yasser Arafat and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). The Israelis cultivated the Christian Phalangists, a quasi-fascist Lebanese nationalist force, as their junior partners in the invasion. After a lengthy and bloody siege of Beirut, in which between 10,000 and 20,000 civilians were killed, overwhelmingly by the Israeli bombardment, the PLO finally chose not to force a decisive showdown, but to abandon their position in Beirut, and several thousand fighters left for Tunis. Left behind were many thousands of women, children and older people, concentrated in sprawling impoverished camps. The Israeli army quickly established perimeters around these.

Shortly thereafter, on 16 September 1982, the Israeli army allowed heavily armed Christian Phalangists to enter two of the main camps in the Beirut area, Sabra and Chatila, where over a period of several hours they carried out an obvious and very bloody massacre. When they finally left, again under the eyes of the Israeli troops, hundreds – most estimates are of 600-800 or even more – of unarmed Palestinian refugees lay slaughtered. Shortly before a war crimes hearing was scheduled to be held in Belgium concerning Ariel Sharon's responsibility for these massacres, the key witness was blown up by a car bomb in Beirut, in "unexplained circumstances".

The question some pro-US-Israeli forces do not want to face is: Is Ariel Sharon Prime Minister of Israel despite or in fact *because* of his role overseeing this butchery?

taken to the streets in Palestine faces awesome challenges, as Israel threatens unprecedented destruction and carnage. But they have a basis to learn the lessons paid for in the blood and sacrifice of their own forefathers, and of the generations of oppressed worldwide who have fought, and, on a few precious occasions, actually defeated the hated enemy. They have cast away illusions about the peace process. Now it is time to turn aside from the traditional wisdom of yesterday's forces and reach for the weapon of Maoism, the outlook of those at the bottom of the imperialist global empire, those who have nothing to lose, the revolutionary proletariat, and to link up with their representatives from the many battles being fought against imperialism around the globe, in particular the parties and organisations that make up the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement. With the weapon of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and its military strategy, people's war, the Palestinian people's fight will surely become an even stronger and more integral part of the world revolution, hastening the day when imperialism, Zionism and all their running dogs will meet their doom.

ENDNOTES

1 Israel's Supreme Court approved the use of "moderate physical pressure" – torture – on detainees. Half of all Palestinian teenagers from the Occupied Territories experience prison. Alain Gresh, *Israel-Palestine* (Fayard, Paris, 2001), pp. 161, 154.

2 One US official, surveying the state of Arab public opinion and its impact on US manoeuvring room in the Middle East, lamented, "The worse things get between Israel and the Palestinians, the fewer options we have with Iraq." *Time*, 25 March 2002.

3 For more on the context and dynamics of the imperialist-backed restructuring of South Africa's power relations, see "The Changing of the Guard in South Africa", *AWTW* 1995/20.

4 Edward Said, *The End of the Peace Process* (Granta, London, 2000), p. 78.

5 Israel screams that its Palestinian opponents are blurring the distinction between military and civilians and uses this to justify its bloody crimes against Palestinian civilians – but it does the

same thing on a much greater scale as it militarises all Israeli society and turns several hundred thousand illegal settlers into forward support personnel for its troops.

6 Marwan Bishara, *Palestine/Israel: Peace or Apartheid*, Zed, London, 2001, p. 110; Edward Said, *The New Intifada*, edited by Roane Carey, Verso, London, 2001, p. 36.

7 Sara Roy, "Decline and Disfigurement: The Palestinian Economy after Oslo", *The New Intifada*, p. 99.

8 Edward Said, "Palestine Under Siege", *The New Intifada*, p. 28; Bishara, *Israel/Palestine*, p. 105.

9 Salman Abu Sitta, "The Implementation of the Right of Return", *The New Intifada*, 301.

10 Said, *The New Intifada*, p. 28.

11 Edward Said estimates losses for the first six months of 2000 at three times total donor aid. *The New Intifada*, p. 28.

12 Said, *The New Intifada*, p. 28.

13 Israeli GNP is \$100 billion, the Palestinians \$4 billion. Avishai Margalit, "The Middle East: Snakes and Ladders", *New York Review of Books*, 17 May 2001. Gresh, p. 159.

14 Sara Roy, *The New Intifada*, p. 104.

15 Bishara, *Palestine/Israel*, p. 102, 105.

16 Bishara, *Palestine/Israel*, p. 109.

17 Mouin Rabbani, "A Smorgasbord of Failure: Oslo and the Al-Aqsa Intifada", *The New Intifada*, p. 77.

18 What some Israeli critics have called, drawing on Biblical language, "the original sin".

19 Bishara, *Palestine/Israel*, pp. 7, 77.

20 It is beyond the scope of this article to return to the question of the founding of the Israeli state. For more on this see *AWTW* 1988/11, which devoted a special section to Palestine and the Middle East. However, it is worth noting a few more recent developments regarding this subject. For years Israeli historians were all but monolithic in their propagandistic views of the 1948 events. Recently, in part due to the shocks dealt by the First Intifada, cracks have begun to appear in historical accounts from within Israel itself. What are called the "new historians" have, while not breaking with basic Israeli policy, come to accept certain charges long made by Palestinians. They have, for instance, drawn on previously inaccessible Is-

raeli archives that prove that the Israeli army did indeed practice mass terror to drive the Palestinians from the land and to prevent them returning in the immediate aftermath of the war. See Norman G. Finkelstein, *Image and Reality of the Palestine Conflict*, Verso, London, 1995.

21 This argument is found even among Israel's peace movement. Amos Oz, for instance, a novelist and founder of the Peace Now movement in Israel, recently argued that, "We shall never be able to agree to the return of the refugees to within the borders of Israel, for the meaning of such a return would be the elimination of the State of Israel" – meanwhile, in the 1990s one million Russians, half without even a Jewish parent, have been accepted into Israel. *The New Intifada*, p. 172.

22 Even one of Clinton's advisors was forced to make this observation. Hussein Agha and Robert Malley, "Camp David: The Tragedy of Errors", *New York Review of Books*, 9 August 2001.

23 For more on this see *AWTW* 1988/11, which examines the relationship between Zionism and imperialism and how Israel has functioned as an outpost of US imperialism. It also looks at the decision of the then socialist USSR under Stalin to give initial recognition to the Zionist state, examines the factors behind that and criticises the Soviet decision from the viewpoint of revolutionary Maoism.

24 *News from Within*, December 2001, Alternative Information Center, Jerusalem.

25 Said, *The New Intifada*, p. 40.

26 The David versus Goliath image so assiduously cultivated by pro-Israel propagandists – "tiny Israel versus a sea of Arabs" – has suffered a beating during the two Intifadas. Moreover, revelations from Israeli archives opened up in recent years have revealed some surprises, including that in the 1948 war Israeli troops actually outnumbered their Arab opponents. See among others Gresh, *Israel-Palestine*.

27 Bishara, *Palestine/Israel*, p. 7.

28 Public spending as a percentage of GDP by the Palestinian Authority rose from 12 per cent in 1994 to 25 per cent in 1999. This reflected both the decline in the Palestinian economy, as well as increased spending on police forces funded by foreign aid, rendering the

Palestinian Authority even more dependent on the imperialists, principally the US.

29 The defeats inflicted on the Arab armies in the 1967 and 1973 wars seem to have led Arafat and his Fatah forces to conclude that the prospects of defeating the US-Zionist state were slim or non-existent, and that the best they could do would be to accept Israel's existence and settle for a mini-state. Much of the rest of the Palestinian left refused this conclusion and formed what was called the "rejection front". For more on this, see AWTW 11/1988.

30 After the coup in the mid-1950s which reversed the revolution and re-established capitalism, the new Soviet bourgeoisie gave particular emphasis to challenging their US imperialist rivals in the Middle East. The Soviet social-imperialists sought to use the contradictions between the Arab regimes and the US and in particular Israel to carve out their own sphere of influence. Ultimately, however, they suffered serious setbacks, in particular when Egypt expelled the Soviet advisers there. After the 1978 Camp David agreement Egypt moved directly into the US camp.

31 Hamas arose out of the Muslim Brotherhood, which, according to Alain Gresh, "during the 1970s and 1980s received help from the Israeli secret services to fight the PLO" (*Israel-Palestine*, p. 170). A 3 April 2002 article in *Le Monde* entitled "The Israeli Army Is Hitting Harder at the Palestinian Authority than Hamas" details how the Israeli armed forces systematically respond to Hamas suicide bombings by striking at Arafat's forces and infrastructure and suggests an implicit complicity between Hamas and the Israeli army. The latter has often struck murderously at the armed Islamic movement but never, the article says, at its political wing or institutions. The correspondent concludes that getting rid of Arafat would strengthen Hamas, and cites Israeli government figures who have spoken in favour of such a development.

32 For more on this again see "Islam: Ideology and Tool of the Exploiting Classes" in this issue.

33 In this it resembles many other nationalist forces, such as the Irish Republican Army, the Basque ETA and others that use terror tactics in an effort to make the price paid by the oc-

cupying force too high to continue.

34 It is worth noting the events that immediately preceded the launch of the suicide attacks. The Israeli forces had been hit hard by the First Intifada and subsequent mass Palestinian upsurges, and evidently made changes to their strategy. When the Second Intifada broke out, the Israelis deployed significant numbers of snipers to shoot down rock-throwing youth. Numerous human rights groups noted the unusually high levels of killed and maimed children among the Palestinian casualties. Using this strategy, in the first week of the Intifada the Israeli forces suffered two losses while the Palestinians suffered five killed on the first day, ten on the second, and then eight, six, seven and six on subsequent days. (Margalit, "Snakes and Ladders", *NYRB*). The Israeli command seemed to believe they were going to be able to sit safely at a distance and simply blast the Palestinians into submission, but events turned out otherwise.

35 Even obliging the docile US puppet Kofi Anan, head of the UN, to speak out. Regarding shooting children, one Israeli sniper said: "You don't shoot if they're 12 or younger. Over 12, and it's authorised. That's what they tell us." *Le Monde*, 24 November 2000.

36 Quoted in Gresh, *Israel-Palestine*, p. 27.

37 To be clear, advocating the destruction of Israel does not mean "driving the Jews into the sea", as many Zionists claim, or as some reactionary forces among the Arab regimes, such as the Saudi ruling class, have at times foolishly boasted. One thing Zionists and feudal sheikhs have in common is the reactionary notion that Jews cannot live in peace with other peoples and thus need to be kept apart.

38 Though ominously for Israel, the Palestinian population is increasing at a rapid rate: half of all Palestinians are under the age of 18. Bishara, *Palestine/Israel*, p. 39.

39 Bishara was consciously seeking just such a "third way" which he formulated as an effort "to avoid either capitulation or war". Nonetheless, his parliamentary immunity has been lifted and he is being charged with support for terrorism. *News from Within*, December 2001.

40 For more on the possible application of the principles of Maoist peo-

ple's war to this region and actual possibilities for fighting the US-Israeli state, for example by fomenting rebellion in an allied state like Egypt so as to draw the Israelis out of their home base and spread their forces thin where they are more vulnerable to attack, see "Drown the US Invaders in a Sea of People's War!", AWTW 1991/16.

41 Israel tries to fight wars of quick decision and to use blitzkrieg-type tactics, as in the Six Days War – but its vulnerability was exposed, above all, in the course of the protracted warfare it faced during its invasion of Lebanon. It finally beat an undignified retreat.

42 Bishara, *Palestine/Israel*, p. 99.

43 The lack of Jewish roots of the Russian immigrants is so flagrant that the Israeli rabbinate often refuses to allow them to be buried as Jews. Gresh, *Israel-Palestine*. For a more in-depth treatment of the issue of the nature of Israel and the Jewish people, see AWTW 1988/11. The Russians tended to be highly educated and have given a big boost to the Israeli economy.

44 The imperialists regularly use their state power to "create facts on the ground", as the Israelis have sought to do in Palestine. Though Palestine is unique, nonetheless there are certain similarities in the way the imperialists divided up other nations in the post-Second World War re-division of the globe, in particular Vietnam, Korea and Germany. In each of these countries, the US carved out a large part of the country and tried to establish it as an independent, historically legitimate entity. The world was treated to the sight of prestigious American academics pontificating about how South Vietnam had always had a certain separate existence from the North, and was not truly part of the same nation. The lies behind this shameless propaganda stood out starkly as soon as US firepower was defeated on the field of battle – just as the Zionist lies of a "land without a people for a people without a land" have been blown apart by the guns of the Palestinian resistance.

45 Robert Fisk, *The Independent*, 30 March 2002.

46 *Guardian*, 7 March 2002.

47 Said, *The New Intifada*, p. 34. ■



Rolpa district, 250 miles west of Kathmandu, Nepal.

People's War in Nepal

Dramatic Advances

As our magazine goes to press in early April 2002, the People's War in Nepal has been facing a difficult test of strength with the reactionary regime and its Royal Nepal Army. On both sides the level of fighting has increased dramatically, as the newly arising people's power struggles to be born, while the guardians of the old, decrepit feudal and pro-imperialist order are waging an increasingly desperate and ferocious effort to stamp out the flames of revolution and the aspirations of the masses.

As indicated in the previous issue of *AWTW*, the revolution in Nepal had already been developing at a dizzying pace in the year 2001. Larger and

higher-quality assaults by the people's armed forces against the authorities of the old state resulted in some major defeats for the enemy, with large numbers killed and wounded and important stocks of weapons and ammunition captured. From its early origins in 1996, when it began with only a few outmoded rifles, the revolutionary armed forces in Nepal have developed into a powerful People's Liberation Army (PLA) capable of waging not only guerrilla attacks but also, and increasingly, major assaults involving hundreds of combatants using modern weapons seized from the enemy.

The advances in the People's War have gone hand-in-hand with dramatic

shifts in the political landscape in Nepal. The ruling structures, increasingly battered by the forces of revolution, have proved increasingly incapable of serving the interests of the reactionary ruling classes. Even as all the reactionaries huddled together tightly to protect themselves from a more aroused people, their class nature and their fear of looming disaster has led to sharp, bitter and sometimes deadly conflict within their ranks of exploiters and their hangers-on.

Events took a particularly sharp turn after the Royal Palace massacre in May 2001, when King Birenda and most of his family were murdered. Coming right on the heels of the resound-

ing victories of the armed forces under the leadership of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) (CPN(M)) in April and May before the Palace massacre and June and July following it, in late July 2001 a new Prime Minister was appointed, who declared a ceasefire and opened negotiations with the CPN(M). The cease-fire lasted for a period of four months, and was a kind of armed truce during which both sides made preparations for the inevitable renewal of hostilities.

On the reactionary side, the class enemy used the period of the ceasefire to regroup their badly disorganised and demoralised forces in the face of the losses in the People's War and the crumbling of the monarchy, which has always been the linchpin of the feudal system in Nepal. In particular, it was necessary to try to establish the authority of the new King Gyrendra over the Royal Nepal Army, the pillar of the state apparatus.

The cease-fire corresponded to the wishes of broad sections of people in Nepal, especially in the cities and from the middle and upper classes, who hoped that a peaceful solution could be found to the problems of the country. Both sides to the conflict strove to appeal to this section of people. The CPN(M) also made use of the ceasefire period to consolidate the process of forming a nation-wide people's government and to further organise the People's Liberation Army.

Three rounds of negotiations were held. The Maoists, as the CPN(M) is popularly known, called for the establishment of a constituent assembly, formation of an interim government and the abolition of the monarchy. In the course of the negotiations the CPN(M) withdrew its demand for an immediate abolition of the monarchy, saying that this matter could be referred to the constituent assembly.

During the course of the negotiations came 11 September. This important development sharply underlined that events in Nepal, including the unfolding of the struggle for state power, do not take place in a vacuum. The negotiations in Nepal were being closely surveyed by Nepal's reactionary neighbours (China and, above all, India). For several months, while the maps on the imperialist news broadcasts of the Afghanistan theatre of war clearly showed Nepal, their commentators were strangely silent, despite the

drama being played out in the country. The US and Britain were guarded in their comments, basically saying that whether the CPN(M) and the revolution in Nepal were to be considered "terrorist" or not would depend on the outcome of the negotiations. In other words, they held out both a carrot and stick.

At the same time Nepal's reactionary ruling class, like many of their look-alikes in charge of repressing the people in other Third World countries, felt emboldened by the so-called "war on terrorism" and the hope that in the new international climate they could count on US imperialist guns and money to root out the revolutionary forces. The demands of the CPN(M), representing the felt needs of the great majority of the people of the country, were disregarded and the ruling class essentially demanded what would have been an abject surrender — recognition of Nepal's reactionary institutions, such as the monarchy, army and parliament. Meanwhile, the Royal Nepal Army was continuing to press ahead with its preparations for an all-out assault on the revolution, a new paramilitary force aimed only at the Maoists was being prepared and terror was unleashed against revolutionary students in the capital, Kathmandu.

The rupture of the negotiations came on 23 November with an announcement by CPN(M) Chairman Prachanda. Two days later massive attacks took place in twelve districts throughout Nepal. The CPN(M) struck especially hard in the Dang valley and its district capital Ghorai. All of the district administrative offices were seized, including the police headquarters and the local prison. Forty-five or more security personnel were killed, including a number of Royal Nepal Army soldiers, and many more were wounded or taken prisoner. The press reported that hundreds of weapons were seized, including automatic rifles and machine guns. In Kalidamara a 46-member patrol of the recently formed paramilitary Armed Police Force Unit was ambushed and 44 were reported missing. According to the January 2002 edition of *People's March*, a revolutionary journal from India, for "four days after the Friday attacks battles raged throughout Nepal".

The military attacks, the cutting edge of the people's offensive, were accompanied by powerful political

blows as well. A central people's government of 37 members was created, representing a wide section of districts, national minorities and political tendencies in Nepal. The new government is called the United Revolutionary People's Council and is led by Comrade Baburam Bhattarai, a senior leader of the CPN(M).

The response by the class enemy was swift. On 26 November, King Gyrendra declared a state of emergency throughout the country. The government banned the CPN(M) and any organisation affiliated with it as "terrorist". The emergency declaration "suspended all constitutional rights, including freedom of speech, the right to assembly, the right to move throughout the kingdom, press and publication rights, the right to information, right to property, right to privacy and the right to constitutional remedy" (*People's March*) and granted the government the right to preventive detention. Accompanying this were the typical efforts of the reactionaries to manufacture divisions in the Party, anointing first one and then another leader as "hard-line" or "moderate". Like previous efforts of this type, these lies were shattered by the solid unity and determination of the Party and its leadership.

The offices of *Jandisha* and *Janadesh*, two newspapers that support the positions of the CPN(M), were raided and all the staff present were arrested. Other journalists for left journals were also taken into custody. One issue of Nepal's leading English language daily, the *Kathmandu Post*, was banned because it contained pictures of Maoists. Journalists from many political positions complained of arbitrary arrests by the government (one journalist sharply opposed to the People's War protested that by late March, 75 journalists had been arrested only for exercising their profession).

The Royal Nepal Army (RNA) was ordered to carry out a nation-wide offensive against the Maoists. According to reports from the CPN(M), these operations were taking place using the typical methods of reactionary armies, past and present, lashing out viciously, but blindly, and taking revenge on common people by murder, rape, theft and torture. While a number of Maoist fighters have been martyred, it is mainly villagers who have been the focus of the enemy's fury.

The new laws made parliament more and more irrelevant, exposing it as a meaningless "talk shop", while the real business of the state is conducted by the executive and especially the military. Even Nepal's colourful array of revisionists and opportunists were restricted in some of their political movements.

Despite the efforts of the class enemy to portray the Maoists as terrorists and responsible for the violence that has resurged throughout the country, reports to AWTW indicate that the great majority of the population, even many of those who had been holding out unrealistic hopes for progress in the negotiations, are clearly seeing through the government's lies and holding the latter fully responsible for the war.

During this period, the Nepalese ruling class turned to its imperialist backers, as well as to India and China, for support against the Maoists. The CPN(M) Standing Committee of the Political Bureau adopted a resolution noting that, "It is now crystal clear that the brutal aggression in Afghanistan was, objectively and ultimately, a part of the grotesque strategy of US imperialism to establish a strong military base there for carrying out its plunder and hegemony in South Asia. Western imperialism under the cover of war against terrorism is blatantly moving ahead in its 'master plan' to ruthlessly crush the right of rebellion practised by the oppressed masses of South Asia. Caught in the quagmire of hatred, anger and rebellion of the masses, the ruling classes of all the countries of this region are playing the dirty game of ensuring their own survival against the masses by dancing to the tunes of imperialism in abject subservience." (*Maoist Information Bulletin*, Number 2, an occasional publication of the CPN(M))

It was the reactionary regime of India that took the most aggressive posture in support of the government. It promised to deliver several helicopters to the RNA, as well as all sorts of other military equipment. Jaswant Singh, who at that time was holding both the Foreign Minister and Defence Minister portfolios, was the first international leader to officially label the CPN(M) as terrorist with all that implies in today's world situation. Even Colin Powell himself did not go that far

on his visit to Kathmandu on 18-19 January, carefully avoiding applying the "terrorist" label. While pledging military equipment and help to the Nepalese reactionaries, Powell also clucked his tongue about the government's need to "eliminate poverty" and for an early end to the State of Emergency.

Under the guise of stopping Pakistani infiltrators from using Nepal to enter India, the Indian army began a major build-up along the entire length of the Nepalese border. On 22 March, Prime Minister Deuba went hat-in-hand to India to meet with Prime Minister Vajpayee. All accounts indicate that the main item on the agenda was co-operation against the CPN(M) and, more generally, against the revolutionary forces in the region. Deuba specifically demanded that action be taken against forces in India that support the People's War in Nepal.¹

The war continued to develop in much the same way for several months. Every day was marked by armed clashes between the people's armed forces and the RNA and by reprisal raids by the enemy forces. Various kinds of illegal political mobilisations took place under the leadership of the CPN(M) in both town and countryside. On 17 February the war leapt to an even higher plane, with a massive battle in the district town of Achham, a few days after the sixth anniversary of the initiation of the People's War. (It also occurred shortly before the three-month expiration of the State of Emergency had to be submitted to Parliament, where a two-thirds vote would be required for its extension.) The world was astounded when the PLA carried out a massive assault on Achham. During six hours of fierce fighting, 143 soldiers, paramilitaries and government officials were killed. Huge stocks of weapons and ammunitions were carried off by the victorious PLA. A nearby airport was also captured and another 30 enemy security personnel killed. Only a few days later another big victory was won, when on 21 February Maoist rebels stormed a police post at Shitalpati in the Salyan district, killing at least 34 policemen, including two inspectors. These victories made headlines throughout the world.

This blow gave great heart to the masses in Nepal, as well as to their friends all over the world. At the same

time it was a profoundly disorienting and panic-inducing blow to Nepal's reactionary classes. Even though the reactionaries were well aware of the certainty of attacks on the anniversary of the People's War and even though the district Administrator in Achham had been sending out more and more frantic calls for state protection, the state came face to face with its inability to defend all of its positions, even relatively important ones, at once from the revolutionary forces, which had been showing their capacity to attack suddenly in different parts of the country. As the echoes of the battle were still ringing, the nation-wide bandh (general strike) called for by the newly formed central people's government, the United Revolutionary People's Council, took place with resounding success.

Perhaps no forces were more shaken than the opportunists and revisionists. While they had been careful to play their assigned roles of making noises against the government and the State of Emergency, whilst focusing their attacks on the CPN(M), in the aftermath of Achham there was no more room for them to wiggle. In particular, the CPN (United Marxist-Leninists), referred to as "UML", the largest opposition party in Nepal, was needed to vote for the extension of the State of Emergency. (Originally it had been floated out that perhaps the UML parliamentary members could simply arrange to be outside the hall during the vote and thus allow the State of Emergency to pass using that underhanded method. But in the wake of the CPN(M) victories, it seems that UML's masters decided that only full and active endorsement of the government's anti-people onslaught would do.) True to its form, the UML, friend and allied party of the opportunists, revisionists and even some wavering communist forces internationally, in the finest tradition of the traitors of the Second International who voted for war credits in the First World War or revisionists who have been helping reactionaries fight the Maoists in India, Peru, Turkey and elsewhere, voted 100 per cent for the extension of the State of Emergency. The only fig leaf (or was it just pure bribery?) that was accorded them was a promise by the government to carry out "poverty alleviation" schemes!

The badly stung Royal Nepal Army redoubled its efforts to take revenge. In mid-March, they announced with great fanfare that a camp in Rolpa had been raided and 68 "Maoists" killed. At the time of writing, we do not know the actual story of this development but it is important to note the words of Chairman Prachanda from only a few weeks before: "Any Nepalese who writes or speaks even a minimal truth has been branded as a 'Maoist terrorist' or his supporter. Whether a cadre of a political party or an anti-autocrat journalist, human rightist, social worker or intellectual of any ideological path; whether innocent, unarmed or common people engaged in small occupation for their livelihood in the rural areas; they are all made victims of the military terror and atrocities of feudal autocrats.... Baseless and false propaganda such as having killed 200 Maoists, though only 14 gallant warriors of the People's Liberation Army had attained martyrdom while capturing the district headquarter of Solukhumbu, killing innocent peasants in the villages but gabbing falsely about encounters with the Maoists..."

"Presently, the basic leadership of highest to lowest level of our Party has been safe and amidst the masses, successfully advancing activities. Of course, the enemy has killed many and revealed some of our good activists in urban areas, and many have been captured. They have captured our alternate Politburo member Comrade Rabindra Shrestha in the capital. Similarly, dozens of our fighters have attained martyrdom in the real and successful war with the enemies, setting historic records of bravery and sacrifice. Having captured thousands of our supporters and well-wishers in bazaars and easy areas, the enemy has been torturing them mentally and physically. All these facts show the losses to the movement. But when we compare this with the sacrifice inevitable in defending and developing the revolution against the ultimate and total force of the enemy, we see that it is, indeed, very minimal. Sacrifice of the part for the defence of the whole is a law of science." (Interview with Comrade Prachanda made available to AWTW, early February 2002.)

Almost immediately after the PLA victories in Achham and Salyan, the US and the British imperialists began

to sing a different tune. According to press accounts, "after a weekend visit to Achham and Salyan, US Ambassador Michael E. Malinowski compared the Maoists with al-Qaeda terrorists led by Osama bin Laden. 'In democracies, the death of even one police officer or one soldier is a community and national tragedy. I salute each and every police officer and soldier who has died at the hands of Maoist terrorists.'" (*Spotlight*, 1 March 2002)

The British imperialists sent the British Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs responsible for South Asia, Ben Bradshaw, to Kathmandu immediately after the attacks. He said, "Britain will certainly help Nepal. We have also experienced in Northern Ireland a similar kind of problem for 35 years. There is a need for a robust attack on this type of terrorism.... The insurgency has been ruthless and relentless.... The government has received greater sympathy from the world community after the latest ruthless assault. Any democratic government has the right to defend its citizens. After the 11 September attacks [in the United States], there has been a greater obligation to stop terrorism in the world. We have already passed legislation to stop terrorist propaganda." (*Spotlight*)

Every great revolution, one that has truly aroused the masses in their millions and mobilised them in the fight to take political power, can only advance by confronting new problems and finding new solutions. Protracted people's war, like all revolutionary processes, is full of sound and fury, sudden twists and turns, periods of rapid breakthrough punctuating periods of quantitative development. The drama of the unexpected creates even more favourable conditions for bringing out the Maoists' greatest weapon – man's conscious dynamic role in waging war.

The Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), under the leadership of its Chairman, Comrade Prachanda, has been steering the revolution through the turbulent seas whilst under constant fire from not only the reactionaries in Nepal but increasingly from the world's leading imperialists, as well as the Indian reactionaries.

It is of the utmost importance that the new upsurge in the People's War in Nepal is taking place at the very time that, the US imperialists are leading a

world-wide "war on terrorism", now focused a few hundred kilometres to the west of Nepal. The sacrifice and daring of the fighting peasants and workers of Nepal is making the Maoist alternative come alive in splendid colour for all those who care to see. With millions of the poor increasingly mobilised to struggle, with vast and deep support from all sections of society, urban as well as rural, the flimsy, threadbare label of "terrorist" cannot be made to stick at all. A new power, people's power, is emerging and consolidating in the Himalayas, and it is already influencing the revolutionary situation as a whole in the vital South Asian region, home to one-fourth of humanity.

What frightens the imperialists the most is not just the blows that the reactionary armed forces have received at the hands of the People's Liberation Army. It is that from the bottom of society, the millions of toiling masses who have been despised by the ruling class of Nepal as little more than "talking tools", as the ancient Greeks referred to slaves, have shown that they can seize their destiny and challenge the chains of centuries of exploitation and reactionary tradition. They are showing once again that, as Mao put it, "the people and the people alone are the motive force in the making of world history." In a time when, using the defeats of past socialist states, the imperialists have launched a propaganda onslaught to say that there is no alternative to a world of class division and exploitation, the thunder from the Himalayas fills those who hear its echo with hope and determination.

ENDNOTES

- 1 The CPN(M) also made some moves on the diplomatic stage with a letter signed by Comrade Prachanda as Chairman of the Party and Supreme Commander of the People's Liberation Army and Comrade Bhattarai as convener of the United Revolutionary People's Council addressed to the United Nations, Indian, US and Chinese governments and the European Union denouncing the efforts of the Nepalese reactionaries to paint the insurgency as "terrorist" and calling on "all countries; international bodies and particularly the two immediate neighbours, India and China, not to interfere in the internal affairs of Nepal and let the Nepalese people decide their own political future themselves."

Long Live Red May First!

By the Committee of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement

This First of May 2002 dawns on a world that is different in many ways from what it was only a short time ago. Most importantly, there has been a leap in the world situation – the forces of imperialism and reaction, headed by the US, and the forces of the people, although often scattered and under different kinds of leadership, are locked in combat on a world scale more sharply than at any time in recent decades.

With the declaration of its “war on terrorism”, the US has gone on a rampage against the world’s people for the all but openly avowed purpose of consolidating a global American empire and enforcing what it considers a “favourable environment” in which to squeeze even greater profits out of the labour of the people in the dominated countries. Acting both through their own troops and their puppets who rule these countries, they have launched a global terror campaign to crush anything that could stand in their way.

While the US launched its aerial bombardments and ground special forces killers on Afghanistan, it also unleashed its Zionist guard dogs against the Palestinian people. Operating with American arms and money and US blessings, Israel is carrying out the bloodiest “ethnic cleansing” since the Zionist settlers first stole the land from the Palestinians.

In country after country the ruling classes are trying to stamp out every spark of the people’s resistance. But this is only one aspect of what is becoming an increasingly fierce and more globalised battle on both sides. Every act of resistance by the people to the US war machine is a source of strength for the world-wide revolutionary struggle of the proletariat and the oppressed peoples and nations. The Palestinian people, numbering only a few million and fighting under desperate circumstances, are taking their place on the front line of the resistance to the US-led offensive, and are daring to stand up and stand fast in the most unequal combat. They have given voice and inspiration to people everywhere and have become a major, unexpected and for the imperialists and their flunkies most unwelcome factor in the unfolding of world events. If the US & Co. expected their mechanised “war on terrorism” to be able to simply and smoothly roll over the people, the Palestinian people have shown otherwise.

The Marxist-Leninist-Maoist parties have been in the forefront of leading the people in their struggles for liberation. The People’s War under the leadership of the Communist Party of Peru (PCP) has persevered for nearly 22 years, holding high the red flag of revolution and representing the hopes of the downtrodden for a world they rule and completely transform. In the Philippines, Turkey, India and elsewhere the revolutionary armed struggle is continuing and coming more and more into direct conflict with the US-led crusade. In Nepal during the last few months the People’s War, launched six years ago, has reached a critical juncture. On the one hand, the great advances of the People’s Liberation Army led by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) have made it possible for millions of peasants and their allies to overthrow the feudal landlords and bureaucrat capitalists in vast areas of the countryside, set up their own political power and begin to build a whole new society based on the interests of the people. On the other hand, the increasingly cornered ruling class is lashing out against the masses, sending its army to kill, rape and terrorise the common people and abolishing elementary rights through a declaration of emergency. On this May First we call on all revolutionary and progressive people to step up support for the People’s War in Nepal and to condemn the State of Emergency there.

Defend the Life of Chairman Gonzalo

After his capture and a secret, summary military trial before faceless judges in 1992, Chairman Gonzalo, leader of the Communist Party of Peru (PCP) and the People's War in that country, was thrown into an isolation cell in an underground military prison. He and other PCP leaders are still being held there today. He was last seen in public on 24 September 1992. In what was supposed to be a humiliating appearance before the press, he stunned the regime and thrilled the world by issuing a resounding call to continue the revolutionary war. The now defunct and discredited Fujimori regime made an unacceptable attempt to attribute political views to Chairman Gonzalo whilst keeping him cut off from the outside world. The new government of Alejandro Toledo

has yet to put a decisive end to this situation. So far it has not met the demands raised both in Peru and internationally that Chairman Gonzalo be allowed contact with family, friends, attorneys and others, and, most importantly to express himself publicly and in person. The International Emergency Committee to Save the Life of Dr Abimael Guzman (Chairman Gonzalo) sent a seventh delegation to Lima in March 2001 to pursue this struggle. It is especially important today, when the Toledo regime is facing increasing political turmoil, and the issue of political prisoners is being debated in various quarters, to continue to demand, "Break the Isolation! Present Chairman Gonzalo live before the world press!" ■



Long Live Red May First (continued)

People living in the imperialist countries, including the US, are increasingly taking a strong and active stand with the peoples of the world against the parasitic imperialist ruling classes who feed on 90 per cent of the world's people and on the proletariat of their own countries. The world-shaking movement against the war in Vietnam is a standard to live up to and surpass in an ever more tumultuous world where resolute and enlightened struggle may open up unprecedented possibilities.

In fact, the US-led world-wide reactionary offensive is accelerating the awakening of masses across the globe to political life and calling forth its opposite: determined resistance in all its many forms, in a rising spiral of confrontation. The Revolutionary Internationalist Movement supports this resistance wholeheartedly, and will strive to link up its various streams and help lead them into a single raging current that can fully and finally emancipate humanity.

**Down with Imperialism! Stop the US-driven War Machine!
Palestine Will Win!**

Support the People's War in Nepal – End the State of Emergency!

Long Live Proletarian Internationalism!

Build and Strengthen Marxist-Leninist-Maoist Parties United in RIM!

New Participants of RIM: The Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) (Naxalbari) and the Maoist Communist Centre

By the Committee of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement

The Committee of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (CoRIM) is happy to announce the admission of two Marxist-Leninist-Maoist organisations from India as full participants in the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM) — the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) (Naxalbari) (CPI(ML) (Naxalbari))¹ and the Maoist Communist Centre (MCC)².

RIM is governed by organisational principles that are in keeping with its character as the embryonic centre of the world's Maoist forces and its task of struggling for the creation of a communist international of a new type. Admitting new participants into RIM is no light matter. While there is always debate and struggle within RIM on questions of politics and ideology, participants must adhere to RIM's basic line as expressed in its *Declaration* and its document *Long Live Marxism-Leninism-Maoism!* Participating in RIM means carrying out systematic revolutionary work and developing solid communist organisation in a party's own country and fulfilling Lenin's instruction: "There is one, and only one, kind of real internationalism, and this is—working wholeheartedly for the development of the revolutionary movement and the revolutionary struggle in *one's own country*, and supporting (by propaganda, sympathy, and material aid) *this struggle*, this, and *only this*, line, in *every country* without exception."

Both these organisations have had long, deep contacts with CoRIM and RIM parties and organisations. On the basis of this interaction and also in the course of joint revolutionary activities, RIM has determined that both of them meet the high standards for participation in RIM.

India is home to hundreds of millions of toiling workers and peasants who have long suffered under the

weight of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. It is also a country with a glorious history of revolutionary struggle, including most notably the Naxalbari movement, which lit the sparks of people's war in India that communist revolutionaries have struggled and sacrificed to spread. Fulfilling the hopes and dreams of the Indian people for liberation depends on uniting all of the genuine Marxist-Leninist-Maoist forces into a single proletarian vanguard party, guided by a correct revolutionary line and tightly united in RIM. The complexities of the revolutionary process in India, including its vast size, the history of the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist movement and other factors, makes the forging of such a single vanguard party no easy matter. We are convinced that the admission of the CPI(ML)(Naxalbari) and the MCC as participants of RIM will spur this process onward.

There are a number of Marxist-Leninist-Maoist organisations in India that are still not part of RIM. This includes comrades who have been fighting heroically against the enemy for many years and have paid a heavy price for their courageous revolutionary stand. CoRIM has had good relations with some of these forces, and we have learnt from them and will continue to discuss and struggle with them. We are confident that, over time, these comrades will also come to fully appreciate the need for a centre for the world's Maoist forces and will join together with us in building RIM and fighting for a new communist international.

We consider the incorporation of the MCC and the CPI (ML) (Naxalbari) into RIM a great victory for our Movement and a great step forward for the cause of proletarian revolution in India.

Naxalbari Zindabad!
Forward towards a United Proletarian

Vanguard Party in India!
Red Salute to the Struggle in Andhra,
Bihar and Dandakaranya!
Long Live Marxism-Leninism-Mao-
ism!
Long Live RIM!

1 April 2002

ENDNOTES

¹ The CPI(ML)(Naxalbari) has its roots in the former Central Reorganisation Committee of the CPI(ML), itself one of a number of centres that emerged from the CPI(ML) founded by Charu Mazumdar in 1970. The CRC had been a founding participant of RIM in 1984. The CPI(ML)(Naxalbari) includes comrades who had waged struggle against opportunist positions of the CRC at different stages and, over a lengthy period of struggle and realignment, joined forces to form a new centre of the CPI(ML). See AWTW 2000/26 for further information on the ideological and political positions of this organisation and its historical development. The CPI(ML)(Naxalbari) has been a candidate participant in RIM since the former's formation.

² The MCC was formed in 1969 in the course of the Naxalbari movement, as part of a general trend to break with the revisionist positions of the Communist Party of India and the CPI(Marxist). From early on, the MCC comrades integrated with the masses of poor and landless peasants, at first in the Indian states of Bihar and West Bengal, and led the masses in carrying forward armed struggle against the local feudal goons and, increasingly, the armed forces of the reactionary state. Although the MCC previously did not have formal organisational links to RIM, in the last few years a period of vigorous discussion and struggle has taken place between the MCC and CoRIM over cardinal questions of ideological and political line, and there has been increasing practical co-operation between the MCC and the RIM parties and organisations in the South Asian region. ■



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Islam: Ideology and Tool of the Exploiting Classes

By Nasreen Jazayeri¹

The following article was commissioned by *A World To Win* to examine the role of Islam as a political force in the world today. Dealing with Islam is only part of the task of revolutionaries confronting the recent rise of religion, which is undergoing a revival that would have seemed unthinkable only a few decades ago. Religion appeared to have been relegated to a private concern in large areas of the world, in part due to the rise of socialism and scientific Marxism. But the world changed. The revolutions in the USSR and then China were defeated. The wave of national liberation struggles that shook the 1960s ebbed. Also importantly, science fell into further discredit, as it became identified in the eyes of millions with horrendous weapons of mass destruction and luxury gadgets for the wealthy, while the poor groan under the ever heavier burden of the intensified production and immiseration associated with technology-fuelled imperialist "globalisation".

The new wave of religiosity is, therefore, closely linked with the defeats inflicted on world revolution and the horrors inflicted on the masses.

Religion has also continued to be used as a weapon in the hands of those who rule. The appointment of Christian fascists to key posts in the US government by Bush junior is indicative of the importance the US imperialists give to using religion to shore up their legitimacy, to

anaesthetise the masses to the real cause of their suffering and to mobilise hard-core reactionaries behind the "core values" of bourgeois rule. Just as Hitler used anti-Semitism to rally Germany to war, so too the US imperialists are turning to Christian fundamentalist ideology to gear their subjects to their ambitious new imperial quest at home and abroad. Thus Bush calls for a "crusade" against the Islamic fundamentalists and for the Chinese to embrace "faith", while respectable US Senators commemorate the victims of 11 September by reading from the Bible to give their god's guidance in such circumstances. Indeed, with respect to the role religion has played as a standard-bearer for reactionary crimes, Christianity still has no rival.

The reason this article focuses on Islam is not because of any belief that it is in some way fundamentally different from other religions. On the contrary, from an ideological viewpoint, Marxism treats all religions equally. But Islam does have influence among an important section of the world's oppressed. In contrast to the world's imperialists, who have targeted Islamic fundamentalism out of chauvinism, the Maoists seek to unveil the actual interests behind the Islamic religious forces so as to unleash the masses in important parts of the planet to fight the imperialists and reactionaries with greater determination and thoroughness.

— *A World To Win*

Islamic political parties or groups that are in opposition to the ruling cliques in the Middle Eastern countries have played a major role on the political stage for at least three decades. These Islamic forces, claiming to oppose and fight (or wage jihad) against Western imperialist powers and their neo-colonial client states in the Middle East, have been able, at times, and to a significant degree, to influence sections of the social base of neo-democratic and socialist revolution — the workers, peasants and semi-proletarians. But neither their ideology nor their programme represent the interests of the masses to the slightest degree. To bring out this truth has been a continuous and pressing challenge for the revolutionary communist forces in the Middle East in their task to arouse and organise the masses to fight for the goal of overthrowing the reactionary states and ousting imperialism. Over two decades of experience in both Iran and Afghanistan have demonstrated in a crystal clear manner that Islam is not a liberating ideology and that the political and economic programmes of the Islamic forces do not represent any rupture with the ugly oppressive societies of the Middle East, which are semi-feudal, semi-colonial constructs of imperialism in alliance with local reactionary big capitalist-feudal classes. However, as Mao said, "Where the broom does not reach, the dust will not vanish of itself." Already for too long the Islamic forces have distorted the struggles of the oppressed masses in the Middle East, wasted their sacrifices and tried to dissipate their tremendous energy with religious ideological shackles and reactionary political pro-

grammes. In this way, the Islamic forces have contributed to delaying revolutions in this part of the world, thereby providing great service to world imperialism.

Moreover, the mere fact that US imperialism, the biggest and most vicious enemy of humanity on the Earth today, has proclaimed the Islamic fundamentalists as its enemy (although in reality this is an attack against the masses of the region, under the pretext of going after the armed religious bigots) is creating a certain spontaneous attraction amongst the masses of the so-called Muslim countries towards Islam. The masses always tend to spontaneously uphold whatever is vehemently attacked by their oppressors. But the masses need a *revolutionary scientific ideology* that can defeat imperialism and advance the struggle to liberate humanity from the clutches of all kinds of oppression and exploitation. This emphasises the double task for the revolutionary communists all over the world: they have to place themselves at the head of the anti-imperialist struggles, lead the masses to overthrow the reactionary state powers and make revolution; and at the same time, as an inseparable part of doing that, in order to be successful, they have to explain to the masses more vigorously than ever that the ideology of Islam (and every other feudal and bourgeois ideology) is an obstacle to liberation and unable to defeat imperialism. To defeat imperialism the masses need to take up communism, which is the only genuinely liberating ideology and programme in the world and in the history of humankind. It is the only ideology that can unite the masses of the world, regardless of their religion, race and nationality, to carry out the most earth-shaking struggles against imperialism – mainly US imperialism – and all the reactionary state powers that are today dominating the Arab and other Muslim countries. Carrying out this ideological struggle is part and parcel of being able to lead the rising masses towards real revolution, and only when the masses actually see models of real revolution will the influence of religion, as a whole, subside.

TRAJECTORY

Contemporary political Islam is a complex phenomenon. It has been

used by different arrays of class forces – the Western colonial-imperialist powers, the reactionary regimes of the Muslim countries, the reactionary forces opposing these regimes, and, at times, nationalist forces as a means to mobilise the opposition of the masses to foreign domination. Our focus will be on the political Islam that has flourished in recent decades in the Middle Eastern countries in opposition to the regimes there, and which has overwhelmingly represented the aspirations and objectives of reactionary class forces who have been pushed out of the power structures and have been jockeying for better positions within the existing state structures. Wherever and in so far as the masses have been attracted to these forces, it has not been mainly due to any so-called religious impulse but more because of their reaction to the extreme conditions of injustice that imperialism and their puppet regimes have imposed on the masses.

Political Islam is hardly a new phenomenon. Islam itself was born as a "worldly" political programme using religion as its flag. Originally it was dictated by Muhammad of Mecca in the Arabian peninsula. It was not the word of an Allah, but its appearance in 610 AD was a historically specific product of the socio-political conditions engulfing that part of the world as a whole.¹

In Europe, after the eighteenth and nineteenth century bourgeois revolutions, the role of religion in state affairs was substantially reduced, however it continued to be a pillar of the state in the feudal Islamic countries. In pre-colonial Islamic societies the *Ulama* (high-ranking Islamic clergy) were one of two basic pillars of state power – the other pillar being the Sovereign or King. This was an arrangement very similar to European feudalism, where the Crown and the Church shared feudal power and pillage.

This colonial-imperialist subjugation of the Arab and Muslim countries in the nineteenth century was a watershed in the character of these societies.² At the century's close, all the feudal elements in the economic base and the social and political superstructure of that society were recast in subordination to, and in the service of, the world imperialist system. Unlike Latin America, in the Middle East the colonisers relied on the local religion itself.

The British, during their wars to oust the Sunni Ottomans from Arabia, gave a major political role to the Wahabi branch of Islam in Saudi Arabia and used it as the moral and ethical underpinning for their war of colonial conquest to drive out the Ottoman empire from the region. The Wahabi brand of Islam and Mecca gained its current importance as a centre for Islamic congregation only after the Kingdom of Al-Saud was established in 1932 with the help of British colonialism. The Shiite Ulamas of Iran were close allies of the British in the latter's rivalry with colonial Tsarist Russia in the nineteenth century. In the early nineteenth century (1816) the British pushed the Shah of Iran to call for a jihad against Tsarist Russia. The first theological book on jihad in many centuries was written in the city of Najaf in Iraq under the orders of the Shiite clergy to create a religious pretext for the war with the Russian Tsar. An old saying that "under the turban of every Mullah is written: 'Made in England'" captures this British-Mullah alliance in popular Iranian terms.

In the aftermath of the First World War, a major modern Islamic current arose in Egypt – the Muslim Brotherhood founded by Hassan al-Banna (1906-1949). It later became a source of inspiration to other political Islamic forces developing in other Sunni-dominated countries. The original Muslim Brotherhood appealed to a section of the intellectuals because it set itself the task of proposing a modern, native ideology, as against the ethics of the colonialists. It appealed to a section of the masses because of its opposition to the British domination of Egypt and the misery engulfing the masses of the poor in Cairo. But Banna and the Muslim Brotherhood never called for the basic requirements for overcoming backwardness, i.e. uprooting feudalism, in particular by arousing the masses of peasants for agrarian revolution and liberating women from the yoke of patriarchy. In fact, they had a dual message: for the masses of poor there was a call to go back to the principles of the Koran and the *Sunnat* (Islamic tradition) as spiritual healing for the intellectuals, disturbed by both foreign domination and by the backwardness of Egypt, the message was different: a modern Islam that provided a "native" or "national" identity whilst allowing for the use of Western

management tools in the running of a semi-feudal, semi-colonial country. In fact, the Muslim Brotherhood experience shows that Islam, like all other religions, is able to accommodate itself to the dictates of modern forms of oppression and exploitation. But it also shows the limitations of a religious flag, as opposed to the revolutionary banner, in terms of overcoming colonial-imperialist domination and economic and political backwardness.

During the 1950s and 1960s, political Islam was very marginal among those opposing the status quo. In fact, organised Islam was ridiculed as a foreign puppet project. The post-Second World War period was another watershed in these societies. The imperialist powers forged new semi-feudal, semi-colonial state structures in these countries. In the new set-up, the clergy got a much smaller share of the power. A political trend grew out of the Islamic establishments in different Middle Eastern countries in strong opposition to the ruling regimes. They denounced the ruling cliques, as well as official Islam, as corrupt and irrelevant. In fact, the contemporary political Islamic movements mainly have their origins in this period, even though their ideological forebears started to articulate their political thought even earlier.⁴ (This article focuses its critique on the Islamic forces that have been politically challenging the pro-Western Middle Eastern regimes using the religious flag of Islam.)

The leaders and core cadres of these Islamic movements generally come from: the clergy who aspire to be restored to their old place in the ruling structure or seek greater accommodation with the system, disgruntled urban middle class intellectuals, and sections of the feudal-comprador classes pushed out of the ruling structures (i.e. splits within the exploiting, propertied classes of these societies). But their foot soldiers come from amongst the desperate displaced urban masses who from afar are being seduced by the "oppositional" posturing of these reactionaries. What makes these Islamic movements reactionary is not mainly the class origins of their leaders and core cadre, but rather their promotion of an archaic ideology – a religious ideology – that is not based on reality, and therefore is absolutely unable to transform the present day realities of the world. And they are reac-

tionary because they want to preserve the same class-structured oppressive societies, simply making them "more Islamic" (by applying the *sharia*, which is the Islamic law based on the Koran and tradition, written after the death of Mohammed and subsequently updated many times by each Islamic sect). This can only mean, and has meant, strengthening the feudal-patriarchal elements of society. These movements in different parts of the Muslim world uphold one of the various brands of Islam – Shiite or Sunni, for example. But almost all of them adhere to the basic tenets of Islamic ideology – with unimportant nuances – and derive the future promised Islamic society from the old models established by the original Islamic prophets. Specifically, the society established by Muhammad is cited as the most favourable model by almost all of these trends. All misfortunes of the Muslim countries are explained away as a "deviation" from this early model, which according to them was corrupted after the first four caliphs (successors to Mohammed).

The Islamic fundamentalist forces have been opposing the imperialist powers and the ruling cliques of these countries with hot rhetoric and, at times, violent actions. But they are easily co-opted, becoming the new and at times more ruthless guardians of the same old system. This dynamic took place in a major way during the Cold War, when the US launched its Green Belt strategy to make use of the Islamic countries (Islam is symbolised by the colour green) strung along the southern border of the USSR, to contain and later help dismember its Soviet social-imperialist rival. The US imperialists aided the rapid development of the Islamic fundamentalist forces in Afghanistan in the 1980s, and it was the US imperialists and their European allies that opened the way for Khomeini and his cohorts in Iran to hijack a great revolution there. Under a false revolutionary mantle, they established themselves as the new ruling clique, quashing the real revolution and massacring the revolutionary and communist forces. It must be brought to light that the 1979 defeat of the revolution in Iran, through the establishment of the theocratic regime, was a product of the collaboration between the Western imperialist powers and the Islamic fundamentalist forces in Iran. US General Huizer was right when he said, "We

unplugged the Shah and plugged in Khomeini." (See the review of his book on the Iranian revolution in *AWTW* 1986/6.) In the last 25 years, the biggest Islamic jihad was financed by the US imperialists – the war of the Islamic fundamentalists of Afghanistan (the generic name for them was *mujahedeen*, which is Arabic for fighters) against the Soviet Union. The experience of the last two decades has ripped apart the mask of the Islamic forces and shows that they are neither revolutionary nor anti-imperialist. Islam is and can only be an ideology and tool of the exploiters.

1. WORLD VIEW, STAND, POLITICAL PROGRAMME AND POLITICAL STRATEGY OF CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIC MOVEMENTS

In order to construct their theoretical body of thought, mobilise the masses and legitimise their programme, the political and ideological leaders of the Islamic movements deploy several key concepts. The mere use of the fundamental concepts of Islam and stories from the distant past allows them to mystify the nature of their ideology and programme in the eyes of many desperate masses. It is very important to tear apart this mystification and reveal to the naked eye the very earthly, class nature of their world view and programme: that their world outlook, aspirations and actions represent certain class forces in Muslim societies.

In fact, let us start from right there, with classes.

UMMA

In the body of thought of these movements, there is no place for the most stark reality of our times – that all societies are divided into classes, that people in all parts of the world are first and foremost divided into categories depending on their relation to the major means of production. Instead of classes, in Islamic thought there is *umma* – the community of believers, regardless of which class they belong to. The concept of *umma* covers over the fact that societies are sharply divided into antagonistic classes, with antagonistic economic and political interests. Big landlords and industrialists and bazaar traders, as well as the proletarians with nothing to lose and

the impoverished peasants – in short, exploiter and exploited – can all be part of the Islamic umma.

Under Muhammad, the founder of Islam, those who united with him in his fight for power were counted as part of the umma. At the start of his quest for power, the umma combination changed according to the political needs of the moment. As part of the umma he even included the Jews of Medina that united with him in fighting against his opponents in Mecca. Even then, his umma was divided into classes. The Koran (the Islamic scriptures) was written by Muhammad and his associates to administer the new society, which he built out of the scattered Arab nomads. The Koran very clearly reveals the class and social distinctions among the umma: there are the haves and have-nots; there are the slaves and the slave owners; there are the women, owned by, subordinate to, and fully obedient to men; there are warriors who share the plunder of the wars of conquest, with higher economic and social status; and others who toil the land and tend livestock herds. And there is the bigger division between the umma and non-umma: the umma warriors can make their captives into slaves and take their women as concubines. This is an ugly society. Muhammad built a new state power and a new organised religion to enforce new exploitative relations, as well as relations of domination over the populations of foreign lands defeated in war and co-opted into the expanding Islamic empire. The Islamic movements' deployment of the concept of umma in modern times is meant to mobilise the masses under their flag and gain legitimacy for their cause, whilst keeping them ignorant of the class interests behind this flag and programme.

The concept of umma is not only class collaborationist but also unscientific. At the time this word was coined, modern classes, such as the capitalists and the proletarians, did not exist. There was no such thing as colonial and imperialist powers or oppressed and oppressor nations.

Covering over sharp and antagonistic class interests is hardly a new phenomenon. Throughout the entire history of class society, in their drive for power and class rule the privileged classes have lied to the dispossessed, saying, "My interests are your interests." It is the kind of demagoguery that

the imperialist powers and reactionary states employ all the time. Even the rising bourgeoisies of Europe in the eighteenth century proclaimed the "universality" of their vision and aims. And within the oppressed nations, the political representatives of the small bourgeois and landlord classes, which aspire to become part of the power structure, use this line to gain the following of the masses. It is a means for reactionary forces that have been pushed out of state power, to ride on the backs of the masses in a bid to get back in. There is such a thing as umma unity, but it only means the people under the thumb of the Mullahs.

WORLD UMMAT UNITY

The Islamic movements call for international unity on the basis of umma. First of all, this is an impossible project because the Islamic umma is divided into tens of different faiths – Islam has been branching out since its inception. Look at the Islamic Republic of Iran and its co-religious brethren, the Taliban of Afghanistan, who were at each other's throats. Within Iran, the Sunnis are oppressed by Shiite rulers. In Afghanistan, Sunni, Wahabi and Shiite Islamic parties are killing each other. In Lebanon, the *Hezbollah* ("Hezbollah" means Party of God and is also a generic name for Islamic fundamentalists) claim to fight for the liberation of Palestine, but they cannot even approach the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon because the Palestinian Muslims are Sunni and Hezbollah is Shiite. Secondly, Islamic international unity is reactionary unity. It calls upon the people to believe in a supernatural being and unite on the basis of a faith established fourteen centuries ago. It is reactionary because it divides the oppressed peoples of the world, who share a common enemy, world imperialism, on the basis of the religious faith of their forefathers. Islam cannot even unite oppressed people in one country against imperialist dominators, let alone across countries. Within oppressed nations there are peoples with different religious backgrounds. Look at Palestine: there are Christian as well as Muslims forming the Palestinian people. How can Hamas (the Islamic party in Palestine) possibly unite the entire Palestinian nation against the common enemy, colonial Israel? It has not and will not. And, in fact, it has

been an obstacle to such unity. The proletarians from Egypt, Iran, Peru, Spain and the US can and must unite with each other on the basis of their *common enemy and common future*, whilst they cannot and must not unite with the capitalist and feudal big shots of their countries on any basis, whether religious or any other kind of real or imaginary "heritage". Calling for Islamic international unity will play into the hands of the imperialist powers – especially the US imperialists – who are calling upon the masses in the West to unite with them on the basis of "the clash of civilisations" – Western civilisation, based on the Judeo-Christian tradition, versus others, such as "Islamic civilisation", "Chinese civilisation", etc.

The irony is that the umma preachers easily and comfortably enter into political dealings and unity with the imperialist powers and the reactionary states. Take for example the Islamic Republic of Iran, the first contemporary state born of the Islamic movement. US President Reagan once remarked, "the Mullahs are our friends". And he was right. Under this regime the flow of petroleum – the linchpin of Iran's integration within the world capitalist system – was not disturbed for even one day. The Islamic Republic of Iran, under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini, suppressed the attempts of the petroleum workers to close down the plunder of oil resources by the Western companies, and today, more than two decades later, the Iranian economy is still heavily dependent on the sale of oil on the global market, with sales of over \$20 billion annually. Even though relations with the US were apparently cut, the Islamic Republic of Iran carried out all of its services to the Western powers and the world capitalist system through the European states. It carried out joint covert operations with the CIA of the US to help finance the infamous Contras' against the Nicaraguan people and the Sandinista regime. It secretly continued relations with the Israeli government while denouncing the revolutionary forces in Iran as the "agents of Zionism".

This picture also applies to the Islamic militant groupings in other countries. Take for example the assorted Islamic rulers of Afghanistan who were close allies of US imperialism and other reactionary states, such as Pakistan

and Saudi Arabia. According to bin Laden of al-Qaeda, the Saudi king was part of the umma as long as US military forces were not stationed on Saudi soil. According to the revolutionary communists, the Saudi king was a lackey of US imperialism and Saudi Arabia was a neo-colony of the US long before and after the 1990 stationing of US military forces there. And as far as we are concerned it does not matter whether or not the Saudi royal family is still part of the umma. The Saudi regime was not and will not be part of the people and has always been a gang of vicious exploiters that has to be overthrown.

The concept of umma serves as a reactionary united front strategy by the feudal and big capitalist classes who are struggling to get a better deal from the rulers of their countries and the imperialist powers.

The leaders of the Islamic movements have deployed the concept of umma (or united front strategy) with some success. There is a basis for that success, even though it is detrimental to the masses of workers, peasants and all the oppressed. The national subjugation of Muslim societies (by colonialism and imperialism combined with the semi-feudal structure dominating these societies) provides the material basis for the strategy of umma to gain some following amongst the oppressed masses. And the semi-feudal structure in and of itself means that tribal – and religious – affiliations and bonds amongst the people still have influence.

The introduction of class concepts into the political movements within the oppressed nations has always been reviled by the Islamic forces (and even by the secular nationalist forces), because they are not opposed to class oppression and exploitation. They uphold the feudal landlords' right to own land and on that basis exploit the poor and landless peasant; and they uphold the capitalist ownership of the means of production and the exploitation of the workers. They uphold all kinds of oppressive social relations – most outstandingly, the subjugation of women by men. These Islamic forces do not consider imperialism to be the highest stage of capitalism. They call the Western powers "imperialist" when those powers do not give them enough room in running their respective oppressive social orders.

The fact of the matter is that while the imperialist oppression of these na-

tions makes a national united front against imperialism necessary, experience has proven that if such a unity is forged under the leadership of feudal-tribal and bourgeois forces, it is bound to lead to the selling out of the masses of workers and peasants and even national betrayal. Whether or not the much-needed national unity against imperialism is led by a proletarian vision and programme and a communist party is a matter of life and death for every genuine revolution in the countries dominated by imperialism. Neither Islamic nor even the secular bourgeois-nationalist forces can forge and lead a revolutionary national unity against imperialism that can free the oppressed nations from the yoke of imperialism.

As experience has amply shown, all of these forces would rather unite with the imperialists in order to suppress the revolutionary forces and the workers, peasants, women and progressive intelligentsia. As smaller slave owners, they always tend to unite with big slave owners. Muhammad of Mecca 1,400 years ago called for unity based on a new universal faith in order to break up tribal segmentation and forge a unified state in the Arabian peninsula. Today, the populations of the Islamic societies are not divided into tribes any more. They are divided into classes by feudal and capitalist exploitation, and at the same time they are oppressed by the powerful imperialist nations. Today, these are the divisions that must be overcome and can only be overcome through new-democratic and socialist revolutions.

FITNA: THE PEOPLE DO NOT HAVE THE RIGHT TO REBEL

Fitna (splitting and intriguing) is another concept that the Islamists use. Any attempt to divide the umma is called *fitna*. So scientific class analysis is the greatest *fitna*! All of the above arguments are called *fitna* because they reveal that the umma is not an indivisible whole. For example, in the Islamic Republic of Iran, the workers' strikes and the struggles of the oppressed Kurds and women for their rights have been called great *fitnas*. Any attempt by the masses to take their destiny into their own hands has been impermissible. During and in the aftermath of the 1979 revolution in Iran, the liberating fact that the masses of workers, peasants, revolutionary intel-

lectuals and women, all over the country, were occupying the political scene was *fitna* and dangerous to Islam. Khomeini crushed all these *fitnas* to consolidate his reactionary rule.

Islam, like religion in general, including the other Abrahamic religions, Christianity and Judaism, is terrified of criticism and innovation and anything that would shake-up sterile, stupid and frozen thinking. Thinking may be tolerated in the exact sciences and the medical sciences but never in the social sciences. The history of human evolution and human society, and most of all the creation of god and religions by man in a certain historical period of the development of the productive forces and human knowledge, are taboo topics in the schools of the Islamic movements and groups. Islam does not see any need for "developing" or for rectifying its shortcomings through self-critical analysis. This is because, like all other religions, Islam claims to be all-encompassing for all times. Frozen ideology versus a constantly changing world and developing human knowledge is dealt with by concepts similar to those of the Christian Inquisition, which in Islam is called *nifagh* (splitting) or *Kofr* (blasphemy).⁶ Any innovation in dominant Islamic thought is called splitting or rebellion. Khomeini did not even tolerate the minor "innovations" that Ali Shariati (a reformer of the Shiite religion)⁷ or the People's Mujahedeen Organisation of Iran introduced into the doctrine of Islam. He designated them *mumafiqheen* (splitters). Every Islamic branch has its own splitters and throughout Islamic history bloody wars have been waged over *nifaghs* among different branches of Islam. *Kafir* is the term used for those "outsiders" who are not Islamic or who criticise religious thinking. According to Islam, anybody who attempts to criticise its tenets is *kafir* and punishable by death. Contrary to claims by those termed "moderate Islamic forces", this law is inscribed in the Koran. Communists are *kafirs*.

One of the shameful chapters of the history of the contemporary Islamic movement has been the assassination of precious intellectuals and literary figures in both Arab and non-Arab Islamic countries. For example, the assassination of Kasravi by the underground Islamic movement in Iran, half a century ago, was a national tragedy.

He was an early modern critic and historian, whose excellent books on the history of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution in 1905 are treasures of the people's history of Iran. Associates of Ayatollah Khomeini killed him because he was a courageous and outspoken critic of religious obscurantism and the reactionary clerical apparatus in Iran. Today, his killer is hailed as a hero by the Islamic Republic of Iran. Systematic elimination or enforced exodus of the people's intellectuals by the Islamic Republic of Iran has been a national tragedy for Iran, the scope of which is still not widely known. Many writers and artists were assassinated by Hezbollah bigots in the Arab countries as well: Dr Hossein Morovat in 1987; a few weeks later the assassination of Dr Mehdi Amel; the assassination of the famous and courageous Palestinian caricaturist, Naji Alali; and the assassination of Turhan Dursun in the early 1990s in Turkey. All of these intellectuals were accused of serving Zionism, whilst their elimination has been the summit of national betrayal by the Islamists. With these kinds of compatriots, who needs Zionist colonialists?

Under Islamic law, *munafiqheen*, as well as those Muslims who convert to another religion or become atheists, are punishable by death. Under Khomeini's rule, thousands of communists and Muslims of the Mujahedeen type were executed. The majority were revolutionaries who had fought to oust the Shah's regime. Those communists who waged armed struggle against the Islamic Republic of Iran were condemned to death twice: once for being heretics and the second time for Rebellious Against God (*Mohareb Ba Khoda*).

TAGHLEED: LEADERS AND MASSES

Taghleeed means obeying a Grand Ayatollah⁸ in all aspects of life. This is mainly a Shiite concept, but with some variance exists in other branches of Islam as well. According to this reactionary concept, the masses are sheep who need shepherds. It reveals that in Islamic theory there is no place for the masses consciously taking their destiny into their hands and fighting for their own interests. The shepherds are the Ayatollahs or the Imam (the infallible leader who is chosen by the Ayatollahs), who assign to themselves

the job of thinking for the masses, judging every detail of their lives and instructing them on how to live. The concepts of *taghleeed* and the Imam are meant to drive home this reactionary relationship between the masses and the leaders who are supposedly god's men on Earth. In the Islamic worldview, one can never find anything close to what we communists call the "mass line" or the concept that "the masses are the makers of history". Nor even anything close to the rising bourgeoisie's view of the creativity and ability of human beings to think reasonably and to individually change their lot independent of god or church. In the mid-1980s, Dr Hamood al-Oodie, a professor at the University of Sanaa, the capital of Yemen, published his research on the ancient agricultural system in Yemen, showing that it was a tremendous achievement of the masses in the region. He was ruthlessly attacked by the Islamic forces, who claimed all things on earth are the work and creation of god; they said that this scholar had committed "apostasy" by giving credit to the masses of Yemen. (See *Salman Rushdie and the Truth of Literature*, by Sadik J. Al-Azm.)

So it falls to the Ayatollahs to herd the people in their daily routines. Each of these Ayatollahs has their own books, which in detail prescribe daily and long-term behaviour for their followers, the bulk of which includes the most oppressive and reactionary ethical codes for, and indictments against, women. These Mullahs, parasites that have never used their hands for earning a living, sweat days in religious debates to formulate their nonsense and stupidity with the aim of keeping the masses obedient and ignorant.

JIHAD AND SHIHADAT

Jihad is one of the most important tenets of Islam and a requirement for every Muslim. It means waging battle on the path of god: *jihad fi sabilallah*. But what is it, against whom should it be waged and what is to be achieved on earth? What is the nature of jihad in Palestine? Is it a national war for winning back the land stolen from the Palestinian peasants and people by the colonisers, or is it a religious war for winning back the holy places? What is jihad in Algeria? Why does god (or his representatives) want to massacre thousands of peasants in the name of

jihad?

The goals of any war and the way it is fought make clear what kind of society will emerge from it. Since the Islamic fundamentalists like to go back to fundamentals, let us look at Muhammad's time. From its inception jihad has been extremely political in nature. Muhammad carried out 65 wars in nine years to forge a new state, with new economic and political relations. Many of the Koranic verses on this subject were formulated during this time. Later, his descendants carried out jihads to expand the feudal empire of Islam to other parts of the world. To mobilise the masses as foot soldiers and gain legitimacy for his difficult quest for power, he had to cloak the nature of the war in the mystical garb of religion: that jihad is ordered by a supernatural being. He had to make promises realisable in both the short and long-term: those who wage jihad and do not get killed get to have a share of the war spoils; those who die in jihad get to go to heaven. It is guaranteed. And there are all kinds of "better" material goods in heaven of course, including many "virgin women" and young boys at the disposal of men. This is clearly nothing but doping and bribing the soldiers of *Fi Sabil Allah*. In jihad, if the vanquished did not accept to pay retribution they were to be killed and their children taken as slaves. This was the kind of society that jihad promised.

In Islamic thought there are none of the modern concepts, such as "war is the continuation of politics by other means", "class war" or "national war". There is only war between the "believers" and others: *dar-al-Islam* against *dar-al-harb* (the land of Islam against the land of the non-believers). But this does not mean that Islamic fundamentalist movements do not have political goals in their jihad, or for that matter in their other strategies. The ambiguity is preserved for the desperate masses in order to fool them. Obviously, during the anti-Soviet war in Afghanistan, the Mujahedeen of Afghanistan and Osama bin Laden would tell the masses that they were "fighting for god". They were not going to tell them the truth, that they were "fighting for the CIA". Despite all their shallow boasts and huffing and puffing, forces like bin Laden and the Islamic Republic of Iran will always be the foot soldiers of the big reactionaries of the world.

Some of the Islamic groups have been calling for jihad against the imperialist powers because the imperialists are "infidels" that have dominated Islamic countries. But jihad's fight against the imperialists is a mockery of the struggle against imperialism. It has nothing to do with the successful wars that have been carried out against the imperialist powers: the Great Russian Revolution in 1917; the Chinese war against imperialist Japan and the US puppet regime in China, which led to the decisive victory of the Chinese Revolution in 1949; the impressive defeat that the US army received in 1953 at the hands of the Korean people and the Chinese Red Army in the Korean war; and finally the humiliating defeat of the US army by the Vietnamese. Today, liberating people's wars in Peru and Nepal are developing through twists and turns, on the basis of a winnable strategy of people's war and already, even before final victory, have established red base areas where the masses wield political power. The victory of people's wars do not depend on any god but on the people – on a strategy developed by the proletariat in the twentieth century and tested in practice, on this strategy's creative application and leadership by a revolutionary communist party, and on the creativity and audacity of the people.

Far from striking fear in the hearts of the imperialist powers, the jihad of the Islamic fundamentalists has been mainly successful in raining terror against the masses of people. Take for example Iran, Afghanistan and Algeria. In the jihads of the Islamic groups against the ruling cliques of the Middle Eastern countries, how many of the Algerian, Saudi and Egyptian army commanders and soldiers or the occupying forces of the imperialists in the Middle East have been killed? Not many at all. On the other hand, there are the wholesale massacres of political prisoners by Khomeini in 1987, the massacre of the Kurdish people in Iran, the burning and looting of the neighbourhoods of minority religious groups, such as the Baha'i, the secret assassinations of progressive intellectuals and the banning of their works, and the wholesale massacre of the masses in certain villages of Algeria by the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS). In Afghanistan, the invasion of the Taliban and Northern Alliance of each other's areas during the last decade, in

which they have indiscriminately killed the masses and raped little girls and women as a prize of jihad – these are the *al-hando-let-lah* – "praise be upon God" – fruitful jihads. The big jihads of the last two decades – the war between Iran and Iraq, the war of the Afghanistani Mujahedeen against the occupying Soviet army – were aided and fought with the advanced "God sent" weaponry dispatched from the arsenals of the Western imperialist powers and with the aid of their satellite intelligence. What makes jihad reactionary in nature is not waging armed battle. The world amply shows that political power grows out of the barrel of a gun. It is the political and social objectives of jihad and the way it is fought that makes it reactionary.³

In the 1980s, the Islamic fundamentalist movements called for jihad for the seizure of political power and the establishment of Islamic sharia societies. But their calls have changed to some extent. Now most of them are calling for jihad as a way of striking blows at the enemies of Islam and for the sake of Islamic self-purification. The success of jihad is no longer guaranteed, but it is said that victory will be granted whenever god decides – *toufigh men allah*. This kind of superstitious talking to the people has a ring of modern-day politics to it. It is telling the masses, "Let me use you efficiently and don't ask why things are not changing or when victory will come." There have been two shifts that have influenced this change in the perspective of the Islamic fundamentalist movements. 1) These movements have lost their big allies amongst the imperialist powers in the aftermath of the Cold War. 2) The bankruptcy of the Islamic states in Iran and Afghanistan, where not only poverty, dependence on imperialism and all sorts of social injustices have continued for the great majority of the masses, but the enforcement of sharia has made the lot of the people even worse. These Islamic projects have proven that the promised Islamic society is not Eden but the continuation of backwardness, poverty, debilitating ignorance and all kinds of discrimination, as well as national subjugation and humiliation.

Along with jihad there is a complementary concept of *shihadat* or martyrdom for the cause. There is a wide gulf between *shihadat* and the revolutionary concept of daring and readi-

ness to sacrifice one's life for revolution. The latter is in the service of the clear aim of achieving victory – the seizure of political power by the workers, peasants and all the other oppressed masses and the overthrowing of private appropriation and exploitation. In *shihadat*, achieving an earthly political aim is secondary, and ascending to the summit of "closeness to God" is primary. In fact, in Islam *shihadat* is the highest goal of jihad. Becoming a martyr (*shahid*) is an end in itself, preparation for travelling to the other world and securing well-being and happiness in the other world. This is what makes the doctrine of *shihadat* reactionary.

The appalling conditions that the masses face provide enough reason for them to want to strike at the enemy by any means possible. In fact, in Palestine the Islamic Hamas group, by promoting a series of suicide missions, only gives vent to the anger of the masses and leaves them spectators to individual acts, however spectacular, instead of taking the more difficult road of finding the way to make them active participants in sustained collective armed struggle. *Shihadat* is based on, and nurtures, desperation and the masses' lack of hope that they can actually change this world. The masses need a revolutionary and scientific ideology that can raise their sights and enlighten them about real winnable war strategies against their powerful enemies. The masses of the Middle Eastern countries do not need jihad. Since it is the product of an ancient oppressive society, jihad would only bring more suffering. Plus, with the hocus-pocus of jihad, the masses cannot rid themselves of powerful reactionary state powers and their imperialist masters. The masses need to scientifically see how an enemy as strong as the imperialist powers can be brought down by a correct strategy. And for taking the enemy by strategy there will be a huge need for audacity and sacrifice by the masses, including laying down one's life. But laying down one's life is not the goal. The goal is to lay down the enemy's life and to destroy the system of exploitation by destroying the powers that guard it – at the heart of which lie their state powers and their armies.

Religious ideology is injected into the masses as a fantasy escape route from this horrible world. Marxism

teaches the masses to face the world as it is and change it accordingly. Marxism is completely based on the realities of the world and, therefore, is capable of changing it. Marxism teaches the masses that there is no supernatural being to aid them. The masses do need "magic". But this magic has always been and can only be a conscious human product. And today it can be produced if the masses wield the only ideology and science that belongs to them. Marxism, being thoroughgoing materialism, has to, and has been, constantly developing; without this development it would die out. Marxism has developed through epoch-making revolutions and by absorbing the advancing knowledge that human beings acquire through production and scientific inquiry – it has developed to Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. Marxism-Leninism-Maoism is the powerful scientific revolutionary ideology of the proletariat. It is this class that, under the leadership of its greatest representatives, Marx, Lenin and Mao, has been able to produce a scientific worldview, a political, military and economic line that truly reflects the interests of the exploited masses. For the first time in the history of class society, the exploited masses do not have to resort to ideologies that come from the ancient or modern arsenals of the exploiting classes.

2. FACTORS GIVING RISE TO ISLAMIC FORCES

Three decades ago the overwhelming majority of the political forces opposed to the ruling cliques in the Middle Eastern countries and their imperialist backers were secular – genuine communist forces, pro-Soviet phoney communist forces, and secular nationalist forces. Look at Iran, Egypt and Palestine. After the Second World War, in Iran two major political forces opposing the Shah's regime and its imperialist masters were the pro-Soviet Tudeh Party and the National Front led by Mossadegh, who was toppled in 1953 by a CIA-led coup, with the help of the Mullahs. In the Arab countries, it was mainly secular nationalist forces. In Egypt, these forces were led by Jamal Abdul Nasser, who picked up the flag of opposition to foreign domination whilst suppressing genuine revolutionary forces. In Palestine, it was secular nationalist forces and Palestin-

ian left-leaning forces that led the struggle against Israel, while the Islamic forces gained influence mainly in the 1980s. This raises the question of what factors have been fuelling the Islamic movements. The following must be examined: 1) How Islamic political forces were brought onto the political stage by deliberate imperialist policies. 2) How the destructive workings of the imperialist system have provided a framework for the development of these forces. 3) How the bloody suppression of, and failures of, the revolutionary communists left a vacuum to be filled by them.

One of the obvious reasons for the growing influence of the Islamic forces has been the deliberate policy of the Western imperialist powers and their client states in the Middle East to contain the revolutionary masses, as well as the advances of their Soviet imperialist rivals, by fanning Islamic forces. In the 1970s, throughout the Middle East, a network of mosques was developed with the consent and encouragement of the respective regimes. In 1977 General Zia ul-Haq carried out a US-backed coup against Bhutto in Pakistan and inserted sharia into the Pakistani constitution. In Iran, the Monarchical Philosophy Association headed by Western-educated Islamic scholars was founded with the thesis that Iranian society needed a new ideological identity with a heavy dose of Islam. While the revolutionary communist forces were hunted, killed, imprisoned or pushed into exile by the Shah's regime, all kinds of Islamic discussion forums were made available for spreading Islamic thought among the intellectuals. The alliance of the clergy with the bazaar merchants and usurers was allowed to expand the network of mosques and house-to-house Islamic preaching, and they were even given considerable freedom to mix in criticism of the Shah. Only a small underground Islamic-left guerrilla organisation, the People's Mujahedeen of Iran, did not enjoy that freedom. In 1980, after the military coup in Turkey, fanatical pro-Ataturk, secular-minded generals went to Switzerland to bring the Islamic leader Arbakun back from the exile that they had imposed on him earlier. He returned to form the Islamic Refah Party. The Islamic forces were given room to establish their control over the basic masses, and granted millions of dollars for Islamic schools. During the

counter-insurgency against the Kurdish upsurge, hezbollah forces were used extensively by the Turkish army.

While it is true that those running the oppressive societies in the Middle East had a deliberate policy of placing Islamic forces on the political stage, the question remains as to what underlying workings produce and reproduce them. It must be said that these forces cannot be reduced simply to "echoes of the past", even though they pledge to roll back their respective societies. They are products of the modern structures of the Middle Eastern societies, which are in turn products of the deep imperialist penetration of these societies that has reorganised and integrated them into the worldwide web of the imperialist system. This has been a very tumultuous process and one of the ugliest in history, in terms of the human suffering inflicted. This is an ongoing process that breeds crisis and suffering on a massive scale for the peoples of the world – "globalisation" being its latest chapter.

The rise of Islamic fundamentalism reflects the incurable crisis of the neo-colonial states in this region, their massive permanent poverty, whilst tremendous riches are pumped out of this region into the West. It reflects the spasmodic rise and fall of the middle classes; the displacement of populations from one end of their country to the other, and from inside to outside of their country; and the never-ending clash between being stuck in the pre-capitalist era and being dragged into the maelstrom of world capitalism. These countries are in constant turmoil. Even the reactionary classes are beset with bitter splits and ruthless competition.

Islam has been the ruling ideology in Middle Eastern societies for a long time. And the religious establishment has been a part of the ruling structures – both before and after the domination of the Middle East by the colonialist and imperialist powers of the West. However, their position in the ruling structures underwent some changes in the aftermath of the First and Second World Wars. After the First World War, the British carried out major transformations in the various countries they dominated. They resorted to what is now called "nation building" in imperialist lingo; establishing centralised

states with modern armies and police forces, roads and railroads, etc. This was part of building fortresses against the newly born socialist Soviet Union, and gave rise to figures like Reza Shah of Iran and Ataturk of Turkey. After the Second World War came another nodal point. Taking over from British imperialism, the US carried out major economic and political restructuring in several key countries it now dominated. The result was a new class configuration: the working class expanded, and a modern school system churned out modern intellectuals, some of whom became state functionaries and technocrats, whilst others joined the progressive and revolutionary milieu. A big part of the religious establishment was alienated, and in most of the countries their veto power over legislation was overturned.

The Islamic forces that seized power in Iran in 1979 had been shaved off from the power structures following the Second World War. After the First and Second World Wars the feudal economic base and its corresponding superstructure were dealt heavy blows in separate waves of imperialist penetration. The clerical establishment, which had been a powerful pillar of state power, was pushed aside in several waves, first after the First World War when the British introduced a semi-colonial centralised state structure, and then again after the Second World War. The US sponsored land and other reforms that the Shah of Iran carried out in the 1960s under the name of the "White Revolution". These weakened the clergy to a considerable degree. But the White Revolution did not uproot feudalism, it simply reorganised the semi-feudal mode of production and linked it to global imperialist relations. Moreover, because the further penetration of "modern" relations was on a capitalist basis and was concerned to preserve the existing state structures, it did not seek a decisive showdown with feudal representatives, ideas and institutions, but instead sought compromises with them so as to integrate them into the neo-colonial system. Ayatollah Khomeini protested two chief features of the Shah's White Revolution: the distribution of land among the peasantry, limited though it was, and the granting of the right to vote to women. When the "modernisation" drive hit the rocks, the Islamic forces that had been

pushed out of the power structures came back to hound the Shah and his US masters. This imperialist modernisation created a lopsided and disarticulated economy to such a degree that it not only inflicted suffering on millions of people, but it even became dysfunctional.

Similar dynamics developed in other countries such as Egypt. Starting in the 1960s, the so-called modernisation drive there uprooted the peasantry in vast numbers, but bureaucrat capitalism could not absorb them into the token modern factories, agri-businesses and infrastructure construction activities.

This was a major phenomenon throughout the Middle East. The big cities swelled with populations displaced from the countryside. The urban middle class, which had grown in the 1960s – one expression of this was growth of the secular school system and the number of university students – started to feel the squeeze. The Islamic movements, originating from clerical centres, used all of their wits to connect with the rage of the poor masses, who were swelling the cities, and a section of the urban intellectuals.

The revolutionary communists, obscurantist religious forces and nationalists found themselves on the same side against the Shah of Iran and its US masters for a short but intense and turbulent period. A section of the urban poor – largely the displaced peasantry – followed Ayatollah Khomeini. It is not true that this displaced poor is inherently Islamic. It is the case that Islamic ideology spontaneously boils from the semi-feudal structures of the society and is there to be resorted to by the distressed masses. But a similar crowd of urban poor to that which greeted Khomeini in 1979 in Tehran, the capital of Iran, had marched there a decade earlier in mourning for a popular woman singer-dancer called Mahvash.

The third and extremely important factor is the crisis within the communist movement internationally. The restoration of capitalism in the ex-USSR in the mid-1950s was the first source of this crisis. Islam did not gain such a prominent place among the masses opposing the status quo because of its political vigour, theoretical clarity or practical radicalism. The crisis within the international communist movement

created a huge vacuum of leadership among the masses, which was filled by the Islamic forces who in turn were being virulently promoted by the Western imperialist powers. Just as the socialist revolutions in Russia (1917) and China (1949) and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966) had tremendously boosted the growth of communist and revolutionary secular movements in the world as a whole, including in the Middle East, the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union and the betrayal of the national liberation movements by it and the pro-Soviet so-called Communist Parties was a blow to the genuine communist forces. On the basis of Soviet foreign policy interests, the pro-Soviet parties started to collaborate with reactionary regimes. For example, they "discovered" "progressive" elements in the Shah of Iran and in Arab socialism and Islamic socialism in the Arab countries. The revisionist coup in China (1976) was a second major blow, which in the 1980s caused tremendous crisis in the communist movements in these countries, as well as on a world scale. These defeats, along with bloody suppression of the genuine revolutionary communist forces by the reactionary regimes and imperialists, gave an opportunity for the growth of opposition under Islamic flags. When there is no powerful alternative to idealism, obscurantism and imperialism, then assorted reactionaries seize the opportunity.

When China was a red power base, it provided a resounding argument for revolution and a revolutionary vision of society. It was a powerful magnet for the oppressed masses everywhere. It was a flag for the people that dared to change the world themselves and not wait for some god to decide whether he wants to bother. It was a shining example of internationalism, aiding all the struggles of the people around the world. It gave heart to the world's oppressed.

**IMPERIALIST LUNACY IS NOT
BETTER THAN ISLAMIC
FUNDAMENTALISM**

In reaction to Islamic fundamentalism, there is a trend among the intellectuals of the Middle Eastern countries to proclaim that the first and foremost problems of these countries come from "within"; that "we can't blame it all on the foreigners", in other words,

on colonialism and imperialism. This argument has some truth to the extent that it calls attention to age-old problems strangling Middle Eastern and a great many other countries – namely, vast feudal remnants. But the bigger truth is that since the integration of these countries into the world imperialist system, these “internal” and “external” problems have become intertwined – the problem comes from the rule of certain classes and their ruling ideology and political power that today are intrinsically interwoven with imperialist economic and political domination. These classes have their roots in the capitalist and feudal exploitation of the workers and peasants, and at the same time they are integrated into a world system. The current problems of these countries cannot be sought in their distant history, because the contemporary Third World countries are constructs of the imperialist era. Without correctly identifying the obstacles to the progress of these societies, one cannot find solutions. Both the Islamic forces and those who whitewash imperialism are wrong in their conception of the root causes of the problems. Therefore, their solutions are wrong. The first proposes going backwards with reactionary programmes. The second closes its eyes to the savagery of imperialism because its bombs are supposedly the seeds of modernisation and enlightenment being spread over these countries. This pro-imperialist line has always existed among the upper echelons of Middle Eastern intellectuals. Often, despite their own intentions, it has made them technocrats of imperialism.

It is the world capitalist system – imperialism – that is preserving the reactionary states in the Third World countries, condemning so many of the world's people to misery and starvation, and robbing the whole world of the enormous potential power of the all-round development of the creativity and cultural and scientific ability of the masses. This world system is structured in such a way that it does not allow the masses of the Third World to empower themselves. Imperialism and feudalism have locked the oppressed countries into backward conditions. Look at this simple fact: the US forces landed in Afghanistan with bags of dollars to buy the political and military allegiance of the tribal leaders in order to establish the kind of politi-

cal arrangements their empire needs in that part of the world. The dollar is a social relation. It shapes the socio-economic conditions in the world. The structure of relations between the imperialist countries and the oppressed nations is part – and in fact a decisive part – of the world capitalist system. It is imperialism that is the main force shaping the internal class and social relations within the oppressed nations. The reactionary classes within these oppressed nations – i.e. the big landlords, industrialists, traders and bankers – are class allies of the world capitalist system. They are imperialist “operatives” within these nations. Sometimes the relations between the master imperialist and the local reactionary classes become tense. Yet, in the final analysis, their lives as feudal comprador classes depend upon their diverse connections with the imperialists. It is, therefore, not possible to separate “internal” and “external” problems because they are not separate. Both must be overthrown at the same time.

There is widespread feudalism both in the economic base and the superstructure of these societies. Basically, they are passing through a long, slow and painful transition period from the feudal to the bourgeois epoch. The intertwining of religion and state, the status of women, the strong patriarchal social relations and nepotism are all manifestations of this situation. But these societies have been under the thumb of imperialism for a long time. The imperialists have been the foremost agent of whatever modernisation exists in these countries and, at the same time, have integrated these countries' backward economies in a subservient way into their world web of capitalism. Whilst introducing modern productive forces, they have imposed a lopsided economic development, where advanced sections of the economy exist as small detached islands surrounded by vast backward areas. The very workings of the world capitalist economy have devastated the local economy of these countries and have left them at the mercy of the violent swings of the world market and changing ecology. At times, the imperialist powers have deliberately adopted the policy of strengthening the forces of feudalism. Afghanistan is a glaring example of this. What has dictated, and will dictate, the penetra-

tion of imperialism into these countries is profit, greed and political dominance. Only an anti-feudal and anti-imperialist strategy and programme can open the doors for the all-round development of these societies.

NEW-DEMOCRATIC AND SOCIALIST REVOLUTION – THE ONLY SOLUTION

Political Islam has failed. Wherever it came to power, it failed to establish anything new for the masses. It kept the old oppressive relations intact. The rich stayed rich and the poor stayed poor, and the grip of the imperialists on the economy and political power remained as strong as ever. Political Islam does not represent a cover for the coalescence of traditional ethics and tribal unity under a new regime. It mainly and fundamentally represents specific class aspirations in Muslim countries. It is the banner of a section of the exploiting classes raised in order to gain incorporation into the ruling power structures. These class forces care about the masses only so long as they need foot soldiers. As Lenin emphatically put it, today even the reactionaries need the masses to carry out their projects. The rise of Islamic forces signifies a grave crisis among the reactionary states in the Middle East. Political Islam has not, and cannot, cure this disease. With or without an Islamic cover, these states are crumbling. That is the main reason that their guardian – the US – has been compelled to land its military forces in the Middle East. It must now deal with this situation in person. The US can show off its air power as much as it desires. But on the ground the angry masses are besieging its neo-colonial client states. What is lacking is strong Marxist-Leninist-Maoist parties capable of putting themselves at the head of these masses, organising their unquenchable thirst for liberation and their tremendous energy in powerful people's wars, and leading victorious new-democratic revolutions. This is the only way to both uproot feudalism and solve the centuries-old problems suffocating these countries, and to cut off the strangling yoke of imperialism once and for all.

ENDNOTES

1 A supporter of the Communist Party of Iran (Marxist-Leninist-Mao-

1st).

2 Ilya Pavlovitch Petroshevsky, *Islam in Iran*. This authoritative Marxist source book on the history of Islam presents valuable scientific analysis of the socio-political roots of Islam. To paraphrase Petroshevsky, the emergence of Islam at the beginning of the seventh century AD is inseparably connected with the developments in class society and the beginning of a complicated social and political movement among the Northern Arabs. Islam became the ideological mantle that led to the establishment of an Arabian state and its military and political expansion throughout Arabia.

Muhammad was an intellectual from a family of small merchants in Mecca. His family (the Bani Hashem family from the well-to-do Ghoreish tribe) were the guardians of a collection of idols worshiped by different tribes and families. Mecca had a strategically important geographic location. It was a centre for foreign trade, including the slave trade. The trading routes connecting India and the Byzantine empire (Syria, Palestine and Egypt) passed through Yemen (in the South) and then Mecca (in the North). Iran under Sassanid captured Yemen in the sixth century and diverted the transit route in its favour. Foreign trade diminished in Mecca. Mecca was also a centre for internal commodity exchanges between Arab nomads, who traded dairy products for dates, grain and craft items from Mecca. The Ghoreish tribe lived in Mecca. Some of its member families became very rich from trade and usury, through which they ruined smaller families and merchants (such as the Bani Ommayeh family, initially the main enemies of Muhammad, but who later united with him and led the expansion of the Islamic empire). Others were modest merchants and agriculturalists (such as Bani Hashem, Muhammad's family). All of them ruthlessly traded slaves from Ethiopia, and exploited them in agriculture as well. The disintegration of the tribal community and the development of private land ownership, and the consequent increasing gap between the rich and the poor of each tribe, shook up the Northern regions of Arabia. A tremendous social and economic crisis engulfed them. Muhammad took it upon himself to unite the scattered, warring tribes of the Arabian Peninsula to deal with the crisis. For this, a unified state for all of Arabia was necessary.

3 Defeats by the Western

colonialists during the nineteenth century loom large in Islamic literature. The British consolidated their hold on the Middle East in the latter half of the nineteenth century, and during that same period dismantled the Ottoman Empire. Tsarist Russia went into the Caucasus and Central Asia in 1857. That half-century was a turning point. It ended the centuries-old balance between the Muslim and Christian empires. The Christian world had surpassed feudalism. But the Muslim world was still grappling with the past.

Various Islamic forces that are less fundamentalist and closer to nationalism use nostalgia for the pre-colonial past as an ideological banner for uniting the people: marching through the streets of Ramallah carrying a portrait of Salahedin Ayubi (a celebrated victorious fighter for the Islamic empire against the Crusaders); fantasising about the Ottoman empire, even though the Arab feudals and kings happily helped the British to oust it; and endless nostalgia about how Islamic civilisation was more advanced than European, which was still in the Dark Ages (which is true, but let's take care of the future!). This history has given way to a lot of debate over "why the Islamic portion of the world was not able to compete with European colonialism". This in itself is a big subject of historical study and analysis among the intellectuals in Muslim countries, but this debate is beyond the scope of the present article. Nevertheless, a correct proletarian approach would start from the point that, while it is important to explore this aspect of the development of human society, the proletariat does not struggle against today's ruthless reactionary empires (i.e. the imperialists) with the objective of restoring past empires. First of all, the proletariat did not even exist then, so it does not have any lost empires to cry over or fight to revive. Secondly, these past empires – in the East and West and regardless of religion or ethnicity – were oppressive and not worth getting nostalgic about. The proletariat can freely say, as Marx did: let the dead bury the dead (in other words, let the bourgeois and feudal class forces cry over their own past). We have the future to fight for, a future society completely different from all previously existing class societies.

4 Among the ideologues of the current Islamic movements are: Khomeini, Motahari and Taleghani from Iran, Seyyid Qutb from Egypt, Maududi from Pakistan and Al-Turabi

from Sudan.

5 In the 1980s, the CIA under the Reagan administration carried out covert operations against the new Sandinista regime in Nicaragua. The reactionary Nicaraguan and Cuban mercenaries, who were run by the CIA's Oliver North, were called the Contras. This operation was funded by revenues from cocaine smuggling and the selling of arms to Iran through Israel. The scandal was called Iran-Contragate.

6 Especially since 11 September, there has been an enormous amount of propaganda in the Western media, including in the liberal intellectual press, arguing that Islam is different from other religions, that it is inherently more rigid and less open to inquiry than the other major religions, and that this is the reason why the Arab and Muslim world is so poor and has such backward leaders (feudal sheikhs and the like). This implies that the people in the West are so much luckier because they live under regimes based on the much more open-minded Judeo-Christian ethic, and that in turn is why they enjoy more prosperity and greater liberty. This is a Western chauvinist argument. In terms of the scriptures and traditions of Islam it is necessary to call attention to the fact that the Koran and Islamic tradition is in many ways simply an updated and concretised extension of the Judeo-Christian scriptures and traditions – as well as others such as Zoroastrianism, Greek philosophy, etc. All these religions are equally oppressive and reactionary.

It is ahistorical to say that Islam is inherently incapable of reform. Throughout its history, Islam has responded to changing social conditions. In fact, many varieties of Islam are products of mass rebellions, invasions, power struggles, great debates, the flourishing of science in parts of the Islamic world, learning from the Greeks, Egyptians and Babylonians, advances in mathematics, astronomy, etc. It is also true that the Islamic world was in many ways scientifically and intellectually more developed than the world of medieval Europe. When the Muslim empire was established in the seventh century, Europe was in the Dark Ages. In the following centuries, Christianity went through the Inquisition, burned heretics at the stake, and so forth. However, the hold of religion and feudalism was overthrown by capitalist revolutions in Europe, whilst feudalism continued to maintain its grip on the Islamic lands. But capitalist de-

velopment in the West was not Christian-ordained. Some say that if it had not been for Protestantism and Calvinism, capitalism would not have developed in the West. But it is the other way around. When capitalism developed (which did not have to happen the way it did, i.e. emerging in Europe first), it forged a unified world history. And in this process Islam continued to be part of the superstructure of societies that are both oppressive and subordinate. When European and American colonialism and imperialism penetrated these countries, it gave rise to the semi-feudal, semi-colonial, lopsided societies that we see today. The domination of Islam in the superstructure of these societies represents both the strong presence of feudalism and colonial-imperialist bondage. This is how history developed, and it is ahistorical to argue which religion is better.

Another ahistorical view is that Islam should catch up! It cannot and should not try to "catch up". The world is saturated with imperialist-capitalist countries already. And the Islamic countries do not need to produce Is-

lamic Luthers or Kants. That era has passed and attempts to reproduce it are bound to be reactionary.

7 Ali Shariati, an Iranian, is one of the most famous Islamic thinkers. He tried to forge a modern revolutionary Shiism. He is the founding father of a new trend among Shiites. Ayatollah Khomeini considered him an eclectic.

Shariati goes back to the origins of Shiism to claim that it has an immense revolutionary potential. He injected this new reading of Shiism with modern sociology, including aspects of Marxism, to produce what is portrayed as an anti-colonial, native identity, called "Coming Back to Self" after the title of one of his most important writings. He lumped the exploited and exploiters in the West together as "others" and portrayed Fatemeh, the daughter of the Prophet Muhammad, as a role model for modern Muslim women.

His political aim was to counter the growing influence of Marxism among Iranian intellectuals.

8 In the nineteenth century the hierarchy of the Shiite faith was institutionalised like this: Grand Ayatollah at the top, followed by the Ayatollah and

then the Hojat-ul-Islam. Only Grand Ayatollahs can practice Taghleeed.

9 A word should be said here about the People's Mujahedeen Organisation of Iran, since it differs in certain respects from most fundamentalist Islamic movements. It was founded in the late 1960s as an anti-imperialist guerrilla organisation and fought against the Shah and US imperialism. It had clearly defined political goals – the overthrow of the Shah and the ousting of imperialism from Iran – and its perspective for future society was a "classless Towhidli society", a classless society where everything belongs to god. At its inception, it was a radical petit-bourgeois organisation, which felt required to resort to Islam in order to gain legitimacy among the Muslim population and to distinguish itself from the Marxist political organisations. At the same time it felt the need to incorporate Marxist notions, such as classes, exploitation, imperialism, etc., into its theory to distinguish itself from the reactionary clergy and Islamic fundamentalists. ■



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Global Rampage

Continued from page 8

Although this secret paper was written just after the war with Iraq and not long after the collapse of the USSR, its postulated goals were neither possible nor necessary to achieve a decade ago in the same way as now, because of the reasons indicated here – the further decline in Russia's strength, on the one hand, and the increasingly acute need to intervene in the Third World and contradictions between the imperialist powers on the other. But now it is the united policy of the US ruling class – at least as long as it seems to be working. The position of its authors at the heart of Bush's cabinet, where the key posts are filled by military figures or civilian life-long military experts and "national security" veterans associated with this line, is testament to a conscious adoption of this new line.

Bush's warning that "You're either with us or against us" is directed against "foe" and former "friend" alike. An unidentified US "administration official" put it this way in interpreting General Colin Powell's remarks to the cautions about invading Iraq from some of the US's former allies: "At some point, the Europeans with butterflies in their stomachs – many of whom did want to see us go into Afghanistan – will see that they have a bipolar choice: They can get with the plan or get off."¹³ Get off here means get out of the US's way or get off the earth. After the fall of the Soviet bloc, there was a lot of talk about the emergence of a multi-polar world. Bush's plan is for a unipolar planet.

Not since Nazi Germany has there been such an open bid for world hegemony. Or maybe it would be more accurate to say not since the end of the Second World War, when the US began to slip into the colonial shoes of both its former enemies (Germany and Japan) and its allies (the UK and France) – but then it faced a formidable opponent, the socialist bloc led by the Soviet Union, which later was transformed through counter-revolution into a social-imperialist (socialist in words, imperialist in deeds) rival equal in stature to the US.

The process of US disengagement from international encumbrances be-

gan well before 11 September, with American rejection of nearly every international treaty and convention conceivable. In retrospect, Bush's decision to withdraw the US from the 1997 Kyoto agreement was one of his first special messages of American intentions to an incredulous world: the US would not allow itself to be limited in any way, even over a matter of its sacred right to pollute. There was an ideological message as well – nothing is more important than profit, and the US's rulers have as much contempt for the planet as for its people. An equally stunning event in international diplomacy occurred when the US refused to go along with an international pact against money laundering and tax evasion. The reasons why came to light later, when the Enron scandal revealed how vital the use of unregulated "off-shore" banks has become to the functioning of multinational corporations. Even before Bush, the US had already rejected international treaties against the development of biological weapons – the US is threatening to demolish Iraq to force Saddam Hussein to welcome the international bio-warfare inspectors that are barred from American shores. The US also turned down a convention that would have made the World Court a permanent institution, despite US approval of the Milosevic trial there now. The US objected on the grounds that such a treaty might mean that some day American soldiers or officials would be charged with war crimes, and, therefore, called for the Court's abolition.

The bin Bush administration reversed the course set by Bush senior and Clinton on nuclear weapons. Instead of destroying missiles to match the number destroyed by Russia, the US will put them aside for "safe-keeping" and increase its spending on new nuclear weapons development. The US is even considering resuming nuclear bomb tests to fine-tune them. The US ruling class has also ratified another Bush project, dear to his heart since his first days in office, to revive Ronald Reagan's plan for an anti-ballistic missile system. Unlike his predecessors, Putin has accepted this without protest – much to the dismay of the Continental European governments. America's renewed need for these weapons and for the once-discredited ABM system does not come from any second thoughts about dangers from the

former Soviet Union or any "rogue" states, as the only country to have used nuclear weapons likes to put it. Right now no state in the world could conceive of launching a nuclear first strike against the US. During the Gulf war Saddam Hussein, who was often cited as the reason why the US needs a nuclear missile shield, didn't even dare use his alleged chemical warheads against a far less dangerous opponent, Israel, for fear of the consequences. By retaining thousands of missiles and erecting an anti-ballistic missile shield capable of knocking down a limited number of rockets, the US aims to neutralise any attempt by the lesser nuclear powers to use nuclear weapons to resist a conventional American invasion and is thus positioning itself to unleash a first strike with no fear of retaliation.¹⁴

In short, the US has been openly and brazenly proclaiming it will do whatever it considers necessary to serve its own interests. An assistant to Powell proclaimed that as far as the US is concerned, "International law doesn't exist". One pundit labelled this "the deregulation of the international violence market" – and like the US's idea of global trade deregulation (steel, for instance), the aim is to free American interests from all constraints; however it doesn't mean that anyone else is free to do anything at all against US interests.

International law, of course, means imperialist law, agreements reached by the rulers of the most powerful countries designed to protect their common interests at the expense of everyone else. And actually, the US, like any imperialist country, has never recognised international law when its interests dictated otherwise. Bush senior's 1989 invasion of Panama is a case in point. The US created Noriega and then sent its troops to remove him when it felt like it. But, significantly, the US preserved some of the appearances of observing international law even though it was basically mocking it. For instance, Noriega was tried as a prisoner of war and to this day is being kept in a prison in compliance with the Geneva Conventions. George junior's prisoners at the American naval base in Guantanamo, Cuba are being treated very differently, in legal as well as human terms. American defiance of international law has become so extreme that when the Bosnian Human Rights

Court (set up at Western insistence) ordered six men of Middle Eastern origin released from prison for lack of evidence, after they had been accused of planning an attack against the US Embassy in Sarajevo where they lived, US troops kidnapped them (with the probable complicity of the Bosnian government) in the middle of the night and carted them off to Guantanamo. There they are being held along with British, French and other nationals whose countries' requests for jurisdiction or even access have been ignored.

The US openly admits that the men at Guantanamo are being submitted to relentless interrogation, psychological manipulation (including sensory deprivation and such isolation that they reportedly don't even know where they are) and other forms of treatment prisoners of war are supposedly protected from. Since the use of outright torture has been openly defended in the US and European press, it is not hard to guess what is happening on a remote island closed to the media and international observers. (When protests were raised, the Red Cross investigated and made a report – a secret report for US eyes only.) By mistake or arrogance, the Pentagon itself released the famous photo showing these prisoners shackled with their eyes and ears covered. Why is Bush so determined that these men not be recognised as prisoners of war under the Geneva Conventions, despite the international uproar around it and his own claims that this is a mere "question for lawyers" that would make no practical difference? "To preserve flexibility", a Bush aid wrote in a memo.

"Flexibility" is exactly the point for the US, in all matters. The US wants the world to know that it will do what it wants to whomever it wants, full stop, and there's always room in Guantanamo's tiger cages for anyone who doesn't like it.

Guantanamo is not just a concentration camp for prisoners from Afghanistan. It is a symbol of what the US intends to do to anyone who stands in its way. The US does, however, implicitly recognise the division of the world into oppressor and oppressed nations, and does not propose, at least for now, to send Marines to haul off France's Chirac. Yet Guantanamo's very existence is meant to put some practical menace into the warning "Get with the plan or get off."

This new unilateralism does not mean that the US intends to act alone. Bush has paid great attention to the ad-hoc building of coalitions under his leadership. There will always be inter-imperialist co-operation when that serves their common interests – even now French soldiers are working side by side with American soldiers in building a long-term airbase in Kyrgyzstan. But to the degree possible (and this could be a very big question), the US intends to act quickly and decisively without even trying to achieve consensus, imposing its decisions in deeds and letting others express their qualms and quibbles afterwards, unbounded by treaties among its allies, supreme in its own sovereignty and considering that of others worthless (especially oppressed nations). Wolfowitz explains that "there will not be a single coalition but rather different coalitions for different missions" in which the US hopes to work mainly with "local forces" (i.e. puppet troops) rather than its "partners" and rivals.

America's closest allies are now to be its underlings, imperialists who recognise their weakness and get with the unipolar plan on that basis. Never has Russia seemed so subservient to the US as since 11 September. Vladimir Putin suddenly became Bush's "best friend" through a combination of enticements and threats. Among the latter is an understanding or at least the hope that the US will drop the Chechnya independence movement that Russia sees as part of a campaign to carve its state into smaller and smaller pieces. Putin supported the invasion of Afghanistan and reportedly told his "best friend" that he would not object to a US attack on Iraq, both countries previously being objects of Russia's predatory ambitions. Most remarkably, and unexpectedly, he acquiesced to the extension of NATO right up to Russia's present borders, including the Baltic states that belonged to the USSR until a decade ago, and accepted the American building of 13 new bases and the permanent stationing of US troops in what was formerly Soviet Central Asia. He even gave his blessing to the current American incursion into Georgia, also until recently part of the USSR, and until now, at least, a pawn built up militarily by the US and Turkey against Russia. This does not necessarily mean that everyone in the Russian ruling class

shares Putin's interpretation of their interests, and Russia's imperialist interests are sure to give rise to sharper contention with the US in the future.

5. THE GEOPOLITICS OF THE APOCALYPSE

Bush's hit list of countries to be attacked, or at least threatened, is highly instructive. It may be mad, but it is a well thought-out (and broadly supported within the US ruling class) plan to make the world safe for American plunder. For instance, after long squabbling between the various powers with influence in Afghanistan to set up a new interim government, the US sneered at the Northern Alliance, whose troops did most of the fighting against the Taliban but were deemed too friendly to America's rivals, and instead simply put in its man, Hamed Karzai, a former advisor for the California-based Unocal company, whose proposed pipeline, in Western eyes, is the only thing that might give the country any value at all. (The US Special Envoy, Zalmay Khalilzad, was also on the Unocal oil company payroll.)

Or take Iraq. At first, some commentators did not believe Bush would fight a battle so distasteful to the US's former allies in the Gulf war. The contrast between Bush's insistence and their opposition has been so striking that a newspaper commentator remarked that Europe "seemed tempted to make the Iraq issue one of American hegemony in world politics rather than of Saddam's brutality and treachery". That, in fact, is an accurate assessment of what is at stake.¹⁷ As Rumsfeld's old Nixon team-mate, Henry Kissinger, recently wrote, "The issue is not whether Iraq was involved in the terrorist attack on the United States.... The challenge of Iraq is essentially geopolitical."

Despite the US-led effort to boycott Iraq, France, Germany, England and Russia have been openly doing business with the Iraqi government. In fact, practically the whole world has been conducting business almost as usual with that country for years now, including American companies (Vice President Cheney, in his oil-baron days, was involved in trying to beat out the Europeans in deals with Saddam). Since Bush senior cut short his war on Iraq, apparently out of the realisation that the toppling of Saddam might lead to

the dismemberment of Iraq and, therefore, be destabilising for American interests in the region overall, the regime has been a symbol of the limits of American power. That seems to be the main thing Bush wants to overthrow. He wants to demonstrate in the most convincing way possible that the developments of the last decade and the posture adopted by the US on that basis mean the old limits no longer apply.²⁸

Bush's sudden addition of Iran to his "axis of evil" list in January puzzled many observers. After all, that regime's recent concessions to the US included an unpublicised agreement to rescue downed US pilots, close co-operation in brokering the US-dominated "interim" government in Afghanistan and allowing the US to offload supplies for Afghanistan through Iranian ports.²⁹ Apparently the mullahs didn't bow quite low enough to suit Bush, who demanded more and threatened to overturn the regime anyway. One reason why the Iranian government thought it could maintain the appearance of something less than openly kissing the Great Satan's fat behind has been the degree to which it has welcomed German, French and other European investment. A country that lives from the sale of oil needs at least a France to exploit it. It seems that being totally and openly subservient to the US politically, and to US interests economically, are two sides of the same coin. The threat of American troops in Iraq seems to have spurred the Khamenei-Khatami regime to yield even further to the US, shutting down Afghanistani forces in Iran opposed to Bush's Afghanistan government and rounding up foreigners (including European citizens) viewed unfavourably in Washington. More recently, Iran indicated that it would allow the US-sponsored Iraqi National Council, presumably the US's choice to replace Saddam, to open offices in Tehran, the capital of Iran, and broadcast calls for Saddam's overthrow from Iranian soil – not a gesture to be expected from a regime in any kind of "axis" with Iraq. The US move towards invading Iraq may allow the US to bend the present Iranian regime completely to its will, or the US may hold out for a rupture between Khomeini's successors and what it considers an acceptable government. But either way, the key to forcing the

changes America wants is... force.

The sending of American troops to Yemen is another piece of the puzzle. Considered on its own, Yemen has no importance for the US. This is about American naval bases in Yemen, US naval power stationed in that part of the Gulf, and really about the American dream of turning the Gulf into an American lake.

Everyone knows why the Gulf is strategic: because of the oil. But it is not just a matter of the money to be made. The previous quote from the Wolfowitz-Libby report about strategic regions and resources echoes Lenin's remarks about the importance of oil during the First World War: the imperialists consider oil a strategic resource to be controlled not only for its own sake but also to be denied to their rivals. Actually, today Europe is far more dependent on Middle Eastern oil than is the US, and Japan even more so. The profits to be made are enormous, but even more importantly, he who controls these petroleum spigots has his hands on the throat of the European and Japanese economies.

It is significant that the Philippines was the second country to be invaded by the US, after Afghanistan in October 2001, and in greater numbers than anywhere else but Afghanistan. (About 900 US troops, 650 of them combat forces; some of them have been sent on patrol in the countryside alongside Philippine government troops.)

The Philippines became an American colony when the US took advantage of a popular revolt against Spanish domination to snatch up the islands for itself.³⁰ It has been said that the American military first adopted the .45 semi-automatic pistol because Philippine fighters resisted so fiercely that they could not be stopped by smaller bullets. The islands became a key military outpost for the US in the Pacific, as was reflected in the strategic battles over the Philippines in the Second World War. After the war, the US was forced to give up direct political control of the Philippines but maintained economic and indirect political control. The Subic Bay naval base remained the key anchorage for the US in the Pacific, until the US thought it better to leave of its own accord in the wake of a popular upsurge and the toppling of the US-sponsored Marcos dictatorship in the 1980s. The rebellion of the oppressed Muslim people of the

southern Philippines islands has been a serious obstacle for US-sponsored regimes for many years, but US intentions are not limited to the reputed Muslim strongholds on Sulu island. According to news accounts, US troops flying over northern Luzon, on the opposite end of the archipelago, exchanged fire with troops of the New People's Army led by the Communist Party of the Philippines. Clearly the US intends to make major moves to tighten up its control of its former colony. These aims are not limited to the Philippines alone. The US is now also negotiating for access rights to the huge Cam Ranh naval base in Vietnam, which the US built during its unsuccessful war to conquer South-east Asia. The base is about to be vacated by Russia, which can no longer afford the lease.

The inclusion of North Korea on Bush's target list has been particularly difficult to understand, since that country has been trying desperately to grovel at America's feet for several years now. Clinton says he was about to travel there to accept its surrender at the close of his term in December 2000. In fact, several years ago North Korea unilaterally halted testing of the missiles that Bush is complaining about. It is not clear, as this article is written, whether or not Bush intends to make war there. But from his first days in office Bush has made it clear that he is reluctant to allow North Korea to make peace. Again, there is some political symbolism involved in dramatising his rupture with Clinton's policies. But the most important factor in this equation is not North Korea but the 37,000 US troops stationed in South Korea. The maintenance of an unsettled military situation on the peninsula is an important component of the US's ability to bully China, which Bush apparently hopes to pull more firmly into the US orbit, and Japan, a country whose exploitation of Korea is at the core of its imperialist existence.

Other countries where the US military is now present, or considering involvement, include Colombia, Yemen, Indonesia (American advisors may be sent there) and even perhaps Algeria (the US has begun supplying military equipment to the Algerian government, a provocative step into France's backyard, where until now US contacts have mainly been with the Islamic fundamentalist "terrorists"). Put it all together and you have a map of where

the US has long considered that its strategic political and economic interests require military intervention and a clearer picture of the necessity behind Bush's madness.

6. A WAR JUST IN TIME

The relations between politics and economics are complex and dynamic. Everything in today's world situation is rooted in the increasingly global "comprehensive socialisation of production" and its contradiction with private appropriation, as Lenin noted nearly a century ago, when he called imperialism the antechamber of a new system of global co-operation that would emerge through proletarian revolution. The economic compulsions driving the imperialists (including crises, rivalry and the expand-or-die imperative) are rooted in that contradiction, as is the struggle of the international proletariat and its allies. These ruling classes are ultimately representatives of the requirements of imperialist capital and not simply making wilful policy decisions. But new policies have in fact been coming into being through the interworking of these requirements and imperialist politics.

There is ample evidence that the Bush administration took office looking for something like 11 September, an opportunity to change the military, political and social course that the US has been on. In an interview reported in the 29 January 2002 *Washington Post*, Bush said, "I do believe that there is the image of America out there that we are so materialistic, that we don't have values, and that when struck, we wouldn't fight back." In the same article, Rumsfeld recounted how when Bush interviewed him for the job of Defence Secretary (the key role in the Bush cabinet, as it turned out), Bush criticised Clinton for following a pattern of "reflexive pullback" whenever American military intervention ran into serious obstacles, such as its defeat at the hands of local militias in Somalia. Rumsfeld replied that he believed US power was needed to "discipline the world". "I left no doubt in his mind but that, at that moment when something happens, I would be coming to him to lean forward, not back. And that I wanted him to know that. And he said, unambiguously, that that is what he would be doing, and that we had a clear,

common understanding." This is exactly what Bush did, "leaning forward" to leap at the first good opportunity for war that presented itself. For those in the know, these cards were already on the table when Bush was picked to be president.

The Taliban regime was born amid the muck and mire of "the great game", the imperialist jockeying for control of the oil and gas pipelines in Central Asia. The US gave Pakistan the green light to bring the Taliban to power in 1996 because it believed they could bring about the political stability needed for the Unocal corporation to build a pipeline from Turkmenistan to Pakistan via Afghanistan, making sure that American hands controlled the petroleum flowing from the former Soviet republics. Support for the Taliban paralleled the close military relations the US was developing with most of these Central Asian countries. Their medieval oppression of women was certainly no obstacle, especially since it matched much of the programme advocated by American Christian fundamentalists well respected in Bush circles. Moreover, the American government found the Taliban so potentially useful that for a time the State Department blocked the FBI investigation of Osama bin Laden's involvement in the bombing of the USS Cole in Yemen because it hoped to quietly persuade the Taliban to turn him over without disrupting their relations. (The head of the FBI investigation, who resigned in protest, became head of security at the World Trade Center, where he died.) Negotiations between the US and the Taliban reportedly continued through July 2001. The French daily *Le Figaro* claimed that the local head of the CIA met with bin Laden himself, while the latter was being treated at the American Hospital in Dubai that month.²¹

Those negotiations were suddenly broken off in August 2001. It seems that the US had given up on the Taliban and was already itching for a fight in Afghanistan. One way or another, it got one. Who fired the first shot? It doesn't matter. The US invasion of Afghanistan, like its support for the Taliban, was meant to establish a semi-feudal, patriarchal and imperialist-subservient regime. What's more, Afghanistan was only a target of opportunity, an easy enemy militarily and politically, nothing like the Vietnamese revolutionaries who battered the US

and won world-wide support. Afghanistan was important, not so much in its own right, but as a good place to start a global rampage.

As Lenin wrote, "War does not alter the direction of pre-war politics but accelerates their development." The aftermath of 11 September didn't alter historical trends. It did, however, mark a new, qualitatively different situation.

7. THE "HOME FRONT"

The "coalition politics" and "leaning backward" policies Bush brought to a halt were very much tied up with US reluctance to inject its own troops into direct combat, especially where they might get killed in numbers that would be politically difficult to sustain domestically. Only a very short time ago, European imperialists were criticising the US for not sending in enough soldiers, especially to places where European troops were being sent, like ex-Yugoslavia, where, it was said, "The US does the bombing, we do the dying and the NGOs do the feeding." Today, even more than before, the US is counting on being able to rely on being able to inflict death from a safe distance. What this means has already been amply demonstrated in Afghanistan, where the estimates of civilians killed run from 3,000 to several times that number. When at a press conference someone referred to a village wedding that had been bombed by the US and the survivors strafed, Rumsfeld curtly lectured the media on how such things should not even be considered an issue.

But Americans are going to have to get ready for body bags, and Bush wants them to know it. Indeed, while "raining death from above" will remain a cornerstone of US strategy, the US imperialists are also intent on burying the "Vietnam syndrome" (by which they mean the fear of being stuck in a losing imperialist war of conquest) and doing away with any remaining reluctance to sacrifice the troops' blood to achieve their aims. Ultimately, political control requires ground troops. In the scramble to secure new positions abroad, all the imperialists are anxious not to be the only ones without battle-scarred troops.

The sea change in military policy has been prepared along with changing politics within US society as well. In the wake of 11 September, a broad

spectrum of representatives of the US ruling class have been working to operate a paradigm shift from a social contract with sections of the middle classes, in which their passive acquiescence was considered enough to earn them a certain comfort, to more of a Spartan model, in which the order of the day is war without end and the willingness to accept the mobilisation and sacrifices that makes necessary.

Tremor after tremor has shaken the American political landscape during the last few years, as a new agenda began to emerge through the development of events, political infighting and a shifting consensus. There have been bitter "culture wars" around abortion, the patriarchal family and cultural issues – questions of how people live – but little has been said in public about the point of all this, except for obscure articles in foreign policy journals. Whether they believe in his system of ideas or just pragmatically believe that it makes for effective propaganda, the ruling class circles behind Bush have a whole highly repressive social and cultural agenda. They seek to create a social situation that is as radically different domestically as the unfettered global empire they seek to bring into being. Without making facile comparisons that history may or may not confirm, or ignoring the profound differences between a Germany making a desperate bid to break out of its status as a defeated power and an America at the top of the imperialist heap and determined to stay there, it can be said that the recasting of society embarked upon by the Nazis was at one with the global aims of German imperialism and what they knew would be necessary to achieve them.

8. DANGERS AND OPPORTUNITIES

After the First World War Stalin wrote, "The significance of the imperialist war which broke out ten years ago lies, among other things, in the fact that it gathered all of these contradictions in a single knot and threw them onto the scales, thereby accelerating and facilitating the revolutionary battles of the proletariat." The situation now is different in many ways – today the contradictions between the imperialists are being conditioned mainly by the contradiction between imperialism and the oppressed peoples – but neverthe-

less the analogy is useful, for the world's contradictions are intertwined, the whole knot is being drawn tighter and tighter, and they are again being thrown "onto the scales". Cataclysmic events are unfolding and the imperialists and reactionaries themselves have placed war, the resolution of contradictions by the force of arms, squarely at centre stage. All of this can serve to accelerate and facilitate the battles of the proletariat and the oppressed peoples at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

In order for this to happen, in order to bring out and concretise the favourable potential in today's world situation, a great deal of work is required to bring forward the flag of the proletariat more powerfully into the current swirl of contradictions. Never before in the existence of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement has the need and the possibilities for Maoist leadership stood out more sharply.

It is indisputable – even George Bush understands it – that there will be resistance. It may arise in different ways and at a different rhythm in different countries, and it will not take a straight path. But the most important question, for the Maoists, is this: Should we stand in its way (by trying to direct attention elsewhere, hoping for some different conditions)? Tail behind the contradictory and sometimes dead-end currents that spontaneously appear? Or strive to lead it? Who else can correctly tie together all the strands of struggle, bring out the people's common interests and enemy, and point out what needs to be done at every stage?

Lenin wrote, "The experience of this war... stuns and breaks some people but enlightens and tempers others". He pointed out that war reveals that which is normally hidden, that the imperialist system ultimately depends on military force to survive, and that war creates more favourable conditions for the proletariat and the people to establish their own rule through revolution. This new world disorder will be feared by some and welcomed by others, but at any rate it is the currency and it will sweep millions into motion, dragging their own points of view and interests with them. Events such as these shed light on the real relations that govern this world and the strengths and weaknesses of the people and their enemies, and mobilise and temper the people to

fight them. What Lenin's words mean now, in our situation, is that we face both the danger of being crushed through confrontation with an enemy that is striking out aggressively or through our own passivity or misstep and the need and possibility of rising to the occasion and leading the struggle on a planetary scale, in a way that was not possible when the world's people did not face such a sharply-defined and rampant enemy.

Global resistance and the more forceful assertion of the proletarian alternative are what are called for. This resistance will take many forms.

On the one hand there needs to be mass movements at an international level, uniting all who can be united, bringing the outlook and the programme of struggle of the proletariat into these battles and, through this process, winning broad masses all over the world not only to more powerfully and effectively oppose and resist the war and aggression of the imperialists, but also to understand and focus more sharply on the imperialist system itself as the cause of injustice and oppression all over the world.

At the same time, and central to the Maoists' ability to step more forcefully onto the political stage on a world scale, the current international situation also makes it possible and necessary for further accelerated work on the path of seizing power in every country and building and strengthening Maoist parties capable of leading this process. The conditions for actually doing so can be glimpsed on the horizon to various degrees in different countries.

For example, today we can see how the People's War in Nepal is interacting with the rapidly sharpening revolutionary situation in the whole region. The resounding victories of the People's War are providing a model of how to fight and what to fight for. Fear of such an alternative path appearing in the tinderbox of South Asia is no doubt one of the reasons why the revolution in Nepal is facing more direct opposition from the US and British imperialists, as well as from the regional gendarme of the world imperialist system, India. It is also clear that the rivalries between the different reactionary states, especially India and Pakistan, as well as the turmoil and resistance that has been unleashed by the so-called "war on terrorism", also create more favourable conditions for revo-

lution throughout the subcontinent.

Likewise, in other front-line states the revolutionary process is now much more directly conditioned by the US-led crusade. In Iran, the regime's sham opposition to imperialism may be about to be put to the acid test, clarifying minds and providing revolutionary openings. The solidity of Turkey's reactionary regime is the object of increased US concern amid the political and economic strains of enlisting in US war efforts, a highly risky proposition.²² To cite another example key to US plans, despite the Israeli effort to "beat the Palestinians into submission", as Sharon puts it, the Israeli occupation of Palestine has in no way been rendered more stable by this world context but instead continues to generate resistance and spew instability throughout the region. The return of US troops to the Philippines has already triggered an anti-imperialist uproar throughout the country and may offer opportunities for a new level in the mobilisation and unity of the people for armed struggle.

The exact effects on each of the oppressed countries will be uneven and hard to predict. In general, it may be that the higher stakes set by Bush will have contradictory consequences. People's wars are necessarily protracted and go through twists and turns. But just as it is impossible for reactionary rule to prevail evenly throughout the whole of a single country in most of the countries oppressed by imperialism, because of the relative weakness of the central state power in the oppressed nations, particularly in the vast countryside, it is also impossible for the US imperialists to intervene everywhere and all at once around the world, and they will face some stark choices of their own.

US forces are now stationed in at least 100 of the 189 member states of the United Nations – their greatest world-wide presence since the Second World War. Many of them are operating in areas like Central Asia that are relatively unfamiliar, and far from the US home base, with supplies dependent on intermediate bases positioned in "friendly" third countries like Saudi Arabia that are sometimes not all that stable. However "lean and mean" they may be, they are still stretched thin, including relative to US economic strength. The US rulers are gambling

that they will eventually be able to translate this expanded military presence into economic gains. But this situation leaves their forces exposed and vulnerable on an unprecedented scale.

While the US has been fairly successful in the initial stage of the "crusade" in lining up the other imperialist powers, the diverging interests of the different powers mean that they will not be able to maintain indefinitely a unified camp – contention as well as collusion is a permanent feature of imperialism. Already the fissures in the US-led "coalition" are showing themselves in relation to Iraq and Palestine and will grow deeper as the resistance of the people intensifies.

When Rumsfeld defined the new US military doctrine as the ability to fight in four major theatres of war at once – and largely alone – he was making the assumption that nobody would fight back too hard and that the US would keep winning easy victories. After all, the war in Vietnam was just one war and even so the US could not win it. This situation poses unprecedented challenges to the revolutionary forces, too, including in terms of raising their level of internationalist unity so as to wage the global struggle against the imperialists in a more unified way.

As for the situation in the imperialist countries, there is historical experience to draw on there as well. "Never is imperialism stronger than at the outbreak of a war", Lenin wrote in 1915 in a polemic against those who saw only that aspect of the situation and not the revolutionary situations that were to break out over time as the effects of the war unfolded in the belligerent countries. Later on he added, "In the first place, never do the governments stand in such need of agreement with all the parties of the ruling classes, or of the 'peaceful' submission of the oppressed classes in relation to that rule, as in the time of war. Secondly, even though 'at the beginning of a war', and especially in a country that expects a speedy victory, the government seems all-powerful, nobody in the world has ever linked expectations of a revolutionary situation exclusively with the 'beginning' of a war, and still less has anybody ever identified the 'seeming' with the actual."

No revolutionary situation now exists in the imperialist heartlands, but revolutionary situations are impossi-

ble without crises generated by events such as the current war, and no one can say with certainty whether this or some future crisis will give rise to such a situation. There has never been an imperialist war that was not at first greeted by a wave of patriotism. On closer examination, the sentiments among even the intermediate people in the US and other imperialist countries are more complicated than they might at first appear. Also, the situation between imperialist countries is necessarily uneven, but the eager race to build up arms, to militarise societies and to get troops on the ground to contend for control and booty wherever possible will drag all of these countries into the whirlpool. The US position as a frontline country will draw people into political life in an intensified manner, and the struggles there against the US crusade will have enormous impact on the rest of the world, just as the struggles in other countries will give heart to those in the belly of the beast.

The struggle against the US-led war and aggression against the world's people will have a crucial impact on the development of the world revolution. Marx spoke of the need for the working class to resist the capitalists or risk becoming reduced to a mass of broken wretches; the same applies to resistance against today's unjust wars. Moreover, Middle Eastern immigrants in America are already living under martial law. Britain has locked up asylum seekers in concentration camp-like conditions. Its proposed requirement that they carry microchip "smart cards" whose contents are secret even from the men and women carrying them,²³ has been compared to the yellow stars Jews were made to wear by the Nazis. Colonial wars old and new are inevitably accompanied by repression against those forced to leave their homelands to work in the metropolises, where they form a basic component of the proletariat in many imperialist countries. This was seen in the massacres of Algerian demonstrators in Paris during France's war against Algeria. Only if the advanced proletarians and their Maoist representatives in these countries stand up in solidarity with the world's people can they become fit to rule; only in this way can they represent the interests of, and begin to unite, the workers and the majority of people in these societies whose fun-

damental interests are opposed to the kind of world they are now trapped in.

Further, this is the context for the necessary organisational efforts to go from what Lenin described as a situation of revolutionaries wearing "thin-soled shoes" to one where "hob-nailed boots" are required. It would be an error of shameful and perhaps fatal proportions to fail to recognise the existence and implications of the new situation.

There is considerable danger of losing revolutionary bearings in the face of this situation. There has already been some experience in the anti-globalisation movement, whose surge in the period before 11 September so alarmed the imperialists of every country and provoked much of their post-11 September crackdown. (Police gunfire against anti-globalisation protesters in Gothenburg and Genoa heralded the changing rules of the game in Western politics.) Some forces have tried to disconnect demands against globalisation from the current wars and preparations for wars. The question facing people in these movements, like everyone else on the globe, is whether or not to stand with the people of the world. Otherwise, just and important protests against McDonald's and genetically-modified products, or even political repression, risk missing the point. For instance, there was not nearly strong enough opposition to the US-led war at the anti-globalisation conference in Porto Alegre, Brazil. Members and supporters of complicit European governments (especially France) were allowed to participate as if they were not part of the problem. This was a case study in how to reduce the demand for a different world to an irrelevant, pious wish by ignoring what keeps that world from being born – imperialism and its armed forces and enforcers. To take another example, raising slogans against both war and terrorism means avoiding pointing the spearhead of the struggle against the US and one's own ruling classes and can only strangle the people's resistance in its cradle. Those who understand the possibility and necessity of uniting very broadly, of basing themselves on the masses and uniting all who can be united against the US-led crusade and imperialist war in all its manifestations, will be able to inspire and lead the hard work of shedding light on the world situation and

telling the masses the truth about where their interests lie – not with the imperialists and governments, but with the people of the world.

As the Revolutionary International Movement has recently written, "The world has entered a period of conspicuous change when what on the surface seemed permanent and immovable is being shaken by its internal contradictions. It is a time full of both greater opportunities and real dangers. It will require all of our proletarian resolve, our Marxist-Leninist-Maoist stand, viewpoint and method as well as our correct political orientation to advance amidst the turbulent storm. We can see the possibility of ultimate victory coming more sharply into focus but this will require more struggle and more sacrifice."

Mao Tsetung said that imperialism is both a real tiger and a paper tiger, and in the long run it is the people and only the people who are really powerful. In today's world, anyone who tries to ignore that real tiger aspect is spreading a suicidal fallacy. But why is it also a paper tiger? This aspect can remain latent in ordinary times and is brought out only by mass struggle in all its forms. Not because imperialism's skyscrapers can fall to the ground but because it does evil things at home and around the world, arousing the hatred of the people and uniting them against it, and in the long run the people and only the people, including in the belly of the beast, can resolve the contradictions it gives rise to. The world is plunging deeper into disasters that can only be resolved by the people, mobilised in revolutionary struggle and led by a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist line.

ENDNOTES

1 The burning of the German Reichstag (parliament) in 1933 gave Hitler the pretext to declare "you're either with us or against us" in his own style and consolidate Nazi rule as a prelude to a war for world hegemony.

2 In the real world, these neutral economic terms mean chaos and suffering on a scale rarely seen in human history. For instance, the "normal workings" of world trade meant that Zambia's agriculture was ruined and its economy became dependent on foreign-owned mining, and those same normal workings meant that when the world's handful of competing monop-

lies produced too much copper in the various Third World countries they controlled, Zambia's mines were closed and that capital just picked up and moved elsewhere. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) solved the problem of the shortage of profit opportunities for imperialist capital in Zambia by opening its economy to further penetration in other ways. It forced the country to drop the trade barriers that protected its once-thriving garment factories where the miners' wives, sisters and children worked. Imported clothing soon swept them away like a tidal wave. One of the dozens of women trying to keep her children alive by selling a few tomatoes in a local market told a reporter, "No one alive now has ever seen such poverty." In the wake of the financial crisis caused by global currency movements, within a matter of weeks peasants in Indonesia went from eating rice to the bark off trees. The world has seen famine, plague and other disasters, but never have they been so clearly man-made.

3 The two blocs were held together by mutual interests, not force, but defections weren't allowed on either side. The Soviets made that point in Czechoslovakia in 1968. So did the US, although sometimes less openly. In Italy, for instance, under Project Gladio and secret organisations like the P2 Masonic Lodge, the US organised to launch a military coup in co-operation with like-minded sections of the Italian ruling class should the pro-Soviet Italian Communist Party come too close to power.

4 Nixon's Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, is on record as saying, "We can't let a country go Marxist just because its people are irresponsible." He directed the CIA to organise a military coup to overthrow Allende. The US-backed generals executed thousands of real or suspected impediments to US interests, creating the political conditions for further US investment.

5 Argentina is a good example. European and especially Spanish capital is so heavily concentrated in that country and its neighbours that when the IMF refused to extend Argentina's loans, the Spanish stock market trembled, while the US market was able to take it in stride. France and Spain had attempted to forestall this decision, but under the IMF system of weighted voting, the US has veto power. Too bad for the Spanish banks. And too bad for the millions of Argentinians who woke up one morning and found

themselves poor or poorer when the country's currency collapsed.

6 For more on this, see "Free Trade – Engine of Growth or Plunder?", in AWTW 2000/26.

7 By now it should be clear to all that the argument that "human rights" trumps sovereignty has led to a new doctrine: "national security" (of the US, of course) trumps human rights, now merely "a fashionable cause of the dim and distant 1990s", as a columnist cynically wrote.

8 Today, in the World Court in The Hague, we see the Serbian thug favoured by Russia and much of the French ruling class, Milosevic, on trial, while the Croatian Tudjman, the thug favoured by Germany and the US, is still in power.

9 They finally got their wish in the fierce March fighting south of Gardez, the first battle in the Afghanistan war the US fought with conventional forces. Troops from Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany and Norway took part, with France sharing the tasks of aerial bombardment. For a few days, the Continental European foreign ministers softened their tone.

10 The USSR produced military equipment, from Kalashnikov automatic rifles to MiG jet fighters and the world's largest military aircraft, that were considered at least equal in quality to that of the West. But measured in current exchange rates, Russia's annual military budget is now down to \$9 billion. By comparison, according to some estimates, the US is now spending about \$1 billion a day. It has been said that the cost of maintaining military parity with the West on the smaller economic base of the Eastern bloc created economic imbalances that were a major factor in its demise. There may be lessons for the US in terms of its plans to greatly expand military spending.

The change in the world balance of military forces, brought about by the further weakening of Russia, also impeded dreams of grafting Russian military power onto European economic might. That is another important difference between the world situation of a decade ago and that of today.

11 In the last few years, France has developed a rapid-reaction strike force of 50,000 troops, part of a strategic realignment, begun in 1996, of France's armed forces away from its nuclear-dependent focus of the Cold War days. It has abandoned its land-based nu-

clear missiles and bombers and, by abolishing conscription, made it politically easier to send troops overseas. Until recently Germany had only 1,000 soldiers specifically trained and equipped for rapid intervention abroad. The UK has 4,000 seasoned special operations troops, the SAS, long infamous for atrocities in Ireland and elsewhere, whereas by contrast, comparable German units saw combat for the first time in Kosovo. All three countries have made efforts to send these soldiers into battle wherever and whenever possible, not only to achieve immediate military and political goals but also to test and train them as core units for future expansion.

12 India and Pakistan's nuclear weapons can be ignored as far as the world military scene is concerned. Israel's nuclear weapons have a specific role to guarantee the US-sponsored Zionist outpost in the Middle East.

13 This may be the model the US wants to implement for some or all of the other imperialist countries as well, akin to the Roman Empire where the local ruling classes were articulated into its empire, for their mutual benefit, as long as all roads led to Rome, and Rome got the lion's share and the last word.

14 See "Cold War Government with No War to Fight – America's Imperial Longings," Philip S. Golub, *Le Monde Diplomatique* (English edition), July 2001. Note the headline – this analysis of America's quest for unipolar power was published before 11 September. Golub notes that even before becoming Bush's war secretary, Rumsfeld was warning about a new "Pearl Harbor". It may be more accurate to say that Rumsfeld was calling for one. This is, of course, what the Bushites labelled the 11 September events. The original Pearl Harbor, the Japanese attack on the American fleet stationed in Hawaii that occasioned the US entry into the Second World War, was also an event at the very least welcomed by the US, if not provoked or deliberately allowed to happen.

15 Shortly afterwards Powell accused his French counterpart, Hubert Vedrine, of having "caught the vapours", a remark that yet other "unidentified spokesmen" for the US translated as acting like a "menopausal woman". These remarks, from Bush's chief diplomat (!), are the terms on which America is setting the debate: "real men" versus females and the effeminate. For the macho – misogynist

and homophobic – American military man, this is a provocation.

16 America recently announced it would develop smaller "tactical" nuclear devices that would be used in "normal" wars. In fact, Afghanistan and Iraq were cited as potential targets. War strategists used to talk about the "balance of terror", which meant that neither side would dare to provoke a thermonuclear showdown. Now, in the "brave" new post-Cold War world, we may see – soon – the first nuclear warfare since Hiroshima.

17 Bush barely bothers to formulate credible pretexts. The CIA itself (suddenly on the "left" in American politics) issued a report in February stating that Iraq, like Iran and North Korea (the three countries on Bush's "axis of evil" list), was not at this time involved in what the US considers "terrorism". Bush hasn't tried to argue otherwise. Instead, he emphasises what weapons the regime might acquire at some time in the future, which, even if they existed, would still pale beside the chemical, bacteriological, nuclear and other "weapons of mass destruction" already in the hands of the US, Israel, etc. (after all, the anthrax used to kill people by mail in the US was made for equally murderous purposes by the American government).

18 In addition to the end of US-European "coalition politics" previously discussed, a decade ago the USSR was the main defender of Iraq; recently Russia refused to receive the visit of an Iraqi minister.

19 Hardly a new venture for a regime that provided weapons to the US-sponsored Contras in Nicaragua during the early 1980s.

20 The US acquired Cuba and Puerto Rico in the same way during its 1898 war with Spain.

21 Contrary to its standard and almost invariable practice of refusing to confirm or deny allegations about its activities, the CIA later denounced this as a fabrication.

22 This is one reason why the IMF bailed out Turkey and not Argentina.

23 In a country that prides itself on the lack of any national identity card for its citizens.



Mao Tse-tung teaching at a cadre school before the Long March in 1934.

Maoism Versus Opportunism in Turkey

The article below is excerpted from a letter written by the Committee of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (CoRIM) to the Communist Party of Turkey/Marxist-Leninist (TKP/ML) in mid-2001. The TKP/ML is one of several political centres that emerged from the formerly united Communist Party of Turkey Marxist-Leninist (TKPML), which was a founding participant of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement in 1984.

During the course of a series of splits and realignments among Party forces, several centres of the TKPML have emerged, each of which continues to use the name of the Party and claim its heritage. The names of the two largest groupings that exist today are distinguished only by punctuation marks: the TKP(ML) and the TKP/ML. In the RIM Committee letter, reference is made to other centres that have existed in the course of the Party's history, in particular the TKP/ML (Maoist Party Centre), which continues today, and the TKP/ML East Anatolia Regional Committee, usually referred to by its Turkish initials DABK, which merged with the TKP/ML Central Committee to form the TKP/ML Provisional United

Central Committee in 1994 and which subsequently split into the above-mentioned TKP(ML), which publishes *Ozgur Gelecek*, and TKP(ML). To minimise confusion concerning the names of the different Party centres, no punctuation is used when referring to the previously united TKPML of 1984 and earlier, and the other centres are referred to by the punctuation they use themselves.

As the letter makes clear, from the formation of RIM onwards serious differences emerged between the TKPML and RIM, and a long process of discussion and struggle has gone on involving the different centres that emerged from the previously united TKPML. The letter is part of the effort waged by CoRIM to clarify RIM's relations with the TKP/ML, whose positions have increasingly diverged from those of RIM as a whole and which has aligned itself with other non-RIM currents within the international communist movement.

CoRIM's letter was never answered by the TKP/ML. A subsequent CoRIM letter dated January 2002 informs the TKP/ML that, "Your political positions and approach have long become intolerable for a participating party

or organisation of our Movement. Furthermore, articles in your press (and especially the interview with a leading comrade of your Party from the Black Sea region, which spoke of a "rupture") led us to believe that you no longer considered yourselves part of our Movement.... We have seen no reason to believe you are correcting the serious ideological and political errors that we have criticised in the past. For all of these reasons our Movement has, in keeping with its organisational principles, decided to expel the TKP/ML from RIM."

The excerpted letter below clarifies the political and ideological basis and the historical development behind this serious decision. The full version of the letter has been published in Turkish and is available in English and Turkish in full on the AWTW website: www.awtw.org. The public discussion of this letter will no doubt contribute to the ongoing process of uniting all of the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist forces of Turkey into a single centre of the Communist Party of Turkey Marxist-Leninist closely united in RIM.

- A World To Win

Letter to the Communist Party of Turkey/Marxist-Leninist

From the Committee of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement

Comrades:...

The formation of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM), based on its *Declaration*, represented a great victory for the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist (MLM) forces world-wide and in fact marked a major turning point in the crisis of the international communist movement. Your Party participated in this. (Here we are referring to the united Party you were part of.) The formation of RIM laid the basis for ending the process of further disintegration and collapse [of the international communist movement] and replaced it with one of higher unity and the growth of the revolutionary communists – the Maoist forces – in the world. However, shortly after that, strong trends within TKPML and its leadership opposed this basis of unity of the MLM forces.¹

To this end they put forward a seriously flawed and erroneous argument: that Mao Tsetung Thought² did not represent a qualitatively higher and third stage in the development of Marxism-Leninism. On the basis of this and a series of other important criticisms, the *Declaration* was called "opportunist" by the majority of your Party leadership. Even at that time significant forces in the TKPML did not accept these attacks. It is not our intention in this letter to review the struggle that took place within the Party at that time or the actions, tactics and subsequent development of the various forces who either separated from the Party centre to form the Maoist Party Centre or others who continued to struggle for an MLM line within the framework of a single Party centre. The point is that your "centre", the TKP/ML, is still carrying the ideological baggage of that time and it is high time it took measures to rectify this.

In addition to negating Mao Tsetung Thought, another major criticism made by the TKPML at the time

was of the summation contained in the *Declaration* of Stalin's errors. This question was closely related to the question of Maoism. It is a well-known historical fact that the negation of Mao Tsetung Thought (today Maoism) and the refusal to recognise comrade Stalin's errors was spearheaded by Enver Hoxha [leader of the Party of Labour of Albania] after Mao's death and the coup in China. Hoxhaite and semi-Hoxhaite trends (by semi-Hoxhaite we mean those who rejected some of Hoxha's more outrageous conclusions but adopt his world-view and basic arguments to a large degree) raised their heads in many corners of the international communist movement during the years following Mao's death. In the communist movement of Turkey, including in the TKPML, this trend was quite pronounced.

There were also several less central but still significant questions contained in your criticism of the *Declaration*. Among your other criticisms was the role of the national bourgeoisie in the democratic revolution in the oppressed nations. These, as well as other criticisms, were expressed in the Report of the Fifth Plenum of the Second Central Committee (CC) of the TKPML and were responded to in our 1986 letter, to which, in the interests of maintaining our focus, we will not return in this document.

As of January 2000 we were informed by your representative that your Party still holds the *Declaration* to be "opportunist". But what is the reason for this charge now? The principal reason you gave previously for calling our *Declaration* "opportunist" was its emphasis on Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought (today MLM) as a third and higher stage of the development of Marxism. Now if you really have accepted MLM as a third and higher stage of Marxism, what is the basis for continuing to hold the position that the *Declaration* is

"opportunist"? Or is this a conclusion in search of a justification?

After your Party put forward its seriously wrong positions on Maoism and called the *Declaration* of RIM "opportunist", there ensued a process of internal struggle between RIM and its parties and organisations and the TKPML, in regard to this and other cardinal questions of revolution. CoRIM (Committee of RIM) wrote a very important letter to your Party responding to your criticisms of the *Declaration*. The first Expanded Meeting of the RIM Committee approved this letter in 1986. This letter seriously criticises your Party's centrist position on Mao and Maoism and clarifies that the RIM *Declaration* is not only not "opportunist" but is an MLM platform which draws a clear line of demarcation between Marxism and revisionism in today's world. As we said in our 1986 letter:

"The heart of the dispute between the Communist Party of Turkey Marxist-Leninist and the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement has always been, and remains, the question of *Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought* [today MLM]. ... Much of the attack on the *Declaration* takes the form of a 'defence' of the great Marxist-Leninist Joseph Stalin and the revolutionary heritage of the Third International (Comintern). In fact, this defence is not, in essence, a defence of Stalin and the Comintern, and certainly not of their most revolutionary accomplishments; it is, on the contrary, an attack on Mao Tsetung and, specifically, on those important criticisms that Mao summed up from the experience of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the Soviet Union, criticisms which played an important role in the development of Mao's most vital contribution to the science of Marxism-Leninism, his theory of continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat, and which in

turn laid the basis for what, in the words of the *Declaration*, represents the most advanced experience of proletarian dictatorship and the revolutionising of society – the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. The *Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement* emphasised that, 'Lack of clarity on this question will lead to revisionism.'"

Your Party also challenged the fact that it was Mao who developed the strategy and tactics of making proletarian revolution in the semi-colonial, semi-feudal countries. From the fact that Lenin and Stalin both paid considerable attention to summing up the initial development of a revolutionary movement in these countries and made a series of extremely important observations concerning the revolution there, you wrongly implied that, therefore, Mao did not make a qualitative development of Marxism-Leninism in this field. At that time (in our 1986 letter) we warned that centrism over MLM would lead to abandoning the strategy of people's war. In fact, at different junctures this centrism led the leadership of TKP/ML to question the possibility and necessity of waging people's war in Turkey.

Another argument of your Party for calling the *Declaration* "opportunist" was that the *Declaration* boldly sums up the deviations of the Comintern during the Second World War and in the course of adopting the policy of the United Front Against Fascism. In response to this we said that the Party leadership's blind defence of the Comintern is, "above all, a reflection of the TKPML's open rejection of the conception of Mao Tsetung Thought and its failure to really grasp Mao's qualitative contribution to the science of Marxism-Leninism. In order to pull Mao down it is necessary to build up Stalin and the Comintern and more than that, protect them from any real, critical summation of practice."

These were the outstanding ideological and political differences between the line of your Party and the line of our Movement. They constituted your Party's basis for calling the RIM *Declaration* an "opportunist" document since 1985.

Are we arguing that there were no errors in the *Declaration* written in 1984? Of course not, that would be a Hoxhaite failure to see the contradiction in everything. In the course of

vigorous debate in the years following the formation of our Movement, we have developed our collective understanding on a number of important questions concerning the analysis of the situation in the world and making revolution. The most far-reaching of these developments are reflected in the document *Long Live Marxism-Leninism-Maoism!* which our Movement adopted in 1993. Not only does that document correctly adopt the term Maoism instead of Mao Tsetung Thought, it explains the content of that change. Through practice in revolutionary struggle and lively internal debate we raised our understanding of the Maoist line for making revolution in the oppressed countries, the universality of people's war and other questions, and this higher understanding was reflected in that document. Important developments have taken place in our analysis of the world situation, including reaching a unified position on the principal contradiction in the world today. Along with these advances in our ideological and political understanding and unity, our Movement has gained precious experience in fulfilling its task as the embryonic centre of the Maoist forces and leading the process of the formation of a new communist international. RIM has made corresponding organisational advances, and its parties and organisations and the Movement as a whole have grown stronger and more capable of fulfilling their responsibilities.

This process has been driven by vigorous internal struggle waged by RIM's parties and organisations. Certainly, various forces in the TKPML have participated directly or indirectly in this process of unity-struggle-unity. But the negative attitude and approach to RIM that your Party is championing did not contribute to this process; rather it can be said that it was an obstacle. The advance of RIM in all aspects, including its ability to overcome earlier errors and weaknesses, is testimony to the strength of the MLM basis on which it was founded.

Since 1985 your Party has gone through many changes of leadership. Every time you called the previous leadership "rightist" or "opportunist". But you never argued, either in meetings with us or in the writings of your Party, that these previous leaderships had a fundamental problem – centrism in regard to life-and-death questions of

socialist revolution and Marxism. Even after your Party adopted MLM you did not base this position on a summation of your past deviations on this question. Even after you adopted MLM you refused to drop your position against the *Declaration* or explain why you spent so much time on the basis of calling yours MLM – you think the *Declaration* is "opportunist". In the following sections we will see how, despite calling yourself MLM, your understanding of your scientific ideology still lapses on important aspects.

YOUR SUMMATION OF THE TKP/ML'S HISTORY SHOWS YOUR LINE

We believe that the history of advances and problems of TKP/ML must be evaluated mainly in relation to Maoism and MLM. Not because of our subjective desire but because it is the reality. We whole-heartedly unite with the position of TKP(ML) in its letter to RIM which said whenever the Party departed from MLM it caused critical and serious damage. (From the letter of the CC of TKP(ML) to RIM, January 2001).

Only this can be a correct summation of the history of your Party, and must be taken as a guideline. In your account of "The Brief History of TKP/ML" [from a document entitled, *History of the Glorious Achievements of Our Party on the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of its Founding and Struggle*, July 1997], this approach is absent. In the account of the TKP/ML history you list numerous problems your Party had, where you also toss in the question of Mao Tsetung in a very ambiguous way. The failure to recognise the root cause of the problems leads to an eclectic line. The characteristic of eclectic line is that it muddles together the correct and incorrect. Thus, partial truths that are expressed become mere demagoguery in the service of what is wrong. This kind of line only confuses minds. Since it pays no service to some correct points it hopes to prevent the revolutionary masses from seeing its fundamentally wrong essence. Because it mixes primary and secondary problems together, it draws attention from the essence of the problem. That is why eclecticism has often been the vehicle used by right opportunism when the open advocacy of an overtly opportunist line is difficult.

we saw this same situation in China when the revolutionary left had to sharply struggle against the eclecticism serving as a Trojan Horse for the right opportunist line of Deng Xiaoping. One would expect that, especially when a document is only a "Brief History", it would deal with the principal problem at each turning point of the Party's history.

Your account of Comrade Ibrahim Kaypakkaya's split from the Shafak revisionists [a group of pro-Soviet revisionists] lacks decisive aspects of historical truth. You fail to underline the fact that the formation of the Party was principally related to the world-wide struggle between Marxism and revisionism. You fail to grasp what Comrade Ibrahim Kaypakkaya stressed, that, "It must be emphatically said that the TKPML is a product of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution." It was under the influence of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and his grasp of MLM that Ibrahim Kaypakkaya could recognise the revisionist essence of the Shafak group even while they were covering their revisionism in a garb of pro-Mao posturing. Comrade Ibrahim Kaypakkaya exposed the reformist, legalist and economist activities of the Shafak revisionists and ruthlessly uncovered their poisonous revisionist eclecticism. He convincingly argued that "these gentlemen think that by changing the name they can change the content".

In 1979, the Party had correctly pointed out that: "In the fight against Khrushchevite modern revisionism, young Marxist-Leninist parties were born in many countries under the influence of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.... Our Party was born under such conditions [following a reference to, among other things, the "world-wide effects of the Cultural Revolution"] in Turkey and the world." The formation of the TKPML was part of the whole Marxist-Leninist movement that, to quote the *Declaration*, "has as its origins this historic appeal [referring to the *Proposal for a General Line of the International Communist Movement*] and the polemics that accompanied it." It was precisely the inspiration of the Cultural Revolution that played a key role in the development of a vanguard party in Turkey. For, as in a great many countries, the history of the communist parties that had been part of the Third Interna-

tional was far from revolutionary. As we said in our 1986 letter: "In the case of Turkey, it seems evident that, on the ideological level as well as in practice, Ibrahim Kaypakkaya represented the kind of rupture with revisionism that was the precondition to the development of a real Marxist-Leninist movement. In fact, the great contribution of Ibrahim Kaypakkaya was to bring Mao Tsetung Thought to Turkey, to begin the process of integrating the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought with the concrete realities of Turkey, and, on that basis, to launch the first real and serious efforts to establish red political power amidst the flames of people's war" [quoted from the 1986 CoRIM letter to TKPML].

GRASPING THE KEY LINK

Again, in your account of the Party's history from 1978 onwards, the key link is not grasped.

After the death of Mao and the counter-revolutionary coup in China a crisis broke out in the International Communist Movement and within the communist parties and organisations that had been formed in the midst of the international struggle led by the Communist Party of China and Mao against the modern revisionists in the USSR. This crisis took another leap when the revisionist Enver Hoxha launched a vicious attack against Mao and MLM.

The problem of Mao and Maoism in the Party since then is rooted in that crisis. In some parties there were splits between Marxist-Leninist-Maoists and those that sided with Hua Kuo-feng and Deng Xiao-ping and called China socialist. Some of the that parties that denounced the revisionist nature of the new rulers in China were unable to extend this to digging deeper into Mao and MLM and resolutely upholding and applying MLM. As a result a centrist tendency developed towards MLM in some communist parties and organisations. In some cases this happened because a strong pro-Hoxha trend developed. In other cases it happened without an explicit pro-Hoxha grouping developing. Nonetheless, whether they openly upheld Hoxha or not, they shared a common line and outlook on vital issues regarding the international communist movement and revolution. Within TKPML there

developed a liquidationist and centrist trend concerning Mao and Maoism. The liquidationist tendency was represented by those who were openly pro-Hoxha. But even after Hoxha's attacks against Mao were rebuffed, the TKPML dropped Mao Tsetung Thought. TKPML continued to defend Mao and his contributions but refrained from restoring Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought as the ideological basis on which, in fact, the Party had been formed.

In your whole account of your "Brief History" there is no mention of this! There is no mention that your Party dropped Mao Tsetung Thought and did not restore it for more than 10 years. Your Party only called itself Marxist-Leninist and even criticised the *Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement* as "opportunist" for upholding Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought. It is amazing that you can keep quiet about this long lapse and not sum it up in your "Brief History" even while you deal with diverse (real or imaginary) kinds of deviations of different sections of TKPML in that "Brief History". You treat this long lapse in dropping Maoism as a very minor misunderstanding! You keep quiet about this but you cannot pass up celebrating the one hundredth anniversary of Hoxha's birth in your legal paper, *Ozgur Gelecek*! Is this not amazing?

In your "Brief History" you recount the important and correct struggle of TKPML in 1976 against those who later became Halkin Birliigi [who until 1994 called themselves TKP/ML Hareketi, or TKP/ML Movement]. You say: "...the views of this faction and those of the Party were diametrically opposed. These differences were on the analysis of socio-economic structure of the country, the path of revolution, the character of revolution, the preparation for revolution, the main contradiction, and Mao Tse-Tung" [cited from the English translation of *Hail the Glorious...*, 1997]

You correctly call this group a "revisionist" group. But what was the principal reason for their revisionism? If it was liquidation of Mao, then why are you mentioning it last, and referring to the Mao question as one of the differences with this group? In fact it may well be true that your Party at the time dealt with this difference as only one among many. But to treat the differ-

ence on this question merely as one of the differences was and is wrong. It is a sign of your centrist line on the cardinality of Mao and Maoism in the fight against revisionism. At that time (as well as now) that was the key problem of your Party. Every other problem that you listed in your article boiled down from liquidating Mao. The negation of Ibrahim Kaypakkaya's line flowed from liquidating Mao. If this is not grasped you will not be able to make a correct summation of the Party's history. You will always end up with an eclectic summation. You should follow what Mao taught: grasp the key link! Once one grasps the key link everything else will fall into place.

In the "Brief History" you sum up the February 1978 Conference of your Party in this way: "This Conference was particularly important as a decision was taken to stop organising locally and begin organising centrally. The initial period of the First CC... was qualitatively MLM. Nevertheless, at the fourth meeting, the CC departed from the MLM line and went towards the right.... Despite discussions about People's War, the idea would only stay in theory."

It is true that this Conference was very important in terms of reorganisation of the TKPML. But it is amazing that you *forget* to mention that it was this Conference which changed the guiding ideology of TKPML from Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought to Marxism-Leninism. It was this Conference that dropped Mao Tsetung Thought and lowered Mao to the ranks of Dimitrov [a Bulgarian communist who was a leading figure in the international communist movement in the 1930s] and even Hoxha. In 1978 the First Conference of the TKPML published a document entitled "Self-criticism of the TKPML" addressed to the "Marxist-Leninists of the world". This document, which examines some questions of the history of the Party, tries to link the conception of Mao Tsetung Thought to the erroneous view put forward by Lin Biao regarding "a new era". The First Conference stated: "...although F. Engels, J.V. Stalin, G. Dimitrov, E. Hoxha and Mao Tsetung are great teachers, they have not contributed to the theory on a new basis for they have not lived in a new era different from Marx's or Lenin's."

The fact that today your Party evaluates this period of the First CC as

"qualitatively Maoist" shows that your understanding of Maoism is still marred by more than a few remnants of Hoxhaism. One expects that when you start criticising the First CC because it "departed from MLM and went to the right" you would mention the fact that it developed a semi-Hoxhaite centrist line on Mao and that it openly negated the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution's universal application. Instead you beat around the bush in order to avoid the principal deviation of the First CC. Why do you do that? Is it not because you still have not grasped the essence of Maoism despite the fact that you have adopted the name? Your "Brief History" criticises the First CC for not implementing people's war. While this was an extremely important deviation, it was not the cause but the result. Dropping Mao Tsetung Thought from the guiding line of your Party and negating the universality of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution by your First CC meant that your Party leadership was confused about the nature of its goal: socialism and communism. Dropping Mao Tsetung Thought, especially in the climate of Enver Hoxha's assault on Mao for "war without perspective" and "populism" (by which he means "based on the peasantry"), also meant dropping people's war and the basic line Mao developed for revolution in semi-feudal, semi-colonial countries. Unfortunately your Party is still unable to see this fundamental problem. We should stress that your account of this history avoids key questions, reverses the primary and secondary and cause and effect, and sows confusion.

This First TKPML Central Committee correctly opposed the reactionary attacks of Hoxha on Mao Tsetung. But despite the refusal of the TKPML Central Committee to adopt Hoxha's conclusions, Hoxhaite thinking and approach continued to exert influence. In fact a key feature of the First CC of TKPML was that it tried to strike a "middle ground". On the one hand it rejected the reactionary attacks of the Hoxhaite on Mao and on the other hand it developed a line *against* accepting Mao's developments of Marxism-Leninism. Look what it says against Mao indirectly: "Similarly, the idea that links the class struggle to the existence of the bourgeoisie as a class and the idea that propounds its continued existence as a class throughout

the historical stage of socialism, are also ideas that constitute a deviation from Marxism-Leninism." [From the Report of the Ninth Plenum of the First CC of TKPML.] Your account of history misses this important fact of the history of your Party in an astonishing manner! We deeply believe that this is not just a misunderstanding but a line question. Your First CC in a number of its documents rejected Mao's cardinal analysis of the existence of classes and class struggle under socialism, two-line struggle in the party and the universal significance of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution....

The First CC openly criticised Mao and the Communist Party of China on the vital question of the two-line struggle in the party and put out a "classic" Hoxhaite line that: "The Chinese Communist Party regarded the struggle between the 'two lines', i.e. the proletarian line and the bourgeois line, as legitimate. This is not a correct understanding. What is legitimate is ideological struggle within the Party. Whether this turns into a struggle between two lines is dependent on a series of objective and subjective factors." As we know, neither Enver Hoxha nor the First CC of the TKPML was correct in saying that Mao held that the existence of the bourgeois line was "legitimate". Rather, he held that such a struggle was inevitable, had material roots, and if not paid attention to would lead to disaster for the proletariat. Mao's correct understanding was linked to his whole dialectical materialist approach and its application to understanding the laws of socialist society.

In the face of Hoxhaite attacks against Mao, the Party did not firmly defend Mao but took the position that the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution does not have universal application. The "Report of the Ninth Plenum" said: "It is to create a theoretical dogma, for instance, to present the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution as it took shape in China - which was a product of the specific circumstances in China - as a universal principle." This position went against the foundations of the TKPML, which was a product of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. This kind of position went against the urgent need for drawing a clear line of demarcation between Marxism and revisionism. Compare this

position with the sharp and clear position of the *Declaration* that you call an "opportunist" document: "Lenin said, 'Only he/she is a Marxist who extends the recognition of the class struggle to the recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat.' In the light of the invaluable lessons and advances achieved through the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution led by Mao Tsetung, this criterion put forward by Lenin has been further sharpened. Now it can be said that only he/she is a Marxist who extends the recognition of the class struggle to the recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat and to the recognition of the objective existence of classes, antagonistic class contradictions and of the continuation of the class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat throughout the whole period of socialism until communism. And as Mao so powerfully stated, 'Lack of clarity on this question will lead to revisionism.'"

Therefore, your "Brief History" definitely closes its eyes when it says that, "The initial period of the First CC... was qualitatively MLM..." and links the departure of the Fourth Plenum of the CC from the "MLM line" to not taking steps towards starting armed struggle and not foreseeing the military coup, etc., problems which however important were not the source but the results. Rather, it could be said that those errors were the logical conclusion of the line adopted earlier.

It was shortly after the Ninth Central Committee meeting of the TKPML that the First International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organisations took place in 1980. In this International Conference the TKPML participated as observers. The TKPML delegation played an extremely negative role in the Conference, parroting Hoxhaite attacks on Mao Tsetung Thought, and masquerading as defenders of Stalin and the Comintern. The TKPML refused to sign the Joint Communiqué produced by the First International Conference. This is another part of your Party's history that you have dubiously forgotten to mention.

During this entire period various forces in the international communist movement continued to struggle with the comrades of the TKPML, to demonstrate their erroneous positions and the dangers involved in such a cen-

trist approach.

The Second Conference of the TKPML was held in January 1981. At this meeting the "Bolshevik" faction in the Central Committee criticised Mao Tsetung and declared that Mao Tsetung, unlike Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, could not be considered a "classic". The "Bolsheviks" were defeated in this Conference and Mao was upheld as a "classic". The "Bolshevik" faction was expelled from the Party. In the aftermath of the Second Conference, the newly elected Central Committee re-examined the position that had been taken by the previous Central Committee regarding the Joint Communiqué and decided to sign the Communiqué with some reservations (which were reprinted in the second issue of *A World to Win* (first pre-RIM series)). Similarly, the Second Plenum of the TKPML Central Committee criticised itself for not having fulfilled its responsibilities in relation to the international communist movement and pledged to make further efforts. The victory over the "Bolshevik" line was testimony to the strong influence of Mao and Maoism within the TKPML as well as the heritage of Ibrahim Kaypakkaya. It was a sign that the revolutionary leaders and members of the Party, unlike bourgeois democrats, want to fight for a genuine revolution and not something else.

We agree with your "Brief History" that, "The most important issue dealt with by this Second Conference was the defence of Mao against the attacks from the Enver Hoxha fraction.... In short Mao and his teachings were resolutely defended in this conference." But we should emphasise the fact that this Conference did not succeed in uprooting the centrist line on Mao and MLM. Even after the expulsion of the Hoxhaite revisionists from the Party, the TKPML continued to refrain from recognising Mao Tsetung Thought or Maoism as a qualitatively new and higher stage in the development of Marxism-Leninism. A great many discussions were held between various Maoist parties who had signed the Joint Communiqué and representatives of the TKPML on a whole series of outstanding questions, most of all on Mao Tsetung Thought.

Again, your account of this period of the history of the Party obscures and covers over the main problem. You do not even mention that, despite de-

fending Mao against the "Bolshevik fraction", that conference failed to reinscribe MLM on the banner of the Party. This is how you describe this period in your "Brief History": "One side of contradiction was right opportunism and the other side was 'left' opportunism. One side of contradiction was bureaucratism and the other side was sectarianism. While both the right and 'left' opportunism seriously affected the Party, it was the right that posed the main danger." The fact that political-ideological polarisation within the Party crystallised around these secondary issues rather than the root cause was itself a problem. It was an important sign that the key link was not grasped. In your "Brief History" you still fail to grasp the key source of the different deviations that sprang up in the Party. Again, not accepting MLM (at the time Mao Tsetung Thought) as the guiding ideology of TKPML and not defining the contributions of Mao as the third and qualitatively higher stage of development of Marxism-Leninism was not just a minor misunderstanding on your part. It was an obvious sign of not grasping/accepting the truth of Mao's contributions. It was a wrong line and it must be stated as such. The fact that today you dismiss this criticism and run away from it, the fact that you do not want to look it in the eye and sum it up in order to get rid of all of its manifestations, shows that despite the fact that you have adopted the term you have not grasped the essence of MLM.

Your "Brief History" continues to miss major turning points in the life of the TKPML. In 1984 the Party joined the efforts to convene the Second International Conference and form RIM. At the Second International Conference, the Party was represented by top Party leadership. The Party was actively involved in drafting the *Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement*. It played an important role both in struggling for its positions and in uniting with the consensus of the Conference.

This was another big victory for the TKPML and could have cleared the way for the total victory of MLM in the Party, but instead the Party continued to maintain its core understanding on Mao Tsetung Thought. Notably, soon after the formation of RIM the Turkish edition of the *Declaration* was printed with a statement express-

ing the TKPML's disagreement with Mao Tsetung Thought. Later, the viewpoint of the TKPML Central Committee evolved into the extreme position put forward in their Report holding the Declaration to be "opportunism".

In a strange manner your "Brief History" jumps over this rather important period! There is not even a word about it. The years 1984-1986 simply do not exist in your "Brief History".

Even though sharp differences existed within the TKPML, unfortunately these differences did not crystallise mainly around MLM. A third Conference was held by the CC of the TKPML in 1987. Your Brief History says: "This conference was a milestone as it swept away the effects of the 12 September coup within the Party and united the Party. This Conference decided that guerrilla war was the main task. The Third Conference on the one hand criticised and condemned right opportunism within the Party and on the other hand analysed DABK [East Anatolia Regional Committee]. Although DABK's wrong tendency and departure from MLM was openly identified, this conference regarded them as one of the forces within the Party. Therefore, the Third Conference did not understand the true nature of the DABK. The DABK was seen to be MLM in theory and in defence of the Party programme but this was on the surface."

This account of the Party's history really surprises us. No doubt there are important lessons that should be understood and summed up from the division of the Party into the CC and the DABK centres at that time. But one thing is sure: summation of this question also must be based on putting the problem of MLM at the centre. Otherwise, it will fail to get to the heart of the problems.

As far as we know, the Third Conference of your Party adopted the term Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought. However it is very clear that the Hoxhaite trend and thinking continued to exert considerable influence in your Party. Just to give one example we will quote your Party's amazing summation of the nature of the Party of Labour of Albania: "Within the parties and states who claimed to be communists, the position of the Labour Party and the People's Republic of Albania was less decayed, therefore they had more positive aspects in the coun-

try's life. It also deviated from ML and became revisionist, however it was not as bad as other revisionism. [...] It didn't have an exploiter class and a privileged section. There was not any serious proof showing that the Party of Labour of Albania has started revisionist-capitalist restoration. [...] up to now we have not said that Albania is not a socialist country. [...] It was the only country that kept socialism alive and was less influenced by the liberal-bourgeois wind." ("Ibrahim Kaypakkaya", *Worker Peasant Liberation*, 1990, number 95, page 27.)

After unity of the two sides - between the CC and DABK - in 1993, the united Party adopted MLM instead of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought. Your "Brief History" says: "One of the important decisions of this First Extraordinary Conference [in 1993] was to accept MLM instead of Mao Tsetung Thought." In our opinion this was a great advance. But it was not clear on the basis of what line struggles within the Party this was adopted and how the Party summed up its past centrism on this question. In fact, your "Brief History" implies that no summation was (and is) seen as necessary. You imply this by saying: "Although the content of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought had been understood correctly, the naming of it had been incomplete."

We wish this were true. But unfortunately it seems that the Hoxhaite legacy had not been uprooted properly even at this point. The least sign of it is that even after your Party adopted MLM it also celebrated the hundredth birthday of Hoxha with a large photograph of him in your journal *Ozgur Gelecek* in 1994. In our meeting with your Party's delegation we seriously criticised you for celebrating this revisionist who spared no effort to attack Maoism and confuse the international communist movement. But you did not accept our criticism. Your representative told us that Hoxha was a Marxist-Leninist in the past and you were celebrating his birthday for his past contributions. Astonishing! Imagine celebrating Kautsky, Liu Shao-chi and other big revisionists for their revolutionary past. That can only mean celebrating Hoxha today in the guise of respecting his past!

The disturbing signs do not stop here. In fact, publishing Hoxha's picture and celebrating his birth were only

an aesthetic expression of what line your leadership held. Almost at the same time a series of articles were published in your monthly theoretical journal *Partizan*. In these articles ("The Truth About Stalin", *Partizan*, 1990, numbers 13, 14 and 15), one of your theoreticians/leaders elaborates a Hoxhaite line on important questions that are at the heart of the dispute over MLM. This series of articles continues to repeat the same centrist line of the First Central Committee but this time under a mask of MLM. They uphold Comrade Stalin's wrong line on the cardinal questions regarding the nature of socialism and class struggle under socialism and attack Mao's line without naming Mao. Fortunately, shortly after the appearance of these articles another article called "On Comrade Stalin" (*Partizan*, September 1994) written by TKP(ML) comrades responded sharply to this line. This refreshing response removed the MLM mask of "The Truth About Stalin" and made an uplifting defence of true Maoism. (At this time you and the comrades of TKP(ML) were still in the unified Party, which split soon after.) This response was a sign that the MLM forces within your Party are fighting against the pernicious Hoxhaite influence. It shows that the principal historical two-line struggle within your Party still needs to be settled in a clear-cut way once and for all and that the task of uprooting Hoxhaite influences and reviving genuine Maoism in the TKP/ML still remains. "On Comrade Stalin" adequately exposes a wrong trend in your Party, which under the garb of defending Stalin is, in fact, attacking Mao and consecrating Comrade Stalin's grave errors. It exposes how still strong forces within your Party are trying to sneak in Hoxha's influence through the back door by adopting the wrong aspects of Stalin's understanding of socialism. "On Comrade Stalin" makes a strong defence of Mao's analysis of classes and class struggle under socialism, his analysis of the political economy of socialism, and the Maoist concept of two-line struggle in the communist party - all based on defending Mao's criticisms of Comrade Stalin's line and practice in these matters. It sharply points out that the problem of the line under criticism is not "only the Party of Labour of Albania question; they cannot break with Khrushchevism, with which the

Labour Party of Albania shares a common legacy as well." And it continues, "You cannot empty Mao and call it defence of Mao! To impose revisionism by putting an empty shell of Mao in between two eyebrows and eyes is not Maoism." The article says: "The 'Truth about Stalin' tries to impose the line of the First CC and *Bolshevik Partisan* which systematised its errors under the cover of the MLM brand." And "this is not 'Maoism' but an expression of the centrism of the First CC and the systematisation of its errors and the defence of *Bolshevik Partisan*, all of which in internal and external party struggles had been repudiated and rejected. This is the same line even though it hurls curse words at *Bolshevik Partisan*..." ("On Comrade Stalin", section on Two-Line Struggle, page 40 in Turkish). The article exposes the pro-Party of Labour of Albania essence of this line in many aspects. It shows how this trend "like the revisionists attaches itself to the errors of Stalin". It shows how this line tries to use a Trotskyite blanket to cover Stalin's errors and attack Mao's line on socialism. It exposes this line's wrong understanding of two-line struggle in the party and demonstrates the Hoxhaite outlook of the author(s) on this question. For example it says: "Those friends who in the name of defending Maoism criticise the Party of Labour of Albania are in fact repeating the Party of Labour of Albania's line. That is why it is useless for these friends to separate themselves from the Party of Labour of Albania in words. They are sitting in the same room. They cannot change this reality by hanging a Mao picture on the walls of this room! Their views are only different in words and not in essence" ("On Comrade Stalin", Section 5). The article seriously defends and reaffirms Mao's criticisms of Stalin's errors. Obviously, your Party, TKP/ML, owes this critique an answer if you believe in the necessity of two-line struggle.

MAO'S DEVELOPMENT OF MARXISM ACCORDING TO TKP/ML

In a different section of your 1997 document you put forward your views on Maoism. We agree with most (not all) of what you say, that "it is not enough to recognise only Marxism-Leninism or theories of Marx-Lenin-Stalin. It is also important to take this

understanding one step further by the recognition of Maoism." We agree that Maoism must be recognised as the third and highest stage of Marxism up to now. However, we do not agree that Comrade Stalin can be put on the same level as Mao. Marxism-Leninism-Maoism was developed mainly by Marx, Lenin and Mao. It is better to talk about "three (Marx, Lenin, Mao) plus two (Engels, Stalin)" as the formula to emphasise the central role of Marx, Lenin and Mao in relation to the development of MLM. We also do not think that Marxism-Leninism-Maoism is simply "one step further" than Marx-Lenin-Stalin. Certainly, Mao could not have developed Marxism without learning from Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. But not could he have developed Marxism without taking some steps away from Comrade Stalin. We do not agree entirely with your statement that: "He [Mao] continued the work that was started by the four great masters of the class." We do not emphasise only continuity but also rupture – that is, Maoism also developed because Mao did not follow Stalin in very important aspects. In fact the centrist and semi-Hoxhaite trend within TKP/ML has always opposed the criticisms that Mao made of Stalin's view of the nature and dynamics of socialism and the political economy of socialism. They insisted that Mao's contributions to Marxism are a simple extension and continuation of those of Stalin.

Mao made the very important criticism that Stalin's thinking contained a significant amount of metaphysics and that he "taught others metaphysics". In short, the negation of Stalin's errors is a decisive element in Mao's development of Marxism to a whole new stage. This point was elaborated in our 1986 letter to you and it has been clearly raised by other comrades who have waged struggle against this centrist and semi-Hoxhaite influence in the TKP/ML. This is not a minor disagreement between your and our understanding. It has to do with deeply grasping Maoism and the lessons of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

[The section cut from here expounded on Mao's understanding of the political economy of socialism. – AW/TW]

HOW THE PROLETARIAT LEADS

In our 1986 letter to the Party we warned that centrism regarding MLM would lead to abandoning people's war. As is known, in different periods the TKP/ML leadership questioned the possibility and necessity of waging people's war in Turkey. This was a serious result of negating the universality of Maoism. As our 1986 letter to you emphasised, "any attempt to negate the universality of Mao Tse-tung Thought carries with it the danger of abandoning the concept of People's War and the need to develop red political power." We should remember that one of Enver Hoxha's vicious attacks against Mao was over the strategy of people's war. He mocked it as "a war without perspective" and a "peasant war", implying that it did not have anything to do with the leadership of the proletariat in the new-democratic revolution. The TKP/ML's negation of the universality of people's war was not unrelated to the Hoxhaite influence within it....

The title of your document – "TKP/ML: New World Order, Working Class, and its Leading Role" – promises to explain how the working class should play its leading role in the world. Through this document we find out that the TKP/ML thinks that the leading role of the working class is expressed through organising militant trade union movements. This document goes on and on about the history and evolution of the trade union movement, the role that communists should play in developing the trade union movement and its role in achieving victory (what kind?) for the proletariat. This document fails to mention even once the central task of revolutionary communists – the seizure of power by armed force – and its centrality in establishing the leading role of the working class under the leadership of its communist party. Lenin made the point that the class-conscious worker should not be a trade union secretary but a tribune of the people. In order to apply the Leninist line – as it was developed in his work *What is to Be Done?* and applied in the practice of making revolution in Russia – the working class should put itself at the head of the democratic revolution. In China, Mao took that Leninist line and raised it to the level that the working class should lead the people, es-

pecially the peasants, in people's war in order to carry out new-democratic revolution and establish socialism. But your document does not even once mention the task of the working class in leading the new-democratic revolution and the role of people's war, as though this has nothing to do with "achieving victory" for the working class – or perhaps you think this is a "peasant" matter and does not have anything to do with the working class "leadership" or "achieving victory"!

...We do not negate the role that genuine trade union struggles of the workers at times can play as a school of war, as Lenin put it. However, when the war itself is absent from the picture no schooling will help. Through studying this document we see a serious lack of understanding of the MLM guideline that all revolutionary activities – including workers' militant economic struggles – before the initiation of people's war should serve its initiation and after initiation should serve its development.... At best it can be said you do not relate your trade union activities to carrying out the New Democratic Revolution and people's war, and their place in this strategy. Your document fails to mention that the most important "intervention" of the revolutionary communists in the spontaneous struggles of the workers is to make them serve the revolutionary struggle for the seizure of power. You mention once the need for "the intervention of the communists and revolutionaries in the light of MLM" but you reduce this to intervention in helping bring about the "class trade union" organisation of the workers. However just the struggle of the workers in Turkey to have their independent trade unions may be, this struggle, even if led by MLM forces, can never establish the leading role of the working class. In this 57-page document about the leading role of working class and how it should achieve victory there is nothing about the fact that without state power the working class can do nothing, that without state power all is illusion and that political power grows out of the barrel of a gun, and that without a people's army the people have nothing even if they have powerful trade unions....

In stressing the need for the trade union movement for making proletarian revolution in both types of countries [imperialist and oppressed coun-

tries – AWTW] your document takes note of the degeneration of the trade unions in the imperialist countries and how they have become part of "the corporate structure". It goes on and on about the numerous major changes produced by the development of capitalism/imperialism and the relations of all these to the evolution in the nature of trade unions. It "forgets" Lenin's decisive analysis of imperialism and the most important change in the class configuration in these countries as a result of the development of capitalism into imperialist capitalism – the split in the working class in the imperialist countries with the appearance of a labour aristocracy, which is an ally of the bourgeoisie. The TKP/ML paints the "working class" in the imperialist countries as an undifferentiated whole. Therefore it is unable to explain the material basis of the trade unions becoming part of "the corporate structure". The TKP/ML says that the privileges provided by the bourgeoisie to the working class after the Second World War "led to the imagination" [illusions] that its aims could be realised within the system. There is absolutely no mention of a split in the working class and a shift in class alliances in the imperialist countries. The TKP/ML explains this phenomenon only in the sphere of ideology as though it does not have a material basis....

Not seeing the class basis for this degeneration has made many communist parties in the imperialist countries follow the false road of competing with the social-democratic and revisionist parties of the ruling classes in the imperialist countries on labour aristocratic terms and in the same fields of trade unions and elections – for example, look at the Marxist-Leninist Party of Germany's (MLPD) strategy in Germany. As far as we know in the last elections in Germany your Party called upon the masses to vote for Marxist-Leninist Party of Germany candidates!

The TKP/ML only mentions the struggles of certain strata of the working class in the imperialist countries, such as the strike of the Bridgestone workers on 12 July 1994 and the UPS strike in the US. But there is nothing about the Los Angeles uprising of proletarian masses in 1992 and the numerous walk-outs and struggles of the lowest strata of workers made up heavily of Hispanic immigrants and Blacks in that country. This conception of the

"workers struggle" has striking similarities to a trend in the international movement which proposes reformist trade union struggle in the imperialist countries while accepting a mixture of the same thing plus a circumscribed "armed struggle" for the semi-feudal semi-colonial countries – trends represented by such parties as the Marxist-Leninist Party of Germany and the Party of Labour of Belgium (PTB)....

[The section cut from here is of the international communist movement and RIM – AWTW]

YOUR LINE ON THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST MOVEMENT IS ECLECTIC

...In your article (in the 4-17 September 1998 issue of *Ozgur Gelecek*) you make an evaluation of the international communist movement, including RIM. In the introduction to this part you say, "serious new alignments are under way" in the international communist movement, but you totally fail to say what is the character of each: Marxist or revisionist? Let us take a look at your evaluation of international communist movement forces:

"1- RIM... which bases itself on the MLM-formula, and which our Party and the Peruvian Communist Party are still in a way members of, and which, however, is going through a lot more and serious problems because of the self-serving, pragmatist, hegemonistic conduct of its leadership that has grown far from fulfilling its leadership mission and thus from being capable of acting on numerous possibilities that have developed in the past ten years and whose many members have become increasingly passive.

"2- The 'Marxist-Leninist platform' where the Marxist-Leninist Party of Germany and Communist Party of the Philippines are influential, which bases itself on Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, although there are also parties and organisations within it that are based on MLM, is experiencing serious political-ideological problems but still demonstrates a positive tendency in the three alignments, and has over 20 members today.

"3-The 'Marxist-Leninist platform' that takes as its basis the minimum criteria of unity as organised by the Party of Labour of Belgium in May every year, with the participation of organisations that have different lines, and

where membership is growing but the level of quality is falling.

"4. The 'Marxist-Leninist platform' that principally follows the line of the Party of Labour of Albania...."

You glaringly fail to put forward an ideological and political yardstick for evaluating different forces in the international communist movement. First you paint an eclectic, hodgepodge picture of the international communist movement forces. And then you leak out your position that among different alignments, despite the fact that RIM is based on MLM and your Party "in a way is a member" (is it?), RIM should be "isolated" because of "self-serving, pragmatist, hegemonistic" conduct!! Is not all this just for the purpose of muddying the ideological and political lines of demarcation that are necessary for recognising who are Marxists and who are revisionists in this world?

Your harshest criticisms are reserved for the thoroughgoing MLM forces, in other words, RIM. And you have a slap on the wrist for openly revisionist forces – for example the alignment that the Party of Labour of Belgium and a party from Russia are trying to forge. (For a critique of this alignment, see the editorial in AWTW 1998/23, as well as a critique of the Russian Party, the All-Union Party of Communist Bolsheviks.) In this document you express a positive inclination for the International Conference of Marxist-Leninists (ICML), within which there is an array of Maoists and revisionists and which itself suffers from the lack of an ideological and political basis of unity capable of regrouping Marxists on a clearly revolutionary communist basis. Such a basis can only be MLM – not MLM as a "formula" (as you put it) but as content, as a revolutionary line for making revolution in the different types of countries.

You criticise the alliance of the Party of Labour of Belgium and the Russian Party (who want to rebuild their International on the basis of Marx, Lenin and Stalin) for their falling "level of quality". What is the content of this "falling quality" in terms of MLM? As far as we are concerned their level falls from revisionism to more revisionism. In your evaluation there is no mention of the fundamental and principal feature of this alliance. Their main feature is that they reject the struggle waged by the revolutionary communists of the world under the leadership of Mao and

the Communist Party of China against Khrushchevite revisionism. The starting point for evaluating any international grouping or party that claims to be a part of the international communist movement is the recognition that *Mao rescued the international communist movement from the morass of revisionism, first by the great struggle against modern revisionism and then by leading the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution*. But in your evaluation of these groupings no such criteria are used. There is no mention of the fact that today's revolutionary communist movement is a *direct result* of, above all, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, which, in the words of the *Declaration*, "gave rise to a whole new generation of Marxist-Leninists". In fact, the TKPML itself is a product of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. The fact that in evaluating the international groupings you do feel obliged to talk about the "self-serving, pragmatist, hegemonistic conduct" of RIM's "leadership" but that you "forget" cardinal lines of demarcation between Marxism and revisionism in evaluating "Marxist-Leninist platforms" is astounding! This does not look like the legacy of Comrade Ibrahim Kaypakkaya but the legacy of the Hoxhaite tendencies which hoped to take over TKPML. This shows that it is not enough to talk about MLM. One should apply it to everything. This shows that one cannot look at MLM as a "formula" – it is a complete outlook, stand and method for understanding and, more importantly, for changing the world....

Not to focus on cardinal questions of line which have been the basis of the estrangement between your Party and our Movement and instead to use secondary criticisms – whose content is camouflaged and/or left as swear words rather than substantive criticisms – is not an MLM method of waging two-line struggle. It is a method that is only good for spreading confusion among the rank and file and for preventing them from consciously monitoring the line and practice of their leadership....

You charge RIM with not acting "on the numerous possibilities that have developed in the past ten years". But speak openly and frankly; what do you mean by this? Does this mean that RIM saw new "serious alignments" taking shape after the break-up of the

Soviet social-imperialist bloc but was not willing to liquidate its line and jump on the bandwagon? And was not willing to grade the international communist movement on the basis of the bits and pieces of Marxism each grouping appears to uphold? Do you think we should have changed our evaluation of who is Marxist and who is revisionist in the world in order to be able "to act on the numerous possibilities that have developed in the past ten years"? Or what do you mean by "pragmatism"? If RIM was "pragmatist" now, it would be making a lot of alliances with all kinds of forces calling themselves Marxist-Leninist regardless of their position on dividing-line struggles concerning the history of the international communist movement. Please spare us; we are unable to make such "serious contributions". We want to win a new society, not give the old one a face-lift. That is why we put decisive importance on clarifying who is Marxist and who is revisionist....

...[W]e call upon you to substantiate and clearly state why the International Conference of Marxist-Leninists "demonstrates a positive tendency" over RIM. Even though there are parties within the International Conference of Marxist-Leninists that we consider MLM parties, notably the Communist Party of the Philippines and Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) (People's War), the main feature of this international grouping is that it consists of Maoist parties on the one end and revisionists on the other end. At first this group included the notorious counter-revolutionary Patria Roja from Peru, which has distinguished itself by opposing the People's War in that country. As of the International Conference of Marxist-Leninists's Fifth Conference, the Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist-Leninists), which has been part of several reactionary governments in Nepal and was directly entrusted with the suppression of the People's War there, was a member in good standing. The International Conference of Marxist-Leninists' basis of unity and method of uniting is structured to allow such an alliance. Therefore, despite whatever intentions, it cannot serve the regrouping of genuine revolutionary communists world-wide. It cannot fulfil the requirements of the proletarian revolution, the need to forge and strengthen genuine communist van-

guards in every country. Because this means to be armed with the fullest and most scientifically correct understanding achieved by the proletariat to date – Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. The International Conference of Marxist-Leninists can in no way serve the goal of the formation of a communist international of a new type. In fact it does not accept the validity of that goal.... (See AWTW 2000/26 for the Committee of RIM's critique of the Resolutions of the Fifth International Conference of Marxist-Leninists.)

It is true that we considered the Resolutions of the Fifth Conference as an overall positive advance. But why? Because for the first time the International Conference of Marxist-Leninists took a clear position against the revisionist rulers in China and upheld Mao Tsetung's development of Marxism and many other correct new directions. You will agree that for the parties that kept quiet for so long on the capitalist nature of China and the turning point of 1976, this was an advance. However, it is quite a regression for your Party to join the International Conference of Marxist-Leninists. It is not an advance but an unfortunate setback....

CONCLUSION

The attempts to undermine the *Declaration* and RIM went hand in hand with muddying the line of Ibrahim Kaypakkaya in order to blur and modify TKPML's basic political line. All this caused confusion among the ranks of the Party. Many difficulties and problems of revolution — such as the setbacks suffered — were misused to strengthen a centrist line.

...Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought [today MLM] is the basic compass that charts the road ahead. It is this basic orientation that is embodied by the *Declaration* of RIM [supplemented by *Long Live MLM!*]. By persevering on this path, strengthening the unity of the proletariat on a world scale as well as its contingents in each country, by striving to correctly assimilate the lessons of the past, we can march ahead victoriously!" ... (Committee of RIM message — see AWTW 1985/3).

Comrades: Fourteen years is a long time to wait for your response. The conditions are now favourable for the broad ranks of the TKPML to unite

under a correct MLM line and a single organisational centre. And this will happen as the major erroneous lines that caused such damage in the TKPML are repudiated. We call on the comrades of the TKP/ML to sweep away the cobwebs of the past erroneous lines and fight wholeheartedly to put Marxism-Leninism-Maoism clearly in command of the revolution in Turkey, which the masses of your country and around the world so desperately needs.

Committee of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement

ENDNOTES

1 See the preface to the Turkish edition of the RIM *Declaration* published by TKPML in 1984 and the Report of the Fifth Plenum of the Second TKPML Central Committee (CC).

2 Since 1993 our Movement has adopted Maoism instead of Mao Tsetung Thought.

Edited, Printed and Published by A.K. Sengupta, on behalf of A World To Win, Delhi. Printed at India Prints, Naraina, New Delhi for Chithira Printers and Publishers, Kochi-16.



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— The Revolutionary Internationalist Movement

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