

STRUGGLE

A MARXIST APPROACH TO AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND

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Crisis of World Capitalism

The triumphalism of Bush and Blair can only paper over the cracks for so long. Capitalism is in crisis, arising from fundamental contradictions between monopoly capital and labour, among imperialist powers, and between imperialism and the oppressed peoples and nations. The increasing social interdependence forged by new technologies is ever-deformed by the global rapacity of monopoly capital under the slogan of 'free market' globalisation.

The centralisation and concentration of capital is accelerating. The world's richest 20 percent own 85 percent of the world's wealth. The world's three richest people have assets greater than the gross domestic product of the world's 48 poorest countries. Mergers and acquisitions among the largest companies are accelerating. Only two companies remain making large commercial aircraft worldwide, three big accounting firms, three oil companies remain from the "seven sisters" of the 1970s, 11 of 40 car manufacturers.

Capital is ever-concentrated in the "triad" of the US, Europe and Japan. According to the UN Committee on Trade and Development, 85% of international investment stocks are from these countries to these countries. The developing countries simply pay tribute to this core, the net annual transfer from developing countries to developed countries nearly doubling 1998-2002, from \$US111 billion to \$US193 billion. The only significant net investment in the third world, \$US54 billion, goes to China.

Outside the triad, most countries are in depression. Third world debt has almost doubled from \$US 1.3 trillion in 1988 to \$US 2.5 trillion, despite having paid \$US 4.5 trillion in debt payments over the last 20 years. According to the ILO, half the world's workforce, 1.4 billion workers, live on less than \$US 2 per day and 550 million on less than \$US 1 per day. Millions more, unemployed, scrape by on far less. Millions die each year from malnutrition, polluted water, and simple preventable illness.

Within the triad there is a surfeit of riches. The developed world is plagued by overproduction. Prices of high tech consumer goods are plummeting as global demand for all manner of goods can be met within days from single plants because of great advances in productivity. Asset values spin out of recognition as money flees production to speculative investments in dot coms to highly leveraged corporates to currency markets and then onto real estate. In the tail of the speculative whirlwind comes stock market crashes, corporate scandals, currency devaluations and real estate collapses.

The combination of overproduction, financial speculation and depression among developing countries threatens recession amongst the imperialist countries. Economic growth within the triad fell from 3.8 percent in 2000 to 0.8 percent in 2001 and only rebounding somewhat to 2.8 percent in 2004.

Global recession has only been stayed by the massive US military spending since 2001, using the "war on terror" to

stimulate the US economy. The \$US 586 billion military spending, half the total federal budget, replenishes the US armaments consumed in Iraq and develops new weaponry. This provides contracts for arms manufacturers, with associated employment and consumer spending. \$US 5 billion has already been awarded in contracts to Halliburton, Bechtel, DynCorp and other firms closely connected to the Bush regime. Strategically, the military and political incursions not only in the Middle East, but also in the Balkans, Central Asia and West Africa, have enabled the US to seize sources and supply routes of oil and gas far beyond its existing supply lines.

The principle contradiction between the imperialist powers and the oppressed peoples and nations is intensifying. As the growing economic crisis drives the imperialist puppet regimes to squeeze more and more from the workers and peasants and to intensify oppression, wars of national liberation are intensifying in Iraq, Palestine, Afghanistan, Nepal, India, the Philippines, Colombia, Turkey and Peru. At the same time, national governments continue to assert their sovereignty against US encroachments, from North Korea to China, Cuba, Venezuela, Iran, Syria, Congo to Zimbabwe.

Contradictions between US imperialism and the other imperialists are also to the fore, particularly as the US abrogates its international obligations under the UN Charter, the Geneva Conventions and the Convention on Climate Change.

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Election Outcome Certain

Guest Editorial – Communist Party of Aotearoa

Continued Imperialist Plunder of Aotearoa Economic and Social Decline

Whether the Clark regime governs alone after the elections later this year or does so in coalition with the Greens, the Maori Party or with the opportunist rabble of Anderton, Peters & co., or even if they are defeated by National, the outcome will be the same. Aotearoa will continue its subjugation to the US imperialists and their corrupt local agents.

No party contesting the parliamentary elections even questions the rule of capitalism over Aotearoa; in practice this means none question the increasing plunder of the resources of Aotearoa by US multinationals and their agents. All, from the Greens to ACT, support capitalist and thus imperialist control of the economy. They are all capitalist parties. Parliament a Capitalist Institution

This is hardly surprising. The consuming goal of all the parliamentary parties is gain office in a capitalist institution. Parliaments are fundamentally capitalist institutions, created centuries ago by the capitalist class to secure their overthrow of the feudal lords. Where the feudal lords had ruled their provinces personally, the capitalists set up committees of elected representatives, parliaments, to rule nationally. These were for a long time only representatives of the capitalists themselves. Only when the working class was tamed and taught to respect capitalist domination were we granted the vote, a right quickly taken away from us again whenever capitalist interests are fundamentally challenged.

LIMITS OF REFORMIST PARTIES

Even parties formed with the greatest intentions to relieve the lives of the oppressed are condemned to betray us if they do not have a clear understanding that parliaments can be no more than instruments of capitalist domination. Labour was set up in the early 1900s by union activists, with the explicit aim of socialism; the Communist Party joined the Labour Party at this time because we shared these goals. But because Labour saw the path to socialism only by means of a majority in parliament, it increasingly toned down its aims to become acceptable to the capitalists, whose approval any party ulti-

mately needs to gain parliamentary office. As they sold out their principles, they expelled their more principled allies, including a large minority of the working class and parties such as us, going as far as banning the Communist Press and imprisoning our central committee in the 1940s.

Labour's ultimate betrayal of their original principles came in the 1980s when the Lange-Douglas regime served as the handmaiden of US imperialist takeover of Aotearoa. Many of the principal figures in the current Clark regime served with them. Again, the Communist Party joined those, including Anderton, who split from Labour to form the New Labour Party in 1989. But again, in the lust for parliamentary seats, the New Labour Party, and Anderton in particular, was quick to compromise principle for office. Again and again, policies were toned down to be 'acceptable', ostensibly to 'public opinion', but in reality to the fear of capitalist backlash. The rumoured new 'Aotearoa Party' ostensibly for blue collar worker and poor immigrants will follow this same trajectory.

GAINS COME FROM MASS STRUGGLE

The working class and the oppressed Maori nation have little to gain from appeals to capitalist parliaments. The capitalists only concede what they must. Working class gains such as the right to vote, social security, or the Waitangi Tribunal, and the nuclear free policy have been won by mass struggles, despite the attempts by parliamentary social democratic parties like Labour to claim credit.

Socialism will not come from parliamentary elections. Socialism requires the overthrow of capitalist power throughout society, primarily their control of the factories and other workplaces. Every workers revolution to date has seen the development of alternatives to capitalist parliaments, in the same way that capitalists introduced new institutions in place of feudal rule. The overthrow of US imperialism and its local agents will see the emergence of new mass democratic institutions; most likely based on workplaces and hapu.

Socialism will emerge from the struggles of workers, Maori and other oppressed peoples in throwing of the shackles of imperialist plunder of Aotearoa. This

movement is built on the streets, not in the Beehive. The only party committed to this vision of fundamental change is the Communist Party.

TACTICAL VOTING

This is not to argue that there can be no tactical advantage for the masses to be gained from parliamentary elections. Parliamentary elections actually provide a useful indicator for the capitalists as to how effective their dominance of the oppressed peoples is. The capitalists may prefer the open rule of the National Party, but if the masses get too upset, the capitalists quite happily tolerate Labour, because they know Labour will not challenge their fundamental interests. But a vote for Labour over National is still an indicator of working class power. And a vote for the parties to the left of Labour is a further indicator of weaknesses in capitalist domination. A strong showing for the Maori Party will reflect heightened political development of the Maori nation. In this election, when the Clark regime is seeking an absolute parliamentary majority to bolster capitalist 'stability', tactical voting to prevent this will destabilise capitalist rule.

But the progressive mass movements should not become divided over choices among capitalist parties, in the same way that we do not become divided over choices about which capitalist shops we frequent. The working class and the oppressed Maori nation must look beyond capitalist elections for liberation from the plunder of US imperialism. We must build up the mass organisations of the people, building our strength to choose the agenda, rather than restrict ourselves to the choice the capitalists allow.

COVER CONT.

US attempts to monopolise Iraq's oil, in particular, have drawn furious responses from France, Germany and Russia, whose own contractors want a slice of the pie.

The growing crisis in the imperialist countries is intensifying the class struggle between workers and monopoly capitalism, with racism towards immigrants being a particular battle ground. But, around the anti-war movement in particular, broad based popular collations are being forged against war and imperialism.

Stewart, Others Convicted on Bogus Terrorism Charges

By *Dustin Langley, for Workers World*

Following almost three years of government pressure and media baiting of the defendants, on Feb. 10 a Manhattan jury convicted well-known human-rights fighter and defense attorney Lynne Stewart on five counts of "conspiring to aid terrorists" and "lying to the government."

John Ashcroft's Justice Department targeted Stewart because of her determined defense for her client, Muslim cleric Omar Abdel Rahman, and because of her long career as a fighter for justice. Stewart, who is 65 years old, faces a possible maximum sentence of 45 years.

Stewart's co-defendants—Mohammed Yousry, an Arabic translator, and Ahmed Sattar, a postal worker who acted as a paralegal—were also convicted of all charges against them.

Speaking to the media immediately after hearing the verdict, Stewart said, "We are not giving up, obviously. We are going to fight on. This is the beginning of a longer struggle. I think everyone who has a sense that the United States needs to protect the Constitution at this time understands that struggle.

"And this case could be, I hope it will be, a wake-up call to all of the citizens of this country and all of the people who live here that you can't lock up the lawyers. You can't tell the lawyers how to do their job. You've got to let them operate. And I will fight on. I'm not giving up. I know I committed no crime. I know what I did was right."

The National Lawyers Guild, anti-war organizations and civil-rights groups have rallied to Stewart's defense following what they called "a travesty of justice."

Stewart's indictment in April 2002 was announced by Attorney General Ashcroft himself on the David Letterman show. It was the first time that the federal government prosecuted a defense attorney in a terrorism case. Lawyers around the country have said that they fear the government's goal is to silence dissent and scare lawyers away from defending clients that have been demonized.

The prosecution claimed that Stewart

helped to communicate a message from Rahman to his organization in Egypt, the Islamic Group, by passing on a press release expressing his opposition to a cease fire with the Egyptian government. The government claimed that this was a violation of the "Special Administrative Measures" (SAMs) against Rahman. SAMs severely limit the ability of certain federal prisoners to communicate with the outside world.

However, as even the New York Times admitted, "The government never showed that any violence resulted from the defendants' actions. The Islamic Group never canceled the cease fire. The defendants were not accused of terrorism in the United States."

Stewart's behavior was in no way linked to any violent acts. Yet the prosecutor tried to paint Stewart as a terrorist, even showing videotapes of Osama Bin Laden to the jury in attempt to link Stewart to Al Qaeda.

The seven-month trial of Stewart and her co-defendants was held in the same New York federal courthouse where the Rosenbergs were tried for conspiracy to commit espionage more than a half century ago. The prosecution introduced approximately 85,000 pieces of evidence, including transcripts and audio and video clips gleaned from spying on private phone calls, e-mails, and meetings. These included conferences between Stewart and the jailed Sheik—conferences that are supposed to be confidential.

The jury deliberated for 13 days before delivering a guilty verdict.

JURY INTIMIDATION

Just prior to her conviction, Stewart reported receiving a threat taped to the door of her apartment in Brooklyn. It was reportedly from the Jewish Defense Organization, an offshoot of the Jewish Defense League, a right-wing terrorist group.

In addition, the group taped fliers on lamp-posts near the Manhattan federal courthouse branding her a traitor for representing Omar Abdel Rahman and calling upon jurors to put Lynne Stewart "in a cage." Although the organization denied contacting any jurors, journalist Jennifer Monroe, who interviewed members of the JDO, concluded that they were engaged in jury

intimidation.

Judge John Koeltl called upon law-enforcement authorities to investigate the organization, which threatened to run the lawyer/defendant out of town for being an "enemy" of the U.S. and Israel.

Koeltl set Stewart's sentencing for July 15. Because she was convicted of a felony, Stewart will be immediately disbarred. She remains free on bail, but is confined to New York State.

A statement issued by the National Lawyers Guild in response to Stewart's conviction said, "The U.S. Department of Justice was resolute from day one in making a symbol out of Lynne Stewart in support of its campaign to deny people charged with crimes of effective legal representation. The government is bent on intimidating attorneys from providing zealous representation to unpopular clients."

The Guild called for a National Day of Outrage in response to the Lynne Stewart verdict for Feb. 17.

Speaking on WBAI-Pacific Radio's "Morning Show" on Feb. 15, Stewart announced an organizing rally for Feb. 17 at the Community Church in New York at 7 p.m. She said she had been getting e-mails from all over the country and the world and had begun a campaign to send 1 million letters to Southern District Judge John Koeltl demanding he rule in her favor.

She said she hoped "this conviction is the low point for the struggle and we can start fighting back from here."

Sara Flounders, a co-director of the International Action Center, said her group would "support any protests and other actions called to defend Lynne Stewart. She is a real people's hero and has conducted herself with enormous courage and determination. This is an historically important case. She should be included in every mass people's program to give voice to her or her case in every struggle throughout the country."

To find out more and to assist in her defense, go to www.lynnestewart.org or write to the Lynne Stewart Defense Committee, 351 Broadway, 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10013.

Foreign Grip on Economy Consolidates

Foreign capital continues to consolidate its hold on the New Zealand economy with 16 of the 30 largest companies in foreign hands. Despite government attempts to prevent foreign owners running the transport infrastructure into the ground, through the bailout of Air NZ and the national rail network, and the establishment of Kiwibank, the largest firms are firmly foreign owned.

The cost of foreign ownership is high. Nearly \$9 billion profits went to foreign investors in 2004, cancelling out all earnings from trade, and entirely responsible for the \$5.7 billion balance of payments deficit.

OWNERSHIP OF 30 LARGEST FIRMS

	Rev- enue	Emp- loyees
Fonterra c	11830	19600
ANZ National Bank*	5527	8794
Telecom *	5380	6840
Foodland NZ *	4949	
Fletcher Building *	3958	11400
Carter Holt Harvey *	3894	7000
Air NZ s	3498	10394
Westpac *	3096	
BNZ *	3012	4500
Foodstuffs (Auckland) c	2955	1500
ASB *	2348	
The Warehouse f	2259	8005
Shell NZ *	2040	300
Foodstuffs (South Island) c	1909	1038
BP NZ *	1739	1700
Foodstuffs (Wellington) c	1714	1127
Mobil Oil NZ *	1415	
Genesis Power s	1387	350
PPCS c	1373	4000
Caltex NZ *	1245	200
Richmond c	1222	4000
Contact Energy *	1209	
Alliance Group c	1147	5700
Vodafone NZ *	1070	1300
NZ Post s	1051	9312
British American Tobacco NZ *	1027	348
H J Heinz *	1025	
Pacific Retail Group f	1009	
Fisher & Paykel Appliances f	939	
ZESPRI Group c	920	135

* foreign; c cooperative; s state-owned; f family controlled

Source: Management 200, December 2004

The only way domestic settler capital has survived the opening up of capital markets to all-comers has been by restrictions on the transfer of shares. Settler capitalist farmers have held on to their long investments in the dairy, meat and fruit industries by restricting the sale of shares to farm owners, essentially making these firms producer cooperatives. This is designed to provide control of processing and marketing stages of production and thus a greater share of the final sale of agricultural goods. This contrasts with farming in the third world where these stages are controlled by independent merchants or multinationals, who drive down farm prices below subsistence levels.

Similarly, settler grocery retailers have maintained a long-standing cooperative to resist the inroads of the multinational supermarket chains, now concentrated in the giant Foodlands group (owner of Foodtown/Woolworths). The small "Four Square" superettes have cooperated to build the "New World" and "Pak 'n Save" supermarket chains. Shares in the Foodstuffs parent companies can only be owned by small shop keepers in designated areas. This has provided these store owners with local monopolies in small store sales, a share of profits from the supermarket sector, and secure low-cost supplies through ownership of their own warehouses, another area where multinationals often try to squeeze out competitors.

A final mechanism for retaining domestic control is used by the Warehouse, Pacific Retail and Fisher & Paykel and the secretive unlisted Todd Group. While these firms are listed on the stock exchange and have foreign investment, each has a sizeable and controlling holding by family interests; the Tindall,

Watson, Fisher and Paykel and Todd families respectively. Long-term family interests and loyalties tend to hold out against lucrative purchase offers, often because of family covenants on selling without agreement from all family members. This mechanism tends to breakdown, however, when key family members die, particularly when a young heir takes the helm, as happened with Lion and Fletchers.

State, cooperative and family ownership restrictions, then are key mechanisms for settler capital to continue its accumulation of surplus value in Aotearoa. This accumulation within Aotearoa has put some limit on the sizeable flow of profit to the global centres of capitalism in Sydney, New York and London. It underpins the occasional conflicts that erupt between domestic and foreign capital, such as the dispute over Foodland's takeover of Woolworths and the dispute over the future of Air NZ and the national rail network.

Despite these contradictions with foreign capital, settler capital spares no favour for workers, in part because of their settler nature. The farmer-owned firms, in particular, have a long history of ruthless labour disputes and minimal wages. Pak 'n Save is notorious for bad working conditions. Perhaps sensitive to their vulnerability, a number of the family-owned firms have been paternalistic to staff and promote 'corporate social responsibility', but so too do a number of the multinationals. While the contradictions between settler and foreign capital will undoubtedly grow with the unfolding economic crisis, the settler capitalists will be loath to break with their foreign masters because they are ultimately foreigners themselves on occupied land.

New Peoples Army Recognises Same-Sex Marriage

By LeiLani Dowell, first published Feb 17, 2005.

On Feb. 4, the New People's Army (NPA) conducted the first same-sex marriage in the Philippines. Two guerrilla fighters who have participated in the armed struggle against the pro-U.S. regime in Manila, Ka Andres and Ka Jose, exchanged their vows before their comrades, friends and local villagers.

The ceremony was full of symbolic imagery of the two comrades' commitment to each other as members of a couple, as well as their commitment to the revolutionary struggle. The two men held each other's hand throughout the wedding, and a bullet in the other as a representation of their commitment to the armed struggle.

During the ceremony, Ka Andres and Ka Jose were draped in a sequined flag of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), which was secured by a long, beaded rope around the couple and their sponsors. The rope and

flag, according to the Philippine Daily Inquirer, symbolized that their marriage would be made stronger with the help of both their comrades and the masses.

NPA COMRADES HOLD FIRST SAME-SEX WEDDING

A choir of the New People's Army serenaded the couple with revolutionary love songs.

In response to the marriage, representatives of the Philippine government have condemned the NPA for lacking religion. A spokesperson for the Air Force generals told reporters, "This proves that they have no god and their morality is very much in question."

Although proposals in support of same-sex marriage have been introduced several times to the Philippine legislature, none have passed so far.

The Progressive Organization of Gays (ProGay) responded to the NPA marriage with a challenge to the administration of President Gloria Macagapal

Arroyo to enact legislation that would formalize equal rights for lesbian and gay Filipinos.

Michael Falguera, secretary general of Pro Gay, said, "Instead of branding homosexual marriages as immoral, the government should be taking steps to follow the example of the NPA by legalizing domestic partnerships and honoring gay families."

Speaking on gays in the NPA, newlywed Ka Andres said, "Gay cadres adhere to the strong party discipline. They enhance the prestige of gays in the movement. This has gained positive results through the years. Comrades (male and female) and even the masses have learned to respect and recognize gays and their contribution to the revolution."

Ka Jose said, "What we have to do now—with the help of the party—is to work on our marriage and to be strong while serving the people."

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Brash Again

After the huge "success" of his Orewa 2004 Maori bashing speech, this year National leader Don Brash decided to target beneficiaries for this year's hate campaign. This time he declared that beneficiaries are the greatest obstacle to prosperity for "kiwi battlers". So what was Brash trying to achieve and why did he attempt to have lightning strike twice in the same place?

Like last year, this speech was designed to divert attention from the real enemy and real bludgers (the capitalist class) and once more attempt to get one section of the poor and oppressed identify some mythical privilege in another section of the poor and oppressed.

In spite of the attempts of the bourgeois media (led by the state-run Television One network) to "talk up" the Brash speech, this year's speech got little of the traction of last year's and may only cause a small and short increase in Brash's and National's popularity. For the second year in the row it was even too reactionary for the National Party Spokesperson for the topic that Brash pronounced on. This year it was Catherine Rich who was demoted when she could not agree with everything that her leader said.

However the speech reinforces the form of bourgeoisie politics where untruths, half truths and distorted statistics are used to divert attention away from the reality of class exploitation by getting workers and others at the bottom of the heap to blame each other for their situation.

The media are completely superficial in their coverage and offer little in the way of analysis of what lies behind this form of politics. It is a Marxist analysis that is much more helpful in understanding what is behind Brash and this demonising strategy. And it is up to Marxists and other progressive people to undertake the slow and patient work required within the working class to ensure that people do not fall for the Brash lies but instead identify who the real enemy is, who the real bludgers are and how to fight those with the real privilege.

Brash represents the most reactionary

section of capital in New Zealand; foreign, finance capital. He did so as Governor of the Reserve Bank under an Act designed by the Labour Party's Roger Douglas and continues to do so as leader of the National Party.

At a parliamentary political level, Brash and the National Party's problem is that the huge transfer of wealth from workers to capitalists undertaken during the 1980s and 1990s and the inequalities that this transfer created have now been cemented in and efficiently managed (for capital, that is) by the Parliamentary Labour Party.

Although capital always moans about a Labour Government, the fact is that the capitalist and managerial classes are doing very well for themselves at the moment and do not want to upset a winning combination.

Brash, the National Party and also the Act Party cannot at the moment secure the support they want from the middle classes. They therefore turn to the working class for the votes needed to get them into Government. Both National and Act are trying to re-brand themselves as "workers parties". They have both used this phrase. Historically this is not new. All sorts of reactionaries try and promote themselves in this fashion. Some have even called themselves "National Socialists". However it is very dangerous when reactionary parties do try and appeal to the working class. Given they cannot tell the truth to this class (that is, they are exploited by capital) they tap into and build a false consciousness amongst workers that appeals to a set of reactionary views often promulgated through the media, and in today's world, especially by reactionary talk back hosts.

In doing this Brash, National and Act try and identify those issues where workers may see other workers having more privilege than themselves. Then those with this so called "privilege" are demonised as being the cause of the poverty and oppression that other workers feel.

So, last year Maori were targeted as the "privileged" because of Treaty claims,

special scholarships etc. No mention of the fact that Maori have been expropriated by colonisation and still fall well behind pakeha on wealth, health, education and all other statistics.

This year is beneficiaries who are attacked as a privileged group.

Instead of standing up for these groups and telling the truth that it is capitalist privilege which is the source of the problems the "kiwi battler" faces, the Parliamentary Labour Party tries to out-Brash Brash. Last year following Brash's Orewa speech the Labour Government launched a new round of Maori land confiscation, (of the foreshore and seabed) and vowed to eliminate the Maori privilege that did not even exist.

This year Labour has not supported beneficiaries against the attacks from Dr Brash. It has simply said it is already doing most of the things that Brash has called for.

It can be seen that the interests of Maori, beneficiaries and working people as a whole are not represented by any of the bourgeois political parties. Nor can they be fully achieved within the capitalist system itself.

Even some of the world's biggest capitalists are honest enough to state that the capitalist system does not serve the interests of ordinary people. The international currency speculator, George Soros made this case in his book entitled "The Crisis of Global Capitalism", published in 1998. And in an article in the New Zealand Sunday Star Times of 30 January 2005, Microsoft Founder Bill Gates described the growing global inequalities as "a failure of capitalism" and lamented that capitalism provides no incentives to invent medicines for diseases of the poor".

Of course neither of these men, or other "enlightened capitalists" advocate the overthrow of the system that has enabled them to make their billions. However, unlike Brash, at least they are prepared to acknowledge the truth.

(contributed)

US Puppet Regime of Iraq

Under the guise of democratic elections, the US occupation forces have installed a second puppet regime, after the first lost all legitimacy in national and international eyes.

The election, designed and controlled by the US was restricted to areas where the 150,000 strong US occupying armed forces were in complete control, excluding one third of the country's provinces. Political parties and movements opposing the US occupation and elections in these conditions were prevented from campaigning for electoral boycotts by the arrest and murder of activists. \$92 million was supplied in 'voter education' programmes, to convince the allegedly uneducated Iraqi population of the legitimacy of an election under military occupation.

Because of the dominance of US military force, the clients funded throughout the Iraqi elite and US control of external economic relations there can be no question of any measures taken by the transitional National Assembly challenging US economic, political and

military interests in Iraq and the Middle East. The National Assembly is certain to maintain US control of Iraqi oil and a permanent military presence in the country. As if to underline the situation, the US has shamelessly declared that US troops will remain in Iraq and has diverted another \$80 billion towards the effort there and in Afghanistan.

The US will undoubtedly have a major hand in the drafting of the new Iraqi constitution, which will be voted on in a referendum in October, with further elections in December. As it has in countless occupations before, most notably Japan and the Philippines, the new constitution is bound to create a political structure that entrenches the rule of a succession of corrupt elites beholden to foreign, US, support.

Many Iraqis participating in the elections were well aware of their sham nature but see this as at least a short term path to US gold at a time the occupation has reduced the country to economic ruin. The major goal of US and British insistence on elections at this

stage of the occupation is to seek international legitimacy badly tarnished by mounting casualties inflicted by the Iraqi national resistance forces.

As long planned, the quest to restore some legitimacy for the occupation in Iraq is supported by a major effort to distract international attention from Iraq by provoking a series of confrontations with other so-called 'rogue states'; North Korea, Iran, Syria and Libya.

But unhappily for US and British plans, neither the provocations nor the Iraqi national resistance are playing the script deployed for them and are constantly making surprise moves. Even in the heartland of imperialism, despite Bush's claim of an electoral mandate for the war against Iraq, a majority of the US public, 52% against the occupation. As the US death toll in Iraq approaches 1500 and number wounded close to 26,000, the parallels with Vietnam grow by the day.

Britain's Bloody Colonialism in Kenya

British Treasury Minister Gordon Brown recently claimed, during a tour of Africa promising debt relief, that Britain had nothing to apologise for for colonisation, which had introduced "British values" of liberty and democracy.

Documents recently released by the British government show that Kenyans were subject to "indiscriminate shooting by army and police, prisoners were "beaten to extract information" and "torture was a feature of many police posts." No British official or military personnel has ever been prosecuted for these crimes.

The rebellion against British rule in Kenya began in the 1950s among highlanders who had been forced off their

lands through the 20th century by white settlers and reduced to labourers on the settlers' farms. The "Mau Mau" killed 32 settlers during the uprising but tens of thousands of Africans who collaborated with the British occupation.

The British responded with heavy bombing and systematic internment of more than one million Kenyans in concentration camps, where disease killed thousands. 3,000 Kenyans were tried in special courts, 1090 hanged. The British set up paramilitary "death squads", "a private army" in police uniforms to kill, rape and loot rebels and their supporters, with rewards provided for dead rebels. The documents show "It was an accepted ... practice to cue off either one or both hands of a body that could

not be brought in".

As often happens, the British won the war but lost the peace. Britain was forced to admit political independence and released nationalist leader, Jomo Kenyatta, who went on to win the election, while the white settlers power was diminished.

Other documents recently released catalogue torture or "deep interrogation" in Northern Ireland. "The Compton inquiry found that five techniques (hooding, wall standing, subjecting to noise, deprivation of food and sleep) constituted physical ill treatment." Some detainees were eventually compensated for the torture.

Tahitian Update

Tahiti correspondent

Independence leader Oscar Temaru won the Territorial elections a fortnight ago but did not get enough votes to give his party the majority in the assembly. The vote on February 13 was supposed to mark the end of months of political and economic uncertainty in Tahiti, but resulted in an Assembly with 27 seats for Temaru's party and 27 for Gaston Floss's party. Nicole Bouteau's "third way" party holds the balance of power with 3 seats. During the election campaign she announced she was not going to side with either of the main parties, but after the last elections in May 2004 Nicole Bouteau was an integral part of Temaru's coalition.

The background to this weekend's election: on 23 May 2004, Temaru surprised everyone (including himself) by leading a coalition of anti-Floss parties to victory in the elections for the Territorial Assembly. Though portrayed as a victory for the independence movement, it was more that the electorate was sick of 30 years of Floss's dictatorship, which was a rule based on corruption and clientele-ism. ('Tau' - change - quickly became the slogan of the new way of doing politics in Tahiti.)

A few defections from the ruling majority (Oscar Temaru's coalition) tipped the balance in favour of Floss and he re-assumed the Presidency. (The elected members of the assembly elect the President, and Floss's friends in Paris refused Temaru's request to ask the population what it wanted!)

Reaction among the people: lots of disappointment, even amongst some former staunch Floss supporters. The feeling is generally that we would have like to have seen what Temaru's coalition would have done if they had had more time. Temaru's government at least has been more open, democratic and accountable, even if the poor people are still poor and the rich still live in extreme luxury.

All this made for very exciting news.

There were new revelations daily in the papers and on TV: ministers in Floss's government using public money to pay their prostitutes/mistresses; a journalist who went missing 7 years ago allegedly 'taken out' by Floss's secret service; details of Floss's spying network including attractive 'hostesses' working for the secret service and paid to seduce men to find out information...

Massive protests were organised and people started to think back to the riots and protests in Papeete when they recommenced nuclear testing in 1995/1996 ("the time when Papeete burned", as they say here).

Luckily some special police units arrived from Paris and New Caledonia to keep everything under control. Someone had advance notice so that a couple of plane-loads of these police forces could get here before the start of all the political re-positioning!

The optimism of the first few months didn't last long, as Temaru's government (a little unprepared for their victory, and not aided by the fact that the previous government had emptied their filing cabinets of all documents upon leaving office) took a few months to get going. A few restless MPs jumped ship and then a motion of no confidence in Temaru's government was passed in October 2004.

Between the two rounds of voting Temaru supporters occupied various public services and squatted in the palatial 'Presidence'. This building, incidentally, is an example of Floss's penchant for erecting enormous buildings with public money. The running expenses of the French Polynesia's 'Presidence' under Floss's reign are rumoured to be more than those of the Elysée in Paris (Chirac's hang-out).

Temaru, Bouteau and Floss all led jaunts to Paris to convince the colonial rulers to grant new elections to sort out the political uncertainty in Tahiti. Chirac, by the way, is a close personal friend of Floss, and Brigitte Girardin,

the French Minister for Overseas Territories does not hide her support for Floss either. Initially refusing to call new elections, she was persuaded to declare the May 2004 elections void, but only for the islands of Tahiti and Moorea!

The French Polynesian assembly has 57 seats, of which 18 are elected by the populations of the outer islands. Since 17 of these 18 seats are held by Floss's party, Chirac and his Overseas Territories Minister didn't think it necessary to ask the populations of these islands who they wanted to lead the country!

So Tahiti and Moorea voted on Sunday 13 February for their 39 representatives. The particularity of the electoral system is that the party with the most votes automatically takes one third (13) of the seats. The rest of the seats are distributed proportionally.

(This bonus system was invented by Floss and voted in without consultation in January 2004. It was supposed to ensure political stability, that is, the continued dominance of Floss's party. However, both last May and in these recent elections this bonus system has backfired against him.)

While waiting for a leader to emerge from the political negotiations, Tahiti is calm. (Though hundreds of 'gendarmes', flown in from France, are on stand-by to control any tensions that might arise.) After some delays Floss has since resigned, promising to do so if he lost Sunday's elections. Yet there is not the feeling of elation and freedom that was present in the air and on people's faces after Temaru's win last May.

French Polynesia is waiting for a new leader.

Spilt Milk?

The new year has seen the dairy industry start to take out paid television advertisements promoting the value of the dairy industry to New Zealanders. When something like this starts happening, we need to ask why. What is going on below the surface when one of the "most successful" industries of New Zealand feels that it has to promote itself in such a way?

The business pages of the major dailies are always full of news about the dairy industry and Fonterra. You cannot talk about one without the other. Fonterra, a legislated monopoly cooperative dairy product company, is one of the biggest companies in New Zealand. Its political power and influence is second to none within Government. It gives us the New Zealand version of the old American saying that if General Motors sneezes the US economy will catch a cold. In New Zealand's case if Fonterra sneezes then we may develop pleurisy.

Past issues of struggle have commented on the formation of Fonterra. This article analyses the future direction that Fonterra might take and what effect that will have on the New Zealand economy and working people.

Fonterra continues to be in the news as one of the chief advocates of free trade agreements with any and every country possible. Fonterra has the view that the freer trade in international dairy commodities is, the greater the amount of dairy produce that can be sold on the world market and the higher the price that its shareholder farmers will receive for their product.

This scenario ignores a number of other factors.

First, the focus of Fonterra seems to be on being the biggest possible commodity exporter of minimally processed dairy product (mainly milk powder). This means that there is very little attention on further added value processing that could create more wealth and provide more well paid jobs in New Zealand. And commodity exporting is acknowledged to be a highly volatile industry.

Second, as the goal continues to be the

production of more and more milk, the dairy industry is becoming less and less sustainable. Already more and more land is being turned over to dairying. Some of this land is completely unsuitable in the long term for dairying. It is a very similar scenario to that of the sheep and wool industry in the 1960s and 1970s where over stocking on the wrong land cause major environmental problems such as erosion and over fertilisation. Today many regional councils and even the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment are producing reports warning of the increasing environmental problems of run-off and water-table reduction as a result of the growing intensity of dairying.

Third, in the brave new world of free trade, New Zealand workers, as consumers, are required to pay the world price for dairy products. This means if world demand exceeds supply and the world price for dairy products goes up, New Zealand workers also have to pay more to buy local dairy products. So this means that the better Fonterra and New Zealand dairy farmers do, the worse off New Zealand workers and consumers will be. This is completely at odds to the situation of a couple of decades ago where prices for many dairy products were fixed in New Zealand. That meant that as world prices went up, dairy farmers would benefit but the rest of the country would not be any worse off. Canada continued a version of this system until quite recently. However it was taken to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Disputes Tribunal and required to stop this practice. The main country that took Canada to the disputes tribunal? New Zealand!

Fourth, as Fonterra pushes for more and more free trade agreements it produces two sets of casualties. First, if New Zealand gains better access for dairy products through a free trade agreement then there is always something that New Zealand has to give in return. For countries with lower wage costs than us, they demand greater access for manufactured goods such as clothing and footwear. So jobs are lost in these industries in New Zealand but not replaced in the dairy sector as Fonterra

has little interest in value added processing. For countries with higher wage costs than us, they demand access for trade in services and push for the privatisation of health, education and welfare services so these can be bought up by their transnational capitalists.

The other set of losers are the dairy farmers in both the rich and poor countries that New Zealand trades with. Some of the strongest opponents to the NZ Thailand Free Trade Agreement were Thai dairy farmers. These dairy farmers had been helped to establish by New Zealand aid money over the last thirty years. Now they will be put out of business by a cheaper New Zealand dairy products under the Free Trade Agreement.

Fonterra is dealing with the problem of being a commodity exporter by trying to control more and more of the world's dairy production. It has bought up a number of dairy companies in other countries, especially in South America and is currently trying to buy up the major dairy company in Australia. There is a major contradiction here. Fonterra was allowed to establish in New Zealand as a monopoly against the rules of the Commerce Commission because it was owned by farmers as a cooperative. However, Fonterra now seeks to destroy dairy farmer cooperatives in other countries in order to gain greater control of the world dairy production.

Fonterra is also undertaking joint ventures with the Dutch based multinational company Nestle. However although Fonterra is a huge company in New Zealand terms it is dwarfed by Nestle who will be the more powerful partner by far in any joint venture arrangement.

The future of Fonterra and dairy farming in New Zealand is, however, of even greater concern. The more successful that Fonterra becomes, the more danger there is of it being dismantled as a cooperative and established as a share equity company. This is what the National Government forced on other producer cooperatives in the 1990s. However, even if this is not forced by a future Government, the logic of the
continues on next page...

US Designs on Iraqi Wheat

Iraq is part of the 'fertile crescent' of Mesopotamia. It is here, in around 8,500 to 8,000BC, that humans first domesticated wheat. In recent years however, the birthplace of farming has been in trouble. According to the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) the result of deprivation 'during the embargo years' combined with three years of drought caused wheat production tumbled from 1,236,000 tons in 1995 to just 384,000 tons in 2000.

Despite its recent troubles, Iraqi agriculture's long history means that for the last 10,000 years Iraqi farmers have been naturally selecting wheat varieties that work best with their climate. Each year they have saved seeds from crops that prosper under certain conditions and replanted and cross-pollinated them with others with different strengths the following year, so that the crop continually improved. In 2002, the FAO estimated that 97 per cent of Iraqi farmers used their own saved seed or bought seed from local markets. Long before Abu Ghraib became the world's most infamous prison, it was known for housing not inmates, but seeds. In the early 1970s samples of the many varieties used by Iraqi farmers were starting to be saved in the country's national gene bank, situated in the town of Abu Ghraib. Indeed one of

Iraq's most well known indigenous wheat varieties is called 'Abu Ghraib'. Unfortunately, this vital heritage and knowledge base is now believed lost, the victim of the current campaign and the many years of conflict that preceded it. But there is another viable source. At the International Centre for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas (ICARDA) in Syria there are still samples of several Iraqi varieties. As a revealing report by Focus on the Global South and GRAIN comments: 'These comprise the agricultural heritage of Iraq belonging to the Iraqi farmers that ought now to be repatriated.'

If Iraq's new administration truly wanted to re-establish Iraqi agriculture for the benefit of the Iraqi people it would seek out the fruits of their knowledge. It could scour the country for successful farms, and if it miraculously found none could bring over the seeds from ICARDA and use those as the basis of a programme designed to give Iraq back the agriculture it once gave the world. The US, however, has decided that, despite 10,000 years practice, Iraqis don't know what wheat works best in their own conditions, and would be better off with some new, imported American varieties.

First, it is re-educating the farmers. There are now 800 acres of demonstration plots all across Iraq, teaching Iraqi

farmers how to grow 'high-yield seed varieties' of crops that include barley, chick peas, lentils – and wheat.

Out will go traditional methods. In will come imported American seeds (more than likely GM, as Texas A&M's Agriculture Program, which is leading the project, considers itself 'a recognised world leader in using biotechnology'). And with the new seeds will come new chemicals – pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, all sold to the Iraqis by corporations such as Monsanto, Cargill and Dow.

Another firm, called the World Wide Wheat Company, in partnership with three universities (including Texas A&M again) it is to 'provide 1,000 pounds of wheat seeds to be used by Iraqi farmers north of Baghdad.' WWWC is one of the leaders in developing proprietary varieties of cereal seeds - ie varieties that are owned by a particular company. According to the firm's website, any 'client' (or farmer as they were once known) wishing to grow one of their seeds, 'pays a licensing fee for each variety'.

All of a sudden the donation doesn't sound so altruistic. WWWC gives the Iraqis some seeds. They get taught how to grow them, shown how much 'better' they are than their seeds, and then

SPILT MILK? CONT.

Fonterra strategy in integrating with other companies such as Nestle is that at some stage dairy farmers will be given an offer they can't refuse to convert their cooperative shares into equity shares. For example farmers could find that their Fonterra shares are worth more than their land or dairy herd. Who could resist?

Such a change in ownership, while lining the pockets of the current dairy farmers would be disastrous for future farmers, workers and the economic development of the country as a whole.

Very soon the shares would be bought up by Nestle or one of the other dairy commodity MNCs. The dairy farmer would become a price taker, like the tomato growers for Heinz Watties but on a much grander scale. Billions of dollars would be siphoned out of New Zealand gutting both rural and the national economies.

It can't happen here? Just look Uruguay and Paraguay in South America. Both had the same reliance on dairying as New Zealand. In the 1950s these countries enjoyed similar standards of

living to New Zealand. Now they are third world countries completely dominated by the MNCs.

We must hold Fonterra to account for their current anti-people, anti-environment policies, but we must be even more vigilant to ensure that the scenario painted above does not happen.

Otherwise it will be no use crying over spilt milk.

(contributed)

told that if they want any more, they have to pay.

Another point casts further doubt on American intentions, 'six kinds of wheat seeds were developed for the Iraqi endeavour. Three will be used for farmers to grow wheat that is made into pasta; three seed strains will be for breadmaking.'

There can be only two reasons why 50 per cent of the grains being developed are for pasta (which isn't eaten in Iraq). One, the US intends to have so many American soldiers and businessmen in Iraq that it is orienting the country's agriculture around feeding not 'Starving Iraqis' but 'Overfed Americans'. Or, and more likely, because the food was never meant to be eaten inside Iraq at all.

Iraqi farmers are to be taught to grow crops for export. Then they can spend the money they earn (after they have paid for next year's seeds and chemicals) buying food to feed their family. Under the guise of aid, the US has incorporated them into the global economy.

What the US is now doing in Iraq has a very significant precedent. The Green Revolution of the 1950s and 60s was to be the new dawn for farmers in the developing world. Just as now in Iraq, Western scientists and corporations arrived clutching new 'wonder crops', promising peasant farmers that if they planted these new seeds they would soon be rich.

Worldwide, thousands of traditional varieties developed over millennia were forsaken in favour of a few new hybrids, all owned by even fewer giant multinationals.

Overall, the FAO estimates that about 75 per cent of genetic diversity in agricultural crops was lost in the last century. The impact on small farmers worldwide has been devastating. Demanding large sums of capital and high inputs of chemicals, such farming massively favours large scale, industrial farmers. The many millions of dispossessed people in Asia and elsewhere is in large part a result of this inequity. They can't afford to farm anymore, are driven off their land, either into their cities' slums or across the seas to come knocking at the doors of those who once offered them a poisoned chalice of false hope.

When Paul Bremer departed Iraq in June 2004 he left behind a legacy of

100 'Orders' for the restructuring of the Iraqi legal system. The most significant part of Order 81 is a new chapter that it inserts on 'Plant Variety Protection' (PVP). This concerns itself not with the protection of biodiversity, but rather with the protection of the commercial interests of large seed corporations.

To qualify for PVP, seeds have to be 'new, distinct, uniform and stable'. Under the new regulations imposed by Order 81, therefore, the sort of seeds Iraqi farmers are now being encouraged to grow by corporations such as WWWC will be those registered under PVP. On the other hand, it is impossible for the seeds developed by the people of Iraq to meet these criteria. Their seeds are not 'new' as they are the product of millennia of development. Nor are they 'distinct'. The free exchange of seeds practiced for centuries ensures that characteristics are spread and shared across local varieties. And they are the opposite of 'uniform' and 'stable' by the very nature of their biodiversity. They cross-pollinate with other nearby varieties, ensuring they are always changing and always adapting.

Cross-pollination is an important issue for another reason. In recent years several farmers have been taken to court for illegally growing a corporation's GM seeds. The farmers have argued they were doing so unknowingly, that the seeds must have carried on the wind from a neighbouring farm, for example. They have still been taken to court. This will now apply in Iraq. Under the new rules, if a farmer's seed can be shown to have been contaminated with one of the PVP registered seeds, he could be fined. He may have been saving his seed for years, maybe even generations, but if it mixes with a seed owned by a

corporation and maybe creates a new hybrid, he may face a day in court.

Remember that 97 per cent of Iraqi farmers save their seeds. Order 81 also puts paid to that. A new line has been added to the law which reads: 'Farmers shall be prohibited from re-using seeds of protected varieties or any variety mentioned in items 1 and 2 of paragraph (C) of Article 14 of this Chapter.' The other varieties referred to are those that show similar characteristics to the PVP varieties. If a corporation develops a variety resistant to a particular Iraqi pest, and somewhere in Iraq a farmer is growing another variety that does the same, it's now illegal for him/her to save that seed. It sounds mad, but it's happened before. A few years back a corporation called SunGene patented a sunflower variety with a very high oleic acid content. It didn't just patent the genetic structure though, it patented the characteristic. Subsequently SunGene notified other sunflower breeders that should they develop a variety high in oleic acid with would be considered an infringement of the patent.

So the Iraqi farmer may have been wowed with the promise of a bumper yield at the end of this year. But unlike before he can't save his seed for the next. A 10,000-year old tradition has been replaced at one stroke.

In short, what America has done is not restructure Iraq's agriculture, but dismantle it. The people whose forefathers first mastered the domestication of wheat will now have to pay for the privilege of growing it for someone else. And with that the world's oldest farming heritage will become just another subsidiary link in the vast American supply chain.

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Crisis Follows King's Power Grab

Nepal: Two Futures, Two Roads

by Li Onesto for *Revolutionary Worker*

On February 1, 2005 King Gyanendra in Nepal declared a state of emergency, dissolved the parliament, sacked the prime minister and suspended many constitutional rights, including freedom of the press, speech and expression, peaceful assembly, the right to privacy, and the right against preventive detention. All international flights to and from Kathmandu were halted and telephone lines and internet services were blocked.

With the king's televised declaration, armored military vehicles began patrolling the streets of the capital city of Kathmandu and soldiers immediately started arresting people and instituting a sweeping clampdown. Soldiers surrounded the houses of Prime Minister Deuba, putting him under house arrest. Other leaders of two of the main parliamentary parties, the Nepali Congress and the Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist-Leninist), were detained in their homes or arrested—and security forces were stationed in front of government buildings, post offices, telecommunications centers and the state bank. To prevent organized protests, trade union and student leaders were also arrested. Reliable news is hard to get from Nepal because of intense censorship, but there are reports that in the days after the king's announcement, as many as 1,000 people were arrested.

This is a desperate move by the king, who has been unable to crush the Maoist People's War led by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist). February 13, 2005 marks the ninth anniversary of the start of the insurgency and the Maoist guerrillas now

control 80% of the countryside.

The World to Win News Service pointed out: "With his attack on parliament, Gyanendra is trying to win a certain populist appeal by pointing to the corruption among those parties—as if he himself were not involved in all sorts of corrupt activities and killing. It has become apparent to one and all that society has become polarized between the Maoists and a monarchy based on little more than the Royal Army. With the king's 'self coup,' the country has entered what Prachanda [head of the CPN (Maoist)] called 'a turning point, a decisive battle between autocracy and republic.' "

The day after his declaration Gyanendra announced a new 10-member Cabinet made up of his supporters. The king's new foreign minister said there would be no new elections until the Maoist rebellion was ended and predicted it could take three years before multi-party democracy could be reintroduced.

The current king, Gyanendra, people may remember, came to power in June 2001 after a palace massacre in which his brother king Birendra, the queen and eight other members of the royal family were murdered. Many people think Gyanendra was behind this massacre and upon coming to power he sent the Royal Nepal Army against the guerrillas for the first time.

By the end of that year Gyanendra had declared a state of emergency, suspended constitutional rights, and unleashed a bloody campaign against the guerrillas in which thousands of people were killed. He has been backed by India, the United States and the UK which have

all provided political, financial and military support. The U.S. Congress gave the king \$22 million, thousands of M16s, and has sent U.S. military personnel to train the Nepalese Army. Nepal has been without a working parliament for over two years. At the end of 2002 Gyanendra grabbed complete power, disbanded the parliament, and appointed his own prime minister. Later, in 2004 he was forced to give some power back to the parliamentary forces. But he has now grabbed complete power once again.

It was reported that only hours after the King's speech, in the western town of Pokhara, stone-throwing students clashed with the police, driving them away from the campus twice over the course of several hours. At least 15 people were injured when the police fired on the protest, and many were also beaten when the police dispersed the crowd. Nepal's national human rights commission also reported that the same night the army raided a student hostel and at least 250 students were detained.

The paramilitary police immediately began enforcing the king's ban on public gatherings. A few days after the king's declaration they raided a meeting of about 50 members of the Nepali Congress Party, arresting all those who couldn't escape. Nepalese and international reporters and photographers — including a team from The Associated Press and Associated Press Television News — who were covering the meeting were briefly detained and had their digital camera disks and videotapes confiscated.

Government security teams launched sudden inspections of the Passport

Department, Land Revenue Department, Kathmandu District Administration Office and Transport Management Office. And the king issued an order prohibiting government employees from setting up any kind of organizations having political affiliation. Any such organizations that already existed have been ordered to stop all activities "that affect the sovereignty, integrity or peace and security of the Kingdom of Nepal." The order also authorized the seizure of private property.

REVOLUTIONARY RESPONSE

The Maoists have called for an indefinite blockade and traffic strike throughout the country starting on February 13, the ninth anniversary of the start of the People's War and a spokesman for the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) ruled out any possibility of talks with the king. As we go to press, the news on February 13 has reported that the Maoists have begun a successful blockade of traffic across the country.

According to sources from inside Nepal, even though the phone lines and internet were cut off, the revolutionary forces were able to keep in contact with each other. Five radio stations, from the People's Republic of Nepal Radio—have continued to transmit daily programs. The pro-Maoist newspapers have managed to keep publishing regularly through many different means. And there are reports of successful attacks by PLA fighters against RNA soldiers.

TV stations in Nepal reported that on February 9, the Maoists attacked a district jail in Kailali, near Kathmandu, killing five security personnel and freeing 166 prisoners, including many imprisoned Maoists. It was reported that the guerrillas, armed with crude bombs, broke open the prison gates after a 90-minute firefight with the security personnel.

Responding to the king's actions, the CPN (Maoist) issued a statement saying, "The feudal aristocracy is responsible for the grievous situation of the country and the people, and the time has come to throw it into the dustbin of history. Through the class struggle of 1990 and nine years of People's War the Nepalese masses have shown beyond a doubt that they can fulfill their historic task of establishing a republic... Our Party forcefully appeals to all the country's political parties, the intellectual masses, civil society and the masses of all levels and beliefs to create a storm of united



countrywide rebellion, under the minimum commonslogan of a people's democratic republic and a constituent assembly, against this last lunacy of the feudal clique."

Prachanda, the head of the CPN (Maoist) has urged "pro-people forces of the world" to oppose Gyanendra's power grab and called for "the political forces, civil society, the intellectual community, journalists and all levels and sections of the people to store supplies necessary for daily consumption and support our movement by all means to make it successful." The regime then announced that anyone buying extra food and fuel would be arrested.

The CPN (Maoist) has warned that the advance of the people's power toward the seizure of political power countrywide heightens the danger of Indian expansionist and imperialist intervention. And Prachanda's February 1 statement appealed to "the entire pro-people forces of the world to raise their voices against this autocratic step and in favor of the Nepalese people's democratic movement."

MILITARY OFFENSIVE AGAINST THE MAOISTS

The moves by the king in Kathmandu are targeting the parliamentary parties and any others who oppose the monarchy. But these drastic measures are first and foremost aimed at the Maoist guerrillas who are increasingly in a position to seize power. This became immediately clear when the king announced that with the state of emergency, his army is launching a new and increased offensive against the Maoists. On

February 8, Reuters news agency reported that RNA troops backed by helicopters launched attacks on Maoist camps in the west and that dozens of Maoists had been killed near the western city of Nepalgunj.

For years now — even with the U.S., UK and India providing millions of dollars, helicopters, automatic weapons, advice and training—the RNA has been unable to defeat the Maoists. Until 2001, Royal Nepal Army soldiers numbered only 45,000. This number has since almost doubled to around 85,000, but has still not been able to militarily beat back the People's Liberation Army in any real significant way. Most analysts following developments in Nepal, including U.S. bourgeois think tanks, say "there can be no military solution to the crisis in Nepal"— conceding that the RNA by itself (without any kind of outside intervention) cannot militarily defeat the Maoists.

The strife and intractable divisions within the Nepalese ruling class have been centered on this problem, including over whether and how to negotiate with the Maoists. There have already been two ceasefire periods of negotiations between the government and the CPN (Maoist). But the Maoists' strategy is not one of achieving military gains aimed at getting a seat at the parliamentary table. They are carrying out a protracted People's War aimed at seizing power and establishing a new socialist government. And a new revolutionary government has already been established in vast areas of the countryside where the Maoists have control.

The RNA basically acknowledges that at this point it cannot win on the battleground and are now saying they expect a long and bloody warfare against the Maoists, aimed at forcing them to the negotiating table.

Gyanendra says the first priority of his new government is "peace with the Maoists." But what does he mean by this? Speaking to Reuters, a member of the king's new cabinet, referring to the Maoists, said, "Will they come to talks or not? If they do, we can move forward in a certain way. And if they don't, we have to make another choice."

The king may hope that by unleashing an even more brutal military campaign against the Maoists, he can perhaps "divide and conquer" the insurgency. Army spokesman Gurung stated, "We have to force the Maoists to come to the negotiating table, we are looking for them. Wherever they are we are going to launch offensive operations. We have to make them weak. Once their military capabilities go down, their political faction will gain the upper hand and hopefully they'll come to the negotiating table."

But this is a big gamble by the king that could backfire.

The Indian Express newspaper commented, "Clearly, King Gyanendra has calculated when it comes to a choice between the monarchy and Maoists, India and the international community would have no option but to side with him." But the U.S., UK and India have been very concerned about the deep splits within the Nepalese ruling class and have been trying to get the king and the parliamentary parties to work together in order to form a stronger more united front against the Maoists. Now the king is only deepening the deep chasm that has existed within Nepal's ruling class.

One worried analyst from New Delhi said of Gyanendra's move, "This is a fairly disastrous decision, the worst possible option" that will alienate the king from all of the nation's major political forces even as it does nothing to strengthen his hand against the rebels.

The parliamentary forces in Nepal are also worried that the king's seizure of total power will only end up strengthening the Maoists. A leader of the Nepali Congress said, "If the king fails, it will strengthen the Maoists, which are already a dangerous force. If he fails, it



could cost his crown because the real power will go to them. If he succeeds, this will enhance the role of the king in favor of a stronger monarchy. With that, multiparty democracy will be weakened."

IMPERIALIST RESPONSE AND CONCERN

The U.S. and India have been providing the Nepalese government with political, financial and military support to fight the Maoists. Neither of them, as of this writing, have retracted any of this support or in the past really condemned the fact that Nepal has basically been a monarchy—without elections or any semblance of a democratic parliament since the end of 2002. It is unclear what role the U.S., UK, or India may have had in the king's decision to make such a drastic move. The U.S. and India have been very involved in arming, training, and advising the RNA, and some argue it is unlikely the king would and could have made a move like this without the knowledge and/or support of the U.S. and India. But now the U.S., UK and India are all publicly condemning the king's "undemocratic" moves—reflecting real concern that the escalating crisis could lead to further and perhaps decisive gains by the Maoists.

Britain summoned the Nepali ambassador in London to convey its concern. And Nepal's ambassador to India, who said he was in regular contact with New Delhi to explain the new government's views, said, "The government of India is very concerned about the growing nexus between the (Nepalese) Maoists and the Maoists in India" and that New Delhi has a vital stake in helping quell the revolt as it is worried Maoist violence could spill into parts of India where radical leftist groups are powerful.

A statement from India's Ministry of

External Affairs said, "The latest developments in Nepal bring the monarchy and the mainstream political parties in direct confrontation with each other. This can only benefit the forces that not only wish to undermine democracy but the institution of monarchy as well."

The New York Times quoted C. Raja Mohan, professor of South Asian studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi, who pointed out that Nepal shares a border with China and borders three of India's largest states, all of which are battling Marxist Naxalite insurgents, who have links to the Maoists. "Strategically," Mohan said, "you can't get any bigger than this."

U.S. State Department spokesman Richard A. Boucher said the Bush administration was "deeply troubled by the apparent step back from democracy" and demanded an "immediate move toward the restoration of multiparty democratic institutions." He said Gyanendra's actions "undermine the Nepalis' struggle with the Maoist insurgency, which is a very serious challenge to a peaceful and prosperous future for Nepal."

U.S. officials have acknowledged that RNA soldiers are carrying out human rights abuses but have justified U.S. aid on the grounds that without it, the Maoists might win and Nepal could join the roster of "failed states hospitable to terrorists." The CPN (Maoist) has been put on the U.S.'s official "terrorist list"—even though it is clear the Maoists in Nepal have nothing whatsoever in common with "terrorist" politics, tactics and strategy. And the U.S. has made it clear that the Maoists cannot be allowed to come to power in Nepal—that this kind of "regime change" is against the interests of U.S. imperialism.

The situation continues to intensify in Nepal, with two futures posing themselves very sharply—on the one side, the brutal monarchy and a whole oppressive and corrupt system; and on the other side, the People's War which is struggling to liberate Nepal from the grip of foreign domination and establish a new revolutionary government. This situation places a great demand on all progressive people of the world—to oppose the murderous moves by the King, expose the role of the U.S. in backing the efforts of the Nepalese ruling class to crush the insurgency, and protest any further intervention by the U.S., UK, India, or any other power, aimed against the People's War.

The Witch Hunt Against Ward Churchill

"We're a tolerant society here, but some things cannot be tolerated."

*Bill O'Reilly, Fox News discussing University of Colorado professor Ward Churchill
February 11, 2005*

An intense battle is being fought out right now [in the United States] over whether anyone will be allowed to express ideas that challenge the U.S. empire, its operations, its motives and its official history.

With growing insistence, rightwing "cultural warriors" have demanded that college campuses be purged. And now this whole campaign has been kicked onto the national political stage. Fox News is on the case, and two Republican governors have demanded that radical professors be fired.

The focus of this moment has been Ward Churchill, a long-time political activist and author. Churchill is a professor at University of Colorado (UC) and head of the Ethnic Studies Department there. He is a Native American who has worked closely with the Colorado American Indian Movement and the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee. He has written, edited and co-authored many books, including *Agents of Repression: The FBI's Secret Wars Against the Black Panther Party and the American Indian Movement* and *A Little Matter of Genocide: Holocaust and Denial in the Americas: 1492 to Present*.

Last fall, Churchill accepted an invitation to speak at Hamilton College in upstate New York on February 2, 2005. The topic was prisons and Native American rights. The sponsor was Hamilton's Kirkland Project for the Study of Gender, Society, and Culture and their "Class in Context" speakers series.

Churchill combines his scholarly knowledge with a radical perspective and an often shocking style of delivery. And for exactly those reasons, he has been in demand, speaking at dozens of colleges over the last few years. His professional

focus is exposing the genocide and current oppression of Native American peoples.

This time, however, a highly organized ideological and political assault broke out—demanding that he be prevented from speaking. In the method of all witch hunts, the target quickly widened, surrounded by rumors and crude distortion: Who invited him and why? Who in high places has allowed such things to go on? What other professors, on other campuses, share his radical views?

Active in the attack on Ward Churchill from the beginning was David Horowitz, the notorious intellectual hitman for the right wing—who has formed a network of campus brown-shirts (perversely called "Students for Academic Freedom") to target progressive professors, disrupt their classes, record their remarks, and use the conservative mass media to brand them as "America haters".

This campaign is aimed at every prominent academic voice who criticizes the U.S. system and policies. And it is aimed at the very idea of academic ferment and dissent, which is despised by the rightwing forces as an incubator of critical thinking, radicalism, and challenges to the status quo in every sphere of intellectual endeavour and society.

The stakes here are extremely high. And this is not yet well understood by many forces who need to be intensely engaged in this battle.

UP AGAINST THE WITCH HUNT

"We need to train our students to listen, think critically and speak up at these hard questions. We don't need to protect them from things that they might disagree with."

*Nancy Rabinowitz, Kirkland Project Director
TV News 10, Syracuse, New York,
January 26*

"You have the right to free speech, As long as you're not dumb enough to actually try it."

The Clash, in the song "Know Your Rights"

Professor Nancy Rabinowitz was already on the rightwing watch-list when she invited Ward Churchill to Hamilton College. In 2004, her Kirkland Project invited Susan Rosenberg to teach a one-month course on writing memoirs. Rosenberg is a former political prisoner who served time for supporting the activities of the Weather underground. Rightwing forces screamed bloody murder over this appointment, and Susan Rosenberg backed out.

Then, on December 14, 2004, the Kirkland Project announced that their speakers for 2005 included Professor Churchill. And immediately a self-appointed rightwing attack group on campus dug into his background and writings.

Their attention focussed on an essay Churchill wrote after 9/11, called "Some People Push Back—On the Justice of Roosting Chickens." In that essay, Churchill argues that the attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center could not be separated from what the U.S. had been doing in the world. In particular, he talks about the horrors of the U.S.-enforced embargo against Iraq that caused the death of 500,000 children. In a now-famous passage, Churchill likens many who died in 9/11 to the "good Germans" who kept silent in Nazi times. He argues that many formed "a technocratic corps at the very heart of America's global financial empire—the 'mighty engine of profit' to which the military dimension of U.S. policy has always been enslaved—and they did so both willingly and knowingly. Recourse to 'ignorance'—a derivative, after all, of the word 'ignore'—counts as less than an excuse among this relatively well-educated elite."

And in a now famous passage, Churchill describes these technocrats as "the little Eichmanns inhabiting the sterile sanctuary of the twin towers." (This is a reference to Adolf Eichmann, a

REPORT

leading Nazi responsible for organizing the death camps during World War 2.)

Clutching this three-year-old essay, Theodore Eismeier, a government professor at Hamilton, rushed to threaten the college administration with a public relations scandal. Nancy Rabinowitz said that when the college president came to ask her opinion, Nancy responded, "Let's take a strong stand for freedom of speech." Hamilton College refused to cancel the invitation to Churchill. They decided to have Churchill appear on a broader panel, together with opposing, conservative speakers.

The right wing was furious over this idea of engaging in open debate. Standing reality on its head, Eismeier denounced the panel idea saying: "It seems akin to inviting a representative of the KKK to speak and then asking a member of the NAACP to respond." And public attacks started—first in the local Syracuse newspaper (on January 26), and then on the internet's influential rightwing blog-sites, like "Little Green Footballs" and "Free Republic."

Two days later, Fox News' commentator Bill O'Reilly denounced Hamilton College and labeled Ward Churchill "insane." He called on his listeners to target Hamilton College. A spokeswoman for Hamilton College said, "When the segment stopped, the phone just started ringing." Hamilton was flooded with over 8,000 e-mail messages (many ugly, some supportive). Within days of O'Reilly's rants on Fox, Churchill had received over 100 violent threats.

(O'Reilly's coverage included extended clips of Ward Churchill speaking—which prompted one Hamilton professor to point out that O'Reilly believed Churchill's words shouldn't be heard in reasoned campus discussion, but should be heard in hysterical TV broadcasts.)

In the firestorm that broke out, Ward Churchill, his writings and politics have been taken completely out of context and reduced to a one-liner: "He compared the victims of 9/11 to Nazis." Churchill fought to be understood (Counterpunch.org, February 3):

"I am not a 'defender' of the September 11 attacks, but simply pointing out that if U.S. foreign policy results in massive death and destruction abroad, we cannot feign innocence when some of that

destruction is returned. I have never said that people "should" engage in armed attacks on the United States, but that such attacks are a natural and unavoidable consequence of unlawful U.S. policy. To the extent we shirk this responsibility, we, like the "Good Germans" of the 1930s and '40s, are complicit in its actions and have no legitimate basis for complaint when we suffer the consequences."

But in the roar of the rightwing offensive, and in the absence of organized resistance, such clarifications have rarely been heard. Churchill's views are being portrayed as "pro-terrorist hate speech" and then declared outside the bounds of legitimate public debate. The argument has been, quite simply, that someone (anyone!) who had ever written such things should never again be allowed to speak on any subject—not even in the context of an open debate of opposing views.

The broader mass media "picked up this story"—meaning: they adopted and broadcast (almost word for word) all the distortions, overheated outrage and fascistic demands emerging from the rabid rightwing forces.

And it must be said, unfortunately, there was not the necessary timely counter-offensive by progressive forces—to defend those under attack, to defend the right of professors generally to hold radical views, to defend the right of students to judge different political analyses for themselves, to counter the incredible allegations being spread, and to expose the crude fascist agenda behind this campaign!

Public Persecution for Open Discussion
What followed was the painful public breaking of Hamilton College and its resolve.

At first, college president Joan Hinde Stewart tried to take a clear and principled stand in favor of free speech and academic freedom.

On January 26, she wrote: "Hamilton, like any institution committed to the free exchange of ideas, invites to its campus people of diverse opinions, often controversial. The opportunity to encounter and respond to people from outside the college community in their intensity and their immediacy is among the key attributes of a liberal education. The views of speakers are their own. We expect, as a matter of civil discourse,

that the members of this academic community, as well as visitors, respect the dignity of reasoned and principled debate. It is in this setting that the substance and credibility of a speaker's views are established as being worthy of support, or not. We expect that many of those who strongly disagree with Mr. Churchill's comments will attend his talk and make their views known. This is the process of both academic freedom and freedom of speech."

On January 30, as the full force of the rightwing campaign hit, President Stewart wrote: "There have been calls for me to rescind the Kirkland Project's invitation to Ward Churchill and cancel the event. But there is a principle at stake, for once the invitation was extended by the Kirkland Project and accepted by Ward Churchill, it became a matter of free speech.. On Thursday [when the panel discussion was to take place] we will have the chance to demonstrate the power of democracy."

What followed demonstrated that the so-called democracy in the U.S. is based on a dictatorship—that is more and more rearing its ugly head in academic and intellectual life.

On January 31, George Pataki, governor of New York State publicly denounced Hamilton College for inviting Ward Churchill. In fluent double-speak, he said: "There is a difference between freedom of speech and inviting a bigoted terrorist supporter."

On February 1, President Stewart announced that Churchill would not be allowed to speak. Stewart said Hamilton College had tried to "protect what we hold most dear, the right to speak, think and study freely" but that the threat of physical attack made this impossible. Churchill had privately said that he would be willing to risk his life to go through with the discussion.

Even cancellation was not enough to satisfy the raging reactionaries. And attacks piled in from many sides on Professor Rabinowitz.

For example, on February 3, a classic smear—in the manner of infamous communist hunters J. Edgar Hoover and Senator Joseph McCarthy—appeared on Horowitz's Frontpage website. In a long rambling dossier-like piece, Frontpage writer Thomas Ryan attacked Hamilton's Professor Nancy Rabinowitz—documenting that her

father-in-law Victor Rabinowitz had been accused of being a communist (during the early 1960s witch hunts conducted by U.S. Congressional committees!) and connecting him with the National Lawyers Guild and the Center for Constitutional Rights. Ryan wrote that Victor Rabinowitz had served as defense lawyer for Kathy Boudin, a member of the Weather Underground.

In other words, the basic charge here is that Nancy Rabinowitz is related to Victor Rabinowitz, a lawyer who is charged with defending his clients!—i.e., accused of representing “radical individuals and groups seeking to destroy the U.S. Constitution.”

On February 5, David Horowitz denounced Nancy Rabinowitz on his personal blog for supposedly creating a “Terrorist Nexus at Hamilton College.”

On February 11, it was announced that Nancy Rabinowitz had been forced out of her position as head of the Kirkland Project.

It was not enough that Churchill should be dis-invited. Those who invited him had to be publicly humiliated. A college had to betray its own belief in open debate.

Nancy Rabinowitz asked a good question: “How many people can stomach what we’ve been through?”

THE STORM IN COLORADO

Day by day, a parallel campaign raged in Colorado. Colorado Republicans took time out from their permanent assault on gay marriage to focus on Ward Churchill and the suspect political climate in the state’s university towns.

Bill Owens, Governor of Colorado, went on the O’Reilly Factor and called on the University of Colorado’s Board of Regents to fire Professor Churchill. Owens said, “I’ve called for him to actually be terminated, because of his words and his actions, which I think are inconsistent with what we stand for in Colorado and at the University of Colorado.”

It is worth taking a second to think about what he is saying: Quite simply, it is that someone should not be allowed to teach at a college in Colorado unless they conform to the highly conservative governor’s political standards of “what we stand for.” Apparently he thinks he is the dictator of what the state’s college

professors are allowed to think or say. This is the kind of “academic freedom” that the Horowitzians are calling for and, if such views carry the day, the impact on political and intellectual life would be chilling.

Republicans in the Colorado House of Representatives introduced a resolution denouncing Churchill.

Bowing to this political pressure, university authorities set to work concocting some way to punish Churchill.

First he was stripped of his department post: On February 2 (the same day that Hamilton College cancelled the panel event) Ward Churchill resigned as head of the Ethnic Studies Department at University of Colorado.

At the same time, Ward Churchill is a tenured professor—which means that he cannot be fired unless he has committed major violations of ethics (like scholarly fraud).

The American Association of University Professors weighed in (“Statement on Professor Ward Churchill Controversy,” February 2): “Freedom of faculty members to express views, however unpopular or distasteful, is an essential condition of an institution of higher learning that is truly free. We deplore threats of violence heaped upon Professor Churchill, and we reject the notion that some viewpoints are so offensive or disturbing that the academic community should not allow them to be heard and debated. Also reprehensible are inflammatory statements by public officials that interfere in the decisions of the academic community.”

Meanwhile, the chancellor at UC initiated a 30-day investigation into Churchill’s writings and statements supposedly looking for firing offenses, saying Churchill “may have overstepped his bounds.”

Enter stage right: A certain Thomas Brown, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Lamar University in Beaumont, Texas, popped up on cue. On Horowitz’s Frontpage website, Brown published a long polemic challenging some details in the way Ward Churchill once (ten years ago in a legal document) described the use of “small pox blankets” to kill Indians. Brown writes. “Churchill’s tale of genocide by means of biological warfare is shocking. It is also entirely fraudulent.”

This is a set-up for a political firing: the plan is to accuse Churchill of fraud, while really targeting him for his politics. A number of scholars quickly rose to his defense.

Prof. Arturo Aldama, who works with Churchill at CU, told the press: “He’s impeccable on his sources and known for his empirical and archival-based methodologies.”

Noam Chomsky, MIT professor of linguistics and prominent researcher into U.S. imperialism, said: “I’ve read a fair amount of his work, and a lot of it is excellent, penetrating and of high scholarly quality.”

Meanwhile, the University of Colorado tried to suppress a campus rally in Churchill’s defense. On the morning of February 8 they announced that the event planned for that evening was canceled—citing “security concerns.” Students threatened a court suit, and the administration backed down. (Apparently: no real security danger, huh?)

That evening over a thousand people crowded in to hear Ward Churchill speak, and over 250 stood outside trying to get in. As the audience cheered, colleagues and students spoke movingly in Churchill’s defense, and Churchill declared fiercely that he had no intention of retreating from his justified criticisms of U.S. atrocities around the world.

Later, O’Reilly sneered on the air that Churchill had created a “cult of personality” on campus—and that it only showed how dangerous it was to allow students to hear radical views.

Meanwhile at the University of Wisconsin at Whitewater, the school administration has courageously insisted that they will not cancel plans to have Ward Churchill speak on March 1. And, in a pattern that is both chilling and now typical, members of the Wisconsin legislature have announced that they would take steps to prevent Churchill from speaking in their state.

This is where things now stand—as this sharp struggle continues.

NDFP Answers False Claims Against the Revolutionary Movement

Ruth de Leon
Executive Director
International Information Office
National Democratic Front of the Philippines
(NDFP)
January 21, 2005

In the course of its thirty-six years of struggle for national and social liberation, the Philippine revolutionary movement has fought for the fundamental national and democratic rights and interests of the Filipino people. Thus its programs for land reform, health, education, and culture are meant to respond to the demands and aspirations of the peasants, workers and other sections of the people.

We are convinced that the unjust social order, the corrupt and rotten semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system, inflicts the most intolerable exploitation and oppression on the people. Furthermore, US imperialism and the local exploiting classes of big compradors and landlords subject the people to the daily violence of exploitation and the use of its military, police and paramilitary forces to violently suppress the people's just struggle against this unjust social order. Therefore, the revolutionary movement fights to overthrow this unjust social order and to achieve genuine independence, social justice, democracy and peace.

As it grows in strength, the revolutionary movement is subjected to all kinds of attacks against its integrity. Relying on the support of the people in their millions and confident that the truth will prevail against false claims, we present the stand of the revolutionary movement regarding various claims that have been raised against it recently. Since we wish to present our responses concisely, we refer all interested persons to feel free to visit our websites for further information: www.philippinerevolution.org and <http://home.wanadoo.nl/ndf>

CLAIM: The revolutionary movement maintains a "hit list" of its political and ideological adversaries.

ANSWER: The revolutionary movement does not maintain a "hit list". This is an immediately slanted way to ridicule the revolutionary movement. Political and ideological adversaries are engaged by the revolutionary movement on the level of debate and struggle of ideas. They are not subject to criminal proceedings for their ideas. Persons charged with criminal offenses are

guaranteed due process under the revolutionary movement's legal and judicial system.

The people's courts are created by the revolutionary government at different levels and consist of a panel of at least three judges. Persons charged with criminal offenses before a people's court are presumed innocent until proven guilty, and have the right to be informed of the charges filed, the right to counsel, and the right to appeal, among other rights.

CLAIM: Those who drop out from the revolutionary movement and become ideological and political adversaries of the movement are targeted for killing.

ANSWER: Individuals voluntarily join the revolutionary movement and voluntarily participate in revolutionary struggle — utilizing their knowledge and skills, facing the hardships and sacrifices of revolutionary struggle, and laying down their very lives for the advancement of the national democratic aspirations of the people — for as long as they are willing and able. Individuals can voluntarily leave the revolutionary movement when they wish to.

Leaving the Communist Party of the Philippines, the New People's Army, or any of the revolutionary mass organizations is not a crime. The constitutions of these organizations guarantee the right to voluntarily join and the right of every member to resign.

Persons claiming they were formerly active members of the revolutionary organizations or the CPP are proof to refute the claim that those who drop out from the revolutionary movement are targeted for killing.

CLAIM: Revolutionary taxation is extortion.

ANSWER: The revolutionary movement is building a new society to replace the present semi-feudal and semi-colonial society characterized by widespread poverty and economic backwardness. The new society that is being built promotes the interests of the overwhelming majority of the Filipino people comprised of the workers, peasants and the middle-classes. In many areas under the control and influence of the revolutionary movement, the democratic organs of people's government are being set up and socioeconomic programs that benefit the people are being carried out.

Revolutionary taxation is a function of the people's government. It is implemented to defray the expenses of the organs of the people's government and to finance the socio-economic programs for the good of the people.

In general, revolutionary taxes are levied on businesses and economic concerns operating in areas under the control and influence of the revolutionary movement. Businesses, however, that cause harm and injury to the people and the country, such as commercial logging for export that causes denudation of the forests are not allowed by the revolutionary movement in areas it controls.

Real extortion consists of the reactionary government's imposition of a heavy tax burden on the people only for the revenues to be stolen by the high bureaucrats, and then denying the people of basic social services. They collect the most taxes from the people through withholding taxes from employees' wages and through sales taxes and the VAT. They condone notorious tax evaders like Lucio Tan. Every year, an estimated 20 percent of the budget of the reactionary government is eaten up by corruption. In 2003 alone, this amounted to PhP 180 billion.

CLAIM: The revolutionary movement is responsible for deforestation because the NPA controls the forests.

ANSWER: The widespread denudation of the forests that has been going on for many decades is caused by the reactionary government's policy of allowing the unbridled plunder of our forest and other resources. The logging companies are licensed by the reactionary government through Timber Licensing Agreements (TLA). They are protected by this government wherever they operate, and bureaucrats and the military collaborate with illegal loggers. Just before the recent calamities, the Macapagal-Arroyo regime granted logging concessions to cronies of Mike Arroyo.

Logging for export — legal or illegal — continue because the reactionary government allows the logs to move through the highways and through the ports.

This full article is available at: <http://www.philippinerevolution.org/cgi-bin/statements/statements.pl?date=050121;author=ndfio;language=eng>

Sino Latin American Rhythm

China and Latin America moves forward cooperation in all fields (from Beijing Review with additional reporting from Struggle)

CHINA ALLIANCES IN SOUTH AMERICA LOOK TO OUTFLANK US IN THE REGION

Chinese President Hu Jintao's recently completed a visit to Latin America where he met and concluded arrangements with leaders in Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Cuba.

The 21st century has been marked by an international situation that has experienced great and fundamental changes, most notably through the revival of unilateralism and power politics and economic globalization. Against this backdrop, developing countries have encountered problems in international relations with their status and role being reduced in many instances. Just like other developing countries worldwide, those in Latin America are seeking to adapt themselves to this new international environment.

LONG-TERM AND STABLE RELATIONSHIP

China began exchanges with Latin America nearly 500 years ago, but these were mainly economic and trade exchanges through nongovernmental channels. Official ties between China and Latin America started relatively late, as only a few countries such as Cuba and Chile had official diplomatic relations with China as of the 1970s, but this advanced rather rapidly after the 1980s.

Currently, China has established diplomatic relations with 20 Latin American countries with their combined land area and GDP both exceeding 95 percent, and population exceeding 90 percent, of Latin America's total.

Political ties between China and Latin America have advanced with the increase in high-level exchanges. Before the recent visit by President Hu, former Chinese President Jiang Zemin visited Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Cuba, Venezuela and Brazil in 2001. Meanwhile, top leaders of Mexico, Venezuela, Cuba, Ecuador, Brazil, Argentina and Chile have also visited China. These visits have vigorously promoted development of Sino-Latin American links at various levels.

Of particular importance have been the blossoming relationships between Hugo Chavez' Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela, Workers' Party President Lula of Brazil and a recommitment of socialist solidarity between the Communist Party of China and the Communist Party of Cuba. China and Venezuela signed agreements regarding oil – both securing a vital resource for China but also assisting Chavez in his goal of protecting the Venezuelan oil industry from overexposure to the US market.

Amid the strengthening of Sino-Latin American political relations, the economic and technological cooperation and trade exchanges between China and Latin America have been greatly improved. Bilateral trade volume reached \$26.81 billion in 2003, nearly 20 percent higher than that in 2002. Meanwhile, trading structure has changed, with the proportion of industrial finished products such as machine tools, heavy machineries, engineering vehicles and aircraft growing notably.

To date, Sino-Latin American economic and technological cooperation has shifted from pure trade to a combination of trade, economic assistance and joint venture and cooperation. China's investment in iron mining in Peru, oil tapping in Venezuela and Ecuador, iron mining and iron and steel manufacturing in Brazil and textile in Mexico is generating remarkable profits. On the other hand, Latin American countries consistently has increased investment in China, with total projects exceeding 9,000 and actual investment topping \$30 billion as of 2002. In 1999 and 2003, two earth resources satellites jointly developed by China and Brazil were successfully put into orbit, an exemplary scientific and technological cooperation project between developing countries.

MUTUAL BENEFITS

China and Latin American countries all belong to the developing camp. Intensified bilateral cooperation is expected to help them cope with challenges on their developing roads, which is beneficial to world peace and development. China is centralizing efforts on its modernization, while Latin American countries have huge development potentials, supplying a historical opportunity for them to strengthen cooperation for mutual benefits.

During his recent visit, President Hu reiterated that China and Latin American countries should build on mutual understanding and political trust, supporting each other politically so as to become all-weather friends.

Leaders of Latin American countries spoke highly of China's position and role in international affairs. They signaled to expand their relations with other Asian countries through deepening their links with China. This will not only raise Latin American countries' status in the international community, including the United Nations and other international organizations, but also bring hopes for their national development on the foundation of the development of economic, trade, scientific and technological cooperation with the rest of the world.

China's international activities have been a source of considerable concern since the death of revolutionary leaders Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai in 1976 and an apparent shift away from proletarian internationalism that accompanied the development of a so-called 'socialist market economy'. This was exemplified by the cover of Beijing Review in that showed PRC President Jiang Zemin and US President Bush declaring one another 'dear friends' and united in the 'war on terror'. There seems to be a decided shift away from seeing a strategic alliance with the US in the interests of China or the world's people.

The changing international situation has given China an unprecedented strategic opportunity for the country to expand its relations with Latin America. As a permanent UN Security Council member and a large developing country, China's principled insistence in maintaining world peace and establishment of new, just and reasonable international, political and economic orders has won high praise from all developing countries, including those in Latin America.

China and Latin America share many common strategic points and they hope to find their respective positions and roles in the international community on the support of each other's influences in seeking a peaceful international environment.

Strive to Unite!

Ka Kohi Te Toe Ka Whai Te Marama Tanga

(through the sharing of knowledge, enlightenment will follow)

Struggle is published quarterly representing the viewpoint of the Organisation for Marxist Unity. Struggle aims to provide a Marxist analysis of class struggle, politics and economy of Aotearoa/New Zealand.

The immediate task is to encourage working people and all possible forces to unite in a Patriotic and Democratic United Front led by the working class to remove the stranglehold of foreign monopoly capitalists and their local agents, by establishing a People's Democratic State System. This stage of the advance to Socialism is determined by the

objectively existing class contradictions, classes and laws of social development. The more comprehensive the competition of this stage, the more favourable will be the situation for the further advance to a socialist society.

Struggle emphasises the necessity of studying the history of class struggle in Aotearoa/New Zealand from the stand-point of the revolutionary working class science of Marxism-Leninism, in which the writing of Mao Zedong have made a major contribution. Struggle works for the building of a Communist Party based on the

ideology of Marxism-Leninism, a party that develops its strategy, tactics and methods corresponding to the needs of the situation in Aotearoa/New Zealand by concrete analysis: a party free from doctrinaire Marxism, sectarianism and the influence of social democracy, a party whose members are committed to serving the people.

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