

UN MONDE A GAGNER, KAZANILACAK DÜNYA, عالم نزیخته, UN MONDO DA CONQUISTARE

TO WIN 獲得的將是整個世界 МИР ВЫИГРАТЬ UN MUNDO QUE GANAR जीतने के लिए है पूरी दुनिया UN MONDO DA CONQUISTARE

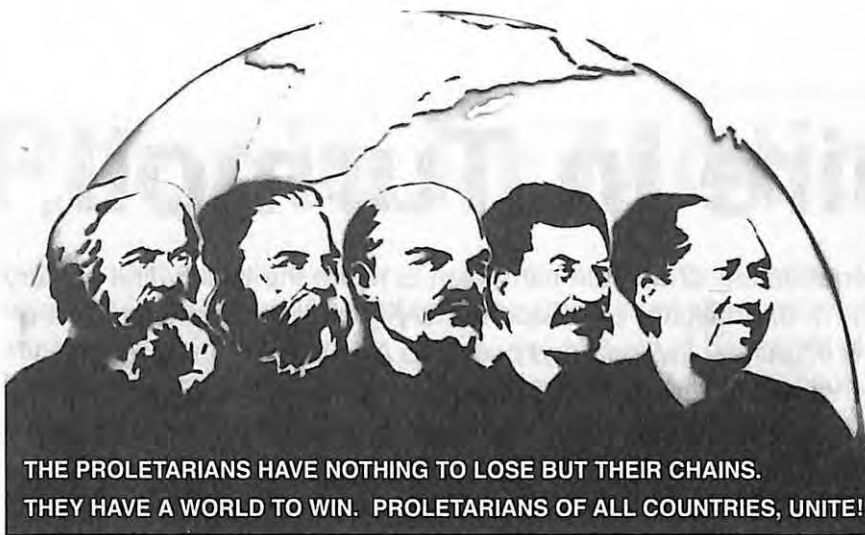
2004/30

*Empire in Turmoil,
People in Motion*



UN MONDE A GAGNER, KAZANILACAK DÜNYA, عالم نزیخته, UN MONDO DA CONQUISTARE EINE WELT ZU GEWINNEN विश्व विजय





2004/30

Three Decades Leading Battalions of India's Poor

Deep in the countryside, the Maoist Communist Centre of India has been organising for years among the poorest of the world's poor. The strongholds they have built in Jharkhand and adjoining states are now the eye of a rising storm of revolutionary war. The incorporation of MCCI into the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement in 2001 represents a great step forward for the cause of proletarian revolution in India.

On the Struggle to Unite the Genuine Communists

Despite the obvious need for unity against the powerful, well-armed enemies of revolution, it has often proven difficult to unite the communist forces into a single vanguard party. The solution is not, however, programmes that gloss over differences in the search for some arithmetic unity around "common points", but a dialectical process of struggling to resolve the key issues facing the revolution in a spirit of unity-struggle-unity. This article reviews the rich but tortuous experience of the international communist movement to draw vital lessons for the struggle today.

Building Red Power in Nepal

As it struggles to advance the eight-year-old People's War towards the seizure of nation-wide power, the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) is confronting complex and perilous challenges. An interlude of cease-fire in 2003 gave way to a new round of even more intense warfare. Today the People's War is reaching new heights.

Empire in Turmoil, People in Motion

US Power and its Limits:
America's Global Rampage
Two Years On **2**

RIM Circular:
Advancing Amidst Storms **3**

Turkey and Kurdistan
In the Cauldron of War **9**

MCCI: Three Decades Leading
Battalions of the Poor **14**

Inside MCC Country **17**

Afghanistan:
A Trail of Broken Promises **20**

The Unquenchable Fire
in Palestine **24**

Remembering Edward Said:
An Extraordinary Citizen
of the World **28**

On the Struggle to Unite the Genuine
Communist Forces **34**

Worldwide Upsurge Against
Imperialist War and Occupation **44**

Injustice Times Two:
New Trial Scheduled for Chairman
Gonzalo **54**

Building Red Power
in Nepal **74**

Defend Comrade Gaurav! **76**



ISSN 0269 9141

RNI 55096/91

Vol. 1 No 15

English edition. Edición inglesa.

For Subscription information see page 28.

RIM

Fifth South Asia Regional Conference of
RIM Parties and Organisations **56**

Celebrate RIM's Twentieth
Anniversary **72**

First of May! An Emerging New Tide of
World Revolution **32**

Empire in Turmoil,

In the two years since the US imperialists launched their campaign to make the twenty-first century the "new American century", they have dramatically escalated military spending, positioned tens of thousands of troops in a dozen new countries, invaded and occupied Afghanistan and intensified repression at home and around the world. In Iraq, the US carried out its most savage war since Vietnam. 150,000 US and British troops now occupy Iraq. This section of AWTW on **Empire in Turmoil, People in Motion** contains an analysis of US policy that not only strips away imperialist rhetoric to reveal their real agenda, but also shows how the same compulsions that have launched the imperialists on their grab for unprecedented power are also awakening millions to political life

US Power and Its Limits: America's Global Rampage Two Years On

By **Fatima Resolucao**

It has been little more than two years since the US seized upon the pretext of the 11 September 2001 attacks and set out to make the twenty-first century "the new American century". The invasion and occupation of Afghanistan was Baghdad under the occupation in July.

meant as a prelude to an even more momentous step, the seizure of Iraq, in the drive to create a single global empire on an unprecedented scale.

As we wrote in late 2002, when preparations for the US-led assault began to reach a climax, "The US is

seeking to transform Iraq from a country economically dependent on imperialism but able to negotiate with several imperialist powers, to a neocolony entirely... or perhaps an outright colony, run by a governor appointed in Washington... This 'New Iraq'... would be a lynchpin in a newly configured Middle East, a 'Greater Middle East from North Africa to Afghanistan and Pakistan', as a recent article by two former Clinton advisors turned Bush theorists put it.

"In this new configuration,
(Continued to page 4)



People in Motion

and creating more favourable conditions for revolution. Another article examines the particular situation of Turkey and Kurdistan in the cauldron of war, and warns that by linking up with the imperialist war machine in an effort to get a share of the spoils of war, what some nationalist leaders are advancing is not national liberation but national capitulation. The world's Marxist-Leninist-Maoist forces must seize on the boiling anger at the imperialists' crimes and advance the revolutionary cause amidst the intensifying swirl of contradictions. A document from the RIM Committee, originally an internal circular letter to RIM parties and organisations, calls on the communists to grasp the full impact of the moment and act upon it.

RIM Circular Advancing Amidst Storms

The following document, prepared by the Committee of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (CoRIM), was originally circulated internally to RIM parties and organisations in April 2003. An edited version of this circular was provided to A World to Win for publication.

Dear Comrades,

We are writing this circular two weeks after the beginning of the US-UK war on Iraq. It is clear from the opening salvos of the war, as well as the months of fierce political and diplomatic struggle that preceded it, that the Iraq war represents a major turn in world events, heavy in consequences for the people's struggle and for our Movement.

The Iraq war is a direct result—and intensification—of the world situation our Movement analysed...in the year 2000 [see *A World to Win* 2000/26], a situation which itself underwent a qualitative intensification following 11 September and the US imperialists' declaration of an open-ended "war on terrorism" in which

(Continued to page 5)



Transport workers from Bangladesh. 3 April 2003.

(Continued from page 2)

economically, Iraq's vast oil reserves would give the US a stranglehold on the oil needs of any would-be rival. Militarily, the vast permanent military build-up there, virtually turning Iraq into a gigantic military base, could bend and smash any wayward regimes. This new 'Greater Middle East' would in turn be key to a newly configured world - an American world. With the war on Afghanistan, the US grabbed one end of this part of the global map; with the war on Iraq it means to nail down the other even more crucial part."

Has this analysis turned out to be correct? If so, then in this light, how should we evaluate the results of this first phase of the US's "war on the world"?

In that article, we tried to answer the question "why Iraq?" One advance of 2003 is that Bush's own answer to that question has been thoroughly discredited. "The Iraqi regime and its weapons of mass destruction represent a clear threat to world security" - these words are now all but universally admitted to be untrue.¹

Former Bush cabinet member Paul O'Neill recently revealed that Bush's henchmen began planning the invasion of Iraq "within days" of entering the White House in January 2001. The strategy for the Iraq invasion was finalised in August 2002; it was not until the following October that the CIA produced the National Intelligence Estimate that provided the Bush government with the (false) weapons of mass destruction claims used to justify the invasion.²

Actually, the plan to invade Iraq goes back even further. A 1997 document entitled *Statement of Principles of the Project for a New American Century* was unambiguous: "As the twentieth century draws to a close, the United States stands as the world's pre-eminent power. Having led the West to victory in the Cold War, America faces an opportunity and a challenge: Does the United States have the vision to build upon the achievements of past decades? Does the United States

have the resolve to shape a new century favourable to American principles and interests?... The history of the twentieth century should have taught us that it is important to shape circumstances before crises emerge, and to meet threats before they become dire. The history of this century should have taught us to embrace the cause of American leadership."

This paper was signed by George W. Bush's brother Jeb and the men who now form his inner circle, including Vice President Dick Cheney, Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and his deputy Wolfowitz. A statement from the same group a year later outlined the first step in this direction: "removing Saddam Hussein and his regime from power. That now needs to become the aim of American foreign policy".

Further, they called for a military build-up to enable the US to "Fight and decisively win multiple simultaneous major theatre wars" that are "large scale" and "spread across the globe". Then they warned, "The process of transformation, even if it brings revolutionary change, is likely to be a long one, absent some catastrophic and catalysing event - like a new Pearl Harbor."³

Obstacles to War

With 11 September 2001, they got their Pearl Harbor. Yet one of the strongest indications of the strategic reasoning behind the invasion of Iraq comes from the fact that the propaganda explosion set off when the planes hit the World Trade Center did not make preparing the Iraq invasion as easy as these men hoped, *and yet they went ahead anyway*.

Never before in history has the launching of any war been more opposed than this one. On 15 February 2003, many millions of people in hundreds of cities took to the streets to express what no one can deny represented the will of the vast majority of the world's people. UK Prime Minister Tony Blair staked the survival of his government on his ability to trample on British public opinion. While the Bush government

did initially profit by casting itself as defender of the victims of 11 September, even in the US a great many people in the middle classes began to see through this as the invasion of Iraq took shape. Instead of a post Pearl Harbor-like apparent national unity, Bush had to face an anti-war movement of a magnitude not seen since the last days of the US's losing war in Vietnam, a movement which took years to develop.

Despite Bush's bluster about a "coalition of the willing", the more the US and UK moved toward invasion, the more isolated they became internationally. Eventually they had to withdraw their motion before the UN Security Council rather than suffer the humiliation of defeat. The vast majority of governments took an oppositional stance. In the end, the grand coalition consisted of the US, UK, Australia and Poland, with cheering (but no troops until after the invasion) from Spain, Italy, Japan and a handful of smaller countries.

There is every indication that in their arrogance, these men expected to be able to bully other countries to go along with them and the UN to give them its approval and cover. Some people, seeing the tide turning against the warmongers, thought that Bush and Blair would have to reconsider. Dissenting prominent figures in the US and British ruling classes warned that this war could be a disaster for imperialist interests. The world front of reactionaries was in great disarray, and to some people it seemed that this alone might stay the hands of the invaders, or at least make them hesitate.

At the UN, as France's representative argued that the weapons inspectors should be given more time, Bush's Colin Powell responded by doing everything in his power to paint a picture of imminent danger, including lies about a nexus between Saddam Hussein and al-Qaeda. Blair warned that Saddam could deploy unconventional weapons "in 45 minutes", implying that London and New York were literally in Saddam's sights. It is now clear to all that these men were in a hurry to start a war for

entirely different reasons. For one thing, Bush and Blair knew that the inspectors would eventually expose their deceit. More importantly, the longer the invasion was delayed, the more their domestic and international political situation would deteriorate.

Their solution to opposition to the war was to launch it anyway and present the world with a fait accompli. Their message to the people of the world was that their opinion doesn't count. The people of the US and UK were thrust into war whether they liked it or not, then told that it was time to support "their" troops or be considered traitors.

You could say that the US looked deep into the eyes of the governments that opposed them and called their bluff. Angry and potentially explosive public opinion played an enormous role in preventing the US from forming the kind of coalition it sought. It stiffened the resistance of

governments like France and Germany that opposed the US for their own imperialist reasons, and hindered governments like Spain and Japan from sending troops. Yet, in the end, France, Germany and Russia clashed with the US at the UN but did nothing to actually prevent the war. Germany allowed the US to use military bases on its soil as indispensable staging areas. France allowed equally important US military overflights through French airspace. In fact, the only government to put any concrete obstacles in the way of the US invasion was Turkey, and that was most unwillingly.

Overwhelming opposition to the war in Turkey made the members of parliament fearful for their regime and at times their own future, leading to a refusal to authorise US use of Turkish bases for the invasion. If the US-owned Turkish military had openly overruled the Turkish

parliament, that would have brought even more trouble by threatening the stability of a key regime whose importance to the US has only increased with the invasion. The US was forced to load its troops on ships and take them to Iraq the long way, through the Mediterranean and the Suez Canal and on to the Gulf, instead of sending some of them crashing across the border on trucks and other vehicles from bases in Turkey. The failure of the US to invade Iraq from the north as well as the south was a major victory for the global resistance movement.⁴

This lent even greater importance to the role of Egypt. Despite massive popular opposition to the war in the Arab world's most populous country (manifested in both government-sponsored and government-tolerated rallies, and illegal, violently suppressed street demonstrations), and

(Continued to page 6)

RIM Circular

(Continued from page 3)

Kids at a school in Iraq where US troops killed protesters in April denounce the occupiers.

they proclaimed the right to attack any state, movement or organisation that might pose a "potential" threat to the

interests of US imperialism and its drive for world hegemony.

The analyses made in [previous reports] have been completely borne out by subsequent developments.

Of great importance has been the phenomenal growth of massive opposition to the US imperialist war plans. The movement has been of particular breadth and strength in Europe, the Middle East and the US itself, but no region of the world has been untouched by this mighty upsurge.

Although the mass opposition to the war did not prove powerful enough to stop the war before it began, it did result in several extremely important accomplishments:

1) It completely exposed the unjust, predatory nature of the US war plans and stripped off the cloak of "victim" the US had tried to hide behind since 11 September. The mass movement demonstrated clearly and convincingly that the imperialist war against Iraq is opposed by the vast majority of the people of the world.

2) The mass movement greatly intensified the contradictions within the imperialist camp itself, notably

(Continued to page 6)



despite the Mubarak government's public show of support for the French-led position, Egypt gave the US what it needed most at that moment - it let US warships use the Suez Canal. There was never much question it would do otherwise, since that regime depends on the US for its existence, and the US might well have seized the Canal if it had to. But Mubarak's act of self-exposure— amidst a level of political ferment not seen in Egypt in decades, at a moment when Arab eyes were turned toward this country—will not be soon forgotten.

How should we sum up the fact that the anti-war movement, as powerful as it was, did not stop the war? It is impossible to say what would have happened if anti-imperialist and revolutionary forces had been able to play a more decisive role on a world level, if the people had been clearer on what was at stake and the goals of the struggle, and the forms of struggle had consequently more often overflowed "normal" boundaries.

In fact, one of the anti-war movement's great weaknesses was that, especially in the Western countries, many people believed — or wanted to believe — that the display of the "popular will" alone could prove decisive. Yet the strength of the anti-war movement forced governments from Washington to Cairo to pay a price in a certain loss of legitimacy, and the final amount of that bill is still mounting. The fact that Bush and Blair rushed on heedless of international and national public opinion, relying on their state power and justifying their conduct by what have now been exposed as forgeries and lies, did much to lay bare the real nature of their so-called "democratic" rule and blast the post-11 September acquiescence and passivity they hoped to build in their respective countries. The imperialists themselves seemed determined to prove the truth of Mao's teaching, "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun." Clearly they would not listen to reason or the people, and whatever promises they may have made to get elected were no longer on offer.

Political cynics argue that "victory pardons deceit". There is some truth to

this: the people's political memory may smoulder bitterly, but the reactionary stability achieved by victory can tend to make the people feel powerless. But if the war itself does not end and victory is not in sight, then this situation only underlines the deceit and gives an acuteness to the bitterness and a desire to act. If Bush and Blair's war were not going so badly, would the popular indignation around the "weapons of mass destruction" hoax have the same power? In fact, would the ruling class functionaries who have stepped forward to point out some of the lies have dared open their mouths at all?

Whether or not the people could have held back the US-led invasion at that time, the course of events as they did happen provides powerful evidence that the US and its allies, along with their rivals, are part of a single, world-wide imperialist system, and that the forces compelling them toward war cannot be finally turned back once and for all without putting an end to that system. One of the strongest lessons from this period is the need to build conscious resistance and global organisation that can unite and help guide the struggles of the people on the basis of that understanding.

Circular

(Continued from page 5)

between the US and UK on the one hand and France, Germany and Russia on the other. Although these latter powers have their own imperialist interests pushing them to oppose the US war on Iraq, it is fairly clear that without the strength of the international mass movement these states would have found some form of accommodation with the US war efforts. In fact, even now these countries are co-operating to different degrees with the war effort. France and Germany have granted over-flight rights, Germany is allowing the use of many key bases for the war, and other countries are collaborating in one form or another with the US war machine. In those European countries most directly

A Revealing Occupation

The conduct of the war itself reveals its aims. The toppling of the regime — the goal of this war according to Bush's defenders — proved to be only the start of a far more fiercely fought and protracted conflict. Even Saddam's capture in December brought no relief for the occupiers.

If the basic conflict were really the invaders versus Saddam "deadenders", as Rumsfeld put it, maybe the US could solve it. But the basic contradiction is between the occupiers and the people. From early on, the occupiers trained their guns on anti-occupation demonstrators, most notably in Falluja, where they fired on crowds twice, and most recently in Habbariya, also in central Iraq's "Sunni triangle". They did the same thing time and again to the poor of Sadr City in Baghdad, and in Basra and Amarah in the south, three Shia Arab areas where Saddam was particularly hated.

The occupiers' tactics involve a mix of Special Forces units, sniper teams, torture and other low-intensity warfare tactics to seek out and kill guerrillas at any cost, and massive use

implicated in the aggression — the UK obviously, but also Spain and Italy — the anti-war movement has been of even greater magnitude, with the masses directly demanding the resignation of the reactionary governments and increasingly taking measures to directly oppose the war machine (blocking troop shipments, etc.).

3) The fact that a number of imperialist powers have gone to war or supported it against the expressed will of the people of those countries (the UK is a particularly notable example where public opinion was overwhelmingly opposed to the war) has shown the shallowness of their mask of democracy and helped reveal that their bourgeois dictatorship is ultimately based on military force.

4) In many countries, especially in the Middle East, the mass movement

of combined ground and air "Operation Hammer" style raids to intimidate and punish whole villages and neighbourhoods suspected of anti-occupation sympathies. The occupiers pound neighbourhoods with aircraft, mortar and artillery fire. They invade homes and at roadblocks shoot whole families dead.

Critics point out that the US's reliance on armoured warfare and sheer firepower is a "blunt instrument" that cannot root out determined guerrillas, but this is missing the point. US commanders have had to grasp something about what they are up against. A US general first told a reporter that the guerrillas in the town of Falluja number 20,000; then he corrected himself and said, "Probably there are 1,000 people out there ready to attack us and kill us and another 19,000 or so really, really don't like us." This points to a huge problem for the imperialists: military intelligence, which depends on who the masses tell what. Here the Iraqi resistance's advantage over the Americans is as lopsided as the US's advantage in firepower. The imperialist way of dealing with this, when they can't root out the guerrillas, is to terrorise the population as a whole. As the

New York Times summarised, "The new strategy must punish not only the guerrillas but teach ordinary Iraqis the price of not co-operating."

Abu Ghraib, where the old regime kept political prisoners, is now full of anti-occupation inmates. In all, the US is said to be holding about 10,000 "security detainees", who have no rights whatsoever. Few have any charges against them and even fewer have seen a courtroom. Even the American authorities admit that some of them are being held as hostages to get others to co-operate. Their families are never told where their loved ones are or what might happen to them. "Bagging" prisoners - fastening cloth or canvas over their heads and handcuffing them with their arms behind their backs - is standard procedure for all suspects, family members of suspects and anyone else who might be usefully "interrogated". US and British troops have been caught torturing and murdering prisoners in several incidents that have been fully documented.

So far all this has generated more opposition and resistance.

Representing the Bush government's position, a US ambassador contends that the armed resistance "is pretty much confined to the Sunni

Triangle, and 20 per cent of Iraq's population". A wider focus would reveal a different picture. Mark Danner, an American writer who travelled to Iraq last October replied, "First, though Sunni Arabs are indeed thought to constitute roughly 20 per cent of the total population of Iraq, the so-called Sunni Triangle, which encompasses Baghdad itself, probably includes more than a third of Iraq's population, and perhaps much more. Secondly, as any newspaper reader knows, since October the ambit of the attacks has been steadily spreading, until 'no more than 60 per cent', according to one intelligence official I spoke to, now take place in the Sunni Triangle - which is to say, four in ten of these attacks, and perhaps more, take place in cities like Mosul [in Kurdistan] and Karbala [in the Shia-majority region south of Baghdad], whose inhabitants, in the ambassador's words, 'mostly accept us'." ⁵

The situation for the occupiers is symbolised by Saddam International airport in Baghdad, whose fall in April marked the end of his regime. They changed the name, but they haven't been able to make it a standard business destination, as the authorities bragged they would in no

has lit a fire of opposition under the puppet regimes on whom the US imperialists count to police the people and generally protect their imperialist interests. This can be seen in Turkey, where the massive opposition of the people severely disrupted US war plans, when Turkey's parliament found it prudent not to allow the US army to march through the country on the way to Iraq, and in Egypt where the government has been feigning neutrality or even opposition to the US all the while it is protecting the Suez Canal, so vital for the US movement of troops and war materiel to the Gulf theatre.

5) The masses of people in Iraq itself have proven that they are not easily cowed by the "shock and awe" of the imperialists and have put up a fierce resistance to the aggression. This in turn is giving heart to the

people of the world, underscoring the fundamental weakness of the imperialists and fuelling further opposition to US-UK aggression.

A number of commentators have described the mass movement as having "emerged from nowhere" and as having become a major factor in world affairs that the imperialists must take into account in determining all of their political, diplomatic and even military moves. Of course, this movement did not "come out of nowhere" but has been gestating and building in opposition to the intensified imperialist exploitation and oppression of the 1990s. In the West, in particular, this took the form of an intensifying "anti-globalisation" movement that more and more sharply focused on imperialism itself as the source of the misery of the majority of the world's people — even if the

solution to imperialism was not clearly seen by most of the participants in the movement. In the oppressed countries, the opposition to intensified imperialist exploitation and oppression accompanying the collapse of Soviet social-imperialism was manifested in a growing discontent among the masses, the searching out of alternative political models (even if in many cases important sections of the masses gravitated toward non-revolutionary solutions such as religious fundamentalism), and explosions of struggle in different forms. In some still too infrequent but nonetheless very important cases, it translated into the armed struggle for political power, notably in Nepal.

When analysing the First World War, Lenin stressed it was impossible to understand the nature of that war (Continued to page 67)

time. Nine months later, commercial flights remain impossible. Guerrillas regularly fire at military aircraft, seriously damaging three in three months. All flights are considered dangerous. Instead of bustling with international investors and other eager civilians, the cavernous airport complex serves as yet another US military detention centre.

In short, while the US found it easy to topple a reactionary regime, they have found it much harder to impose their will on a people. The current rotation of fresh troops into Iraq amounts to an admission that massive numbers of US soldiers will be there for the foreseeable future.⁶ While US military planners would like to reduce the troop level from the current level of 132,000 to 50,000, they say, they are giving equal weight to the possibilities that their present strength might have to be maintained or increased. Note that the only scenarios the Pentagon is contemplating involve reducing, maintaining or expanding troop levels. There are no even hypothetical plans to withdraw US troops from Iraq.

Only Strategic Aims Could Explain their Stubbornness

Even if the Iraqi resistance were to diminish, the US wants to keep many troops there as long as it can. The five US aircraft carrier groups (each with more warplanes than most countries) remaining within reach of Iraq are not there just to bomb and strafe people's houses. They are there to achieve regional aims.

Events have made it very clear that simply grabbing Iraq's oil for the enrichment of corporations close to Bush is not at all what this war was and is about. Above all because of the armed resistance, the American authorities have not been able to reach even the relatively low level of oil production Saddam was able to maintain despite the American-led embargo. The occupation runs on petrol from Kuwait. Because of the devastating legacy of the 12-year embargo that made it impossible to obtain spare parts and new equipment, Iraq's wells and pipelines are in

desperate need of repair. Even the underground oil layers themselves are said to be in danger of collapse through excessive and inappropriate exploitation. None of the necessary investment is conceivable in the midst of today's war of resistance.

There is no profit bonanza anywhere in sight for the US ruling class as a whole. Instead, the continuing cost of this occupation is a very major problem for the US, which had hoped it would pay for itself. Yet there is no suggestion that Iraq's unprofitability, at least for now, will lead the US to abandon the occupation. This emphasises the US's geopolitical and strategic aims.

As historian Arno Mayer wrote, "The Great War [First World War] confirmed that in times of war and peace oil was, in the words of the then-French Premier Georges Clemenceau, 'as necessary as blood', particularly for imperial Europe and the United States — what we know as the 'first world'[sic]. After the Second World War the United States supplanted Great Britain as the dominant power in the greater Middle East. The inability of London and Paris to pre-empt Egypt's seizure of the Suez Canal in 1956 not only confirmed their demise as world powers, it affirmed the consolidation of America's military and economic hegemony in Mesopotamia and Arabia. With this region's oil resources of greater importance today than ever before, the White House is not about to permit any challenge to its domination of the Middle East, which is vital to Washington's imperial reach, including its leverage over the other economies of the first world as well as that of China. As part of the new power arrangements, Washington means to give privileged access to Middle Eastern oil to the United Kingdom, to the disadvantage of France and Germany, which, along with Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg, are the core of the authentic 'New Europe', whose economy bids fair to one day challenge America's economic and dollar primacy... At this juncture Iraq is not an end in itself: for the United States Iraq is a pawn, a way station in the evolving geopolitics and geoeconomics of its imperial power."⁷

The strongest evidence of Iraq's place in American dreams of a single world empire is this: the occupation has turned out to be far more difficult and dangerous than any of Bush's inner circle dreamed, yet few voices among the US ruling class, and not many more in the UK, are calling for the occupiers to cut their losses and go home.

What It Would Take to Win

What went wrong for the invaders? Perhaps the planners really did believe that sufficient numbers of Iraqis would welcome the occupation to make direct rule viable. Maybe they did think that the UN would be forced to go along with the invasion, and that this would create helpful political conditions inside and outside Iraq. They seemed to have been convinced that France and other countries would send enough troops so that the US and UK would not have to assume the burden all but alone.⁸ But it seems that the most important source of the occupation's present difficulties lies in the US's own plans for a "post-Saddam Iraq". They thought the invasion would prove them invincible, and that once the Iraqi people saw that, few would dare resist them. To put it another way, they underestimated the people.

The armed resistance is clearly an expression of mass sentiment and a mass movement. That is a point in common with Vietnam. But the difference between the Iraqi resistance and the Vietnam war is not only one of scale. At this point, there has not emerged a level of warfare that could actually wipe out whole units of occupation troops and endanger the occupiers with military defeat, nor even the prospect of this at this time. The Iraqi people have armed and determined crowds and brave guerrilla fighters, but no army. This is related to a deeper problem: so far, the Iraqi resistance has been unable to offer a programme for a different future for Iraq.

All wars of liberation and revolutionary armed forces inevitably

(Continued to page 62)

Turkey and Kurdistan In the Cauldron of the Iraq War

By B. Bahrumi and G. Malik

While the rulers of Turkey tried mightily to do everything they could during the Iraq war to be of service to their imperial masters in Washington, there was perhaps no other country whose contribution to the war effort fell so far below US expectations. The Pentagon had relied on being able to make use of Turkey's large military forces and of its favourable location so close to Iraq. Yet despite strenuous efforts by Turkey's rulers to comply, the imperialists and reactionaries ran into a swirl of contradictions that they had arrogantly ignored, not least the determined opposition of millions of people in Turkey, as well as Iraq itself, and the thorny contradictions posed by the issue of Kurdistan.

Turkey's Rulers Wanted to Go to War...

On 7 October 2003, the Turkish Parliament, an eager supporter of the US/UK-led occupation of Iraq, gave the government authorisation to send troops to Iraq. It was obvious that an agreement on this had been reached long beforehand, at the demand of Turkey's US masters. Long before the Turkish Parliament's decision, US Deputy of Defence Paul Wolfowitz had presumptuously declared during a visit to Ankara that Turkish assent was "assured". The decision of the Parliament was mere lip service, a fig leaf. The real authority in the Turkish state is the Turkish army. From top to bottom the army is a lackey of the US imperialists, so they desperately wanted to go into Iraq as a guardian for the US-UK occupiers of Iraq. The blood of US soldiers, "johnnies" in Turkish, is considered by the

imperialists to be worth more than that of Turkish soldiers, so the deployment of 10,000 Turkish troops was intended to be a cheap deal for the imperialists. An 8.5 billion dollar US credit to the Turkish government was to be the payment for this blood. Thus, the first reason for the Turkish parliament's approval was to get its soldiers on the front lines on behalf of the occupiers.

The second goal of Turkey's rulers was to prevent the potential establishment of a Kurdish state of any sort. Turkey's rulers have long been haunted by the decline of their prestige and power from the glory days of the Ottoman Empire, when Istanbul, then Constantinople, ruled over many different peoples of a far-flung region, including the Armenians, Kurds and a large part of the Arab world. This empire was taken apart bit by bit, and Turkey's rulers today are terrified at the possibility that the establishment of a viable Kurdish political entity in northern Iraq could act as a magnet that rips the millions of Kurds within Turkey's own borders out of their grip. At the same time, they were salivating at the possibility of putting their troops in Iraqi Kurdistan, with its major oil fields.

And the US Needed Them...

Iraq was occupied by US and British forces on 9 April 2003, but unfortunately for the US and UK the Iraqi people did not meet them with flowers as the invaders had proclaimed they would. The situation now is far from the peace, democracy and stability they prophesied. These were empty illusions designed only to throw sand in the face of the people. It was clear to the Maoists what the imperial Pax America was going to

mean for the masses, and even less experienced masses knew from the experience in the Balkans and Afghanistan generally what lay ahead.

The question of Iraq is bound up with the strategy of the US imperialists to reshape the Middle East region overall. Any regime that does not respond to the needs of the US imperialists is a target. The US even wants to restructure close US allies like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and others too. In addition, the US wants to compel other less compliant reactionary regimes in the region, like Syria and Iran, to submit to its overall plan. The Turkish troops they wanted to send into Iraq were therefore not intended simply to serve as fighters for the US-UK in Iraq, but also as fighters for them more widely in the region.

The unity between the Turkish regime and the US is not based on some mutual sharing of a strategic common aim; instead, Turkey is being more tightly harnessed in the service of US aims. The Turkish army was built up after the Second World War to serve the US imperialists in their contention with the rival Soviet imperialist bloc. It was forged into the fifth-largest army in the world and armed with modern military equipment by the US imperialists. It is now being restructured to serve the plans of the US in the Balkans and the Middle East as regional gendarmes, a cheap rent-an-army for the US.

It was very clear that occupying Iraq would not be easy, and the occupiers quickly hit this reality hard. Even the Pentagon HQ has admitted that the national resistance of Iraq is on a stronger organisational footing than it was earlier. In the beginning, the fact that it was not more organised

reflected the reactionary character of the Saddam regime. It was against the nature of things to think that such a regime would actually be able to mobilise genuine national resistance against the imperialists. Yet, as has been seen in the example of the town of Um ul Ghasr, where the first ground fighting in the war took place, the potential did exist to mobilise the people to fight against the invaders. But anyone who compares the fighting conducted by the Saddam forces with Stalingrad or Vietnam is operating under illusions. It was the US itself that set up the Saddam regime, and it was the US too that prodded it to wage the eight-year war against the Iranian regime in the 1980s.

From the beginning of the occupation, the imperialists' situation in Iraq was not easy or comfortable, but it grew steadily worse, and now they need new mercenaries to do their fighting. One of their chief motivations to bring in Turkey's Army was a belief that it would represent the presence of a Muslim country, or, as the *New York Times* put it, this would "change the image of the occupation from that of a solely Western effort to one that is multi-ethnic as well as multinational". In other words, this would cover the ugly colonial nature of the occupation with a thin veneer of "Islamic-friendly" respectability and strengthen the argument that this was not a war against Islam. This was an approach based on ignorance and arrogance that soon backfired.

Turkey and the Middle East

For the imperialists, the Middle East has long been a region of great interest, including because of the value of petrol. During the First World War, the British imperialists had a very large force stationed there. Using the age-old strategy of divide and conquer, they cultivated local ruling classes as their legs in the region. The global balance of forces changed significantly with the Second World War, and the US took over as chief imperialist. Israel, the Turkish military and the Shah of Iran became the US's strongest legs in the

region. Soviet social-imperialism also had some influence and strength, through the regimes in Syria and Iraq, while the Germans played a lesser, economic role.

Following the collapse of the Soviet-led Warsaw Bloc, a power vacuum arose in the region that the US was determined to fill. This is what they set out to do in the Gulf War, and are doing even more emphatically now. Seizing Iraq has become key to the US drive for world hegemony.

It is very clear that their plans for the occupation of Iraq and other parts of the Middle East are ultimately rooted in these interests, and are aimed, first, at strategic control of petrol and energy resources, because the US imperialists are the main consumers of petrol and energy resources in the world today. Their alarm at the economic crisis is pushing them to take a more aggressive stance. It is thus a top priority for them to gain greater control of these energy sources. They also want to prevent the euro from becoming even more influential in the area, and they want to prevent the possibility of a stronger relationship developing between Russia, France and local forces in the region. Third, they want to guarantee the survival of Israel.

For these purposes they are seeking hegemony over the Middle East as a whole. And hegemony in the Middle East is a cornerstone for US strategic domination of the entire world.

As was seen with Noriega in Panama, it is difficult to keep control of reactionary comprador regimes like those in Iraq, Iran and others - they need new lackeys who can fight on their behalf in the region. Thus, the US changed the last government in Turkey, which was not capable of serving American interests well, and took the new Islamic government and turned it into a war cabinet for the US. The US will also try to use the Islamic influence of the new government to strengthen its influence throughout the region. So the Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan and his cabinet have been raised to the level of the government in the service of this

imperialist need.

The European imperialists are very uncomfortable at seeing Turkey becoming practically the fifty-first state of the US. They have their own calculations about their interests in the region, and how Turkey could serve them. The European powers, home to hundreds of thousands of Kurdish exiles, tried to exploit the problems Turkey's rulers face with the Kurdish rebellion, not out of any concern for the Kurdish masses, but in order to curb the growing US influence.

This is a crucial factor in the ongoing discussion of integrating Turkey into the European Union. But Turkey, which belongs to the US from head to toe, is not so reliable for the EU.

The EU already faces problems due to the role of the UK, Poland and others in Iraq. They don't want to add fuel to the fire by bringing Turkey into Europe. They don't want Turkey to become a Trojan horse for the US. Although they also have problems with Turkey's Islamic religion and culture, these are secondary. For their own interests, the European imperialists are willing to accept the Islamic religion, or Kurdish nationalism, or whatever - their overriding concern is their own imperial interests. While the demands Europe is placing on Turkey have sometimes caused the country's rulers to vacillate, or to try to play both sides, sometimes winding up in a muddle, overall they are clearly in the US camp. Therefore, for the time being, Turkey is trying to force open the doors of Europe through US influence, but it knows that it cannot rely on this alone.

Islamic Party in Turkey

The Islamic-based Justice and Development Party, now the governing Party in Turkey, grew up in reaction to the military coup of 1980. Since then it has been groomed to be a "responsible" force in Turkey's mainstream politics. The Party boasts that, with regard to religion, it should be seen as the Turkish counterpart of Germany's Christian Democratic Party. The US imperialists and Turkey's rulers both like to present the

country as a model for Muslim countries, where a "moderate" Islamic party defends the capitalist system under the domination of the US through a parliamentary democratic form.

While Europe, particularly Germany, is the leading investor in Turkey, the US has tight control over the Turkish military. All of the generals who sit on Turkey's National Security Council, the most powerful body in the country, have been personally involved in leading key NATO operations, such as in Bosnia and Kosovo, or even in the US war in Afghanistan. The Turkish army has played an important historic role in NATO for decades. The US also has several large military bases in Turkey, including the huge air base at Incirlik. At the end of the First World War, Turkey was a semi-colony of Germany; during the interwar period Britain and France gained greater influence, but with the US victory in the Second World War it steadily took over as the dominant force, particularly with the outbreak of the Cold War. Since then Turkey has been under the complete domination of US imperialism. Germany has the most extensive economic relations with Turkey, particularly in manufacturing, while Britain has key contracts in gas distribution and telecommunications and in the financial field. Turkey has also greatly strengthened its ties with Israel. Turkey, Israel and the US have signed three major mutual assistance agreements in recent years.

In this model of what the US wants for the region, Turkey's generals still have the decisive say on any major issue, and have staged coups against civilian governments three times since the Second World War and even pressured the forerunner of the Islamic Party from power only a few years ago. A recent Amnesty International survey reports that there are still more than a thousand political prisoners in "F-style" isolation cells (see *AWTW* 2001/27 on Turkey's prisons), and that, "Torture remained widespread and the perpetrators were rarely brought to justice" - this is particularly the case in the Kurdish

south-east. Turkey gives a perfect idea of exactly what Bush and the US mean by a model American-style Middle East democracy.

US Power Hits a Wall

The US chieftains persisted for some time in trying to get Turkish troops sent to Iraq. For several weeks Bush and his cronies continued to argue that the costs were outweighed by the potential benefits. The decision by the Turkish state on 7 October 2003 to push forward through the Grand National Assembly formal authorisation to send Turkish troops, despite the apparent difficulties, also demonstrated the high level of dependence of the Turkish state on US imperialism and the Turkish rulers' continued willingness to take a risk to increase their own influence in the region by showing their muscle.

Ultimately, however, they were forced to back down. It seems that the straw that broke the camel's back was the imperialists' failure to convince even their own lackeys in Iraq that this would be of help to pacifying Iraq. The opposition of even the bourgeois-feudal leaders of the Kurdish national movement in the north of Iraq meant that the US would jeopardise the support of one of its more reliable allies in the country, risking the disaffection of the Kurdish leadership and the wrath of the basic masses, especially in light of the rising anti-US resistance. It would also have antagonised the Shiites in particular, not only because the Muslims of Turkey are mainly Sunni, but more fundamentally because of the whole history of nationalist opposition on the part of all the Arab peoples to Turkish domination, extending back to Ottoman Empire days. The very emergence of Arab nationalism was bound up with the rise of opposition to four centuries of Ottoman occupation. In the eyes of the Arab masses, almost any army other than the Turkish Army would have been less of an insult and provocation. As the British Special Envoy to Iraq, Sir Jeremy Greenstock, ruefully admitted to the BBC, the idea of

sending Turkish troops to occupy northern Iraq was about as popular in Baghdad as the idea of sending British troops to occupy Belfast has been in Dublin.

Germany and France were also reluctant, if not outright opposed, to such a move. Finally, the people in Turkey itself massively opposed the war, and in particular the plan to send Turkish troops into Iraq. There were meetings, protests and demonstrations of tens of thousands against Turkish participation in the war in all the major urban centres, including Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir and Adana.

In Turkish there is an expression that says, "there is shit on both ends of the stick". Ultimately, then, although the government made a big effort to get a positive response in parliament, all these factors, as well as the opposition of the masses, contradictions within the ruling class that fragmented the unity of the government, the fact that the US didn't meet the Turkish ruling class's demands regarding Kurdistan (that the US wouldn't permit the establishment of a Kurdish state), and the fact that the UN failed to give its stamp of approval to the US/UK war - all this ultimately thwarted the US effort to obtain Turkish troops as occupation forces.

But there should be no illusions that the Turkish rulers have somehow turned over a new leaf. Turkey did work for the US-UK invasion. In February 2003, Turkey opened its ports, shipping lanes and air space to the US military. US bombers that bombed Iraq's cities set off from bases in Turkey, and at least some US troops did move through Turkish territory. Despite their failure in parliament, in actuality they played a major role in helping the US war.

The Kurdish Question against the Backdrop of the War

In the world today, it is not only the voices of the imperialists and reactionaries that are being heard. The people too have resisted and are continuing to resist. The US occupation forces are being pulled into a quagmire. Those who say that

it is only Saddam forces that are resisting are wrong, and are missing the undeniable role of Iraqi nationalism. For the time being, the US's closest allies are the feudal strata among the Kurds, in particular around Masood Barzani and Jalal Talabani. The Maoists have repeatedly pointed out that this is a reflection of their class position. The so-called realistic pragmatism of the Kurdish feudal ruling class has objectively turned them into servants of US interests. The Maoist forces have long made the point that the leadership of the Kurdish forces in northern Iraq, centred around Barzani and Talabani, has promoted illusions that the US imperialists could somehow be used to further the national interests of the Kurdish people. In this situation, they seized on the war to argue that it represented a historic opening, that the Kurds had to be "realistic" and had no choice but to work with the US imperialists to the extent that they could. Unfortunately this line has had some influence among the Kurdish masses.

But before going into greater depth on the situation of Iraqi Kurdistan during the war, it is worth examining recent developments in the Kurdish movement in Turkey, which had also been moving in a direction of more accommodation with imperialism. [For more on the history and politics of the Kurdish question, see *AWTW* 1985/5 and 1991/16.]

In Turkey, Kadek, previously known as the PKK (Kurdish Workers Party), has tried to argue that the US will bring democracy to the region.¹ They now argue that capitalism has a democratic aspect, and that old-style colonialism has been left in the past and that the imperialist attacks taking place today represent a new-style democratic colonialism. So Kadek has even been meeting with US representatives. Consider in particular the recent arguments of Abdullah Ocalan, the historic leader of the PKK. Ocalan, who still exerts tremendous influence on the Kurdish movement in Turkey despite being in prison, made the following argument on behalf of Kadek: we don't have the

aim of smashing the Turkish state or of establishing a new state. What we want is to transform the Turkish state into a democratic state where there is room for compromise and reform. Our goals are language and cultural rights that could be achieved within a democratic Turkish state. Talk of self-determination of the Kurdish nation is an outmoded concept. The Kurdish people living in the various countries of the region should demand their democratic rights within the framework of each different country. The official ideology of the Turkish state is Kemalism - this is a modern ideology. But, Ocalan argues further, the British imperialists provoked the Kurds to rise up against the Turkish state after the First World War, so the Kemalists had no choice but to smash this movement. If there had been no imperialist provocation, Kemalism could have developed into democracy. The suppressive form Kemalism took at that time can in today's conditions be transformed into a democratic form. To take the line that it is necessary to smash the state, as we used to in the past, Ocalan argues, must thus give way to a new line, the heart of which is transforming the Turkish state into a democratic republic based on reform and compromise. If the Turkish state is ready to transform in this way, we are ready to bring back our guerrilla forces based in Iraq and integrate them into the political life of Turkey. We therefore seek a general amnesty to do this. Even a good inspiring message from the Turkish state would be enough to set us on the path towards a democratic republic. Unfortunately, the Turkish state refuses to do this, so we have no choice but to maintain our armed forces. Thus concludes Ocalan's argument.

The reality of the situation is very different. The US adopted the policy of asking Turkey to open the door for Kadek to be integrated back into Turkey's political life. But the Turkish state asked the US to fight the Kadek guerrillas under the claim that they are terrorist. Although the US has said the PKK is a terrorist organisation in order not to offend its Turkish allies, it

has also tried not to offend the PKK by actually using force against PKK guerrillas in northern Iraq. It has tried to sit between two stools. On the one hand, the US is talking to Turkey in order to seek the elimination of the PKK, while on the other the US understands the difficulty of the plan to eliminate the PKK and therefore wants to solve this problem by opening the door for the PKK to be reintegrated into Turkey's political life. This is their main emphasis. Since the best allies the US has in Iraq are the feudal bourgeois leadership in Kurdistan, the US doesn't want to have an armed confrontation with the PKK and incur the hatred of the Kurdish people. In response to US wishes, the Turkish state enacted a law, called a "return home" law, that required guerrillas to sign a statement renouncing their previous armed struggle against the regime. The PKK responded that this was a dishonourable law, including because it also required the guerrillas to collaborate with the army and identify remaining guerrillas. The PKK said they could not accept this law, and instead demanded a general amnesty and the democratic and cultural rights of the Kurdish people.

So this was the political line being advanced by the PKK in Turkey as war broke out. A similar line of accommodation with the imperialist order had already gone much further in Iraqi Kurdistan.

In March 2003, as the US-British forces moved into Iraq to seize that country, there was surprise, confusion and anger around the world at the sight of American soldiers being accompanied by contingents of Kurdish peshmerga fighters. The peshmergas, who were given great prominence by the imperialist media, were sent by two Iraqi Kurdish parties, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), led by Talabani, and the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), led by Barzani. These two parties have been running a US-puppet Kurdish government in northern Iraq since 1991. The US had created a northern "no fly zone" after the first Gulf war that enabled the regimes of the two parties (they are historic rivals

and control different territories) to operate free of Saddam Hussein's authority. As the parties were allowed to receive some revenue from the rich oil fields in the area and to control cross-border trade routes with Turkey and Iraq, both developed a fat elite that established itself over the poverty-stricken and exhausted Kurdish people in northern Iraq. They had a 40,000-strong force with some CIA-trained commandos. During the invasion, thousands of peshmerga troops were led by US commandos and CIA forces in different military operations.

To justify this, PUK leader Talabani argued that the Kurds could have no better friends than those in Washington. US President Bush repeatedly denounced the Hussein regime for its crimes against the Kurds, and prominent US government spokesmen promised fulfilment of Kurdish aspirations for an autonomous state within a federal Iraq. None of these promises has turned out to be true.

The two Kurdish parties were hoping that after the overthrow of the Saddam regime they would be allowed to consolidate and expand the power of the Kurdish autonomous regime in northern Iraq. They also hoped that since they had helped US imperialism to rape and occupy Iraq, they would be rewarded with leverage in the future central government in Iraq that has been thrown together by the US imperialists.

For a brief time immediately following the occupation of Iraq, the Kurdish government did seem to become more viable. This stirred the Kurdish nationalist parties in Iran as well as the PKK in Turkey to follow on the heels of the Iraqi Kurdish parties to seek US support for their own share of "Kurdish power". It was as if they suddenly believed that the US imperialists were running an open market dispensing "national liberation". Leaders of the Kurdish-based Komalah Party in Iran joined the rush to Washington and held meetings with Pentagon officials. Komalah openly announced this "new relationship", and shamelessly argued that at this juncture in world history US interests

dictated that they parcel out autonomy to Kurds, perhaps in federal-type arrangements. Talabani, the PUK leader, played a "distinguished" role as middleman and broker for the Kurdish parties in Iran and Turkey in order to smooth their capitulation to the US imperialists and enlist their services.

The US imperialists did not take long to dash these grand illusions. Paul Bremer, the US proconsul in Iraq, summoned the Kurdish leaders on 2 January 2004 to tell them that the present Kurdish autonomous state in northern Iraq is an obstacle to US plans for Iraq and should be wound up. There is powerful opposition in Washington DC to any kind of Kurdish autonomous state. For the US, victory in Iraq means being able to forge a stable Iraq under its boots, and Kurdish national rights are an obstacle to this for a number of reasons. First, the US colonial rulers in Iraq need to tame and control the masses of Shiite and Sunni Arabs. For them this means working through reactionary feudal comprador classes and religious Shiite and Sunni authorities, and uniting some intellectuals and technocrats and wooing a section of the middle classes among these groups. So the US wants to appease the appetite of the reactionary classes and authorities within Iraq's Shiite and Sunni Arabs. But this runs counter to granting the Kurdish feudal comprador classes a big share of political and economic power. There simply isn't enough to satisfy all these compradors, and allowing the Kurds greater autonomy would also require potentially dangerous tinkering with long-established hierarchies of domination.

The US also has to take into account the interests of Turkey and Iran. After all, the reactionary classes of the dominant nations in those states are stronger and much more organised and experienced in serving imperialist interests! Turkey, which is a close US ally in NATO, vehemently opposes the emergence of any Kurdish state at all because this would stir discontent and rebellion in Kurdistan of Turkey. The Turkish state and the US are especially

opposed to any attempt by the Kurdish parties to gain control of the northern Iraqi oilfields, which stretch along the borders of Kurdish areas near the cities of Kirkuk and Mosul, because this would give a lot of power to the Kurds.

Contrary to all the colourful propaganda by the Kurdish leaders in Iraq, the US is not out there to protect Kurds or parcel out autonomy. The US never planned to give any power to the masses of Kurdistan, because the interests of the peoples of the Middle East, including the Kurds, clash with US plans for the domination of this whole strategic region. But for a while it seemed as if the Kurdish feudal and comprador classes would get to consolidate their own narrow power base in northern Iraq. But how and if this will work out is uncertain. The US is putting great pressure on its Kurdish allies to give up any moves toward greater autonomy or toward control of the oil fields. In addition, the US is expected to demand the eventual disarmament of Kurdish armed forces through the merger of their peshmerga into a new US-controlled Iraqi army. *New York Times* columnist William Safire reports (14 January 2004) that the US colonial administrator of Iraq, Paul Bremer, "told Kurdish leaders brusquely last week to forget the past US autonomy policy and get with the unity program".

It is a historical fact that the imperialist powers have committed horrendous crimes against the Kurdish nation. The four reactionary states oppressing the Kurds (Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria) were forged and propped up by British and US imperialism in the first place, leaving the Kurds stateless. And the imperialist powers have established a cruel pattern of relations with the Kurds since then. They have repeatedly made false promises to the feudal and bourgeois leaders of Kurdistan and then betrayed them. For example, when the US has wanted to undermine a government in Turkey or Iraq, it has encouraged and armed Kurdish forces and built up conservative nationalist forces among the Kurds who have been willing to fight for the US against the respective

(Continued to page 88)

MCC India Three Decades Leading Battalions of the Poor



A WORLD TO WIN 2004/30

One of the important Maoist forces in the world, a party that is little known outside of its own country, is the Maoist Communist Centre of India (MCCI), a participant in the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement since 2001. This article attempts to introduce readers to the history, activities and political understanding of the MCCI. In addition to the MCCI's own documents and important contributions received from MCCI supporters, this article draws on the pamphlet entitled "Inside MCC Country" by Alope Banerjee, published in June 2003, excerpts of which are found later in this issue. ¹ – AWTW

When we talk about the International Communist Movement, we will certainly be talking about the Indian communist movement. This is true for different aspects and different reasons. A vast country with the second largest population of the world, India has a long history of communist movement, contemporary to that of China. Today there are a number of genuine communist forces in India, one of the most important of which is the Maoist Communist Centre of India (MCCI). The MCCI has had a decades-long glorious tradition of arousing the poor in armed revolutionary struggle against the exploiting classes. Since 2001,

the MCCI has been a participating party in the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM). The MCCI is particularly active in the Indian states of Jharkhand, West Bengal, Chattisgarh, Bihar and Orissa. The MCCI has developed guerrilla zones and an important degree of revolutionary political power in a vast section of Jharkhand and parts of adjoining states. These areas are populated by millions of desperately poor people, even by Indian standards, mainly from different groupings of *adivasis* or indigenous tribal peoples. Over the centuries these peoples have been pushed into the hilly region where



land is less productive than in the fertile Ganges plain to the north in Bihar or to the west in Bengal. In these areas, schools are rare and doctors almost non-existent. A merger in the year 2003 with the former Revolutionary Communist Centre of India (Maoist) strengthened the presence of the MCCI in the north-western Indian state of the Punjab as well.²

The MCCI mobilises the masses not only to carry out the armed revolutionary struggle actions that often involve hundreds and sometimes thousands of fighters but also in the various mass mobilizations and *bandhs* (general strikes) that the MCCI has repeatedly

called in Jharkhand. These *bandhs* can bring "business as usual" to a grinding halt, even stopping the Indian state's strategic rail lines that pass through Jharkhand on the way between Delhi and Calcutta. On occasions, many thousands of peasants are mobilised to travel to Calcutta or other cities to demonstrate in favour of the revolutionary cause. While the government tries to stick the label "terrorist" on the MCCI (as is the fashion among all reactionaries these days when it comes to slandering the revolutionary forces), in their large strategic area in which tens of millions of people live the depth of support for the MCCI is impossible

to deny.

The MCCI today has a number of strong mass peasant organisations that it has mobilised broadly under the slogan of "land to the tiller, political power to the peasant association". Organised in this way, the MCCI leads the peasants to fight back against their poverty and immiseration, which is rooted in their landless condition and in the way agriculture is organised more generally in the country, where a host of landlords, loan sharks, government bureaucrats and the like prey on the millions of peasants.

The MCCI in Action

In one case, for example, in August 2001, an armed squad under the leadership of the MCC led 1,200 people to march out at half past nine at night to the main Grand Trunk road near Kulgo village in the Hazarbagh district. There they stopped a truckload of grain and distributed half the large sacks of pulses to the masses before they were forced to retreat by the arrival of police reinforcements. Emboldened by their success, the next night an even larger group, 8,000 strong, halted five trucks on the Grand Trunk road near Titlamore village in nearby Giridih district. The slogans raised were "confiscate the money lenders' goods to distribute amongst the poor", "establish the authority of the revolutionary peasant committee" and "protect the people from starvation". Banners and posters flew over the heads of the thousands of peasants. Before the goods were distributed, thirty jeep-loads of police arrived at the scene. Fierce fighting broke out, but the revolutionaries had prepared by laying mines. The police responded with grenades, followed by an intense exchange of gunfire. The police retreated, then returned in stronger numbers and attacked again. But the MCC guerrillas once again resisted their attack, boosting immensely their confidence and that of the peasants.

While the revolutionaries have

sunk deep roots in broad sections of the countryside, the reactionaries have used their control of state power to sow terror and scare away support for their cause. Over two years ago when Babulal Marandi took over as Chief Minister in Jharkhand, he projected himself as a strong man, a Hitler-type figure who would "destroy" all the revolutionary movements and struggles in the state. In one instance, a number of members of the Krantikari Kisan Committee (Revolutionary Peasants Committee), which had led an uprising earlier in the 1990s that had seen the militant involvement of hundreds of thousands of poor and middle peasants, were tracked down and caught. A special court in Gaya sentenced a number of them to life imprisonment and gave four the death penalty. The MCC called a 72-hour bandh in Bihar and Jharkhand in protest against this unjust verdict. There was massive support. A staff reporter of the revolutionary Indian quarterly *Resistance Call* in Ranchi reported that, "Schools, colleges, courts, offices, shops and markets mostly remained closed. The movement of vehicles ceased in most places. All train services in the main, chord and branch railway lines came to a standstill. Thousands of people went for a sit-down on the railway track and gave vent to their voice of protest against the verdicts. The success of the bandh was total in 18 districts and 80 per cent in the other four. Business in Bihar came to a halt. The area all around seemed to have been placed under curfew.... During the three-day long bandh, the Maoists in their active protestations organized revolutionary raids with success against the police and administration at Lohardaga, Gumla and elsewhere."³

While India's press is full of lurid stories of international terrorist conspiracies, in fact the main armoury for the weapons of the revolutionaries is the Indian state itself, that is, guns seized from defeated troops and police. The revolutionaries have gone to great lengths to figure out how to deal with their situation of being greatly outgunned, but having superior morale and creativity. In one

situation, General Reserve Police (GRP) forces had dispersed on a train on the Tata-Barkakhana line near Harubera station, with a pair of GRP personnel in each wagon on the train. MCC guerrillas captured the pair in the last wagon and took their weapons, then pretended to cry out for help from the pair in the adjoining wagon, as if they were in danger. When the next pair rushed into the wagon, the guerrillas captured them too, and so on, thus in the end overwhelming all the GRP personnel without firing a shot!

Much of the work of the MCCI has been among tribal peoples in north-eastern India. One focus of the struggle among these people is the use of the forest. The government has taken control of much of the forestry operation and uses this for its own coffers. In one incident, the police and forest department employees set fire to nearly 100 huts of poor tribals and *Dalits* (those held by Hinduism to belong in the lowest caste, sometimes referred to as "untouchables") at Koradih village in Mirzapur, the home district of then Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Rajnath Singh. The intention was to drive them out of the area. Nearby the Uttar Pradesh police shot down 16 revolutionary peasants in what they described as an "encounter". Various human rights groups denounced the government for trying to disguise what was actually an outright execution.

The MCC and supporters from a tribal group countered and disarmed 66 *jawans* [soldiers]. The government was furious and offered a reward of 2.5 lakh rupees (100,000Rs = 1 lakh = \$2000 US) for information leading to the capture of the Maoists – a huge sum, more than a year's average wages in the Indian countryside. Despite this, the government learned nothing. At the same time, the government showed their contempt for the claims they had violated human rights of the tribals and *Dalits* by granting a cash award to the police officers responsible for the massacre.

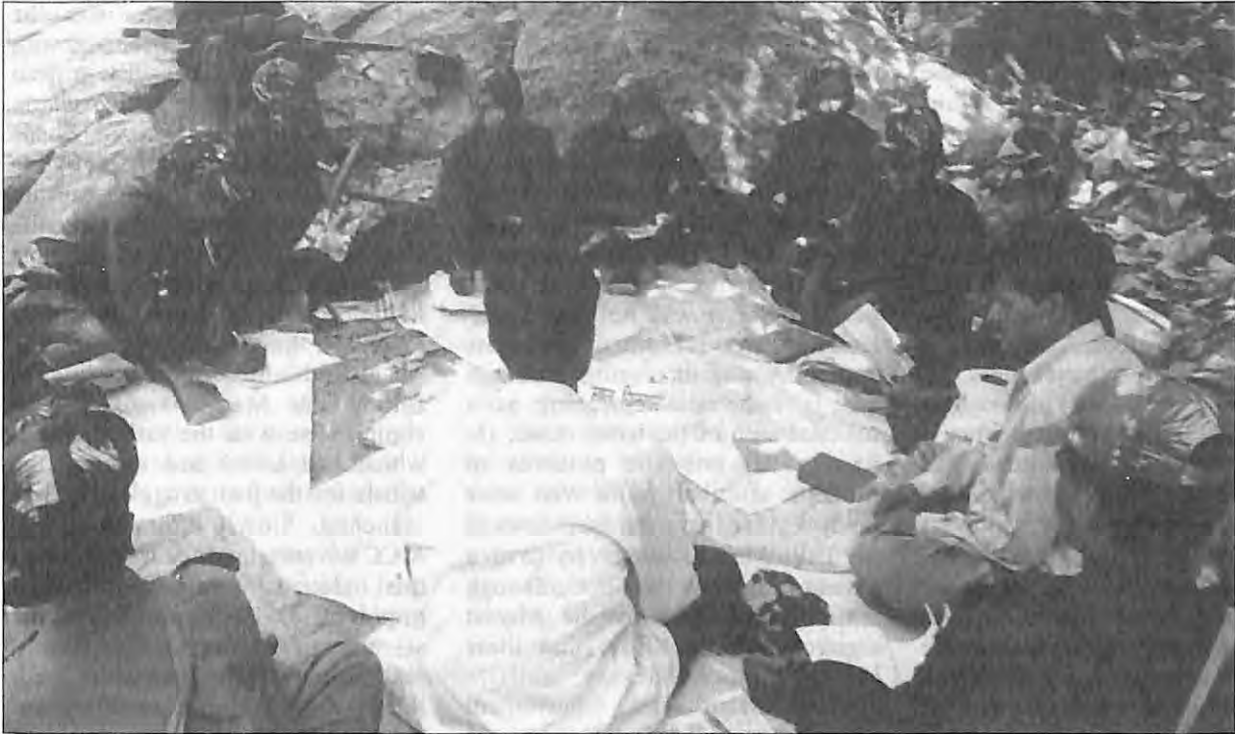
At about 7pm on the night of 19 December 2002, while about 75 members of the Jharkhand armed police were returning with the body of

an oppressor killed in the dense forest area of Sarenda, the biggest teakwood forest in Asia, they were attacked by an ambush of MCC guerrillas; 18 police were killed, 20-25 were wounded and most of the rest surrendered to the guerrillas. More than 50 weapons were captured. The police had been on a campaign of repression against the masses, particularly poor tribal people in the area, including the rape of women.

The Indian state has become increasingly alarmed at the growing strength of the MCCI along with other sections of the Indian communist movement, most notably the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) (People's War), which has also made big advances in developing the armed revolutionary struggle of the peasantry in different sections of the country. The MCCI, like the CPIML(PW) and other communist forces, has come under fierce attack from the Indian state, as well as from local feudal forces and their armed goons, who together kill hundreds of communist revolutionaries and their supporters among the peasantry every year. Very often captured and unarmed revolutionaries or just peasant sympathisers are murdered in cold blood and later described as victims of "armed encounters". New draconian laws, such as the "Prevention of Terrorism Act" (POTA), are giving the government a free hand to repress the revolutionaries. The arch-reactionary Minister of the Interior Advani presides over regular meetings of the main government officials of the different Indian states in which armed struggle is being waged to co-ordinate the repression.

Despite the increased pressure from the reactionary state, the MCCI has been raising its ability, step by step, to defeat the reactionary attacks of the Indian Border Security Force (BSF), the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), as well as other militarised police forces. Now the MCCI says, "We have reached a stage where it will be impossible for the government to curb our activities with the police. Sooner or later, they will have to deploy the army and we are

(Continued to page 58)



Study is an important part of guerrilla life.

Inside MCC Country

Excerpt reprinted from the pamphlet "Inside MCC Country" by Alope Banerjee, a journalist for the *Times of India* (June 2003).

From Jharkhand to Lal Khand

The present enormous growth of the MCCI [Maoist Communist Centre of India] had a humble beginning 30 years ago. But even then, Bihar had been selected as part of a strategic area by the founding fathers of the Party - Kanai Chatterjee, Amulya Sen and Chandrashekhar Das. And ever since MCC began its work, Chatterjee had been insisting that formation of a red army and a base area must be identified as the principal task of the party. In fact, it was this strategy, which gave MCC a distinct identity as compared to the CPI(ML), which was much more powerful in the early 1970s. To put the central task into practice, largely on an experimental basis, the MCC sent some of its members to the Kanksa-Budbud-Aushgram area in Burdwan in West

Bengal in the early 1970s.

"We knew that the work here would not survive and would be crushed soon. But we needed field-level experience, and the plan was to recruit some active and advanced forces and depute them to Bihar", said Bihar-Jharkhand-Bengal special area committee member Kamal. Kanai Chatterjee and Amulya Sen themselves began working in Bihar and in areas that now fall within Jharkhand. "We were clear from the beginning that it would be unwise to work wherever we found contact. So, from our inception, we concentrated our work in the area that we felt could be converted into a base area in future," Kamal said.

Work began from Dhanbad and Gaya in Bihar. By the time the struggle in Kanksa faced a setback after a ruthless police repression, the MCC was already active in Hazaribagh and

Giridih. Simultaneously, the Party began working in Uttar Pradesh and Assam. Around 12 members from Kanksa, who gained first-hand experience of how to build struggle from a scratch and how to fight feudalism in the villages, now began to work in Bihar. Some members from Kolkata [Calcutta] and Hooghly were also sent later.

"What we tried to do right from the start was to build the Revolutionary Peasants Committees and establish them as centres of political power. We also learnt that even crucial decisions on struggle should be taken by the people of the villages and under no circumstances should decisions be imposed on them by the Party from above. The job of the Party was to explain the situation politically so that people could take correct decisions on their own", said an organiser, Marandi.

The results were dramatic. Struggle soon spread in a vast area against the landlords, traders, moneylenders, contractors in the forests and the coal mines as well as against dreaded dacoits [bandits]. The wrath of the people was sharpest against them. From Gaya and Dhanbad, the struggle spread to Aurangabad, Bokaro, Hazaribagh and Giridih. Attacks were launched against landlords. Their land was seized and distributed among the villagers. Several moneylenders and contractors were killed, after which money lending as a business virtually ceased to exist. The landlords began to flee to the cities. Most of the dacoits were eliminated. This gave a tremendous boost to the growth and prestige of the MCC.

The key to the final success in Jharkhand, however, came from the matured handling of the Jharkhand movement and converting the nationality movement into class struggle that demanded the establish of "Lal Khand (Red Territory)". The agitation that began with a demand for a separate nation and then for regional autonomy and a separate state has now largely been converted by the MCC into a struggle that is no longer limited within the boundaries of one state but into a political and social movement that demands uprooting the existing socio-economic and political structure of the entire country. The slogan "Jharkhand ko Lal Khand me badal dalo (convert Jharkhand into Lalkhand)" played a pivotal role in the transformation of a struggle that has now involved millions of people spread over a vast territory.

But when the Jharkhand movement was launched by the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) led by Siblu Soren and Vinod Behari Mahato, the MCC was a mere spectator, having little strength to influence or even intervene. So the MCC decided to get involved in the struggle to acquaint itself with the true fighting elements in the movement both at the grassroots and at the leadership levels. MCC leaders even talked to the top JMM leaders, including Siblu Soren and Mahato, to

convince them that a separate state was no solution for the tribals and that what was required, instead, was to uproot the existing social system. The classes that oppress would still remain even if the government accepted the demand for a separate state, and it was necessary to get rid of exploitation itself by liquidating the exploiting classes from the state structure.

Siblu Soren was not impressed. He had no reason to be. His popularity was increasing dramatically, and he was emerging as a national hero of the tribal cause. He had in his grip the passions of millions of tribal youth who were ready to sacrifice even their lives at his call. Mahato, however, gave a patient hearing to the MCC. Though not yet convinced by the Maoist argument, he was sure that these Maoists meant business.

The Jharkhand movement exploded into the Indian scene in 1973-74. What began with a demand for compensation for converted tribal land soon gained momentum as the JMM organisers added an entirely new dimension to it and demanded a separate nation for the tribals. When large-scale arrests were ordered by the government, which clearly panicked, seeing the ferocity of the movement, the JMM leadership raised more aggressive slogans like "vote se nehi, chotse lenge Jharkhand (we will get Jharkhand not through votes but through bloodshed)" and "maro daroga maro mahajan (kill police officials and moneylenders)". Senior police officials were annihilated. Seizure of land began. Continuous strikes for 48 hours and then even for 72 hours became routine.

But since end-1974, the movement's leaders began to retract. They had achieved their purpose. They were powerful. Now it was time to negotiate with the government to obtain plum prizes. Siblu began talking to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. In 1974, three notorious robbers were lynched by the people at Kundko in Giridih in presence of Siblu. Three days later, the police surrounded the village and opened fire, killing three and injuring two. Siblu did not protest. On the

contrary, he advised the people to shun violence and co-operate with the government and the police. And with this began his gradual isolation from the people. In 1977 he participated in the elections.

The MCC began from where Siblu retreated. They gave a call not to surrender but to advance the struggle. Mahato, who was against Siblu's sudden volte face, offered the MCC a helping hand. In public meetings, he began to praise the MCC and advised the people to follow the Maoists and not to compromise with the ruthless state, which had killed and tortured the tribals for the just struggle they had launched. Slowly but surely, the MCC advanced, armed with some of the slogans the JMM had popularised. They continued the seizure and distribution of landlords' land. Moneylenders were attacked. Along with it began a consistent campaign that the struggle for Jharkhand is to be converted into a vigorous class struggle. Siblu accused Mahato of being an MCC agent. He split the JMM in 1985. But by then the reins of the movement were already in MCC's hands.

Land seizure movement began in full swing since 1986. Between 1987 and 1990, over 7,000 acres [2,833 hectares] of land in Chatangpur were confiscated and distributed among the villagers. A struggle against exploitation of the tribals by the forest officials also gained momentum. Forest offices were attacked. Gradually almost all the forest officials fled. In 1991 the landlords formed the Sunlight Sena - a private army - to combat the MCC. Within a year, Maoist armed squads liquidated the entire Sena. The power, prestige and credibility of the MCC further increased. And from that time on the forward march of the Party has continued. The movement for Lal Khand is a classic example of converting a nationality movement into class struggle.

Hits and Misses

The government's efforts to root out the "Maoist extremists" have

been consistent and ruthless. The strategy has been two-pronged: to kill them, arrest the sympathizers, destroy villages and beat up men, women and children to drive home the point that any association with the MCC will be suicidal. With the stick has always come the carrot. Developmental activities have been initiated. Food and clothes have been distributed by politicians, ministers, collectors and senior police officials free of cost. The attempt obviously has been to convince the villagers that the government is, after all, not that indifferent to the people's plight and is ready to offer a helping hand if the villagers give up their association with the Maoists.

All such attempts of the government have so far yielded little results. The people of Jharkhand have been ignored and taken for granted for too long. The tribal male has always been a slave for the upper caste and the rich to be whipped, their muscles and bones to be employed in gruelling toil to reap unlimited profit. The tribal female has been nothing but flesh to be torn apart in lust. The tribal culture has been trampled upon. Their simplicity has always been exploited by the moneylender and the landlord. Deprived of food and shelter, their hunger and poverty have been used to draw them into the cobweb. Their forest land and those for cultivation have been snatched away. Elections for them have been nothing but mockery of democracy with hundreds of them hounded out of their houses and forced to vote for a particular party. And all rebellion has been nipped in the bud with lathis [batóns], bullets and wine. They lived like animals and died like animals until the MCC came.

Only the Maoists told them that they were still human beings. The Maoists gave them back their honour and dignity. They learnt afresh that they could still afford to protest. They learnt afresh that it was possible to fight back bullet for bullet and win back their land. From the MCC, they learnt that they were not the only ones to be exploited in this big world and that people were still

fighting back and winning. For the first time, "politicians" came to live with them - to share their miserable lives and not to take advantage of their situation. And they fell in love with them and joined their call for revolution. They killed the notorious robbers and saw the MCC repelling the retaliation successfully. They seized the landlords' land and saw him not raiding their houses at night but fleeing to the town. They saw brutal moneylenders taking to their heels. And finally they saw that they were emerging as their own masters.

The reasons for the failure of the government to isolate the villages from the MCC lie in such a history. No senior leader of the MCC has ever been arrested, in spite of the government declaring awards ranging from Rs 1 million to Rs 5 million [11,000-50,000 pounds sterling or 20,000-100,000 US dollars]. No regular guerrilla squad has so far been fully eliminated. Only the villagers have had to bear the wrath of the police and the administration, and they have accepted it willingly. Operation Eagle, Operation X, Operation Shikhar and Operation Hill Top, undertaken by successive governments against the MCC, have all met with failure because the government has been unable to win back the confidence of the people. "Model villages" have been set up. Hospitals have been built. Cattle, tube wells, clothes and food have been distributed after each "operation". But the villagers considered these to be bribes. They accepted them but did not accept the government.

Operation Hill Top, which came to an abrupt end in May 2003, had employed thousands of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and Border Security Force (BSF) personnel. The forces had been led by top officials, including the director general of police (DGP) himself. The police moved with armoured vehicles, helicopters hovering above them. But it turned out to be nothing but a massive show of strength, which impressed none. The MCC remained as elusive as ever. The success report filed by the

DGP in front of newsmen was a joke. "We have got a first-hand idea on the topography of Jhumra Pahar," he said during his press conference, with a long face.

The military strategy adopted by the MCC has so far outwitted the government. The terrain makes large-scale deployment of CRPF and the BSF a time-consuming affair. With absence of roads, the police have to travel on foot. Their movement has always been slow because of the fear of landmines. But the greatest hurdle has been a hostile population. As the government forces, which are now always large in numbers, have to travel through the villages, the villagers inform the MCC men and women before the police can reach the spot. All raids as a result become futile and damaging for the police's morale. The sagging spirit of the police gets further battered as every month MCC platoons lay several successful ambushes, killing or injuring the personnel and decamping with the weapons.

The situation in Jharkhand, as in Bihar and parts of Chattisgarh, has come to such a state that the police have given up trying to enter villages influenced by the MCC without mobilising a huge force. Even then, they enter the villages during the day and never at night, destroy a few houses, beat up whoever they can lay their hands on, arrest a couple of villagers and leave in a hurry. Several senior police officers have openly confessed before the media that they feared for their lives. Top police and state home department officials suspect that this fear psychosis is one of the reasons why the news of raids is often reaching the MCC even before the raids are conducted. A retired army officer has been deputed as the governor of Chattisgarh with a brief that he should employ his counter-insurgency experiences to tame the Maoists. ■

Afghanistan:

A Trail of Broken Promises

Based on a series of reports from *A World to Win News Service*

With the US-imposed regime change in Afghanistan came promises of a better economy, stability, democracy and women's liberation. The US and its allies pledged "aid" to reconstruct the country and have tried to justify their presence in Afghanistan in the name of bringing security to the people.

Two years after Karzai and the warlords, took over the reins of government, reconstruction and the economy of Afghanistan are as bleak as ever. The backward and restrictive social conditions for women are legitimised by the state, and so-called political stability is nowhere on the horizon. With a solution stamped "Made in USA", there is little perspective that the situation in any of these areas is likely to improve.

"Reconstruction" and the Economy of Afghanistan

After US bombs carried out massive destruction, the US convened its allies to a conference in Tokyo in 2002 that pledged \$5.8 billion in aid to Afghanistan over the next five years for reconstruction. More recently, the US promised another \$1.2 billion and urged its allies to put up a billion dollars more. This is not very much money by international standards. The US alone is spending almost a billion dollars a month (\$900 million) for its own occupation expenses in Afghanistan. But any ordinary person who sympathises with Afghanistan's people and who might think that the answer is to send more "aid" should consider how this money is spent.

Not much of it goes to rebuilding the country. As the *British Observer*

newspaper pointed out on 25 May, "So far donor countries have committed just \$300 million to road-building in all Afghanistan, by coincidence exactly the same amount of money as is being spent on reconstructing the US embassy in Kabul.... The contractor is Bechtel, the US construction giant." One of the two main Bush-friendly mega-corporations getting very much richer in Iraq at the moment, Bechtel charges almost \$400,000 per kilometre of road constructed.

As for the rest of these funds, the US and the West are sending supplies and cash, both directly and through

non-governmental organisations. Much of it is in the form of military aid for the central government or for the particular warlords supported by the particular donor country. It also includes so-called civilian aid, in the form of food or money to subsidise food imports from the West (another bonanza for American and other giant corporations).

Afghanistan's economy is basically powered by two things: opium and money sent home by Afghanistans in exile. With four million abroad out of a population of 24 million, Afghanistan has one of the highest percentages of people

A WORLD TO WIN NEWS SERVICE!

A World to Win has initiated a **News Service** that reports weekly on events of international importance from a revolutionary perspective. Articles may be reprinted by other publications on the sole condition of being credited. In this way **AWTW News Service** fills an important need in providing timely news and analysis to communist and other revolutionary and progressive press the world over. Contributions are welcome.

■ To subscribe to the English language **A World to Win News Service**, simply send a blank e-mail to:

AWorldToWinNewsService-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

(Subject space not required.) This will lead to a computer-generated response being returned to you. On receiving this response message back, open it and then just click on "Reply" and then on "Send" to confirm your free subscription. Or go to **awtw.org** and follow the links.

■ To subscribe to the Spanish language **A World to Win News**

forced to live abroad of any country in the world. The main reason for this and for why Afghanistan's economy has been strangled overall is very simple: the warlords and the feudal system they enforce.

The Communist Party of Afghanistan (a participant in the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement) analyses Afghanistan as "a semi-feudal and colonial country". It is semi-feudal because it has a feudal economic and social system that has been influenced by capitalist relations. It is colonial because not only is the country under the political and economic domination of imperialism (like many countries considered semi-colonial), it is also directly occupied by imperialist forces. . .

Some warlords started out as local feudal rulers or with the support of such people. Others have used their guns to become feudal rulers or big landowners over time. About 75 per cent of the people of Afghanistan live in the countryside, and most of them are under the domination and control of these warlords. Almost half of the cultivable land belongs to the feudal and big landlords, and the other half is divided among the peasant farmers. This means that the vast majority of the peasants are either landless or are forced to make do with very small plots of land. The farmers who work on the feudal lands have to pay between 65 and 85 per cent of the crops to the feudal as rent. This could be even higher in the case of poppy growing.

The warlords and their armies enforce this exploitation – in most cases the warlords are the direct exploiters themselves. They grab the land of the people who have left the country and in some cases force the people to sell or even just abandon their land. Sometimes they collect taxes. They use the Islamic tax known as *khoms* to take 20 per cent or more of the crops. In a report from Shol Garah valley in Afghanistan, the *New York Times* wrote on 24 September 2003, "The fighting in this fertile bowl flared as the harvest neared, and that was not a coincidence. From bountiful crops of

cotton, corn and wheat would come a cut for local commanders. The more land the commanders controlled, the more crop they could claim... Throughout early summer, men toting weapons roamed in pickup trucks. Gunshots echoed. Farmers watched helplessly, wanting nothing more than to be free of the men...."

Flourishing Opium Poppies, a Fix for the Globalised Economy

Poppy growing has become a golden opportunity for the warlord government and all those it represents to expand their capital and become a part of the new comprador class that US imperialism intends to reconstruct. Only a few months after the US and its allies invaded, it was clear that Afghanistan was going to become the world's largest opium poppy producer again. After the Taliban succeeded in banning this crop, less than 200 tonnes were produced in 2001. But this figure reached 3,400 tonnes in 2002 and it will probably be well over 4,000 tonnes in 2003. Today it is estimated that more than 3 million people and their families in the country support themselves directly from poppy cultivation. Several million more work in the poppy fields occasionally.

The farmers of Afghanistan are in fact driven to opium cultivation by powerful but merciless forces: on the one side a globalised world economy that gives them no choice but to grow something they can live from, and on the other side the imperialist intervention and what this has meant for their lives.

In the absence of irrigation systems and in a situation in which water is often stolen by big feudal landlords and more powerful people, many have turned to growing poppy. Poppy plants need less water than wheat or other basic food crops. Further, how can peasants afford to grow wheat when their crops will be undersold by cheap imports produced by subsidised farmers in the rich countries? American and European food "aid" to Afghanistan is almost as lethal as land mines. The

rich countries are happy because they can sell their surplus wheat, but free or cheap imported wheat ruins Third World peasants and, by making the country dependent on food imports, eventually brings starvation.

Those who profit from the poppy business are certainly not the farmers. First come the gangs who charge the farmers to "protect" them against other gangs. Then come the armed groups of one or another warlord. Then come the officials demanding bribes. If the peasants refuse, they may see their harvest destroyed, or end up in prison. So a large percentage goes to all these parasites. Even if things work out for a peasant family, it is certain that they will make only a little money, which of course is better than starving.

Opium production is directly related to the predominance of feudalism and the rule of warlords in Afghanistan. But the political conditions imposed by the US have been a key factor. Poppy growing in Afghanistan might have a long history but it did not take place on such a large scale until the US began to back the Mojahadeen Islamic fundamentalist (and feudalistic) guerrillas in the war of resistance against the USSR in the 1980s. These warlords encouraged poppy cultivation in areas under their control to finance their war against the Soviet invaders.

Opium is grown in 24 out of 32 of Afghanistan's provinces, but most of the production is concentrated in five provinces that are strongholds of the warlords now allied with the US, including Badakhshan. That province was the stronghold of Ahmad Shah Massoud, a close ally of Europe, especially France. Now it is under the control of his Jamiat-e-Islami, a powerful faction of the former Northern Alliance. Poppy production now forms the biggest single part of the economy. One estimate is that it brings in \$2 billion in foreign currency a year. It is central to the wealth and power of the social forces on which the US occupation depends, from traders and local warlords to big comprador

businessmen and the highest-ranking government officials. It is intimately connected to the political and economic maintenance of the country's enslavement by backward feudals and foreign occupiers.

Afghanistan supplies 70 per cent of the world's heroin. It supplies Pakistan, Iran, Central Asia, Russia and Eastern and Western Europe. Much of the addiction from Afghanistan's opium is concentrated in countries where the degradation of the people particularly suits US strategic interests. There are estimates of up to as many as six million drug addicts in Pakistan, nearly five million in Iran, around four million drug users in Russia, and many new addicts in the former Soviet states of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan – all targeted for US domination. This is one of the major "achievements" of the US occupation of Afghanistan.

**Imperialism is the Source of
Instability in Afghanistan**

The ongoing power struggle within the Afghanistan regime, the lack of government control outside Kabul and on top of that the continued fierce fighting with the Taliban, underscore just how unstable Afghanistan remains. Many aid organisations have halted their activities, complaining that the situation is deteriorating.

Historically, Afghanistan has been a strategic prize for great powers anxious to expand their regional domination. The country marks the dividing line between Central Asia (historically dominated by Russia) and South Asia (dominated by the British and then the US). For the British and then US, Afghanistan was the gate to Central Asia. For Russia, it was the gate to South Asia and the open sea to the south. This contention has been the source of instability for more than a century. The exception was the period when the USSR was a socialist country. During those decades the Soviet Union had no designs on Afghanistan and there

were several decades of relative calm.

Using the attack of 11 September 2001 as a pretext, the US tried to take advantage of its position as the only superpower to finalise the situation in Afghanistan. The aim was to ensure stability there in line with its own imperialist interests and pave the way for expanding American hegemony in Central Asia and the Middle East. But events proved this to be more difficult than the US ruling class initially thought.

Russia still considers Central Asia as its area of domination and Afghanistan as its backyard. It could not tolerate US advances towards its area of control. As a result, it has stepped up its support for the forces it backs in the power struggles within the Afghanistan government. For example, Defence Minister General Qasim Fahim is said to have good relations with Russia. No wonder there was a \$40 million military deal between Russia and Jamiat-e-Islami, of which Fahim is a main leader. The contract calls for Russia to provide transport helicopters, gunships and spare parts directly to Fahim's ministry rather than to the Afghan National Army.

Other European imperialists no less eager to increase their influence in Afghanistan have nourished relations with certain opposition forces since the time of the Taliban. After the US-led 2001 invasion, the European countries sent their troops under UN and NATO flags to control Kabul. They have been asking for the expansion of the UN mandate to allow them to operate outside Kabul, so that they could expand their control in Afghanistan.

Other reactionary countries in the region are also interfering in Afghanistan. Pakistan is in the forefront. Its generals were the main promoters of the Taliban and, on American instructions, gave them vigorous help to seize power. After the fall of the Taliban, these generals have allegedly been helping the Taliban to regroup and to use Pakistan's border region as a base for operations inside Afghanistan. The relationship between Pakistan and

the Jamiat-e-Islami is very strained. Pakistan's main concern is that it is locked in confrontation with India on one border and cannot afford to have hostile forces on the other.

From the other side, Iran has provided military aid to the private militia of Ismail Khan, the governor of Herat province in western Afghanistan. Huge amounts of imported goods are flooding into that region. The Islamic Republic of Iran is also trying to use the similarity of the Shia religion to influence forces in Hezarah Jat and is training and financing Islamic groups in central and north-western Afghanistan.

India is also trying to gain influence in Jamiat-e-Islami to expand its regional importance in competition with Pakistan.

Turkey and Uzbekistan are eager to revive their support for General Dostum, a Northern Alliance member who is an adversary of other forces within the Alliance, and would like to boost him in the power struggle.

All this shows that the warlords are only small pawns in a "Great Game" played by the big powers and other reactionary states. The biggest players are the US occupiers and the other imperialists who have sent troops. They are the main source of instability. History gives little reason to think that any big power occupation or puppet regime could bring peace and stability, let alone the social change Afghanistan's people so badly need.

Harsher Oppression for Women

After the invasion of Afghanistan and the fall of the Taliban, many women across the country thought they would get at least some limited freedom. They thought they could at least lighten their Islamic covering, and leave their homes for work and school. They hoped they could take part in social and political activities. But instead a new nightmare awaited them.

Islamic cover may no longer be compulsory by law, yet no woman can go out without it. The burka, imposed by law under the Taliban,

covering the entire body from head to toe, is generally common, and in most cases women must wear a burka to protect themselves against insult or rape. As a 2003 Amnesty International report put it, "During the Taliban era, if a woman went to market and showed an inch of flesh she would have been flogged; now she's raped."

The return of many girls to school is also running into obstacles. Some schools have been burnt down to deter parents from enrolling their children. In some areas soldiers and militiamen of the former Mujahideen groups are discouraging girls from going to school. As Human Rights Watch noted, these men have grabbed many young girls on their way to school and kidnapped and raped them. This organised harassment has added to parents' worries, so that returning refugee families who had sent their girls to school in Pakistan and Iran are now frightened and choose not to send their girls to school in Afghanistan. The state also plays a major role in reinforcing women's conditions: in November 2003 a law from the 1970s was upheld prohibiting married women from attending high school. This stifles any hope for many women to improve their lives, as many girls are forced into marriage at a young age, sometimes as young as 9 or 10.

Many cases of rape and sexual abuse of women are not reported because there is little support for fighting this in any part of the society and none in the government – neither in the executive power (run by President Karzai) nor in the judicial system, which is mainly in the hands of fundamentalists. In fact, the current rulers and their courts put the victims on trial, not the rapists. Women who are victims of rape or other abuse are often convicted of adultery (*zina*).

This form of oppression of women that makes the women property and thus the bearers of the "honour" of men is deeply rooted in the feudal and semi-feudal system. It is the very forces who are acting as US allies in Afghanistan, the feudal

landlords and warlords, who embody and enforce this system.

A New and Reactionary Constitution

One of the greatest farces of democracy imposed on Afghanistan's people is the puppet regime's new Constitution, approved by the Loya Jirga (Grand Council) in early 2004. It is not much of a surprise, since basically it is the programme of the feudal and comprador class who have pledged allegiance to their imperialist masters at the expense of the masses of the people. In other words, the Constitution is designed to protect and consolidate the dominant semi-feudal economic and social relations and to ensure the dominance of imperialism over the country. This means a dictatorship of the reactionary classes, the feudalists and imperialist lackeys and their servants, over and against the people, who are the majority.

The tenets of Islamic ideology represented in this Constitution violate one of the most basic principles of any democracy – the separation of state and religion. The Constitution puts it this way: "No law in Afghanistan can be valid if it goes against the sacred religion of Islam and this Constitution." It also allows judges to make decisions using Islamic law as their guide. The judges must swear "in the name of God the Great" that they will "uphold justice and right according to the commandments of the sacred religion of Islam and the Constitution".

The Constitution allows political parties to be established as long as their programme "does not go against the principles of Islam" and they don't have "military aims" or "foreign affiliation". This means that communists and other atheists won't be allowed to form a party or other organisation. These conditions may also apply to religious minorities.

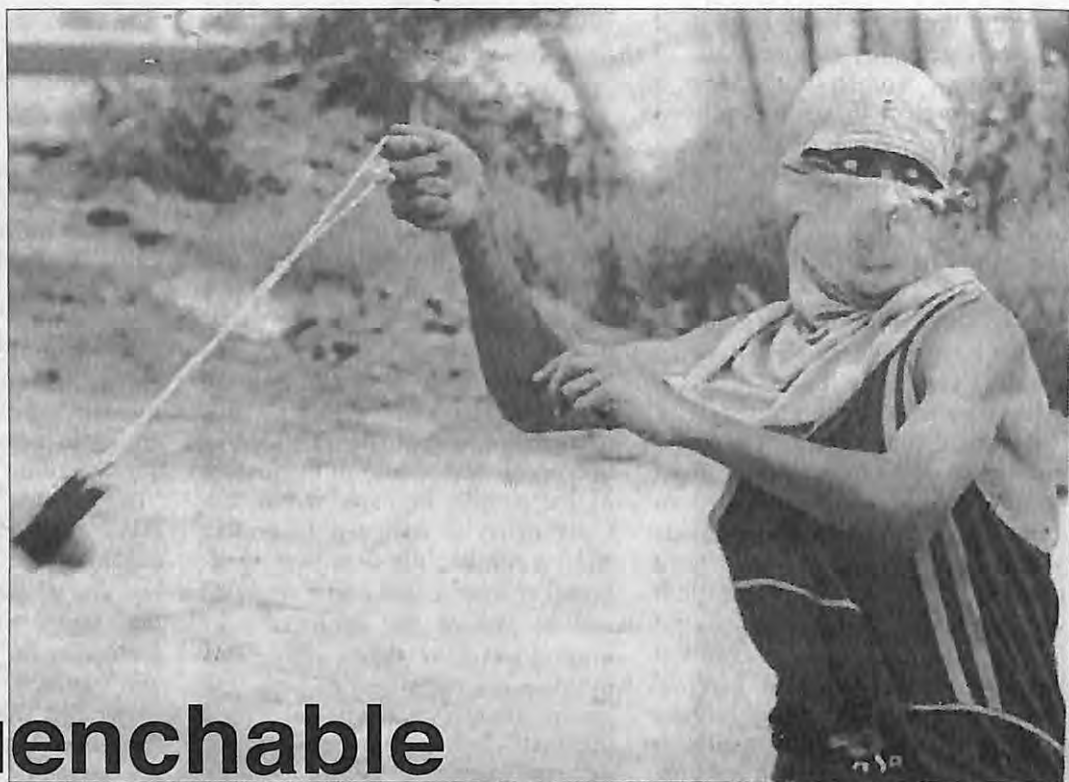
The Maoist movement in Afghanistan has a shining history. It started in the 1960s and gained broad support throughout Afghanistan. People call them Sholeii ("Sholeh-

ists," after the name of the organ of the Progressive Youth Movement). The Maoists fought hard. Many were killed by the pro-Soviet revisionist government during the USSR's imperialist invasion, while some were murdered by the Islamic fundamentalists. Most people who know about the Sholeii respect them. But the new Constitution outlaws them, while Islamic organisations that have committed countless crimes against the people enjoy the freedom to rule and to commit more crimes in the name of the "law".

According to the Constitution, "The state encourages private investment based on a market economy, according to the rule of law, and guarantees its immunity." At the same time, it foresees no protection for the national economy and puts no restrictions on imperialist capital. Thus, there is no serious pretence of independence of the country, but rather a built-in freedom for invaders to run the economy, plunder its resources and exploit the masses.

The vast majority of the peasants in Afghanistan are landless or have very little land. But the Constitution does not even refer to the land question, one of the most essential issues for Afghanistan's people, nor provide for land distribution, which is one of the most basic democratic steps the country requires. Instead, it has an empty reference to "effective programmes" for helping peasants and promoting handicraft-making.

A very different Draft Programme has been published for a future united Communist Party of Afghanistan. That party will consist of Maoist parties and organisations, including the present Communist Party of Afghanistan, a participant in the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement. It declares that, "New-democratic revolution is the proletariat's minimum programme. This revolution overthrows imperialist domination and eliminates semi-feudal relations through agrarian revolution and carrying out the central slogan of land to the tiller." ■



The Unquenchable Fire in Palestine

With the shift in global US strategy, signalled by the rise of the Bush team, came a shift in the US approach to Palestine. Bush & Co. were highly critical of former US President Clinton's Camp David negotiations effort. There was a feeling that things were being approached in the reverse order, that too much emphasis had been given to a view that the key link in strengthening the US position in the Middle East was achieving some kind of resolution of the fighting in Palestine. Instead, the view strongly put forward by leading members of Bush's foreign policy team was that "the road to Jerusalem runs through Baghdad". In other words, in their view the best or perhaps the only way to make progress in pacifying the Palestinian struggle was to overthrow the Saddam regime and use a US-dominated Iraq as a lever to re-shape the Middle East. A big part of this agenda was cleaning up the remnants of what was regarded as the

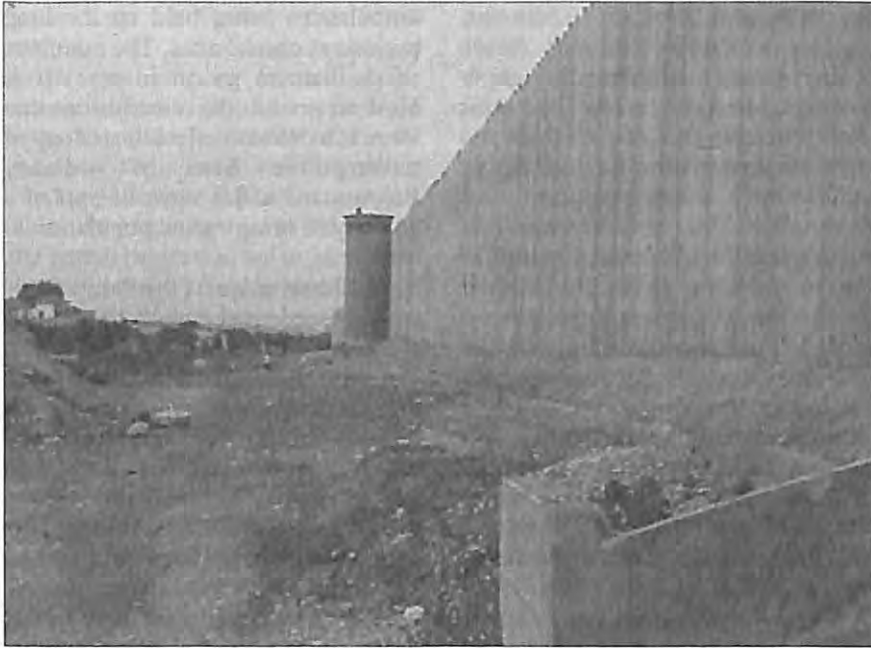
"old world order". The Bush strategists argued that one of the key factors propping up anti-US regimes in the region had been the existence of a rival camp headed by the Soviet social-imperialists. Since the Soviets were no longer around to back these regimes up, the US needed to seize the opportunity to clean these regimes out, give a boost to pro-US forces in the region, especially Israel, and solidify unchallenged US domination of the region.

In Palestine, this programme meant that Yassir Arafat as well as Hamas were both to be escorted from the stage of history, to be replaced by modern pro-Western Palestinians, people with whom Bush could "do business". For over a year US officials have refused to have any dealings with Arafat, whom they labelled "yesterday's man", despite his election as President of the Palestinian Authority. In October 2003, the US went even further and vetoed a UN Security Council

resolution condemning Israel's open threat to exile Arafat or "take him out of the picture" through other means that were unspecified, but clearly ominous.

As part of preparing for the dramatic US grab for power in Iraq, Bush launched a "road map for peace" in the Middle East. Co-sponsored by the UN, the European Union and Russia, it consists of a three-phase process that would lead to the establishment in 2005 of a Palestinian state, on the one hand, and to ensuring Israel's security, on the other.

The road map is supposed to be an "even-handed" process, where each side advances in step with the other. But there is nothing even-handed about it. In the first phase of the road map, for instance, the Israelis are required to "freeze settlement activity" in the Occupied Territories (meaning occupied from 1967, as opposed to 1948) and dismantle settlements established



The Apartheid wall in Palestine

since September 2001. Bush has called this a "tough demand" and Sharon says it would be a "painful sacrifice". Yet the Israeli occupation of these lands in the first place is a violation of international law and UN Resolutions (e.g. 242), and building settlements on them, as Israel has

been doing for decades under both "liberal" and "right-wing" governments, compounds this. The illegal settlements have grown at a rate of 10,000 people per year for the past three years, aided by a \$10,000 subsidy from the Israeli government for each settler family. While the

Palestinian youths against tanks and bulldozers.



settlement movement is veiled in all kinds of religious nonsense about god giving the Jews the land, the settlements in fact function as heavily armed fortresses to strengthen Israeli control of what remains of the Palestinian territory. So what the road map actually requires is that the Palestinians cease struggling against the theft of their land and stand by and watch the Zionists consolidate this control whilst stealing even more of it.

On point after point, this is the so-called even-handed approach of the road map: requiring minor Israeli concessions on unjust policies that have long placed it in violation of international law and in opposition to world public opinion, while requiring the Palestinian leadership to surrender its just claims and to suppress all resistance to Israel and its US masters.

Whilst the Israelis have continued to violate the road map conditions with impunity, the Palestinian Authority has been repeatedly and loudly condemned by Bush and Blair, who have both publicly declared that it is the Palestinians and Arafat that are the main reason for lack of progress towards peace. Yet even as the US

and British imperialists piously preached at every opportunity that the gun could never help the Palestinian cause, they geared up to advance their own cause by invasion and war. They screamed "bloody murder" at the top of their lungs every time a handful of Israelis died at the hands of Palestinians, whilst they sent in 150,000 heavily armed troops to kill many thousands of Iraqi civilians and occupy their country. Nowhere in the world does imperialist hypocrisy stand out more than in the Middle East.

This hypocrisy perhaps reached new levels when, after having waged a war on the stated grounds of eliminating Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, which have now been shown not to exist, US officials recently admitted that they collaborated with the Israelis to deploy US-supplied cruise missiles armed with nuclear warheads on Israel's submarines. Israeli-military doctrine is designed to place one nuclear submarine in the Persian Gulf, and another in the Mediterranean, giving the Middle East's only real nuclear power the ability to strike at any of its Arab neighbours. Whilst the US imperialists preach peace and disarmed Saddam's rag-tag army, they have merrily armed the formidable Israeli war machine with nuclear missiles in the most war-torn part of the world.

More Bricks in the Wall

A key part of recent Israeli efforts to strengthen their control in the last year has been what the Israelis call the "security fence", called the Berlin Wall or the "apartheid wall" by the Palestinians. The wall is up to nine metres high (30 feet) and slices deep into the West Bank, cutting off tens of thousands of Palestinians behind it and forcing them to go through Israeli checkpoints to get to their farms, jobs and schools. While Sharon says that it is only to keep out suicide bombers and is not intended in any way to mark out a more permanent border, the unanimous opinion of the Palestinians is that is

exactly what it is for.

The wall has brought fierce condemnation internationally - giant, heavily patrolled walls like this where trespassers can be shot on sight are supposed to be the work of totalitarian suppressors of democracy, not governments like Israel's that the US touts as being the "only democracy in the Middle East". The US government issued some mild criticisms of the wall, but then vetoed a UN Security Council resolution denouncing the wall, and when a resolution was then brought before the UN General Assembly the US was one of only four countries that voted against it. The next day, Israel announced it would ignore the UN resolution.

Israel has used the wall and its pervasive infrastructure of control and repression to even further drive down living conditions in Palestine in recent years. In 2003, a Parliamentary commission from Britain visited Palestine. There has been strong sentiment among some members of the British Parliament that it had been toyed with by Bush and Blair and that the road map was a sop tossed out to undercut opposition to the war moves of the US and UK governments, who had no real intention of forcing Israel to make any concessions to the Palestinians. The commission delivered a damning denunciation of the Palestinian people's living conditions.

The report blames the security wall as well as Israeli incursions, curfews, checkpoints and other restrictions for strangling the Palestinian economy. It notes that unemployment has shot up to nearly 70 per cent, and that there has been a serious decline in living standards, resulting in malnutrition levels as bad as found in sub-Saharan Africa. "What makes the poverty so unpalatable," the report says, "is the level of deprivation vis-à-vis Israel, and the awareness that it is not the results of natural calamity but of deliberate action on the part of the government of Israel." The report points out that one particularly "emotive" practice is Palestinian

ambulances being held up for long periods at checkpoints. The members of parliament go on to say: "It is hard to avoid the conclusion that there is a deliberate Israeli strategy of putting the lives of ordinary Palestinians under stress as part of a strategy of bringing the population to heel."

As Israel subjects the Palestinians to unprecedented levels of oppression, the US carries on feeding the Zionist military machine the arms and money indispensable to its bloody functioning. The US State Department has just asked Congress to approve \$2.2 billion in military aid for Israel in 2005, up by \$60 million from 2004. The US has also agreed to an extra \$9 billion in loan guarantees over three years to bail out the Israeli economy. Overall Israel receives nearly 40 per cent of total US military and economic foreign aid.

Sharon's Trojan Horse

As *AWTW* goes to press, Ariel Sharon has just announced that his government plans to pull Jewish settlements out of the Gaza Strip. Liberal commentators, including the *New York Times*, *Le Monde* and many others, are arguing that Sharon's initiative should be welcomed and efforts should be focused on ensuring that this is only the "first step" in a more general Israeli pullback from the West Bank too - that, in effect, this announcement could initiate the "land for peace" trade that has been the cornerstone of all imperialist-sponsored peace plans for the region.

Whatever comes of this initiative, it is clear that the Israeli ruling class has no more intention of abandoning the entire West Bank after Gaza than it does of continuing in the same vein to ultimately abandon Israel itself. Raising this as the *New York Times* and many other imperialist liberals have done prettifies what is in fact nothing but an Israeli trap. To accept Sharon's gambit would require ignoring everything else Israel has been up to in recent years, with the US's full backing.

The much more likely goal of this initiative is to give up the tiny

settlements in Gaza - the 7,500 settlers in far-flung, isolated settlements in poor areas that are expensive and difficult to defend - in order to grab a big chunk of the far more strategic and valuable West Bank, with its 210,000+ settlers. There is every reason to think that the Israeli rulers will try to impose an arrangement, unilaterally if necessary, that would retrench the West Bank settlements behind the security wall and set up a rump Palestinian micro-state on the remaining land in the West Bank and Gaza. "Gaza First" might well prove to mean "Gaza Only". After all, do *Le Monde* and the *New York Times* really believe that the Israelis do not intend for this 600-700 kilometre-long wall built at a cost of \$1.4 million per km to function as an actual border wall? This would leave the Israelis with a large chunk of the West Bank and at least most of the Jewish settlements there, which are decisively positioned to control the water and transport system of the entire area. As for the Palestinians, they would be imprisoned in what's left of their own land, behind giant walls surrounding Gaza and what remains of the West Bank, with Israeli-held territory separating the two. The original partition of British Mandate Palestine in 1948 by the UN gave Israel 50 per cent of the territory and the Palestinians 50 per cent. After the war immediately following partition and then the occupation in 1967 of the West Bank and Gaza, Israel held 78 per cent of Mandate Palestine. Taking the West Bank portion behind the security wall would give Israel between 80 and 85 per cent of the land. The Palestinians would have the bitter consolation of being granted what Sharon has infamously called "the attributes of a state" - meaning little more than a national flag and a song to go with their South African apartheid-style bantustan.

Unilaterally imposing this kind of arrangement on the Palestinians would be a desperate move on the Israelis' part, and in a certain sense it would be an admission of the impotence of the Israelis and their

imperialist backers. From the late 1980s when the Palestinian struggle exploded from the refugee camps into the mass battle of the First Intifada, Israel and the US have calculated that to put an end to the Palestinian resistance they had no choice but to try to come to some sort of an arrangement with a compliant Palestinian authority. This has been the underlying logic of the Madrid and Oslo agreements, and then the road map.

It is possible, however, that the Israelis will risk a unilateral move. On the one hand, they seem to feel that there are some factors in their favour, including a certain momentum that the US imperialists have built off the occupation of Iraq and the consequent pressure they have been able to bring to bear on Syria's Assad and the Iranian mullahs. At the same time, the Israeli rulers are facing a number of increasing difficulties. Jewish immigration has plunged in the wake of the Second Intifada to its lowest level in 15 years, tourism has collapsed, the economy is suffering, and there are even certain cracks appearing in the seemingly monolithic Israeli military, as hundreds of reservists and some officers have refused to do their service in the Occupied Territories.

The last year has seen rising support in Israeli ruling circles to unilaterally "separate" from the Palestinians and pull back behind "defensible borders", leaving the Palestinians some form of "mini-state". This was a major plank in the 2003 Labour Party presidential elections. Sharon, despite his long-time identification with and support for Zionist expansion into all of Palestine, has long favoured a mini-state solution, which is why two years ago he fought the Likud Party resolution pushed by former Prime Minister Netanyahu opposing such a state. It is also clear that what redeems the road map in Sharon's eyes is phase two, which calls for establishing an "interim" Palestinian state in just under half the West Bank. Sharon might well intend to entrench Israeli forces, including the

illegal settlements, behind the security fence, leave the Palestinians to establish a rump state in Gaza and roughly half the West Bank, and then Sharon can proclaim that he has complied with phase two of the road map, and make sure that this "interim" solution is actually "permanent".

The difficulty the imperialists and Zionists are having in achieving some kind of settlement in Palestine that puts an end to the violent conflict there is of course fundamentally rooted in the fact that their cause is unjust - but there is more to it than that. For in today's world, every ruling class cause is unjust... but not every ruling class faces the unrelenting onslaught of resistance that the Zionists face every day. The situation of the Palestinians represents in many ways a concentration of the crimes of imperialism - the uprooting of an entire people from their land, their expulsion from their homes to a life in refugee camps, the development of the settler colonial state into the chief armed outpost of Western imperialism in the region, where a few million European settlers lord it over tens of millions of Arabs.

Anyone anywhere who has ever been ripped off, bullied and mistreated, who has ever tasted the lash of the oppressor's whip or been forced to watch in impotent fury as their brothers and sisters were humiliated and scorned by armed oppressors, looks at Palestine and sees their own condition stripped naked and bare for the whole world to see. The refusal of the Palestinians to give in, despite what sometimes look like overwhelming odds, inspires millions to look anew at their own situation, sometimes seeing possibilities for resistance where they previously thought none existed.

Today, the Palestinian people are facing perhaps the most intensive all-around assault on their existence in their history. The Zionists and imperialists hope they have ground the Palestinians down so far that they will welcome, or at least acquiesce to, having any kind of Palestinian state at all, even a runt state run by a corrupt

clique of compradors in less than a quarter of their original homeland.

But the Zionists have never known peace, and they will not now. At the heart of the problem they face is the fact that theirs is an oppressive settler colonial state erected on another people's land, and the sons and daughters of that original refugee population, numbering some 10 million today, still harbour a deeply felt dream of reclaiming their homeland - and this is especially true of the millions still in refugee camps. However much Arafat may have wanted to reach an agreement with Israel's Labour Prime Minister Barak at Taba in 2000, and regardless of the exact percentage of the Occupied Territories that Israel actually put on the table, Arafat knew - just as do the imperialists themselves - that any agreement that signs away the right to return of the refugees and formalises the subordination of the Palestinian people in a mini-state could never bring peace. This, ironically, is one of the reasons why Sharon might proceed in a more unilateral fashion - it would be a way the Israelis could enable feudal and comprador elements to finally have

the mini-state they crave so much, without being publicly forced to sign away the right of return of the Palestinians still in refugee camps, and a way to accept conditions that amount to an abject capitulation.

The forces the Palestinian people confront today are daunting, and they still lack the leadership they need to actually move ahead to defeat their enemy on the battlefield - yet no one doubts that they will continue their struggle, and that the world's oppressed will stand shoulder to shoulder with them.

The struggle of the Palestinian people powerfully illustrates the truth of Mao Tsetung's summation that, "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." ■

Remembering An of

By J.S.

Reproduced from the Revolutionary Worker, voice of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA, No. 1215, 12 October 2003, posted at www.rw.org in English and Spanish.

Edward Said - outstanding public intellectual, eloquent exponent of the Palestinian people, and erudite theoretician - died on 24 September at age 67. Even representatives of the powers that be in the world today, who had attacked or sought to undermine him in life, were forced to mark his passing with prominent obituaries. On the other side, voices from oppressed nations, particularly Palestinians and other Arab peoples, responded to his death with accounts of how much he had meant to them.

Edward Said was born in Jerusalem to a well-to-do Palestinian family that was forced into permanent exile, along with hundreds of thousands of other Palestinians, by *al-Nakbah* - "the catastrophe" of aggression, terror and dispossession that surrounded the founding of the Israeli state in 1948. Coming to the United States as a student in the early 1950s, Said remained in this country, like many from the Third World, for most of the rest of his life. With a PhD from Harvard and appointment as a professor of comparative literature at Columbia University, he had a secure and prestigious niche in academic life - a security he was willing to risk again and again as he came to see the necessity of standing up against lies and oppression, against the depredations of imperialism and Zionism and the discourse that seeks to justify and rationalise it.

Subscribe to A WORLD TO WIN

■ English Language Edition:

Please send your name, postal address, cheque and the issue number with which to begin your subscription, to one of the following addresses:

- South Asian subscriptions, Rs. 80 for four issues, write to:
A World to Win, A K S, Post Box 9288, Laxmi Nagar, Delhi 110092, India
- North American subscriptions, write to:
A World to Win, North American Distributors, c/o Revolution Books, 9 West 19th Street, New York, New York 10011, USA.
- All Other Areas £12.00 for four issues, write to:
A World to Win, 27 Old Gloucester Street, London WC1N 3XX, UK.

■ Spanish Language Edition

Current and most back issues available.

Contact: Juan López Pérez, Apdo. 21-098. Coyoacan, 04021 México, D.F. México.

■ Italian Language Edition (from issue 27)

Materiali, C.P. 2290 TA/5, 74100 Taranto, Italy

■ Hindi Edition (from issue 25)

Contact: A K S, Post Box 9288, Laxmi Nagar, Delhi 110092, India

■ Other Language Editions

Most issues of A World to Win are available in Farsi and Turkish. Selected issues or articles are available in Arabic, Bangla, French, German and Italian.

Edward Said: Extraordinary Citizen the World

Take the famous “stone-throwing incident” of three years ago, for example. On a trip to southern Lebanon, Said had thrown “stones of celebration” across the border with Israel, and toward an Israeli guardhouse. This was the border that had only recently been re-established, after Israel had been forced to withdraw from its occupation of southern Lebanon. It was a highly fitting gesture of solidarity in defiance of Israeli armed might – and thus bound to set off reactionaries in this country, who demanded that this distinguished scholar and teacher be fired from his post at Columbia (and during his career Said received numerous death threats). The attempts to remove Said from his academic position were defeated and he continued teaching up to the time of his death.

But the whole incident – tipping his hat to the stone-throwing youth of Palestine – was the kind of surprising gesture that revealed Said’s deep connection to the new generations. Known for his scholarship and literary criticism of such authors as Jane Austen, Joseph Conrad and Albert Camus, Said’s passions ranged in many directions, such as a recent introduction for Joe Sacco’s graphic novel *Palestine* – where Said discussed the subversive value of comics that defy “the ordinary processes of thought”.

Edward Said was a public intellectual. He was an engaged and committed intellectual. And his life is an example of some of the best that intellectuals are capable of, as thinkers who range themselves

against the established powers and on the side of the people of the world. This is the sort of person, and role, that the proletariat values and honors.

In his most famous and innovating book, *Orientalism*, Said traces out the ways in which notions of the Orient or “the East” came to be formed in the West, and how the profession of “orientalist”, or intellectual who “knows” the area and its peoples, from Middle East to Far East, came to be. He shows how these concepts were constructed as part of European imperialism’s conquests in the modern era, beginning with Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt in 1798 (in which his 3,400 troops were accompanied by a thousand civilian administrators, surveyors, economists, biologists – even artists and poets).

The imperialists had to study the lands and peoples in order to control them. But the knowledge they gained was infected by their aims of domination. The people and institutions there became a vast Other, seen as passive, sensual and ignorant, in contrast to the active, cerebral and knowledgeable West. In short, the image of the “lazy, ignorant native” is constructed, who must be ruled and guided, and whose “exotic” customs and superstitions are to be studied and classified by the superior and scientific West.

This representation of the peoples of “The East” is a kind of false knowledge. But it serves a purpose – not only (and not mainly) to make the imperialist feel superior, but to build a whole discourse of domination, so that what counts as knowledge is interwoven with the structures of power. As Said puts it, “The hold

these instruments have on the mind is increased by the institutions built around them. For every Orientalist, quite literally, there is a support system of staggering power, [which] culminates into the very institutions of the state. To write about the Arab Oriental world, therefore, is to write with the authority of a nation, and not with the affirmation of a strident ideology but with the unquestioning certainty of absolute truth backed by absolute force.”

From the late 1960s onward, it was this sort of interrelation of knowledge and power that claimed Said’s attention as a literary and cultural theorist. This coincided with a turn toward greater involvement in the political struggle of the Palestinian people and in the political leadership of the Palestinian movement. The event that brought Said into political life was Israel’s aggressive attack and conquest of the West Bank in 1967 (the “Six Day War”). His next book was *The Question of Palestine*, and in the 1970s he became a member of the Palestine National Council, the “parliament in exile”, as it was often called. Over the next 30 years, he came forward as one of the most articulate and visible public exponents of the Palestinian struggle in the US, writing and speaking on the subject on innumerable occasions. He also wrote a column for the Egyptian weekly *Al Ahrām*, which circulated throughout the Arab world.

The Palestinian struggle has gone through several stages, and one of the most important was inaugurated with the beginnings of the First Intifada in

1988 – mass struggle, under the guns of the Israeli army, against occupation, domination and dispossession. It brought joy to the hearts of the oppressed everywhere, and great consternation to Israel and the rulers of the US, who opened up negotiations with Yasser Arafat and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), something which they had previously refused to do. As negotiations proceeded, Edward Said saw that Arafat was capitulating to the US, and in 1991 he resigned from the Palestine National Council.

When an agreement was signed two years later, which gave token power to a Palestinian Authority in constricted areas of the West Bank and Gaza (the "Oslo Accord"), he rightfully denounced it as "an instrument of Palestinian surrender", which had turned "a national liberation movement into a small-town government". While continuing to voice his principled critique, Said continued his advocacy of the Palestinian struggle for national self-determination.

Edward Said's writings are notable, not just for the positions that he advocated, but for a kind of characteristic combination of political commentary and literary-cultural criticism, couched in a direct and personal style. His was the world of the humanistic scholar and intellectual, to whom, in the old saying, nothing human can be alien, and for whom the human mind becomes a finely tuned instrument for understanding and precise assessment. This is at the opposite pole from those intellectuals, inside the universities and out, who have sold their brains to the highest bidder, retreated into a narrow sphere, or put their minds in the service of power and reaction.

Said described himself as a humanist, and he had a particular interpretation of this broad philosophical outlook. "By humanism", he says, "I mean first of all attempting to dissolve [poet William] Blake's mind-forg'd

manacles so as to be able to use one's mind historically and rationally for the purposes of reflective understanding. Moreover humanism is sustained by a sense of community with other interpreters and other societies and periods.... This is to say that every domain is linked to every other one, and that nothing that goes on in our world has ever been isolated.... We need to speak about issues of injustice and suffering within a context that is amply situated in history, culture, and socio-economic reality."

Edward Said deployed his humanism against religious orthodoxy. He was a strong advocate of secularism. He opposed theocratic, or religious-based, movements, societies, and states: whether they were Zionist, Islamic or Christian. He opposed what he considered to be any dogma that squelched open communication and criticism. At the same time, Said's humanism and his belief that critical thought and science could lead to a deeper understanding of the world, and that the role of the intellectual was to help advance human freedom and knowledge, placed him in opposition to various "postmodernist" philosophies – those that say that truth and freedom and moral judgement are purely localised and relative concepts that do not have the sort of universal meaning and value that Said saw in them.

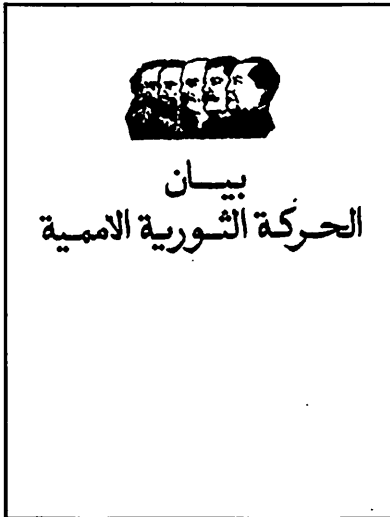
In his book *Representations of the Intellectual*, Edward Said elaborated on the social, political and moral responsibility of the intellectual, and on his concept of the intellectual as an oppositional figure. He offered this challenge to the intellectual: "No one can speak up all the time on all the issues. But, I believe, there is a special duty to address the constituted and authorized powers of one's own society, which are accountable to its citizenry, particularly when those powers are exercised in a manifestly disproportionate and immoral war, or in a deliberate program of discrimination, repression, and collective cruelty."

Such noble concerns, and a burning rage against injustice, marked Said all through his life, including the final 12 years as he struggled against cancer. In the past two years, as the rulers of this country began their moves toward a war on the world and police state at home, a group of activists, intellectuals and artists prepared a response, the Not In Our Name Statement of Conscience, declaring, "Let it not be said that people in the United States did nothing when their government declared a war without limit and instituted stark new measures of repression." Edward Said was an early and enthusiastic signatory of the statement, and he urged others to sign it as well.

A man of broad culture and interests, one of Edward Said's great loves was opera and classical music. An accomplished pianist, he also wrote musicology and music criticism. This shared passion brought him together with Daniel Barenboim, the prominent pianist and conductor, and together they founded the West-East Divan, a forum for Arab and Israeli musicians, and one of Said's final publications was a book on music co-authored by the two of them. In a tribute after his death Barenboim remarks on the way in which Said "was not only at home in music, literature, philosophy, or the understanding of politics, but also he was one of those rare people who saw the connections and the parallels between different disciplines.... He saw in music not just a combination of sounds, but he understood the fact that every musical masterpiece is, as it were, a conception of the world."

We also celebrate this breadth and deep perception of interconnections in a vision of the world.

An outstandingly self-conscious public intellectual who combined a rich understanding and investigation of theory and culture with actions and words that supported and championed the people, all carried out with consistently critical intelligence: the proletariat honours Edward Said. ■



Arabic

The Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement

&

Long Live Marxism-Leninism-Maoism!

Signatories of the Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement and Participating Organisations in RIM:

- Ceylon Communist Party (Maoist)
- Communist Party of Afghanistan
- Communist Party of Bangladesh (Marxist-Leninist) [BSD(ML)]
- Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) (Naxalbari)
- Communist Party of Iran (Marxist-Leninist-Maoist)
- Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)
- Communist Party of Peru
- Communist Party of Turkey Marxist-Leninist
- Maoist Communist Centre of India
- Maoist Communist Party [Italy]
- Marxist-Leninist Communist Organisation of Tunisia
- Proletarian Party of Purba Bangla (PBSP) [Bangladesh]
- Revolutionary Communist Group of Colombia
- Revolutionary Communist Party, USA

In addition to the above list of participating parties and organisations of RIM, there are candidate participants of RIM in a number of countries struggling to form vanguard Marxist-Leninist-Maoist parties. A new edition of the Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement including Long Live Marxism-Leninism-Maoism! is now available in English and Spanish.

The Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement has been printed in over 20 languages: Arabic, Bangla, Chinese, Creole, Danish, English (2 editions, Indian and US), Farsi, French, German, Gujarati, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Kannada, Kurdish, Malayalam, Nepalese, Portuguese, Punjabi, Spanish (4 editions – Colombian, Peruvian, Spanish and US), Tamil and Turkish. Long Live Marxism-Leninism-Maoism! is also available in many of the above languages.

Order from:

BCM RIM, WC1N 3XX, London, UK
New Edition English and Spanish:
£2 (plus £1 postage)

Other languages:

Declaration £1.50 Long Live MLM £1 (plus £1 postage)

1 May 2003

An Emerging New Tide of World Revolution

The class-conscious proletarians and the revolutionary masses of all countries are celebrating May First this year under exceptional conditions. Throughout the world, the people are furious with the US imperialists for their brutal rape of Iraq and determined to settle accounts. Resistance in the early days of the war showed that the masses in Iraq were determined to fight. A people's movement of tens of millions stormed the world stage. But the sudden collapse of the Saddam regime has shown, yet again, that there can be no effective struggle against imperialism under the leadership of the reactionary classes. It is the great task of the proletariat, and to it alone, to unite and lead the people in revolutionary struggle aimed squarely at the imperialists and the reactionary rulers of every country.



Colombia

It is only the international proletariat, the class that stands opposite the imperialists on a world scale, whose interests lie in the complete destruction of the imperialist system, in the full liberation of all nations and in the creation of a society *without* classes and exploitation - communism. The enemy mouthpieces have been working overtime for many years to declare this vision and this mission an impossible and dangerous dream. But it is a dream that is rooted in the material conditions of the international proletariat itself, in its co-operative labour, its conditions of exploitation and its common struggle. It is a dream that must and does constantly fight to reassert itself, despite the mountains of distortions and lies, and continues to provide enthusiasm and a sense of direction and purpose. The truly dangerous deception is the strange idea that the problems of humanity could be solved without uprooting the capitalist system itself. A social system whose very motor is the exploitation of man by man, which breeds every kind of oppression and inequality, which has sacrificed many millions of people in its unjust wars of aggression and plunder - such a system can never be reformed.

The beneficiaries and protectors of this predatory world system will never listen to reason nor bow to the demands of the people, even when that will is expressed in an overwhelming and forceful way. In the mouths of the imperialists, words like "international law", "democracy", "consent of the governed" and "freedom", whether eloquently preached by Tony Blair, grunted by George Bush or even when translated into French or German, are nothing but decorations to cover over this naked reality.

The imperialists and reactionaries are a small minority and can only maintain their domination of the planet through their armies, police forces and intelligence services, not to mention their huge arsenals of weapons of mass destruction over which

they are so determined to keep a monopoly. The war on Iraq proved once again the truth of Mao Tsetung's words, "political power grows out of the barrel of a gun".

However strong the imperialists may appear, they are ultimately weak. Why? Because their exploitation, oppression, injustice and aggression make people all over the world hate them, including the people within their own countries.

The communist science and ideology, Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, is powerful, not only because it correctly analyses the world, but also because it corresponds to the interests of the majority of humanity. When communist understanding is grasped by the proletariat and the oppressed, it becomes a material force and can transform the world.

We repeat our call to look to the Himalayas, where we can see millions of the down-trodden standing up firearms in hand, taking political power for the immense majority of the people. Bit by bit Nepal is being transformed by People's War from a very backward country into a shining example of the future for the proletariat and oppressed of all countries. In Peru, Turkey, India, the Philippines and elsewhere Maoist revolutionaries persevere in holding high the banner of People's War.

The entire political and social framework in the Middle East has been shaken by the US imperialist invasion of Iraq. It is sure to be an even sharper arena of class struggle in the months and years to come. What is lacking now is the powerful presence of the genuine communist movement in most of the region.

South Asia is one of the important storm centres of world proletarian revolution. The hundreds of millions of people in India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh are suffering tremendously from the imperialist system and semi-feudal oppression. Unlike many other places in the world where the revolutionary energy of the masses finds no positive outlet, the existence of genuine Maoist parties is opening the way for a real revolutionary alternative in South Asia.

In Europe, North America, Japan and Oceania, possibilities for big advances in the class struggle are also coming into sharper focus. The powerful movement against the US aggression in Iraq gives a glimpse of the underlying discontent with the domination of the world by the monopoly capitalists even in the imperialists' own heartlands.

In Africa, disease and malnutrition is ravaging the people. The regimes of the petty tyrants who rule on behalf of their imperialist masters are weak, and conflicts and warfare have erupted in country after country. Today it is the people who are suffering from these wars for the right to loot and pillage, but these conditions show that the possibility for a wholly different kind of warfare for genuine liberation is also maturing.

The United States has long considered Latin America its "backyard", and it is easy to see the results of the neo-colonial domination of these countries and the subordination of their economic life to the Yankee masters. Under the dictates of the International Monetary Fund, hunger has arisen in once wealthy Argentina and the threat of deeper crisis and dislocation hangs over the whole region.

This is why a new tide of revolution is emerging all over the planet. The people want a different world, and they are increasingly determined to fight for it.

(Continued to page 43)

On the Struggle to Unite the Genuine Communist Forces

Throughout the history of the international communist movement the question of unity has been of paramount importance. Against powerful, well-organised enemies at both national and international level, the need for the unity of the working class and the oppressed masses under the leadership of a single vanguard constantly reasserts itself. The masses want the revolutionaries to unite and they often have difficulty understanding why they are not united. But despite the obvious need for unity and despite the wishes of the masses, unity has always been difficult to achieve. From the time of Marx and Engels until today, the international communist movement has been marked by repeated and fierce struggles. Indeed, it has only been through waging such struggles that the scientific ideology of the proletariat has been able to emerge and establish an identity different from the numerous other trends that spoke in the name of the working class and the oppressed and thereby serve as a basis for the unity of a vanguard party capable of uniting the great masses of the working people. At a time when the problem of uniting the vanguard communist forces is again emerging as an urgent task on both the international and national levels, we must have a firm grasp of the dialectical relationship between unity and struggle and how the unity of the communist movement is to be forged.

If we look to the origins of the Maoist movement itself, we can see that it was born out of a revolt against

all that was rotten within the communist movement of the time, what we know as revisionism, in which the words "communist" or "Marxist-Leninist" or even "internationalism" remain but are gutted of their essential revolutionary content: the fight to overthrow the dictatorship of the exploiting classes and establish in its place the rule (dictatorship) of the proletariat and the masses of the people as part of a protracted world-wide struggle to abolish class society all together.

It was the struggle waged by Mao himself against the revisionist leaders of the Soviet Union, who had seized power in the former workers' state of the USSR and restored capitalism, which laid the basis for the emergence of what became the Maoist movement. In China itself Mao's struggle against Soviet modern revisionism strengthened the ideological underpinnings of what was to be his most important contribution to the international proletariat—the waging of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR) and his thesis on continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. In this article we can only refer in passing to the tremendous achievements of the GPCR, the unprecedented unleashing of tens of millions of workers, peasants and revolutionary intellectuals to fight to restore those parts of the state that had been usurped by revisionists who sought to drag China back onto the road to capitalism.

Just as the October Revolution had before it, the GPCR sent shock waves

around the world. In country after country the revolutionary elements in the communist movement rallied around Mao and the banner of the GPCR. Everywhere these newly emerging forces faced the fierce opposition of the revisionists and had to fight an uphill battle. They were mainly young revolutionaries along with a relative handful of older veterans of the communist movement who had rebelled against the revisionist chieftains. Together, inspired by the tremendous revolutionary upheaval in China and fired with a sense of a rising world-wide battle against imperialism, they dared to struggle against the established wisdom of the modern revisionists who wrapped themselves in the guise of Marxism-Leninism but practiced compromise and conciliation with imperialism and reaction.

This great world-wide struggle against modern revisionism unfolded differently in each country. In the oppressed countries it often focused on the question of the road to power, on whether or not to adopt the basic path blazed by China of waging a protracted people's war in which the enemy's strongholds in the cities were surrounded from the countryside. The modern revisionists frantically opposed applying Mao's teachings to the revolutionary process in these countries. But the newly emerging revolutionary forces combated the revisionists both in practice and in a theoretical debate that concentrated the life-and-death questions that the "practical movement" faced. Even today we can hear the echoes of the hysterical howling of



Revolutionary youth took up Mao's banner and formed the Red Guards in 1966.

BELOW: Cover of 2003 publication done by the Belgian Workers Party (PTB) entitled "Chinese-style Socialism" jointly authored by the former East German ambassador to China and the head of the PTB's international department. It seeks to justify every major policy of the current revisionist Chinese rulers who have trampled on Mao's legacy and 20 years of socialist transformation.



the revisionists and opportunists at the infant steps the Maoist movement began to take to implement Mao's line of protracted people's war. In India, Charu Mazumdar launched the Naxalbari rebellion, which rightfully earned the label "Spring Thunder" for its electrifying effect on the revolutionary masses of that country. It spread the sparks of armed struggle and transformed the whole political landscape. In Turkey, Ibrahim Kaypakkaya not only developed a scathing critique of the errors of the

revisionists and opportunists in the communist movement of that country, but also boldly formed the first armed squads that spread panic among the revisionists and reactionaries and hope among millions of the oppressed. In Bangladesh, Siraj Sikdar was able to lead a grouping of Maoists to dive into the swirl of contradictions as the masses in former East Pakistan revolted against national oppression and the subsequent invasion of the Indian army. The newly formed Maoist party in Bangladesh, the PBSP, rapidly blossomed and placed the political programme of the proletariat—protracted people's war and new-democratic revolution—on the country's agenda. In the Philippines, José María Sison led the formation of the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army, which continues to fight against imperialism and reaction in the Philippines to this very day. In all these cases, as well as many others, we can see that it was through struggle that great unity was achieved. It was through struggle in the ideological arena linked to the political struggle for power that small numbers of people who the "learned" revisionists were quick to denounce as mere "sects" were able to quickly bring forward and unite thousands of revolutionaries and win the support of millions and millions of masses.

In a number of other countries as well the foundations of today's Maoist movement were linked to the advanced positions taken ideologically and politically by the forces at the time. In the United States, Bob Avakian, the leader of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA, played a vital role in winning a section of the revolutionary movement of that country to a Maoist position. In Peru, Abimael Guzman (Chairman Gonzalo) was waging a series of struggles against revisionism that was later to lead to the reconstruction of the Communist Party of Peru under a correct line and leadership. In Europe, important Maoist parties were formed and grew quickly in the ferment of turbulent times marked by such glorious

events as the May 1968 student and workers movement in France.

Unity-Struggle-Unity

The formation of the Maoist movement is an illustration of the laws of dialectical materialism. Mao Tsetung teaches us that it is the law of contradiction, the unity and struggle of opposites, that pushes forward every process whether it be in nature, society or people's thinking. The communist movement both internationally and in each country is no exception. The communist movement itself is a unity of opposites, a permanent battleground between the ideas and forces representing the proletariat and its long-term interests of seizing power and marching forward to communism, and those ideas and forces that would surrender or conciliate with imperialism and reaction and would abandon the goal of a communist world. This ongoing struggle of opposites goes through different waves and has different features according to the conditions of the class struggle in a particular country and internationally. From a quantitative point of view, most of the time this struggle takes place through discussion and debate within a unified party organisation, through criticism and self-criticism, through summation of revolutionary practice and through other forms in which right and wrong ideas are battled out and the communists, including those who have made mistakes, are united in a common viewpoint and policy.

From a qualitative viewpoint, however, Maoists recognise that it is the relatively rare periods of intense two-line struggle, when the very goals and outlook of the communist movement itself are called into question, that great leaps and ruptures take place compared with the more gradual change in "normal times". It is in periods such as Lenin's struggle against the revisionists of the Second International or Mao's fight against Soviet modern revisionism that the communist movement has had both the most to win and the most to lose. That such struggles will periodically break out on an international level

and in given countries is a law that cannot be avoided. And when such struggles do break out the ability of the communist leaders and cadres to recognise and fight for a correct ideological and political line will have a decisive impact on the future of the communist movement for many years or even generations.

The process of unity-struggle-unity in the communist movement is linked with and conditioned by the overall process of the world proletarian revolution. It is the class struggle itself that sets the stage and conditions the struggles in the communist movement. The battles waged by Lenin and Mao, for example, were not struggles that they chose to wage because it suited their fancy—these struggles were theoretical and ideological reflections of the intense battles that were shaping up in the world between the forces of imperialism and reaction on the one hand and the proletariat and oppressed on the other. The struggle that Lenin waged against the betrayers of the Second International was made essential by the explosion of the First World War, which placed the overthrow of the bourgeoisie as an immediate task on the agenda in a number of countries. The revisionists of the Second International were the representatives of the bourgeoisie within the ranks of the working class, basing themselves on those sections of workers (the "labour aristocracy") who enjoyed small privileges in return for their support for their "own" ruling class in its war against its imperialist rivals.

On the other hand, the great mass of workers were repulsed and horrified by the slaughter of the First World War, and they yearned for a revolutionary way out. But in most countries no leadership existed that was capable of representing the class interests of the masses of workers, gaining their adherence and leading them in battle against the bourgeoisie. In most countries, there were leaders or circles of revolutionaries fighting against the betrayers, and in Germany Karl Leibnicht and Rosa Luxemburg gave their lives leading the heroic Spartacus Rebellion, and remain hon-

oured to this day by the class-conscious international proletariat. Nevertheless, it must be noted that outside of Tsarist Russia the revolutionary forces were too unclear ideologically and too weak organisationally to lead the millions in assaulting the citadels of imperialism. Without the leadership of Lenin and the Bolshevik Party, there would have been no October Revolution and the Communist International could not have been formed at that time.

Likewise, events in the class struggle in China have had profound implications for the world proletarian movement. When Mao's line was overthrown in China after his death in 1976, China changed colour and hundreds of millions of workers and peasants were thrown back into capitalist hell, while a new bourgeoisie enriched itself in a frenzy of theft, corruption, dislocation and enslavement rarely equalled in human history. China was transformed from a fortress of the world proletarian revolution into one more link in the world-wide system of imperialism and reaction. The impact of this is still painfully felt today. Although Mao and the revolutionaries in China had ceaselessly warned of the possibility that the revisionists would capture China and had directly called upon the revolutionaries the world over to help the Chinese masses overthrow these revisionists if they were to come to power, the international Maoist movement reacted very unevenly to this great challenge. A great many parties and organisations actually supported the new leaders in China, as well as their charges that the so-called Gang of Four, who were actually Mao's closest supporters, were "ultra-left" splitters. Others lost confidence completely in Mao's line after the revisionist coup in China and used the attack on Mao Tsetung Thought (as Maoism was then called) by Enver Hoxha, the leader of the Albanian Party of Labour, as the signal to abandon Mao's precious developments of the proletarian science. Hoxha and his followers tried to resurrect tired old concepts of the past communist movement that the Maoists had long rejected (for exam-

ple, denying the validity of protracted people's war in the oppressed countries, denying Mao's criticisms of Stalin's metaphysics, etc.) And then there were others, the bulk of the previous Maoist movement, who found themselves leaderless and demoralised, unable to continue the revolutionary struggle in the face of such a crushing defeat and with a lack of confidence in the future of the world revolution.

Fortunately, a relatively small minority of the previous Maoist movement stood up to the pressure and fought back, using as their main weapon the teachings of Mao and the revolutionary headquarters in China. Many of these forces went on to form the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM) in 1984. RIM daringly declared itself the embryonic centre of the Maoist forces internationally and proclaimed its intention to go forward and fight for a Communist International of a new type. It too was initially attacked and derided by many in the revolutionary movement and ignored by some others who felt that political line was less important than the size or strength of the various forces. This same kind of pragmatism, of judging political positions by the force that they mustered at any given point, had led some Maoists to be confused about or even support the revisionists in China, which remained a powerful country, albeit no longer a socialist one except, occasionally, in words. But RIM and the parties making it up persevered and achieved some stunning advances in the class struggle at the very moment that world reaction was declaring its "final victory" over communism. The Communist Party of Peru (PCP), a founding member of RIM which had begun a People's War in 1980, made steady advances throughout the decade, to the point where the imperialists and reactionaries openly stated their fear at the prospect of a Maoist victory. The People's War in Peru suffered a "bend in the road" after the capture of Chairman Gonzalo in 1992 and the emergence of a right opportunist line in the Party shortly thereafter, which called for abandoning the war

in favour of peace accords. But the perseverance of the Party Central Committee on the path of people's war despite the difficult conditions continued to inspire Maoists the world over and helped underscore the significance of the ideology and politics that RIM concentrated.

On the ideological front, RIM united in 1993 around the understanding of the proletarian ideology as Marxism-Leninism-Maoism (MLM). Some attacked RIM for "creating another division in the international communist movement". Others tried to downplay the importance of this development by saying that it was a mere change in words and not in political content, and they reflected this by using formulations like "Mao Tsetung Thought or Maoism" in which the two terms are treated as interchangeable. In fact, the adoption of Maoism by RIM expressed in the document *Long Live Marxism-Leninism-Maoism!* reflected a higher and more united understanding of our ideology than the international movement had been able to achieve up to that point.

The importance of this higher understanding was illustrated in practice when the comrades of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) (CPN(M)), a party that had been formed in close connection with the developments in the international communist movement and RIM itself, launched a People's War in 1996, which now has the whole country ablaze with revolution.

In order for the CPN(M) to start the People's War, it had been necessary to settle accounts with the views of M.B. Singh, a long-time leader of the Nepal Maoist movement. Singh had led the struggle in RIM against the adoption of Maoism and, as part of this revisionist position, had declared it impossible to wage protracted people's war in Nepal unless revolution succeeded first in neighbouring India. The organisational split between M.B. Singh and those who later went on to play the central role in forming the CPN(M) actually dated from 1986 with the division of the then Nepal Communist Party (Mashal) into two centres (one called

the "Central Committee" and the other the "Central Organising Committee"). Cadres and members sensed that under the leadership of Singh no revolution could take place. Nevertheless, at those early stages a thorough political and ideological critique of Singh had not yet been developed, and so the division of the Mashal party did not develop into a full-scale two-line struggle at that time. It was only later, as the political and ideological questions became clarified in Nepal, and in conjunction with developments in the international movement as well, that it became possible to carry out what the CPN(M) later summed up as the repudiation of the "M.B. Singh school of thought". As this critique developed step-by-step the negative effects of disunity based on a still unclear political basis were overcome, more forces were united in a single party centre and the basis was laid for unity on a scale never before seen in Nepal. For it was the consolidation of the Party around Maoism and the thorough repudiation of the "M.B. Singh school of thought" that opened the door for the initiation of the People's War on 13 February 1996. Lenin had pointed out decades ago that the political role played by the different forces in the workers' movement in Russia during the period of crisis and revolution had been foreshadowed by the political struggles that took place among the revolutionaries themselves years earlier. The debates of a relatively small number can, under the conditions of revolutionary upheaval, graphically reveal the opposing interests of different classes. In Nepal, when the MLM line led to the initiation and advance of the People's War, political questions that were formerly restricted to relatively small circles of leaders and activists became questions for the broad masses as a whole, and the living reality of a correct political and ideological line was more easily seen. This also led large numbers of cadres and supporters of wrong lines to be won over to the MLM position and to make important contributions to the ongoing revolution. Thus it can be seen that

struggle (or disunity) with M.B. Singh was necessary for building the most important unity of all—the unity between the genuine communists and the broad masses of the working class, peasantry and revolutionary intellectuals who need a revolutionary solution to the problems of Nepalese society. And, once again, the universal truth that unity is the fruit of struggle was illustrated.

Today Marxism-Leninism-Maoism has become the rallying cry of the genuine communist forces the world over. It can be seen that far from being a factor for split and disunity, the adoption of Maoism by RIM is serving as a pole of regroupment and unity in specific countries and on a world scale.

**“One Divides into Two”
or “Two Combines into One”?**

One of the great contributions of Mao Tsetung was his further development of dialectical and historical materialism. In particular, Mao focused on the unity and struggle of opposites as the central law of dialectics, and he brilliantly applied this to socialist society, the building of the party, political economy, revolutionary warfare and other areas. As we have seen, a deep grasp of how the law of dialectics applies to the process of forming and strengthening a vanguard party is vital.

One of the important arenas of theoretical struggle in China was on the philosophical front. Mao had to fight sharply against the leader of the Chinese revisionists, Liu Shao-chi, who was later overthrown in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR), and against Liu's main representative in the philosophical field, Yang Hsien-chien. In 1963, at the very time Mao was launching open polemics against Khrushchev and the revisionists of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Yang argued that “all things invariably combine two into one”. (See *Peking Review* 22 Jan 1971 and 23 April 1971 for a more detailed review of this debate.) He argued that “analysis means ‘one divides into two’ while synthesis means ‘combine

two into one’.”

In order for the struggle against revisionism to develop in China and on a world scale it was necessary for Mao to vigorously refute this thesis. He reaffirmed that: “All things invariably divide into two”; “In society as in nature, every entity invariably breaks up into its different parts, only there are differences in content and form under different concrete conditions.” (“Speech at the Communist Party of China's National Conference on Propaganda Work”, cited in *Three Major Struggles on China's Philosophical Front (1949-1964)*, Foreign Language Press, Peking, p. 58.)

The revolutionaries in the Communist Party of China (CPC) argued that, “Marxist philosophy tells us that analysis and synthesis are an objective law of things and at the same time a method for people to understand things. Analysis shows how an entity divides into two different parts and how they are locked in struggle; synthesis shows how, through the struggle between the two opposite aspects, one prevails, defeats and eliminates the other, how an old contradiction is resolved and a new one emerges, and how an old thing is eliminated and a new thing triumphs. In plain words, synthesis means one ‘eats up’ the other....

“Analysis and synthesis are closely connected. There is synthesis in analysis and analysis in synthesis....

“The process of summing up our experience is also one of analysis and synthesis. By undertaking various kinds of struggles in social practice, men have accumulated rich experiences, some successful and some not. In summing up experience, it is necessary to distinguish the right from the wrong, affirm what is correct and negate what is wrong. This means, under the guidance of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, reconstructing the rich data of perception obtained from practice, ‘discarding the dross and selecting the essential, eliminating the false and retaining the true, proceeding from the one to the other and from the outside to the inside,’ raising perceptual knowledge to the level of rational knowledge and grasping the inherent

laws of a thing. The movement of opposites—one divides into two—runs throughout this process. With the experience summed up in this way, we are able to uphold the truth and correct our mistakes, ‘popularise our successful experience and draw the lessons from our mistakes’.” (“The Theory of ‘Combine Two Into One’ Is a Reactionary Philosophy for Restoring Capitalism”, *Peking Review*, 23 April 1971.)

The above passage, written in the heat of the GPCR, stands the test of time and serves as a good guide to us now, as we seek to make a great advance in building the unity of the communists in individual countries and on a world scale. While on the surface it may appear that the unity of the communists from different organisations will come about through the combination of “two into one” this view fails to grasp the essence of the process through which a new thing comes into being. Synthesis will represent a new unity, but as the above passage argues, synthesis cannot be confused with “combing two into one”. Synthesis is the result of struggle and transformation by which one contradiction or set of contradictions is resolved and a new contradiction emerges.

In connection with the struggle of “one divides into two” versus “two combines into one” the comrades of the CPC sharply criticised the theory of “seeking common points”. By this we refer to the argument of Liu Shao-chi, Yang Hsien-chen and others, of seeking “common points” between opposites, such as capitalism and socialism and the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Indeed, if we look only on the surface and not at the essence we can find many so-called “common points” between Marxism and revisionism. Don't the revisionists also claim to represent the proletariat, to favour socialism and even communism? Don't the revisionists also claim to oppose imperialism? But if we use our MLM understanding to look beneath the surface we can see that revisionism and Marxism are implacable enemies contending on every point.

Unity must be seen as the product

of struggle and synthesis, a leap through which is formed a new entity based on a new contradiction, and most definitely not as a product of "negotiations" based on discovering "common points" while disregarding cardinal points of struggle. There are many examples in the history of the communist movement, recent and past, that illustrate that an approach to unity based on discovering "common points" will never be successful and in fact will be harmful to the advance of the movement.

If we go back to the formation of the Communist International itself, we can see that Lenin fought hard to include as many forces as possible, but he did so without compromising on the fundamental questions of the day. Specifically, he insisted that members of the Communist International break with revisionist misleaders, and he vigorously combated every attempt to conciliate with them under the guise of unity.

There are also important examples from our more recent past that illustrate this point. We referred earlier to the content of the rebellion led by Ibrahim Kaypakkaya against the revisionists in Turkey, including those who were trying to masquerade as supporters of Mao and revolutionary China (the Shafak revisionists who, not surprisingly, supported the counter-revolutionary coup in China and whose principal leader, Perencek, continues to this day to be a sworn enemy of the revolutionary movement in Turkey and even calls for unity with the reactionary ruling classes). The struggle by Kaypakkaya led to a new unity, the TKPML, which quickly galvanised hundreds of thousands and even millions of supporters in the country. But like any unity, it too was marked by struggle, and the subsequent martyrdom of Kaypakkaya and the setbacks in the armed struggle he initiated led to new struggles in the TKPML over how to sum up revolutionary experience and what ideological and political line to implement.

It is not our purpose here to review in detail the history of this struggle (some of this can be found in *AWTW* 2000/28, "Open Letter to the

TKP/ML", as well as in *AWTW* 2002/29 in the Congress documents of the Maoist Communist Party [Turkey and North Kurdistan] (MKP) formed out of the former TKP(ML)). As the leadership of the Maoist Communist Party has summarised, after the death of Kaypakkaya a strong opportunistic current existed in the TKPML for thirty years, especially focused on the questions of Mao's development of Marxism-Leninism to a whole new stage and on the validity of Kaypakkaya's analysis of protracted people's war as the path of revolution in Turkey. Because a correct ideological and political line was lacking, disunity was reflected on the organisational front. The Party was riddled with factionalism, indiscipline and splits.

Clearly the disunity of the communist vanguard forces weighed heavily on the masses in Turkey and on their struggle. Indeed, it is often the case that the masses can see only the disunity and the paralysis of the practical struggle, the surface reflections of the deeper problem of ideological and political line, since to go beneath the surface to the essence of the struggle between Marxism and revisionism requires MLM, which the broad masses do not and will not acquire spontaneously. And what is true for the masses is also true for the broad ranks of the members and fighters of the political party as well—unless they are well equipped in applying MLM (which was not generally the case in the TKPML at that period) they too will see the surface and not the essence, the problem of disunity and paralysis but not the deeper problem of the substance of the ideological and political line.

This was the general situation when several attempts were made to unite the major groupings of the TKPML into a single centre. One of the most important of these efforts was the formation of the Provisional United Central Committee (PUCC) in 1993. The PUCC, which brought together the largest portions of the TKPML, was met by great enthusiasm in the ranks of the members and supporters of the TKPML. (The TKP/ML (Maoist Party Centre) did

not participate in the PUCC.) But the PUCC was formed by negotiating "common points" between the existing centres that made it up. Even some of what seemed, on the surface, correct "common points", such as the adoption of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism as the party's ideology, were mere formalistic verbiage covering over the same previous misunderstanding about Maoism, in particular negating Mao's criticism of the mistakes of Stalin and his further development of the proletarian ideology. Other wrong positions of the past, and notably a harmful and incorrect evaluation of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, were also incorporated into the PUCC.

The results of this experience are worth noting. The PUCC was not at all able to meet the expectations of its members and supporters nor to give rise to a new wave of revolutionary struggle in Turkey. Instead the old factionalism, indiscipline, disunity and paralysis continued in new forms. Within a few short years a major split again took place within the Party. Because a correct line was not guiding the process of struggle and advance in the TKPML, the various splits and unifications that took place did not represent the same kind of process of "unity-struggle-unity" that takes place when a genuine MLM line is in command. In the case of the TKPML, a higher level of unity of the Party and a higher level of revolutionary practice were not achieved.

This situation began to change only in more recent years, as leaders and members of the TKP(ML) began a process of more thoroughly repudiating previous incorrect positions, summarising the past experience of the whole movement on the basis of MLM and, closely integrated into this process, uniting firmly with the international communist movement, especially RIM. Thus we can see in the struggle waged by the TKP(ML) and the TKP/ML (often called "Ozgur Gelecek") a difference from the sectarian squabbling of the past—genuine life-and-death questions of the Turkish movement were being addressed correctly and the

differences between the TKP(ML) and the TKP/ML were raised to the level of two-line struggle.

In Turkey, as elsewhere, the process of uniting all of the genuine communists in a single centre is not complete. There are certainly a great number of leaders, cadres, members and supporters of the present TKP/ML who can and should play an active role in a united vanguard party. The basis for completing this process on a correct basis, for bringing into being the "new unity" that a single vanguard party will certainly represent, will come through further radical rupture with the wrong understanding that is now more and more concentrated in the TKP/ML and reflected in its departure from the ranks of RIM and its adoption of other, erroneous centrist approaches to building the "unity" of the international communist movement. (Again see *AWTW* 2000/28, which addresses the TKP/ML's departure from RIM and its joining of a different alignment in the international movement.) Once again, repudiation and rupture with the incorrect ideological and political line are the key to unity and advance.

**Who are the Splitters?
Who Stands for Unity?**

History has also shown that it is always the genuine MLM forces that fight for unity and always the revisionists and opportunists that resort to factionalism, splits and intrigues. MLM parties and organisations are the constant arena of two-line struggle and, as we have argued, can at times be the site of extremely sharp internal battles, but if this process is guided by a correct MLM line and leadership it will result in greater unity within the party, between the leaders and the membership and, most importantly, between the party and the masses themselves.

On the other hand, bourgeois and reactionary political parties are the focus of a different kind of struggle—the struggle between persons and cliques for personal gain, for individual authority and prestige, even over shares of corruption. If

such parties are, for a certain period of time, able to maintain a façade of unity within their ranks, it is obedience that grows out of fear of reprisal, hope for reward, ignorance or even terror. At the first fissure, such parties will split apart and their leaders will tear each other apart like crabs caught in a net.

This is because bourgeois and reactionary parties do not and cannot represent the interests of the broad masses of the proletariat and oppressed and thus must always seek to confuse and deceive the masses, appeal to their most ignoble and backward sentiments, and try to exercise dictatorship over them. However strong the following of bourgeois and reactionary parties appear, they are certain, sooner or later, to face the judgement of the masses of people. History has proved this, time and again, in country after country.

When some political parties of the national bourgeoisie or petite bourgeoisie have, however halfheartedly, led struggle against the imperialists or domestic reactionaries, they claim the right to speak in the name of the whole people and are often able to achieve an important following, including, among the oppressed classes. But even in these kinds of situations the character of the bourgeoisie as an exploiting class is inevitably expressed. Such forces cannot rely wholeheartedly on the oppressed masses and cannot appeal to their highest interests. They always attempt to resort to appeals or compromises with ignoble and backward sentiments, including narrow nationalism, religious bigotry, the oppression of women and so on. If such parties come to power and compromise with the world imperialist system, whatever popular character they may have once represented is usually quick to evaporate, and these parties, too, become indistinguishable from other bourgeois and reactionary parties. (We can see this transformation clearly in the trajectory of the Kurdish nationalist forces in Iraq who began fighting for more rights for the Kurdish people but ended up as tools in the hands of the US imperialists in enslaving not only

the Kurds but all of the peoples of Iraq.)

When an MLM organisation departs from a correct revolutionary line, it is inevitable that revisionist ideology and politics will be reflected in the organisational sphere and that such parties will adopt features of bourgeois and reactionary parties.

Mao Tsetung summed this up brilliantly in his well-known "three dos and three don'ts": "Practice Marxism, not revisionism; unite, don't split; be open and aboveboard, don't intrigue and conspire." (See "Report on the Revision of the Constitution" of the Tenth Congress of the CPC.) The key is the first, to practice a correct MLM line. Those who depart from such a line cannot unite and inevitably split. Those who depart from Marxism are unable to be open and aboveboard and wage principled struggle for their point of view. Instead, they always resort to personal attacks, spread rumours and gossip, obscure the cardinal questions of line involved in the struggle, and concentrate on minor or secondary points. Once one departs from Marxism it is impossible to have confidence in the masses of the people and the masses of party members, and intrigues and conspiracy become the order of the day. Such people will always sacrifice the long-term interests of the international proletariat for the narrow and short-term interests of a minority. Fighting for the unity of the genuine communists, fighting for the unity between the party and the masses, is one of the permanent tasks of Marxist-Leninist-Maoists, who must be ever vigilant to avoid the style of work and forms of struggle of the bourgeois, reactionary and revisionist parties.

In the case of former MLM parties that have transformed qualitatively into revisionist parties, such parties are no different than other reactionary parties—when they hold political power the so-called democratic centralism and discipline of such parties is just a feature of the reactionary dictatorship exercised over the masses of the people, including the masses of party members. Today the Communist Party of China is a perfect example of

a bourgeois, reactionary and fascist party. Those who arrested thousands upon thousands of Mao's closest followers, including his widow Chiang Ching, who violently suppressed the revolutionary workers and peasants in order to seize political power, and who became known to the world in 1989 as the "butchers of Tiananmen Square"—this kind of party can never be "rectified" but must be overthrown by force like all other parties exercising reactionary dictatorships.

The Fight for Unity Is on the Agenda

There is a constant need for the unity of all the genuine communist forces in every country. But the need for unity and even the desire for unity is not always enough to carry through the struggle to achieve a single united vanguard. Once again, the key factor is the emergence of a correct Marxist-Leninist-Maoist ideological and political line capable of serving as a rallying centre for the great bulk of the genuine communist forces in a given country.

History has shown that the path through which such a correct line will emerge will vary greatly from country to country according to the different conditions and different histories of the communist movement. In Peru, for example, Chairman Gonzalo traced the development of the PCP as a direct outgrowth of a series of struggles going far back into the history of the communist movement of that country, struggles in which comrade Gonzalo played a central role in fighting against various forms of revisionism and opportunism. In Nepal, however, the formation of the CPN(M) followed a different path, and Comrade Prachanda was to sum up that the forces that were later to play the central role in the formation of the CPN(M) had not been the most correct of the communist forces at the earlier stages of the communist movement, such as in the 1970s.

The formation of a correct line in a given country is a protracted process that inevitably involves twists and turns, advances and set-

backs. And as we know, it is a never-ending process, as a correct line can never "stand still" but can only advance in continual struggle against what is incorrect and in continual interaction with the class struggle itself. It is also possible to fall into the error of seeking the "absolutely correct" line, and, since this mirage is by definition unobtainable, of using the "absence of a correct line" as a convenient excuse to avoid achieving the unity that can be achieved during a given period. Looking for the "absolutely correct" line is idealism and metaphysics, not materialist dialectics. It separates thinking from being, and theory from practice, and will lead to sectarianism and sterility. Communist leaders must be good at defining the crucial questions of ideological and political line facing the revolutionary movement and focus their attention on these points. While no important ideological and political struggle can be neatly wrapped up in a predetermined box—there are always many different aspects and fronts of struggle—it is nonetheless true that resolving the principal question or contradiction facing the movement at a given point is key to resolving secondary but important questions, such as style of work, correctly summing up lesser historical disputes in the movement, and so forth. As communists raise their ability to understand the key questions of ideological and political line, they will also be able to unite more firmly and not allow relatively minor matters to disrupt the unity process.

A great deal of experience has been accumulated in different countries and on a world scale. There have been great achievements throughout the history of our movement, and new ones are coming into being in this period, such as the great advances of the People's War in Nepal. But we know the international communist movement has suffered serious setbacks as well, including the loss in China from which we are still suffering. The recent period has also seen both advances and defeats in different countries. A correct line must be forged on the basis of sum-

ming up this rich experience of struggle and sacrifice, advance and retreat. This also means having a good understanding of the essential experience of the international proletariat as a whole, as summed up using Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, and of the experience of the struggle of the proletariat and the oppressed and the communist vanguard forces in each specific country.

In a number of countries, revolutionary experience has been achieved by different contingents of the communist forces, working apart. This is a particularly important feature of the communist movement in India, where, for reasons of the history of the communist movement, as well as the diversity and large size of India, different communist forces have been carrying out various forms of revolutionary struggle, including trying to develop people's war, in various corners of the country. Now the task of synthesising the combined experience of the communist movement in India, both in recent years as well as the great upsurge of the Naxalbari period, is coming sharply on the agenda. Such summation is also an important arena of struggle—what are the essential lessons to be upheld? What are the weaknesses to be overcome? As in other countries, the successful conclusion of this process, which can be nothing other than a single vanguard party following a correct MLM line and united in the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, will also come about through a process of leap and rupture. Those aspects of thinking and practice that have been clearly wrong will need to be repudiated, while the tremendous positive achievements of the communist movement in that country will need to be upheld and developed.

In India we can also see where efforts to unite the Marxist-Leninist-Maoists on the basis of "common points" has led to failure. In the late 1990s, a movement to unite a number of forces that made up part of the Indian MLM movement resulted in the formation of the Janashakti organisation. Its creation was met with enthusiasm from important sec-

tions of the fighters and supporters of the MLM movement. But this unity was false and hollow. It was based on negotiations to determine the "common points" that existed between the merging organisations. But these "common points" included, and indeed were based on, a continuation of a wrong summation of the Naxalbari movement led by Charu Mazumdar and actually represented a repudiation of that experience and those lessons. Not surprisingly, this opportunist unity, like so many others in the history of the international communist movement, was based on "combining two into one"—combining verbal support for the strategy of people's war with a line of building peaceful mass organisation as a "necessary" sub-stage, and combining illegal struggle with long-term participation in parliamentary politics. This kind of eclecticism, trying to put Marxism "on a par" with opportunism, will always mean that Marxism becomes mere window-dressing, while revisionist practice and orientation predominates. In the case of Janashakti, the unprincipled unity did not last long and burst like a soap bubble. The enthusiasm the unity had given rise to was replaced by an even deeper demoralisation. This does not mean that there is not much in the experience and understanding of Janashakti's members and leaders that can and must contribute to the formation of a genuine united Marxist-Leninist-Maoist vanguard party in India. But for this experience to be useful, for it to be really at the service of the people, the process of "dividing one into two", and specifically the process of criticising and repudiating opportunism and revisionism, is essential.

**On the International Line
of the Communist Party**

Every political party or organisation is guided by a stand, viewpoint and method. It is impossible for a party to apply one ideological and political line when it comes to making revolution in its own country and a different ideological and political line when it comes to the internation-

al movement. History has shown this time and again.

The formation of the communist parties and the adherence to the Communist International in the years immediately following the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 were part of a single process. Whether or not to support the dictatorship of the proletariat that had emerged out of Tsarist Russia was linked to whether to fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat in one's own country. Similarly, supporting Mao Tsetung's fight against revisionism and upholding the Cultural Revolution is a crucial and indispensable dividing line in every country between the genuine revolutionary communists and the different stripes of revisionists.

But we should remember that what seems so obvious today was bitterly fought over at the time. Between Lenin and the modern revisionists were a whole host of opportunists and centrists who tried to muddy the dividing lines in the name of the unity of the proletariat or simple pragmatism, the philosophy that "whatever works" is correct. As Mao was proclaiming "It's right to rebel" and leading an earth-shaking struggle against revisionism, some other influential forces, notably the Vietnam Workers Party, which at that time was leading the most important struggle in the world against US imperialism, were trying to return to a false "unity" of the international communist movement that embraced even the Soviet revisionist clique itself. No one can deny the great necessity the Vietnamese leadership faced in their confrontation with the US, and it is easy to imagine the arguments for diplomacy and compromise. But we can also draw lessons from the tragic betrayal that led to Vietnam remaining caught in the web of the imperialist world system even after the masses had fought so heroically and successfully against the world's most powerful imperialist enemy. Opportunism, pragmatism, centrism and revisionism in the international arena will also surely undercut, sap and ultimately destroy any revolutionary struggle being waged on the home front.

What was true in the past is no less true today. Inevitable disarray took place in the Maoist movement following the revisionist coup in China and, for a while, the different contingents of the international communist movement faced the need to advance separately. Some forces were more favourably situated than others to more quickly draw the lessons of the loss in China and its implications for the world movement. For the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, it is not a question of demanding special privileges merely because RIM was able to more quickly and decisively recognise the true nature of the Chinese revisionists and take up the obligation of fighting against them. As Mao put it so beautifully, "Come early or late, all who make revolution deserve equal treatment."

Unlike an earlier period when many communist forces were working separately, today virtually all the forces of the international communist movement are seeking to unite on an international level. The question is, with whom to unite, on what line, with what ideology and for what purpose? The attitude that one adopts to the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement is not a minor matter. It is not possible to be correct about the revolution in one's own country but be hostile or indifferent to RIM. On the contrary, an incorrect evaluation of RIM should be taken as an alarm and serve as an impetus to discover and root out those incorrect aspects of politics and ideology upon which such a misevaluation is based.

It is also noteworthy that groupings on an international level also tend to reflect the line that political parties follow in relation to the class struggle in their own countries. The parliamentary cretinism of the Belgian Workers Party (PTB) goes hand-in-hand with their efforts to erase the hard-fought lessons of the struggle against modern revisionism and "reunite" the communist movement on a completely opportunistic, anti-Maoist basis. The non-revolutionary programmes of the Marxist-Leninist Party of Germany, the Communist Party of Nepal (Mashal),

the Communist Party of India (Red Flag) and similar groups that are all joined in the International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organisations (ICML) are the "glue" that holds this amalgam together. Nor is it possible to forever keep one foot in the revolutionary camp whilst refusing to break with the revisionists and opportunists.

We can see that the existence of RIM is creating a more favourable environment for the unity of the genuine Maoist forces at the national level as well as the international level. This has been clear in Afghanistan, for example, where the genuine MLM forces have been rallying to strengthen the Communist Party of Afghanistan. In India, RIM issued a call to stop the armed clashes that were going on between the two most important Maoist groups of that country. At the time there were those who dismissed the initiative taken at the 1999 South Asia Regional Conference of RIM Parties and Organisations as "useless" or even as unwelcome interference. Now it is impossible for anyone to deny the positive and important role this call played in helping stop the clashes and bringing about a more positive atmosphere in the Maoist movement of that country. (The South Asia Regional RIM Conference in 1999 issued a call reprinted in *AWTW* 2000/26.)

Does this mean that RIM alone contains the Maoist forces, and all others outside it are not Maoist? Obviously such an argument would be ridiculous. There are important Maoist organisations outside RIM who need and must play a vigorous role in uniting the genuine communists on both the national and international levels. As we have stated from our foundation, RIM's goal is its own replacement by a Communist International of a new type. This will represent a synthesis, a new contradiction, on a qualitatively higher level than we have experienced up until now. The question is whether to advance further based on the achievements of RIM and others in erecting a genuine MLM pole internationally, or whether to believe that the first task is to liquidate

RIM's role as an embryonic center and replace it with an eclectic and ineffectual talk shop, mixing Maoists and opportunists, or with some other ineffectual form. The question facing every genuine communist force is whether to support the process of uniting the genuine MLM forces wholeheartedly or lag behind and demand that others do likewise. It is whether to unite on the basis of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism or whether politics and ideology should be subordinated to other considerations such as temporary strength. (We continue to be amazed that some notorious revisionist forces such as the FARC in Colombia are still considered important "Marxist-Leninist" forces by some in the Maoist movement!) "Supporting wholeheartedly" or "lagging behind" the process of uniting the genuine MLM forces internationally is a vital question of line. It is one that cannot be swept under the carpet, especially when it is intertwined with the problem of the formation of a single vanguard party in a given country.

Today the "wind of unity" is spreading and bringing hope to the revolutionary-minded people in many countries. The great battles looming on the horizon demand that the communist forces make great efforts to overcome their shortcomings and consolidate a unity that represents something higher, more solid and more correct than what exists today. The struggle to achieve the unity of the Maoists will not be simple, but then revolution never is. By redoubling our efforts and being fearless in discarding what is wrong and upholding what is correct, it is possible to take important steps forward in uniting the genuine communists on both the national and international levels.

The full text of "The Theory of 'Combine Two into One' is a Reactionary Philosophy for Restoring Capitalism" will appear on *A World to Win's* web site www.awtw.org. ■

May Day

(Continued from page 33)

This makes the formation of Marxist-Leninist-Maoist vanguard parties all the more urgent and crucial. Where such parties do not exist, they must be formed. Where they do exist, they must be strengthened so as to fulfil their revolutionary tasks. And these parties must be united in a new Communist International, toward which the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement is an important first step.

The battles of the last few months are only a taste of what is to come. The US imperialists are driven to pursue their mad gamble of trying to violently reshape the world and sink their fangs ever deeper into the necks of the people. But the people in all countries have not and will never tolerate such a future. New storms of resistance are inevitable. However strong the imperialist enemy may be, our strength in our hundreds of millions is potentially much greater. The arrogance of the class enemy can never conceal that they are fighting desperately to defend an outmoded system fit only for the museum, just like the ancient slave empires and feudal systems that went before. Step up the struggle and get ready for the even bigger battles looming on the horizon!

Oppose, Resist and Defeat the US Imperialist War on the World!

Look to the Himalayas - A Better World's in Birth!

Build and Strengthen Vanguard Maoist Parties United in the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement!

Long Live Proletarian Internationalism!

Committee of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement ■



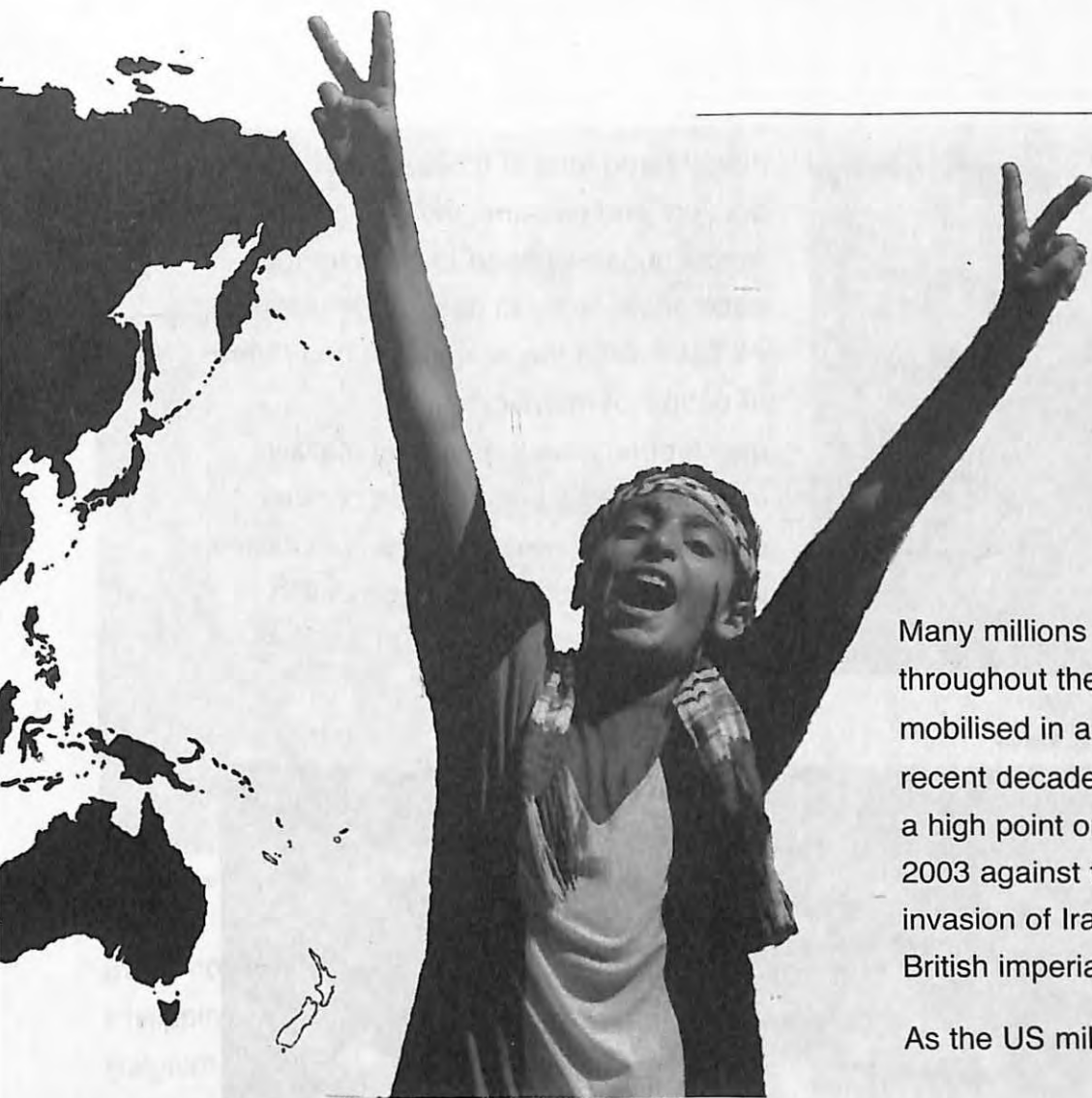
WORLDWIDE UPSURGE IMPERIALIST WAR

Amman, Jordan. 29 March

Sao Paulo, Brazil. 21 March

Beirut, Lebanon.





Many millions of people throughout the whole globe mobilised in a way not seen in recent decades. This reached a high point on 15 February 2003 against the impending invasion of Iraq by the US and British imperialists.

As the US military machine

AGAINST AND OCCUPATION

A WORLD TO WIN 2004/30

27 January
Guatemala City, Guatemala. 3 March



Manilla, Philippines. 31 January





Kathmandu, Nepal. 24 March

Melbourne, Australia. 26 March

slaughtered tens of thousands of Iraqi soldiers and civilians, the bourgeois media goose-stepped to keep up the pace of lies to try to defend the moves. All this fuelled the indignation and rage of people of many different backgrounds, who continued massive demonstrations and all kinds of other actions. NATO headquarters, embassies and other symbols of US and British power were besieged with protests in



Jakarta, Indonesia. 8 March

Seoul, South Korea. 14 February

Tokyo, Japan. 18

A WORLD TO WIN 2004/30

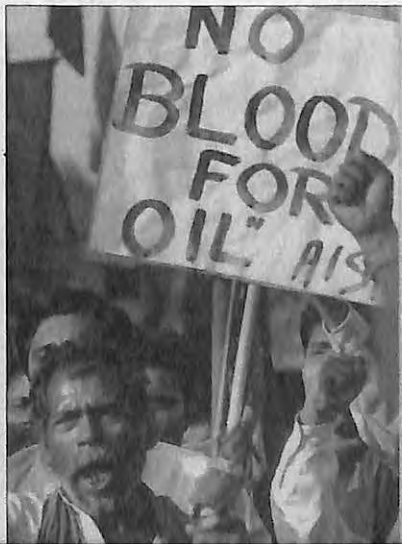




Dhaka, Bangladesh. 21 March.

every country on the planet, stretching from Japan to the Philippines, Latin America and beyond. In the Netherlands, Belgium, Britain, Germany, Turkey, Cyprus and other places military bases were a regular target. Activists stopped trains in Italy carrying US war materiel to Iraq, dockworkers blocked the loading of supplies at a California port, and actions in Turkey disrupted the unloading of American military hardware. As invasion turned into occupation, the Iraqi people refused to bow down and developed many forms of resistance, including armed

Calcutta, India. 24 January

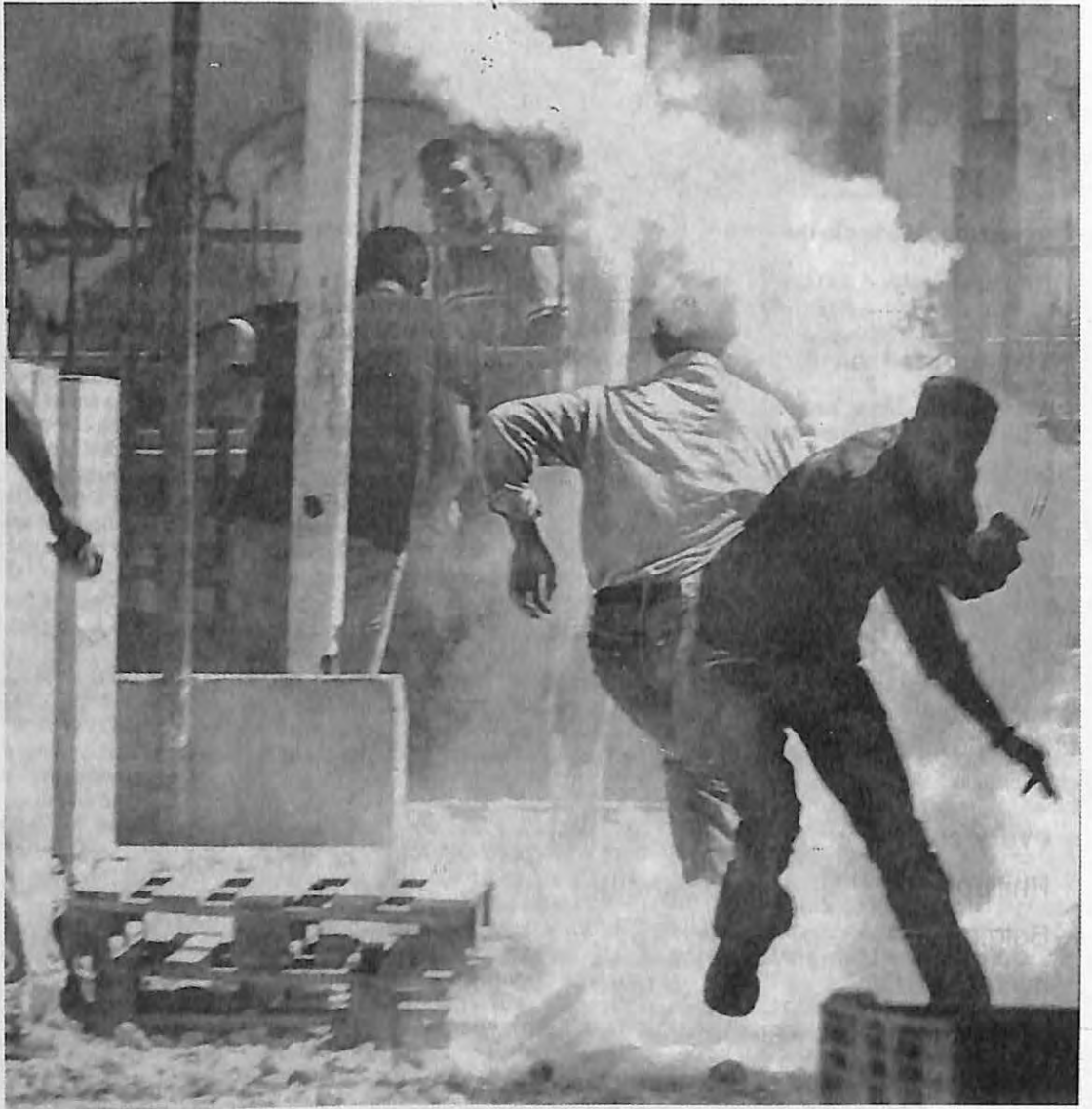


Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. 18 March



Karachi, Pakistan. 15 February





Balata Refugee Camp near Nablus, Palestine. 15 August

A WORLD TO WIN 2004/30

Casablanca, Morocco. 2 March



Dakar, Senegal. 21 February



Nuseirat Refugee Camp, Gaza. 6 April





resistance.

Bush — likened to Hitler and Sharon on banners in many languages and art forms — was branded the world's number one terrorist. He did not dare to make many public appearances outside imperialist officialdom and military hospitals. But when he did venture to

Baghdad, Iraq. Celebrating a downed US Apache helicopter in late March.

Istanbul, Turkey. 26 January



Beirut, Lebanon. 20 March

Cairo, Egypt. 21 March



West and Southern Africa in July for a few hours (surrounded by a legion of hundreds of American security forces), he was met with angry protests of thousands. When he went to sip tea with the Queen of England in November, public outrage at Tony Blair's defence of their joint rape of Iraq flared even higher. One huge demonstration after another filled London's streets and a 14-metre effigy of Bush was toppled from Trafalgar Square.

A hideous partition of shame jags through Palestinian land like a prison wall. Stones flew as determined resistance in the occupied territories



A hundred thousand people of many nationalities amassed on the Swiss-French border near Geneva to taunt the representatives of the rich countries at the G8 meeting in June 2003.

A WORLD TO WIN 2004/30

Thessalonica, Greece. 3 April



Florence, Italy. November



Barcelona, Spain. 15 February





A 14-metre effigy of Bush was toppled during his UK visit, London. November



Amsterdam, Holland. 16 February

exploded in the face of Israeli state gunmen murdering many hundreds more Palestinians and invading refugee camps and towns in Gaza and the West Bank.

The powerful upsurge in 2003 against imperialism's juggernaut of death and destruction stirred new and old generations

Paris, France. 16 February

Sweden. 4 April





In September 2003, Latin American peasants, Mexican students and anti-globalisation activists from many countries came to Cancun, Mexico, for several days of sharp and colourful resistance to World Trade Organisation policies that ruin the livelihoods of poor farmers everywhere.



Bogota, Colombia. 28 March

from vast sections of the people into motion, helping to set the stage for new rounds and higher forms of struggle in the storms ahead...

Santiago, Chile. 9 March

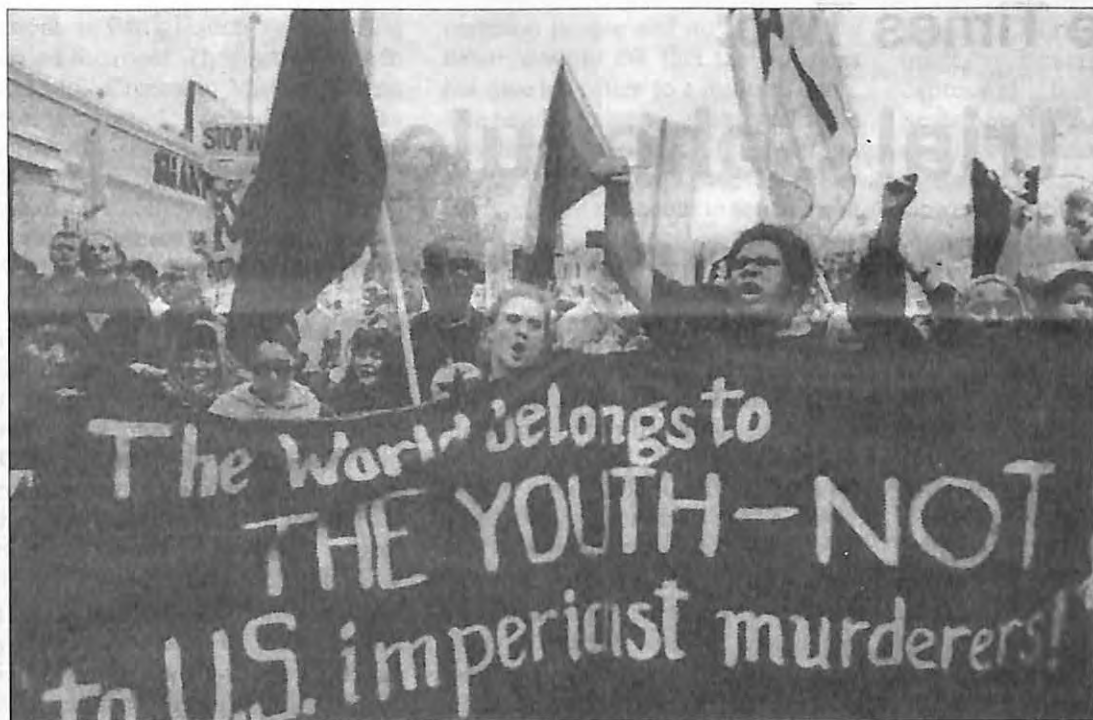


Quito, Ecuador. 26 March



Montevideo, Uruguay. 14 February





Los Angeles, US. 15 February

...The future remains unwritten.

A WORLD TO WIN 2004/30

Buenos Aires, Argentina. 20 March



San Salvador, El Salvador. 24 March



Montreal, Canada. 15



Injustice Times Two:

New Trial Scheduled for Chairman Gonzalo

Chairman Gonzalo (Abimael Guzman) of the Communist Party of Peru (PCP) and other Party leaders and members are scheduled to be retried in March 2004. If the Peruvian regime is staging new trials for those it has held in its dungeons for more than 13 years, it is not to finally allow justice but to commit new injustices. The Peruvian government and its main international backer, the US, intend to use the trial to try to turn the spotlight away from their own crimes, to put rebellion itself on trial and to throw confusion and demoralisation into the hearts of revolutionary-minded people.

Particularly, they hope that after the long years of isolation from the Party's collective life and deep roots among the people, some prisoners may have lost their revolutionary bearings and be prone to reactionary manipulation. In following the news of this trial and fighting what the reactionary rulers of Peru and the world are trying to achieve, it is extremely important never to lose sight of the central fact: the aims and acts that Chairman Gonzalo and the others stand accused of.

In 1980, under Chairman Gonzalo's leadership, PCP members and supporters began the arduous process of awakening and organising Peru's forgotten and despised, the poor peasants and others who in normal times have no voice whatsoever, in an armed rebellion. Because these Maoists relied on nothing but the people themselves, the people's war they launched began with relatively small numbers, but it gradually grew into a raging torrent, a mass upsurge with the support and participation of millions. Latin America had never seen anything like

it. In fact, the whole world has witnessed far too few examples of such a war: Battalions of the poor took on not only their immediate oppressors and the state that represents them, but also world imperialism, aiming to free themselves as part of the world revolution to free humanity from all forms of oppression, exploitation and inequality and bring about communism, a global classless society. For that reason they became a bright torch and won support from people everywhere, bringing great prestige to Maoism and helping the launching or preparation of new people's wars.

This "megatrial", as the Peruvian press has labelled it, is the result of a decision last year by Peru's Constitutional Court that overturned some aspects of the presidential "anti-terrorist" decrees authorising secret military tribunals before "faceless" (hooded) judges held under the deposed and discredited president, Alberto Fujimori, now a fugitive from corruption charges. His replacement, Alejandro Toledo, anxious to distance himself from Fujimori's decade-long hated rule by personal decree and open terror, found himself obliged to accept the ruling of the Inter-American Human Rights Court in Costa Rica that these trials were contrary to international law. So far, the courts have ruled that 1,136 people sentenced by "faceless" judges and 295 imprisoned for "treason to the fatherland" by secret military tribunals are to be retried.

The Peruvian Constitution prohibits a sentence of life imprisonment with no possibility of release. It has long prohibited the death penalty as well, although the armed forces have gunned down

unarmed captives (including in several notorious prison massacres), and Fujimori apparently planned to have Chairman Gonzalo killed with no trial after his October 1992 capture. A strong international movement to "move heaven and earth to save the life of Chairman Gonzalo" was one factor that stopped Fujimori. Instead, three hooded Navy officers sentenced Chairman Gonzalo to life in prison in a secret travesty of justice. His lawyer was given the same penalty. Fujimori bragged that the PCP leader would never emerge alive from the underground dungeon he called Chairman Gonzalo's "tomb".

Now this seems to be Toledo's intention as well.

Although some of the approximately 100 who have already been retried have been acquitted, the Peruvian press has not expressed the slightest doubt that the 11 to be tried in March will be convicted. The only question being debated is the sentences: 25 years from the time of conviction or life sentences with a court hearing in 35 years. Either way, the intention is that Chairman Gonzalo and the other leaders never emerge from their captivity alive. The trial is to take place at the Callao military prison, where Chairman Gonzalo and other PCP leaders have been held in underground cells.

Chairman Gonzalo's 1992 trial was held with such arrogant disdain for legal niceties that it lasted only a few hours and even the exact charges were never revealed. This time they have been: a series of armed actions during the course of the People's War that began in 1980 until the day the PCP chairman and others were captured in Lima. The eleven people to be tried have been accused of either being responsible for these

actions as Party leaders or of having carried them out. They are Chairman Gonzalo, Comrade Miriam (Elena Iparraguirre), Zenon Vargas Cardenas, Martha Huatay, Carlos Inchaustegui, Laura Zembrano, Elvia Zanabria, Nancy Ruiz, Roberto Pizarro, Carmen Carhuapoma and Maritza Garrido Lecca.

Comrade Feliciano (Oscar Ramirez Durand), who assumed responsibility for leading the PCP after Chairman Gonzalo's arrest until his own capture, is also being held at Callao prison. Although the Lima press has not named him as a defendant in the March trial, reactionary commentators have expressed their hope that unconfirmed contradictions between Comrade Feliciano and Chairman Gonzalo can be used to turn this trial into an ugly spectacle and throw dirt on the very concept of revolution.

The basic point of orientation is this: if anyone wanted to talk about real justice, the men and women who led the struggle against an oppressive social system and US domination would be free, and the leaders of the Peruvian government responsible for intolerable injustices would be on trial.

The US played a crucial role in arming and advising the Peruvian government in its bloodthirsty war against the peasants and other poor people who dared fight for a future as fully functioning human beings. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank gave their unreserved support to the Fujimori regime, which is now universally admitted to be a criminal conspiracy against the interests of the Peruvian people. The US government vigorously defended Fujimori against international criticism when he seized all power in his own hands through a "self-coup" in 1992, and it explicitly refused to distance itself from the "hooded judges", the death squads and the rest of the campaign to put down revolution through terror. Today, international reaction is equally supportive of Toledo, who, although in a different form, is following that same path, no less dedicated to squeezing the lifeblood out of the

common people and no less broadly hated, despite the fact that he does not owe his office to a military coup. The new trials are an attempt to make people forget all that. But these are crimes Peruvians and people all over the world are not about to forgive and forget.

The Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, the embryonic political centre of the world's Maoist parties, has defended Chairman Gonzalo and other revolutionary prisoners of war and political prisoners in Peru because it supports the people's war they are being tried for leading. In the upcoming trials, the fundamental issue remains the assertion - age-old but still central to the politics of the rulers of today's world - that revolution itself is a crime.

In defending Chairman Gonzalo's life, the Maoists have been joined by a great many people around the world, from prominent political and human rights figures to ordinary justice-loving men and women, who do not necessarily agree with the People's War Chairman Gonzalo led or the politics and ideology it represents but passionately agree with the stand taken in 1992 by the International Emergency Committee to Defend the Life of Dr Abimael Guzman: "No knowledgeable and truthful observer of Peru, regardless of their political beliefs, can deny that Dr Abimael Guzman is the recognised leader of millions of peasants, workers, students, intellectuals and others of various walks of life in Peru. In no way can the 12-year long war he has been leading be dismissed as 'acts of terrorism'. In no way can Dr Guzman be denied the stature of a captured leader of a revolutionary party and army. Dr Abimael Guzman merits the broad international support that all imprisoned opponents of imperialism and reactionary regimes have always benefited from."

The new trials are very likely to be remakes of the 1992 trials: a travesty of justice.

No one who has been appalled by the injustice of this whole affair can accept any attempt to continue

keeping Chairman Gonzalo and the other prisoners from publicly expressing their views. On 24 September 1992, when Fujimori tried to parade him triumphantly before the international press, Chairman Gonzalo turned the tables on his captors and gave a famous speech. He said that the Peruvian revolution would continue on the path of people's war despite this "bend in the road". (For the full text see *A World to Win* 2002/29 posted on www.awtw.org.) The following year, Fujimori claimed that Chairman Gonzalo and Comrade Miriam had reversed this view and signed a letter asking for peace accords. A right opportunist line arose from within the Party that argued that because of Chairman Gonzalo's capture the revolutionaries had to abandon the People's War and disband their army and the People's Committees where the peasants held political power in much of the countryside.

The PCP Central Committee denounced the Right Opportunist Line and declared that the Fujimori regime had engineered a "hoax" by attributing the call for peace accords to Chairman Gonzalo.

The international movement in Chairman Gonzalo's defence, which among other things sent seven international delegations to Lima over the course of the decade, has focused on the demand that Chairman Gonzalo, Comrade Feliciano and the other political prisoners and prisoners of war be given free and direct access to lawyers, relatives, friends and the international media so that they can freely explain their views. Their contact with the outside world has been severely limited.

It is possible that the Toledo regime will try to continue the policy of keeping Chairman Gonzalo and the others isolated. New laws permit the state to ban video and audio recordings during trials. In some retrials of other accused revolutionaries during the last year, reporters were restricted to pens and notebooks. The purpose of this policy is to keep the people from seeing

(Continued to page 88)

Communiqué

Fifth South Asia Regional RIM Parties and

The Fifth South Asia Regional Conference of the Parties and Organisations of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement was victoriously concluded in July 2003. The Regional Conference was historic for many reasons. Firstly, it was held in a world situation of turmoil and turbulence rarely seen in history. On the one hand, the US-led imperialists are waging an aggressive, military, political and hegemonistic offensive against the people of the world and, on the other hand, they are meeting with stiff resistance from the people throughout the world, including in the very citadels of imperialism. The struggles armed and unarmed, spearheaded by the Maoist-led protracted people's wars in Nepal, Peru, India, Philippines and Turkey, are indicative of the emerging new wave of world proletarian revolution. This trend is also manifested in the intensifying struggles of the countries of South Asia such as Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bhutan. Secondly, for the first time the Regional Conference was held in a red area, a guerrilla zone located in the Bihar-Chattisgarh-Orissa-Jharkhand Special Area in India. It was held in a warm and conducive atmosphere protected by a company of the newly formed People's Liberation Guerrilla Army (PLGA) led by the Maoist Communist Centre India. Thirdly, it took place when the People's War in Nepal is advancing to new heights and transforming the country into a bastion of the world proletarian revolution. Fourthly, the MCCI, whose recent participation in the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM) has greatly strengthened our Movement in South

Asia, attended a Regional Conference for the first time.

The Conference was called and led by the Committee of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement and both full and candidate participants of RIM from the region participated. Vigorous and spirited discussion took place on all of the points on the agenda.

All comrades were united on an understanding of the crucial importance of the developments in the international situation that we are experiencing in a concentrated way since 11 September 2001. As our Movement has stressed, it is a period of both great dangers and great opportunities. The concrete significance of this is that our Movement can and must struggle even harder to transform these possibilities into real leaps forward in our work and to help the emerging new wave of world proletarian revolution to develop more quickly, more powerfully and under the leadership of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.

Here in South Asia we have a great responsibility. Now is the time to seize the importance of the hour and redouble our efforts. A leap forward in the revolutionary struggle in this region will go a long way in transforming South Asia into a bright red base area for the world proletarian revolution. The objective situation serves as the stage on which we must act, but we are not passive marionettes, we can and must give full play to what Mao called "man's conscious dynamic role" in unfolding the great drama of revolution, and in this way "hasten and await" further favourable developments in the international situation.

In addition to demonstrating the relatively high level of common understanding that exists, the discussion of the international situation also showed that our parties and organisations need to pay serious attention to further understanding and debating the underlying laws through which imperialism is heading toward its doom. Through this process our unity will become still higher and more solid.

The comrades from Nepal presented a vivid picture of earth shaking advances of the People's War, which have threatened not only the Nepalese ruling class but also Indian expansionism and US imperialism. The parties and organisations participating in the Regional Conference resolved to fulfil their internationalist duty to develop a powerful mass movement against any direct or indirect military intervention against the People's War led by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) under the leadership of Comrade Prachanda. The Regional Conference endorsed the slogan "Hands off Nepal!" and called on the revolutionary masses of the world to "look to the Himalayas, a better world's in birth!"

The Regional Conference thoroughly discussed the on-going struggle to forge a united single vanguard party in India, based on a correct Marxist-Leninist-Maoist line and united in RIM. In this light the Conference hailed the growing wind of unity of the Maoist forces in India, especially the unity process proceeding between the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) (People's War) and the Maoist Communist Centre India, both of

Conference of Organisations

which have been waging protracted people's war for many years, defying and resisting the enemy onslaughts. The Regional Conference expressed confidence that the united party will concentrate and raise to a still higher level the experience, understanding and energy of the communist revolutionaries in India now working separately. The formation of such a party will lead to a new stage of the People's War in India and give a further impulsion to the revolutionary struggle the world over.

The Regional Conference denounces the increasing military co-operation between the US and the reactionary regimes of the region, especially efforts to set up bases and sinister plans to utilise the reactionary armies of this region in the service of US imperialist aggression and occupation in West Asia and elsewhere.

The Regional Conference hailed the importance and timely formation of the Co-ordinating Committee of Maoist Parties and Organisations of South Asia (CCOMPOSA). The Regional Conference hailed the formation of the Communist Party of Bhutan (Marxist-Leninist-Maoist). The Regional Conference discussed the problems of the Maoist movement in Bangladesh and called upon the comrades of that country to redouble their efforts to forge a unified single party on the basis of a correct Marxist-Leninist-Maoist line. The Regional Conference supported efforts to strengthen the World People's Resistance Movement in South Asia.

The Regional Conference began with the hoisting of the red flag. The martyrs of the world proletarian

revolution in South Asia and all countries were commemorated by garlanding a memorial column and observing two minutes of silence. The sessions were held in the specially constructed Yenon Hall beautifully decorated with slogans and illustrations reflecting the solemn tasks and political orientation of the Conference. At the front of the hall were portraits of Marx, Engels, Lenin Stalin and Mao and a large representation of the RIM symbol of the world breaking free from its chains. Citations were "The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win." "Working men of all countries, unite!" (Communist Manifesto). "There is one, and only one, kind of real internationalism, and that is - working whole-heartedly 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" (Lenin). "... Proletarian internationalism demands, first, that the interests of the proletarian struggle in any one country should be subordinated to the interests of that struggle on a world-wide scale, and, second, that a nation which is achieving victory over the bourgeoisie should be able and willing to make the greatest national sacrifices for the overthrow of international capital" (Lenin). And "The seizure of power by armed force, the settlement of the issue by war, is the central task and the highest form of revolution. This Marxist-Leninist principle of revolution holds good universally, for China and for all other countries"

(Mao). A revolutionary cultural team performed a spirited program in many languages in honour of the conference, in which the delegates joined singing songs in their languages.

As comrades dispersed to their respective trenches of combat the fighters of the PLGA and revolutionary masses gave an inspiring send-off to the delegates.

Down with the US Imperialist Onslaught Against the Peoples of the World!

Hail the Emerging New Tide of World Proletarian Revolution!

Down with Revisionism!

Transform South Asia into a Bright Red Base Area of the World Proletarian Revolution!

Long Live People's War in Nepal, India, Peru, Philippines and Turkey!

Long Live Marxism-Leninism-Maoism!

Long Live Proletarian Internationalism!

Long Live the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement!

● Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) (Naxalbari), CPI (ML) (NB)

● Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), CPN (Maoist)

● Maoist Communist Centre India, MCCI

● Proletarian Party of Purbo Bangla Central Committee, PBSP CC

● Proletarian Party of Purbo Bangla Maobadi Punargathan Kendro, PBSM MPK

● Revolutionary Communist Centre of India (Marxist-Leninist-Maoist), RCCI (MLM)

● Bangladesher Samyobadi Dal (Marxist-Leninist), BSD (ML)

● Communist Party of Bhutan (MLM), CPB(MLM) ■

MCC of India

(Continued from page 16)

preparing ourselves for that eventuality. To avoid a setback, the battle has to be developed to the next higher stage."⁴

Historical Background

In order to understand the work of the MCCI today and their perspectives, it is useful to review some of the outlines of the Indian communist movement.

The Communist Party of India was founded as part of the Third International or Comintern. But the Party, unlike the Communist Party of China under the leadership of Mao, was never able to chalk out a correct revolutionary strategy. It was only after the Second World War and the victory of the Chinese revolution that some elements of the Communist Party of India began to try to apply some of the lessons learned in China, in particular the importance of mobilising the armed revolutionary struggle of the peasantry.

The historic Telangana peasant revolutionary movement began in the late 1940s in one section of what is now the state of Andhra Pradesh in southern India. This armed movement of millions of peasants was growing like a storm before it was brutally suppressed by the Nehru government right after the formal declaration of "independence". It was the leadership of the Communist Party of India (CPI) of that time that betrayed this revolutionary peasant movement from within. This was a historic betrayal of the revolutionary peasant movement by the mainstream CPI, which thus revealed itself, through its actions, as a revisionist party and an appendage of the Indian ruling class. Corresponding to its revisionist character, it was up to its neck in parliamentary cretinism. The degeneration was so appreciated by the reactionaries that they popularise the so-called "first elected communist government" in the southern state of Kerala as their own victory, which in reality it was.

Internationally Mao Tsetung

began a struggle against the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, led by Khrushchev, in 1963. A split with the revisionist leadership of the CPI became unavoidable. Since this meant a split from a revisionist organisation, it was necessary to raise revolutionary slogans and to gather support from the revolutionary communists and the masses. Thus at the beginning of the split the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI(M)) enjoyed the support of the revolutionaries. However, the CPI(M) took a centrist position in the international communist movement, pretending to stand equidistant between China and USSR, between Mao and Khrushchev, during the great debate, while never really accepting Mao's thorough revolutionary critique. In the course of time, the real face, the revisionist face, of the CPI(M) was further exposed, and it became indispensable to take new initiatives to form a new revolutionary party or a 'party of a new type'. Thus, the genuine communist revolutionaries in different corners of the country began new initiatives to form such a party.

It was a tough job for the Maoists to reorganise a real communist movement in India, which contained lots of rotten garbage inherited from four decades of revisionist domination. It is during this period that Comrade Charu Mazumdar hoisted the red flag against revisionism and drew a line of clear demarcation. The fruit of the revolutionary line he developed was the Naxalbari movement, named after the northern Bengal village where the armed struggle was sparked in 1967, and which quickly spread to many parts of the country. There were other comrades as well who had taken up the study of Mao's line and teachings, then known as Mao Tsetung Thought. Also inspired by the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, they were calling on the genuine communists to thoroughly repudiate revisionism. Comrades Kanai Chatterjee and Amulya Sen are two outstanding leaders of the communist movement in India who

dared to take up this task.

This period was marked by new and momentous developments in the Indian communist movement. Misguided and misled by various erroneous lines and different shades of right revisionism for more than four decades, the late 1960s and early 1970s were a turning point in the Indian communist movement, which gave rise to the Maoist movement in India. This important period of upheaval against revisionism and reaction gave birth to both the Communist Party of India (Marxist - Leninist) (CPI(ML)) and the Maoist Communist Centre (MCC), two major forces representing the two principal Maoist streams in the Indian communist movement. Apparently, there was broad unity among the leaders regarding the cardinal question of Indian revolution but differences remained, thus paving the way for the inception of two different Maoist organisations in India.

MCCI as a Distinct Maoist Stream

Why two different Maoist streams emerged right at the same period would be a valuable subject of investigation, but in any case it is a stark reality of the history of the Indian communist movement that everybody has to recognise.

It is very important to take note that the line of the MCCI is inherited basically right from the period of its foundation. The basic orientation was carved out during 1969 in *Dakshin Desh*, the Bangla language organ of the MCC during that period. Two consecutive articles, entitled "The perspective of the Indian Revolution" and "The tactical line of the Indian Revolution", were published on 1 May 1969 and 17 May 1969, respectively. They give a vivid picture of the perspective of the Indian revolution with the basic strategic and tactical line of new democratic revolution in India.

Comrades Kanai Chatterjee and Amulya Sen not only rebelled against the ideology and politics of revisionists but also abandoned the old tradition of "coffee house

revolutionaries". They left the city of Calcutta and chose to work in the remote backward forest area of Bihar (now most of which lies in the new state of Jharkhand). They organised class struggle based on the backward and poor peasantry and for the completion of the new-democratic revolution in India. The second generation of leadership, which is now leading the MCCI, is continuing this legacy. Facing all hardships, with a very simple life style and leadership in close relationship with the peasantry and oppressed classes, has been the MCC's style of work, which continues today. Based mainly on the principle of "encircling the cities through the countryside" and taking the "countryside as the main theatre of war", the MCCI has always given abundant emphasis to the work in the countryside and among the peasantry and to developing their armed struggle.

Both the MCC and CPI (ML) very correctly upheld the Chinese path as the basic path of the Indian revolution, and the leadership of the genuine communist organisations have tried to base themselves on Mao's teachings. Despite these basic similarities, it is equally true that they had separate origins, separate organisations and naturally a separate style of functioning right from the beginning.

Thus it is a fact of history that the MCC is a separate stream of the Indian communist movement, with a great wealth of experience, understanding and strength to contribute to the whole movement.

People's War as the Central Task

Right from the beginning, the MCC stood for taking up armed struggle as the main form of struggle and waging protracted people's war as the central task of the party. No party in the world can have a complete grasp and knowledge at the very beginning. As Mao has put it clearly, warfare can be learnt through warfare itself. Nevertheless, the level of clarity of the MCC during the 1960s about this vital question of revolution is important to note. This

position of the MCC has been repeatedly expressed and emphasised:

"This armed revolutionary war is the war of the armed people themselves, it is 'Protracted People's War' as shown by Mao Tsetung. The concrete economic and political condition of India leads to the very conclusion that the path shown by the great leader and teacher, Mao Tsetung, the path of the Chinese Revolution, that is, ...to establish a powerful people's army and people's militia and to establish dependable, strong and self-sufficient base areas in the countryside, to constantly consolidate and expand the people's army and the base areas, gradually to encircle the urban areas from the countryside by liberating the countryside, finally to capture the cities and to establish the state system and political authority of the people themselves by decisively destroying the state power of the reactionaries – this very path of the protracted People's War is the only path of liberation of the people of India, the path of victory of the new democratic revolution."⁵

"The modern revisionists of the whole world without exception try to detract the people from the path of people's war, the only path of liberation of the people – from the path of establishment of the armed state power of the revolutionary people and establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat by destroying the state machinery of the reactionary ruling classes."⁶

The leadership of the MCC not only accepted the theory of people's war in principle but also tried their best to apply it sincerely. They selected the remote rural backward areas of the backward state of Bihar and started to work among the poor and landless peasants, mainly from the indigenous and tribal people, and to develop the peasant movement and armed struggle in the same area. Later the Party developed guerrilla zones in those areas through a hard battle and intensive class struggle with the local *zamindars* (landlords), *jotdars*, bad gentry, their goons, their private armies, forest guards and the

state police force. Steeled in harsh battle, the MCC developed guerrilla squads and militia.

The MCC also grew by analysing and deftly relating to the Jharkhand movement, a movement that began in the 1970s for the creation of a separate state for the tribal peoples occupying the hilly region of Bihar.⁷

In order to suppress the growing level of class struggle, the enemy has been deploying paramilitary forces in addition to the police force being used before. So, the Maoist guerrillas have to confront the paramilitary forces and special task forces trained mainly for fighting anti-guerrilla war. In accordance with this necessity, the MCCI has developed the quantity and also the quality of its armed forces, the formation has been developed from squads to platoon and company up till now and the force as a whole has been recently named the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army. It is well known that guerrilla war has to play a strategic role in the whole course of the people's war. But according to the level of development of the war, this develops from guerrilla war to mobile war and positional war. Now the struggle has developed to the point where mobile war, while still not the main form, is an increasing feature.

The founding documents of the MCC stressed the importance of base areas in the revolutionary process in India: "If we are to build up agrarian revolution, a people's army and red base areas, we will always have to remain firm on some basic principles regarding their inter-relations. The building up and consolidation of the armed agrarian revolution, people's army and base areas – these tasks are deeply inter-related to each other.

"Without armed agrarian revolution no people's army can be built up. Similarly, agrarian revolution cannot be advanced to its final end without a people's army.

"Again, without a people's army no base area can be built up. Similarly without base areas, the very existence of the people's army cannot be maintained.

"It is only through agrarian

revolutionary guerrilla struggle and the establishment of the people's army that a red base area can be built up. Again, through this work alone the revolutionary high tide can be accelerated throughout the country, and depending on the base area and with the help of the people's army, the agrarian revolution also can be consolidated, deepened and expanded."⁸

Indeed, how to correctly understand these relationships and how to build red political power have been a subject of important discussion and debate in the Indian communist movement. Faced with the strength of the Indian reactionary state, establishing base areas is no easy matter, but the MCCI has made important progress in this regard in its central areas of work. The Revolutionary Peasants Committee, or KKC from its Hindi name, exercises power in the villages. This involves distributing land and crops seized from the class enemy, organising improvement works, such as digging ponds for fish production, resolving disputes and ensuring the security of the people. Cultural teams use song and dance as one means to carry the line of the revolution. In this part of India, which has long been neglected by the central authorities, formerly illiterate people are learning basic reading skills, as well as politics, in schools set up by the revolutionary authority.

New relations among the people and a new culture are emerging, step by step, in Jharkhand and elsewhere. This is particularly noticeable in the new role women are playing. In this backward area of India all sorts of superstitions and medieval customs added yet more oppressive weight on the women, in addition to the grinding poverty they shared with men. Now a large number of young women participate in all aspects of the revolutionary process — from cultural teams to the armed squads and platoons where they make up a good percentage of the troops. Child marriages, once a scourge, have been outlawed in areas under the people's control and major efforts take place to thoroughly wipe out the practice of

“witch-hunting”, which leads to the deaths of hundreds of women per year in some areas. These reactionary customs are not only stopped by force, they are also the subject of intense criticism and education — indeed, this is one of the areas of focus for the MCCI's cultural teams, who produce songs and skits to ridicule and expose reactionary practices.

All-India Perspective

Although the MCCI has mainly carried out work in one section of vast India, it has a nation-wide political perspective. The earlier-mentioned merger with the RCCI(M) from Punjab gives it a stronger presence in the agricultural area north of Delhi. Even Jharkhand itself has very important industrial sections as well, especially the large steel production units run by Tata, the biggest private bureaucrat capitalist group in India. Nor are the masses of these areas cut off from the rest of India. Many desperate millions, especially men, must migrate to big cities, such as Calcutta, or to agricultural areas, such as Punjab, in search of work as day labourers. All this only underscores the importance of the developing red political power in Jharkhand and elsewhere in the perspective of the all-India revolution.

For the revolution to advance on the all-India level, the problem of a single vanguard party, based on Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and united in the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, is sharply posed. For a number of reasons, including history and the vast size of India, the communist movement there has developed in separate streams. The need for the unity of the genuine communists in order to withstand and eventually defeat the ferocious reactionary state is quite clear.

In the past, efforts to unite the communist forces failed. In fact, at one point in the late 1990s a very tragic situation emerged in which the forces of the CPIML(PW) and MCC were even involved in armed clashes

with one another. It is important to note that the MCC responded quickly and energetically to the Appeal from the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (see *AWTW* 2000/26) to immediately cease such clashes and to eradicate the causes that gave rise to them. Since then, relations between the MCCI and CPIML(PW) have dramatically improved, and discussions have begun over the possibility of uniting.

Marxism-Leninism-Maoism the Guiding Ideology

A key to the MCCI's advance over the last several years has been the MCC's decision in 2000 to formulate the Party's guiding ideology as Marxism-Leninism-Maoism in place of Marxism-Leninism-Mao-Tsetung Thought, which the Party had been using since its formation. Opponents within the Party started factional and disruptive activities secretly, and later circulated a hand-written article entitled, “Mao Thought vs Maoism”, and published articles in open papers attacking Maoism. The opportunists developed a ridiculous slogan, “Down With Maoism! Long Live Mao Thought!” The opposition was not strong organisationally, and it could have been simply ignored. But the MCCI chose a correct method of waging ideological struggle, which helped expose the wrong lines, thereby paving the way to establish Maoism further.

The MCCI Central Committee brought out a polemical document in June 2003 entitled “Take a Correct Position in the Debate on Maoism, Hold High the Banner of Maoism”. The opportunist opponents leapt out vigorously against the organisation after it took a position in favour of Maoism, which these opponents understood did not correspond to their opportunist positions on many matters, thus reaffirming that adopting Maoism is not only a change of terminology but something much more important. One of the main points of attack of the opportunists was to deny the significance of Mao's criticism of

Stalin. They also strongly opposed RIM and MCCI's decision to participate in the Movement, arguing that RIM was a divisive factor.

If we judge this question through the concrete practice of the MCCI, we can clearly realise that, taking Maoism as the basis of unity, the Maoist forces are coming closer and the perspective of unity has been further enhanced. The MCCI has been able to unite with several Maoist forces already, and this process has been further advancing towards achieving the great goal of forging a single Maoist Party in India.⁹ Thus the importance of unity among the Maoist forces of India on the correct basis as envisioned by the South Asia Regional Conference of RIM Parties, i.e. "based on a correct Marxist-Leninist-Maoist line and united in RIM",¹⁰ is self-evident. It is neither a matter of coincidence nor a matter of chance that all these developments towards unity among the Maoist forces in India have taken a concrete shape after MCC adopted Maoism and joined RIM and took the initiative on a correct basis.

Unity of Maoist Forces in India

After accumulating lots of experiences and passing through a long and hard course of class struggle and line struggles, and due to the changes taking place at the national and international level, the Maoist forces are now coming closer and heading towards the tremendous objective of forming a single Maoist party in India, and the question of the formation and line of such a party is coming onto the agenda of the whole movement. The MCCI, a participating party in RIM, has already united with three Maoist centres during 2003. Discussions are also going on with CPI (ML) Naxalbari, which is also a participating party of RIM. There have also been many press accounts about the possibility of unity between the MCCI and CPI(ML)(PW), the two Maoist forces with the greatest strength and experience in carrying out the armed revolutionary struggles, and this has generated widespread interest and

enthusiasm among revolutionary-minded people.

The Indian communist movement thus stands at a very crucial juncture of history. The class contradictions in India, in the South Asia region and the world as a whole are sharpening. In India the class enemy is striking out more ferociously and systematically at the revolutionary forces but the perspectives for the advance of the revolution are bright indeed. A wind is blowing in favour of unity among the Maoist forces. This situation has emerged out of historical necessity, and it deserves to be given due importance. No doubt like any other breakthrough, this struggle too will be complex and will have twists and turns.

Vision of a "New International"

Needless to say, the MCC joining RIM is a very significant event in the life of the Movement and also for the overall development of the contemporary international communist movement. RIM has set out to serve as the embryonic centre of the international communist movement and has set itself the task of working for the formation of a Communist International of a new type. In order to accomplish these tasks, it is necessary that the genuine Maoist forces in India play their full role. Already the participation of the MCCI in RIM helps makes this more of a reality. The necessary breakthrough in India in forging a unified vanguard and making a leap in the on-going people's war is closely linked to the advances, past, present and future, of forging RIM and advancing on the road toward a new International. There is no doubt that the great experience and understanding accumulated by the MCCI in its three decades of revolutionary struggle represents a vital factor not only for the further advance of the movement in India but also for the advance of the international communist movement as a whole.

New Horizon Book Trust, 57/1 Potuatola Lane, Kalkutta, 700 009 India. It includes colour illustrations of life in the guerrilla zones of the MCCI.

2. Until its merger in 2003 with the RCCI, the MCCI was known simply as the MCC; this change will be reflected in the abbreviations in this article.

3. *Resistance Call*, Jan-April 2002, p. 13.

4. Statement by Kamal of the Bihar-Jharkhand-Bengal special area committee of the MCCI, quoted by Bannerjee.

5. *Red Star*, Special Issue, p. 20. *Red Star* is the English language organ of the MCC.

6. *Selected Works of Mao Tsetung*, Vol. II, pp. 94-95.

7. How the MCC began its work and how it handled this movement are dealt with in the excerpts from Alope Banerjee's "Inside MCC Country" to be found later in this issue.

8. *Red Star*, Special Issue - 1, p. 3. This article was first printed in *Dakshin Desh*, Bengali organ of the MCC, in June 1971, whose English version was later published in the journal *Red Star* on 1 May 1995.

9. In a short period of less than two years the MCC was able to unite with other Maoist forces, such as the Revolutionary Communist Centre of India (Maoist). After the unification of the MCC and RCCI(M), the name of the party was slightly changed from MCC to MCCI. Immediately after that, unity took place with the Revolutionary Communist Centre (Maoist), which was formed after a split had taken place in the MCC, some years before. There was then one more unity step with one group of the Second Central Committee of the CPI(ML), who previously were upholding the erroneous position that Lin Piao, a leader of the Chinese Communist Party who was exposed as a revisionist chieftain during the Cultural Revolution, actually was Mao's comrade-in-arms, a genuine follower of Mao and a champion of people's war. Now after a prolonged ideological struggle it dropped this position and has united with the MCCI.

10. The press communiqué of the Regional Conference of South Asian Parties and Organisations united in RIM, which was successfully held in July 2003, for the first time in the liberated area of Jharkhand under the protection of the MCCI-led People's Liberation Guerrilla Army. *Red Star*, Special Issue, pp. 42-43. ■

Footnotes

1. The pamphlet can be ordered from

Iraq

(Continued from page 8)

start small and build their strength through protracted fighting. Iraq has given fresh proof that a relatively weak force can disrupt and wear down a larger force. As history has shown many times, from the first successful slave revolution in Haiti at the dawn of the nineteenth century to the Chinese revolution led by Mao Tsetung, also to some extent in the anti-colonial wars of the 1950s and 1960s, and now, in a promising way, the people's war in Nepal, in the course of fighting, a guerrilla force can eventually grow into an army and become strong enough to defeat an initially far more powerful army, if the cause is just and the war is fought in such a way as to rely on the people. The Iraqi guerrilla forces lack both a leadership that is able to formulate strategic goals that can unite the people and a corresponding military strategy and tactics. A leading line and organisation, which could only mean a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist vanguard, that could give material expression to the unity of interests of the people of the country, the region and the world could ultimately change the equation entirely.

Victory over the US requires a material shift in the balance of forces, and nothing less. To make that clear, it's worth criticising the following: "For the insurgents fighting the US forces in Iraq, the American 'centre of gravity'-what they must destroy to win — is nothing less, as one American operations officer told me, than 'the will of the American people'," says the writer Danner in the exchange with the US ambassador. The US commander in Iraq Ricardo Sanchez said something very similar: "I really believe that the only way we are going to lose here is if we walk away from it like we did in Vietnam. If the political will fails, and the support of the American public fails, that's the only way we can lose."

It is true that in a war of national liberation, unlike a war between imperialists, "for the insurgents to succeed they need not defeat 'the world's ablest military,'" as Danner

says, in the sense of completely crushing its ability to fight, as the US did, for instance, with Germany in the Second World War. But this is a one-sided and un-materialist way to look at things, and with regard to what happened in Vietnam it amounts to a lie. The anti-war movement in the US and the world did play a very important role in narrowing the US ruling class's options in that war. Yet the opposition to the war did not emerge from people's thought processes alone; it rose in direct relation to the Vietnamese people's battering of the US occupation forces. If some ruling class figures and finally the mainstream of US rulers (including Nixon) "lost their nerve" and decided to "walk away from it", it was because they recognised that within the parameters of the situation as it existed, including the opposition to the war in the US and the international state of affairs, they had no hope of winning, and if they didn't pull out the situation could only continue to deteriorate.

That situation was not created by the press, contrary to what Danner believes ("the road to that centre of gravity runs through the eyes, and the cameras and pens, of the press"). Although what it reports definitely does matter, what the media (especially the big outlets owned and controlled by the monopoly capitalists) feels obligated to say or dares say in the first place principally reflects its overall considerations.

This point is central in understanding Iraq's future. While politicians have to pretend concern, American military officers, especially when addressing a restricted audience, brag that they can sustain their present level of losses indefinitely. Strictly speaking, how can that be denied? To make a point similar to our earlier argument about the anti-war movement on the eve of the invasion, these imperialists are not going to pull out of Iraq unless they are forced to, in this case by some combination (interaction) of a higher level of Iraqi armed resistance, resistance to the war internationally, including in the US and "coalition" countries, and other world events.

Stabilising the Occupation: Forward to the Past

There are plenty of reactionary theoreticians and counter-insurgency specialists who understand that this kind of a war must be fought in the political sphere as well as militarily. Their reasoning is that even if they stomp all over the Iraqi people's national sentiments, they can still buy off some people. Undoubtedly they can, just as occupiers around the world from time immemorial have purchased a few and terrorised others.

The US has gone back and forth on what legal form to give the occupation, whether to rule Iraq directly or through Iraqis. It's hard to know how much these sudden switches were due to policy disputes and how much they were based on whatever seemed practical at any given moment. But the upshot is that the US has not yet found the solution.

Although the Iraqi government was in contact with the CIA on the eve of the invasion and offered to surrender to every one of Bush's demands, the US needed the invasion itself more than it needed to overthrow Saddam. In the early days of the war, the word from Washington was that the US planned to remove "the dirty dozen" - Saddam and his closest aides - and keep the Iraqi army and bureaucracy intact. Then this policy was reversed and General Jay Gardner, the first US "governor" of Iraq was unceremoniously removed. In May 2003, the US occupation chief, Paul Bremer, dissolved Iraq's army and talked about banning leading members of Saddam's Baath Party from the US-imposed government.

Within a few months, as its difficulties increased, the US shifted course again and began reconstituting Saddam's secret police (the Mukhabarat), starting with its foreign intelligence operations and following up with the domestic political repression service, with its system of files on all Iraqis. Then it began rebuilding Saddam's army, in some cases swallowing old units intact and in general relying on men who were Saddam's soldiers until the last.

Officially, former Saddam officers retain their ranks up to the level of lieutenant colonel, those who command the battalions, the largest units at present, although the US employs higher-level former officers in other ways.

Now the occupiers say they intend to build up an army of 40,000 men, along with police, militia, guards and other armed forces totalling another 160,000. The first battalion of this new army was put through a brief training programme on how to serve the Americans and sent out into the streets toward the end of 2003. Within weeks, the unit was down to half strength through resignations and desertions. The occupation authorities reacted by adding a hardship bonus that doubled the pay of the lowest ranks and set out to train a second of the 27 battalions they plan to organise.

US policy towards these men is mired in contradictions. The US only gives them small arms because it's worried they will turn over or sell more powerful weapons to the resistance. But the poorly armed puppet troops then become "soft targets" for resistance forces - and they have indeed been hit hard. They are also scorned and despised by the masses as sell-outs.

The deeper problem for the US is that money alone is not always enough to make people want to die for the privilege of being humiliated by oppressors. Local mercenaries can be helpful for an occupying imperialist army, but it is difficult for them to replace it. The US tried very hard to build a Vietnamese puppet army, but failed to successfully "Vietnamise" the war.

No rule can succeed without a social (class) base. As imperialism does in every country in the world it seeks to dominate, no matter in what form, the US is trying to build an alliance of class forces whose interests overlap with those of American capital. They are working to pull together a coalition of the most backward forces among all the ethnic groups, including tribal leaders, religious authorities and other feudal elements, along with comprador

capitalists like fraudster financier Ahmed Chalabi, head of the Iraqi National Congress, and former Baathist army and Mukhabarat generals and officials such as those in the Iraqi National Accord. All of these men have in common that they are national sell-outs with more to gain from an alliance with imperialism and a privileged place in the occupation structure than from the country's development. What American pundits call "nation building" is more like nation destroying.

The US seems to consider that the most viable of these forces (in terms of having any popular support) are the leaders of the two Kurdish parties, Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) leader Jalal Talabani and his rival, Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) leader Massoud Barzani. It remains to be seen how long these betrayers can mislead the Kurdish masses. [See the article on Turkey and Kurdistan in this issue.]

Shia leader Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani wants to hold elections, since under the circumstances those most likely to vote are his supporters, but an American henchman legitimised through a few ballot boxes is no more "democratic" than a hand-picked henchman.⁹ The Council's members were all appointed by the US, and the squabbles among them reflect conflicting reactionary interests and not any attempt to challenge the basic relationship with the US. In January, Iraq's Governing Council cancelled Iraq's decades-old "family law" upholding certain rights for women, and voted to replace it with Islamic law (Sharia), which would submit women to the same hateful restrictions as in Iran. Perhaps in this way, these men can claim that they are champions of Islam and not just US flunkies, as though there were any contradiction between the two.

The location alone of the Governing Council tells its position: bunkered alongside the invaders' Coalition Provisional Authority in Saddam's former Republican Palace that now comprises the Green Zone, the few square kilometres of Iraq under the tightest American control,

although even there the occupiers and collaborators are vulnerable to mortar rounds. The degree to which these politicians will ever get to decide anything can be seen in Bremer's open involvement in setting the limits for what is to be allowed in the "new Iraq" - with a view towards forging this assortment of petty exploiters and oppressors into a real, country-wide criminal enterprise "farsighted" enough to serve the higher interests of the US.

The millions of dollars in cash at the disposal of US field commanders for "civilian construction projects" like building schools are not mainly intended to impress middle-class parents, although that may be a hoped-for by-product. Contracts are awarded not to the lowest bidder, but the best politically connected and "co-operative" companies, often in the hands of clan authorities. This not only buys their loyalty, but also enables them to increase their own power and influence through their control of hiring. Operating on the same principle on a national level, some US authorities are putting out the idea of (re)creating an Iraqi state-owned petroleum company. Like the rest of the class structure the US is trying to build up to root its control of Iraqi society, this is truly going forward to the past. After all, in the Iraq Britain created and Saddam eventually inherited, like so many other countries, the creation of a class of bureaucrat capitalists, the fusion of feudal and state power, whose core in this case was made up of men who controlled the income from exploiting and selling the country's oil and other state-owned businesses, was a vital part of the glue that kept together the motley assortment of ruling reactionaries. It also ensured that the country would remain dependent on the imperialists and their world market.

The Iraqi resistance and the refusal of the US's rivals to recognise the legitimacy of the occupation may have pushed the US towards a transition away from open, direct rule (a country "run by a governor appointed in Washington", as we put it in *AWTW* 2002/29) much sooner

than expected. But the question of whether or not Iraq remains an American neocolony does not depend on whether or not they cobble together some sort of government by some Iraqis. As the colonial experience of all powers has shown, that development was inevitable.

Despite the planned handover of formal authority to an Iraqi regime by next July, real Iraqi sovereignty is not part of the US plan. The scheme, as of this writing, is for municipal and provincial administrators appointed by US army officers (and recently weeded for loyalty and effectiveness) to pick delegates to hold an assembly to choose a government under which the US occupation forces will continue to hold the real political, economic and military power. Chalabi explained it this way: "We will have the US forces here, but they will change from occupiers to a force that is here at the invitation of the Iraqi government." An American general, putting it less diplomatically, said that the idea is to "put an Iraqi face on security". Rumsfeld was even more blunt: "It does not mean that we would physically leave the country any sooner."

Imperialist Critics and Rivals

The fact that some of Bush's political rivals and critics accuse him of using the "sovereignty" handover to "cut and run" in Iraq shows how solidly the mainstream of the US ruling class is united around the necessity of a long-term occupation. As much as some opposition politicians criticise Bush and Blair for their making a mess of the war, the only way out now, almost all agree, is to figure out how to win it.¹⁰ Failure, they believe, is not an option.

Curiously — or maybe not — this is also the line amongst the US's imperialist rivals as well. French government spokespersons have regularly denied American accusations that they want to see the US lose in Iraq. Russia's Putin said the same thing very explicitly. It's true that neither country was unhappy with Saddam — in fact, Saddam's willingness to do business with France, Russia and

Germany was a big part of why the US was unable to stand the status quo. The French ruling class does not want to see the US win, in the sense of achieving its aims in Iraq and being able to use its control of Middle Eastern oil against its rivals. France is probably pleased by America's troubles. But the French imperialists very clearly don't want to see the US driven out, since the French are in no position to replace them, or to see even long-term instability in Iraq, with all the consequences that would have for French interests in the region and the world.

This doesn't mean that the contradictions between these powers have diminished since the diplomatic fireworks of the UN debates. On the contrary, Bush's National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice is said to have described US policy as "Forgive Russia, ignore Germany, punish France".¹¹ A December front-page headline in the authoritative French daily *Le Monde* described US-French relations as "disguised warfare".

The US's main charge against France is undeniably true, although no crime from anything other than an American monopoly capitalist viewpoint: it is aiming to build an anti-American counterweight. These rivalries place the US and other imperialist countries on a collision course.¹² Chirac's invitation to German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder to celebrate D-Day at his side is just one indication of how fast the world is changing. Sooner or later, the US's rivals, as powerful economically as America, will certainly try to bring their military abilities into line with their wealth. But for now, the limits to France and Europe's contention with the US are set by lack of military capability, both to openly challenge the US and to police the Third World themselves.

Bush's imperial project, it must be recognised, is to use the US's unprecedentedly lopsided military power to subordinate the US's imperialist rivals, not necessarily to crush them (although it would certainly intervene militarily if and when any rivals seem too threatening). His main weapon right now is the US's

ability, based on military power, to organise a global network of political and economic relationships for the benefit of all the imperialists. In other words, to use the unequal balance of military power to enforce unequal relations on a world scale. Like Rome in some ways — an empire beneficial to all exploiters who join it, but which cannot survive without the hegemony of Rome.

Chaos and Necessity

To some extent chaos has been part of the plan.

The plan, after all, was not to maintain the status quo but to blow it up and fit the pieces back together in a new way. This is key to understanding why the US launched a global rampage, and why they cannot conceive of turning back.

During the first US-led invasion of Iraq in 1991, Bush's father halted the war before Saddam's army was destroyed and the regime toppled for fear that the situation (especially Iraq's people) would get out of hand. At that time, for reasons explained in *AWTW* 2002/28, the US was not able or did not feel required to take over Iraq directly itself. This time the invasion went all the way and to some extent things have got out of hand: in Iraq the old ruling alliance of exploiters was destroyed and a new one is yet to be rebuilt; in the region contradictions in neighbouring countries are becoming increasingly volatile; and in the world as a whole old networks of imperialist relations are being challenged by imperialist rivalry on the one hand, whilst on the other hand these events are dragging different sections of the masses in many countries into political life or even into a state of political ferment.

At least some of the people around Bush expected this and are not deterred. In this high-stakes gamble, they are aware of the problems and dangers but believe they can solve them by charging ahead and "staying the course", as they like to say, amid shouting and gunfire. Their plan is all or nothing, not just quantitative successes. In

other words, they know it is not possible to first establish a stable Iraq and then move on to the region and the world. Their plan is to recast the region and the world as quickly as possible and then go back and pick up the pieces, building local and global stability on that basis. They tried to deal with opposition to the war by launching it, and they will try to handle the various kinds of opposition and obstacles they now face by more aggression and interference. They are counting on this to intimidate the world.

Of course, there are priorities, and the obstacles the US has encountered in Iraq may slow down the pace of preparing for interventions in other regions, some of which, ironically, like North Korea, turn out to be less urgent than Bush presented them when he gave his "axis of evil" speech. But they can't stop and they won't stop. We cannot underestimate either the problems and limits they are encountering nor their unbending necessity to go forward with their project no matter what the cost.

General Shinseki was rebuked for predicting that the Iraqi occupation would require several hundred thousand troops for years to come, and yet he turned out to be the most far-sighted of Bush's generals, armchair and otherwise. Iraq has spelled the end of the US's "zero deaths" policy of waging war whilst avoiding risking American lives. The January 2004 death in a shot-down Blackhawk helicopter of an American GI who had escaped alive from the infamous 1993 "Blackhawk Down" incident in Mogadishu is emblematic of that shift. The Bush administration flaunts its stoic attitude toward the almost 600 American deaths in Iraq. This war may also show the limits of the "Rumsfeld doctrine" of waging wars on the cheap, in human terms, or at least American humans, by relying more on technology than soldiers. Obviously this is a very major question in terms of the US's global project. There is increasing concern among some of Bush's reactionary critics that the US will need a far larger army to deal with the chaos

American military intervention has already begun to stir up.

Of the US Army's ten active duty divisions, eight have units that have either just returned from Iraq or Afghanistan, or are on their way. Current military planning is for many of those just brought home to be sent back after a year of retraining, re-equipment and rest. Despite his known preference for a smaller but more "agile" and "deployable" armed forces, Rumsfeld has just signed emergency orders to expand as soon as possible the number of US armed forces to over half a million, about eight per cent over current legal limitations. In addition, thousands of soldiers are to be replaced by civilian employees. Combat soldiers are in such short supply that the Pentagon issued "stop-loss orders" preventing thousands of troops from leaving the service at the end of their contractual term of enlistment. In principle, this is a crack in the "voluntary" nature of the US armed forces, which have so far been able to rely on economic compulsion and social pressure to recruit.

"If the war on terror is a real war", one pro-war Bush critic asked rhetorically, "why don't we act like it?" This means a whole society shifted onto a war footing, including the possible reintroduction of large-scale conscription. So far, the Bush administration has preferred to combine appeals to patriotism and sacrifice with soothing reassurances that the life style many Americans are used to is what he is defending, not ending. But the real world will have its say in what happens next.

The Global Shadow of Guantanamo

The persistence of Guantanamo should tell us something about how far they are willing to go in pursuit of their aims. Their answer to chaos is repression.

Guantanamo is only the most notorious of a whole network of large and small US prisons, from Bagram Airbase in Afghanistan to Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean, and into the Caribbean, not to mention

dungeons in Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Morocco and other countries where America's captives are held and tortured under CIA direction. Guantanamo, it turns out, was not just a temporary expedient linked to the invasion of Afghanistan. Two years on, the number of men being held there has gone up, not down, and new prisoners are still being brought in.

Three children, ages 13 to 15 (the youngest was only 11 when he was arrested) were released from Guantanamo in January 2004, not because the US decided imprisoning children is wrong - an unspecified number of teenagers, who are currently 16 and 17 years old, are still being held, in violation of international law - but because they no longer had any "interrogation value". Of three US citizens in isolation in military gaols in the US itself, the government recently agreed to let one see a lawyer for the same reason, not because they concede their prisoners have any rights, but because they were finished "interrogating" him. Most of the 1,200 men rounded up without charges in the US after 11 September were held in secret. None were indicted for anything relevant to the 11 September attacks. Even now, aside from the roughly 100 hit with other criminal charges, the US refuses to release the names and other details about those who were arrested or say who was deported, released or is still being held.

The principle they are defending is that anywhere in the world they have the right to hold anyone they want in total isolation as long as they want, with no charges or any public accounting, and to interrogate people in isolation until they break without having to bother with legal niceties. The state's interests are openly posed as absolute, and the people's rights are to be reviewed and judged in that light. Of course, the US government, like other contemporary imperialist bourgeois democracies, has long used violence to enforce the dictatorship of the monopoly capitalists, from beating up strikers to murdering revolutionaries. But now even the stated rules of the game are shifting.

In the name of the "war on

terrorism", America's spy computers are gobbling up databases not only on air passengers but on all inhabitants of countries around the world. American security authorities effectively run some 20 seaports in Europe and elsewhere. World financial information is similarly being streamed through Yankee checkpoints. "They hate our freedom," says Bush, trying to explain resistance to the US in Iraq and elsewhere, but the US is the world's most flagrant human rights violator. The US imperialist ruling class is stretching to establish a world unbounded by any laws other than its own.

Two Dangers

The plan for "a new American century" has not unfolded in a straight line. Iraq has turned out to be more of a handful than Bush's inner circle expected; the reorganisation of the US armed forces has turned out to be too complicated to carry out in wartime; and they may not be able to follow the invasion of Iraq with another military action at as quick a tempo as we implied in our earlier articles. But even if they may not find it a good idea, right now, especially amid the American presidential campaign, to repeat their warnings that the "war on terror" (of which the Iraq war is only one part) will last a whole generation, they are not backing off their plan.

With ongoing war in Iraq but an apparent lull in terms of the US's global aggression, a kind of "intense calm" has set in (to borrow Lenin's words concerning the moments of apparent lull in the run-up to the October Revolution). Greater and even more tumultuous storms are on the horizon and the imperialists are preparing new crimes.

The people's forces also have to prepare for new rounds of struggle.

It would be a big mistake to let the temporary pause in the US imperialists' "war on the world" lull us to sleep about the dangers that lie ahead. Yet it would be just as dangerous and criminal if we failed to see the strategic weaknesses that

the last two years have already begun to bring to light.

Most of all, Iraq itself has shown both the US's power, and the limits to its power. To restate the lesson we drew from our critique of the Iraqi resistance but this time put it positively, if disparate Iraqi guerrilla organisations, despite their limited outlook (so far at least), have been able to stand up to the most powerful military in history, then what, in that country and region, could be accomplished by bringing into play the full potential of a war that relies on the masses and represents the interests of the vast majority of the people in the world?

In shattering the old order in the Middle East, the US has unleashed powerful forces it ultimately may or may not be able to control. The American occupation of Iraq and the US support for Israel are supposed to be pillars of US control in the Middle East, and yet they are also the main sources of disorder in the region. The third military pillar, Turkey, and Egypt, have been anything but stabilised by the Iraq war. What the Communist Party of Iran (Marxist-Leninist-Maoist)'s organ *Haghighat* number 12 has said about that country applies to more than one long-standing, imperialist-dependent, deeply exposed and hated regime in the Middle East: the question is not whether or not they will be able to survive, but how they will fall. "The best [possibility] is that the masses, led by clear revolutionary slogans, play the biggest role in overthrowing the regime." If for the US seizing this region is key for their plans for world domination, the development of revolution here could be equally key to a whole different world outcome.

Further, people's wars led by the revolutionary proletariat and its Maoist parties are advancing in several countries, most notably Nepal. The People's War in Nepal is an expression of the contradiction between the imperialists and the people of the oppressed countries they dominate. This contradiction is also expressing itself in the US grab for Iraq and in many other ways, and is playing the principal role in

bringing the world to a boil. The same compulsions that have launched the imperialists, and the US in particular, on such a dangerous gamble are also affecting the mood and activity of the masses and intensifying conditions for revolution in many countries. Genuine people's war under the leadership of a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist party is the way forward for the people in Iraq, the Middle East and the world over. Nepal may not be at the centre of world contradictions right now, but revolution intensifying throughout South Asia would surely become a major geopolitical factor.

The situation, for instance, in many countries of Latin America is also increasingly explosive - and Latin America is far from what today might seem the eye of the storm. As has become all the more apparent, the US cannot intervene everywhere at once. In fact, the resistance of the people of the world and especially the resistance of the Iraqi people has already, to some extent, changed the conditions in which the imperialists' offensive is unfolding. Nor do they have all the time in the world. For instance, whilst the US is tied up in Iraq, the other end of the "Greater Middle East", Afghanistan, is increasingly proving itself not at all "nailed down" in the US imperial order.

Within the imperialist countries themselves, the war has stripped off some of the trappings that often hide bourgeois dictatorship, which has enraged a growing section of the people and further heightened the contradiction between the imperialists and the revolutionary proletariat and its allies among the masses who are opposed to this war. It is not impossible that the consequences of the US's "war on the world" could hasten the advent of revolutionary situations in the imperialist heartlands.

"Today's world is in a state of revolutionary disarray," as Henry Kissinger put it. The present world situation is becoming increasingly intolerable for all classes. No halfway solution is possible. The world is being shaken by enormous contradictions, and this won't stop until they are resolved, one way or another, at least for a time, either at the expense of the

people or through great advances in their liberation. Until then, the wheel will continue to spin. No one can predict how long the world will be in a state where one order is being shattered and another has yet to be erected. But as long as it lasts there is likely to be an unprecedented window of opportunity for revolutionary advance on a global level, the likes of which are rarely seen.

The revolutionary possibilities and the difficulties and dangers this situation poses for the people are two sides of the same coin, different manifestations of the same underlying contradictions. One cannot exist without the other.

This situation places very heavy responsibilities on the shoulders of the world's revolutionary forces, and in the first place on the Maoists, whose thoroughly revolutionary outlook, understanding and leadership have been proven all the more necessary by the events of the last few short years.

Footnotes

1. The issue of the US/UK governments' lies to "their own people" shouldn't be allowed to hide their greater crimes against the Iraqi people. The US/UK anti-war academics' organisation Iraq Body Count (iraqbodycount.org) estimated total civilian deaths as a minimum of 7,968 and a maximum of 9,801 between the start of the bombing and 9 January 2004. Most, although not all, were killed by occupation troops. Estimates of the number of Iraqis who died due to the 12-year UN embargo run from a half million to one million.
2. See Scott Ritter, "Not everyone got it wrong on Iraq's weapons", *International Herald Tribune*, 6 February 2004. The former chief UN weapons inspector in Iraq points out that his paper concluding "it can be fairly stated that Iraq was qualitatively disarmed at the time the inspectors were withdrawn [in December 1998]", along with similar reports by his predecessor Rolf Ekeus and strong indications to that effect by his successor Hans Blix, were all ignored.
3. Japanese bombers sank American warships stationed in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, in 1941, shortly after the US Navy moved to cut off Japan's oil supplies. Some historians contend that the US authorities had at least some inkling of this surprise attack but decided to let it happen to create the impression of a just ("defensive") war and a wave of patriotic fever.
4. The prohibition was only on ground troops. The US's giant Incirlik airbase was never closed. Along with US bases in Germany, Incirlik is part of a logistical triangle on which the US occupation of Iraq still depends - as way stations for troop rotation and

supplies, medical evacuation, etc. In January 2004, the Turkish government authorised the US to use Incirlik to move hundreds of thousands of troops in and out of Iraq. This time parliament was not asked.

5. Exchange between US Ambassador (retired) Hume Horan Berkley, the recently-resigned senior American counsellor to the occupation Coalition Provisional Authority, and journalism professor Mark Danner in letters in *The New York Review of Books*, 12 February 2004.

6. Between January 2004 and the end of May, some 250,000 soldiers are to be rotated in and out of Iraq and Afghanistan. This is the biggest movement of its kind since the Second World War.

7. *Monthly Review* (monthlyreview.org), March 2003.

8. In addition to the 132,000 regular troops in Iraq, the US also has Special Forces counter-insurgency soldiers whose numbers are secret. The UK has a total of 12,000 troops. Other countries supplied another 12,000 in all - less than a quarter of what the US asked for. Some of the latter are supposedly non-combat forces and none are stationed in what are considered high-risk zones, although they have suffered 36 combat deaths anyway. British troops, also far less involved in combat than the US, have had 56 deaths. In addition to the officially reported 496 American dead, over 10,000 US soldiers have been evacuated for medical reasons. (Figures as of 13 January 2004.)

9. Although it is ironic that Saddam could hold elections but Bremer considers them "impractical" in Iraq.

10. Even Howard Dean, considered the most "anti-war" of the Democratic Party contenders to run against Bush in the presidential elections, said, "Now that we're there we can't leave." As the *Revolutionary Worker*, voice of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA, points out, "This is not an anti-war stand. It is a pro-war stand - even if it comes with angry and mocking denunciations of Bush."

11. In some accounts she supposedly said, "buy Russia". Whatever other efforts the US is making toward Russia, the US still maintains, over Russian objections, military bases ringing that country's southern underbelly, and has carefully courted the three Baltic states, now in NATO, whose airfields are within a three minute flight of Saint Petersburg.

12. Iraq and the Middle East is far from all that is at stake between the US and France. For instance, in December Powell travelled to Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia in the highest-level US visit in a decade - hot on the heels of the first conference of European and North African governments in several decades. Powell offered doubled military support and quadrupled economic aid to Morocco. This incursion into traditional French territory was followed the next month with an agreement for US troops and military contractors to be sent into four countries in France's sphere of influence in West Africa. ■

Storms

(Continued from page 7)

without first examining the thirty years of economic, diplomatic and political history that preceded it, of whose "politics" the First World War was a continuation. Similarly today's war (and by this we mean not only the invasion and occupation of Iraq but also the whole military/political offensive by US imperialism since 11 September) is a continuation and concentration of the politics of US imperialism, especially over the last twelve years, which has increasingly placed the US directly in the role of the exploiter and policeman of the oppressed nations and peoples. It is this reality, an expression of the principal contradiction in the world today, which is shaping and propelling the other main contradictions in the world, as we have seen in the last few months of crisis followed by the war in Iraq. The conflict between the US and the other imperialist countries has been heating up and has been shaped immeasurably by the struggle of the people, just as the war moves of the imperialists have further propelled a new round of struggle of the proletariat and its allies within the imperialist citadels themselves. This latter contradiction, also, does not "come out of nowhere" but has intensified in the past period with the important struggles in many of the advanced countries around the rights of immigrants, against police repression, against attacks on living standards of the people and so forth.

To return to the analysis [which appeared in *AWTW* 2000/26], "While we are not yet experiencing the same kind of 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." Our Committee called attention to the likelihood of a mass upsurge developing in our November 2002 statement on Iraq when we said that a US war of aggression was "likely to ignite a world-wide storm of resistance such as has not been seen for many years". Today, we can

affirm that this storm of struggle has indeed materialised. The possibilities for revolutionary struggle are opening up, in the Middle East, certainly, but also in many countries across the globe. Although the struggle will certainly not develop in a straight line and will inevitably go through ups and downs and be met by fierce resistance from the class enemy, the reality of the advance of the tide of revolutionary struggle is inescapable.

Again it is worth referring to Lenin's outstanding essay, "The Collapse of the Second International" and his analysis of the First World War and the revolutionary opportunities that accompanied it. "...[T]he objective war-created revolutionary situation, which is extending and developing, is inevitably engendering revolutionary sentiments; it is tempering and enlightening all of the finest and most class-conscious proletarians. A sudden change in the mood of the masses is not only possible, but is becoming more and more probable, a change similar to that which was to be seen in Russia early in 1905 ... when, in the course of several months and sometimes of several weeks, there emerged from the backward proletarian masses an army of millions, which followed the proletariat's revolutionary vanguard. We cannot tell whether a powerful revolutionary movement will develop immediately after *this* war, or during it, etc., but at all events, it is *only* work in this direction that deserves the name of socialist work." (*Collected Works*, Vol. 21, pp. 257-58.) And earlier in the same work when discussing the importance of the struggle going over to direct assaults on state power, Lenin stresses, "It is *not so often* that history places this form of struggle on the order of the day, but then its significance is felt for decades to come. Days on which such method of struggle can and must be employed are equal to *scores of years* of other historical epochs." (*Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 254, emphasis in the original.)

In their own perverse way, the imperialists themselves recognise the importance of the moment and how

their actions will set the stage for the future. On the eve of war, Tony Blair, addressing the UK's parliament for approval for British forces to participate in the attack on Iraq, stated, "...on this decision hangs the fate of many things: Of whether we summon the strength to recognise this global challenge of the twenty-first century and meet it...Of the institutions and alliances that will shape our world for years to come."

In a similar vein Jacques Chirac, president of France, spoke days before the war explaining why France would, if need be, exercise its veto at the United Nations. His first point was that a "unipolar world", i.e. US world hegemony, was intolerable. Behind the diplomatic manoeuvring was a dispute over the emergence of a "counter power" to US might. It is this that explains the venom with which the US and UK reacted to the French, German and Russian moves. And it also explains the fear of these other powers to go all the way in their opposition to the US — even though they oppose an unbridled US hegemony, they are also painfully aware that at this time only the US can prop up and protect the world imperialist system.

Of course the parallel with the situation Lenin analysed during the First World War, while remarkable in many ways, is far from complete in all its aspects. First, the current war is not yet "straining" the entire capacity of the imperialist societies in the way that the First World War and Second World War did — there is not the same widespread immiseration among the masses of these countries nor the evident possibility of "defeat" of these same ruling classes at the hands of imperialist enemies. On the other hand, the arousal to action of broad masses of the people is all the more remarkable given that the crisis has yet to unleash its full fury on the masses in these countries.

Why, then, do the US imperialists feel compelled to carry out such an adventure? After all, no one takes seriously the charges that Iraq represented a real threat to the US or that it had "weapons of mass destruction"? Further, some of the

representatives of US imperialism, including a number of those grouped around Bush senior, had cautioned against the dangerous and unforeseen consequences of the military adventure. Those voices have since been silenced by the US ruling class "consensus at gunpoint".

Despite the occasional flashes of reason of different imperialist spokespersons, there is a compelling reality pushing the US into its "war on the world". If a single country, or even a small group of countries, is to monopolise so much of the world's wealth it is also compelled to exercise its political control over those countries it exploits and oppresses. It must be prepared and willing to police these countries and impose its will. It has to be ready to attack not only the workers and peasants of these Third World countries but even those strata of the exploiting classes who fail to do the bidding of the US. Further, it is not always enough to rely on the local ruling class authorities; increasingly the US is both threatening and employing direct use of the overwhelming force of its military.

It is impossible for such an empire to be expanded, consolidated and policed without intensified opposition from the people themselves, without massive discontent, protests, rebellions and ultimately wars of resistance being waged against the US. While all of the imperialist powers have common interests in opposing and suppressing the growing upheavals of the people (hence their collusion), they have sharpening contradictions (contention) with each other, including how best to protect their specific interests amidst the intensification of world contradictions. Further, we have seen in the last few months how the conflict among the imperialists themselves has created some favourable openings for the people's struggle, fissures in the enemy camp (to paraphrase Lenin) through which the discontent of the masses can burst forth. The dispute in the UN over weapons inspections in Iraq is one such example: although the terms of the debate were completely reaction-

ary, as they were all premised on the need to disarm Iraq and maintain the monopoly of weapons of mass destruction in the hands of a select group of reactionary powers, it is nonetheless the case that the dispute over these questions fuelled the growing anti-war movement among the masses of all countries.

The crucial importance of a revolutionary situation and revolutionary crisis in the imperialist countries is generally accepted in our Movement: our *Declaration* points out that Lenin "analysed that the possibility for making revolution in the capitalist countries was linked to the development of *revolutionary situations* which appear infrequently in these countries but which concentrate the fundamental contradictions of capitalism". The dynamics of the revolutionary process in the oppressed nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America (the "Third World" for short) are different in important ways. Our *Declaration* stresses, "In the oppressed countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America a continuous revolutionary situation generally exists." Because of the continuous revolutionary situation it is generally possible to initiate and sustain armed struggle in one or more pockets of a Third World country. We have correctly opposed those who in the name of the "lack of an objective revolutionary situation" would postpone forever the initiation of the armed struggle or fail to see the decisive importance of the preparation and initiative of the proletarian vanguard forces. We have seen, both in the history of our Movement, as well as in the decades preceding our formation, that the conditions have, in fact, been favourable for initiating, sustaining and developing the armed struggle of the people for power. The most recent case in point is the dramatic growth and success of the People's War in Nepal, begun in 1996 at the very height of US imperialist strength in the post-Cold War epoch. It stood as a stunning refutation of the thesis of the Right Opportunist Line that emerged in the Communist Party of Peru (PCP) and argued that conditions in the

world were such that world revolution was going into a great retreat that required the communist forces to abandon revolutionary struggle and solicit peace accords.

In the same passage discussing the continuous revolutionary situation in the oppressed countries, our *Declaration* goes on to point out that, "...it is important to understand this correctly: the revolutionary situation does not follow a straight line; it has ebbs and flows. The communist parties should keep this dynamic in mind."

It is important to stress that a crucial factor in determining the "ebbs and flows" of the revolutionary situation is the international situation. It has always been a tenet of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism that the situation in a given country is inextricably connected to the world situation as a whole. Mao himself, despite acting in a country that comprised almost one fourth of the world's population and had a vast geographical expanse, and despite the fact that in the earlier decades of imperialism the world was far less tightly intertwined than it is today, paid great attention to analysing the world situation and examining the interrelation between the situation in China and the world as a whole.

The underlying basis for carrying out a correct strategy of protracted people's war is rooted in the socio-economic character of the given country, including the penetration of imperialism into that country; an economic, political and military consideration is of the utmost importance in understanding the dynamics of any oppressed country in today's world. But the ability to launch the armed struggle for power, the pace of development of the struggle, and the final seizure of nation-wide power is very much linked to the overall international situation and the intensification of the country-wide situation it can give rise to, including in the mood and revolutionary energy of the masses.

We can see today in a number of countries that the conditions created by the Iraq crisis and war have become clearly more favourable for revolution.

In many countries the masses are aroused to a great extent, the reactionary regimes are more isolated than ever, and the alignment of the class forces is generally favourable to the proletariat. Furthermore, the US imperialist enemy, while remaining on a vicious world-wide offensive, is forced to concentrate on Iraq and is not capable of intervening everywhere to the same degree.

In his famous work "A Single Spark Can Start a Prairie Fire", Mao opposed pessimistic tendencies in the party that failed to see the possibility of maintaining the armed struggle and the base areas. He wrote, "The objective situation today is still such that comrades who see only the superficial appearance and not the essence of what is before them are liable to be misled. In particular, when our comrades working in the Red Army are defeated in battle or encircled or pursued by strong enemy forces, they often unwittingly generalise and exaggerate their momentary, specific and limited situation, as though the situation in China and the world as a whole gave no cause for optimism and the prospects of victory for the revolution were remote. The reason they seize on the appearance and brush aside the essence in their observation of things is that they have not made a scientific analysis of the essence of the overall situation. The question whether there will soon be a revolutionary high tide in China can be decided only by making a detailed examination to ascertain whether the contradictions leading to a revolutionary high tide are really developing. Since contradictions are developing in the world between the imperialist countries, between the imperialist countries and their colonies, and between the imperialists and the proletariat in their own countries, there is an intensified need for the imperialists to contend for the domination of China. While the imperialist contention over China becomes more intense, both the contradiction between imperialism and the whole Chinese nation and the contradictions among the imperialists themselves develop simultaneously

on Chinese soil, thereby creating the tangled warfare which is expanding and intensifying daily and giving rise to the continuous development of the contradictions among the different cliques of China's reactionary rulers." (*Selected Works*, Vol. 1, pp. 120-21.) He ended his article with a scientific, but revolutionary romantic, conclusion: "How then should we interpret the word 'soon' in the statement, 'there will soon be a high tide of revolution'? This is a common question among comrades. Marxists are not fortune-tellers. They should, and indeed can, only indicate the general direction of future developments and changes; they should not and cannot fix the day and the hour in a mechanistic way. But when I say that there will soon be a high tide of revolution in China, I am emphatically not speaking of something which in the words of some people 'is possibly coming', something illusory, unattainable and devoid of significance for action. It is like a ship far out at sea whose mast-head can already be seen from the shore; it is like the morning sun in the east whose shimmering rays are visible from a high mountain top; it is like a child about to be born moving restlessly in its mother's womb." (Vol. 1, p. 127.)

The question facing many comrades now is to understand how the increasingly favourable international situation can accelerate the revolutionary process. Under these circumstances, it is possible to foresee two basic kinds of deviations. One error would be, under the pressure of the moment and the rising activity of the masses, to abandon a party's basic strategic orientation, vision and plan. As comrades in one party put it, this kind of error is "tactics eating up strategy" and "policy eating up politics". In other words, in the understandable effort to make progress in linking up with the immediate struggle of the masses, the long-term interests of the masses are sacrificed. This error can take a classic right form or a "left" form as well. Maintaining our strategic orientation and strategic planning will be an important fight if the

vanguard forces are, on a correct basis, to be able to seize the initiative at the current juncture.

At the same time an equally damaging tendency also exists, which is to fail to adjust and apply the strategic orientation to the concrete developments in the class struggle, and to fail to use the favourable international conjuncture to accelerate and advance the party's strategic orientation, but instead to go on with "business as usual" as if we are not experiencing exceptional moments in the international class struggle. Mao pointed out, "when a certain objective process has already progressed and changed from one stage of development to another, they [true revolutionary leaders] must also be good at making themselves and all their fellow-revolutionaries progress and change in their subjective knowledge along with it, that is to say, they must ensure that the proposed new revolutionary tasks and new working programmes correspond to the new changes in the situation. In a revolutionary period the situation changes very rapidly; if the knowledge of revolutionaries does not change rapidly in accordance with the changed situation, they will be unable to lead the revolution to victory." ("On Practice", *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 306.)

If communists in any country, and especially those most affected by the current vortex of contradictions, were not to take into account the rapid and dramatic changes in the international situation and their interpenetration with the class struggle in their country, and if they were not to develop the policies, slogans and tactics that corresponded to these changes, then "persevering in the strategic orientation" could become a smokescreen covering conservatism and passivity and the "strategic goal" will remain mere wishful thinking.

RIM Must Advance Amidst Intensifying Contradictions

The Revolutionary Internationalist Movement has existed for eighteen years and its accom-

plishments are undeniable. But we can by no means rest content with what we have achieved until now. As [an internal report put it in] January 2002, "Thus our Movement is placed before a historic responsibility, opportunity and challenge. Will the Maoists be able to step forward and lead the masses of people in resisting the imperialist onslaught, and through the course of the struggle further advance the cause of the world proletarian revolution?..."

"In this light it is impossible to overstate the importance that our Movement has for the people of the world and the importance of the decisions and actions (or lack of same) that we take in the coming period. In short, the Movement is facing its greatest test since its formation."

No progress is painless - every step forward, especially at critical junctures, can only come amidst fierce struggle, not only with the enemy but also against counter-currents that inevitably arise in opposition to a correct understanding. Mao pointed out that it is not enough to grasp the correct line, it is necessary to grasp it firmly. He went on to say, to not grasp the line firmly means to not grasp it at all. If our Movement is to play the role that it must, it is necessary that we "grasp firmly" both the correct political and ideological line that we have been forging and our understanding of the favourable, if contradictory, international situation. We also need to firmly grasp the possibility of achieving breakthroughs precisely in connection with the current intensification of contradictions and fight to preserve and maintain this understanding. Finally, and most importantly, we need to find the means and vehicles to link this advanced understanding with the masses and push the whole revolutionary process forward.

Nepal

It is worth briefly examining the interrelation between the revolutionary advances in Nepal and the overall situation of the world revolutionary movement. This is a

point that our Committee has addressed frequently in past reports and statements. Today, however, the living link between the earth-shaking developments in Nepal and the overall world situation comes into sharper relief.

It is clear that Nepal is not presently the focus of world events, as the US-UK imperialists have, for reasons analysed previously, felt compelled to focus their attention, including especially their military aggression, against Iraq, as well as the Middle East more generally. But does this mean that the reality of people's power emerging in vast expanses of Nepal and the real possibility of nation-wide victory has no relation to the overall situation in the world? No, it does not.

As Mao put it, "Ever since the monster of imperialism came into being, the affairs of the world have become so closely interwoven that it is impossible to separate them... today international support is necessary for the revolutionary struggle of any nation or country... In the past, the Chinese revolutionary forces were temporarily cut off from the world revolutionary forces by Chiang Kai-shek, and in this sense we were isolated. Now the situation has changed, and changed to our advantage. Henceforth it will continue to change to our advantage. We can no longer be isolated. This provides a necessary condition for China's victory in the war against Japan and for victory in the Chinese revolution." ("On Tactics Against Japanese Imperialism", January 1934, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, pp. 170-71.)

We can see that the emergence of an international movement against the US imperialist war moves is of great significance for the future development of the people's struggle in all countries, including in Nepal. The millions of masses who have been propelled into motion have, to a great degree, done so despite being "saddled" with the thankless task of objectively defending the Sadaam Hussein regime, a regime widely exposed and hated for its crimes against its own people. Those who have fought so hard to stem the hand

of the US-UK aggressors can, through education and struggle, be won to fight with all the more determination and enthusiasm to protect the genuine accomplishments of the Nepalese people and especially the red political power they have brought into being. While only six months ago it may have seemed a mere pipe dream to imagine the masses of the people of the world "coming to the rescue" of the revolution in Nepal if and when it faces the massive intervention of imperialism and/or other reactionary states, today such a movement on the part of the people seems not only possible but an achievable task. It cannot simply be willed into being, it will depend a great deal on the actual unfolding of events, but if the imperialists attack the revolution and as the people resist in a way that shows the nature of the revolution they are waging, fertile ground will exist for mobilising support for the Nepalese revolution, in South Asia and all over the world.

This shows the correctness of the slogans the Committee has raised — "Hands off Nepal" — and calling on the advanced masses the world over to "Look to the Himalayas, A Better World's in Birth." The more the masses are aware of the completely different kind of struggle and completely different kind of society being built in Nepal, that truly a "better world's in birth", the more courageously and the more far-sightedly the masses will struggle on all of the vital battlefronts of today, especially in the crucial battle to defeat the US-UK aggression in Iraq. And the more powerfully the struggle against US-UK aggression and occupation in Iraq is waged, the more the people sense their own strength and the enemy's underlying weakness and the more the masses will come to understand the importance and possibility of beating back the imperialists and reactionary plans against the revolution in Nepal.

The Iraq crisis and war, as pointed out earlier, succeeded in bringing to the surface the cracks and fissures among the imperialists and reactionaries themselves. Indeed, this

is one of the remarkable differences between the current war and the 1990 Gulf War, when the US was able to orchestrate virtually the entire "international community" to take part directly or indirectly in its aggression. The difference cannot be attributed to Iraq's diplomatic efforts. Rather, the increased cleavage in the imperialist camp has been dramatically sharpened by the just struggle of the masses of people of all countries, which has interacted with the very real conflict these different powers have over how best to pursue their own imperialist interests. We can see that the determined resistance of the Nepalese masses, led by their vanguard party, will win the support of the progressive and revolutionary people the world over — this is an inescapable law. It is this resistance and this bedrock of support around the world that will create real obstacles to the imperialists and reactionaries uniting against the revolution. While it is never possible to rely on any imperialist or reactionary powers, it is true that through the intensification of the struggle and the building of a genuine revolutionary movement of support, it will become more possible to divide the imperialists and reactionaries, which will, in turn, provide new openings for the people's struggle.

We must persevere in the correct policy of focusing our attention against the US war against Iraq while at the same time seizing every opportunity to weave education about, and support for, the Nepalese revolution into our overall work....

Comrades, we will end with this verse from a poem by Mao Tsetung:
We can clasp the moon in the Ninth Heaven

And seize turtles deep down in the five seas:

We'll return amid triumphant song and laughter.

*Nothing is hard in this world
If you dare to scale the heights.*

**Committee of the Revolutionary
Internationalist Movement
5 April 2003 ■**



Twenty years ago, in March 1984, the formation of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM) was announced to the world during a historic London press conference that boldly declared the formation of "an embryonic centre of the world's Maoists" and the goal of forming a communist international of a new type. A short time later, on 1 May of the same year, the *Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement* was published and distributed in many languages. Although the world situation has undergone dramatic changes since then and RIM's own understanding of its revolutionary ideology has advanced, especially with the adoption of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism as its guiding ideology in 1993, the *Declaration* remains a precious achievement and a solid foundation for further advance.

The formation of RIM was, above all, a response to the capture of revolutionary China by the new bourgeoisie led by Hua Kuo-feng and Deng Xiaoping shortly after the death of Mao Tsetung in 1976. The closest followers of Mao, including his widow, Chiang Ching, were arrested, and a wave of terror spread across the country. Thousands were killed or imprisoned. The China that had been living proof of the possibility of building a new society free of exploitation was rapidly transformed into a hellhole of capitalist exploitation. The China that under Mao had been a bulwark of resistance to the world imperialist system became another link in the world-wide chain of oppression.

The international communist movement was severely harmed by the loss in China. Many forces followed the Chinese party into the

revisionist swamp. Others echoed Enver Hoxha's vicious attack on Mao Tsetung Thought (which today we call Maoism). Some tried to "rediscover" socialism in the Soviet Union, which Mao had so forcefully and convincingly exposed as social-imperialist. Even more former communists lost their hope in the possibility of proletarian revolution and drifted away from political activity altogether.

The formation of RIM was a declaration of refusal to abandon revolution. It was a daring act to hold high the red flag when it was being trampled in China, Albania and elsewhere. As the *Declaration* put it, "Today...the forces fighting for a revolutionary line are a small minority encircled and attacked by revisionists and bourgeois apologists of all stripes. Nevertheless, these forces represent the future". With the hindsight of twenty years we can see how prophetic these words were.

Only a few years after the formation of RIM the whole East bloc, including the USSR itself, came crashing down to the applause and laughter of the Western imperialists, who tried to use the collapse of this revisionist monstrosity to proclaim the final victory of Western "democracy" over "communist totalitarianism". Even today the tidal wave of the bourgeois ideological onslaught against the theory and experience of proletarian revolution does its damage.

Despite these difficult moments, RIM and the parties and organisations making it up were not only able to maintain their bearings but to make some dramatic breakthroughs. The People's War under the leadership of the Communist Party of Peru advanced steadily throughout the 1980s and early 1990s before facing a

"bend in the road" following the capture of its leader, Chairman Gonzalo, and the subsequent emergence of a right opportunist line that called for abandoning the war. Despite the hardships and difficulties, the communist revolutionaries in Peru have persisted and struggled to keep the red flag flying.

South Asia, home to hundreds of millions of the world's exploited and oppressed, is crucial in the process of world proletarian revolution. Maoist forces from India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka have been a pillar of RIM since its formation. A new chapter in this history began in Nepal in 1996 with the initiation of the People's War. Now, after only eight years, the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) has liberated the bulk of the country and is knocking at the door of nation-wide political power, which is sending shock waves throughout the region.

In India, RIM's connection to the advancing revolutionary struggle has been strengthened with the participation of the Maoist Communist Centre of India and the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) (Naxalbari).

In Turkey, the Maoist current is emerging stronger after a series of line struggles against the pernicious influence of a semi-Hoxhaite trend in the communist movement of that country. As a result, the subjective conditions are improving for a powerful new wave of people's war.

In Iran, a generation of revolutionaries had faced arrest, execution or exile, but amidst the defeat and demoralisation the red flag was kept afloat by the forces of RIM who went on to form the Communist Party of Iran (Marxist-Leninist-Maoist). Today, as the reactionary regime of the mullahs is agonising on

Celebrate RIM's

By the Committee of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement

20th Anniversary!

its deathbed and the imperialists and reactionaries seek to control the inevitable "regime change", the importance of RIM and the existence of its contingent in Iran stands out more clearly than ever.

In Afghanistan, where the communist forces had been smashed and/or disoriented by the Soviet Union's invasion and the subsequent leadership of the anti-Soviet war by CIA- (and China-) backed reactionaries, a new communist party emerged.

Thus, we can see that in the Middle East-Central Asia region, the only choice for the masses is *not* the false conflict between imperialist "modernisers" and Islamic "anti-Western" obscurantism. The path of new-democratic revolution, socialism and communism is no doubt a difficult road, but it is the *only* road to genuine liberation. Suffering at the hands of domestic and foreign exploiters, tired of seeing national sovereignty and democratic rights trampled by these same enemies and fed up with the dead-end "solutions" of the misleaders, whether bearded or clean shaven, men or women, the revolutionary elements in these countries need the liberating ideology of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, and it is the forces of RIM, in particular, who are struggling to bring it to them.

The countries of Latin America have long been considered their "backyard" by the US imperialists, who believe they have an unrestricted right to exploit the masses of these countries and control their destiny. Although the People's War in Peru has faced difficulties in recent years, it has been a shining example for revolutionaries throughout the region, and comrades in Colombia, Mexico and other countries of Latin America have struggled to popularise its

lessons. In Latin America, as well as elsewhere, efforts by the US imperialists to impose an even tighter control are intensifying the already strong hatred for Yankee imperialism. Here, too, the possibilities of new revolutionary breakthroughs exist.

From the beginning, RIM has reflected the reality that the world proletarian revolution consists of two basic streams — the proletarian socialist revolution in the imperialist countries and the new-democratic revolution in the oppressed countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. RIM's vision of the final goal of a world without classes and its internationalist orientation is strengthened by its presence in both kinds of countries. In the imperialist citadel of the United States, the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA has been able to sink roots among the masses and advance preparations for the future battle to rid the world of its greatest oppressors. In Italy and Germany, parties and organisations are developing as part of RIM, and elsewhere in the imperialist countries comrades are increasingly recognising the role of RIM in uniting the genuine Maoist forces.

In short, the world is ripe for revolution, and the situation is ripening still further. But in order for the dreams of the oppressed to become a reality, proletarian ideology must come to the fore and a solid communist organisation must be built. There are still too many parts of the world where Maoist forces are extremely weak or non-existent, such as in Africa where the need for revolutionary transformation is so evident. Even where genuine Maoist forces do exist, their capacity is generally dwarfed by the magnitude of the tasks to accomplish and the

possibilities to fulfil.

Further, we must consider the whole of the international communist movement and its future, not just the specific parts that make it up. RIM was formed not only to help the existing parties and organisations learn from each other and advance but to develop as a centre, to strengthen the proletarian ideological and political pole in the world as a whole and to lay the basis for further advance, both ideologically and practically, towards a communist international of a new type. The need for ideological and political clarity, for a stronger unity of the communists at the international level, and for further breakthroughs in leading the revolutionary struggle of the masses forward, all this cries out to be done. All Maoist revolutionaries must understand the importance of RIM to the world proletarian revolution and do their utmost to help it advance.

The world today is a fiery cauldron of conflict. The imperialist enemy is on the rampage and the people are driven to resist in a thousand ways. Imperialist order and stability is giving way to more intense turmoil in which the difficulties, hardships and sacrifices facing the communist forces and the masses of people are intensifying. Yet these very same conditions are favouring the emerging new wave of world proletarian revolution. Thus, we see once again that danger can be transformed into opportunities, the necessity to resist transformed into the freedom to take great strides ahead. In this light we can see that RIM's important achievements over two decades are but a prelude to the even greater challenges on the horizon facing the proletariat. ■



Shabha, East Nepal People's government.

Building Red Power in Nepal

Throughout the year 2003, Nepal has continued to be a vital battleground in which millions of Nepalese peasants, workers, revolutionary intellectuals and other progressive forces have, under the leadership of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) (CPN(M)), been locked in a fierce and complex struggle with the forces of the old Nepal—the landlords and bureaucrat capitalists and the discredited political forces linked to them, led by a feudal monarch backed by world imperialism and reaction. Nepal is one of the few countries where a genuine Marxist-Leninist-Maoist party has clearly established its leadership over the revolutionary process, and where the revolutionary

vision of the future illuminates the path ahead. This stands out in stunning relief in a world where, unfortunately, the struggles of the people are all too often encumbered by the cobwebs of different forms of dead-end ideology promoted by opportunist, bourgeois or even reactionary forces. For these reasons, the eyes and attention of the class-conscious proletariat and genuine revolutionary and democratic forces have been increasingly focused on the drama being played out in Nepal.

For much of 2003, there was a cease-fire in the People's War launched in 1996, during which the revolutionary and reactionary camps each sought to reinforce its position and prepare for the more intense

struggles that both knew lay ahead. When, after repeated provocations by the Nepalese reactionaries, the cease-fire was formally terminated at the end of August 2003, a fierce new wave of fighting swept from one end of the country to the other. The reactionary forces, emboldened by infusions of weapons, funds and advisers from the US and some other reactionary powers, have committed atrocity after atrocity, usually against common villagers and, in a grisly reminder of US imperialist tactics in Vietnam, often label the corpses falsely as "Maoists" to disguise their crimes and boost sagging morale.

The intense fighting of the later months of 2003 has not only been a continuation of the whole process of

People's War begun in 1996 but also, in a more immediate sense, the violent continuation of the political battle that took place under conditions of temporary cease-fire in the first half of 2003. Through this process the CPN(M) is emerging more clearly than ever as the acknowledged leaders of the great majority of the Nepalese people and the only political force that has the capability and is prepared to provide an alternative to the decrepit monarchy and the rule of the reactionary classes.

Background to the Cease-fire

As we analysed at length in *A World To Win* 2002/28, the revolution in Nepal has been developing at a dizzying pace, especially since the royal palace massacre in June 2001, when the reigning King Birendra and most of his family were killed. Although the massacre stripped the monarchy of any remaining legitimacy in the eyes of the masses, the ruling classes and the foreign imperialists recognised Birendra's brother Gyanendra as the new king and hoped that he would be able to finally crush the People's War. Gyanendra immediately called out the Royal Nepal Army (RNA) to directly confront the People's Liberation Army (PLA) led by the CPN(M). Up

People's Liberation Army women.



Piscar mountain village, east of Kathmandu.

to that point the RNA had stayed mainly in the background, aiding and advising the militarised police who had been the spearhead of the enemy's counter-revolution. But the ruling classes' hopes and dreams of quickly defeating the CPN(M) on the battlefield were soon crushed, as the PLA showed itself more than capable of standing up to the RNA and inflicting stinging defeats on them. On one occasion, they even surrounded a contingent of RNA soldiers who had arrogantly ventured into the Western region revolutionary strongholds and forced them to put down their rifles and pledge never to

fight the people again. Amidst the turmoil and revolutionary advance that followed the palace massacre, the enemy was divided and demoralised. The new king and the RNA felt it necessary to call a cease-fire with the revolutionary forces. The CPN(M) leadership, analysing that the people's forces would benefit from a temporary pause in the hostilities, and taking into account the wishes of different sections of the people, accepted a cease-fire.

Some initial exploratory talks took place during this first cease-fire, which lasted three months in the late summer and early autumn of 2001. Mainly, however, both sides used the interlude to prepare for the next round of military clashes. For the enemy, it was a time to try to re-solidify a badly shaken RNA and reunite the ruling class and its political parties around a widely hated king, who was generally considered responsible for the massacre of his own brother and other family members. It was also a moment for the old state to reinforce its ties with US and British imperialism, as well as with neighbouring India, which has always considered Nepal its protectorate. The attacks on 11 September 2001 and the US imperialists' subsequent announcement of a "global war on terrorism" made the king and the ruling circles more confident in their backing from the US, and made the US all the more

insistent that the "Maoist problem" be resolved by force.

On the part of the CPN(M), the three-month cease-fire was used to solidify and formalise the People's Liberation Army, whose founding conference was held in autumn 2001. It was also a moment to strengthen organs of political power at the local level, with the election of revolutionary councils in numerous districts. Huge mass meetings held in the district centres and the capital of Kathmandu further revealed the extent and depth of support for the revolution in Nepal.

After this short cease-fire ended,

the Party undertook what it called "a new initiation"—referring back to the initiation of the People's War in 1996, when the entire Party made the ideological, political and organisational transformations necessary to actually begin a people's war. This "new initiation" involved massive attacks by the PLA against enemy strongholds, in some cases involving thousands of soldiers organised into brigades and well armed with equipment that had been captured from the enemy.¹ In particular, immediately following the Party's announcement of the withdrawal of the cease-fire, a stunning military

victory was achieved in the district capital of Dang, where the most important enemy military base for the entire Western region was captured and huge stocks of weapons and ammunition were seized and carted away in lorries by the victorious PLA. Enemy strongholds were routed on a number of other occasions.

In the political sphere, resounding blows by the PLA hammered away at the efforts of the ruling class and its political party to forge a new reactionary consensus around King Gyanendra. On 4 October 2002, the Prime Minister and government were dismissed and

Denounce the Crimes of the Indian Defend Comrade Gaurav!

As *AWTW* goes to press, the Indian government has just abducted two leaders of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) (CPN(M)) and illegally handed them over by night to the torturers of the reactionary monarchy running Nepal. The two are Comrade Matrika Prasad Yadav, a member of the Political Bureau of the CPN (Maoist) Central Committee and head of the newly organised Madhes Autonomous Government, and Comrade Suresh Ale Magar, an alternate Central Committee member who accompanied the former and is also a leader of the World People's Resistance Movement-South Asia. CPN(Maoist) Chairman Prachanda issued a statement saying: "By arresting Comrade Yadav, a popular leader of the entire Nepalese people in general and of the Madhesi people in particular, and Comrade Ale Magar, a popular leader of an oppressed nationality, the Indian ruling class has struck at the heart of the entire Nepalese people from the Terai to the hills. This die-hard reactionary conduct of the Indian ruling class, which proclaims itself a 'republic' and the world's biggest democracy, has today stunned and enraged our party and the masses of people who are

fighting against the medieval autocratic monarchy in favour of a republic."

This latest outrage comes as an international battle has been heating up to prevent the Indian authorities from committing the same crime in relation to Chandra Prakash Gajurel, known to millions in Nepal and South Asia as Comrade Gaurav, who has been held in an Indian gaol since 20 August 2003 when he was arrested by the Indian authorities at Chennai (Madras) airport as he attempted to travel to Europe to carry out Party work. Since Comrade Gaurav is a member of the Political Bureau of the CPN(M), which is leading a people's war to free Nepal from feudal oppression and foreign domination, naturally he could not travel freely.

The Indian authorities have charged him only with possession of false papers. Even if this were true, India does not usually treat such matters as a major violation of their laws, and usually deal with this kind of thing in a matter of hours, not months or years. In this grossly unequal world, millions of people from oppressed countries do whatever is necessary to pass

through the iron wall around Europe and North America. The way the Indian authorities have treated Comrade Gaurav shows clearly that, regardless of the formal charges, in their eyes his real crime is not "illegal travel" but being a leader of a mass revolutionary upsurge in a country that has long been considered India's protectorate. India is, along with US imperialism, one of the main backers of the reactionary and thoroughly corrupt monarchy that has been fought into a corner by the CPN(M)-led People's War. The handover of Comrades Yadav and Ale Magar without even the pretext of a legal procedure shows that the danger is real indeed that the Indian authorities may try to do the same to Comrade Gaurav.

Even before this latest outrage by the Indian government the CPN(M) Information Bulletin number four warned, "There is real danger of the Indian state handing him over to the butchers in Nepal. Even though the prevailing extradition treaty between the two countries does not legally bind one to hand over the political detainees to the other side, the Indian rulers have been selectively invoking different treaties and laws to suit

parliament dissolved, and the king effectively centralised all governmental power in his own hands. Shortly thereafter the king appointed an unelected and hated flunkey, Lokendra Bahadur Chand, as his prime minister. The central goal of the king, his foreign advisers and indeed the entire Nepalese ruling class was to crush the rebellion of the masses of people by brutal force.

Despite the enemy's all-out attempts at suppression, the revolutionary forces persisted: different district headquarters of the reactionary state were demolished, large numbers of enemy soldiers

were put out of action, and further stocks of weapons and ammunition were captured. The country's top police chief was annihilated in the capital, Kathmandu. As the reactionary regime floundered and weakened on every front of the war, it was eventually forced to call for another cease-fire. In addition to the resounding military actions, the Party continued to lead other forms of struggle as well, including a very successful strike of the country's university students and repeated *bandhs* (or general strikes), whereby all economic activity in the country was halted for one or several days.

The powerful blows of the People's War and the ever-growing allegiance of Nepal's masses to the programme and leadership of the CPN(M) sent the whole reactionary ruling class into a quandary. In every corner of the country, the overwhelming political issue on people's minds had become the outcome of the war: on what basis could peace be restored, what form of society and what form of rule would replace the old state whose bankruptcy was becoming more and more evident?

The reactionaries of Nepal are and remain divided into many competing fiefdoms with different

Authorities!

their own interests. For instance, they did not hand over the people accused of plane hijacking and the bank robbery case belonging to the Nepali Congress in the 1970s, but readily and stealthily handed over Comrade Bamdev Chhetri and others [from the CPN(M)] last year." (Full text at www.cpnm.org)

Protests against the detention of Comrade Gaurav have been held in many countries around the world and have served as schools of internationalist solidarity. Support statements were issued by a politically broad range of forces immediately upon his arrest, including the National Democratic Front of the Philippines, the Workers Party of Belgium, the Communist Party of Norway, the Communist Party (ML) of Greece, the Maoist Communist Centre of India, and the Coordination Committee of Maoist Parties and Organisations of South Asia (CCOMPOSA), and these were quickly followed by many others.

In Istanbul, Turkey, a protest was held outside the Indian High Commission and a delegation of well-known human rights activists and lawyers met with a representative of the Indian government to make known

their concern. The World People's Resistance Movement (WPRM) has organised protests around Europe, and faxes and emails demanding Comrade Gaurav's release have poured into the Indian authorities. WPRM Benelux (Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg) and STOP USA (a platform of more than 50 groups that helped organise demonstrations against the invasion of Iraq) staged a protest rally in front of the Indian Embassy in Brussels on 12 November at which the protestors handed India's Ambassador a memorandum addressed to Prime Minister Vajpayee demanding Comrade Gaurav's immediate and unconditional release. Spokespersons for the Workers Party of Belgium and WPRM highlighted the recent increasing brutality of the reactionary regime of Nepal and urged the justice-loving people of the world to fight for his immediate release. A protest letter organised by Nepalese students in Norway was handed over to the Indian Embassy in Oslo, Norway, on 10 November.

At the time Comrade Gaurav was attempting to travel to Europe, the ceasefire between the government and the CPN(M) was still in place. But since then the war has resumed. The monarchy, with its arsenal reinforced by weapons acquired from the imperialists during the ceasefire, has stepped up the bloody intensity of its US-style counter-insurgency war. Human rights groups like Amnesty International have

denounced a wave of disappearances carried out by government forces.

The Nepal government has sent Interpol "red corner notices" for a number of revolutionary leaders, and the US recently listed the CPN(M) among its second tier of "terrorist" organisations. But the world's press, even establishment media like the BBC, France's *Le Monde*, *The New York Times* and *India Today*, have had no choice but to acknowledge that millions of Nepalese have rallied to the side of the popular insurgency in Nepal against the decrepit monarchy. Fighting to win the freedom of Comrade Gaurav is a crucial battlefield in the larger fight for the liberation of the oppressed of Nepal.

The task of defending Comrade Gaurav is particularly important for the Indian communist movement which has a special responsibility to oppose these reactionary moves by its own ruling class. A Committee in Defence of C.P. Gajurel has been formed in Delhi. It includes prominent university professors, lawyers, journalists, political activists and well-known personalities. Some 500-600 people took part in an 8 November meeting in Chennai (Madras) to support Comrade Gaurav. Speakers from a broad range of forces, including a member of India's parliament, demanded Gaurav's immediate release and threatened a "strong storm of struggle" if India turns him over to Nepal. ■

interests. But the most important division to note is between those who see the preservation and strengthening of the monarchy as the key link in maintaining the rule of the reactionary classes and others, especially the Nepali Congress Party and the Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist-Leninist), usually referred to as UML, who are the strongest parties in parliament and who see their own futures connected to the preservation of some sort of parliamentary system. These latter parties describe themselves as the defenders of the 1990 constitution, which was established after a nationwide anti-monarchy movement knocked down the old non-party Panchayat system that was headed by

the king and based on councils of "notables". While these two basic trends in the Nepalese ruling class have been locked in sharp conflict, they also interpenetrate. Even the so-called "Marxist-Leninists" of the UML have sworn allegiance to the monarchy, and even the king finds it useful to combine the defence of an autocratic and medieval system of rule with what the Nepal rulers like to call "multiparty democracy".

In addition to the shrinking support for the ruling class political parties on the one hand, and the bedrock support for the Maoists among the poor peasants and workers on the other, there are also important sections of the people who hesitate between the different political

solutions. These strata are particularly significant in the capital of Kathmandu, where an urban petite bourgeoisie has developed. As in other countries, the class position of these strata make them particularly susceptible to falling for illusions about the possibility of peaceful change through elections or to chasing after solutions other than the decisive victory of one of the two fundamentally opposed camps. From the beginning of the People's War, the CPN(M) has fought hard and achieved important successes in winning wide sections of these classes and strata to support the revolutionary camp. On the other hand, the UML and other revisionists have made it their special task to try

The Prisoner and Chandragiri By Krishna Sen ("Ichhuk")

The following poem is an excerpt from a longer poem called "The Prisoner and Chandragiri" written by Krishna Sen, whose pen name was "Ichhuk" ("Eagerness"). It is addressed to Chandragiri, a mountain standing north of the Kathmandu valley overlooking Bhadragol gaol where Sen was imprisoned. In his poem, the mountain personifies the Maoist vanguard standing firm and invincible before the difficulties on the path to revolution. Krishna Sen was the editor of the Maoist weekly newspaper Janadesh. The reactionary Nepal government ordered it closed down and had Sen murdered. The murder of the revolutionary journalist sparked a wave of protest and indignation in Nepal and internationally. Now the paper once again appears clandestinely.

Beloved Chandragiri!
At this moment of happiness
lost in eternal feelings
with yearning eyes
I behold you time and again.

This moment of happiness
may be a dim memory tomorrow
just as the memory of those arrested and
disappeared day after day
gradually dims and fades in the memory of those
left behind.

When final victory comes
we may or may not still be here
and this moment of happiness
may be our last joyous meeting.
And if I am gone tomorrow
the last verses of this poem
I'm writing now
may remain unfinished.

Those who have chosen death over capitulation
at a time when fear fills the air
like a Gestapo gas-chamber
really live their lives, in fact.
Despite their physical death
their great hopes and ambitions
will remain forever.

The memory of those who are fresh and honest
until the very end of their life
will remain forever
because as long as they lived
they lived an honest and meaningful life
and their strong feelings
will live long.

Who lives and who dies in real life
is ultimately determined by time,
and time will tell
that those
who lived for their country and the people
are the real blood of the motherland
and their pure feelings
will remain forever.

Beloved Chandragiri!
In my life
I tried to live real life
with all my efforts and convictions.
Between night and day,
the two sides of life,
I have tried to follow the day side
with all my efforts and convictions.
At every crucial moment of hardship or difficulty
I have tried to mix tears with lucidity

to play to the bourgeois-democratic prejudices of the urban petite bourgeoisie and hold up the illusion that some "third way", other than the victory of the Maoists or the RNA, is available to the country.

The Party has analysed that a state of "strategic equilibrium" now exists between the old and dying state represented by the king on the one hand and the emerging new state under the leadership of the Maoists on the other. Mao Tsetung analysed that, as a general rule, revolutionary warfare proceeds in three stages: from "strategic defensive", where the revolutionary forces are weaker than the enemy and must accumulate strength over a protracted period of time on the basis of guerrilla

engagements with the enemy, to the stage of "strategic equilibrium", in which the two sides are relatively equal and neither is yet able to decisively destroy the other and the fighting is more and more characterised by larger-scale mobile and positional warfare, to the "strategic offensive", when the forces of the revolution are able to launch an overall offensive aimed at decisively destroying the enemy's armed forces and establishing the rule of the people throughout the country. In Nepal, the Party holds that "strategic equilibrium" is reflected by the fact that the entire society recognises that there exist two different states in the country, each with its own army and

institutions. Experience has shown that both the revolutionary and counter-revolutionary camps use the period of "strategic equilibrium", which by its nature is transitory and unlikely to last long, to prepare to resolve the question of the revolution by decisively defeating the opposing camp.

Under the conditions of "strategic equilibrium" and the reality of "two states and two armies", a clamour for a negotiated solution to the war arose from many sectors of society, including from some sections generally supportive of the revolution but whose class position made them susceptible to hopes of some sort of peaceful solution.

Comrade Prachanda, the Chairman of the CPN(M), put it this way:

"Generally, as the revolutionary people's war develops to strategic equilibrium, enormous pressure mounts on the state establishment to find a way out through negotiations. In the concrete conditions of enormous military pressure (from the People's Liberation Army) as well as political pressure from the masses, the possibility of ... negotiations grows stronger, especially during the stage of strategic equilibrium. This is clearly shown by the history of people's wars around the world. But this does not mean that at the stage of strategic equilibrium cease-fires and negotiations necessarily take place, nor that their occurrence should be viewed as some kind of principle.... A process of a cease-fire and negotiations might be necessary and productive in one particular context of the national and international balance of power, whereas in another situation it might be unnecessary and even counter-productive.... In the present context of Nepal, the process of cease-fire and negotiations can be understood and defined as reflecting several particular factors: a specific international situation marked by a more aggressive and unbridled imperialism, a specific situation of strategic equilibrium in the country, the wishes of the Nepalese masses to find a political solution through peaceful negotiations, and our

with all my efforts and convictions
and to embrace truth.

Even so, life is life,
mistakes might have been made.
Dear friend,
forgive my mistakes.

Like a brightening morning
after a long deep night
today's deep gloom will be split asunder.
Communism, our belief,
will certainly one day rise
from the seeds of our commitment.
Certainly one day
our happy and thriving future
will bloom like a golden flower.

Until then, in a real sense
life will not be a real life
and in a real sense
today's terrible land
will not be transformed into a beautiful place for mankind.
Until then, we will persist
on our journey of commitment to building a beautiful world.
Certainly one day
the civilised world of our convictions
will become real, real life.
And this twenty-first century
will be the great century of our liberation
and the third millennium
will be the great millennium
of our victory.

Party's policy on war and negotiations." (*Janadesh Weekly*, 24 March 2003.)

From the outset negotiations and cease-fire had two entirely different contents for the two opposing camps of revolution and counter-revolution. Within the reactionary camp, both the parliamentary forces and the state power grouped around the army and the king tried to utilise the cease-fire and negotiations to isolate the Maoist revolutionaries and destroy them by bringing their ranks to the surface. The tactics and strategies of both sets of reactionaries – the parliamentarians and the monarchists – have been the same in essence: both groups wanted to utilise the Maoists against their ruling class rivals as a ladder to climb to the throne, and then turn on and destroy the Maoists. The enemy's cease-fire declaration was also an expression of deep internal contradictions within the reactionary camp itself, which the People's War and the tactics of the CPN(M) have greatly intensified.

Furthermore, the reactionary ruling classes and their foreign advisers hoped that the Maoist revolutionaries could be corrupted through the cease-fire and negotiations process. They recall past experience in Nepal, whereby a section of former Marxist-Leninists who in the late 1960s had even taken up armed struggle under the influence of the Naxalbari upsurge in nearby India, later degenerated into the ossified "royal UML". Other such examples can be found elsewhere in the world. Similarly, they hoped that if the CPN(M) could be enticed into the parliamentary hog-house, it could be transformed into a parliamentary party. They also expected that the Party could be divided, or that its members and leadership, who swim among the masses like fish in the sea, could be brought to the surface so that even if the cease-fire collapsed, the revolutionaries could be picked off like beached fish, ultimately leading to defeat for the revolution. For the enemy, then, the cease-fire was a time of political conspiracies and of illusions of placating the Maoist revolutionaries and eliminating the

People's War.

The leadership of the CPN(M) was quite aware of the conspiracies the reactionaries were hatching, and it was determined to navigate the cease-fire and negotiations carefully. Through this process, the CPN(M) was determined to make clear to all sections of the Nepalese people that the Party had a programme for addressing the basic needs of Nepalese society and a reasonable and just solution to the war by transferring all power to the masses of the people themselves. While it would be highly unlikely that the ruling classes and their foreign masters would allow such a solution, the struggle at the negotiating table and in the overall political arena would make it clear to millions more, including the wavering middle strata, that it was the reactionary forces, especially those grouped around the king and the RNA, that were blocking any possibility of fundamental change. As such, it is they who bear full responsibility for the hardships of war that the Nepalese people are suffering.

At the Negotiating Table

The CPN(M) thus faced a situation marked by new lurking dangers, but also great new opportunities to advance the revolutionary cause – if they could rise to the challenge. As CPN(M) Chairman Prachanda noted,

"Revolutionaries have been victorious by steadfastly applying the science of social revolution, upholding the fundamental interests of the masses, and being firm in principle and flexible in tactics. If a revolutionary party has not acquired this political and ideological capacity, it will not only be defeated on the front of dialogue but also on the front of war itself. Examples of defeats of armed struggle on the war front abound throughout world history, as do defeats on the front of dialogue. By avoiding the dangers of the rocks to the one side and the whirlpool to the other, the vessel of revolution can advance steadily to sea. If a captain lacks the capacity to

avert unseen rocks and dangerous whirlpools, the vessel may break apart on the rocks or be sucked into the whirlpool. Here the captain means the revolutionary party."

In this situation, the CPN(M) formulated three principal demands for a political solution to the war, as follows: a round-table discussion, an interim government and the election of a constituent assembly. The cease-fire was announced on 27 January 2003 when, according to CPN(M) Chairman Prachanda, Gyanendra had expressed his willingness to enter into serious discussion on all three of these points.

These three demands themselves are not the final goal for the Maoist revolutionaries; the Party considers them tactical means to reach the goal – to abolish the present reactionary system and to establish a revolutionary new-democratic system as the necessary first stage, before advancing to the socialist revolution. It is the new-democratic revolution alone that can, in a real sense, empower the masses of the people and make them sovereign.

As Mao defined it, the new-democratic revolution is, by its nature, bourgeois-democratic in that its immediate targets are not capitalism and the bourgeoisie as a whole, but rather only the landlords, foreign imperialists and those sections of the capitalists (the bureaucrat comprador bourgeoisie) linked to foreign and domestic reaction. In Nepal, the need to complete the democratic revolution is stark indeed. It has been clear since the Sugauli Treaty of 1815 following the war with British India and especially over the last fifty years that the country has achieved neither democracy nor national liberation.

Furthermore, in the hands of the reactionary classes these two goals have been made to appear opposite and contradictory. While the comprador bureaucrat capitalist class claims to be democratic and is supported by imperialism, the feudal autocratic monarchy claims to uphold the nation's sovereignty and independence. Likewise, in the process of attaining political power,

the comprador bureaucrats have always taken help from one section of imperialists and foreign reactionaries, while, in the name of safeguarding national independence, the feudal autocrats have been propped by other imperialist and foreign reactionaries. So on the surface the power tussle at the top appears to be between reactionary national chauvinist feudalism (actually linked to imperialism) and bourgeois-democratic forces who in reality are comprador bureaucrat capitalists and also puppets of imperialism. The only ones who have never had the opportunity to decide their own fate are the Nepalese people themselves. On every occasion the constitutions were written either by the feudal autocrats or by the compradors. The constitution of 1962 was written by feudal autocrats, as were the 1980 amendments. However, the people's movement of 1990 changed the situation to some degree, and another group of puppets of imperialism, the bureaucrat capitalists, wrote the current constitution, which enshrines "multiparty democracy" (while preserving a powerful monarchy).

The CPN(M) has long made it clear that the constitution of Nepal is already defunct. The palace massacre of June 2001 dealt a heavy blow to the monarchical system, but the monarchists, ignoring the fact that even the semblance of the monarchy's legitimacy had perished along with King Birendra, have gone all-out to reinforce Gyanendra's rule. Following his ascension to power, the king declared a state of emergency and the parliament and its elected government were formally dismissed. The feudal despot abolished in all but words the remaining traces of the 1990 constitution, and even the parliamentarians were deprived of their bourgeois rights. One section of the imperialist puppets, the parliamentarians, demand a return to the 1990 status quo, whilst another section of imperialist puppets, the monarchist feudal autocrats, demand an active monarchy. This has led to a deep, ongoing constitutional crisis and fuelled the desire of all sections of

the people to seek a progressive way out. The Party's call for a constituent assembly is an effort to speak to this demand and it has achieved a wide echo throughout society.

The question of a constituent assembly is also inseparably linked to the question of control over the Royal Nepal Army (RNA). The so-called democrats, that is, the parliamentary forces, believe that when they hold the government posts the king is a constitutional monarch and the army is under the control of parliament. This illusion could persist only so long as the interests of the feudal autocrats were not harmed. As the People's War developed and base areas were established, people began to exercise real power according to the revolutionary principle of the masses controlling their own destinies. Under the leadership of the vanguard party, the people built up their own political power and their own army, which ran completely counter to the interests of the monarchy and the feudal autocrats. Under these conditions, the thin veneer of a constitutional monarchy was shattered by the reality of the RNA directly reporting to the king and nakedly exercising reactionary dictatorship. The "triangular" struggle that on the surface seemed to be taking place between three forces – the king and the RNA, the parliamentary political parties, and the people's forces under the leadership of the CPN(M) – was thus shown in reality to be a two-sided battle between the old reactionary state, with the king and the army at the centre, and the new state, led by the CPN(M), whose pillar is the People's Liberation Army (PLA).

The proposal for a round-table conference attempts to provide an alternative that could serve as an interim parliament of different sections of the people, with proportional representation for different nationalities, regions, downtrodden castes (Dalits), genders and other sections of the people. This round-table conference would also name an interim government whose task would be to organise the election of the constituent assembly. Through this

process, the legitimacy of the RNA would virtually be finished, and the abolition of the absolute monarchy would be solidified.

In fact, there have been demands for a constituent assembly in Nepal going as far back as 1950. This continued to be raised by various forces until 1980, and some left forces again raised the demand for a constituent assembly during the anti-monarchy movement of 1990. But the concrete reality was that the people were unarmed and had no real political power. Even if a constituent assembly had been elected back then, based on the demands of the political parties, the result would not have differed substantially from the result of the 1980 referendum that endorsed the old Panchayat system. During the 1990 upsurge, the Maoists emphasised that the way forward for the country was to prepare for people's war.

Today, the slogans raised by the CPN(M) exist in a completely different subjective and objective context. Now the people have their own people's army and their own revolutionary political power in vast areas of the countryside. They have been exercising political power based on the principle of self-rule. In a large part of the country the principle of self-determination has won respect and the Maoist revolutionary politics of "it's right to rebel" have been ideologically, politically and practically established. The reactionary system has disintegrated more than ever before, and the masses of Nepalese people have expressed their yearning for the complete transformation of society.

The reactionaries in Nepal and abroad understood themselves that the slogans for a round-table discussion, interim government and constituent assembly would, under existing conditions, represent a transitional form led by the CPN(M) whose end result would be none other than the overthrow of the reactionary classes and the country-wide establishment of the new-democratic power that already exists in vast parts of the countryside.

The three demands had an electrifying effect throughout the

country. Even among the main parliamentary parties, significant sections have supported the demands. The revisionist UML even instituted disciplinary procedures against four of its leaders simply for wanting to put the question of the three demands on the agenda. The US and British at different times and in different ways made clear that no Maoist-led political solution would be tolerated, and so they promptly announced an increase in military aid. The US even had the nerve to place the CPN(M) on the US State Department's list of "terrorist organisations", even as mass rallies all across Nepal were demonstrating the support of millions of Nepalese for the newly arising political power.²

Cease-fire and Aftermath

While the reactionary regime agreed to the cease-fire and to negotiations in words, it covertly harboured a different agenda. The CPN(M) leadership was keenly aware of the reactionaries' character and was thus able to skilfully expose their hidden agenda. It also became clear early on that one tactic of the reactionaries was to avoid major matters and divert discussion to secondary issues. Through all this, the Nepalese masses have now had an opportunity to witness clearly the reactionaries' double-dealing policy, holding one hand forward for an embrace while the other clinches a knife to stab the people in the back.

Within a week of declaring the cease-fire, the CPN(M) prepared a policy and programme for this period and clarified its policy on the question of negotiations, that is, that the ultimate purpose of negotiations was to empower the Nepalese people, and that if the interests of the people were undermined by the enemy, the Party reserved its right to terminate the cease-fire at any moment. While the Party named a high-level five-person negotiating team led by Dr Babarum Bhattarai, the enemy suffered a stinging humiliation when it had great difficulty even constituting its own negotiating panel. For its part, the CPN(M)

respected the cease-fire, not only by circulating its policy among the rank and file, but also, as a goodwill measure, by withdrawing a scheduled general strike (*bandh*). It also stopped fund collections (such as taxation), except voluntary contributions. The Maoist-led People's Liberation Army, the Maoist cadres and the revolutionary people throughout the country exercised a high level of revolutionary discipline.

Meanwhile, the Royal Nepal Army violated even the minimum norms of the cease-fire. They engaged in encirclements of smaller PLA contingents, seized arms from PLA units, conducted raids, and arrested and intensified spying against Maoist revolutionary supporters, cadres and leaders. Some of the police posts that had been removed under the pressure of the People's War were re-established. Instead of releasing Maoist leaders and political prisoners from prison and publicising the whereabouts of "disappeared" people and cadres, the Royal Government killed several Maoist revolutionaries. After protracted discussion, a 22-point "code of conduct" to govern the cease-fire was agreed by both sides and publicly announced on 13 March 2003.³ In the meantime, the Royal government filed criminal charges against Comrade Baburam Bhattarai and other Party leaders and conducted army movements throughout the country camouflaged as public health efforts – their "doctors" were in fact busy killing Maoist revolutionaries and arresting people! In the negotiations themselves, the enemy camp refused substantive discussions concerning the three demands put forward by the CPN(M) and the future of Nepalese society. Despite these provocations, the CPN(M) declared that the Party would persevere in the negotiation process to the logical end.

In the second round of these negotiations, the old state agreed to confine movements of units of the Royal Army to within a 5-kilometre periphery of their barracks. This agreement caused a nation-wide furore, since it effectively meant that

the old state would be able to exercise power only within a small part of the national territory (the 18 per cent of the country within 5 km of army barracks), while the people's rule over the vast majority of the countryside was tacitly recognised. The very next day, one member of the old state's negotiating team tried to deny that there had been any "5-kilometre agreement". The RNA proceeded to arrest many cadres and tried to stop the political activities of the Maoist revolutionaries in the countryside. Under pressure from the whole country, the RNA was finally obligated, in words, to recognise the "5-kilometre agreement".

Why did the old state repudiate an agreement reached by its own negotiators? No doubt this is explained in part by the double-dealing and treacherous nature of the ruling class and its army, like those of reactionaries the world over. But it is also necessary to take full note of the insidious role of US imperialism.

From the time the cease-fire was declared, the US imperialists were actively and openly interfering in Nepalese internal affairs. They welcomed the cease-fire on the day following its announcement, yet, after some days, demanded that the CPN(M) lay down its arms. This would mean nothing less than disarming the people in the face of reactionary suppression. Some days later, the US blamed the Nepalese government for not having fought harder against the CPN(M). All this was plainly aimed at provoking the Nepalese feudals and bureaucrats to violate the minimum norms and conditions of the cease-fire and negotiations. Even whilst negotiations were still going on, the US stepped up its training of the Royal Nepal Army, supplied it with more advanced weaponry, put the Party on its "B" list of "terrorists", and signed a five year-agreement with the Nepalese Royal Government. These facts show that the US goal is to push the reactionary classes into an all-out bloody conflict with the revolutionary people.

Throughout the cease-fire it became clearer and clearer to the

masses and indeed the whole society that the Nepalese ruling classes are part and parcel of the world system of imperialism and reaction, which could never accept the will of the vast majority of the people and would, instead, seek to crush their revolution by force.

Mass meetings, some attended by tens of thousands, were held to welcome the CPN(M) negotiators, not only in the capital but in other cities and district towns as well. Meanwhile, the Party took great care that the temporary cessation of hostilities did not lead to the identification of the various levels of Party leaders, who remained strictly underground.

The third and final round of the negotiations was held in the city of Dang in western Nepal, the site of the tremendous military victory of the Maoist-led armed forces in 2001. Earlier a huge mass meeting had welcomed the CPN(M) negotiating team. When the enemy negotiators and international press arrived, they noted that the entire city was decorated with slogans and banners in support of the positions of the CPN(M). Yet once again the representatives of the old state refused substantive discussions, and both sides prepared for what was now seen by all as the inevitable resumption of full-scale warfare.

In the face of the continuing violations of the cease-fire and the old state's repeated refusal to engage in substantive discussions, on 27 August 2003 the Party finally declared its intention to resume military action. As for the RNA, its undeclared violations of the cease-fire had been mounting daily for weeks and months before that. The BBC World Service reported that one factor behind the collapse of the cease-fire was "the added interest of major outside powers in the country's domestic affairs, mainly the US, UK and India. All three of them... have helped the Royal Nepalese Army fight the rebels, but India is said to be apprehensive of growing US influence in its backyard."

Indeed, while these powers will

doubtlessly work together to thwart the advance of the revolutionary forces, their ongoing rivalry and the general weakness of the central Nepal state makes it difficult for the reactionaries to unite their ranks against the CPN(M). It remains to be seen how much they will pull together as the revolution advances, or how much they will instead turn on each other like rats in a sinking ship. In any case, one of the chief aims of the US imperialists is to try to stand over the fray and knock heads together to forge unity against the revolution, but this effort might well stretch its own resources, especially if it becomes even more bogged down in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In any case, while the CPN(M) carried out a few large-scale actions immediately following the end of the cease-fire, the most significant activity was the forcible removal of enemy armed forces and spies from vast sections of the countryside. This took place not only in the hilly region of Nepal, which had long been under PLA control, but also in the agricultural plains of the Terai, which provide most of Nepal's grain and where feudal landownership has weighed on the peasantry for centuries. The Terai borders India and is an area where communications and transportation are more developed than in the hilly region, hence it has long been an enemy stronghold that is militarily more difficult for waging people's war. So the fact that it too has been overwhelmingly liberated is of tremendous importance.

The CPN(M)'s support is not confined to areas where the masses rule. Only three weeks after the collapse of the cease-fire, the Party called for a three-day *bandh* (general strike), which completely halted all economic activities in the country from 17-20 September 2003, paralysing Kathmandu and costing the economy an estimated 10 million US dollars per day.

Inside the Base Areas

The functioning of the people's

government is making steady but rapid progress. The old state had sought to nip the revolutionary war in the bud. It made many attempts to destroy revolutionary construction – people's power, revolutionary politics, and the gains the people had generally won in the course of the People's War. But revolutionary political power has not only involved fighting a resistance struggle in the base areas, it has also meant applying a revolutionary social, economic and judicial policy. The country's poorest, most oppressed and marginalised people have been establishing their revolutionary state power in remote areas where the old state had little presence. The CPN(M) is learning from the policy adopted in revolutionary China under the leadership of Mao, where certain counties were established as models for the whole country. In Nepal today, alongside model industry and model agriculture, the revolutionary people have also been developing model state power.

Model state power involves the understanding and the exercise of the fundamental rights of the people, including production, the supply of basic necessities, education, sanitation, communications, transportation and the establishment of a judicial system. While the areas concerned are located on difficult, poor terrain, once the people have grasped the essential points of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, and once they have realised their own strength and capacity, they have been able to turn the whole society downside-up. Just as in China's Tachai, where, despite poor, hilly and unproductive land, the formerly downtrodden and oppressed masses were able to transform it into a model county, so too the Nepalese Maoists have been building several "Tachais" in the hilly terrain of Rapati, Bheri, Karnali and Seti in western Nepal. As the Chinese revolutionaries said, "When the broad masses of poor and lower middle peasants, who are the masters of socialist agriculture, study Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought [which we now know as Marxism-Leninism-Maoism—ed.]

and master Chairman Mao's line and general and specific policies, they acquire indomitable strength and become powerful enough to tame mountains and harness rivers." (*Shanghai Textbook*, Banner Press, USA, p. 164.)

Like the revolutionaries in Maoist China, the revolutionaries in Nepal, and the broad mass of poor and lower middle peasants more generally, have been learning to wield Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, the general line and specific policies of the CPN(M), and have been acquiring indomitable strength and are becoming powerful enough to tame Mounts Sagarmatha (Everest), Machapuchre, Jaljala, Malika and Chilkhaya and harness the Koshi, Narayani, Karnali and Mahakali rivers. As the *Shanghai Textbook* said, "They can transform unfavourable natural conditions into favourable ones, transform low yields into high yields, advance from a condition of owning no agricultural machines to owning various agricultural machines, and realise the potential of agricultural mechanisation." With this Maoist understanding, the revolutionary people of Nepal are not only destroying the old system and its infrastructure of exploitation and oppression, but also constructing and building a new economic base and new relations between people – in short, a new social system.

In the Humla district of western Nepal, the aim is for at least one ward of each Village Development Committee to be selected to build model state power. By the time the state of emergency was declared, the development of model state power was underway. When the cease-fire and negotiations began, the Humla and Mugu unified district organising committee had selected Srinagar, Madana Kalika and Viyi as model areas. These are extremely backward areas, where famine has been rampant. Hundreds of people die every year because of hunger and the lack of medicine. Because of the lack of an irrigation system; fertiliser and proper seeds, and since the masses are not mobilised, farmers reap only one harvest a year. The area is

marked by extreme differences in climate, from scorching weather in the summer, when malaria takes dozens of lives every year, to extreme cold and snowfall in the winter. In the past, the old state did nothing. Documents seized from the enemy suggest that the old government had allotted some funds for these areas, yet no work had been done on the ground. Where did the funds, however limited, disappear? Into the pockets of officials and flunkys.

The Party mobilised all possible resources to develop models of new state power. Since the country is still in a state of civil war, the models of state power are designed to meet the demands of the existing situation. The comrade responsible for leading the CPN(M)'s work in Humla and Kalikot told *Janadesh* (3 June 2003), "The division of the districts for the development of model state power was scientifically determined according to the needs of the civil war." By the time negotiations began, 13 institutions had been established to systematise model state activities. The major institutions in the model state power deal with housing and local development, public education, health, sanitation and culture, public security, agriculture and husbandry, industry and mines, public administration, law and justice, information, communications and propaganda, women and society, the development of oppressed nationalities, water resources, population control, forestry and ecological preservation, and financial and distribution co-operatives.

In the Humla and Jumla districts, barely 15 per cent of the population is literate, and the rate for women is considerably lower than for men. The old state had established a ratio of one primary school for every two to three ward areas, and at most 10 to 15 percent of all children actually attended school. Most children had to spend four or five hours every day walking to and from school. Since the model state power has been established, schools have been systematised, evening schools have been opened, a literacy campaign has

been launched, education has begun to be seen as a necessity for everyone, and hundreds of men and women are turning out for evening schools in both the formal and informal education systems. In these evening classes, a minimum of two hours of lesson time is scheduled every day. The first one-hour session is allotted to learning the alphabet and writing, while the second hour is for discussion. The subjects discussed include politics, society, the rights of the people, and the national and international situation. People also discuss what is happening in the village, local needs and possible resources, public health and the needs of the children. Participants are asked to take notes on the discussion in their notebooks.

In most districts, red political power and the development of model systems began during the state of emergency period, that is, prior to the January 2003 cease-fire, though model forms of state power and communes had begun in parts of the Rolpa and Rukum districts even earlier (see *AWTW* 2002/28.) The people had been aroused politically before the establishment of model state power. People grasped the Maoist political line, and, as Mao said, "Once the correct ideas characteristic of the advanced class are grasped by the masses, these ideas turn into a material force that changes society and the world." The people of the Humla and Jumla districts have become a material force to destroy all the old relations and establish the new, and they are pointing the way for millions of others throughout the country.

As the People's War has developed, a new revolutionary culture has superseded the old culture. In model areas, revolutionary culture has become part of the people's lifestyle. In the old state, only the birth of a son was celebrated, whilst revolutionary culture celebrates the births of both daughters and sons. A custom of 13 days of isolation on the death of a family member has disappeared. The marriage system has drastically changed. Polygamy has been

abolished, and adultery has become rare, as monogamy and love marriages are promoted. The custom of *jari pratha* has also been abolished. According to this custom, if a woman marries with a second husband, the new husband had to pay the former husband a property equivalent of one hundred thousand rupees, and the price of a wife from a better off family could be even higher. In essence, this practice reflected and represented the enslavement of women, where the wife was traded for money.

Old religious festivals have given way to new revolutionary festivals. In revolutionary areas such festivals are held on historic days of the revolution, such as the day the People's War was initiated, the birth dates of the great revolutionary leaders and teachers Marx, Lenin and Mao, May First and International Women's Day. Songs, melodies and poems have been adapted, and now convey revolutionary love and passions or reflect the national and international political situation or celebrate actions against the enemy or express sorrow at the deaths of revolutionaries and anger at atrocities carried out in the villages by the RNA. Under the old culture, a woman used to be treated as untouchable and forced to live away from home for up to a week during her menstrual period. That custom has been abolished. Traditional superstitions and non-scientific practices are combated, and sometimes their former practitioners are transformed and even enrol in the People's War. On the other hand, positive aspects of traditional practices, such as the use of local herbals and medicines, are promoted.

One significant aspect of this cultural transformation has been the transformation of ideology to reflect changes in the political, economic, cultural and social spheres. In the revolutionary bases and the model new state powers, a culture of sacrifice has been developed. The understanding of life and death has changed radically from the understanding that existed under the old state. More and more people are

ready to give their lives for the revolution and the development of humankind and put their personal interests in second place. Love for the people and hatred of the class enemy has become the essence of revolutionary culture. The feudal nature of the family has also begun to be transformed. The feudal family, based on dependence, patriarchy and narrow self-interest, is giving way to the family of the future, which is free and independent and looks out for society as a whole.

Economic development projects are underway in the red areas. People previously believed that as long as the old state embargoes everything, development was not possible. This made things especially difficult, as the red political areas are cut off from the state development budget. The reactionaries try to attribute any stagnation to the revolutionary People's War. In reality, as the political and economic relations of the old state were transformed in the course of developing the People's War, revolutionary people's committees have built up their own budgets and begun their own development projects. The responsible comrade of the United District Committee of the Revolutionary Developing People's Committee in Rukum reported that the third convention of the revolutionary people's committee held in February 2003 budgeted Rs 23,000,000 (equivalent to \$30,000 US) and aimed at doubling the volume of development work by relying on the donation of public labour. Plans for the district include five small hydroelectric projects, a small irrigation project, drinking water provisions, co-operatives, food production, food storage, a medical co-operative, bridge construction and road building. The achievements of the people and their capacity to rely on their own efforts have delivered a severe blow to predatory imperialist financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and to the whole reactionary imperialist "development" model, which relies on foreign capital and

ends up further enslaving the people. The ADB has not been able to sell its expensive electricity produced in eastern Nepal, as the revolutionary people in the red base areas in Kholagaun, Kotjhari and Garaila have already been using electricity that they have developed themselves. The People's Committee collects funds from different local sources, including land registration, revenue from industry, mills and factories, commercial duties, public forests, trade in herbals, stone quarries, electricity, taxes and fines and expropriations of class enemies. These income sources have been temporary and irregular, but the People's Committees have been organising to systematise them. The Party is giving due attention to assuring that fund collections take place on an equitable basis, belying the enemy's propaganda that labels CPN(M) taxes as "extortion", while the old state continues to fleece the people and engage in widespread corruption.

Similarly, in most of the developed, organised base areas, such as the Rukum and Rolpa districts, public health, education, care for the martyrs' families and orphans and the elimination of poverty have been accorded high priority. Extremely poor people as well as families are employed in collective farming, orphans are placed in childcare centres, martyrs' families are politicised, and children are provided education.

Nevertheless, the central question is still the destruction of the old state. The highest priority has been given to the war, to politicising the masses and arming the people ideologically and politically. In the revolutionary base areas, the morale of the people is higher, and self-respect has taken deep roots, along with a feeling that they are the people who will usher the world to the profound changes that will mark the twenty-first century.

The revolutionary wave, though at a peak in the western districts of Nepal, is not confined to this area. In the eastern districts and in the Terai areas, Maoist revolutionaries have

been applying the Party policy and programme in all spheres of ideological, political, economic and public welfare.

The roots of the old state are basically cut-off from the countryside. Wherever revolutionary governments are established, regional exploitation and *Khash* national domination is being uprooted by the application of the CPN(M)'s programme of regional and national autonomy. The Party leader of the Solukhumbu district Revolutionary People's Committee in eastern Nepal said that all the institutions of political power are run on the basis of the right to self-rule, and that in the twenty-first century no one would return to the old state's slavery. As the oppressed Nepalese people have stood up to exercise people's rule, significant numbers of doctors, engineers and other intellectuals in the cities have moved to the liberated areas to live alongside the poor peasantry and other sections of the basic masses, and they are putting their training and experience in the service of building the new society.

Eliminating National Oppression

January 2004 saw the electrifying declaration of autonomous regions in different parts of the country. On 9 January 2004, Magarat national autonomy was declared, meaning that the Magar nationality of the Magarat region have gained real political power for the first time in around 300 years.

The centralised reactionary feudal state of Nepal has long oppressed the people of different regions. Empowering these oppressed and marginalised people by winning them real sovereignty has been a key part of the CPN(M) agenda. The Party politically stressed that the liberation of the people would only be possible by combining the national liberation movement with the People's War. In order to unite these movements, the Party laid foundations in its first national conference in 1995, declaring that regional and national autonomy with

the right of self-determination, including secession, would be granted to the oppressed regions and nationalities. The advance of the People's War has now turned words into deeds.

According to the Party plan spelled out in January 2004, there will be nine national and regional autonomous areas around the country. Regional autonomy has been declared in the Seti-Mahakali and Bheri-Karnali areas, and national autonomy in the Magarat, Tharuwan, Tamuwan, Tamang, Newar, Madhesh and Kirat areas (proceeding from the west to the east of the country).

Politically, the declaration of regional and national autonomy is a big step in uprooting the feudal system. Militarily, there has been progress in developing the strategic equilibrium closer to readiness for moving over to the strategic offensive. Similarly, in the international political arena, the declaration of national and regional autonomy has once again proved that the success of the national liberation movement is only possible through people's war led by Maoist revolutionaries. Especially after the Second World War, even powerful national liberation movements, such as the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka, the Kashmir fighters in India, the Palestinians fighting Zionism, the PKK in Turkey, the Irish Republican Army in Northern Ireland and others in Latin America, have been fighting but are having difficulty winning their struggle. The heart of the problem is political line. Under the leadership of Nepal's red detachment of the international proletariat, millions are achieving national liberation. This is a powerful demonstration of the truth that the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement asserted long ago that revolutionary people's war is the path to national liberation.

Conclusion

Every day in Nepal fighting takes place as the revolutionary regime seeks to consolidate the rule of the people, and the old and dying

reactionary regime lashes out in an attempt to re-establish its authority and crush the people's rebellion. The reactionaries are counting heavily on the US imperialists and other reactionaries like the UK and India to come to their rescue. Frequent articles in India's press bemoan the advance of the revolution in Nepal and express fear that the "contagion" will spread south and further inflame areas of India, such as Jarkhand, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and Dandakaranya, where revolutionary warfare is already growing.

Imperialist politicians and intelligence agencies, parroted by their media, repeatedly attempt to portray the Maoists of Nepal as "terrorists". But facts on the ground show just who are the real "terrorists". Human rights groups like Amnesty International that tend to oppose revolutionary and reactionary violence alike are not known for sympathizing with armed insurrections like that in Nepal. Yet report after report from these groups show an incontrovertible truth: that the waves of violence inflicted on the masses come from one side – the reactionary state. The latest report from Amnesty International (October 2003) documents hundreds of cases where the RNA has "disappeared" people, many of whom are thought to have been killed in custody. Thousands have been the victims of "arbitrary arrests and detentions", often under laws that Amnesty describes as "in clear breach of the Constitution, as well as international treaties to which Nepal is a state party". One typical procedure used by the police is to arrest people under the Terrorism Act for the maximum allowable 90 days, release them and then before they can even leave the jail area re-arrest them again! Amnesty reports that of 1,000 people detained under the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Ordinance enacted in April 2002, not a single person has ever been presented to a judicial authority. At the same time, the report acknowledges that "support for the ideologies expressed by the CPN(M) has surfaced from the most economically and socially deprived

areas of Nepal". (Amnesty International, "Widespread 'disappearances' in the context of armed conflict", AI Index: ASA 31/045/2003)

It is true that out of the dozens of pages in the report, there are a few paragraphs that refer to "abductions" by the Maoists, and Amnesty calls on them to abide by the Geneva Convention. This is undoubtedly intended, to some extent, to make the overwhelming condemnation of the Nepal government more palatable to powerful reactionaries, but it nevertheless tends to sow confusion by focusing on the issue of violence abstracted from whether it is in the service of liberation or oppression. It thus winds up confusing contradictions between reaction and revolution with contradictions among the people themselves. A reactionary government agent with the people's blood on his hands who is arrested and punished by the popular power in accordance with the guidelines of the new revolutionary state is thus treated as a "victim" who has been "abducted", whereas a revolutionary activist arrested by the reactionary state and judged in accordance with the reactionary rules of the old legal system elicits no comment. Amnesty's "equal-handed" treatment of reaction and revolution thus conceals an inherent bias to accommodate with the established order. The fact that, despite this, the overwhelming bulk of the Amnesty report is devoted to exposure of the government's crimes is thus testimony to how vicious and widespread the state repression has become as the war has intensified.

What no pro-imperialist analyst wishes to face is the obvious question of how a force that began with no arms and small numbers has been able, in the course of only seven years, to "terrorise" virtually the whole population of the rural areas and rely on them for support and sustenance against the well-documented widespread brutality of the enemy's police and armed forces. In fact, the enemies of the Nepal revolution know only too well that

the CPN(M) and the forces that it is leading are most definitely not "terrorist" – but this is undoubtedly the reason for their biggest fear of all: that the example of a Maoist-led revolution will inspire the downtrodden around the world to see the way out of their miserable conditions and spark the hope, and the struggle, for a different life, not in the "Paradise" of bin Bush or bin Laden, but right on our own planet Earth, ripped free from the plunder and repression of the imperialists and reactionaries. Yet the hysteria of the imperialists and reactionaries and the parroting of these lies by some forces from whom the people generally expect better has ominous implications.⁴ It is under the signpost of combating "terrorism" that the US and other reactionary powers are stepping up their support for the pathetic monarchy holed up in Kathmandu. And these same reactionaries are also trying to paint the supporters of the revolutionary masses of Nepal, especially the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement and the parties that make it up, with the same "terrorist" brush to try to justify their suppressive measures.

As the BBC reported on 20 September 2003, "The rebels are battle-hardened and have areas of the countryside under firm control, but they remain poorly armed and the international community – including crucially India – is lining up against them." The reactionary powers are indeed trying to pull their ranks together under the baton of the US imperialists to save this corrupt and endangered reactionary regime. The revolutionary people of Nepal, who have raised their heads and sacrificed so many of their sons and daughters as they stand on the front lines of the world revolution will doubtlessly face unprecedented challenges in the days ahead. They need and deserve the full support of people around the world. Their struggle is truly opening a breach in the world imperialist system for the international proletariat and the oppressed.

Footnotes

1. For more on these events see *AWTW* 2002/29.
2. The US State Department actually publishes two lists. The CPN(M)-figures on list "B" – "terrorist" organisations to be observed.
3. The Code of conduct agreed that: 1. Both parties should be committed and effortful to find a peaceful solution through dialogue. 2. Both sides are committed and effortful to find mutual agreement on matters of national importance. 3. Both parties will stop violent activities and will not deploy security forces that could ignite fear amongst the general public. 4. Both parties will refrain from aggressive activities around high security areas. 5. Both sides will gradually release prisoners. 6. Both sides will work for the interests of the general public peacefully and without hindrance. 7. Ideas of both sides to get fair and impartial treatment in the state media. 8. Both sides to refrain from publishing comments that could mar the talks and peace process. 9. Both sides to be civil while making comments. 10. Both sides to refrain from forcibly taking money or goods as donations. 11. Both sides to organise peaceful meetings to protest; there will be no strikes, bandhs or transport strikes during the cease-fire. 12. Both sides to refrain from searches, arrests and kidnappings. 13. Both sides to help each other in maintaining peace during the cease-fire. 14. No obstacles to be created in the transportation of food, medicine and essential goods. 15. Both sides will not obstruct the free movement of people. 16. No obstructions to be placed by both sides while exercising fundamental rights. 17. Both sides to allow movement of negotiators without impediment. 18. Both sides will help in the return home of displaced persons and their assimilation. 19. A monitoring team will be formed with the understanding of both. 20. Changes to the code of conduct can be made with mutual understanding. 21. Both sides will amicably settle differences in the interpretation of the code. 22. The code of conduct can be terminated through mutual understanding. (www.nepalnews.com)
4. For example, the prestigious monthly *Le Monde Diplomatique* repeated these kinds of silly lies in its November 2003 issue, quoting the claims of unnamed Western diplomats that Nepalese fighters received training in Peru. The CIA and other reactionaries use these claims to tar the people's struggles as devoid of indigenous support and fomented by a conspiracy of "outside" "terrorist" agitators. ■

Turkey

(Continued from page 13)

central government. Yet the moment the US achieved its goals, it has dropped the Kurds and left them to their fate - sometimes a very bloody one.

The sinister US-brokered 1975 Algiers Agreement is an example of this that still burns in the memory of the Kurdish people. In 1972, US President Nixon, his adviser Henry Kissinger and the Shah of Iran came up with a plan to destabilise the then Soviet-backed Iraqi regime. The US and the Shah encouraged an insurgency by Iraq's KDP, then under the leadership of Mustafa Barzani (the father of Masood Barzani), to weaken Baghdad. On US orders the Shah of Iran secretly supported the insurgency. The Kurdish peshmergha grew to 45,000 guerrillas by 1975 and were able to push the Baghdad regime out of Kurdistan. But for the US this was going too far. With US backing, the Shah entered into the Algiers agreement with the Iraqi regime over various border disputes. The Kurds were dropped immediately. The Shah and the US cut off aid to the Kurds and gave the Iraqi regime a free hand to start a search-and-destroy operation against them. Hundreds of thousands of Kurds fled into exile, but many were forcibly returned and slaughtered by the Iraqi regime. Mustafa Barzani was allowed to go to Iran and die in exile. The masses of Kurdistan categorically condemned and repudiated Barzani's capitulation and sell-out of the Kurdish resistance, and he came to be held as a symbol of national betrayal in all parts of Kurdistan.

The reactionary classes of Kurdistan (namely the feudals and tribal heads) have always held out the offer of serving the imperialists in return for state power, like the reactionary classes of the Persian, Arab and Turkish nations have. And the imperialists have often dangled promises of such a deal in front of their noses in order to manoeuvre the Kurds for their own cynical ends. Yet a closer examination shows that it is not true that the other nations of the region were given autonomous power

or genuine independence by the imperialists. Not at all! All the nations in the Middle East remain subjugated by imperialism and lack any kind of effective political and economic independence. This is why national resistance against imperialism and the fight for genuine independence are part and parcel of achieving a new-democratic revolution throughout the Middle East.

The fact that the reactionary feudal and comprador classes of the Kurdish nation did not get to have even one of the neo-colonial-type state powers that the reactionary classes of the Turkish, Arab and Persian nations have, has led to a particular situation where the Kurdish reactionary classes enjoy a certain leverage with the masses of Kurdistan. This is the leash that the imperialist powers have repeatedly been able to grab hold of to play with the aspirations of the Kurdish nation and use it in their own interests. The imperialists' illustrious thinkers and policy-makers cynically call this "playing the Kurdish card". Yet despite the repeated betrayals by the imperialists and their long history of cynical manoeuvres, the Kurdish leaders of Iraq continue to recount fairytales about the niceties of the US. This crime must be exposed to open the eyes of the Kurdish proletarians and oppressed to the specific character of these feudal comprador classes and their political operatives, who are ultimately bound to be bought and used by the imperialist powers, and to show the burning need for the more thorough-going, uncompromising outlook of the revolutionary proletariat.

The leaders of Kurdistan of Iraq have sought to justify their treachery with the line that "the Kurds should be realistic in order to reach their goals". But this "realism" of the Kurdish leaders has caused more than enough suffering for the Kurdish masses, exactly because they have not been *realistic enough* to recognise that the imperialists and the reactionary states oppressing the Kurdish nation, as well as other peoples of these countries, *are not and never will be* the friends of the Kurdish people.

The nature of the PUK and KDP of Iraq and their ugly alliance with

the US imperialists once again serves as a wake-up call to the Kurdish proletarians and toiling masses to discard their misleaders once and for all. As long as a revolutionary proletarian leadership has not been forged in Kurdistan, the bitter experience will be repeated of trusting the imperialists and the reactionary states and in the end being stabbed by them.

Footnote

1. The Turkish state regularly bans Kurdish nationalist parties, which to keep functioning openly reconstitute themselves just as regularly, in what seems to be a never-ending cycle. Kadek was the latest incarnation of the pro-PKK party, but it has recently dissolved itself and been replaced by the "Kongra-gel", the Kurdish National Congress. This reflects the policy of the leadership around Ocalan to make even greater efforts to be acceptable to the mainstream political process, with the full backing of the US administration and despite pressure from Turkey's military generals. ■

Peru

(Continued from page 55)

what goes on at these trials and to effectively gag the prisoners, so that they cannot make their politics known to the public. It is intolerable that the criminals holding Chairman Gonzalo and the other prisoners be allowed to control and manipulate their communications with the world. The lack of complete public access to these trials would be just another indication that the only purpose of the new trials is to justify the criminal nature of the first ones.

According to the Lima daily *La Republica*, Chairman Gonzalo's lawyer has said that he does not intend to co-operate with this unjust trial. The people must continue to defend Chairman Gonzalo and other imprisoned leaders against the charges the reactionaries are levelling against them. Whatever happens at the trial, Chairman Gonzalo must be allowed to give his views freely and publicly.

What is at stake in this trial is not only how the people understand the past but what they do in the future, and particularly, whether or not it is right to rebel against oppression. ■

\$600



***Celebrate the
20th Anniversary of the
Revolutionary
Internationalist
Movement***