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SIXTH CONGRESS OF LRCI

- Calls for building the Fifth International - a new party of global socialist revolution
- Adopts new name and updates its programme

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FOUNDATION HOSPITALS, BENEFIT CUTS, PRIVATISATION

Tony Blair's war on the poor



See pages 2 and 3

Israeli army murders Palestinians and attacks western peace activists

Israel continues its relentless murder campaign against Palestinians, with 14 killed in Gaza in early May, including a two-year-old child.

And it has now added a new dimension to its terror campaign, aimed at keeping out western witnesses to its atrocities against the Palestinians. It has targeted supporters of the International Solidarity Movement (ISM) in particular.

Since we last went to press, two more international observers/activists have been shot in Rafah, in the Gaza strip - Tom Hurdall and James Miller.

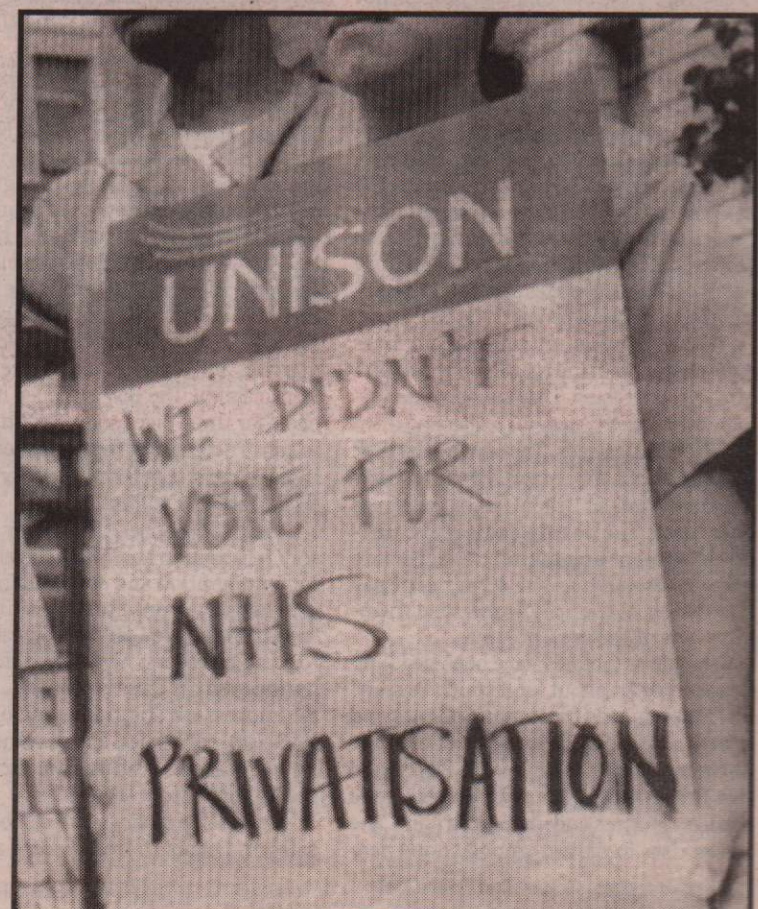
Outrageously, the British state has refused to defend either of the British nationals, stating that any British citizen who goes to the occupied territories goes against government advice and will

not be defended, even, apparently, if killed in cold blood.

Six people who had personal connections with British suicide bomber Asif Hanif were also arrested, despite the fact that suicide bombers are sworn to secrecy before they act precisely to avoid those who care most about them pressuring them not to carry out such a self-destructive deed.

Workers Power calls on all our readers to demand Blair's government carries out an independent inquiry into the shootings of Tom and James, and releases those in custody. We will carry a fuller report next month. In the meantime, we will not be intimidated.

- Victory to the Intifada!
- Justice for the Palestinians and all their supporters!



BNP prospers on back of Labour betrayals

This is just the beginning. Now that we have a foothold and people know that we are capable of winning they will come out and vote for us and the whole thing will just snowball." – Nick Griffin, leader of the British National Party (BNP)

The local elections proved the BNP to be a growing threat. Standing a record 220 candidates it trebled its number of councillors in England from five to 15. It gained some seats in the Midlands, two in the borough of Sandwell, one in Dudley, one in Stoke-on-Trent. They also gained one each in Calderdale, and the Hertfordshire district of Broxbourne.

But its real breakthrough came in Burnley, Lancashire where it won eight seats – up five, making it the second largest group on the council and giving them real influence over local policies. Victorious Burnley candidates gave Nazi salutes as they left the count.

Two questions need to be answered: Why such successes now and how can we stop them?

The BNP have obviously benefited from the mainstream media's anti-asylum seeker racism. As the BNP candidate in Dudley West Midlands observed in an interview with the *Guardian*: "Well we've had quite a bit of luck in that newspapers have become obsessed with the asylum issue. I have not been able to believe the *Daily Express*. Issue after issue, day after day, asylum this, asylum that. So we now have the luxury of banging on people's doors with the mainstream issue of the day. It has legitimised us. We are mainstream now."

Far more important is that a crucial shift is taking place in the allegiance of working class voters. The historic party of the working class in Britain is in crisis and its supporters are deserting it in droves. Even before the election Labour had been abandoned by so many of its core activists that it could find candidates to contest only 70 per cent of the wards. The party's roots in the working class are withering. Blair's destruction of internal party democracy, his weakening of the accountability of councils to local people, his introduction of highly paid chief executives and "professional councillors" are all deepening this process not arresting it.

Labour was widely tipped to lose 500 seats on 1 May – instead it lost far more, around 800. Wards, once solidly Labour, have been sliding deeper and deeper below the poverty line under two successive Blair governments. Record hikes in council tax (12 per cent on average) were announced just two weeks before the elections. They come alongside declining services, appalling neglect of council estates and cuts in leisure facilities for young people.

People in previously solid Labour areas now believe Blair and New Labour couldn't care less about them. They are right. Increasingly they hate the party for neglecting them and their basic needs. That is why the BNP is targeting the most deprived white working class wards in Britain, using racism as their bait, but posing as fiercely anti-establishment and taking up legitimate grievances, such as the 43 per cent pay rise that local councillors awarded themselves shortly before Christmas.

The racist tabloids have been peddling lies and myths about "soft touch Britain" offering refugees free mobile phones and luxury housing while locals can't even get on the housing list. A BBC poll in 2002 found that British people thought a quarter of the world's refugees ended up in Britain. The figure rises to a third among young peo-



"Normal" BNP members celebrate electoral success

ple. In reality Britain takes a minuscule amount, less than 2 per cent.

The BNP plays on these propaganda myths with its claims that white British people are second class citizens in their own country, and that instead "we should be at the front of the queue, not the back", as one Sunderland organiser put it. Poor people, looking around at their neighbourhoods and what Labour has done to them, can easily believe that they come last, even after the refugees.

Despite Labour ministers expressing horror at the BNP's policies, they always respond by mimicking the racists' "concerns". After the BNP's gains in Burnley last year, Labour pushed through still harsher asylum laws. David Blunkett hailed the disproportionately severe sentences for rioting handed down to Asian youth in Bradford and Oldham, and "outlawed" beggars. In Oldham Labour MP and government whip Phil Woolas claimed that that Labour had to be "even handed" and fight racist attacks on white people – thus legitimising the BNP's campaign against claimed "racial attacks" on whites.

FASCIST PARTY

Labour can't tear up the roots of racism – they are too busy feeding them, both by social deprivation and by trying to compete with the BNP by playing the racist card.

The BNP is a fascist party. It is right to stigmatise them as Nazis. Right but not enough. Under the leadership of Nick Griffin the BNP made a turn. After witnessing the success of the Le Pen's right-wing racist populism in France, Gianfranco Fini's rebranding of the old Mussolini party, the MSI, and its entry into government in Italy, and Jörg Haider's feat in getting the Freedom Party into power in Austria, Griffin persuaded the BNP to drop its tactics of violent street marches and focus on electioneering and respectability. The BNP swapped its bover boots for three-piece suits. Griffin is trying to construct a fascist front party, one that is based on racist populism rather than an overt fascist race-war politics.

The BNP dropped the call for compulsory repatriation and limited itself to halting immigration and encouraging voluntary repatriation. "Respectability" and "normalness" are Griffin's constant advice to party members: "when on official party business, smart dress is a must! ... the overall impression should be one of professionalism, normalness and smartness." Griffin goes so far as to call the rival fascist group, the National Front "thugs".

Low-profile tactics such as door-to-door sales and chats in front rooms and pubs

replaced the street sales and skinhead demonstrations. Young, fresh-faced candidates were found to replace the old lags who could hardly stand as credible anti-crime candidates when they had criminal records as long as their arms! Though the latter still work as election agents, canvassers and bodyguards.

However the facade of respectability is paper-thin. On a Panorama documentary shown in December 2002, Mark Collett, the Young BNP's organiser, let the cat out of the bag when he explained he would prefer to live in Hitler's Germany than in mixed-race Oldham and Burnley, and how happy people were under the Third Reich. The BNP was forced to remove Collett as head of the Young BNP – but within five days he was back speaking alongside Griffin at meetings, and was selected to stand in Leeds as a BNP candidate in the May elections.

Despite the respectability ploy there is no doubt that the growth of the BNP will mean rising attacks on black and Asian people, as well as left paper sellers and anti-fascist campaigners.

Peiman Bahmani, an Iranian asylum seeker was killed in Sunderland last August. His partner connects his murder to the deepening racism and fear that is enveloping Sunderland as a result of the BNP's campaigning. And in Leeds when Anti-Nazi League campaigners were out leafletting last week a BNP supporter attacked them. He broke the finger of one and, waving his mobile, threatened to phone round and get a gang together to take care of the rest.

In the last year BNP supporters have attacked two left paper stalls in Leeds, while the car of a prominent anti-fascist campaigner was firebombed.

We need to organise to meet this threat – self-defence to keep our movement safe, and community self-defence to keep out fascists and to break up their meetings and canvassing. We need united campaigns in the communities to isolate the fascists and combat the spread of racism. And we need a sustained struggle to win the unions to driving the fascists out of their ranks, to implementing a policy of total non-co-operation with fascist councillors and to launching propaganda campaigns to win their memberships support for a workers' united front to smash the fascist threat once and for all by denying the fascists a platform.

Above all we need to build a new workers' party, based on revolutionary politics, that can offer hope to thousands of the poorest white workers, that can organise the forces against capitalism's poverty, exploitation and racism, and get rid of it for good. That is the only lasting solution to fascism, which will always breed under capitalism.

Blair's May Day Message MAKE THE POOR PAY FOR WAR

In the days before the local elections on 1 May, Tony Blair made it clear that now the war abroad was over he would be giving his full-time attention to the war at home. The war on Britain's poor, on the public services, on the education system and, of course, on the enemy within, trade unionists trying to defend them and their own wages and conditions.

"Now is not the time for a quiet life. It is time to hold firm to the path of radical reform", declared Tony Blair still "bouncing" from his victory in Baghdad. Having won a military victory in the Middle East he wants to press on to political victories against the working class at home.

The main target of New Labour's assault is the public sector. Boy, do the Blairites hate public service provision. The NHS is to be "reformed" by creating foundation hospitals that will introduce a two-tier system into the NHS. The foundation hospitals will get first call on investment and in return earn money from the queue-jumping middle classes. The rest of us will rot on ever longer waiting lists for the under-staffed and under-resourced hospitals. The foundations of a universal, free-at-the-point-of-delivery, health service will have been thoroughly undermined.

To pay for the exorbitant costs of the Iraq adventure – at least £3 billion of public money – the poorest in society, those on benefits, have actually had their incomes cut, thanks to a below-inflation 70p rise in benefit payments. To save on education services more and more schools are to be subject to privatisation in all but name, through the Private Finance Initiative (PFI).

"Failing schools" are to be handed over to none other than the building contractors Jarvis, fresh from its signal success in looking after Britain's rail system (Potters Bar). And the hated tuition fees that price working class youth out of higher education are here to stay, if Blair has his way.

"Failing states" like Afghanistan and Iraq are handed over to the 82nd US Airborne, to make safe for ExxonMobil. Regimes that stand in the way of the US empire and its corporations have to be got rid of. Blair's domestic agenda represents continuation of the war "by other means".

The drive to privatise what's left of the public sector is the economic policy of globalisation – opening up the hoped for rich pickings of service provision to the very same corporations.

Nevertheless the anti-war movement gave Blair a real shock, even prompting him to consider resignation after the 15 February demonstrations. Mass resistance by British workers to Blair's reform programme could give Blair more than just a shock: it could knock him off his pedestal altogether.

Modelling himself on Margaret Thatcher, he has made clear that he positively relishes a fight with the trade unions. "We will not give in, in any shape or form, to any resurgent union militancy", he trumpeted. Whilst Blair was at war, John Prescott set out to humiliate the firefighters and threatened to impose a pay settlement on them, to slash their jobs, lengthen their working hours and abolish their right to strike.

Blair has treated mild warnings from union leaders, who are fundamentally Labour loyalists, such as newly elected GMB general secretary Kevin Curran, with total contempt. He scoffs at the regular predictions of "waves of industrial militancy" that never materialise.

If all Blair had to worry about was the union leaders his confidence would be fully justified. From the hapless "left" leader of the FBU, Andy Gilchrist,

SOCIALIST ALLIANCE CONFERENCE

Why we need a new workers' party



Trade unionists and anti-war activists need to organise against more New Labour attacks



to right wingers like Brendan Barber of the TUC, they are terrified of the implications of an all-out fight with Blair. Gilchrist proposed a total sell out to his members while the latter drafted its terms in order to pacify New Labour and avoid any strikes during the war.

But while the leaders are a powerful obstacle, they are not all-powerful. They may not be able to prevent the growing anger at New Labour's onslaught on public services from turning into action. Signs of that hostility are clear from the local election results. The net loss of around 800 Labour councillors, the surge in support for the Scottish Socialist Party resulting in six MSPs, and good results for several Socialist Alliance candidates in England, are small but significant signs that many workers want an alternative to Blair.

The grumblings of the union leaders themselves, not just from the left leaders in the so-called awkward squad but from right wingers like Jack Dromey in the TGWU, reflect real pressure from thousands of ordinary workers pushing for their organisations to do something to stop the rot.

Last but not least, countless numbers, especially of youth, opposed the war and still do. They will never forget that Blair ignored them. And they will want to make sure he cannot do so again.

To pay for the exorbitant costs of the Iraq adventure - at least £3 billion of public money - the poorest in society, those on benefits, have actually had their incomes cut

But to turn all of this sentiment into action socialists need to build up and render permanent organisations which the rank and file themselves control and which can be used to co-ordinate a struggle that can win:

- We need to organise the rank and file in the unions so that we can get them to fight on our behalf and not funk to give the bureaucrats a quiet life.
- We need strikes that last for more than a day if we are to save services and jobs - in the private sector, like Corus, and in the public sector - from the chop or from the privateers. In the face of Blair's all-out attack we need all-out strikes to beat him.
- We need local organisations that can bring the unemployed, the tenants' activists, the anti-racist campaigners, the anti-war and anti-capitalist youth and the trade unionists together. We need unity across our communities if we are to defend and improve them. Social forums - similar to those that have grown up in Italy - or local people's assemblies need to be built in every town and city as a means of forging such unity, co-ordinating the struggles and providing ever more effective backing to those at the sharp end of the struggle.
- Last but not least we need a political alternative to Blair - and to the band of globalising pirates he represents. We need a new working class party and a new international, the Fifth, so that we can start taking on our enemies not just in an endless round of defensive battle, but in an all-out war for the revolutionary overthrow of their system once and for all.

There is a real chance today of building a mass socialist alternative to Tony Blair's warmongering and anti-working class New Labour. From the anti-war, anti-capitalist and trade union movements thousands of activists would flood into a new workers' party.

At this year's union conferences resolutions calling for either the democratisation of the political funds, to allow unions to support parties other than Labour, or even disaffiliation from Labour, will be widely debated.

The Socialist Alliance is holding a conference to discuss its future direction this month. Workers Power is proposing a resolution based around the call for a campaign to build a new workers' party. The Socialist Alliance is not the nucleus for such a party. But, if it is willing to combine its forces with those in the trade unions, like Bob Crow of the RMT and Mark Serwotka of the civil servants' union, the PCS, with left anti-war Labour MPs like George Galloway, who is threatened with expulsion, with the many rank and file workers and with the anti-capitalist and anti-war youth, then it could play a positive role in building a real alternative to Blair.

Over the past two years the Socialist Alliance has failed to attract widespread support from those disillusioned with New Labour. Its membership has remained relatively static (around the 2,000 mark). Those members come largely from the existing far left organisations and ex-members of those organisations. Former Labour left supporters and independents with no background in the organised left are a small minority.

The split with the Socialist Party at the last conference and the resignation of Liz Davies last year have underscored the reality that the alliance has not become the united left alternative many hoped for when it established itself as a fully fledged national organisation.

At a local level the organisation has withered. Reports from around the country indicate that in many areas alliances established in the run-up to the general election have ceased to exist. In other areas members' meetings have shrunk in size and effectiveness.

The alliance has enjoyed some important electoral successes - the Hackney mayoral election, three or four results in the general election, a reasonable performance in last May's local elections and, best of all, the election of a councillor in Preston this month. But it has nevertheless failed to make the sort of electoral breakthrough that could have put it on the political map as a viable alternative to New Labour at the polls. Compare the election of a single councillor - after almost four years of sustained campaigning - with the results secured by the Scottish Socialist Party in the Holyrood elections (6 MSPs) or, more worryingly, the BNP's accumulation of 15 councillors over the past few years.

Over the same period, the Socialist Alliance has changed from being a loose alliance of groups and individuals into a more centralised national organisation. From being a formal alliance of groups and individuals it has become an individual membership-based organisation.

These changes in form, but on the basis of a broadly similar membership (minus the Socialist Party and a number of

individuals) has resulted in the evolution of the Socialist Alliance into a highly contradictory organisation. It has adopted many of the formal characteristics of a party but is not a party. It acts on the basis of majority positions, though on many issues the constituent organisations of the Socialist Alliance pursue very different policies to those agreed by the organisation.

In other words, the Socialist Alliance is in content an alliance (primarily of the far left - groups and individuals) but in form packages itself as an organisation distinct from the existing far-left groups (building a socialist alternative to Blair), a type of party. This contradiction undermines the alliance in terms of effective interventions in the class struggle and it is confusing to those who are looking for an alternative party to Blair.

It is not surprising, therefore, that there is no widespread perception inside the working class that the Socialist Alliance is - even in embryo - the socialist alternative to Blair. Any sober reckoning would have to recognise that the number of Labour Party members won has never gone beyond a trickle, despite the widespread dissatisfaction with Blair amongst tens of thousands of Labour supporters.

The fundamental reason for this situation is the triumph of the Socialist Workers Party's (SWP) view of what the alliance should be - a special kind of united front. The special characteristic of it being that in elections it is packaged as a party (the Socialist Alternative to Blair) but in between elections operates either as a loose alliance around delimited issues or, in many cases, doesn't operate at all.

The SWP's rationale for this is that by limiting the alliance to a minimum left reformist programme primarily oriented to elections we can win and retain disillusioned Labour supporters - who are not yet revolutionaries - to an organised break with New Labour. This, they have consistently argued, is why they have voted against every proposal from Workers Power for the alliance to adopt revolutionary socialist positions.

Yet limiting our policies to those generally acceptable to Labour lefts has not won over hundreds, let alone thousands, of Labour-supporting workers. The Socialist Alliance has not become a real united front with reformists breaking from Labour. It is an organisation dominated by "revolutionaries" offering the working class reformist solutions at election time.

By contrast, a party, operating like a party, putting forward a sharp, even though an unambiguously reactionary programme - the BNP - has made great gains. Workers are looking for radical answers, not warmed over versions of old Labourism. That is one reason why the BNP strike a chord. By offering workers a sharp revolutionary alternative we too could start to make swift progress.

But by becoming like a party, but stopping short of actually becoming one, (the united front of a special kind) workers are more likely to be confused by the project, hostile to it (since they will perceive it as a front for the far left, dominated by the SWP), or will want something completely different - an organisation that does seek to build a party to the left of Labour.

The SWP's united front of a special kind is, bluntly, not working - and cannot work even if everyone agrees to "do better".

At the coming conference the SWP have partially acknowledged the problem and are now lining up behind a proposal from Alan Thornett of the International Socialist Group to "relaunch" the alliance as a project for broader left unity. Yet this resolution studiously avoids any call for what workers actually need - a new party.

That is why the SWP will support it. It preserves their "united front of a special kind", leaves them to claim that they are "the party" but enables them to re-orient the alliance, essentially as is, towards broader forces currently outside the alliance. It does not commit them to the radical change of direction that is required if the Socialist Alliance is to have any sort of meaningful future.

The Socialist Alliance needs to re-define itself completely. We are against its continuation as a united front of a special kind, limited by the decisions of the SWP on how far it can go and what its policies should be. But we are equally against those proposals from various quarters of the alliance (such as the Communist Party of Great Britain) that we should set up a Socialist Alliance Party or an English version of the Scottish Socialist Party (a multi-tendency party united around a reformist or centrist programme - the International Socialist Group's option).

Workers Power remains committed to building a revolutionary party. We are not advocating a "centrist party" or "coalition party". We do not believe such a stage is necessary or inevitable. Workers can decide for themselves, through a process of struggle and discussion, whether they want a revolutionary socialist alternative to Blair. But to make that decision we need to begin the fight for a new party, alongside such workers, most of whom are outside of the ranks of the Socialist Alliance.

That is why we should call for a new workers' party. And we should unite with others around this goal - the left union leaders and the workers who look to them, the masses mobilised against the war and those Labour MPs who consistently voted against the war, the youth mobilised in the anti-capitalist movement and those workers engaged in struggles against New Labour.

We could agree to combine with such forces in a much broader coalition to campaign for such a party. The debate on what sort of party it should be could then take place, democratically, among a much wider layer of people than those currently organised by the far left. It could take place over an agreed period of time, leading up to a conference to constitute and decide on the programme of such a party.

Within that campaign we could argue - and seek to prove in practice - the relevance and validity of a revolutionary programme. Others could advance their views. Democracy would decide the outcome.

The call for a workers' party would gain a massive hearing today. It could enormously strengthen the forces seeking to build a revolutionary alternative to Blair. The Socialist Alliance risks a descent into oblivion if it turns its back on this opportunity. It should vote for and act on the Workers Power proposals at this year's conference.

Socialist Alliance conference, Saturday 10 May, 10am to 5pm, Islington Green School, Prebend Street, London N1. For details of creche registration etc go to www.socialistalliance.net/resources/conference/index.html

Defend George Galloway

The bosses' media has unleashed an offensive against Labour MP George Galloway. With the *Telegraph* to the fore, they are branding him as being in the pay of Saddam's secret service, guilty of treason and an all round bad-guy.

The reason for this smear campaign is simple - Galloway was one of the most eloquent and principled spokespersons for the anti-war movement in Britain.

Galloway's speeches were clearly anti-imperialist, as when he declared "We drove them out of Vietnam and we will drive them out of Baghdad", just yards away from the US Embassy in London's Grosvenor Square. Such words made him a hate figure for much of the tabloid press.

The media blitz has all the hallmarks of a frame up - just like when the *Daily Mirror* attacked miners' general secretary, Arthur Scargill, in 1989, for fraud, taking money from Libya and god knows what else. Years later the editor of the *Mirror* at the time, Roy Greenslade, finally admitted that the whole story was a pack of lies.

Indeed, the current witch-hunt against Galloway has historical parallels with the infamous "Zinoviev letter", published by the *Daily Mail* in 1924 to try and stop the election of the first ever (minority) Labour government. The letter was a forgery.

The witch-hunt now underway goes far beyond the integrity of an individual MP. Whatever Galloway's political shortcomings and personal foibles - which are many - those sections of the media engaged in the smear campaign have as their real target not just the MP for Glasgow Kelvin but the whole of the anti-war movement in Britain.

During the war itself Rupert Murdoch's the *Sun* led the charge against Galloway. Now the *Daily Telegraph*, the nation's biggest selling broadsheet, has retailed allegations that the Glasgow MP was on Saddam Hussein's payroll to the tune of £375,000 a year.

In a highly unusual move the *Telegraph* devoted the first five pages of its 22 April edition to an effort to prove that the Ba'athist regime had funnelled "large sums" of money to George Galloway over the course of the preceding three years through the currently suspended United Nations' "food for oil" programme.

A diatribe by the paper's editor, Charles Moore, not only called for a prosecution of Galloway on treason charges but made it plain that he wished to tar the Stop the War Coalition and even much of the Labour Party with the same brush. The paper continued to lead for the remainder of the week with allegations against Galloway, buttressed largely by miraculous finds among the burned out and ransacked ruins of the Iraqi Information Ministry. Its Sunday stablemate then claimed it had evidence that linked Saddam Hussein with Osama Bin Laden.

The *Telegraph's* original story, which rests on a whole series of coincidences that beggar belief (including a journalist with the surname of Blair), has provided Tony Blair and his New Labour operatives with the perfect "smoking gun". They aim to end Galloway's parliamentary career. This could happen, even if the prospect of a libel trial



Smears of Galloway are smears of the anti-war movement

may actually delay formal action by the party's top functionaries.

Prior to 22 April the party's general secretary, David Triesman, was already committed to conducting an "inquiry" into Galloway's remarks to Abu-Dhabi television. Galloway rightly branded Britain and the United States as guilty of war crimes, saying that Blair and George Bush had attacked Baghdad "like wolves".

The charges have now expanded to include the *Telegraph's* allegations, following a statement by the party's recently installed chairperson, Ian McCartney. There also remains the possibility of a similar inquiry surrounding speeches by the longest-serving Labour MP, Tam Dalyell.

In the unlikely event that the latest charges were indeed "proven" against Galloway, his position would be hopelessly compromised. But as Alan Watkins, a columnist for *The Independent on Sunday* put it, Galloway is "neither a traitor nor a fool".

Besides, the Blairites are ill-placed to deliver moral lectures about accepting money from unsavoury sources, given their own track record in taking funds from such blatantly corrupt donors as the Hinduja brothers, Laskmi Mitel and the Enron bosses who took over Wessex Water. While Galloway's apparent closeness to the local gangsters of Baghdad has left him vulnerable to previously aired claims that he had served as "Saddam's mouthpiece", there are very good reasons for doubting the *Telegraph's* supposed scoop.

Not only has the paper been the daily voice of Colonel Blimpish Toryism for generations, but under the ownership of the tycoon, Conrad Black (since 2001 Lord Black of Crossharbour), and his Hollinger Group publishing empire, *The Telegraph* has emerged as a shameless champion of Israel's Likud party.

Until 2001 Hollinger controlled more than 60 per cent of all English-language newspapers published in Canada and, though reduced in size, Black's corporation still runs more than 350

publications worldwide, with an annual turnover approaching £3 billion.

Black's wife, the columnist Barbara Amiel, has not only acted as an apologist for Ariel Sharon but has urged ever more vicious repression against the Palestinians. In a 3 March *Telegraph* column she accused the BBC of "pro-Palestinian" bias and claimed that CNN was an implacable opponent of George W Bush.

An Amiel column in late 2001 exuded her Islamophobia and contempt for the Palestinians in particular: "Powerful as the truth may be, it needs a nudge from 16,000lb daisy cutter bombs once in a while. The Arab/Muslim world's intransigence comes into sharper focus when we see the Americans liberate Afghanistan from the Taliban in six weeks and a cornered Arafat unable to go to the bathroom without the risk of being blown into the next world."

Meanwhile, Black's Hollinger group also has intimate links with the Zionist establishment through its control of the *Jerusalem Post* and similarly with the Bush administration. Its executive board includes the former US deputy defence secretary and leading hawk, Richard Perle.

But the witch-hunt of George Galloway is far more than a plot hatched by a coterie of very rich, neo-conservative Zionists. On the other side of the Atlantic, the normally staid *Christian Science Monitor* has likewise weighed in against Galloway even as pro-war liberals on the pages of *The Observer* bay for his blood.

More significant still is how the Blairite leadership of the "labour movement" will use the *Telegraph's* smears. In addition to seizing on the Galloway story as ammunition against the anti-war movement generally, it will also be keen to divert attention from the enormously "big lies" told to justify the war.

What better weapon of mass distraction than a media obsessed with a troublesome backbench MP while US and British inspection teams continue a futile search for weapons of mass destruction and US troops gun down in cold blood the very people they claim to have liberated on the streets of Fallujah?

While Galloway has every right to take the Hollinger Group and editor Charles Moore to the cleaners at a libel trial, the real battles must be waged not by the QCs in the High Court but by anti-war and labour movement activists. There needs to be petitioning in local anti-war committees, trade union branches and Labour Parties in defence of Galloway and Tam Dalyell, backed up by resolutions in bodies still affiliated to the Labour Party and protests outside meetings of the party's national executive to demand an end to the witch-hunt and ensure that Blair and his operatives do not expel or discipline any anti-war MP.

It is Blair and his cronies - who run the secret service, who deploy the army to commit war crimes against the people of Iraq, and who run a totally corrupt system on behalf of the bosses - who should be driven out of the labour movement, not George Galloway.

Jarvis

derailing education

In a breath-taking piece of arrogance, education minister Charles Clarke last month refused to attend the National Union of Teachers' (NUT) annual conference, dismissing it as a series of "antics", and rhetorically questioned teachers' fitness to teach our children. He then went on to accuse local education authorities of pocketing £597million earmarked for improving schools, thus absolving the government from blame.

No surprise then that this jumped-up know-nothing should move swiftly on to announce that the government has awarded a £1.9m contract to advise 700 "failing" schools to Jarvis. Teachers have condemned the deal, apparently signed, sealed and delivered in secrecy three months ago, as "shocking", "extraordinary" and "a joke".

Jarvis, which is listed as one of Labour's most generous donors, has no experience whatsoever in educational services. True, it has won dozens of contracts under the private finance initiative to build schools. The Audit Commission recently condemned schools built under these schemes as "significantly worse" than publicly-funded projects in terms of space, heating, lighting and acoustics.

It added that they have also failed to come in cheaper than traditional school construction projects. Sensing that this particular gravy train is about to hit the buffers perhaps, Jarvis has crossed the platform, hoping to make a quick buck from running the inadequate schools they have just built.

Jarvis is best known as the engineering contractor responsible for the maintenance of the length of track on which the Potters Bar crash happened in May 2002. Seven people were killed and 76 injured as the train was thrown up onto the platform. A Health and Safety Executive inquiry found that the accident was caused by a faulty piece of track, with nuts missing. Twenty per cent of the surrounding track also had loose or missing nuts.

Incredibly, Jarvis infuriated the bereaved families by stating that the train crash was the result of "saboteurs". The police, however, dismissed the claim and is still investigating the incident to see whether the company should be prosecuted for corporate manslaughter.

If Clarke thinks corporate killers like Jarvis are fit to be in charge of children's education, but teachers are not, then that says more about New Labour than it does about the NUT.

But the astonishing arrogance of the man does not stop here. The announcement was made in the same week that another building firm, WS Atkins, walked away from a five-year, £100m contract to run schools in Southwark, London.

Atkins complained that it was not making the profit margins it had expected when it signed the deal, so it is pulling out, leaving Southwark - whose exam results had worsened under Atkins' tutelage - to pick up the pieces. Whatever happened to the "transfer of risk" which was supposed to justify private companies making money out of public services?

Teachers, parents and school students need to campaign to stop another building firm from destroying our schools. The NUT has already taken the decision to boycott the tests, which have proven to be a distraction from teaching young students. Now they should refuse to co-operate with Jarvis and fight for full control over school education to be placed with those who will not walk away if the money dries up, who will not cut corners in order to get the job done on the cheap: namely, teachers, parents and school students themselves.



From Mayday to Evian

challenging the capitalist system

Across the globe, hundreds of thousands of workers and protesters took to the streets on Mayday demonstrating against exploitation and war.

Thousands of people in Indonesia, South Korea and the Philippines celebrated International Workers' Day by protesting for higher wages, better hours and political change.

This year it was the anti-war sentiment of Mayday that dominated the demonstrations. Spain's two main trade unions published a joint statement saying their May 1st demonstrations will be "another rejection of those who are proud of having conducted an unjust and illegitimate war." This was echoed on the demonstrations across the world from Melbourne to Prague.

But the capitalist system goes on and companies are still making money out of people's misery. In the world of big business, BP reported a "normal" day on Mayday,

making roughly £3m in the time it took demonstrators in London to march to Trafalgar Square. Exxon, the world's largest oil company, made profits of £5bn in the past 12 weeks - one of the largest quarterly profit margins recorded in corporate history.

The Mayday protests echoing around the world have proven that the anti-capitalist movement is alive and flourishing. Now we have an opportunity to take this message to the meeting of the leaders of the richest and most powerful countries in the world, the G8 Summit.

The G8 reflects the development of a globalisation founded on the pursuit of profits. The IMF, WTO and the World Bank are under the directive of this cabal, enforcing their recommendations. And when poorer countries will not comply, these powerful nations bomb them to smithereens. The French authorities are now referring to the Evian meeting as the "G8 peace summit". What hypocrisy!

We must challenge their power: All out for Evian!

The G8 have tried to hide after the enormous demonstrations in Genoa 2001, where the Italian state murdered a young activist, Carlo Giuliani. Last year, the meeting was held in the Canadian Rockies. This year it has been moved from Paris to another mountain hideaway. But they can't hide.

On Friday May 30th, Lake Geneva will become the 'Lake of Fire.' On Saturday there will be four counter-summits in Geneva against debt, privatisation of pensions, the WTO, and war and occupation. On Sunday, there will be two demonstrations against the summit. You've seen the adverts for Evian's famous spring water. Now visit the source!

EVIAN G8 SUMMIT, June 1-3rd, 2003. For more information: www.evian-g8.org or www.g8deviant.org.

Blair sides with unionists to demand IRA surrender

Sinn Fein and the IRA have been blamed for the postponement of the elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly. But instead of making more concessions, nationalists should organise to overthrow the sectarian statelet

Elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly, due on 29 May, have been postponed for the second time by the British government. The elections are effectively being held hostage by Tony Blair and Unionist leader David Trimble.

The ransom they are demanding from Sinn Fein and the IRA is, finally admit your armed struggle for a united Ireland is over, end all paramilitary and intelligence activity and surrender all your weapons. Otherwise, both the elections and the Assembly have had it.

The power-sharing Assembly was suspended on 14 October last year, amid a hullabaloo about IRA intelligence gathering within the Stormont government. Although the IRA had decommissioned weapons on two occasions over the course of the previous year the Unionists demanded more.

They wanted all weapons to be destroyed, an end to punishment shootings and surveillance work – all of which implied the IRA was still in existence and capable of returning to guerrilla war. If Sinn Fein/IRA were "sincere" in their view that they were dedicated to exclusively constitutional politics then, they argued, the republicans should have no problem with agreeing to this.

Instead, in response to the suspension of the Assembly the IRA broke off contact with the decommissioning body set up under the agreement.

During the winter and spring, negotiations took place to try to put the broken pieces back together. The British and Irish governments demanded "acts of completion" by the IRA in return for agreeing to the "full implementation" of the 1998 agreement.

The Good Friday Agreement (GFA) was signed by the nationalist and Unionist parties in Northern Ireland together with the Irish and British governments.

It represented a milestone in the pacification of Irish republicanism. For more than a decade up to the 1998 agreement the Adams/McGuinness leadership of Sinn Fein had been engaged in negotiations with successive British and Irish governments with a view to securing the conditions whereby the IRA would abandon the armed struggle and pursue their goal of a united Ireland by constitutional means alone.

Adams had long concluded that the IRA could not defeat the British army and drive it from Ireland by force. By signing the 1998 agreement Sinn Fein agreed to accept that the Unionists had a veto on the formation of a united Ireland.

This abandoned the core belief of the IRA that the Northern Ireland state was an undemocratic, sectarian and illegitimate entity which was brought into being through the collusion of Westminster and the pro-British Unionist population of the north-east of Ireland in 1921.

But Sinn Fein was successful in getting the issue of the decommissioning of weapons to be taken up in a "parallel process" to the implementation of the GFA proposals on power-sharing in an Assembly and reform of the RUC – an instrument of loyalist repression of anti-Unionists.

This was a crucial concession by Blair without which Adams could not have sold the whole GFA to the rank and file of the IRA. The IRA's weapons were seen as a bargain-



Adams and McGuinness have led Sinn Fein's negotiations with British governments

THE BLUEPRINT

Last month the British and Irish governments were due to publish a blueprint setting out concrete steps towards a full implementation of the Good Friday Agreement.

At the last minute publication was postponed after the leaders said the IRA had failed to answer questions about a statement it submitted on 13 April.

The blueprint is meant to set out specific measures of demilitarisation, criminal justice and policing, human rights and equality. It is also to address Sinn Fein's demand that IRA suspects on-the-run be allowed to return to the UK without facing charges.

On demilitarisation Blair has said that by the end of 2005 only 14 Army bases will remain open and troop levels will be reduced to 5,000 – that is to a level comparable to troop presence throughout the UK.

By the end of next year all the controversial army watchtowers along the border with Ireland would be demolished.

A special judicial commission or tribunal will deal with the on-the-run cases. Suspects deemed guilty will be freed on licence but will not spend any time in jail.

There is to be a commitment to try to improve catholic representation within the police with a target to fill 2,000 posts within two years.

ing chip in getting the British to put pressure on the Unionists to agree to share power with the nationalists in Northern Ireland.

The 1998 agreement was not a progressive step. It did not overcome the divisions between nationalist and loyalists but rather enshrined them in a sectarian arrangement whereby progress could only be secured with weighted majorities that allowed for minorities to veto measures. For five years it has been a fractious, sectarian battleground.

For the Assembly to work, progress in two decisive, inter-related areas was required. Sinn Fein demanded an end to British armed forces in NI and reform of the sectarian, loyalist RUC police force. The Unionists demanded the IRA not only declare a ceasefire but verifiably destroy their arms and disband the IRA.

Every crisis of the Assembly over the past five years has been about the demand by the Unionists and the British that the IRA honour their side of the bargain before major

structural reform of the RUC and army presence took place; in short loyalism demands that the IRA explicitly and unconditionally surrender.

But the anti-Unionist population and rank and file of the IRA remember that the reason the Provisional IRA came into existence in 1970 was because the sectarian loyalist police force and the paramilitaries murdered catholics and drove them from their homes because the catholic minority had the audacity to demand equality of treatment and civil rights.

They experienced every day in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s the brutal effects of collusion between the British army, the RUC and loyalist paramilitaries.

As the Stephens' report into collusion between protestant paramilitaries and the security forces published last month proved beyond doubt, this evil trinity of state-sponsored terrorism mercilessly assassinated human rights lawyers, like Pat Finucane, Sinn Fein activists, and catholics complete-

ly innocent of any IRA activity. The British state worked with the RUC and the loyalist killers as part of their overall goal of subduing the nationalist population as a whole and smashing the IRA.

The reason their terror campaign failed was that the IRA had mass support within the nationalist population. Although inadequate as an offensive urban force for defeating the British army, the IRA did offer some defence against unrestrained loyalist thuggery on the catholic population.

The whole Adams' strategy – first articulated by him in private in 1982 – depends for success on the ability to transform the Northern Ireland state into a non-sectarian political apparatus.

But since 1998 the British – under pressure from Unionists unwilling to give up their powers of patronage and levers of control – have failed to implement the restructuring that would be needed to rob the police force of its sectarian Unionist character and move towards Adams' model.

Time and again reactionary loyalism has shown itself unwilling to make any serious moves towards equality for the anti-Unionists, for fear of losing the privileges in jobs, wages, housing which it rests on. The rallying to the defence of these privileges is expressed in the growing support for Ian Paisley's DUP, which rejects the whole concept of power-sharing while seeking to sabotage it from within.

The lesson of the past five years is that Sinn Fein has consistently underestimated just how reactionary loyalism is. How totally opposed it is to giving even limited equality to the nationalist community in Northern Ireland. Loyalism is not, as Gerry Adams says, just a religious or ethnic "tradition" or "identity". It is a 200 year-old pro-imperialist, reactionary movement that must be smashed. Not by a return to an unwinnable guerrilla war but by mass class-based political action, aimed at drawing in protestant as well as nationalist workers.

Without this it will always be impossible either to free the minority community from oppression or the protestant workers from subordination to "their own" bosses and the Orange Tories who have politically exploited them for so long.

Adams has also grossly overestimated the extent to which Blair, Clinton and Bush would act as an honest broker to force the Unionists to accept Sinn Fein's equality agenda.

Adams went out of his way last month to publicly praise Bush when he visited Northern Ireland for his help in the peace process, knowing full well that it was Bush in 2001 who demanded disarmament steps be taken, who tilted the US administration towards the Unionists and who recently pressed hardest for an unambiguous statement of an end to IRA activity. Adams has no alternative

strategy to his present one of leaning on the capitalist governments of Bush, Blair and Aherne to press the Unionists to honour the terms of the GFA.

Anti-Unionists need to break with the whole logic of the GFA. The 1998 accord effectively recognised the legitimacy of the partition of Ireland in 1921 when loyalist bullying and violence led to the British carving out a totally artificial and undemocratic statelet for the Unionists to oppress the Catholic minority.

Against this there should be a democratic vote by all the people of the island of Ireland in one referendum in which they are allowed to vote on the question: do you want a united Ireland? The unionists would be fully entitled to vote "no" and, if they were in a minority, their civil rights should be protected to ensure they in turn do not suffer any discrimination. But they should have no right of veto, as they do now.

There is no merit in getting the Assembly up and running again even if it has been

Every crisis of the Assembly over the past five years has been about the demand by the Unionists and the British that the IRA honour their side of the bargain before major structural reform of the RUC and army presence took place

brought down by the Unionists. It was convened on the basis of a sectarian head count which undercuts democratic, cross-community working class politics and enshrines a built-in Unionist veto on progress. Instead, there should be a revolutionary democratic all-Ireland constituent assembly with representatives drawn from local communities

to gather and decide on a plan for a new 32 county workers' republic.

The IRA should never have agreed to disarm while the British state keeps tens of thousands of soldiers and well-armed garrisons in the six counties; while the RUC remains a "protestant police force for a protestant people" designed to harass and abuse the anti-Unionist population. We favour the creation of self-defence forces in the anti-Unionist areas and IRA's arms and expertise to be put at their disposal, not destroyed or handed over to the British or American "honest brokers".

Naturally, the vast majority of people in Northern Ireland do not want a return to bombings of town centres or wholesale Orange sectarian killings.

Neither do we.

We always argued that an urban guerrilla war based on the actions of a few hundred volunteers was a wrong – and increasingly failing – strategy for the anti-imperialist struggle in Ireland.

It was incapable of defeating the British forces. Worse, it sidelined the mass struggle, which alone could have mounted the sort of political, and where necessary military, struggle to drive the British out. In its place we call for mass democratic working class action, on the streets, in the factories and offices throughout the whole island, to drive the British out, unify the island and put the working class in power.

LRCI Sixth Congress ad

Against the background of imperialist war and an unprecedented movement against it, delegates gathered in Germany last month to discuss how communists can transform the opposition to the "new American century" into a revolution against global capital

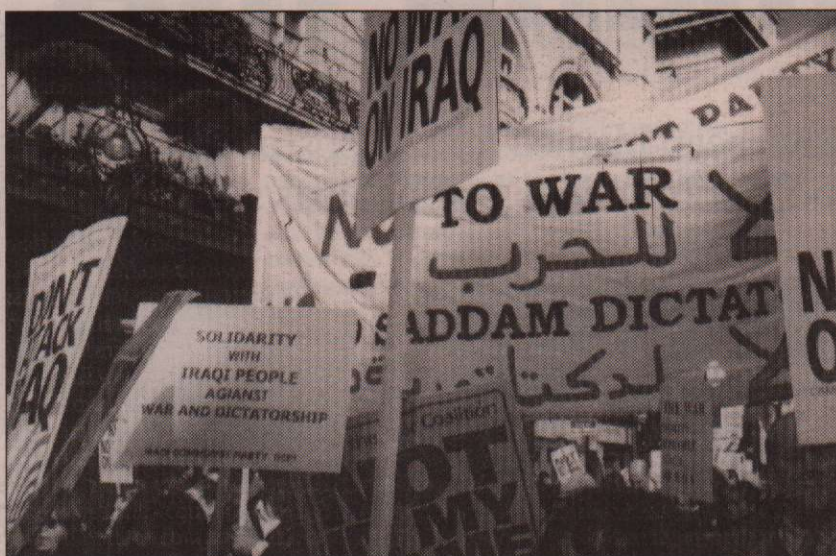
The sixth congress of the League for a Revolutionary Communist International (LRCI) met near Berlin between 15th and 20th April.

Thirty nine delegates from Austria, Australia, Britain, Germany, Sweden, and the Ukraine, plus a number of observer-participants from Revolution groups, met to discuss and decide the policies of the League for the next three years and to adopt a new programme. The meeting witnessed the involvement and active participation of many more young people than at any previous congress.

The 20-year-old Roma revolutionary militant, Mario Bango, was unanimously elected as an honorary delegate of the congress and member of its presidium. Mario has been in a Slovak jail for nearly two years, awaiting trial for defending himself and his family from a fascist attack, in which the attacker later died from his injuries. The congress – committed to the principle that "self-defence is no offence" – pledged itself to renew campaigning for Mario's release.

The anti-war movement and perspectives for the period ahead

The congress began by discussing the enormous amount of activity the League's sections and Revolution groups had undertaken during the many months of the anti-war struggle. It registered the gains made in experience and training in mass agitation as well as the significant number



of new members who have joined our ranks. We discussed the consequences of the US-UK victory, the occupation of Iraq, the sharpening of inter-imperialist conflicts, the effects on the world economy and what all these developments mean for the period ahead.

The conclusions delegates reached were that the post-1989 "globalisation" phase of imperialism has entered into its first crisis. Even if we leave aside issues related to the economic cycle, a double-dip recession or limited recovery, the overall trend in the coming years will be towards stagnation, rather than a return to the "boom" of 1991-2000. Instead of a period

that generated illusions in a "new paradigm" of limitless growth, capitalism and imperialism are increasingly seen not only as brutal and oppressive but as failing the most basic material needs of humanity.

Victory in Iraq means that the economic and political offensive of US imperialism will continue unabated, both in terms of the drive to assert its world hegemony but also through the imposition of neo-liberal policies by IMF, the World Bank and WTO. This will mean continuing brutal threats and unilateral attacks on countries which defy Washington. Syria, Iran, North Korea head the list.

Palestine is marked for a nakedly pro-

Zionist "settlement". There will be greater armed interference in countries like Colombia and the Philippines, in support of "anti-terrorist" campaigns waged by Washington's local agents. However, none of this will stabilise the world, even in the short term. Quite the reverse.

We discussed the sudden sharpening of inter-imperialist tensions between the dominant powers of the European Union and the "Anglo-Saxons". Despite the enormous military preponderance of the USA there will be a growing trend over the coming years and decades for "coalitions of the unwilling" to form, those unwilling to submit to US dictates. Congress was clear that not an ounce of support could be given to the "peace-loving" French and German imperialists.

Most importantly we discussed the massive growth of working class and popular resistance to corporate globalisation and "the war on terrorism" – right around the globe, in imperialist and semi-colonial countries alike. Congress characterised the demonstrations of 15 February 2003 as world historic, because of their gigantic size and because a very new movement called and organised them, via new bodies like social forums, using the new electronic media.

The congress decided that economic stagnation and crisis, imperialist aggression, mass mobilisations against it all indicate a period ahead, which will last for years if not decades, that will be marked by wars, acute political crises, revolutionary

...and calls for the building

Forward to the formation of a Fifth International – a new Global Party of Socialist Revolution

In the opening years of the twenty-first century, resistance to imperialism, war and corporate capitalism assumed a truly global scale.

Vast mobilisations against international financial institutions, continental counter-summits, Social Forums of scores of thousands, cross-border actions and joint days of action – all these have changed the shape of the class struggle.

The idea of internationalism, for decades little more than an aspiration of the most militant and far-sighted activists, has become a practical reality, influencing and strengthening resistance everywhere.

This wave of globally co-ordinated mass actions reached a high point in the world-historic action of 15 February 2003, when 20 million marched in every major city on the globe against the US/UK attack on Iraq – the highest level of co-ordinated anti-imperialist action in human history.

Internationalism has shaken the planet – now it must change it.

To transform the imperialist "War on Terrorism" into a global war on imperialist terror, to set millions in motion against the system that causes war, our networks, forums and co-ordinations need to take a new and bold step: the formation of a Global Party of Socialist Revolution – the Fifth International.

We call on the hundreds of thousands who have assembled in the European, Asian,

South American and Middle Eastern social forums, the trade unions and anti-capitalist initiatives that have linked up in action around the world, the mass working class parties that have taken to the streets against neo-liberalism, capital and war, the revolutionary youth to unite at the highest possible level. This means forming the new International as soon as possible – not in the distant future but in the months and years ahead.

Why take this step? Because the level of unity so far achieved – inspiring as it may be – is not enough to defeat the capitalists. At present we can co-ordinate action. But we have not been able to break the hold of the union leaders and reformists over the mass organisations of the working class. That was why we could call 20 million onto the streets but still not stop the Iraq war. There were marches but very few strikes of the millions who can bring the world to a standstill. The reason: there was no global alternative organisation to the cowardly leaders who let us down.

At present we can discuss and debate the need for "another world". But we have not set ourselves a common goal: the overthrow of the capitalists' state power and the creation of a new power based on the working and popular masses.

Millions back Lula's Workers' Party in Brazil, which is sharing power with capitalist politicians and which has compromised with the IMF. The radical Italian party Rifondazione Comunista plays a prominent role

in the anti-capitalist movement, but has shared power with the capitalists in the past, refuses to rule it out in future and preaches peace at all costs to the Italian workers and youth.

Without a common programme, the movement has no alternative to the catastrophic error of governing with the bourgeoisie, except Zapatista or anarchist fatalism, which renounces the struggle for working class power altogether and disorganises the revolution as a result.

We have no common party – and so can mount no united challenge for our own government, our own power.

Yet history is moving quickly – great opportunities to struggle for power have emerged in recent years and will occur in one country after another, with increasing frequency, in the years ahead. The vast mobilisations of February 2003 herald still greater days to come.

To arm the workers of each country with a perspective and guide to action; to correct errors that arise inevitably when a movement is restricted to a national terrain; to inform the workers of each country of the real events that face their brothers and sisters abroad; to draw the workers and peasants of every country into democratic deliberation of the tasks confronting the movement; to co-ordinate the struggle for power, fighting off the fatal influence of reformism, bureaucracy, nationalism and wavering elements of every type; to spread the revolution across national boundaries onto the continental and global terrain: these

The Second International proved that political struggle, trade union action, electoral campaigning and wide-scale agitation and propaganda can rally mass forces to working class parties everywhere

are the preconditions of victory.

All these demand the formation of a new International.

This is no mere dream. The anti-capitalist workers have done it four times before. We can do it again. If we learn from the past, we can build on the successes of the first four Internationals, avoid the errors that led to their defeat, and build a Fifth International to organise our global victory.

The First International proved that it is possible to rally diverse forces to a world association of the workers. But if, under the influence of anarchism, part of the International resolutely opposes political struggle, unity cannot last for long. The Fifth International must aim to draw the broadest layers of fighting forces together – but it must quickly define its political goals, and resolutely reject anarchist or syndicalist demands that we renounce the only methods that can defeat capitalism: working class government and working class power. There-

fore we will press for the International to pursue relentless political struggle, not fearing a rupture with anarchists, populists or the liberal publicists of the NGOs who cannot accept our class goals.

The Second International proved beyond doubt that political struggle, trade union action, electoral campaigning and wide-scale agitation and propaganda can rally mass forces to working class parties everywhere. But when a bureaucracy emerges in a national labour movement, based on privileged sections of workers, it will quickly make its peace with the exploiters and back even the worst crimes of the bourgeoisie, marshalling the workers for fratricidal war as the Second International did in 1914 and as its national sections, including the British Labour Party, have been doing ever since.

Like the Second, the Fifth International must use the techniques of mass political action to rally not scores of hundreds in propaganda societies, but hundreds of thousands to parties of the working class. But we must never repeat the fatal error of tolerating reformist officials and careerist place-seekers in our ranks. Bureaucracy, national chauvinism, parliamentary or trade union reformism mean bloody defeat for the anti-capitalist movement. The fight for the Fifth International is inseparable from the fight to pry the workers' movement from the grip of warmongers and traitors. We call on working class parties that have taken the road of struggle against capital to rally to the Fifth International – at the same time we demand that they break irrevocably any links with the

opts new programme...

upheavals. This will be accompanied by a chronic crisis of leadership within the working class movement.

In short, what Trotsky called a pre-revolutionary period lies ahead. The duty of revolutionaries is to take major steps to solve this crisis of leadership - to build new mass parties and an International dedicated to social revolution on a global scale.

The League for a Revolutionary Communist International (LRCI) fought for 20 years around the slogan of the necessity of a new International. In the Trotskyist Manifesto, adopted in July 1989 we stated:

"Our objective is the construction of a new world party of communist revolution, a refounded Leninist Trotskyist International."

We reaffirmed this - in its time - courageous step forward and made it totally unambiguous. This congress passed a resolution which stated, "We include in our programme the slogan: forward to the creation of the Fifth International, a new world party of socialist revolution."

To signal this renewed commitment for fighting for the International in the months and years ahead the LRCI changed its name to League for the Fifth International (LFI).

A new programme

The congress devoted the bulk of its time to adopting a new programme. We had published the draft six months ago and our sections had discussed and produced suggested changes and developments to



this. There was scarcely any disagreement that the draft itself was a good one which only needed development in certain areas, albeit important ones.

Particular sections in the draft on anarchism and Islamism were considered inadequate. The sections on women and racism were considered too "flat" and uninspiring, not reflecting enough the experience and anger of those who suffered oppression and fought back against it.

Commissions and sub-commissions of delegates and Revolution observers set to work on these and there was substantial new input into these sections, as well as on the section on the crisis of leadership

in the workers' movement and the trade unions.

The final section of the programme on the International was substantially developed. The congress voted overwhelmingly for the draft as amended. Our purpose with this new programme is to take it into the debates and actions of the coming months, from Evian to Saint Denis and beyond, looking both for individuals and whole organisations who share our fundamental vision and will combine forces with us.

Another very lively debate took place around the adoption of a resolution on the revolutionary youth movement and its relations to a revolutionary party and Inter-

national. Everyone accepted the view of Lenin and Trotsky that the youth movement must be organisationally independent from the party, that it must have its own conferences, elect its own leadership, not be subject to constant interference and what the Communist International called "tutelage".

The issue under discussion was whether a youth organisation should explicitly accept the leadership of a revolutionary party, formally affiliate to it, recognise its discipline. If so how does this avoid becoming precisely the tutelage Lenin criticised? No one disagreed that the full norms of workers' democracy must flourish in the youth movement, majority decisions being followed and leaderships elected.

The majority agreed that once a revolutionary party emerged the youth movement, like the revolutionary wing of the unions, could be won to accepting its leadership - not uncritically, not in a totalitarian fashion, not irrevocably, but freely as part of the one and the same mass revolutionary movement.

Indeed in the present conditions, where there is a massive uprising of youth against capitalism and imperialism, a mass revolutionary youth movement could possibly be built more rapidly than a mass revolutionary party. Thus, as was the case in the years 1914-1920, an international revolutionary youth movement might well play an independent political role, even laying the foundation for new parties and an International.

Another debate raged over the position the LRCI adopted at its fifth congress in 2000 to call for the planned phasing of all nuclear power stations and factories. This time, by a substantial majority the congress reversed its position and withdrew this demand from our programme.

The congress naturally discussed perspectives for the League's work over coming years. We agreed to continue to put major resources into helping Revolution to become an even broader international organisation. Already, there are groups in a number of countries where LRCI has no section.

We want to encourage all the Revolution groups to adopt a common platform - already adopted by the Ukrainian and British groups - to create a permanent international liaison and, in the not distant future, a conference and leadership body. Steps towards this will hopefully place at this year's international Revolution summer camp.

The general view of delegates was that this was a really excellent congress. Young comrades, Revolution observers - who spoken frequently and participated in commissions, in drafting proposals and amendments - said it was a brilliant experience. Older comrades who attended all the congresses were proud that it was "the best congress we ever had". It was a living and exciting experience of internationalism, which will bear fruit in the years ahead.

of the Fifth International

capitalists and drive bureaucratic traitors from their ranks. To do otherwise means to prepare the International for destruction at its first decisive test.

The Third International - a mass revolutionary response to the First World War and the Russian Revolution - proved that to oust the reformist misleaders, to resist imperialist war, to unite the workers in struggle for our own power, the movement must combine the fullest internal democracy with centralised action on a global scale. Without democracy no possibility exists of genuine unity, of drawing the workers of all countries together to formulate an international strategy, of resisting bureaucratic control. Without strict centralism - requiring national parties and leaders to respect democratic international decisions - there is no possibility of resisting national pressures, no possibility of common revolutionary action. The Fifth International must combine the maximum internal democracy with the maximum unity in action; both are preconditions for effective revolutionary struggle.

The terrible fate of the Third International carries a warning for the future. If a revolution in one country fails to spread in time, if working class democracy is suppressed, if the goal of revolution is restricted to securing capitalist democracy, if coalition governments are built with capitalist parties, if a bureaucratic caste in one working class state abandons world revolution in favour of "peaceful co-existence" with global capitalism, then even the boldest and most potent revolutionary parties

It is now over 50 years since the Fourth International was destroyed as a revolutionary instrument

can be transformed into their opposite: instruments of counter-revolution.

Stalinism is a stain on the history of the working class movement. With it, no compromise is possible. Communist Parties that rally to the call for the Fifth International must break with Stalinism's reactionary programme, its shameful methods and its cowardly goals. Without this, the International will never rally the new generation to the banner of human liberation.

Alone in the once-mighty Communist movement, the Fourth International stood against the horrors of Stalinism and the terrible defeats it inflicted on the working class. It passed on to future generations a priceless political heritage. Workers' democracy not bureaucratic planning; the rule of workers' councils, not the dictatorship of a privileged caste; internationalism, not national chauvinism; uninterrupted (permanent) revolution, not an endless bloc with the "democratic" capitalists; a programme that links the daily struggles of the workers to the seizure of working class power, not a catalogue of reforms disconnected from the final goal of revolution. There is not one of these principles that is

dispensable today - all are urgently needed if the anti-capitalist and working class movement is to open the road to freedom in the twenty-first century.

It is now over 50 years since the Fourth International was destroyed as a revolutionary instrument. In the aftermath of World War Two, it abandoned its independent working class programme and instead adapted its policy to left-wing social democrats and Stalinists, finally declaring that the "epoch of October" is dead and seeking a new international only on a reformist programme. In the anti-capitalist movement today, the United Secretariat of the Fourth International defends the most liberal and reformist sections of the movement against revolutionary criticism.

The main split from the Fourth International - the International Socialist Tendency and its leading party, the SWP - renounced almost every revolutionary principle of the International. Today it uses radical revolutionary phrases whilst systematically refusing to challenge the reformist trends within the movement. It explicitly states that a precondition of common action with reformists is suspension of revolutionary criticism. Instead of a consistent revolutionary action programme it advances Alex Callinicos' hopelessly inadequate Anti-Capitalist Manifesto for the global movement. In Britain it stands in elections on a reformist platform. Most recently at the national People's Assembly, the SWP blocked the development of people's assemblies in towns and cities across Britain.

These vestiges of the Fourth International follow a policy which in the history of movement has been called centrist. These organisations are revolutionary in words but prove unable to chart a consistent revolutionary course, independent of the bureaucratic apparatuses. They advocate and create political organisations that present to the masses only a diplomatic agreement between revolutionary and opportunist trends. This can achieve only one thing: the silencing of the revolutionary message and the shielding of reformists from revolutionary criticism.

Instead of analysing what is necessary for the working class and then fighting for it, the centrist fragments of the Fourth International adapt their policy to the prevailing consciousness of the working class at any given time. Centristism relies on the revolutionary "process", the crisis, the spontaneity of the masses, to do the job that the revolutionaries themselves should do - point the way ahead, warn of the pitfalls, identify today's false friends as tomorrow's enemies.

The Fifth International must rally forces from across the anti-capitalist and workers' movement. But there must be no let-up in challenging the reformist programmes advocated by those who today promote the failed methods of the collapsed Internationals. A "negotiated political settlement" between them may serve to unite bureaucratic leaders: for the fighting unity of the working masses, it is worse than useless.

Therefore, for revolutionaries, not only is criticism of the reformists necessary in the struggle for the new International, but

so too is unsparing criticism of centrist dilution. Each of the four revolutionary Internationals embodied great gains for the working class movement and rich lessons for future generations. Yet each of them succumbed to degeneration and collapse.

The urgent task of the world working class is to found a Fifth International, the most important weapon of all in the struggle against global capitalism.

Sceptics argue that it is "too soon" to found a new International. Nothing could be further from the truth. The lack of international co-ordination and leadership is the key weakness afflicting us today, remain at the level of networks will eventually paralyse the anti-capitalist movement and throw it into reverse. To take bold steps forward to global fighting unity - that is the central task in every country and on every continent.

Global capitalism is plunging the world into a new cycle of annihilating war. In this time it is raising up once again its highest gravedigger: the global working class in greater numbers, with greater potential and more closely interconnected than before.

We still have a world to win. The conditions that bind us are strong but our power has never been greater. If we will it, we can shatter them to atoms.

Workers, peasants, revolutionary youth - unite in the fight for the Fifth International! It is the banner of unbroken struggle against capitalism and for your birthright - global human freedom.

The Middle East

Troops firing on demonstrations and leaders picked in Washington are the reality of freedom for Iraq. Dave Stockton outlines the dangers of a government of the Iraqi democrats and tribal elders



Freedom for Iraq Troops out now!

The people of Iraq, on the streets in huge demonstrations, are rejecting rule by General Garner, the US dictator. The US troops are responding with terror and bullets, massacring unarmed civilians.

Liberation has not been brought to Iraq by the US/UK invasion. The country is occupied by a colonial army and is being run by a colonial regime. And the people of Iraq can see this all too clearly.

They are not fooled by George W Bush's soundbites about the "smell of freedom". Tragically it is the stench of death and destruction that fill the nostrils of the Iraqi people today. That is why they are marching to the battle cry "US go home".

The US are busy trying to stitch up an interim undemocratic regime, through their conferences of carefully chosen representatives. But the Iraqi people have made clear that they do not want a gathering of tribal elders, fractious religious leaders or rich and fraudulent expatriates, like Ahmed Chalabi of the Iraqi National Congress.

Chalabi is such an obvious stooge of the Pentagon that he has little chance of acceptance. Such quislings can only help the Americans and British to loot their native land and finger opponents of the occupation. Nor would a United Nations-blessed interim regime be any better. It too would be a pro-imperialist regime, opening up Iraq's oil fields to the multinationals.

The Iraqi people have expressed one clear wish – to determine their country's future free of imperialist occupation and interference. They do not want a Ba'athist dictatorship back, but nor do they want freedom US style.

There must be immediate freedom of assembly, the press, freedom to form political parties and trade unions. The Iraqi workers' movement has to be reborn on the basis of class independence. The Iraqi Communist Party, one of the oldest parties in the Middle East, suffered slaughter and repression at the hands of Saddam Hussein, after helping him to power via a popular front with the progressive generals and the Ba'ath party. Today they are busy calling for a government "representative of the whole Iraqi people".

This is an error of the first order and one that will lead yet again to the repression of the workers' movement if it is ever put

into practice. Iraqi workers must break with this Stalinist tradition of the popular front – a permanent alliance with the untrustworthy representatives of Iraqi capitalism and the limitation of the revolution to an extended stage of capitalist democracy.

In Iraq today such a stage can only mean a regime subservient to the US and an economy geared toward the needs of imperialism. The role of the communists, even were they allowed to participate in government, would be to prevent the workers from asserting their own needs and fighting for their own interests against the new overlords.

The workers must take the path of uninterrupted, permanent revolution: a programme that brings the workers to the head of the struggle for democracy and against imperialist occupation, and which proceeds to remove the control of property owning classes under a workers' and peasants' government. Only in this way can the Iraqi people free themselves of imperialist domination and exploitation by home-grown capitalist cliques.

Iraq needs immediate free elections to a constituent assembly in which all over 16 can vote, to elect recallable representatives from all towns and villages to decide on their own constitution. This is impossible under the guns of US and British tanks. They must get out now. Moreover, in the face of the widespread looting – which US troops did nothing to restrain – the answer was not to draft in private police from Dyncorp in the USA but to establish neighbourhood militias to protect homes, schools, hospitals, museums.

In this constituent assembly the representatives of the workers' and poor peasants' must have full power to decide on what social basis Iraq shall be rebuilt. Real communists will fight for this to be under the direction of a workers and peasants government, one which will socialise the country's natural wealth and means of production to ensure they meet the needs of the vast majority, not cliques of emigré millionaires like Chalabi.

Indeed, only the fight for permanent revolution can rally millions of Iraqis to a socialist alternative not only to imperialist occupation but to the dangers of a theocratic regime, based on the Shi'ite Islamist parties.

The Shi'ites, long oppressed by Saddam

Hussein, are asserting their right to observe their religion in public for the first time in decades. That freedom should be supported by every consistent democrat. But the experience of Iran, where a Shi'ite dictatorship usurped the mass popular revolution of 1979 and then proceeded to attack workers, women, and national minorities in the name of Islam but in the actual interests of Iranian capitalism, must serve as a warning to the Iraqi masses.

Real freedom can only come with both national self-determination and emancipation from economic exploitation. Permanent revolution encompasses the fight for both, links them and guarantees that the new regime will be one based on the direct democracy of the masses themselves, through their workers' and peasants' councils and militia.

The Iraqi workers' movement should set as its goal the struggle for a workers' and poor peasants' government. It must recognise the unconditional right to self-determination for Iraqi Kurds – up to and including complete independence – and offer active assistance to all Kurds in Turkey, Iran and Syria if they wish to create a united Kurdistan.

Today the key demands for Iraqi workers are:

- Fight for an immediate end to the US occupation of Iraq
- US and British troops, and their bases, out of Iraq and the whole Middle East
- Free ALL Iraqi prisoners held in POW camps and by US military intelligence
- No show trials or deportations to Guantanamo
- Texaco, BP: hands off the oil wealth of Iraq
- Forward to a workers' and peasants' government in Iraq.

In the imperialist aggressor countries we must support the Iraqi workers in the struggle for these goals not only by continuing the campaign to get the troops out but by demanding:

- Full, immediate and unconditional reparations to the Iraqi people for the destruction and loss of life caused by the war and the last 12 years of attacks and sanctions
- The US and UK war criminals – Bush, Blair, Rumsfeld – must be indicted and brought to justice.

The international anti-war movement

Among the populations of Jordan, Syria, Iran, Egypt the initial resistance of Iraqi troops and volunteers, the atrocities of the bombing campaign, added to televised pictures of the millions on the streets in Western Europe, aroused their passionate and active sympathy. They launched mass mobilisations on the streets of Cairo, Amman, Damascus.

These restored the masses' self-confidence and dignity and their contempt for their own subservient rulers. Pro-US dictators like King Abdullah of Jordan and President Mubarak of Egypt began to fear for the stability of their regimes.

Tony Blair, Silvio Berlusconi, José Maria Aznar were all badly shaken after millions marched in their capitals, on 15 February, when school students took direct action, when railworkers and dockers went on strike in rejection of the war.

Any serious reverses on the battlefield together with a step forward in Europe and the Middle East from mass protest to mass strike action, could have brought their downfall. That is why the London Guardian reported near panic and readiness for mass resignation by the New Labour ministers.

But 15 February was the high point of the anti-war movement. Between 10 and 20 million marched worldwide on the same day, called into action by the congress of militant organisations that met last year in Florence after the European Social Forum (ESF).

However despite building the most powerful movement ever seen against a colonising war, we were not able stop it happening. The main reason was that was that the massive strength of the working class was never deployed in strike action and militant blockades. Only a full-scale eruption of the class struggle "at home" could have blocked the launching of war or brought about the warmongers defeat.

The reformist party leaders and the trade union bureaucrats are to blame for preventing this from happening.

The leaders of the main trade union federations in both Britain and the USA – the TUC and the AFL-CIO – called for a speedy victory for "our boys" once the fighting started. This revealed their two-faced nature: apparent pacifists until the bugles sound, then the staunchest of patriots once the killing starts.

Even the left-wing union leaders in Britain, France, Italy, Spain, made no serious attempt to call more than purely token strikes against the war.

The leaders of the anti-war coalitions, like Stop the War in Britain, deserve much credit for 15 February and the rapid spread of the anti-war movement around the world. But when the time came to turn protest into effective mass action they argued it was too soon to build local assemblies of trade unionists and anti-war activists to mobilise for all-out strike action, general strikes and mass boycotts of war-related work.

This left the movement marking time at the stage of monster processions and much smaller-scale symbolic civil disobedience. It did not fight for an all-out offensive to drive the warmongers from power through class struggle action.

The anti-war movement suffered a crisis of leadership just as it reached its pinnacle. It is a serious problem that urgently needs to be solved in the months and years ahead.

To uproot war and imperialism will take more than a movement of movements. It needs a new, Fifth International, a global party of social revolution. The millions of new activists, particularly the youth, need not only action but a programme and organisation that can break the stranglehold of the reformists and move forward to defeat imperialism.

Thieves fall out

The balance sheet of the Iraq war for imperialism is far from one of total triumph. It has aroused the Arab masses to renewed resistance against the US. An Iraqi intifada is beginning.

It has divided the imperialists themselves, exposed the impotence of the United Nations, fatally wounded NATO and thrown the EU into inner turmoil. Last but not least this war has created millions of new activists who will not go back to their homes feeling either defeated or demoralised. Resistance in Iraq, in Palestine and wherever the eagle's talons grasp for next, will ensure that this does not happen. An "endless war" by imperialism means an endless fight back against it.

France, Germany and Russia, by opposing the war in words, have undoubtedly gained the sympathy of all the states in the world that fear US dominance and interference. But neither France nor Germany are the peace-loving powers they pretend to be. Russia, posing as a peacemaker whilst still waging a bloody war of occupation in Chechnya, only excites angry revulsion.

The next period will be one of struggle between Europe and the USA over the future direction of Russia and China. What is certain is that there will be growing friction and clashes as the USA carries out its unilateral re-ordering of the world. France and Germany – imperialist powers with global interests of their own – will resist being reduced to minor regional players by the US.

Both the USA and its British lackey and the Franco-German-Russian axis are predatory imperialist blocs, neither better than the other. The working class and all progressive movements in the world today must remain strictly independent of them if they want to chart an effective course of struggle against war and capitalism. In future clashes between them we must remain absolutely clear. The main enemy is at home in every imperialist country. We wish defeat for both imperialist camps.

The origins and limits of Arab nationalism

As the official ideology of a number of Arab regimes, Arab nationalism has failed to achieve its stated objectives. As an organised mass political movement, it has been on the decline since 1967. And yet, it still finds spontaneous expression among the masses whenever an Arab people or movement is under attack, from the invasion of Lebanon in 1982, through the Palestinian intifada and the current occupation of Iraq.

Mark Robbins explains why

The origins of Arab nationalism lay in the decaying Ottoman Empire of the nineteenth century. Contact with the capitalist West brought social, economic and military challenges to the region. The result was the nationalist secession of the more advanced, European parts of the Empire and the absorption of much of the rest into the empires of the rising European colonial powers, especially Britain and France.

In the less developed core of the Empire (modern-day Turkey and the Arab Middle East), the rule of the Turkish Ottoman sultans was preserved only as a result of rivalries between the European powers themselves.

Even so exposure through trade and education to the development modern capitalism, and its attendant ideas of nationalism, liberalism and democracy, began to influence the urban petit bourgeoisie of the region. The failure of successive reforming Ottoman sultans to "catch up" with the West, plus the attempts of the modernising Young Turk revolutionaries to impose a specifically "Turkish" identity on the multinational rump of the Empire, pushed the Arabic-speaking urban intellectuals to produce their own nationalist response to the problems of the region's backwardness.

Their nationalism was secular and Arab, rather than religious and pan-Islamic: firstly, because the "nation" they wished to create and lead contained many non-Muslim minorities (not least among the nationalists themselves, who were disproportionately Christian); and secondly, because the Turkish-speaking Ottoman sultans laid claim to a pan-Islamic legitimacy extending to non-Arab peoples far beyond the boundaries of the Empire itself (in Persia, Afghanistan and India, for example).

While the nationalists' ideology called for a nation based on the unity of the Arabic language and culture its actual appeal was limited. Geographically, it extended only to those religiously diverse Arabic-speaking lands under direct Ottoman rule (Greater Syria and the central parts of modern-day Iraq). Egypt and other mainly Muslim Arabic-speaking lands in North Africa developed their own national struggles against non-Muslim colonisers. The (then) ultra-backward Gulf and Peninsula was ruled by local dynasties, like the Hashemites, who did not transform themselves into modern capitalists until the twentieth century.

Socially, Arab nationalism was isolated among the urban petit bourgeoisie, as capitalist development was too weak to produce large and cohesive modern social classes capable of conducting a consistent national struggle. The nationalists' only real hope of achieving their aims lay in external alliances - with a capitalist West that they hoped to emulate and to which they regularly appealed for support.

Their big chance came during the First World War, when Britain and France finally decided to dismember German imperialism's Ottoman ally. But the imperialists by-passed the nationalists altogether, and in collusion with Hashemite dynasty pushed through a historic betrayal for the Arab nationalists: foreign colonial rule, thinly-disguised through League of Nations "mandates" and the imposition of client dynasties and politicians, instead of real independence; and the erection of artificial "national" boundaries.

France carved the new state of Lebanon out of its Syrian colony for the benefit of a



Nasser, Kassem and Arafat: Arab nationalist leaders

Christian minority with which it had historic ties. Historic Palestine west of the river Jordan was cut from its natural hinterland by the British and settled with Zionist colonists. An inherently unstable Iraq was created out of a forced union of Kurds with Shi'a and Sunni Muslim Arabs under an alien Hashemite dynasty and a minority-Sunni Muslim officer caste, composed of Britain's former allies during the Arab Revolt.

Another thing that the post-war order brought was capitalist development, whose pace was dictated by the dominant colonial powers and their growing interest in the region's newly discovered oil resources. This created an urban working class, and a small and weak capitalist class dependent on its relationship with imperialism for its wealth and its ability to hold on to political power. Naturally, it also increased the ranks of the urban petit bourgeoisie, within which pan-Arab nationalism remained isolated as a minority ideology over the next decades.

But then came the conflict over Palestine, the conflict that lifted Arab nationalism to a position of mass support. The Communist Parties, following the Soviet Union's lead, had supported the creation of the Jewish state in 1948, discrediting themselves in the eyes of millions of Arab workers and peasants.

Meanwhile, humiliating defeat in war exposed the corruption and weakness of the traditional Arab regimes, their disunity, dependence on imperialism and their complicity in its plans. An aggressive new colonial-settler state on Arab land, creating hundreds of thousands of Arab refugees, was a running sore that confirmed the need for change. Arab disunity was regarded as the cause of these and many other ills, and Arab unity as the solution to them.

In 1952, the Egyptian Free Officers Movement (led by Jamal Abdul Nasser) overthrew the Egyptian monarchy and pursued a programme of removing the British military presence, redistributing the land to the peasants (breaking the power of a landowning class that had been a base of support for Britain and the pro-British monarchy), and promoting the country's economic and technological development. Nasser's subsequent nationalisation of the Suez Canal in 1956, and the attack by Britain, France and Israel that followed it, catapulted him into the position of leader and symbol of the march towards Arab unity.

A similar coup in Iraq in 1958 (led by General Abdul Karim Kassem) unleashed the threat of social revolution in a country with the largest Communist Party in the region and a working class centred on the oil industry. The events of that year made it the high point of the Arab nationalist tide. Syria joined Egypt under Nasser to form the (short-lived) United Arab Republic (UAR), which Iraq was briefly expected to join after the overthrow of the Hashemite monarchy.

Lebanon exploded into civil war as its

Muslim majority agitated for equal rights and union with Nasser's UAR - a situation resolved only by the despatch of US Marines and the installation of a reformist Christian regime under General Fu'ad Chehab. Similarly, the Hashemite dynasty in Jordan escaped the fate of its Iraqi counterpart only through the effective British re-occupation of the country.

The coups and revolutions that followed the 1948 war with Israel all involved an alliance between the nationalist petit bourgeoisie and the junior army officers (its military wing), against the traditional elites brought into power by the British and French imperialists. In the background stood an organised working class movement led by the Communist Parties, often much larger and older than the nationalist movements, but hamstrung by their own policy towards them.

The Communist Parties' policy of the Popular Front dictated that the working class should permanently ally itself with all the classes oppressed by "feudalism" and

All the regimes used their much-vaunted "support" for the Palestinians as a political football, sponsoring rival Palestinian factions in order to pursue their internecine quarrels by proxy

foreign imperialism, including that (small) part of the bourgeoisie that was willing to fight the imperialists. In practice, this meant that the struggle for socialism was put off indefinitely, and that the working class movement should limit its demands to those compatible with the capitalist stage. The bourgeoisie's policy, however, was to ride the Arab nationalist "revolution" in order to forestall the threat posed by the Communists. Unable to unite against imperialism, the Arab capitalists could still steal the "Arab unity" slogans of the nationalist petit bourgeoisie to use against the working class.

So Egyptian Communists rotted in Nasser's prisons while their leaders described Egypt as a "socialist" country. The Syrian rulers handed themselves over to Nasser to prevent the Communists taking power there, and seceded from the UAR in 1961 once they had no more need of his help.

The first Ba'athist coup in Iraq in 1963 overthrew the Kassem regime precisely because it leant on the Communist-led working class movement for support and devoted more attention to social and economic reform than to Arab unity projects.

Once they had massacred 30,000 Communists and trade unionists, the Ba'athists were themselves overthrown by their conservative co-conspirators in the military. The policy of the Popular Front led to the working class movement's defeat and loss of political independence, and to conceding the leadership of the popular masses to the petit-bourgeois nationalists.

If defeat in 1948 exposed the traditional Arab regimes as corrupt traitors, then

defeat in the 1967 war exposed the Arab nationalists, and Nasser in particular, as paper tigers. A common Arab front had failed to prevent Israel from grabbing and occupying more Arab land, while the speed of the Arab defeat made the claim that "Arab unity" was the military solution to the Palestinian problem hollow.

From now on, the Palestinians looked to their own nationalism to lead the struggle for liberation, while the (disunited) proponents of Arab unity in power pursued a programme that might be described as "Arab nationalism in one Arab country".

In Syria this meant an expansionist policy towards Lebanon, at the expense of the goal, long held by Arab nationalists, of abolishing its confessional political system and Christian minority privilege. In Egypt, it meant using its military and economic position to seek regional hegemony - through a reactionary peace deal with Israel and support for the United States in the new Cold War. In Iraq, it meant a chauvinist policy towards the Kurds and the Shi'a Muslim majority by the Arab nationalist Sunni Muslim minority, followed by a reactionary eight-year war with Iran.

All the regimes used their much-vaunted "support" for the Palestinians as political football, sponsoring rival Palestinian factions in order to pursue their internecine quarrels by proxy.

Most of all, the regimes discredited themselves through their social and economic record. Their commitment to "Arab socialism", in reality state capitalist development and trade with the Soviet bloc, simply enriched a new layer of capitalists closely intertwined with the state bureaucracy and nationalised industries, while failing to absorb the expanding population into the workforce.

The disillusionment of those urban people who had been given a modern education but denied a place in the petit bourgeoisie or the state apparatus, fed the growth of political Islam as much as the political betrayals of the regimes. The removal of imperialism's artificial borders and client states remains one of the vital, uncompleted national-democratic tasks of the Arab world, vital to any prospect of using its vast oil wealth to promote the development of the region for the benefit of all of its masses.

However, the history of the last century has shown that it is a task that cannot be undertaken by a weak and divided Arab bourgeoisie tied to the imperialist powers, or an "ideologically" motivated radical petit bourgeoisie forcing its will upon the capitalists, whether under the slogans of national nationalism or of Islamism. It is a task that falls to the working class of the region.

The most important task, with which the other are bound up, is that of overthrowing capitalism altogether; a task which requires a perspective of unity based not on nationality, but on the unity of all oppressed classes and nations, regardless of nationality, language or religion, against all their exploiters. The self-styled "Arab Communists" of the last century failed to understand this. The communists of this century, armed with strategy and programme of permanent revolution, must.

Election fiasco for the Argentine left

The Argentinian elections provided an opportunity to break key sections of workers from Peronism and win them to revolutionary politics. Sadly, the left squandered this chance, writes *Keith Harvey*

The outcome of the first round of the Argentine presidential elections last month is a calamity for the left and a boost for the previously discredited parties that bear responsibility for plunging the country into economic depression and political convulsions since December 2001.

Ex-president and pro-IMF Peronist Carlos Menem topped the poll with 23 per cent, while the outgoing president's preferred candidate, Peronist Néstor Kirchner, came second with 21 per cent. All together 63 per cent of those voting, on a high turnout, did so for the three main right-wing candidates.

The Stalinist and centrist left did poorly. The United Left-Izquierda Unida (IU) a bloc between the MST and the PC, and Jorge Altamira's Política Obrera (PO) only polled 500,000 votes or about 2.5 per cent. In the 2001 legislative elections, the left (IU, POMAS, PTS and AyL) gained about 800,000 votes (8 per cent).

PO lost about 35 per cent of the vote it gained in the legislative elections of 2001 and fell back to the level it got in the presidential elections in 1999, with around 0.7 per cent of the vote.

IU, while getting less votes than in 2001, did double the percentage of votes it got in the 1999 Presidential elections to 1.8 per cent.

Some of the left parties that stood in 2001 and 1999 refused to put up a candidate this time and argued for an active boycott of the poll. The PTS, PCR, Patria Libre (Barridos de Pie), AyL (led by the popular Congress member Luis Zamorra) and MIJD as well as some popular assemblies, assorted intellectuals and student groups called for "abstention, vote blank or void your ballot."

The PTS were among those to issue fake ballot papers, calling on voters to stuff them in the ballot box. On the day less than 15,000 of these fake ballots were used.

The tactic of active boycott was premised on the fact that as a result of the revolutionary crisis of 2001 the old "regime parties" (Peronists and Radicals) were utterly discredited. This was expressed sharply in the widespread slogan "Get rid of them all!" that unified the popular assemblies, unemployed piqueteros and the workers' vanguard.

Since the elections – called by President Duhalde last June – were an attempt to restore some legitimacy to a regime that had lost the confidence of the mass of the population, it was argued by the PTS and others that the "Get rid of them all" sentiment would best be focused by refusing to play the game of electoral politics. Instead, the PTS hoped to use an active boycott campaign to build up the popular assemblies, occupied factories and various local co-ordinadoras as an alternative pole of political authority to the regime.

The results show what a gross miscalculation they made. The proportion of blank/voided votes was about 2.5 per cent, around the average for all Argentina's elections. Even then most spoiled ballots are a result of mistakenly voting, and do not necessarily reflect disgust with the system.

As a result, only 20 per cent of the electorate voted for one of the 15 presidential candidates. It is normal in Argentina – where it is customary to vote for



Menem celebrates with his supporters

between 17 to 22 per cent not to cast their ballots. The abstention rate in 2001 was 28 per cent.

The tactic of "active boycott" was misconceived. The main political defect of the Argentine working class is the absence of any mass independent workers' party. For 60 years the gangster Peronist trade union bureaucracy has tied the mass of organised workers to the Peronist party (PJ). In these elections the various trade union barons have backed one or other of the rival Peronist candidates.

Since the revolutionary days of December 2001, the main defect of the political situation has been the inability of the vanguard, some tens of thousands strong, to draw in the several million-strong organised working class (mainly in the two CGTs and the CTA trade union federations) into a battle to unseat the Duhalde government through general strike action. The trade union leaders of the rival CGT federations absolutely refused to do this.

In overcoming this gap in class consciousness between the vanguard and the mass of the working class it was crucial for the former to find every opportunity to present the case for breaking politically with Peronism and forming a workers' party.

The presidential elections were such an opportunity. Last October we said: "Duhalde was at his weakest in first half of the year; but has been helped by: continued support from the CGT trade union bureaucracies that have refused to organise general strike against his government; the fact that from spring onwards the mass movements came up against limits of their spontaneous development and a certain bureaucratisation of them has taken place; thirdly, whereas in the first half of the year Duhalde could not lean on foreign support, today the IMF has become reconciled to his regime.

"[Duhalde's] job is to stabilise the crisis not overcome it; that is entrench the losses the masses have suffered so far while preventing a generalisation of the resistance. This involves repression of the left-wing of the movement against him and an attempt to preserve the 1954 constitution from those who demand that 'all of them must go'."

"Alongside repression of the left-wing of the movement, there is a need to build up the legitimacy of the regime parties by organising

the masses into participating in them."

Faced with this the task of the left was to build the biggest possible united campaign around a workers' party presidential candidate. Such a candidate could have been drawn from one of the nationally known representatives of the occupied factories, for example.

They should have stood on a platform that represented the key thrust of the revolutionary days: for a living wage, nationalisation of the banks, nationalise the occupied factories under workers' control, root the popular assemblies in the working class and through them build a national delegate-based alternative to the Congress; freedom for all political prisoners.

Unfortunately, the sectarianism of some on the left, like PO, would have been an obstacle, but massive pressure from the piqueteros and occupied factories could have overcome this. Similar pressure may have forced unaccountable leaders like Luis Zamorra and his AyL to join such a project.

A candidate, on a revolutionary action programme, could have at least unified the existing vanguard around a common political campaign and drawn hundreds of thousands of CGT members away from Kirchner in Gran Buenos Aires, where he received half of his support.

Such a campaign could hardly have gained much less than the pathetic results achieved by Jorge Altamira for PO or the meaningless outcome of the "active boycott" campaign.

In the next half year there are elections for governor in many states throughout the country. The left must absorb the lessons of the presidential elections, and build a unified campaign around workers' party candidates.

The results represent something of a victory for President Duhalde. His candidate is the overwhelming favourite to win the second round on 18 May. Menem is hated by most people for his role in bringing about the present disaster when he slavishly followed the neo-liberal policies during his two terms in office in the 1990s. He has mined his available support in the first round when he attracted the backing of the bosses, upper middle class and the poorest, least class conscious, layers in the north of the country.

Kirchner will experience a "Chirac effect" with people voting for him to keep Menem out.

The regime has not recovered its position of November 2001, before the eruption of the "revolutionary days". The Radical party has collapsed, its members and leaders turning into a variety of bourgeois "independents". The elections also showed how bitterly divided the Peronist party is in the face of the social upheaval.

But the mass of the organised working class has been lined up again behind one or other of its candidates. This is the tragedy of the elections of 2003. How to destroy Peronism's political hold over the working class remains the great unsolved problem facing the Argentine far left. Without addressing it even an incredibly deep revolutionary crisis, such as Argentina has seen in the year 2001-2, will not turn into a revolution. Indeed, if the working class fails to solve the deep social crisis by taking power, it will inevitably be crushed by counter-revolution.



Above: police storm Brukman. Middle: workers link arms to defend factory. Below: 30,000-strong Mayday demo in support of Brukman workers

Brukman factory stormed by police



At dawn on 18 April the workers of the Brukman textile factory in Buenos Aires were evicted by police from the factory they had been occupying since December 2001. Back then the firm's bankrupt owners ran off, owing the workers several month's wages. A judge ruled at the time that they had the right to stay.

Two weeks ago, two judges, originally appointed under the military dictatorship of 1976-83, ruled that the factory must be handed back to the owners. In a truly memorable phrase, the judge said "There is no supremacy of life and physical integrity over economic interests." On Good Friday, the police brutally expelled the workers.

The next day thousands of people marched, and held a vigil in support of the workers. The police savagely attacked them, firing live ammunition. Many were wounded and about 200 arrested.

After four days of waiting in front of the factory for the government to negotiate, the workers peacefully attempted to enter the factory by moving the police barricades. The workers were then met by tear gas and rubber bullets from the infantry division of the Argentine Federal Police.

The police pursued the fleeing crowd, in some cases for more than 25 blocks where they took refuge in a children's hospital. The police then shot tear gas into the hospital itself. Thirty-two people were injured during this attack and a hundred arrested.

The 55 women textile workers who ran the Brukman factory for themselves were a direct affront to the capitalist order. They proved by their actions that owners and managers are not essential to production – only the workers who produce the goods are indispensable.

The Brukman workers now have no source of income, and there is no unemployment pay.

They have issued the following appeal:

"We, the workers of Brukman, are again appealing for solidarity. We have received countless instances of support from people who came, and are still coming, to our factory. We have marched with nearly 20,000 to recover our livelihood, and against persecution. We have received hundreds of e-mails supporting us, from Argentina and from the rest of the world. In addition, many people and organisations have contributed money and food to sustain our struggle till we succeed in recovering our factory.

But we need to redouble these efforts, so that our struggle is not defeated by hunger. We appeal to all of you to contribute money to our strike fund.

For this purpose we have opened two bank accounts. You may deposit money in either of these. Please let us know the date, place, and amount you have deposited, by sending e-mails to: prensabrukman2@yahoo.com.ar and comision_fabricasocupadas@yahoo.com.ar.

The account numbers are:

Fondo Nacional de Huelga Banco Credicoop Suc. 001

and Fondo de Lucha de Brukman Banco Nacion Suc. 0086"

For more on the Brukman Occupation and the struggle for workers' control go to <http://www.workerspower.com/veggiotai/Argentina>

Zimbabwean workers rock Mugabe

Two general strikes in just over a month have sent President Robert Mugabe's supporters in search of new allies. But the danger for the workers who are leading the resistance is that these new allies will be the US and UK

The United States and Britain are taking the first steps towards forcing through "regime change" in Zimbabwe. George Bush's envoy, Walter Kansteiner, is currently touring southern Africa, canvassing support for a bloodless coup which would see former finance minister Simba Makoni replace President Robert Mugabe and call new elections.

When asked about the situation, Tony Blair told the *Financial Times*, "I have never had a difficulty with the concept of intervention. It doesn't necessarily mean... armed intervention, it can be diplomatic."

Of course, for Britain, this would have the additional advantage of exacting revenge at last on Mugabe for forcing out the white rulers in the 1970s.

Zimbabwean workers, however, had other ideas. They staged their second mass protest this year with a three-day general strike at the end of April.

The national walk-out was called by the Zimbabwean Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) against the government's raising of the price at the gas-pumps. Price rises of more than 200 per cent, following a similar doubling of fuel prices, mean that workers now have to spend about 80 per cent of their wages on transport costs. The strike was a great success with 90 per cent of union members staying away from work between 23 and 25 April. It forced the government to immediately raise the minimum wage and shelve further price hikes.

But the ZCTU promised more actions. Furthermore, it walked out of the Tripartite Negotiating Forum saying that it was impossible to work with business and the government. Effectively the unions have withdrawn their support for the New Economic Programme for National Recovery – a neo-liberal plan to deal with Zimbabwe's rampant inflation of 228 per cent, growing shortages of foodstuffs as famine threatens two-thirds of the population, frequent power cuts and an unemployment rate running at 60 per cent.



Mugabe: His cronies are beginning to talk about replacing him

The successful strike followed a two-day strike in March and a month-long period of intimidation and violence against the unions and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) – the popular front party formed by ZCTU, but with white capitalist farmers and bosses in its leadership – which led to about 600 arrests, 250 people being hospitalised and several deaths. Mugabe gave the green light for the attacks when he said "Let the MDC and its leaders be warned that those who play with fire will not only be burnt, but consumed by that fire."

But ZCTU deputy secretary Collin Gwiyo said that the intimidation only "reminded people to speak out when things are tough." The MDC also won two by-elections at the end of March, proof that Zanu-PF's thugs are failing to stem the party's freefall.

In the aftermath of the strike, the government continued its repression and sacked more than 2,800 post office workers, including the ZCTU president Lovemore Matombo. There have also been accusations that President Robert Mugabe's

supporters beat strikers.

Mugabe and Zanu-PF have now reached crisis point. Their policy of intimidation, which in the past has kept them in power, has now failed to prevent two general strikes and a resurgence of the opposition.

And an economic recession, neo-liberal policies, famine and the failure of the land reforms to benefit the peasants has prevented the government from buying off sections of the masses – as it was able to do in the late 1990s with concessions to the war veterans.

Internationally, Mugabe has responded by saying he will relax the draconian media laws. He has also told the South African Development Community, which met in Harare in March, that the land reform programme was near an end and that the government would now be willing to help evicted white farmers. He even hinted on national TV last month that he may stand down after the land reform programme is completed.

The MDC, has issued a 15-point programme calling for an end to repression, new elections and for a "normalisation" of poli-

tics and society. But behind the scenes moves are afoot which may rob the heroic Zimbabwean workers of the fruits of their struggle. "Normalisation" may mean a new settlement for the benefit of the big landowners, the bosses and politicians who have happily presided over corruption, violence and poverty: a government of national unity, possibly headed by former Zanu-PF finance minister and US favourite, Simba Makoni.

Within the past month, it has been reported in Zimbabwe that there are discussions taking place between sections of Zanu-PF and the MDC using neutral parties. One of the go-betweens said that face-to-face talks were to begin soon, while South African newspapers have called the discussions between the two parties "feverish". The South African government, which until now has firmly been behind Mugabe and even refused to meet the opposition in March, is now sending out a taskforce to talk to both parties to find a way out of the present impasse.

The discussions centre on several issues: new presidential and parliamentary elec-

tions; a national unity government of Zanu-PF and the MDC; a common approach to economic situation; and the development of the 2000 constitution. The sticking point among sections of Zanu-PF is about whether there should be a general election in 2005 or 2008. There is a fear that his early retirement would fragment the party.

But any "regime change" from either by the imperialists or by a Zanu-PF/MDC deal – would be a disaster for Zimbabwe's workers. The economic programme of an MDC or an MDC/Zanu-PF government, especially one brought to power by a US/UK-inspired coup, will be a continuation of the neo-liberal programme of welfare and state support and of price and unemployment. The danger for workers and peasants is that they will bring about a change in the government for the leadership of the MDC – one which is compromised by its links to white imperialists, the UK, US and other imperialist governments – to push through the very economic changes that the workers and peasants have been striking against.

This is the logic of the MDC. The government has always relied on the strength of the ruling class to soak up the regime's violence. It will push Mugabe's cronies onto the back through strike action, and win popular support and elections. But its policies have always been shaped by the white farmers who still control the economy and its exports, and big business in the form of the International Monetary Fund.

The workers and landless peasants refuse to allow their leaders to cut deals with the likes of Makoni. They must continue to fight for regime change from the struggle against the economic programme and political repression of Zanu-PF, the workers and poor peasants must break with the MDC. They must force ZCTU to build a workers' party and the Zimbabwean masses out of the capitalist-imposed misery and despair on to the road to socialism.

An epidemic of bureaucracy and globalisation

Government cover-ups are hampering scientists' ability to contain the Sars outbreak, writes *Helen Ward*

The disease Sars (Sudden Acute Respiratory Syndrome) was first recognised a couple of months ago. Already 5,865 cases have been reported and nearly 400 people have died. The true figures are likely to be much higher due to the failure to identify and report cases in the parts of China where the disease first emerged.

After months of cover-up, the Chinese government finally admitted at the end of April there had been 10 times more cases than they had previously told the World Health Organisation, and that the first cases were seen as early as November last year. They have now reported 3,600 cases in mainland China, and are taking drastic measures.

Schools and public places have been closed, some villagers have erected barricades to keep out people who may be infected, and a new 1,000 bed hospital has just opened on the outskirts of Beijing – built in just eight days! On May Day, Tiananmen Square was almost deserted for the traditional celebrations, and over 10,000 people were in quarantine in the capital city alone.

While the Chinese authorities sacked the national minister of health and the mayor of Beijing, the responsibility

for the cover-up lies with the whole bureaucratic caste, shaped by many years of Stalinism, that still rules capitalist China.

As with the Chernobyl nuclear plant disaster in Ukraine in 1986, a bad situation is made infinitely worse by a repressive and sealed-off bureaucracy that is incapable of admitting to its errors in front of its population. A public health nightmare is compounded by not taking the obvious and quick measures that can contain the impact of the catastrophe.

China was not willing to report cases for fear of scaring off foreign tourists and investors. But eventually it was forced to be more open since information about the scale of the outbreak was getting out by way of mobile phones and e-mail, which even these bureaucrats cannot fully control.

In part due to this major cover-up, which has delayed international efforts to control cases have now been reported from 28 countries. Internationally people are being advised not to travel to some parts of China (Hong Kong, Beijing, Guangdong and Shanxi provinces) or to Toronto. In Singapore, China, Hong Kong and Toronto draconian measures have been introduced to try and halt the spread of the disease.



Airports are taking measures against the spread of the disease

Why has this disease caused such alarm? This is not the first new disease to hit humans in recent years – dozens have been identified in the past decade alone. Public health experts have been anticipating a severe new infection like this for some years – either a highly virulent influenza virus or another easily transmitted virus.

Because of globalisation, any new disease will not be confined to one or two countries or even regions, while experts come to understand it. International mobility, particularly through air travel, means any new bug can be round the globe within hours of the first cases. This creates an enormous challenge for public health systems, and



there are no easy answers to this kind of outbreak.

The quarantine measures adopted in Singapore by its autocratic government have been rightly criticised as overly repressive, but any public health intervention to contain Sars would entail restrictions on mobility until the way the virus is transmitted becomes clearer, and there is a test for people who are carrying the virus but not yet ill.

Around one in 20 people who get this disease are dying, and there has been a major death toll among nurses and doctors. The pessimistic view suggests that this could be a major new pandemic, dwarfing AIDS. This

seems very unlikely given the strict controls now in place, and it looks as though the epidemic has peaked everywhere except in

There have been promising scientific developments already. The likely cause, coronavirus, which was identified weeks ago, although Canadian scientists is not present in all cases. The DNA sequence of the virus has already been completed which will help in the development of a vaccine and possibly a vaccine.

But against this relative scientific optimism, the strict public health measures themselves have had an impact on the globalised world that made them necessary. Travel restrictions in Hong Kong are to cause a 20 per cent drop in the province's GDP growth rate.

Toronto's mayor reacted fiercely to international restrictions on travel, for a major impact on the local economy. He managed to get restrictions lifted within days.

Sars was not invented by globalisation but its impact has everything to do with way modern capitalism functions. Effective public health measures are impeded by bureaucracy and fears of the effects that has on investment and profits.

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- Defend George Galloway - p4

Buoyed by their victory in Iraq Bush and Blair are looking for new targets - abroad and at home

Iraq: end the US and UK occupation

After three weeks of the most savage assault from air, sea and land, the United States and Britain won a victory against Iraq in the most one-sided war in human history.

Already effectively disarmed during the 1990s, Iraq possessed weaponry at least two generations behind that of the Americans. There has been no sign of Saddam's weapons of mass destruction, the lying pretext for the US/UK invasion. Rather it was Rumsfeld, and indeed Britain's Geoff Hoon, who threatened the use of "tactical" nuclear weapons when the war became a bit sticky for them early on.

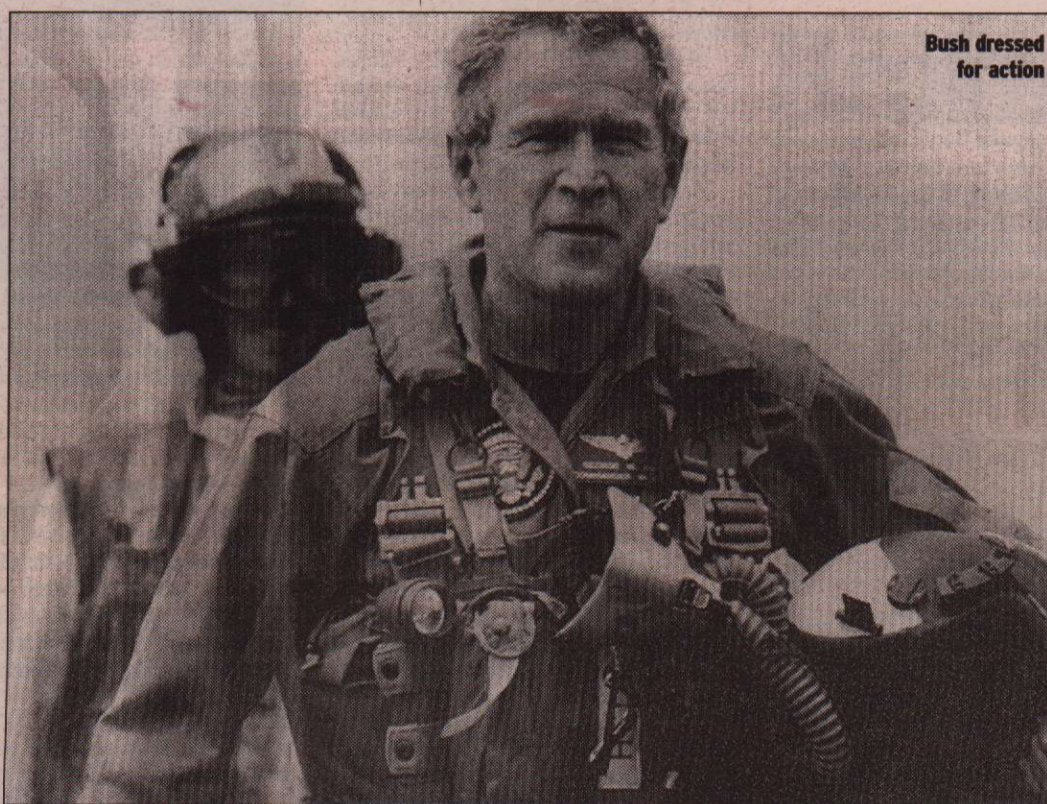
But imperialist victory came at a high price. The biggest anti-war movement the world has ever seen brought a whole new generation onto the streets. The permanent members of the UN Security Council are trading insults in far from diplomatic language. Nato and the United Nations were shoved unceremoniously to the sidelines. And then to cap it all the Iraqi people mobilised on the streets against their "liberators".

The brutal massacre at Fallujah, where American troops opened fire on an unarmed demonstration killing 14 and wounding 70, is just the latest taste of what imperialist occupation means. The unarmed demonstrators were demanding the right for their children to attend the town's school, which had been confiscated by the US airborne rangers.

Though the US troops claimed they were returning fire, independent journalists say there were no signs of bullet holes in the school. Only the walls behind the Iraqi protesters were riddled with machine gun bullet marks. Seize the people's schools, massacre unarmed protesters, lie like troopers about it all. This is no liberating army, it is a force of occupation.

A new colony, run by the pro-Zionist former US general Jay Garner, has been added to the expanding American empire. Saddam Hussein was a brutal tyrant, a weak and isolated one; George Bush, for all his democratic guff, tyrannises the world.

Donald Rumsfeld, Garner's close friend and political master, has already declared that a "free" Iraq will not be allowed to establish close relations with either Syria or Iran, and that the "democracy" he has in mind precludes any Islamist party winning the elections. Only pro-US regimes can be the friends of Iraq; only pro-



Bush dressed for action

US parties can win elections.

The victory of the US/UK coalition, with 105 US and 32 British soldiers dead, with 2,500 Iraqi civilian deaths and an estimated 10,000 Iraqi combatants killed will be media "manageable" for Bush and Blair in the short term. What will not be so easy to handle is the living proof that the Iraqi people did not want this invasion and want the invaders to get out. If this resistance turns into a full-scale Iraqi intifada - with a mounting casualty toll - then the cowardly conquerors can be forced to scuttle

Meanwhile, the Iraqi Oil Ministry - the only government department not bombed to pieces by the USAF and RAF - has a new CEO, Philip J Carroll, formerly

of Shell Oil. He will ensure that Iraq's natural resources are used to fill the coffers of the American and British oil corporations and push down the price of oil, perhaps even breaking Opec's dwindling power over the market.

Further afield, the administration "hawks" say the US should next turn its tanks towards Damascus or Tehran. Rumsfeld has berated Syria for allowing Arab volunteers to cross its border into Iraq, for harbouring fleeing members of Baghdad's Ba'athist regime, for having provided arms to the Iraqis. Laughably, he has even suggested that Assad is hiding the "gone missing" weapons of mass destruction.

Bush and Rumsfeld are obviously satisfied that they

have successfully carried out the new strategic "doctrine" of unilaterally launching pre-emptive attacks on states which they judge to have "failed". Those which have failed to surrender weapons which might deter attacks or resist blackmail from the world's single superpower. Those which have failed to change their regimes to ones the US president approves of. Those which have failed to provide a commodity vital to the US economy at the right price.

Any state which refuses to submit to the dictates of the USA is by definition a "failure".

On the home front too, Tony Blair has used his "Baghdad bounce back" in the opinion polls to punish all those who scared him into almost resigning around the 15 February mobilisations. Dissent within the Labour Party will be severely punished. The Blair spin doctors are lending a hand to the Daily Telegraph's witch-hunt against George Galloway. But above all the poor must pay for the war.

Foundation hospitals, opening the door to a two-tier health service, are being forced through. Jarvis, guilty of corporate killing at Potters Bar, is rewarded with contracts to run our schools. Top-up fees will debar students from working class families from attending the top universities. And just to make sure none of the victims of Tony Blair's wars dares to start a new life here, the ever-tightening anti-asylum laws are already being used to forcibly deport Afghan refugees back to their war-torn homeland with just a £20 UN voucher to rebuild their lives.

Against the occupation of Iraq, the next stage in the US empire's war of conquest and against Blair's war on British workers at home, thousands upon thousands will fight back. The quicker resistance is mounted, the quicker we can turn Bush and Blair's victory celebrations into a wake for their entire system of war, exploitation and racism.

We can start right now by declaring our total solidarity with the Iraqi people as they begin the fight to kick out the occupying armies:

- British and US troops out of Iraq and the whole Middle East.
 - Forward to the Iraqi intifada.
 - Declare war on the imperialist warmongers.
- See page 8 for more on Iraq

Get active, stay active, join Workers Power

Workers Power is the British Section of the League for a Fifth International (LFI)

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Even the onset of war did not stop the global revolt against it.

Across the world the working class is coming together. Globalisation has forced workers and activists from different countries and continents to unite, work and fight together. There have been huge Social Forums of resistance in Europe at Florence, in Asia at Hyderabad and in South America at Porto Alegre.

Together with the LFI, which is represented on the European Social Forum, Workers Power campaigns to bring these movements together into a New

World Party of Socialist Revolution (a New International).

This is a momentous time, one of those times when the true nature of the world we live in suddenly becomes clear to millions. Capitalism is revealing itself to be a system of war, conquest and global inequality. By taking to the streets against war and capitalism, hundreds of thousands of people are showing that they have seen through the lies.

Take the next step and join Workers Power. Phone us on 020 7820 1363 or e mail us at paper@workerspower.com.

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