

MidEast Solidarity

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Western Hands Off the MidEast & Afghanistan



Incinerated body of an Iraqi soldier on the 'Highway of Death' during the Gulf War of 1991. The 'Highway' referred to the road from Mutlaa in Kuwait to Basra in Iraq. American planes immobilised the convoy by disabling vehicles at its front and rear, then bombing and strafing the resulting traffic jam for hours. More than 2,000 vehicles and thousands of charred and dismembered bodies littered the 60 miles of highway. The clear rapid incineration of the human being above suggests the use of napalm, phosphorous or other incendiary bombs. These are anti-personnel weapons outlawed under the 1977 Geneva Protocols. This barbaric attack took place after Saddam Hussein announced a complete military withdrawal from Kuwait in compliance with UN Resolution 660. The massacre of withdrawing soldiers violated the Geneva Convention of 1949, which forbids the killing of soldiers who "are out of combat". There are also strong indications that many of those killed were Palestinian and Kuwaiti civilians trying to escape the impending siege of Kuwait City and the returning Kuwaiti armed forces. No attempt was made by the US bombers even to distinguish between civilians and military personnel. (See Ramsey Clark et al, *War Crimes*, Washington DC, Maisonneuve Press, 1992.) Ten years on, the United States and its allies, including New Zealand, are visiting destruction on the poor of Afghanistan.

Free Palestine



No to West's war of terror!

The attacks in New York and Washington on September 11 were horrific and remain unjustifiable. Thousands of ordinary people died in these attacks, including firefighters and other rescue workers. Ordinary people around the world are rightly repelled by the attacks and empathise with the victims.

What we're supposed to forget

However we are being asked to do much more than this. We are being asked by Western governments to forget that the 6,000 people murdered on September 11 are a small fraction of the millions of people in the Third World killed every year by the domination and interference of the very Western powers which want to use September 11 to unleash more murder and mayhem.

We are being asked to forget that the US government and its allies, including Labour and National governments in this country, have murdered over a million Iraqi people, mainly women and children, through barbaric sanctions over the past decade - as well as regular bombings.

We are expected to forget that Washington and its allies financed, organised and equipped Islamic fundamentalist groups in order to undermine left-wing nationalist movements in the Middle East and in Afghanistan. If many of these people have since turned against the United States, these are examples of the puppets turning on the puppet master which created them.

Responsibility

The ultimate responsibility for the September 11 attacks thus lies with the American government. This fact needs to be pointed out over and over again. They cannot be allowed to escape responsibility for September 11 and they cannot be allowed to use the attacks in New York and Washington to launch a new round of atrocities in the Arab and/or Islamic countries.

Instead we need to spotlight that the Western ruling classes are the biggest terrorists on the planet. And they carry out their terror with impunity.

We need to build a movement which is not only anti-war, but anti-imperialist, in



Above: Iraqi children affected by Western sanctions, which are supported by the NZ government. Over a million Iraqis have been killed in the past decade of bombings and sanctions. Below: Iraqi civilians bombed.

order to put an end to the special privileges enjoyed by the Western ruling classes who, since their defeat in Vietnam in 1975, have largely been able to get away with foreign interventions. Grenada, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Chad, Rwanda, Yugoslavia, Somalia, Sudan, Iran, Iraq, Haiti, East Timor and other countries have been occupied by Western troops and/or bombed/terrorised by Western powers or their local proxies.

Humanitarian imperialism

In recent years, the imperialists have discarded the older, more openly right-wing style of intervention and replaced it with the rhetoric of 'humanitarian intervention'. This kind of intervention has often been supported by middle-class peace groups and liberal parties, such as the Greens. In fact, peace and justice campaigners have often played a thoroughly reactionary role in helping mould Western public opinion in forms that legitimise military intervention.

The classic case of this has been Yugoslavia, where Greens and peace campaigners followed Washington in demonising the Serbs and the Serb government as 'war criminals'. This 'softened up' Western public opinion and helped allow the United States and Britain to bomb Serbia. In Germany, the leaders of the Greens were among the most militaristic in calling for bombing Belgrade.

But in New Zealand and other Western countries peace and justice campaigners



were almost as bad in joining in the demonisation process. Their calls for Serb leader Slobodan Milosevic to be tried as a war criminal, in a court set up under the aegis of the imperialist powers, reinforced the old 'white man's burden' idea that the First World is civilised and has the right to act as judge, jury and executioner over the supposedly uncivilised and brutal Third World. In fact, even to this day, there is no clear evidence that the Serbs and their government were any more brutal than their opponents, who were backed by the West. Claims about the numbers of Bosnian Muslims and others killed by the Serbs have been repeatedly scaled down and the much-vaunted 'mass graves' remain to be found, despite numerous investigations.

Peace movement weakness

The way much of the peace movement operates to legitimise *some form of Western intervention*, a sort of *alternative*

Sanctions and bombs:

The West's mass murder in Iraq

The record of the UN in Iraq is murderous, argue **Grant Poultney** and **Yan Lin**

The purposes of the United Nations are:

1. To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace. . .

- **Chapter 1. Purposes and Principles:**
Article 1 of the United Nations Charter

On August 2, 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait. Four days later, the United Nations implemented a trade embargo on Iraq. This paralysed the country. Before the sanctions were imposed, Iraq imported 70

per cent of its food. The sanctions in place since 1990 have crippled one of the healthiest countries in the world. UK and US politicians justify having the sanctions in place to contain the threat of Saddam Hussein.

In 1999, UNICEF reported that over half a million Iraqi children had died as a result of UN sanctions. This works out to be an average of 200 children a day. How do the deaths of these children fit in with the first article in the UN charter? What have they got to do with 'containing' Saddam Hussein?

Depleted uranium

Iraq also suffers a continuing legacy as a result of the United States using depleted uranium (DU) during the Gulf War. The United States and its allies dropped an estimated 5,000 to 6,000 DU tank rounds

and bombs and 94,000 DU bullets on targets in southern Iraq. It is estimated that the contamination from these DU weapons will last around 4,500 million years and has the potential to kill around half a million people.

DU is what's left over from the process of uranium enrichment, which produces reactor fuel and nuclear warheads. By coating conventional weapons with DU, they can penetrate armoured vehicles much more effectively. As DU is a waste product of the nuclear industry, it is also far cheaper to dump it coated on bombs onto the Third World than to store it in the West.

The DU contaminated water supplies and spread through the desert dust. It can either be ingested or inhaled. Prolonged internal exposure leads to respiratory diseases, breakdown of the immune system, leukaemia, lung cancer and bone

Continued from page 2

imperialism, means that those of us committed to human emancipation, as opposed to new forms of chains, need to build something rather different than a peace movement. We need an anti-imperialist movement which solidarises with people in the Third World and opposes all Western 'solutions'. Such a movement can aid in pointing out the common interests of the exploited of the world - workers of the West and the masses of the Third World - against the Western ruling classes.

Rather than calling for the Western rulers to play by the book in ruling the world, such a movement would dispute the actual legitimacy of the Western ruling elites to rule and exploit anyone.

For our ideas about the political basis for such an anti-imperialist movement, see the back page and the Middle East workgroup platform on p9.

If you agree with us you should get involved in the building of such a movement.

Now.

People who pronounce themselves in favour of the method of legislative reform in place of and in contradiction to the conquest of political power and social revolution, do not really choose a more tranquil, calmer and slower road to the same goal. Instead of taking a stand for the establishment of a new society, they take a stand for the surface modification of the old society.

- Rosa Luxemburg,
Reform or Revolution



funds urgently needed

Producing a good quality bulletin costs money. Basically, we don't have any. All of the work on this bulletin has been done for free, and the printing costs have been paid by revolution magazine. If you support the ideas in this bulletin, and have a few spare bob, a donation would be much appreciated. Cheques should be made out to our publisher, the Radical Media Collective, with a covering note that it is a donation to MidEast Solidarity. Send donations to P.O. Box 513, Christchurch.



UN bureaucrats live it up in Iraq, while virtually controlling the country. Meanwhile Iraqi children catch cholera at open sewers or fall prey to jaundice and other diseases due to the sanctions

cancer. Cases of cancers in Iraq have risen tenfold since 1990. The sanctions prevent this knowledge from being accurately published and also prevent the mess from being cleaned-up.

Health system

The health system in Iraq has been degraded by the sanctions. Before the sanctions, Iraq had a modern health system with the latest medical technology. Now, not only are hospitals short-staffed due to insufficient funds for salaries, medical equipment like incubators, X-ray machines and heart and lung machines normally used on a daily basis to save lives are banned.

People do not even have the appropriate medication for otherwise treatable diseases like diarrhoea, typhoid, dysentery, gastro-enteritis and other water-borne illnesses. Water-borne illnesses are especially prevalent because chlorine and other water purification chemicals are now banned under 'dual use' considerations. The Security Council consistently blocks vaccines, analgesics and chemotherapy drugs, claiming they could be converted into chemical or biological weapons!

As these sanctions were being created, the United States was well aware of what the impact would be on Iraqi lives. In fact, for more than ten years, the United States has deliberately pursued a policy of destroying the water treatment system in Iraq.

Food shortages

Iraq's ability to earn foreign currency was hindered with the UN sanctions and in turn, this constrained their ability to import food. Food shortages and malnutrition became progressively severe and chronic in the 1990s.

Before 1990, the biggest problem

faced by Iraqi paediatricians was childhood obesity. It seems a far cry from the hospital wards full of children that are dying of famine related diseases like kwashiorkor.

In 1995, the UN Security Council introduced Resolution 986, the oil-for-food deal. This scheme permitted Iraq to export limited quantities of oil to finance imports of food and other essential humanitarian needs. This scheme, however, did not entirely solve the food problem. Although food rations under SCR 986 provided a significant proportion of overall energy and protein needs, the provisions were low or lacking in a number of other nutrients, especially Vitamins A and C which are almost zero and calcium, zinc, riboflavin and Vitamin B6, which are all less than 40 percent of needs. The rations consisted mostly of cereals. As a result, the quality of proteins was low. For a more balanced diet, food items like fruits, vegetables and animal products are needed.

Sanctions could be considered as one of the greatest acts of war known to mankind. They affect the entire population



from the children to the elderly. Like a weapon of mass destruction, sanctions sweep through a country crippling its economy, causing starvation, disease, death and the collapse of infrastructure.

The end result could be easily compared to that of a nuclear bomb except the process is slower and far more painful. These sanctions were imposed by the United Nations. And now the Greens and the Alliance want the UN to run the war against Afghanistan!

From an exchange on CBS' 60 Minutes, May 12, 1996 between Madeleine Albright - then US ambassador to the United Nations and later Clinton's Secretary of State - and interviewer Lesley Stahl. Albright was maintaining that sanctions had yielded important concessions from Saddam Hussein:

Stahl: We have heard that half a million children have died. I mean, that's more children than died in Hiroshima. And you know, is the price worth it?

Albright: I think this is a very hard choice, but the price - we think the price is worth it.



Kabul residents survey damage after hours of American bombing. In London, up to 50,000 people demonstrated on October 12 against the attacks. The march included leftists, peace campaigners, trade unionists and Muslims, like the woman above.

In New Zealand, we urgently need to build a movement in solidarity with the masses of Afghanistan and against the Western attacks.

Hundreds of people in Afghanistan have already been killed by US/British air strikes, which have taken place with the full support of the NZ government. In the village of Khorum, virtually destroyed by bombing attacks, up to 200 may have died.

Hundreds of thousands, meanwhile, have been forced to flee their homes, turned into refugees in their own country in the face of the bombing terror.

All the arrogance of imperialist power has been on display in the 'war on terror'. The rulers in Washington, London and Wellington are not even sticking to their own laws of bourgeois jurisprudence, which would require legal attempts to extradite Osama Bin Laden, and the presentation to the Afghan

authorities of a prima facie case against him. (Of course, even this would be hypocritical, given that the Western powers are the chief terrorists on the planet, and that Jeb Bush, brother of the US president, gave a pardon to a Cuban right-wing terrorist wanted in Havana for blowing up a civilian Cuban plane in 1976, with several hundred people being killed.)

However, rather than use their own legal mechanisms, the imperialists simply use their control of means of mass destruction to order the Kabul government to abandon any sense of national sovereignty and hand over anyone the West demands.

Thus the struggle against the Western assault on Afghanistan cannot simply be a campaign against

war. It has to be a campaign to defend the sovereignty of Afghanistan as an independent nation-state, and to support the people of Afghanistan and their right to sort out their own affairs free of Western military terror or any form of Western intervention and interference.

**Stop the bombing!
Stop armed and all other forms of
intervention!
Hands off Afghanistan!
Open entry to NZ and other
Western countries to the
refugees!
Solidarity of NZ workers with the
masses of Afghanistan!**

Israel's war on the Palestinians

The current brutal attacks on the Palestinians are the logical result of the 'peace process' and the very existence of the state of Israel, says **Paul Hopkinson**

If you believe the mainstream media, the current round of struggle in Israel/Palestine is a display of mindless violence on both sides. We are treated to reports of 'battles' between Israelis and Palestinians as if these were evenly-matched forces, even when it is a case of Israeli helicopter gunships versus Palestinians with a few rifles or Israeli troops against teenagers with slingshots. What is also passed over is that the current round of struggle is taking place not in Israel, which is the impression many TV viewers might have, but in the *occupied territories*.

The death toll itself indicates the actual balance of forces between the two sides. Between Ariel Sharon's visit to Haram al Sharif on September 28 and December 4, last year some 310 Palestinians, including 97 children, were killed, according to UNICEF. Another 9802 were wounded in the clashes with the Israeli forces. Fifteen to twenty Palestinians died for every Israeli who lost their life, while the ratio of Palestinians to Israelis wounded ran much higher again. The toll has continued to mount this year. As of September , Palestinians have been killed

Far from undermining the 1993 Oslo Accords/'peace process', the violence has been a logical product of it and, in fact, of the whole existence of the Israeli state.

Your land is my land

The 'peace process' has forced many of the Palestinians in the occupied territories into poverty in mini-Bantustans, which constitute just 3.8 percent of the homeland they lost in 1948. It has also given the Israelis 84 percent of the occupied territories, an occupation declared illegal by the famous - and famously ignored - UN Resolution 242.

The Palestinians were given 60 percent of the Gaza Strip and 13 percent of the West Bank, amounting to 16 percent of the poorest land in the occupied territories. This gives the Palestinians just 1,000.17 sq km to make a homeland with, out of the 26,024 sq kms of land that makes up Palestine/Israel.

This Palestinian land is then divided up, separated and surrounded by Israeli-held land and roads. The Israelis control the water and entrance and exits to all these

areas. This means Palestinians often have to travel through, or to, Israeli areas to go to work, university or visit relatives. Palestinians often must obtain special permits from the Israelis to travel between areas; even Yasser Arafat has to obtain a permit to leave Gaza. This has meant the 'peace process' has reduced the ability of Palestinians to commute or travel.

The Israeli control of these entrances and exits means they can control the local economies in these Palestinian areas. This has led to a serious drop in living standards for the Palestinians. Since the signing of the Oslo Accords the Gaza economy has lost \$US3 million a day because of Israeli strictures, unemployment has risen as high as 50 percent and personal incomes on the West Bank and Gaza have dropped by 50 percent.

Palestinian protests have been met by the Israelis sealing off areas, restricting not only their economies but also the UN's ability to supply food and medicine to the refugee camps in Gaza.

Homes demolished

Between September 1993 and March 1998, 629 Palestinian homes were demolished by the Israelis, 535 in the West Bank and 94 in Jerusalem, with 1,800 house demolition orders pending. In 1999, there were 13,000 Israeli settlement units under construction in the occupied territories, and 42 new hilltop settlements were established on the West Bank in the year previous (1998-99). The 1995 Taba agreements allowed for the construction of 62 new Israeli military bases on the West Bank.

This means the 'peace process' has not only legitimised Israel's continued colonisation of Palestine and the occupied territories, it has speed it up. Thus Shimon Peres' deputy, Yossi Beilin, stated on an Israeli TV show in 1997 that the 'peace process' had allowed settlements to increase 50 percent. He did this to demonstrate that the covert colonisation started by the Rabin government was more effective than the overt colonisation of Netanyahu's government. This shows it does not matter whether it is the Labour Party or Likud that governs Israel - the Zionist expansion will continue under both.

The Likud's methods of colonisation are just less effective - but more honest.

At the root of the current round of repression of the Palestinians is the nature of the Israeli state and the Zionist project.

Zionism

Zionism is a racist ideology that sees nationalism and nationhood as based on race. Hungarian Theodor Herzl founded Zionism in the late 1890s as a response to European anti-Semitism. Instead of confronting racism in his homeland (the Austro-Hungarian empire), his answer was to colonise Palestine and establish a Jewish exclusivist nation-state.

As Jewish anti-Zionist Norman Finkelstein points out, much of Herzl's thinking is found in right-wing German sources, such as Hans Kohn's concept of Pan-Germanism (see Finkelstein, *Image and Reality of the Israeli-Palestine Conflict*, p8). The irony was that such thinking supported anti-Semitism, as a 'natural' response of an 'organic whole' 'infected' by a 'foreign' body, eg the Jews.

Borrowing from this racist outlook, the aim of the Zionists was to create a Jewish majority in Palestine and in doing so guarantee Jewish dominance. To create this majority the Zionists realised they would need mass Jewish emigration and what they termed the 'transfer' - or expulsion - of Palestinian Arabs.

While support for Zionism grew amongst European Jews in the early 1900s the Zionists still needed the backing of a major European power. In 1917, Chaim Weizmann, a leading Zionist, got the support of Britain, by linking the Zionist cause with the needs of British imperialism. In the Balfour Declaration, the British recognized the possibility of establishing a Jewish homeland in Palestine in return for Jewish support for sole British governance there. From the start, then, a Zionist state was connected to the interests of western imperialism in the Middle East region.

While the British may never have intended that the Zionists should colonise all, or even half, of Palestine, they supported Jewish emigration allowing the Jewish population to expand massively under their mandate: the Jewish population expanded from 58,000 in 1919



Israeli soldier 'Born to kill' - the logic of the state he serves



For much of the 'peace process' during the 1990s one Palestinian a day was being killed by Israeli forces. From September 2000 this escalated rapidly, many of the dead being kids

to 528,702 in 1944. So much for the Israeli myth that the British tried to prevent the creation of a Jewish state.

In 1919 Palestinian Arabs owned 97.52 percent of the land and made up 91.7 percent of the population of Palestine with Jews making up just 8.3 percent. By 1944, Palestinian Arabs still owned 94 percent of the land yet they now made up only 69.5 percent of the population, with Jews making up 30.5 percent.

Creation of Israel

By 1944 it had become obvious that the US would be the most powerful Western imperialist power in the postwar period. Thus the Zionist leaders petitioned Washington for support. In 1944 Weizmann told President Roosevelt that "we could not rest our case on the consent of the Arabs; as long as their consent was asked, they naturally refuse it" (Edward Said, *The End of the Peace Process: Oslo and After*, p220). By 1947, the US strongly supported the partition of Palestine and encouraged the immigration of large numbers of Jews, as did Russia. At the same time Washington restricted Jewish immigration to the US.

All the main world powers voted for the partition of Palestine, which was imposed under the 'authority' of the UN on May 14, 1948. It gave 56 percent of the land to the Zionists, the vast majority of whom were recent immigrants who made up just over 30 percent of the population.

Fighting broke out early in 1948. On April 9 the Zionists massacred 254 Palestinians at Deir Yassin in an attempt to

make Arabs flee their land in the new Israeli state. The Arabs retaliated by ambushing convoys between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. The Zionists then used this as an excuse to launch an attack to gain the rest of Palestine. By 1950, over 70 percent of the Palestinians - over 900,000 out of 1.4 million - had been expelled from their land by the use of military force, in one of the twentieth century's most successful and brutal campaigns of ethnic cleansing.

Today, 92 percent of the land in Israel is reserved for only Jews. Non-Jews, the great majority of whom are Palestinians, make up 18 percent of the Israeli population, but are not allowed to buy, lease or sell this land. They live as virtual outcasts in their own country, denied full citizenship by the apartheid-like Israeli state.

The myth that the Israelis have from the start been outnumbered and attacked by xenophobic Arab hordes is untrue. Even in 1948 the Israeli forces outnumbered their Arab opponents by more than 2 to 1. At the beginning of the conflict that year Arab forces numbered about 28,000, Israeli forces 65,000; at the conflict's height, Arab forces numbered 55,000 as against Israeli forces of 125,000. Moreover, the Arab forces came from backward under-developed autocracies and were ill equipped and poorly organised.

Today the situation in the Middle East is similar, with Israel fielding one of the world's most powerful and well-equipped armed forces, with an arsenal that contains weapons of mass destruction. The Israelis

use this military might against largely unarmed Palestinian civilians, killing over 250 between September and the start of December 2000, 66 of them children. Yet the US, the other Western powers and the Western media continue to try to portray the conflict as one between equal sides that have been equally wronged.

When peace means more injustice

Before the Oslo Accords the PLO did not recognise the Zionist state of Israel and called for the creation of a democratic and secular state in Palestine, where Jew and Arab would be equal before the law. After the Accords were signed, Arafat had recognised Israel and settled for a separate homeland in just 3.8 percent Palestine that was to be under his dictatorial rule. The PLO leadership was transformed from a force of national liberation into a body which ruled a 'state' which was little more than glorified refugee camps - parts of the Gaza Strip and West Bank - and policed the Palestinian population for Israel. Essentially, this Accord was pushed by the US and Israel and accepted by Arafat - the Palestinian masses had no say in the matter.

The Palestinian elections on January 20, 1996 were used by Arafat, the Israelis and the US to add legitimacy to the 'peace process' and Arafat's regime. The elections were flawed from the start, with over half (about 4 million) of the Palestinians still living in exile and being unable to vote. The fact that the 'peace process' has provided no compensation or right for these people to return home would make it unlikely they

would support Arafat or the 'peace process'. For the Palestinians who could vote, their choice of candidates and opportunity to vote were severely limited.

All the voters for the election were registered through a joint Israeli-Palestinian Liaison Committee, controlled by the Israelis who had the power of veto. Palestinians were registered by their Israeli identification number, meaning all voters had to be cleared by the Israelis.

Every candidate who ran for the Legislative Council also had to be cleared by the Israelis with no 'racists', 'terrorists', or opponents of the 'peace process' allowed to stand. To make sure that the elections were a 'fair' and 'unbiased' example of Western democracy, a Central Electoral Commission was set up by Arafat to look into any irregularities.

The Electoral Commission was supposed to be set up well before the election and be composed of independent individuals above party or commercial interest. Arafat not only set up the commission late, he appointed his second-in-command, Abu Mazen (Mahmoud Abbas), as the chairman, with the rest of the commission members being either employed by or connected to the Palestinian Authority.

Of the 60,000 registered voters in Jerusalem, only 4,000 managed to get past Israeli security measures to cast a vote. Yet none of the flaws in these elections seemed to stop the Western media celebrating this triumph of 'democracy'.

Arafat's oppressive rule

Frantz Fanon said to Algerians fighting French imperialism in 1960 that just to substitute an Algerian policeman for a French one is not the goal of liberation: a change in consciousness and social structure is. In Arafat's mini-fiefdoms the Palestinian people still face the oppression of Israeli security forces and must now also endure the oppression of the PLO leader's security forces. Arafat has at least thirteen separate security forces including 'naval security' which is situated in Nablus 60 miles inland, as the sea around the Gaza Strip is controlled by the Israelis.

The security forces have become the chief source of employment in the territories. In his latest book, Edward Said talks of a 1996 meeting with a member of



one of Arafat's security forces (Said, op cit, p84). This security agent was a student called Ahmad, who had lost an ear due to torture while in an Israeli jail. Ahmad explained how it was now his turn to interrogate and spy on other students at Bir Zeit, using just as brutal interrogation methods as the Israelis had on him.

The nature of Arafat's rule is also shown by the 1996 arrest of the Palestinian journalist Maher al-Alami who was jailed for putting praise of Arafat on page three of *al-Quds* instead of page one. In 1998, the PLO leader even reinstated the 1936 British Emergency Defense regulations legislation by presidential decree. This legislation was used by the British Mandate Authority to punish Palestinians for

resisting Zionist colonisation and then by the Israelis after 1948 for the same purpose.

Arafat's use of this law makes it illegal to oppose the 'peace process' and gives him the power to ban opponent organisations.

Corruption

While the Palestinian people suffer, Arafat and his cronies profit off their misery. This is done through monopolies that operate unchecked under the Palestinian Authority which has no laws governing companies or investments. Thus companies have monopolies on many basic goods including wheat, cement, petroleum, wood gasoline and cattle feed. In 1997, a report issued by their internal auditors stated that 40 percent of the Authority's budget had either been wasted or misused. This blatant corruption led David Hist, a journalist sympathetic to Palestinian cause and a senior correspondent for the *Guardian*, to write an article in the paper condemning the "open corruption of the Palestinian Authority".

Arafat's support of the 'peace process', along with the corrupt and authoritarian nature of his regime, has created resistance to his leadership amongst many Palestinians. At the end of 1999, 20 leading Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza signed a petition condemning the Authority's corruption and its oppression of its citizens. Nine of the people who signed the petition were members of the Legislative Council. The Fatah movement, which Arafat founded and which is the largest component of the PLO, has split into two camps, those loyal to him and a rebellious group highly critical of the 'peace process' and the Palestinian National Authority.

On November 8, 2000 Marwan Barghouthi, the Fatah commander of the Tanzim militia, stated the intifada would go

anti-imperialist resources:

www.electronicintifada.com

www.emperors-clothes.com

www.targets.org

www.iacenter.org

on with or without Arafat. The following day, a member of this Tanzim militia, Hussein Abeyad, was killed in a helicopter attack carried out by the Israelis. As a November 10 intelligence report by the US capitalist think-tank Stratfor pointed out, such a precise attack could not have occurred without the knowledge and cooperation of Arafat's security services.

This assassination demonstrates that Arafat is not only complying with the Sharm el Sheikh cease-fire agreement, he is using it to eliminate any opposition to his regime. Like other neo-colonial leaders installed by the Americans and their allies, he is now dependent on their support for his continued existence.

UN intervention?

This also explains Arafat's call for the UN – the very body which voted for the creation of the state which dispossessed the Palestinians in the first place - to send a new intervention force to 'protect' Palestinians. Arafat wants and needs an end to all Palestinian resistance to the Israeli state, but has neither the moral nor military authority to enforce this. A United Nations force would have a much better chance of putting an end to Palestinian resistance and imposing 'peace' without justice.



Arafat's cap in hand approach has got Palestinians a kick in teeth

The failure of the 'peace process' to secure Palestinian rights occurred not just because it was orchestrated by Israel's staunchest ally, the US, and negotiated with the corrupt leadership of Yasir Arafat. The core problem was that it surrendered to the racist ideology of Zionism and the apartheid-like state of Israel. Zionism prioritises the rights of Jews in Israel above all others, so making peace with Israel meant acceptance of inequality and the creation of new structures which

strengthen and perpetuate that inequality.

The only viable and just answer for Palestine is the one originally put forward by the PLO and restated in Said's latest book - the end to the separation of Jews and non-Jews through the creation of a secular state in which no religious or national group is set above another. In short, a democratic, secular and socialist Palestine.

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Middle East Information and Solidarity Collective

This is an anti-imperialist workgroup of *revolution* magazine. We concentrate on the Middle East because it is the area in which the contradiction between the rights of oppressed people in the Third World and the inhumanity and intervention of imperialism is currently sharpest. In particular, we focus on the struggle of the Palestinians for freedom and the right of the Iraqi people to run their own country without Western sanctions and bombings. We counter the racist images of Arabs prevalent in the Western media, showing that their struggles are completely rational and deserving of our support.

This support is not because we see them as helpless victims - it is a question of working class solidarity across frontiers, in support of the rights of people struggling for the same things as most people in the West want. Moreover, this internationalism is vital to the development of real class consciousness in the West. Class consciousness is not about a group of workers in NZ just fighting for a wage rise - it is about workers here seeing themselves as part of an international class. This means making common cause with workers around the world against our own government, the NZ government, and its allies in Washington, Canberra, London and other imperialist centres.

As long as workers in the West remain passive in the face of oppression in the Third World, or even go along with it, we will never pose a serious threat to our own rulers and exploiters.

While focussing our main attention on information and solidarity with the Palestinians and the people of Iraq, as against Western domination and oppression, we also condemn the part played by those who have sold out the Palestinian struggle and play the part of Israel's fifth column: the PLO leadership and Palestinian Authority.

- * Western Hands off the Middle East
- * End the sanctions and bombings of Iraq
- * End Israeli repression of the Palestinians and Western backing of Israel
- * For the dismantling of the apartheid-like state of Israel
- * For a democratic, secular Palestine - a free, socialist Palestine without distinction between Jew and Arab; fully equality for all
- * No deals which betray the rights of the oppressed - eg Camp David and the Oslo Accords.

From Zionism to socialism

The article below was written in 1982 by **Ygael Gluckstein**, just after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and a number of massacres. Gluckstein grew up in Palestine, but later lived in Britain where he became best known as the left-wing theorist and political leader **Tony Cliff**.

Looking back on my own experience in Palestine I can see how today's horror grew from small beginnings. Zionism, Jewish separateness and the belief in a Jewish homeland, have developed into state violence.

My parents were pioneering Zionists, leaving Russia for Palestine in 1902 to join a total Zionist population of a few thousand. I grew up a Zionist, but Zionism did not have the ugly face we see today. However, there was always a fundamental crack between the Zionists and the Arabs.

Dispossessing the Arabs

Zionists took over Arab land, often evicting the occupiers. They systematically discriminated against the thousands of Arab unemployed. In our area, 80 percent of the population was Arab, but my school was exclusively Jewish.

My parents were extreme Zionists. My father told me, "The only way to look at an Arab is through the sight of a gun."

The Zionists organised their own trade union, the Histadrut, which raised two political funds. One was called "The defence of Hebrew labour" and the other, "The defence of Hebrew products". These funds were used to organise pickets to prevent Arabs from working in Jewish enterprises and to stop Arab produce coming into Jewish markets.

In 1944 we lived near Tel Aviv market. One morning my wife saw a young man go around talking to all the women selling produce. Some he left alone, but others had paraffin poured on the vegetables and their eggs were smashed. My wife, who had just come from South Africa, couldn't believe it. "What's going on?" she asked. It was simple. The man checked if the produce was Hebrew or Arab, and destroyed Arab produce. Now, this behaviour was still on a small scale and some Zionists were still talking like left-wingers. But the central antagonism to the Arabs remained central.

No Arab ever entered the kibbutz movement, the so-called "socialist" collective farms. The majority of Jewish-owned land belonged to the Jewish National Fund, whose constitution forbade Arab tenants. This meant in whole areas the original Arab populations were driven out. When I left Palestine in 1946, Tel Aviv - a city of 300,000 - had no Arab residents left. Imagine arriving in Nottingham, a similar sized town, and finding no English people.

The Zionists - a minority not trusting an Arab majority - always looked to the imperialist powers that controlled the country. This was low-key at first.

Zionism for hire

Zionist leaders repeatedly told German rulers it would be in their interests if Zionism flourished in Palestine. When Britain occupied the country in 1917, the Zionist leaders wrote to the Tory foreign minister, Balfour, explaining it was in Britain's interests to have a strong Zionist presence in Palestine. And during WW2, when it became clear the United States was the main imperialist power, especially in the Middle East, Zionist leaders switched their focus

to Washington.

The Zionists, if not for sale, were always for hire. The logic of Zionism - separation from the Gentile population, whether in Russia, Poland or Palestine, led to this dependence on imperialism. Nazism and its rise were important. German big business didn't support Hitler out of fear of the Jews, but out of fear of the German working class. Both the Jews and the working class were Hitler's victims.

But the Zionists implied that all Germans were the problem. And, when the German workers were defeated in 1933 without a struggle, Zionism was immensely strengthened. Once a movement has a certain momentum it can't be defeated unless there is a new, alternative movement on a much bigger scale. The absence of such a radical alternative allowed Zionism to become increasingly powerful.

Outrages

Back in Palestine, Zionist outrages against the Arabs were developing. The state of Israel, declared in 1948, was accomplished by a terror campaign which drove hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their homes. The state was also born with the 'limited' massacre of 240 Arab civilians in the village of Deir Yassin.

Men, women and children were slaughtered, some thrown alive down the village well. It was a place I knew well, just a few miles from my home.

The Arabs are not the only ones to pay since then. Israel's constant search for allies has made it increasingly a supplier of military equipment to the world's most reactionary regimes.

Unsavoury friends

In 1966 Moshe Dayan, Israel's defence minister at the time, spent two months in South Vietnam advising the American puppet government. Israel supplied arms to Chile, to Ian Smith's Rhodesia, and to all the countries upon which US president Carter placed an arms embargo for human rights violations.

Israel's security police advised the Shah of Iran, while its scientists developed nuclear weapons with the apartheid regime in South Africa.

The Jews were horribly oppressed for centuries in Europe, but that did not guarantee that they became progressive or revolutionary. Indeed, oppression associated with lack of power leads to reaction. When the core of Zionism meant separation not only from other peoples but even from all progressive forces, the rest of the tale followed naturally.

Now Israel is collaborating with the fascist Phalangists in Lebanon. I'm not surprised. I recall the 1930s when the Irgun, led by Begin - now Israel's prime minister - used the Hitler salute and wore the brown shirts.

In the 1930s, the Zionists in Israel discriminated against Arabs, but did not murder them. However, the monstrosities we have now become used to are the logic of Zionism. Indeed, I fear we'll see worse in the future.

One year of the new intifada

LAW is a Jerusalem-based association of Palestinian lawyers who monitor human rights violations in the Israeli occupied territories. Below is the LAW Special Report on the First Year of the Palestinian Intifada

Introduction

Today, the ongoing Palestinian Intifada has entered its second year. A year ago, on Friday September 29, 2000, Israeli troops stormed the Noble Sanctuary (Al Haram Al Sharif) and opened fire on Palestinian worshipers, killing four and wounding more than 200. Consequently, clashes broke out between Palestinians and Israeli occupation forces and a fifth Palestinian was killed. On the following day, violent clashes broke out between Palestinian demonstrators and Israeli soldiers and spread to all main Palestinian cities. Eleven Palestinians were killed. On the third day, ten more Palestinians were shot to death by Israeli troops. On the fourth day, Palestinians living inside the Green Line clashed with Israeli police and border guards and 16 Palestinians were killed, including seven from within the Green Line. The Intifada intensified and more Palestinians fell victim to the Israeli excessive and disproportionate use of force.

The Israeli occupation forces committed blatant human rights violations during the 1st year of the Intifada. According to LAW's documentation, excessive force has been used against Palestinian stone throwers, even though such stone throwing had no life threatening effect on the soldiers.

Evidently, the Israeli excessive and disproportionate use of force was aimed at causing as many Palestinian casualties as possible.

Weaponry used against Palestinians

1. M16 and Galil rifles
2. Teargas and stun bombs
3. Heavy machineguns
4. Personal armored carriers
5. Tanks
6. Surface to surface missiles
7. Battleships
8. Apache and Cobra gunships
9. F16 and F15 fighter jets
10. Rubber bullets
11. Rubber-coated steel bullets



12. Live bullets of various sizes
13. Internationally banned dum-dum bullets
14. Artillery shells
15. Nail bombs
16. Air to surface missiles

Excessive use of deadly force

According to LAW's documentation, many Palestinians died from teargas inhalation and from rubber coated steel bullets. In several cases, teargas inhalation caused spasms and fits, which raised doubts amongst Palestinian medical sources that Israeli forces were using a new type of teargas.

Furthermore, LAW's documentation proved that rubber-coated steel bullets used by Israeli forces was fatal when used at close range.

LAW's documentation provides that 678 Palestinians were killed during the first year of the Intifada as follows:

29 September 2001
678 Palestinians Killed
10,596 Palestinians Injured
384 Palestinian Homes Demolished
5103.7 Acres of Palestinian Agricultural Land Destroyed

578 Palestinians were killed by Israeli soldiers ·

23 Palestinians were killed by Israeli settlers ·

28 Palestinians were killed in circumstances in which Israeli forces were suspected to be involved in their deaths ·

22 Palestinians died at Israeli military roadblocks after being prevented from crossing ·

27 Palestinians died in suicide bombings

Women and children

The number of Palestinians killed includes 30 females; 19 of which were shot dead by Israeli troops and Jewish settlers, 8 died at Israeli military roadblocks, and 3 died in suspicious circumstances. The figure also includes 173 children less than 18 years of age; 162 were shot dead by Israeli troops, 7 died in suspicious circumstances, and 4 died at military roadblocks.

Furthermore, the number includes 4 Palestinian doctors, including a German doctor, 3 paramedics, and 3 firefighters. Three Palestinian journalists and 95 police officers were also killed. 162 Palestinians were killed during Israeli shelling and 35 Palestinians were assassinated by Israeli forces. Seventeen Palestinians were killed during extra judicial executions of Intifada activists.

The wounded

According to LAW's documentation, 10,596 Palestinians sustained gunfire and shrapnel wounds, including 6,722 in the West Bank and 3,874 in Gaza Strip. Additionally, thousands of Palestinians sustained injuries from teargas inhalation, from falling while trying to escape Israeli indiscriminate shelling of Palestinian homes, and from being physically attacked by Israeli troops and settlers.

Extra-judicial execution

Israeli forces assassinated 35 Palestinians during the first year of the Intifada. This number includes 33 civilians

and 2 policemen. 17 Palestinian passersby died simply because they were present at the scene of these extra judicial executions. Weaponry used to carry out these assassinations has included sniper fire, helicopter gunship missile fire, tank-fire and explosive devices planted in vehicles and telephone booths. The killings were carried out under circumstances that demonstrate complete disregard for the risk involved to the lives of bystanders. Some of those targeted were gunned down in town centers, or even in taxis while other passengers were present.

Sharon's government continued the policy of extra judicial execution initiated by the former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak. Below is a list of extra judicial executions carried out against Palestinians:

- 9 fell in Jenin district
- 8 fell in Nablus district
- 5 fell in Tulkarem district
- 4 fell in Bethlehem district
- 2 fell in Hebron district
- 2 fell in Ramallah and Al Bireh district
- 5 fell in Gaza district

The victims of Israeli executions included members of all Palestinian factions such as the Islamic Jihad, which lost 12 of its activists; Hamas lost 11, Fatah lost 8, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine lost 3. One victim did not belong to any political faction.

Attacks on journalists

Journalists reporting on events in the Palestinian territories have not escaped the brutality of the military occupation to which the Palestinian people and their institutions have been subjected for several years. Local and foreign journalists alike have been victims of attacks by Israeli soldiers and settlers, particularly since the outbreak of the current Intifada in September 2000.

To date, Israeli forces have gravely violated all principles of international humanitarian law and international conventions relating to the protection of civilians in time of war. Israeli soldiers and militant settlers have carried out frequent attacks on journalists and reporters working for the press and television stations, as well as human rights activists that work in the Palestinian territories.

According to LAW's documentation, Israeli forces have killed three Palestinian journalists.

Attacks on paramedics

Israeli forces aimed fire at Palestinian ambulances and paramedics killing four Palestinian doctors including a German doctor, three paramedics, and three firefighters.

Israeli settler crimes

Attacks on Palestinians by armed settlers in the occupied territories have increased in intensity and frequency since 29 September 2000. In the period covered by this report, settler attacks have so far killed 23 and wounded dozens of Palestinians.

The terrorization of Palestinian civilians and attacks on their property are often conducted with the support and protection of the Israeli army, which has never intervened to prevent or arrest those involved. In some cases, settlers have participated with the Israeli army in attacks

victims include a 3- month-old baby. The ages of the victims were below twenty to above forty.

Shelling

Israeli occupation forces used highly sophisticated weapons to shell Palestinian homes and police outposts, including F15 and F16 fighter jets, which were used to bomb Palestinian police outposts in Ramallah, Nablus, Salfit, Gaza, and Dir Al Balah.

Battleships and missile launchers as well as artillery shells, gunships, and heavy machineguns have also been used in attacks. An F16 attack in Nablus killed 11 Palestinians and wounded dozens more. In total, 162 Palestinians were killed during Israeli shellings, 39 police outposts were destroyed, and 1,673 homes were severely damaged.

Incursions into Palestinian-ruled areas

Since the outbreak of the Intifada, Israeli troops have made several incursions to PA-controlled areas; classified as 'areas a' in conformity with Declaration of Principles signed in Washington between the Israeli Government and the Palestine Liberation Organization on the 13th of September 1993, in addition to the Cairo Agreement signed on the 4th of May 1994.

In most cases incursions were followed by the shelling of civilian property and military positions by heavy artillery and machinegun fire. Civilian homes and Palestinian security and police installations have been bulldozed and demolished, causing the death of innocent civilians and national security forces.

Bulldozing and demolition

Israeli occupation forces intensified blatant violations against Palestinian property at the onset of the Intifada. An extensive house demolition campaign against Palestinian homes as well as Palestinian police posts was carried out, using security excuses such as being attacked with stones or gunfire from such houses. The campaign rendered hundreds of Palestinian families homeless. The Israeli forces also uprooted hundreds of Palestinian trees. The number of demolished homes during the Intifada

A typical week under Israeli occupation

“This report covers human rights violations by Israeli occupation forces in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) from September 27 - October 3, 2001. This week, Israeli soldiers killed 22 Palestinians - 16 of whom were civilians (including six children) and four security officers.

Around 300 Palestinians were also injured. In addition, four Palestinians were killed in two mysterious explosions, which the Israeli occupation forces are suspected to be involved in.

Two Palestinian militants were also killed in an attack on a Jewish settlement in the northern Gaza Strip.

According to PCHR's documentation, seven Palestinian civilians, including four children, and a security man, were killed and 230, mostly children, were injured either as a result of being fired at for no apparent reason or due the excessive use of force against demonstrators when no threat was posed to the lives of Israeli soldiers. . . “

**- Palestinian Centre for Human Rights
full report at www.pchrgaza.org**

against Palestinian demonstrators. Settlers have frequently used firearms, as well as other methods to attack Palestinian civilians, with the intent to kill.

Twenty-three Palestinians have died in settler attacks; 12 were shot, five were deliberately run over, three died when their car overturned, two were tortured and mutilated, and one was killed when a rock was thrown at him. Five of these settler crimes took place in the Nablus district; five in Ramallah and Al Bireh district, four in Jerusalem, four in Hebron, two in Qalqilia, two in Salfit, and one in Bethlehem. The



totalled 384, including 308 in Gaza and 76 in the West Bank and Jerusalem.

One hundred and eighty one agricultural barracks were also razed to the ground by Israeli bulldozers including 130 in Gaza Strip

and 51 in the West bank. 57 industrial establishments (36 in Gaza Strip and 21 in the West Bank) were also demolished.

Israeli forces destroyed 5103.7 acres of Palestinian land through bulldozing, including 3354.5 acres in Gaza Strip and 1749 acres in the West Bank. Israeli troops and Jewish settlers uprooted 35,398 trees in the West Bank alone.

Detention

According to LAW's documentation, Israeli forces arrested 1,900 Palestinians during the Intifada; approximately 1,000 are still held in custody. The Israeli authorities have placed 17 Palestinian detainees under administrative detention; all are held at Megiddo prison.

The number of Palestinian female detainees is 13 including 4 young girls. These women have been subjected to severe beating by Israeli interrogators. Aman Mona and Sawsan Turki, were admitted to Abu Kbir hospital for medical treatment as a result of beatings.

What's On

Picket the Labour Party warmongers

Christchurch pickets and MEISC meetings:

for further information, contact MEISC, P.O. Box 513, Christchurch or email jwe21@student.canterbury.ac.nz

Anti-war marches:

Christchurch, Friday nights, starting 6pm, Bridge of Remembrance

contact Peace Action Network: anna@disarmsecure.org, ph (03) 3481350

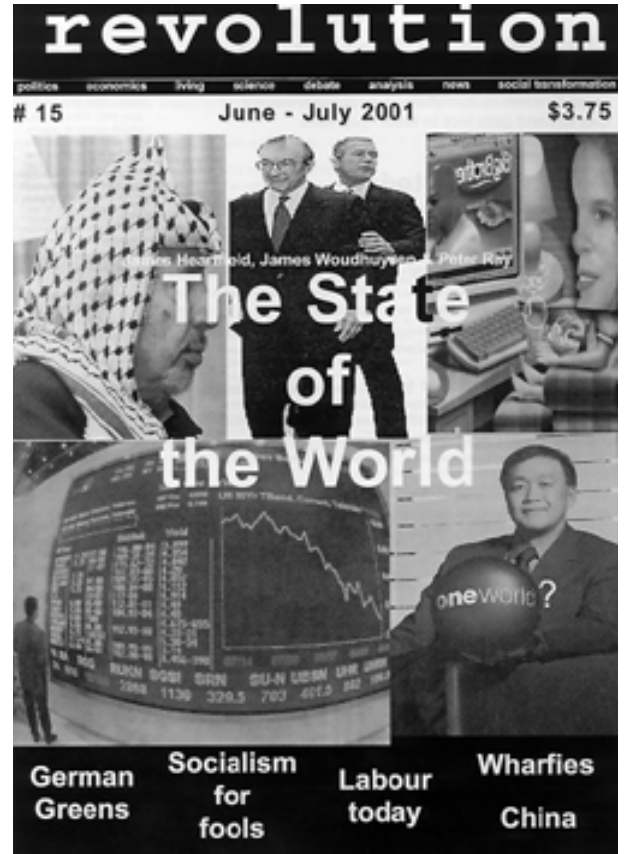
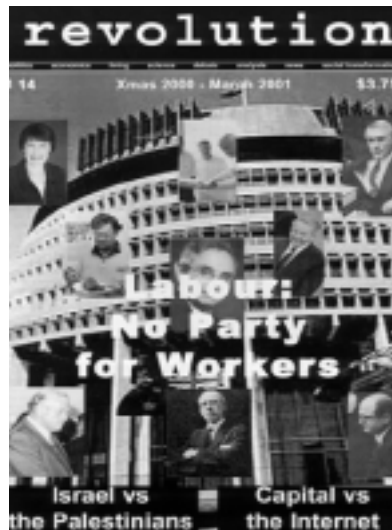
NATIONAL DAY OF ACTION

As the attacks continue on Afghanistan and Washington, along with its friends in the NZ government, threaten a widening of the bombings and other attacks, we desperately need co-ordinated nationwide activity. We are suggesting a national day of action, with marches in as many cities across New Zealand as possible.

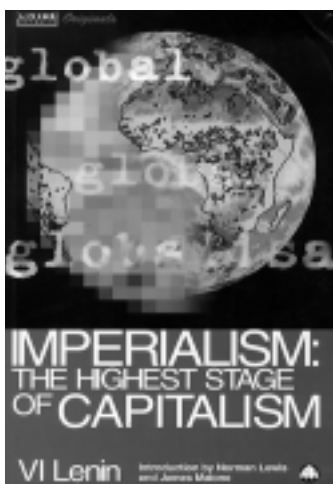
This gives a focus for all upcoming anti-war activities. It gives us something concrete to build towards. It also means we can take the antiwar message into unions and workplaces, local communities, and a range of organisations, asking them to endorse the day of action and provide concrete support.

It means we can argue for unions to take industrial action on that day and to carry out educational work in workplaces leading up to it. It also means anti-war activists can take our message into workplaces and working class communities.

**join revolution's
middle east information and solidarity collective
see our position statement, p9**



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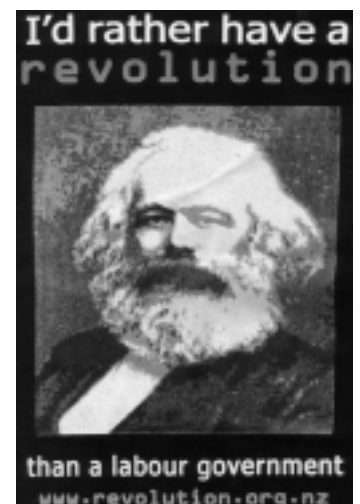
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Cheques for any of the above books should be made out to RM Club and sent to the Club at P.O. Box 513, Christchurch.

Fear of fundamentalism

Images of Arabs in the Western media typically portray religious zealotry, irrationality, violence and danger. Islamic fundamentalism is pictured as a widespread phenomenon and a special danger.

Yet even in countries which have been depicted as fanatically fundamentalist, the facts don't bear this out. Take Iran, for instance. In May 1979, the electorate returned a moderate as their president in a landslide vote. The fundamentalist candidate was decisively defeated.

In fact, the concentration in the West on the 'danger' of Islamic fundamentalism is more revealing about the state of the Western powers themselves than it is about Islam of any sort.

New demons for old

From 1917 on, and especially after WW2, the 'communist threat' had been used to unite the otherwise competing capitalist interests and present the impression of a cohesive Western world view. Western societies were cohered around anti-communism', as promoted by the ruling classes. The collapse of the Soviet bloc created an ideological vacuum for the West.

Thus Ronald Reagan observed in a 1992 speech, "Ironically the collapse of communist tyranny has robbed much of the West of its uplifting, common purpose." The West had to cast around for new demons.

This search, which has proved to be a defining feature of the New World Order, has taken the West's ideologues literally to the ends of the earth. And its inventions have been bizarre to say the least. Some of the weakest and least influential countries in the world have been selected for ritualised vilification.

One section of the world, in particular, has met the criteria laid down by Reagan, criteria which required that the Western capitalist powers "enforce stricter humanitarian standards of international conduct" and "impose civilised standards of behaviour on those who flout every measure of human decency." That section of the world has been Islam.

In his speech, Reagan advised that "a humanitarian velvet glove backed by a steel fist of military force" be used to bring Islamic nations into line. In fact, not much has been seen of the velvet glove - for

instance, all the people of Iraq have seen in the past decade is the steel fist of military force and brutal sanctions. Up to 1.5 million Iraqis have died in the clench of this fist.

The war on Iraq is itself ironic, albeit in a barbaric way. The United States, for instance, used Saddam Hussein and Iraq to wage war on Iran in the 1980s, when the latter country shared US public enemy #1 status with Libya. The hostility against Iran and Libya was soon extended to any regime in the Arab and Islamic world that dared show any independence from the United States.

The focus of Western paranoia on Islam has shifted from one Muslim country to another over the past 20 years. Libya, Iran, Iraq, and Syria have all been demonised. Sudan, one of the poorest nations in the world, has also suffered along these lines. Its refusal to line up with the West in the Gulf War meant that aid was cut off.

When Yemen, which had denounced the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, showed some consistency and also denounced Operation Desert Storm as well, it immediately drew the wrath of the USA. Its vote against Desert Storm in the Security Council cost it over NZ\$1 billion in aid. A US diplomat informed Yemen that its anti-Desert Storm vote was "The most expensive vote you'll ever cast."

Ironically, unlike the United States' chief allies in the Arabian peninsula (eg Saudi Arabia), Yemen actually has institutions which the West demands of its enemies: a free press, prisons open to international inspection and a multi-party political system.

One of the other pieces of Western hypocrisy is that the Western powers are in no small degree responsible for whatever strength fundamentalism has. For instance, the most fundamentalist state in the Islamic world has long been Saudi Arabia, one of the West's key allies. Fundamentalism coheres society around a rich and reactionary elite in that country united with the West and promoted by the West as a counter to socialism and radical national liberation movements that threatened imperialist interests.

In Israel/Palestine, the Islamic group Hamas was originally cohered by the Israeli state as a counter to the secular radical nationalism of the PLO. It was only later, especially as the PLO began abandoning

militant opposition to Israeli oppression, that Hamas saw the possibilities of striking out on its own and building a base amongst the Palestinian masses.

In Afghanistan, the West backed fundamentalist forces fighting the radical nationalist government backed by the Soviet Union from 1979 onwards. In Pakistan, the fundamentalist government of the generals has been preferred by the Western powers to the nationalist parties which tended to be unreliable and, from time to time, express opinions and interests of their own against those of the imperialist powers.

Minor players

The Islamic fundamentalists opposed to the Western powers are minor players in world politics. Yet the Western elites have still been fairly successful in demonising them and presenting them to Western public opinion as a major threat. For this perception to take hold, it must reflect something real. If that something real is not the actual threat posed by the fundamentalists, then it must connect with some real fears and uncertainties in the West itself.

In fact, the economic and social malaise in the West in the 1990s, and the disappearance of the old Soviet enemy against which Western society was cohered, has left the advanced capitalist world especially prone to a whole series of panics - the Aids panic, moral panics about child sex abuse and crime, and a whole series of other debilitating fears. Many people in society are now prepared to believe the worst about anything and everything.

At the same time, the spread of relativism means that strongly-held opinions of any kind are out of favour in the West. No-one is supposed to be committed to any strong beliefs and principles about society or visions of the world any more. Anyone who is does is in danger of being regarded as crazy and/or dangerous. Thus, the strongly-held views of Islamic fundamentalists scare the liberal wishy-washy mentality that is the dominant form of bourgeois ideology in the West.

However, it is precisely the Western governments, including the liberals who run many of these governments, who are the people who have bombed civilians all over the world and who possess the arsenal to kill millions any time they choose.

John Edmundson and Linda Kearns

How the West made Bin Laden

Between 1978 and 1992, the US spent at least \$US3 billion (some sources estimate as high as 20 billion) on creating, funding, training, and arming the mujaheddin 'freedom fighters' in Afghanistan. Every US dollar spent was matched by Saudi Arabia, as the US government and the Saudi oligarchy had an agreement to co-fund the establishment of the mujaheddin. A section of these 'freedom fighters' now make up the Taliban government, and the training camps created by these funds are the ones used by Osama bin Laden.

Wealthy conservative reaction

The mujaheddin started as a conservative reaction of wealthy semi-feudal landlords, and the Muslim religious establishment (often one in the same), to the progressive policies of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). The PDPA was committed to radical land reform that favoured the peasants, trade union rights, education for all (including women) and the separation of church and state. To carry out these policies the PDPA advocated closer ties with the Soviet Union. Fearing the spread of Soviet influence and the example the PDPA might set for people suffering under the repressive regimes of America's other Islamic allies, the U.S offered to support those opposing the PDPA government.

An internal power struggle in the PDPA that toppled the leader of the government in December 1979 saw Soviet soldiers enter Afghanistan to prevent the government's collapse. The Soviet Union did not want to see the PDPA government fail, for it feared this could destabilise the southern Soviet Republics of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The entrance of the Soviet forces was used to legitimise the mujaheddin struggle as one of national liberation.

bin Laden

Osama bin Laden, like many of the mujaheddin fighters and supporters, was drawn from fundamentalist Islamic groups outside of Afghanistan. Born in Saudi Arabia, he was one of 20 sons of a billionaire construction magnate. He arrived in Afghanistan in 1980 to join the 'jihad' against the Soviets and became one of the three people who ran Maktab al Khidamar (Office of Services, MAK). The



Islamic fundamentalists: made in the West

MAK was the organisation that distributed recruits, money and equipment to the mujaheddin factions from Pakistan.

In 1989 bin Laden gained overall control of the MAK. The friendships and associations made in The Office of Services gave birth to the Al Qaeda (The Base) network, which is alleged to have carried out the September 11 attacks.

The MAK was set up, financed and directed by Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence Directorate (ISI), which was the first recipient of the vast bulk of the US and Saudi funding. While the US needed to use ISI operatives, as it had no creditable Islamic agents, it always had control of the operations.

In 1978, president Jimmy Carter started to support the mujaheddin to a level where they could harass the Soviet forces; by 1984 president Ronald Regan wanted to help the mujaheddin to defeat the 'evil empire' (the Soviet Union). CIA director William Casey made a secret trip to Pakistan in 1984 to plan a strategy for the war against the Soviet forces. During this trip he visited three secret training camps near the Afghan border, and watched the mujaheddin fire heavy weapons and make bombs with plastic explosives and detonators supplied by the US.

Mohammed Yousaf, a Pakistani general who attended the strategy meeting Casey held during this trip, has told of how Casey startled his Pakistani hosts by his wish to escalate the war and take it into enemy territory. Yousaf, who supervised

the covert war for the ISI between 1983 and 1987, has since published a detailed account of his role and that of the CIA in what was titled 'The Bear Trap'.

Casey's escalations included the targeting and killing of Soviet military officers, supplying the mujaheddin with high technology and military expertise and weaponry, and carrying on a propaganda war in the southern Soviet republics.

Casey's visit was a prelude to a secret Regan administration decision in March 1985, reflected in National Security Decision Directive 166, to sharply escalate U.S. covert operations in Afghanistan. By 1987 this new policy had arms supplies rise to 65,000 tons a year and what Yousaf called a "ceaseless stream" of CIA and Pentagon specialists arriving in Pakistan to oversee and advise on operations.

In 1986 Casey committed CIA support to an ISI proposal to recruit from around the world for the Afghan jihad. Between 1982 and 1992 at least 100,000 Islamic militants flocked to Pakistan, many to attend fundamentalist schools without necessarily taking part in the jihad, but at least 40 000 joined the fighting.

Recruiting in US

John Cooley, a journalist and the author of *Unholy Wars: Afghanistan, America and International Terrorism*, has revealed that young Muslims were even recruited in the US for the mujaheddin, and trained at Camp Peary in Virginia. Many of these foreign recruits for the mujaheddin joined

bin Laden's Al Qaeda network after the downfall of the PDPA in Afghanistan.

Trained in Green Berets

In November 1998, the British *Independent* reported that Ali Mohammed, one of the people charged with the 1998 bombing of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, was a former member of the US army's elite Green Berets. It reported that he had trained bin Laden's operatives in 1989 and that these operatives were recruited from the al Kifah Refugee Centre in Brooklyn, New York. The operatives were then given paramilitary training in the New York area and shipped to Afghanistan.

The CIA backing of the mujaheddin saw the drugs trade boom and within two years, Afghanistan was the world's biggest producer of opium. As in Southeast Asia during the 1960s-70s the profits provided extra funding for the CIA-backed warlords (in this case mujaheddin warlords), helping to enrich many of them personally as well as helping to finance their war with the Soviets and each other.

In 1995, the former director of the CIA's operation in Afghanistan was unrepentant about the explosion in the flow of drugs: "Our main mission was to do as much



The Western powers' latest demon

damage as possible to the Soviets . . .” The US recently paid the Taliban - now its sworn enemy - 43 million dollars to destroy some opium fields as part of its war on drugs.

The full cost of America's covert funding of the mujaheddin may never be known but the billions of taxpayer dollars spent could have been used to greatly improve the lives of America workers (health care, school funding etc). The cost

of the American governments 'war on terrorism', which some estimate to exceed \$US100 billion could greatly improve the lives of all the people in the Third World (20 billion to provide clean water, 30 billion to provide classrooms for all 3rd world children).

Who pays the price?

Again the full cost of the US 'war on terrorism' will never be known as hidden deals and covert funding of unknown groups and operations go unchecked. Already Musharraf and his Pakistani regime have received \$US600 million in debt rescheduling and had the sanctions imposed on them and India for their nuclear testing three years ago have been lifted.

The human cost of this new war is also unknown but with up to 5 million Afghans facing starvation and the full force of the American war machine it is going to be far too high.

Paul Hopkinson

Below are extracts from a 1998 interview with Zbigniew Brzezinski, President Jimmy Carter's National Security Adviser. It appeared in *Le Nouvel Observateur* (France), January 15-21, 1998, p76. The translation is by William Blum, author of *Killing Hope* and *Rogue State* (see review, *revolution* #14, Xmas 2000-March 2001)

Question: The former director of the CIA, Robert Gates, stated in his memoirs *From the Shadows* that American intelligence services began to aid the Mujahadeen in Afghanistan 6 months before the Soviet intervention. In this period you were the national security adviser to President Carter. You therefore played a role in this affair. Is that correct?

Brzezinski: Yes. According to the official version of history, CIA aid to the Mujahadeen began during 1980, that is to say, after the Soviet army invaded Afghanistan, 24 Dec 1979. But the reality, secretly guarded until now, is completely otherwise. Indeed, it was July 3, 1979 that President Carter signed the first directive for secret aid to the opponents of the pro-Soviet regime in Kabul. And that very day, I wrote a note to the president in which I explained to him that in my opinion this aid was going to induce a Soviet military intervention.

Q: Despite this risk, you were an advocate of this covert action. But perhaps you yourself desired this Soviet entry into war and looked to provoke it?

B: It isn't quite that. We didn't push the Russians to intervene, but we knowingly increased the probability that they would.

Q: When the Soviets justified their intervention by asserting that they intended to fight against a secret involvement of the United States in Afghanistan, people didn't believe them. However, there was a basis of truth. You don't regret anything today?

B: Regret what? That secret operation was an excellent idea. It had the effect of drawing the Russians into the Afghan trap and you want me to regret it? The day that the Soviets officially crossed the border, I wrote to President Carter: We now have the opportunity of giving to the USSR its Vietnam war. Indeed, for almost 10 years, Moscow had to carry on a war unsupportable by the government, a conflict that brought about the demoralization and finally the breakup of the Soviet empire.

Q: And neither do you regret having supported the Islamic fundamentalism, having given arms and advice to future terrorists?

B: What is most important to the history of the world? The Taliban or the collapse of the Soviet empire? Some stirred-up Moslems or the liberation of Central Europe and the end of the cold war?

From New Zealand to Afghanistan:

Labour wages war on workers and the poor

**Picket
Labour MPs,
see p13**

The NZ Labour-led government has fully supported the US/British-led onslaught on Afghanistan. The same party which decimated workers' living conditions in the 1980s is now supporting their allies in Washington and London reducing Afghanistan to rubble.

The stance taken by Labour should surprise no-one. Labour has a long history of protecting the interests of capital against the interests of workers and of opposing the oppressed of the world.

Racists

The founders of the NZ Labour Party were ardent racists who supported, indeed advocated, the 'White New Zealand' policy. Michael Savage, in particular, ranted against the 'danger' of a 'piebald race' unless Asians were completely excluded from New Zealand. All the Labour MPs, including the 'left-wing' first leader of the party, Harry Holland, supported the 1920 Act which closed the door on Chinese entry to NZ. Indeed Holland, Savage and the other Labour MPs criticised the Tory party of the time, led by William Massey, for not going far enough in keeping out what they called 'The Yellow Agony'.

The first Labour government supported the 'Allies' in their war against the 'Axis' powers for control of the world. This government vigorously suppressed trade union militancy during the war. Famous militant waterfront workers' leader Jock Barnes described the first Labour government (1935-49) as bigger jingos



Having impoverished thousands of working class families in New Zealand in the 1980s, Labour now favours bombing the impoverished of Afghanistan

(imperialists) than the open Tories. After the war, Labour set about smashing the trade union movement, a task carried through by their National Party successors in 1951. In the '151 Days' struggle between the wharfies and the National government, Labour adopted an official position of neutrality, while still pretending to be the party that was the 'friend of the worker'.

Party of the middle class

Through the postwar period, Labour lost much of its membership and increasingly became a party of the liberal middle class and the trade union bureaucracy. Party leaders basically went along with the Cold War and failed to oppose NZ's involvement in the brutal war against the Vietnamese people. At the same time, Labour leaders rode to power on the back of the anti-Vietnam War movement, in the same way Labour politicians have always parasitised off mass social movements.

That Labour government, faced with the end of the postwar boom and the onset of recession, began a series of attacks on

the working class. Labour PM Kirk's irate statement that he had "had a gutsful of militant trade unionists" reflected the anti-union prejudices of the middle class and the fact that Labour was going to do whatever was necessary to protect the interests of capital in the new recession.

Ideal capitalist vehicle

By the 1980s, Labour's base in the liberal middle class and its close connections with many of the richest and most 'new right' capitalists in the country made it the ideal vehicle for the biggest attack on workers' rights and living conditions since the 1930s. The 'restructuring' of this government - which included not only Prebble and Douglas (now both of ACT) but also current Labour PM Helen Clark and her deputy, Michael Cullen - cost tens upon tens of thousands of workers' jobs and drove wages down.

The current Labour/Alliance coalition is pursuing the task of keeping workers' horizons as low as possible and coming up with policies that can lift capital and profits out of the mire of an ongoing economic malaise. What could be more natural, then, for a party which protects capital in New Zealand to also protect capital globally? Even if that means killing workers and the poor in Afghanistan or anywhere else.

Philip Ferguson



Labour leaders Savage (left) and Holland (right) advocated the 'White New Zealand' policy. Today's Labour leaders want to keep out poor people of colour and bomb the Third World

Phil's "Labour's racist roots", examining Labour's campaigning for a 'White New Zealand', will appear in *revolution* #17.

The problem is capitalism

The horrific attacks in New York and Washington on September 11 showed a callous disregard for human life similar to that shown by the people who hold power in the United States, New Zealand and other First World countries.

In that sense, however, they did not come entirely out of the blue. Western governments and business interests who have wreaked havoc on the Third World have finally succeeded in creating groups of people as savage as themselves. The September 11 attacks thus show the need not for some major military reprisal by the West - although that is what is being organised - but, rather, for a truly new world order.



The 'civilised' West vs the 'uncivilised' rest? US bombs Red Cross warehouse, Kabul, 2001; napalms kids in Vietnam, 1970

The world we live in

Today, we live in a world in which the 225 richest individuals have combined assets of over \$NZ2.5 trillion. This is greater than the total annual income of nearly half of the population of the whole planet.

The net worth of the top ten billionaires is greater than the combined national income of the 48 poorest countries added together.

Across the world three billion people - about half of all humanity - struggle to live on \$NZ5 a day.

One in five human beings don't expect to live beyond 40. About 300 million people live in 16 countries where life expectancy has actually decreased in the past 25 years.

Plenty of wealth

The inequality across the world is not due to there not being enough wealth to go around. After all, the past century has seen an unprecedented growth in the production of goods and

services. In fact, the total amount of goods and services produced in the 20th century is estimated to have exceeded the cumulative output of the entire preceding recorded human history. So there is plenty being produced.

Nor is it due to everyone in the First World living it up at the expense of everyone in the Third World. Even in the wealthy West, 100 million people live below the poverty line.

In the United States, a mere 0.5 percent, ie 1/200th, of the population own 42 percent of financial wealth. In New Zealand in 1971, 3 percent of NZers owned over 20 percent of the country's wealth; by 1991, after the last Labour government had done its work, this 3 percent owned 37 percent of NZ's wealth.

Not too many people

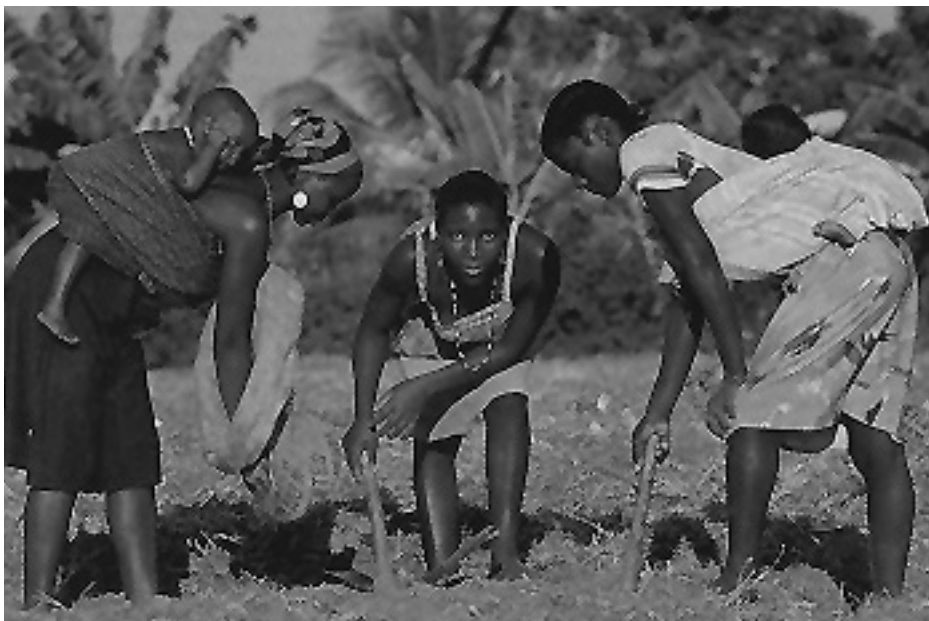
Nor is there a problem of too many people. For instance, while the world's population quadrupled between 1900 and 2000, GDP (gross domestic product) rose by almost 19 times, thus far outstripping population growth. The world now produces almost five times as much per person as it did in 1900. So there is plenty to go around.

If the problem is not too many people and/or too few goods and services, then it must be connected to how the production of those goods and services are owned and organised and how the goods and services are distributed. In a nutshell, the problem must be capitalism.

Let's build a movement to get rid of it.

revolution collective

www.revolution.org.nz



Capitalism denies development to much of the Third World, keeping masses of people in poverty and unnecessarily back-breaking labour

The assault on Afghanistan points up the desperate need not for a wishy-washy peace movement, which treats NZ imperialism as morally superior to other imperialisms and pleads with Wellington to exert greater leverage in world affairs, but for an anti-imperialist movement.

revolution sees the following as the necessary starting points for a genuine anti-imperialist politics in New Zealand today:

AGAINST THE NEW ZEALAND STATE AND ITS FOREIGN POLICY

An anti-imperialist perspective in New Zealand can only begin with total opposition to the policies and initiatives of our own ruling class. NZ is an advanced capitalist society, part of the First World, presided over by an exploiting ruling class which is part of the problem not part of the solution.

NZ nationalism has been historically the ideology through which the capitalist class here coheres society around its own interests and power. In particular this ideology binds NZ workers to their own exploiters, obscures class divisions within this country and prevents workers from developing an anti-capitalist outlook. At crucial times it serves to line workers up behind our ruling class in wars against workers of other countries.

Much of the left has been part of this reactionary nationalist consensus, most blatantly in the forms of labourism, Stalinism and anti-'foreign control' groups. But even the Marxist left has succumbed to it, as was clear around the campaign against French testing at Moruroa, where most far left groups lined up behind the NZ ruling class.

In contrast to middle class peace groups and leftists who make calls on the NZ government to take action against other capitalist governments, thereby prettifying our own ruling class, a genuine anti-imperialist movement in this country promotes action **against**, rather than **with**, our rulers. A genuine anti-imperialist movement promotes international solidarity of workers against exploiters, especially the Western powers, including NZ, which plunder and oppress the Third World.

Moreover, only through breaking with the NZ nationalist consensus can workers here be won to genuine internationalism and anti-imperialism.

Towards an anti- imperialist movement

Oppose NZ foreign policy in all its forms! No to all NZ intervention abroad, including 'peacekeeping' and other 'white man's burden' activities. For international solidarity of workers and oppressed peoples!

NO WESTERN SOLUTIONS

Today the Western powers, led by the United States, intervene at will in the affairs of the peoples of the Third World. This intervention is cloaked in the language of humanitarian intervention (eg Yugoslavia, East Timor) or, in recent months, the 'war on terrorism'. In all cases, however, it represents a denial of the right of people in the Third World to rule themselves and sort out their own problems. All these forms of intervention make things worse.

Moreover, at the same time, the Western powers suck resources and funds out of these countries, ensuring their continued impoverishment.

Arguments in favour of Western intervention all end up taking on the form of a moral rearmament of imperialism. Peoples in the Third World are presented as less civilised and inferior, and the Western ruling elites as a civilising force. These interventions legitimise the carving up of the Third World among the main capitalist powers. They also serve to unite fragmenting Western societies behind some sense of common purpose - like the 'war on terrorism' - thereby binding workers in the West to their own ruling exploiters. The worse things get in the West, the more likely our ruling classes are going to try to get us all to unite behind them in making war in the Third World.

No Western intervention - no Western solutions! Oppose the moral rearmament

of imperialism! No to all attempts by the Western powers to act as judge, jury and executioner whether through bogus 'World Courts' or through bombs and sanctions.

No to the Third World debt, imposed by Western financial institutions and governments.

NO TO RACE HATRED AND CULTURE WARS

Racism provides a major justification for Western intervention in the Third World and serves to divide workers in NZ from our fellow workers in other countries. While outbreaks of violence against immigrants,

especially immigrants of colour, are usually blamed on small far-right groups, are really the result of the workings of the capitalist system, which creates the divisions between people in the first place, and government policies, which scapegoat immigrants. It is the mainstream, respectable parties of capitalism which are thus the main enemy.

While the cultural war is directed at dehumanising Arabs and other Third World peoples, we must do everything possible to expose these stereotypes and show the common aspirations and interests of the vast majority of humanity.

No to the demonisation and dehumanisation of Third World peoples! No to immigration controls! For open borders and a world of common humanity!

A WORKING CLASS PERSPECTIVE

Racism and national hatred make it easier for the ruling class to rule and harder for workers to fight for their own rights. Instead of fighting their own exploiters, they fight fellow workers. Workers who accept racial and national prejudices will never be able to fight effectively for their own rights as workers. Workers who unite across racial and national boundaries, however, can shake the system of exploitation and oppression to its core. No other section of society has this power to change the world for the better.

The building of an anti-imperialist movement requires not only committed activists, drawn from all layers of society, but an orientation to the working class. Only the working class has a vested interest in ending exploitation and oppression all over the world, and only workers' power can achieve this.