No to racist state bans on Muslim dress!

hands off Muslim
stop police brutal
Tony Blair crusades!

For women’s liberation through socialist revolution!

No to racist state bans on Muslim dress!

When cabinet minister Jack Straw declared in October that he would prefer Muslim women not to wear the veil that covers the face (the niqab) he opened the floodgates for a torrent of racist bigotry particularly directed against Muslim women. He also unleashed a campaign for banning the niqab in certain areas of public life. This comes in the wake of the ban on the hijab (headscarf) imposed in French schools in 2004 which was followed by similar bans in some German states and now the Netherlands government proposes to ban the niqab in public places.

Straw’s attack on Muslim women comes in the context of an escalation of the racist “war on terror” which seeks to brand Muslims the “enemy within”. Labour ministers are trying to drum up support among the public which is deeply opposed to the occupation of Iraq. There is also much scepticism about government “terrorism” scares, following the 2005 shooting of Jean Charles de Menezes and the police raid in Forest Gate in June 2006 in which Mohammed Abdul Kahar was shot in the chest. He and his brother were arrested although they were totally innocent. Meanwhile despite the massive “security” scare at the airports in August, no evidence whatsoever of a terrorist plot has been presented to the public.

In November, to whip up support for yet another tranche of “anti-terrorism” laws, MIS head Eliza Manningham-Buller was wheeled out to give a speech that made the country appear to be awash with terrorist plots and potential terrorists. She claimed there are 30 “major terrorist plots being planned”, while 1600 individuals are “actively engaged in promoting attacks here and abroad” and no less than 100,000 people “considered the London bombings to be justified” (Guardian, 10 November 2006).

Soon after Straw’s statement a woman in Liverpool had her veil ripped off, there were arson attacks on mosques and the xenophobic capitalist press had a field day denouncing the veil, and all things Muslim. Straw of course says that it is Muslims wearing the veil that “could make community relations more difficult”. His opposition to the veil soon took on the status of a government-backed campaign. Tony Blair proffered that the veil could make some “outside the community feel uncomfortable”. Local government minister Phil Woolas called for the sacking of teaching assistant Aishah Azmi for wearing the niqab at work. Blair backed Kirklees Council in suspending her from her job, which was in a Church of England school with a majority of Muslim pupils. When Azmi was subsequently sacked she denounced ministers who called for her dismissal, rightly saying it made her “fearful of the consequences for Muslim women in this country who want to work”.

Meanwhile the city council in nearby Bradford — home to one of the largest concentrations of Asians outside London — is drawing up guidelines stating that pupils and staff should not wear veils during lessons. And in a landmark ruling, the House of Lords unanimously backed Denbigh high school in Luton in their exclusion of a pupil, Shabina Begum, for wearing the Muslim hijab (which covers the body but not the face). This overturned a previous Court of Appeal decision that Begum’s exclusion was unlawful and that she had a right to manifest her religion.

As Marxists — and therefore atheists and fighters for women’s liberation — we oppose the veil as both a symbol and an instrument of women’s oppression. Nonetheless we unambiguously support any state or government bans and restrictions on the veil, which are racist and discriminatory against Muslims. Contrary to liberal claims that banning the veil is designed to integrate Muslims into society, bans will lead to expulsions of Muslim women from schools, universities and the workforce, which will reinforce their isolation and oppression. Bans will also fuel racism and play into the hands of the fascist BNP.

Across Europe, bans and strictures on Islamic dress are an extension of the racist “war on terror” directed in the first instance against Muslims, who are falsely and indiscriminately branded terrorist suspects as a pretext for state repression. In Europe, people of Muslim origin are mainly the desecrants of immigrant workers brought into the imperialist countries as cheap labour in previous decades to work in the lowest paid, dirtiest jobs, just like today’s new generation of immigrants. In Britain, the majority of Muslims are of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin and constitute the most impoverished section of the population.

The “war on terror” is a classic “divide and rule” ploy, stigmatising Muslims as an excuse for a sweeping reduction in the legal rights of the entire population. It is also aimed at the working class, intended to stifle class struggle by insisting on “national unity” against a supposed common enemy. The “war on terror” must be fought by mobilisations of the multiracial working class, involving its immigrant component, in a struggle against the hated Blair government and against the capitalist system as a whole. This system based on production for profit is the root cause of racism and of the oppression of women in society.

Straw’s provocation ignited a fierce controversy over race relations, religion and women’s rights. Supporters of Labour’s “war on terror” waved venomous against the religious strictures of Islam, which in Britain is a minority religion of the most deprived and downtrodden. The British capitalist state has its own established Christian churches in England and Wales that are tied to the heart of the conservative establishment, the monarchy and House of Lords. British society at large has been relatively secular for decades, but the Blair

Defend, extend the gains of the 1949 Chinese Revolution!

For proletarian political revolution!
Abolish the monarchy, the House of Commons is disorders. For free abortion on demand! For an end to state funding of religious schools while over Catholic sects — is increasingly being taught in local government minister Ruth Brown was scathing against liberal apologists for the veil in Britain. Noting that unveiled women in Iran are imprisoned, “bride-price, and beheads” while women in Afghanistan and Pakistan suffer a similar plight, she complained bitterly that instead of expressing solidarity with these females, sanctimonious British niqabis are siding with their foes (guardian.co.uk website, 7 October 2006). Despite the name, the WCP is an anti-clerical reformist organisation that often looks to the imperialist powers as allies in the fight for women’s rights in the backward or semi-colonial world. Mahmoud points to the horrors of ‘holy war’ and communalist terror Mahmoud so vehemently opposes. The imperialists are perceived as allies of the women in the Muslim world and the reactionary Islamic fundamentalists as enemies of expressing solidarity in the Muslim world. Mahmoud points to the horrors of ‘holy war’ and communalist terror Mahmoud so vehemently opposes. The imperialists are perceived as allies of the women in the Muslim world and the reactionary Islamic fundamentalists as enemies of expressing solidarity in the Muslim world. Mahmoud points to the horrors of ‘holy war’ and communalist terror Mahmoud so vehemently opposes. The imperialists are perceived as allies of the women in the Muslim world and the reactionary Islamic fundamentalists as enemies of expressing solidarity in the Muslim world.

The New Economic Policy means substituting a tax for the requisitioning of food; it means reverting to capitalism to a considerable extent — to what extent we do not know. Concessions to foreign capitalists (true, only very few have been accepted, especially when compared with the number we have offered) and leasing enterprises to private capital are being made. This is a definite step forward, and this policy of the New Economic Policy; for the abolition of the surplus-food appropriation system means allowing the peasants to trade freely in their surplus agricultural produce, in whatever is left over after we have taken only a small share of that produce. The issue in the present war is — who will win, who will first take advantage of the situation: the capitalist, whom we are allowing to come in by the door, and even by several doors (and by means which we are aware of, and which open without us, and in spite of us), or proletarian state power?...

The whole question is who will take the lead. We must face this issue squarely — who will come out on top? Either the capitalists succeed inorganising first — in which case we shall be rich, but will have lost the war; or the proletarian state power, with the support of the peasantry, will prove capable of keeping a proper rein on those gentlemen, the capitalists, so as to direct capitalism along state channels and to create a capitalism that will be subordinate to the state...


NEP v ‘market reforms’

In 1921, due to the ravages of World War I, the civil war and widespread famine, the revolutionary government in the Soviet workers state was forced to abandon the “New Economic Policy”. This had similarities to the “market reforms” in China today, which the bureaucracy claims will lead to communism, just as they claim to be building “socialism in one country”. In contrast, Lenin regarded the NEP as a necessary and temporary retreat in the overall struggle to defend the dictatorship of the proletariat and extend it internationally, while warning of the dangers it posed. Especially important was that the young workers state maintained a strict monopoly on all foreign trade, unlike in China today.

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London
7 December 2006

Dear comrades,

At Mumia events in London the dubious International Bolshevik Tendency (BT) has been springing on the SL and the Partisan Defence Committee are unwilling to join in united-front protests for Mumia’s freedom. This lying allegation also appears in a September internet posting on their website, “On Recent Spartacist Polemics” which complains of the SL’s “apparent desire to avoid working with us in defense of Mumia Abu-Jamal”. A letter in Workers Vanguard (WV) no 627, 25 August 1995 exposed this claim as a lie. For starters, the BT’s posting appeared on 1 September, one week after the PDC had informed the Labor Action Committee to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal (LAC), one of the key players, of its endorsement of their 15 September rally in Oakland, California. The SL and PDC built for this rally (more can be said for the LAC) which was based on the slogans: “Mumia Abu-Jamal Is Innocent! For Labor Action to Free Mumia! End the Racist Death Penalty!”

But the BT’s allegation that the SL and PDC are sectarian is not about the truth but about joining in genuine united-front protests. It’s a cover for the BT’s role in building committees that are vehicles for unity with the liberals and reformists who call for a new trial. Thus they build illusions in the “justice” of the capitalist court which have upheld the racist frame-up of Mumia for a quarter of a century. The BT’s lie about SL sectarianism goes all the way back to 1995, when they belatedly got involved in campaigning for Mumia. Their account of what happened in Britain in 1995 is record and repetition of the September internet posting, is a masterpiece of BT distortion and falsification. It says:

“Time is short, but it is still not too late to initiate a sustainable demonstration before the end of the year… Other groups are planning various events, but these will be fragmentary unless they are part of a co-ordinated campaign. There has been considerable coverage of Mumia’s case in the bourgeois press and most of the left groups would probably come on board if urged to do so. The SLB, of all the groups on the British far left, is probably best positioned to initiate such a united front because of the years of work by your American comrades in Mumia’s defence.

We pledge our fullest support in building such a campaign…”

—letter to the SLB, 6 August 1995

The ICL leadership responded:

“We don’t know what world the BT lives in. We are aware of reality and our own social weight than to believe that a ‘Free Mumia Committee’ of ourselves, the BT and a bunch of other small leftist organisations would be able to rally the social forces necessary to win Mumia’s freedom.’

—Workers Vanguard (WV) no 627, 25 August 1995

This is a classic BT sleight of hand. The above paragraph quoted from WV was written in reply to the BT arguing that the Spartacist League has undermined Mumia’s defence by not setting up a “united-front committee”, not as they assert, in reply to their call to build a demonstration.

The BT’s ability to disappear facts is notable in the sentence: “In August 1995, when a wave of demonstrations erupted around the world to protest Mumia’s scheduled execution, our comrades in London approached the Spartacist League/Britain (SLB) with a suggestion for initiating an emergency demonstration.” This letter was dated 7 August 1995 (and not 6 August as cited by the BT above). What the BT doesn’t say is that just over two weeks earlier, on 22 July 1995, the PDC had initiated and organised a united-front demonstration in London. It’s not as if the BT doesn’t know about it, leading BTer Alan Gibson spoke from the platform! The PDC had also organised an emergency protest outside the US embassy on 8 June of that year when a death warrant was signed which was attended by about 150 people, at which the BT also spoke.

Having deliberately concealed their call for a committee and their call for a demonstration, the BT’s posting continues:

“We [the BT] replied: ‘it is precisely the fact that a “bunch of other small leftists” and other organisations “all began to mobilize around the same issue at the same time, that made the demonstrations for Jamal successful. In order to build the mass support necessary for winning his freedom, it makes sense to organize this cooperation… True, the combined forces of the left are less than massive. But it is the SL suggesting that it alone is capable of mobilizing greater numbers than small groups working in concert’

—For United Front of Defense of Mumia Abu-Jamal!, 1917 to 17, 1995

Possibly the reason they didn’t mention the PDC July demonstration is to be found in what’s left out of their quote imperialist demonstration calling to “Stop the Rape of Bosnia.” This was a quite conscious decision for all of these groups whose demonstration was called some time after the Jamal protest had been widely advertised. Remarkably, but not at all surprisingly, the BT has not a word to say against those whose own perceived sectarian advantage and capitulationist political priorities led them to counterpose their “Workers Aid for Bosnia” march to a demonstration in defense of Jamal.”

The BT has been a key player in the London-based Mumia Must Live! coalition which, like the IAC in the US, has a track record of organising actions on the basis of a call for a new trial. In March 1999, leading BTer Alan Gibson sent an email on behalf of Mumia Must Live! asking organisations (including the SL) to endorse an upcoming 25 April rally, and Mumia Must Live! coalition. On the political character of the rally Gibson said: “We are hoping that this event on April 25th, as part of the international wave of action in support of Mumia Abu-Jamal, will have something of the flavour of the recent rally in New York attended by 1700 people—I attach a report of this meeting at the end of this email.” The report he circulated left no doubt that the “Flavour” of the New York rally was unequivocally for a new trial.

The report was of a 26 February 1999 “Millions for Mumia” rally. One of its headlines is: “Undeterred by PC, Threats, Supporters of Death-Row Activists say, ‘Stop the Execution, New Trial for Mumia!’ All Out for April 25 Rally! The report continues: “Speakers said Abu-Jamal must receive a new trial and no death warrant must be signed by Gov. Tom Ridge.” It quotes Monica Moorehead, a national coordinator of does not add a call for a retrial to its basis of unity. Judge Yohn can rule that Mumia should go free—why should we demand anything less?” The demand for a retrial can create illusions in the racist justice system in America. And a retrial can result in a new frame-up, as it did for Hurricane Carter. Yet while I oppose adding such a demand to the basis of unity of MML, I believe that those (like the SWP) who want to call for a new trial should be free to do so in their own name.”

This is the best they can do when they decide to muster an argument for freedom for Mumia. Obviously it is not intended to destroy the liberal illusions in the capitalist justice system that the call for a new trial stems from and fosters. It is crafted in such a way as to cause no disruption to unity with the new trial crowd, which is what really matters to the BT.

The foregoing illustrates the wretched political record of a group that mouths “Trotskyist” principles while mingling happily with the most abject reformists. But there are more shady sides to them. At the height of the emergency protests against the death warrant in June 1995, the Wall Street Journal ran an article smearings the organisations defending Mumia, centrally going after the PDC and SL. The cited source for their slanders of the SL as a denigrated “cull” was none other than the BT, a group which at the time had written a total of one article defending Mumia. As the PDC leaflet for the Oakland rally in September put it, “The intent of the Wall Street Journal in smearing Mumia’s supporters was transparent enough. Mumia Abu-Jamal was a minuscule BT was so readily wielded as a tool for the WSJ is not.”

Comradely, Kate Klein

“Millions for Mumia” saying: “Tonight’s meeting showed there is broad support to demand a new trial for Mumia.”
Racism...

(Continued from page 2)

transformation, something that did not exist before because a proletarian as such did not exist. But rather than fight­
ing to defeat the brutal imperialism, the
Kremlin Stalinists under Mikhail
Gorbachev criminally withdrew the
Soviet troops in 1989. This was a huge
betrayal of Afghanistan, especially its
women. It also paved the way for hand­
ing over East Germany and the USSR
itself to conquerors, a colossal defeat for the working masses of the entire
world.

SWP exorts the virtues of
Islamic reaction

Today the SWP is allied with Islamic
organisations in Respect and the Stop
the War Coalition (SWC). In response
to Straw’s statement, SWC held a
“People’s Assembly” in London on 18
November against Islamophobia and
the “war on terror”. This gathering
(which provided prayer rooms, as is
now standard at SWP events) issued a
declaration condemning the govern­
ment’s attack on Islamic religious prac­
tices, and the occupation of Iraq. But in
keeping with the SWP’s gross capitula­
tion to Islamic forces, the declaration says not one word on the rights of
women. Referring only obliquely to the
veil, it does so positively, presenting the
issue as if it were a lifestyle choice and
a welcome example of “diversity.” It said:

“In particular we condemn the statements made by government ministers designed to isolate, demonise and even criminalise Islamic religious practices, choice of dress and cultural expression. We affirm that such diversity is fact makes an important contribution to the overall development of
our society.”

The notion that the veil is just some
“choice of dress” or a matter of “cultural
expression” is liberal nonsense. Marxists reject such “cultural relativism” which
serves to perpetually hide oppression in
the neo-colonial world as merely “cultural
differences”. Often those who speak of “cultural relativism” do so in a laud­
able effort not to impose Western cultur­
al standards on the rest of the world.
However it can also be used to condone
grotesque crimes like female genital
mutilation or so-called honour killings.
Contrary to such drivel, the head-to-toe
veil is a walking prison that physically
excludes women from society. It embod­
ies the submission of women to men and
their supposed inferior status. The hijab
too is a tool of oppression, covering the
hair based on the notion that female
attractiveness and sexuality must be
suppressed and hidden, because it leads
men into “sin” and is a sign of Western
decadence”. We solidarise with the
countless thousands of women who
have sought to escape the tyranny of
the veil, whether in the Muslim world or
in the imperialist centres.

Comrades and sympathisers of the
Spartacist League/Britain and Spartacus
Youth Group spent six weeks participat­
ing in our annual subscription drive cam­
paign, exceeding our quota of 200 points
with a total of 320 points, our best result
in a decade. These points represent 129
subscriptions to Workers Hammer, 64
subscriptions to Workers Vanguard, the
Marxist, working-class bi-weekly news­
paper, of our American section, the
Spartacist League/US, 57 subscriptions
to Spartacist Ireland and 6 subscriptions
to other International Communist League
sectional newspapers.

Workers Hammer welcomes its new
readers and greets those who renewed
their subscriptions. The Spartacist League
is a fighting propaganda group whose aim
is to build a revolutionary vanguard party
of the kind that VI Lenin and the
Bolsheviks forged in order to lead the
working class to power in the October
Revolution of 1917 in Russia. We make
a special effort to sell subscriptions to
our poor readers. It is our policy to seek­
ing for influence and to lead strug­
gles and for winning workers and youth
to our ranks. Our annual subscription
drive is crucial to maintaining an ongo­
ing readership and reaching out to new
layers and to regions where we do not
have branches. Our supporters went to
Manchester, Glasgow, Edinburgh,

Workers Hammer welcomes new readers!

Subscription drive success

Workers Hammer welcomes new readers!

A central part of this year’s subscrip­
tion drive was building the international
campaign undertaken by the Partisan
Defence Committee to free American
drew political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, a former Black Panther and later an
award-winning journalist and supporter
of our movement’s many campaigns.
Our subscription drive was an opportu­
nity to introduce his case to a wider
layer of students and trade unionists.
We gathered a number of signatures on
the PDC’s statement of support for Mumia
(see page 5) and held a showing of the
PDC’s DVD “From Death Row, This is
Mumia Abu-Jamal” at SOAS.

Our slogan for “Free Abortion on
Demand!” created quite a bit of contro­
versy during our trip to Scotland. In
Scotland, where the left has been
embraced in morbidity over the “sex
iscandal” surrounding Tommy Sheridan,
our comrades argued that for Marxists,
al sexual activity ought to be a private
matter in relation to the state and that sex
with a prostitute is consensual sex. Our
article on “The Russian Revolution and
the Emancipation of Women” in the cur­
rent issue of the ICL’s international theo­
retical journal Spartacist helped explain
what a true social revolution achieved for
women and to concretise the revolution­
ary programme that working people
need to fight to end capitalism exploita­
tion and oppression.

Readers’ letters and articles published
during the subscription drive explained
the Russian Revolution of 1917 and
motivated the Trotskyist programme in
defence of the deformed workers states
of China and North Korea—a pro­
mame that the ICL uniquely upholds.
Our subscription drive concluded with a
forum titled “Defend, extend the gains
of the 1949 Chinese Revolution!” (see arti­
 cle, page 6).

Congratulations to comrades Dan who
with 47 points sold the most subscrip­
tions. Thanks to all comrades, and to our
sympathisers who joined us in making
this campaign a success! We encourage
our readers to let us know what they
think of our press and to contact us to
discuss its contents and get involved in
the activities of the Spartacist League
and SYG.

Workers Hammer: Marxist Newspaper of the
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2. 1-year sub to Workers Hammer and 4 issues of Spartacist Ireland £5.00
3. 1-year sub to Workers Hammer PLUS 21 issues of Workers Vanguard, Marxist fortnightly of the Spartacist League/US for £10.00. Sub includes Black Hammer and the Class Struggle.
4. 1-year sub to WH, WV, and 4 issues of Spartacist Ireland £12.00

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League (Fourth International).

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Make cheques payable to: Spartacist Publications, PO Box 4286, London N19 9XY
An injury to one is an injury to all! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal now! Abolish the racist death penalty!

We demand the immediate freedom of Mumia Abu-Jamal, an innocent man.

Mumia Abu-Jamal's appeal is now on the "fast track" in the federal appeals court and the state is determined to carry out his execution.

The case of Mumia Abu-Jamal exemplifies the race and class bias of the US justice system against workers, black people, the poor and all the oppressed. The notorious trial judge, Albert Sabo was overheard at the time providing a roadmap for how to commit a crime and then get away with it by "I'm going to help you out here, you know what I mean?"

Racist party members, local party officials, and those in the movement who have been deceived and/or co-opted by party leadership, are in the process of being terrorized through party threats, and prosecutorial cover-up were the basis for Mumia's conviction. Both the Pennsylvania state courts and the federal courts have refused to consider the renewed evidence of multiplicity of innocence.

We stand with the millions around the world—workers, students, death penalty abolitionists, fighters for black rights and immigrants' rights, socialists—who have taken up the light to free Mumia Abu-Jamal now!
We reprint below in edited form the presentation given by comrade James Palmer at a Spartacist League public meeting in London on 4 November 2006.

The world is a very different place from 15 years ago. The Soviet Union, the first and only workers state created in a proletarian revolution and led by a revolutionary party, no longer exists. Under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks, the Soviet Union had been a great beacon of world revolution for the working class and oppressed. In Lenin's time, for the first time, it had been shown that the working class could take control of a country.

The Chinese Revolution of 1949 was a social revolution of world historic importance. Despite having deep bureaucratic deformations from the start, it overthrew the bourgeois. Hundreds of millions of brutally oppressed peasants rose up and took possession of the land. The victory of the peasant-based Red Army, led by Mao and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) shattered and destroyed the Chinese capitalist state and its military apparatus. The Chinese capitalist rulers, together with Chiang Kai-shek and the remnants of his nationalist army, fled to Taiwan under the protection of American imperialism. The remainder mostly ended up in Hong Kong. In China the power of the warlords, land owners and bourgeoisie (often one and the same) had been finally destroyed. And a nation that had for a century been ravaged and divided by the Western powers was united and liberated from the imperialist yoke.

The revolution created a workers state based on a centrally planned economy which was the basis for the huge leap forward in social progress. The new state redistributed land to the peasants, expropriated key industries and developed the state-owned industrial sector with aid from the USSR. After the Korean War of 1950-53 the remaining private industry in China was nationalised and a state monopoly on foreign trade was imposed. The social effect of these changes to the relations of production after the revolution can be seen most clearly by the gains in the conditions for terribly oppressed women, who were enabled to advance by orders of magnitude over their previous miserable status, historically symbolised by the barbaric practice of foot-binding.

Nevertheless the state that issued out of the 1949 revolution was a bureaucratically deformed workers state ruled by a privileged caste headed by the Chinese Communist Party leadership. A key factor in determining the outcome was the fact that the Chinese proletariat was not mobilised for the revolution, which brought to power a nationalist, anti-working-class bureaucracy who falsely proclaimed they would build socialism in a single, very backward country. The proletariat at the time was atomised, having suffered two decades of deadly repression under both the Guomindang and the brutal Japanese occupation (which began in Manchuria in 1931 and extended to the major cities in eastern and central China after the full invasion in 1937). Moreover, this working class had been repeatedly betrayed by Stalinism, most notably in the bloody defeat of the 1925-27 revolution.

China is not capitalist

Today, we do not minimise the danger posed to the Chinese deformed workers state by the capitalist economic penetration to which the Stalinist bureaucrats have opened the Chinese economy. However, we disagree with the majority of liberals and reformist organisations who have declared the "market reforms" mean China is capitalist. The core of China's economy remains collectivised. Moreover, the threat of a Chinese counterrevolution is an implausible hostility of the imperialist bourgeoisie to the People's Republic of China. The British ruling class discussed the possibility of persuading the US to mount a nuclear attack on China in the 1960s and today imperialism targets China because it remains a workers state that issued out of the 1949 revolution.

In seeking to replicate what happened in the USSR in 1991-92, the imperialists are trying to promote a political opposition in China that will rely principally on the new class of capitalist entrepreneurs. At the same time, American imperialism is increasing the military pressure on China, trying for example to encircle China with military bases, including in Central Asia. The US rulers concluded an agreement with Japan, on the pretext of defending the offshore capitalist bastion of Taiwan, and have established a common military command with the Japanese military at Yokohama against China. The Pentagon is actively developing new weapons against China's limited nuclear arsenal to allow the option of an American nuclear first strike, a strategy which has been openly proclaimed by the Bush gang in Washington.

After the creation of the joint military command at Yokohama, we published a statement entitled "Down With U.S./Japan Counterrevolutionary Alliance!" and said "The U.S. and Japan will not hesitate to crush any challenge in their drive to exploit the working masses of the region."

We Trotskyists stand for unconditional military defence of China and the other remaining deformed workers states against imperialist attack and all threats of capitalist counterrevolution.

For proletarian political revolution!
In particular, we support China's possessiveness of its own resources, seen as a necessary deterrent against imperialist nuclear blackmail. China's "market reforms" have intensified the contradictions that are inherent in a deformed workers state. The rapid economic and industrial growth has created the largest single industrial proletariat in the world. This is of strategic importance internationally. At the same time inequalities within the society are stark and growing. There have been ongoing workers protests and the countryside has seen massive protests by peasants, particularly against seizure of land by CCP officials. The ruling bureaucracy is an unstable caste, not a ruling class. Currently it is divided between elements who want the economic reforms to continue unabated, those who want more state intervention and to stifle discontent, and others who seek a return to bureaucratically planned economy. At some point, the explosive social tensions of Chinese society will shatter the political structure of the bureaucracy and the state will have said, when that happens, the fate of the most populous country on earth will be decided. The political revolution that will open the road to socialism or a return to capitalist enslavement or imperialist subjugation.

We stand for a proletarian political revolution to sweep away the oppressive and parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy and replace it with a government based on democratically elected workers and peasants councils. Such a government, under the leadership of a Leninist Trotskyist party, would reform a centrally planned economy, including reinstating the state monopoly of foreign trade. It would achieve the "commandment" of a bureaucratic caste but by the widest workers democracy. It would expropriate the Chinese capitalist entrepreneurs and renegotiate the terms of foreign investment so that it serves the interests of Chinese working people, instead of serving for example at least on conditions the same as in the state sector. A revolutionary workers government would encourage the voluntary collectivisation of agriculture on the basis of large scale mechanised and scientifically intensive farming, recognising that this requires substantial material aid from successful workers revolutions in the more economically advanced countries, particularly Japan.

There is a qualitative difference between the Russian October Revolution, which was carried out by the class-conscious proletariat and guided by the internationalism of the Bolsheviks, and the Chinese Revolution that came about from a peasant guerrilla war led by Stalinist-nationalist forces. The CCP used Stalin's Russia as a model, meaning that they established a bureaucratic monopoly on political organisation. All working-class political activity was ruthlessly repressed, including economic struggles. Let's take a look at Trotsky's Bolsheviks knew that the only way for the workers state to survive was through building socialism on a worldwide basis. They created the Third International as an instrument to extend the revolution internationally, especially to the advanced capitalist countries of Europe. However, the failure of international revolution, particularly the defeat of the 1933 German revolution, and the increasing isolation of the young Soviet workers state, combined with the German invasion of the Civil War, laid the material basis for the growth of a bureaucratic caste. Beginning in 1923-24, the Soviet Union underwent a bureaucratic-nationalist degeneration under the rule of Joseph Stalin. This constituted a political counterrevolution that forced the Asian proletariat to fight against the Soviet Red Army.

The reactionary utopia of "socialism in one country"

The bureaucratic caste resting on top of the Chinese workers state is a mortal threat to its continued existence. Its anti-revolutionary nature can be seen in the following circumstances: the bureaucratically planned economy, including the political counterrevolution that a nuclear weapons test signifies, the Stalinist regime has criminally joined with the imperialist-led uproar against North Korea. On 16 October, China joined imperialist Japan in a common declaration that a nuclear weapons test "cannot be tolerated". This is despite the fact that any weakening of the North Korean workers state against imperialist militarism would also weaken China's defence. Korea is a historic invasion route into China and is adjacent to important industrial regions. We regard nuclear weapons as necessary to deter imperialist attack and defend the workers states in the region. The ability of the workers states to develop these weapons is a historic gain of the international working class. In the face of US imperialism's unchallenged global nuclear hegemony, the only meaningful guarantee of any nation's sovereignty today is the possession of a credible nuclear deterrent.

 Maoists and Stalinists reject in particular the possibility of proletarian socialist revolution in advanced capitalist countries. The Stalinist-Maoist dogmas of "socialism in one country" is the antithesis of the Trotskyist perspective for permanent revolution which postulates that the modernisation of China must be part of a globally integrated and planned socialist economy, following socialist revolution in the imperialist centres. This is the only road to the all-round liberation of China's worker and peasant masses. The class nature of the Chinese deformed workers state

China is a deformed workers state—a form of the dictatorship of the proletariat. For Marxists, any state is composed of bodies of armed men.
Racism...
(Continued from page 4)

To justify their capitulation to Islam, the SWP sometimes cites the fact that Lenin's Bolshevik Party regarded religion as a "private matter". Lenin made it very clear that Marxism is based on dialectical materialism which is "absolutely atheist" and hostile to all religion and "has always regarded all modern religions and churches, and each and every religious organisation, as instruments of bourgeois class as a private matter. Lenin made it clear that religion serves to solace the oppressed masses in a cruel world and therefore to free the masses from its yoke requires class struggle for socialist revolution against the capitalist system that gives rise to the brutal social conditions religion thrives on. However Lenin was adamant that revolutionaries "regard religion as a private matter in relation to the state, not in relation to themselves, not in relation to Marxism, and not in relation to the workers' party" ("The Attitude of the Workers' Party to Religion", 1909).

The SWP's adaptation to Islam is based on the utterly false notion that political Islam is "secular nationalism" and of political Islam is regarded all modern religions and political Islam is "anti-imperialist". Since Counterrevolution in the Soviet Union in 1991-92, the imperialists have sought to portray Islamic fundamentalism—exemplified by Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda—as the replacement of the true secularist Organisation of the increasing pressure of the world that remained poor and undeveloped, due to the world system of capitalism. Historically and today, the development of the weaker countries has been arrested and retarded by imperialism. Capitalist imperialism is based on the domination of the world by a handful of wealthy states using their might to protect their markets and spheres of influence. All religions reinforce the patriarchal family and the institution of the family is the main source of women's oppression in society. It is the mechanism for inheriting property, for socialising new generations of workers and for inculcating the moral and sexual codes of the ruling class.

Hue and cry over "multiculturalism"

The row over the veil in Britain overlies with a controversy over "multiculturalism", a policy of voluntary cultural adaptation to majority communities that has been promoted by governments for decades. It has always been hated by right-wingers as a concession to racial tolerance. Now it is being denounced as "self-segregation" and Blair has declared that everyone has a "duty to be part of an integrated United Kingdom". This means conform to so-called British values, or, in Blair's words "don't come here" (Guardian, 9 December 2006). Multiculturalism is also detested by liberal Muslims because it strengthens conservative, patriarchal and religious forces within minority communities. It was invoked to justify the government's tacit support has a "duty to be part of an integrated United Kingdom". This means conform to so-called British values, or, in Blair's words "don't come here" (Guardian, 9 December 2006). Multiculturalism is also detested by liberal Muslims because it strengthens conservative, patriarchal and religious forces within minority communities. It was invoked to justify the government's tacit support to terrorism by Sikh elders. This myth must be combated and shattered by the working class.

The increased prevalence of the Islamic veil in Britain is in part due to the rise of political Islam internationally. This is a result of relentless racism, anti-immigrant racism, we call for full citizenship rights for all immigrants.

Within the Respect coalition the SWP has dropped their reformist claim to fight for "socialism" or the working class. They have disavowed secularism and any meaningful fight for women's or gay rights in order to maintain their bloc with Muslims. In its own way, this shows the SWP has absorbed the "death of communism" myth to the same degree as Jack Straw, who admitted that it is possible to have the similarities in society "were ones of class", in the post-Soviet world. But the classes have been recreated by the collapse of the state and in its place they are "principally ones of religion" (New Statesman, 18 September 2006). This myth must be combated and shattered by the working class.

We Marxists fight for voluntary integration of all minorities on full equality. But we understand that the eradication of racism, women's oppression and all forms of discrimination require a revolutionary struggle, mobilising the power of the proletariat, to uproot capitalism and liberate humanity from poverty and want. Predictably, the reformist SWP defends multiculturalism. This denies that minority communities, like the rest of society, are class-divided and that the struggles of immigrant and other minority workers for jobs, unions and equal status mean breaking the grip of religious and other conservative community leaders. Moreover supporting multi-culturalism promotes illusions that the capitalist state can be used as an instrument to fight racial oppression. The capitalist state exists to defend class rule based on private property; it is the executive organ of the capitalist class for the suppression and exploitation of the working class.

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Afghan women in 1900 (top); Red Army intervention opened prospect of social change. Soviet soldier from Central Asia fighting Islamic reaction (left). Kabul today, veiled woman begs on street (right).
China...
(Continued from page 7)

the period of the revolutionary transfor-
mention of the police, army, prison guards,
emphasising that post-revolutionary
courts) who are charged with defend-
classes. Karl Marx explained the
China ...

lay any conditions upon the bureauca-
archy. It means that independently of the
of the war we defend the social basis of the USSR, if
imperialism ("Again and Once More
Nature of the USSR", In defense of Marxism). But we also
give not an iota of political support to
the programme of the Stalinist bu-
reacracy.

SWP's rabid anti-communism

In Britain, the Socialist Workers
Party of the late Tony Cliff does not
claim that capitalism has recently been
restored in China. For them, China has
been "state capitalism" since the 1949
revolution, with the bureaucracy con-
veniently deemed a ruling class. The
anti-Marxist theory of "state capital-
ism" is nothing but a fig leaf for the fact
that these reformists have sided with the
capitalist "democracies" against the
worker states since the inception of
this group. The Cliff tendency came
into existence in a capitulation to anti-
communist hysteria that accompanied
the Korean War. We Trotskyists come to
China's crisis with China - it is both ethnically,
linguistically and historically Chinese.
We Trotskyists will stand with China
in the event of any military conflict
with imperialism over Taiwan. We are
also opposed to the Chinese Stalinists' proposals for
reunification embodied in the slogan of "one country, two
systems". We call for the revolutionary
reunification of China: that means a
workers socialist revolution in Taiwan
as part of China - it is both ethnically,
linguistically and historically Chinese.

China and permanent revolution

The Cliffites maintain that the 1949
Revolution disproves Trotsky's theory of
permanent revolution. This is the
Marxist programme for the countries of
belated capitalist development and in
existence it was also the programme on
which the Bolsheviks led the Russian
October Revolution. In Trotsky's words it says:

"With regard to countries with a belated
bourgeois development, especially the
colonial and semi-colonial countries, the
theory of the permanent revolution signifi-

that the complete and genuine solution of
their tasks of achieving democracy and
national emancipation is conceivable only
through the dictatorship of the proletariat
as the leader of the subjugated nation,
above all of its peasant masses.

"Not only the agrarian, but also the
national question assigns to the peas-
ancy — the overwhelming majority of the
population in backward countries — an
exceptional place in the democratic
revolution. Without an alliance of the prole-
tariat with the peasantry, the tasks of the
democratic revolution cannot be solved,
not even seriously posed. But the alliance
of these two classes can be realised in no
other way than through an irrevocable
struggle against the influence of the
national-liberal bourgeoisie."

— The Permanent Revolution (1969)

According to the Cliffites, permanent
revolution was "deflected" in the 1949
Revolution, as a result of which
"bureaucratic state capitalism simply
replaced private capitalism" (SWP
pamphlet by Charlie Hore, China:
Whose revolution? 1987). While main-
taining that the class nature of the state
that emerged from the revolution was
capitalist, because one bourgeoisie was
simply replaced by a more nationalistic
capitalist ruling class — Hore admits
that "1949 was a genuine revolution,
in which a millions-strong peasant army
overthrew the old ruling classes, broke
the power of Western imperialism and
laid the basis for a new social order.

The notion that the nationalistic bour-
geoisie in China, or any semi-colonial
country, would institute a genuine
social revolution and break the power
of imperialism is totally contradicted by
history. It shows that the reformist SWP
would have stood with the Mensheviks
in Russia in 1917 in supporting the
"liberal" bourgeoisie. The Bolsheviks
countered to this the need to break
with the liberal bourgeoisie and to fight
for the dictatorship of the proletariat!

The colonial bourgeoisie's true role was
clearly demonstrated in the 1925-27
defeated Chinese Revolution, which the
Chinese bourgeoisie drowned in blood.
They were aided by the treachery of Stalin
under whose leadership the CCP was
instructed to subordinate itself to the
bourgeois Guomindang.

Permanent revolution
confirmed in the negative

How could the Chinese Communist
Party, based on a peasant army, be
a petty bourgeois force, establish a work-
ers state? This presented a theoretical
problem for the Trotskyists at the time
and for some years afterwards, until a
contribution by the founders of the
Spartacist League regarding the Cuban
Revolution retrospectively illuminated
the course of the Chinese Revolution.
In Cuba, under exceptional circum-
cstances — the absence of the working
class as a contender for social power;
the flight of the Cuban bourgeoisie;
howlry, colonial and semi-colonial
peasants, the Chinese bourgeoisie
under whose leadership the CCP was
instructed to subordinate itself to the
bourgeois Guomindang.

Beijing, May 1989:
Workers defended Tiananmen student
protests, opposed
effects of pro-capitalist
"market reforms". We
called for proletarian
political revolution to
swEEP away the
to/ Stalnism regime.

continued on page 10

U.S. Navy
But Castroism or Maoism cannot bring the working class to political power. As we have noted, even under the most favourable historic circumstances conceivable, petty-bourgeois forces were only capable of creating a bureaucratically deformed workers state, which spoke and acted the same as that resulting from the political counterrevolution in the Soviet Union under Stalin. In Cuba and China the result was a petty-bourgeois class regime that blocked the possibilities of extending social revolution, into Latin America in the case of Cuba and into Japan and the rest of the Asia in the case of China. To place the working class in political power and open the road to social development requires a further political revolution led by a Leninist-Trotskyist party. Since counterrevolution in the Soviet Union did not read­ily available life-line against imperialist encirclement, the narrow historical opening in which petty-bourgeois forces were able to overturn local capitalist rule has been closed. The experience of the Russian Revolution has completely validated the Trotskyist theory of permanent revolution, in the negative: only under the dictatorship of the proletariat can the colonial and semi-colonial countries obtain genuine national emancipation. To open the road to socialism requires the extension of the revolution to the advanced capitalist countries.

In December 1989 the leaders of the Russian October Revolution, which was led by the proletariat, Trotsky says that: "The peasantry can either support the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie or serve as a prop to the dictatorship of the proletariat. Intermediate forms are only disguises for a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie...the peasantry can follow either the bourgeoisie or the proletariat" (The Permanent Revolution, 1969). Only one of the two fundamental classes in society can hold state power, i.e., the working class or the bourgeoisie. In general, the working class in the former case will be an advanced, centrally planned and managed economy which is regulated by the discipline ofmarket competition as the only answer to economic inefficiency. As we wrote in the 1980s: "Within the framework of Stalinism, there is an inherent tendency to reduce planning and management. The bureaucracy has been given too many powers by the political power of the proletariat to exercise its own role. The case of the Russian十月革命..." (From Central Planning Over Soviet Democracy, Workers Vanguard no 454, 3 June 1988, reprinted in Market Socialism in Eastern Europe (July 1988)).

When Mao died, China, while having constructed a substantial, relative­ly modern heavy industrial sector, was still predominantly rural and peasant country. Over three-quarters of the labour force was engaged in farming and over 80 per cent of the population lived in the countryside. Agricultural output had failed to keep pace with industrial growth and low agricultural productivity was a barrier to industrialisation. Foreign investment allowed certain areas of rapid growth that would not otherwise have been possible in an isolated and largely undeveloped workers state. Today, over 50 per cent of the labour force is employed in manufacturing, construction, transport and the service sector, while 40 per cent of the population is urbanised. From a Marxist standpoint, this is a progressive development. So too is the expansion of China's industrial capacity.

But while this is true, the "market reforms" have massively widened the gap in living conditions within China, impoverishing millions of farmers and rural dwell­ers and also creating a wealthy new class of capitalists within China who have links to the CCP officialdom as well as to offshore Chinese capitalists. The market reforms have been described as a "seizing the opportunity of the USSR's collapse to lay the basis for the elimination of capitalist property relations." In China the market reforms have allowed rapid growth. It is easy to view the "market reforms" that Deng initiated at the beginning of the 1980s either as a total betrayal of the PCR or as the reason for its current growth level. Both of these would be false. The "market reforms" were initially an attempt to respond, within the framework of Stalinist bonapartism, to the inefficiency of bureaucratic "commandeering" (poor productivity, mediocre quality, scarcity etc). As we wrote in the 1980s: "Within the framework of Stalinism, there is an inherent tendency to replace planning and management with market mechanisms. Since managers and workers cannot be subject to the discipline of soviet democracy (workers councils), increasing the bureaucracy is seeking to subject the economic actors to the discipline of market competition as the only answer to economic inefficiency." — From Central Planning Over Soviet Democracy, Workers Vanguard no 454, 3 June 1988, reprinted in Market Socialism in Eastern Europe (July 1988)

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Leon Trotsky's 1936 The Revolution Betrayed presents Marxist analysis of degeneration of October Revolution under Stalinist bureaucracy which applies equally to the Chinese deformed workers state today.

China... (Continuedfrom page 9)

Batista dictatorship and eventually eliminated capitalist property relations. But Castroism or Maoism cannot bring the working class to political power. As we have noted, even under the most favourable historic circumstances conceivable, petty-bourgeois forces were only capable of creating a bureaucratically deformed workers state, which spoke and acted the same as that resulting from the political counterrevolution in the Soviet Union under Stalin. In Cuba and China the result was a petty-bourgeois class regime that blocked the possibilities of extending social revolution, into Latin America in the case of Cuba and into Japan and the rest of the Asia in the case of China. To place the working class in political power and open the road to social development requires a further political revolution led by a Leninist-Trotskyist party. Since counterrevolution in the Soviet Union did not readily available life-line against imperialist encirclement, the narrow historical opening in which petty-bourgeois forces were able to overturn local capitalist rule has been closed. The experience of the Russian October Revolution has completely validated the Trotskyist theory of permanent revolution, in the negative: only under the dictatorship of the proletariat can the colonial and semi-colonial countries obtain genuine national emancipation. To open the road to socialism requires the extension of the revolution to the advanced capitalist countries.

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Witch hunt...

(Continued from page 12)

mirror-image of the Zionists’ denial of the national rights of the Palestinians and illustrates the genocidal logic of all nationalism.

What drives the bloody cycle of Zionism,ушер и Palestinian defiance and despair is the root cause of this conflict: two peoples lay claim to the same land, and no equitable resolution to the conflicting national claims of the Palestinian Arab and Hebrew peoples under capitalist conditions. As long as the national axis is emphasised, the situation will always be bleak and hopeless. But if the class axis is emphasised, that is an excellent chance of a just solution. Against all variants of nationalism, we counterpose a programme of proletarian revolutionary internationalism. The road to the social and national liberation of the Palestinian people lies through common class struggle by the Hebrew-speaking and Arabic workers against both the Israeli and Arab ruling classes, who are the agents of imperialism. Only within a socialist federation of the Near East can the right to national self-determination for both the Palestinian and the Hebrew-speaking peoples be realised. This requires breaking the stranglehold of the Zionist state and all capitalist regimes in the region. For a socialist federation of the Near East, «Down with the Israeli and Afghan occupation! All Israeli troops and settlers out of the Occupied Territories!» proclaims out of Lebanon news.

Protect the “war on terror” at SOAS

The extent to which the Blair government can succeed in enforcing the “war on terror” depends on the amount of class struggle opposing it; that is whether the multination class is mobilised to defend itself, and whether immigrants and minorities who are in the cross-hairs of increased state repression. At the same time, racism and violent repression of workers and minorities is intrinsic to the capitalist state and cannot be eradicated short of proletarian revolution. Those who still make it to university in this racist, capitalist society, despite tuition fees, bigger living costs and student debts, are being threatened that if you oppose the occupation of Iraq or Afghanistan you do not belong there. But the Achilles heel of this racist Labour government and all its armours of state repression is that it is not able to control the multination class, on which this “flexible economy” depends.

Military protests by students against the latest proposals for spying on Muslim students and political societies could be the spark for a protest by workers against the Labour government’s racist “war on terror” more generally. On 13 March 2002, the SYG held a united-front protest at SOAS against the “war on terror” in defence of Fahim Ahmed, a member of the Socialist Labour Party Youth, who was detained under the Terrorism Act. The protest demanded: “Down with the Labour government’s anti-terrorism, anti-immigrant witch hunt!” We also emphasised that “Anti-terrorism laws target immigrants, minorities, the working class, not anti-immigrant witch hunt!”. This exposed that the “English-only” rule for societies’ literature, so often used against us communists at SOAS.

Through our protest in 2002 we sought to explain to youth and students that the working class must take up the fight against the “war on terror” and anti-immigrant hysteria because only the working class has the social power and historic interest to lead the struggle to smash the capitalist system through proletarian revolution and the establish-
and sustained threat to the UK from violent extremism in the name of Islam” and issuing guidelines on “tackling extremism in the name of Islam” (“Promoting Good Campuses Relations”, 17 November 2006). These guidelines amount to a state-sponsored witch hunt of Muslim societies. Make no mistake, this is an attempt to silence or purge any student, campus organisation or lecturer speaking out against the brutal colonial occupation of Iraq or Afghanistan, or defends the Palestinians against murderous assault by the Zionist state, by branding them as potential “terrorists”.

Paul Mackney, joint general secretary of the University and Colleges Union (UCU) has stated that UCU members “will not be police informers” and warned that lecturers “may be sucked into anti-Muslim McCarthyism”. State repression is a daily fact of life for Muslims, blacks, Asians and other minorities. For supposedly “looking Asian”, Brazilian electrician Jean Charles de Menezes was executed by the cops in July 2005. “War on terror” targets Muslims in the first instance but it will also be used to regiment the whole population and to repress social struggles. It is essential for students and most importantly the university unions to oppose this witch hunt of Muslim students. We say: Down with Labour’s racist “war on terror”!

SOAS student union bureaucrats enlist in “war on terror”

Ominously connecting foreign-language leaflets with “suspected extremist literature on campus”, the guidelines give a scenario in which “plaintiffs in the case of Young Spartacus”

... [rest of the text is not provided]