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FORWARD

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20st January 2011

A Monthly Political Paper of the Worker-communist Party of Iraq

www.wpiraq.net/english

Attacks on European welfare states and the tasks of Worker-communism

by Nadia Mahmood

This article looks at issues related to the welfare state in Britain (one of the capitalist states where social welfare is being wound back), the response of workers and students to this attack and the role of Iraqi Worker-communists in defending social gains.



The welfare state in Britain, as is also the case in many other capitalist countries in the Northern Hemisphere, is under a new attack. For the past 65 years (i.e. since social welfare reforms came into existence) every time there has been an economic crisis in capitalism there has been an attempt by governments to wipe out these reforms.

The welfare state is a goal that many millions in the Middle East and in the other parts of the world dream of achieving. It ensures free health services, some level of affordable accommodation, pensions for senior citizens and the disabled, free compulsory state education where a culture of free thought and expression is encouraged and punishment is banned and there are laws which allow the authorities to intervene in family affairs to protect the weakest (children and women) physically and economically.

Citizens in the Middle East and many other parts of the world do not enjoy these and many other related benefits, therefore gaining them is the dream of the vast majority.

Social welfare is one of the things which attracts millions of people from around the world to these countries. In the welfare state rights are “universal”, not relative or local. Everyone in the society enjoys these rights which are guaranteed by law. This is the principle which leads such countries to grant refugees similar rights to those of their citizens. Any physical violation or public statement opposing these principles is regarded as “racial discrimination”. Therefore, after living in the country to which they have emigrated for a certain time, refugees can become naturalized and live their lives just like other citizens.

In the welfare state working citizens pay taxes to the government. This tax forms the a large portion of the national income. The society is organized according to the capitalist system. The citizens pay tax and receive rights and benefits in return. The tax is used by the state to fund services like health, education, social security, roads, parks, libraries etc. and pay its expenses including launching wars- whether the citizens want to enter such wars or not.

When working citizens pay tax they are owed political rights by the state, or at least this is the way the democratic-

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Building Communist Organizations Abroad

By Saman Karim

Introduction

This thesis was presented in a forum for the cadre of overseas organizations of the Worker-communist Party of Iraq held on 2-3 October 2010. The attendees participated actively in the discussion and expressed their ideas and views about this issue.

It was presented under the title “The Global Economic Crisis and the Workers’ Movement in Europe”. When comrades questioned me about the title I responded that I chose it to attract the attention to the lively and strong workers’ movement worldwide and in Europe in particular, as we see demonstration and strikes of millions in Greece, France and many other European countries against the austerity policies adopted by European governments.

However, the thesis is not solely about massive labour protests and strikes or the economic crisis. Building communist organizations abroad is our task as communists within the Marxist tradition: communists with an active and interventionist approach in the issues of the class struggle. This is our task wherever we exist.

I explained in the cadre forum that this thesis does not discuss the following issues:

developments inside Iraq and abroad
frontline and rearguard i.e. whether the struggle inside Iraq is more important than the struggle abroad or vice versa.

the internationalist tasks of the party
whether the Party is strong or weak inside Iraq
My aim is not to find a task and then connect it to other tasks.

On the invitation of Mustafa Bahir, secretary of the Finish organization of the Worker-communist Party of Kurdistan, I presented this thesis again in Finland for a group of comrades. There too some serious and worthy comments and views were presented. After the two forums I revised this thesis in order to clarify the core issues and make them easier to understand.

Prospect of building communist organizations abroad.

Our fundamental task and our identity as Worker-communists, is to follow Marx’s and Mansoor Hekmat’s lines:

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Long live freedom, equality and worker state!

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Attacks on European welfare ...

capitalist society is supposed to operate. Out of these taxes, services are provided to working and unemployed people. Some have the illusion that this equals socialism, because no individual is left in abject poverty as a result of extreme economic conditions. This is especially so in the Scandinavian countries, where welfare benefits are superior to those available in the rest of Europe, in America, Australia and East Asia. Some go even further, trying to "correct" Marx by claiming that turning human labour power into commodities is something from the past as there are millions of citizens who live a decent life do so without being obliged to sell their labour power. However, the reality is that the vast majority do have to sell their labour power to support themselves and it is out of their taxes that benefits are paid to the unemployed.

This is the way the capitalist society is organized within the framework of the welfare state: a system where all citizens live in an economic, social and legal context which emerged and developed along with the growth and expansion of capitalism. But it must not be imagined that the social benefits available in these countries were granted by capitalists out of the goodness of their hearts: they were won in struggle by the working class's movement in country after country over many decades.

Today this system is under fierce attack right across Europe. Within the welfare state (and the UK is a classic example) many politicians are connected to the class which owns industry via numerous ties e.g. the connections of the Tory government with "The City" (banking and finance) in London.

The City is the centre of capital: it is where the large corporations, banks etc. provide solutions to the government during crises. The City has the power to summon the Queen for meetings with it after one week's notice. It also has the power to call the government for a meeting after two week's notice. The City is the UK's financial and economic powerhouse. Representatives of this centre of capital are members of the UK government.

When the Global Financial Crisis started to bite in 2008 and there was a possibility of bank collapses, the UK Labor government gave billions of Pounds to The City (money it had collected in taxes over many years from working people) to prevent this centre from collapsing.

To claw this money back, after five months in power the new Tory/Lib Dem government reduced funds dedicated to children and senior citizens, raised the cost of tertiary education threefold, changed accommodation laws, changed laws which regulated university funding for natural science and human science, raised the pension age from 60 to 62 years and announced plans to raise it still further: to 68.

This class policy, announced on 20th October 2010, will cause half a million workers to lose their jobs. This is in addition to the two and half million who are already unemployed. Soon three million plus workers will be competing for jobs: jobs which will not increase in number due to capitalist economies replacing more workers with machines.

The response to the Tory/Lib Dem government's announcement was immediate and widespread protest: student demonstrations (which included high school students, university students and lecturers), students barricading uni-

versity campuses, workers' strikes, public forums, academic forums and other massive demonstrations.

Co-ordinating these protests is a new organisation: a labour-student grouping called the Resistance Coalition. It held its first congress on 27th November 2010. The congress decided on a series of mass protests ranging from strikes to civil disobedience.

The Resistance Coalition aims to force the Tory/Lib Dem government to stop cutting spending on public services, stop privatization of welfare services and stop laying off more workers. It demands extra money be spent finding jobs for unemployed people. It aims to strengthen organizations which defend the rights of unemployed people and stand up to racist attacks against non Anglo citizens and asylum seekers.

The Resistance coalition has announced these major objectives:

a Week of Protest in February

a mass demonstration on 26th March (which it hopes will be larger even than the 2003 demonstrations against the war on Iraq),

coordination with resistance movements in other countries to move in a united way against the policies of European governments

a conference (to be convened as soon as possible) under the slogan "no cuts, no education fees"

A critical Evaluation of this movement

The student movement provided hot bloods to the workers' protests in Britain. This followed the French

example in using violence for the first time in demonstrations. It changed the language of the organizers, encouraged them to adopt civil disobedience and raised a militant spirit.

However, the question is what are the goals of building a movement of civil disobedience and raising a militant spirit?

Crises are an inherent part of the capitalist system. Depending on how vigorously the working class embarks on a defence of itself and its interests, it can temporarily protect its gains re jobs, education, health services, public services and son on. But the only guaranteed way to end attacks on the lives of the masses of people is to put an end to the capitalist system itself.


Mobilizing and organizing the masses is doable. The masses have come out in large demonstrations in Britain and across Europe and conferences have been held which endorsed fight back agendas. However, what is absent in this movement is a socialist and communist perspective in organizing and leading this movement.

The movement lacks a communist leadership, a communist presence and communist slogans even though communist activists are present within this movement and are an inseparable part of it. In these recent developments

Marxism has not been put forward as strongly as it was in the beginning of the crisis in 2007 and 2008.

This movement needs to learn the lessons of the antiwar protests: despite bringing millions of people onto the streets the war against Iraq took place. Without a Marxist perspective and a Marxist leadership, the anti-cuts movement will suffer a similar fate.

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Long live Working class!

Attacks on European welfare ...

The masses have not yet realized their power and their capabilities. Guiding them to the peak of their strength needs a well respected and influential leadership and a program which exceeds the list presented to the Resistance Coalition last November.

The red banners must fly high!

Workers are capable of twisting the arm of capitalism through strikes. The announcement of the fire fighters' strike in November horrified the government. The working class in Britain should embark on actions which make it more rewarding for the capitalist class to respond to the demands of workers than to attack them, through strikes which costs the system more than if it meets these demands.

This is the task for the socialist forces and Worker-communism in Britain and Europe. It is an enormous

task: to bring the working class and the masses out of this absolute chaos. The task of the Iraqi Worker-communists who live in Europe is to:

Be actively involved in helping to organize this movement and in clarifying its views and perspectives

Introduce Marxism to the vanguard part of this protesting movement

Emphasise class struggle and the fact that this is a struggle between workers and capital. It must be clear that the final goal is the overthrow of the whole capitalist system.

Substantiate a communist internationalism directed by the necessities and goals of class struggle.

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Building Communist Organizations Abroad

to see socialism as ending waged labour and building a society free of classes through workers' revolution and workers' rule... as followers of communism which has severed all links with all sorts of nationalist, democratic and other bourgeois tendencies. Our identity, the identity of this specific trend of communism i.e. Marx's communism, is the workers' class struggle and the effective ways of directing, organizing and leading this struggle toward its urgent and future goals. This communism is an integral part of the working class: a real and objective movement within the class.

Our communism is a vanguard current within the labour movement, regardless of whether this current is strong or weak. We see this current today in the labour movement in Europe fighting against the austerity policies of the bourgeoisie. For example, among the workers at the Caterpillar Construction Company in France who locked the company manager in his office for 24 hours to force him to repeal his decision to dismiss workers (their demand was met). We saw it also in the strikes in the oil port in Fos-lavera in the south of France where workers prevented six refineries from receiving crude oil for 18 days. And amongst the workers who picketed before a refinery which was only broken by police force. We are that section of workers and that is our Marxist tradition....

So, the core of our work (and of our identity at the same time) is to organize this movement and clarify its views and prospects before anything else. In the current stage, this identity means introducing Marx in all aspects

into the ranks of this vanguard part and the communist section within the workers' movement. Introducing Marx means introducing the "Communist Manifesto", "The German Ideology", "Critique of the Gotha program", "Capital" and the traditions in which Marx's political and organizational struggle took place and anything else relating to the class struggle by workers.

It also means explaining to workers that our communism is not Soviet Communism, Stalinism, Maoism, Euro-communism or Albanian communism. It is the communism of Marx, Lenin, Mansoor Hekmat and workers' leaders who sacrificed themselves for the cause of socialism and the class struggle.

As a consequence of this identity (or work) there are two fundamental principles for us:

workers' internationalism or communist internationalism.

This shapes how we look at the world and how we frame our analyses for the working class, society and human beings in general. This means a complete break with all bourgeois tendencies including nationalist, democratic (with all its adjuncts) and reformism. I do not mention political tendencies which represent the Islamic bourgeoisie because it is well known that communism has totally severed all links to this movement in whatever its form. In other words, we are living representatives of the principle that "workers have no homeland".

abroad, we are an organized Marxist-communist entity, part of the organizational structure of our Worker-

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Leather workers strike win

On October 25 workers in the leather Industries Company in Baghdad announced an open strike over danger allowances. These allowances, which workers considered part of their earnings, had been cut by the administrators.

Prior to the strike the workers attempted to resolve matters by sending a delegation to meet the deputy minister of Industrial Ministry_Mr Maki Ajeb Hamodi. He promised to investigate the issue and inform them of the result. In fact Mr Hamodi did send a letter to the managers of the leather company in this regard but they refused to back down. After further attempts at negotiation with the administrators which led nowhere the workers decided to strike.

The strike involved all branches of the company. The striking workers did not just stay at home. They demonstrated in front of the company's building chanting slogans which condemned the administration for taking away their rights. After only a few hours of this the managers caved in, promising to restore the danger allowances providing they were called something else.

The striking workers accepted this proposal and voted to resume work the next day.

Long live freedom, equality and worker state!

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Building Communist ...

communist parties (whether that be the Worker-communist Party of Iraq, Worker-communist Party of Iran-Hekmatist or Worker-communist Party of Kurdistan). We, as part of this political formation, must strive to strengthen these parties and be a vital part in transforming them into capable, revolutionary Marxist parties.

The link which connects these two principles is the communist identity and the communist essence which is our barometer and our view of the world.

Strengthening the party and the international Worker-communism as a vanguard movement within the working class are two inseparable issues which complement each other and there is an obvious practical class and political link between them.

As Marx said in the Manifesto: "The Communists are distinguished from the other working-class parties by this only:

(1) In the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries, they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of nationality.

(2) In the various stages of development which the struggles of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole".

This means that communism necessarily forms the movement which represents the most advanced segments of the working class, which understands the conditions and requirements of the final goal and the final victory of the class struggle and endeavours to mobilize the various strata in the working class.

The practical, political meaning of the essence of communism (in the way explained by Marx in the Mani-

fest) and the way it differs from all types of nationalist currents and other bourgeois movements... is that the class struggle and the fight of the worker against capital is our main cause wherever we exist... whether it's taking place in our countries of origin or in the countries we now live in. The essence of communism is overthrowing the existing system through and abolishing waged labour and building a communist society through the workers' revolution and Workers' rule.

This requires that Worker-communists have an internationalist understanding (in both the practical and political sense as well as the theoretical sense) rather than just raising class slogans and slogans of solidarity. It means looking at the working class as an international class which has common class interests: pure, practical, political interests.

The Worker-communist Party of Iraq, as the vanguard of this class in Iraq, is a vanguard part of the struggle of the class and its social structure internationally. Our party struggles to lead the workers' revolution within the boundaries of a certain country. Question is: how do we see the political power in Iraq in relation to a globalized capitalist world not just on the economic front and its free market model but also on the political and theoretical fronts?!

How do we, in the Overseas Organization (as part of the Party and at the same time part of an international class front), interact with these conditions? We need to do our part in strengthening Worker-communism on an international scale as well as assist our party in Iraq in the struggle to seize power. We need to ask ourselves which practical political activities by the party abroad will put it on the right track.

Building communist organi-

zations

First: The overseas organizations, by definition, exist outside Iraq. Worker-communism's human force abroad is as involved in the societies where they live as other citizens. In Sweden, in the UK, in Canada, Norway, France and Switzerland our comrades are just as badly affected by government cuts in social services and attacks on democratic rights as everyone else. Their livelihood, their political, social, civil and economic rights, the rearing of their children and their social relations are linked to these societies. In other words, the vast majority of our members overseas have become an inseparable part of the working class in their countries: many are members of trade unions, others are active in various social justice causes. The struggles of workers in their countries to better their living standards and win more political, social and economic rights (or just the struggle to defend existing living standards which is what's happening in all European countries right now) involves our members. They are an inseparable part of these struggles: they too are in the middle of these situations. The struggle for a better life for them is inevitably linked to struggles by all workers for these things.

Second: The communist partisan committees. These committees (as is the case with all our organizational organs) is formed on a purely social basis, not on the basis of "communities" or "multiculturalism". These things are driven by cultural, nationalist, and religious elements which do not have an economic basis, either in Iraq or abroad.


Overseas the driving force in society is the class struggle: the struggle of workers against capital, especially when we talk about Europe, North America, Australia, and Japan which are the most advanced capitalist countries. As communism is a vanguard

current within the working class movement, the communist and partisan committees must base their pillars in the class struggle. Our comrades are involved in this struggle as waged workers, like other waged workers. Probably the only differences are the colour of their skin and their mother tongue.

But communism as an ideology, as an idea and a political approach is not hindered by these issues. It works to overcome them and replace them with the human identity of the worker. This is a feature which differentiate Marx's communism, our communism, from all bourgeois movements without exception. Therefore the party committees are communist committee in the Marxist tradition. They are committees which interact and are affected by the social circumstances in these countries, not only because they are communist but also because they organize workers and individuals whose lives and rights are linked to the circumstances of these societies. A communist organization cannot be build without a social basis.

Our "workers", the members of the party or members of what are called "communities" work in both the industrial and the service sectors in these societies. So what are the social and class basis of their organizational relations?

Their presence and prominence in the class struggle and in the workers' movement and their involvement as communist citizens and workers in their countries and their political and social presence in the public sphere such as, for example, seeking support from trade union* leaders, writing articles for or making appearance in the media has a big impact on their prominence within what is called the "Arab and Kurd communities". But it must be noted that these "communities" are in fact divided into two

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classes; the bourgeoisie and working class. And, as the vast majority are workers they are affected, like other workers and unemployed people, by the policies of governments in their countries.

Seclusion and isolation within what are called "communities" in the name of "multiculturalism" is what puts a nationalist or religious blindfold over the eyes of some members of these "communities". It's why many do not see themselves as ordinary citizens of the countries they're living in. One of our main tasks is to remove such blindfolds. Therefore, in my opinion, communist involvement in the social conditions in the countries concerned has a direct impact on the "communities" and in attracting them to communism and the party.

In this sense, our organizations need to build their influence to successfully exploit any political changes in favor of the party in Iraq, Kurdistan and Iran and will have the power to mobilize worker solidarity, and communist and leftist personalities in support of the workers' movement in Iraq. They will participate in safeguarding the party and defending it whenever that is required, in addition to attracting Arabic speaking people to our political course.

Third: The party's committees overseas have another partisan task which is activity amongst Arabic speaking people who are called by the bourgeoisie, the nationalist movements and parties and the mainstream media "the Arab or Iraqi community" and are called by the Islamic parties and the Islamic media "the Islamic community" which is even more insidious. Having intellectual and political impact

and undermining the intellectual and political influence of the nationalist and Islamic movements on these milieus is a very important task for the communist committees and their cadre. This goal, along with winning them to communism and the Worker-communist Party, can only be achieved by adopting the international political view explained above.

"Multiculturalism"

"Multiculturalism", as a political and intellectual concept, is common to all bourgeois political movements (nationalist, Islamic and reformist) other than the extreme right. The policy of "multiculturalism" (which has become a dangerous policy in relation to the human identity of the worker for over two decades) is the umbrella under which almost all bourgeois tendencies come together. Under this compassionate-sounding name, is an attempt to convince workers that that are not human beings so much as Arabs, Kurds, Swedes, British, Americans, Australians, Iranians, Muslims, Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Shia or Sunni!

It is a policy which represents the interests of the bourgeois class in dividing workers under false identities based on political, cultural and intellectual differences. These essentially cultural (rather than class) concepts i.e. traditions, heritage, literature, art and morals etc. have found their way into the constitutions of the advanced capitalist countries.

Culture, law, the constitution, politics and morals are all parts of the superstructure of the capitalist system. Together, they form one of the main political wedges designed to divide human workers on the basis of nationalism, religion, color of skin, East or West in order to protect bourgeois private property and divide us. Multicultural-

ism as a policy and law is the extreme of what the democratic bourgeoisie in its most refined forms in the capitalist west has reached and is a long way from our essential unity as human beings. I am not talking here about the fascist and racist movements.

Under the umbrella of "multiculturalism" the bourgeois tries to protect capital and private property, not only in the west but also in the original countries of these "communities" as well. In other words, strengthening the cultural structure in this wide sense means both strengthening the dominant class in the original countries and strengthening the religious and nationalist policies and ideas in western countries. This assists the most reactionary traditions and norms within these "communities" and aids in financing organizations which divide the ranks of the working class, distancing it from its international feature as the labour force.

Because migration is vital for capital, "multiculturalism" is necessary to keep workers from organizing effectively. This policy is used as a tool to break strikes, lower wages and lower the minimum wage in these countries which boasted (until a few years ago) about their "welfare states". Human rights for all have been set aside in the interests of the "rights" of nationalities, sects and religions. This represents a regression in the intellectual and cultural system of the bourgeoisie in comparison to the beginning and the middle of the 20th century. This reactionary regression is called "post modernism".

But it has not worked. As German Chancellor Angela Merkel announced on 16th October 2010 in a meeting of the youth arm of the Christian Democratic Union, Germany's attempt to build a "multicultural" society

has "utterly failed" (which is not to deny the racist content concealed inside this statement). Many other left wing and right wing bourgeois parties have trotted out the old slogan "When in Rome, do as the Romans do". Regardless of the politics of the parties which raise this slogan, they all agree that the policy of "multiculturalism" has failed.

According to their view, the integration of refugees and migrants in these countries (according to the policy of "multiculturalism") has not worked. The refugees and migrants (according to their description) lean toward their nationalities, sects and traditions more than leaning toward the traditions of the society they have settled in. From both intellectual and political aspects this represents a big failure of the ideas, views, approach and policies of the reactionary post-modernists who believes in "texts", "interpretations", "sophistry" and "lack of truth" in comparison to objective reality and the class struggle. For the post-modernist the class struggle is an outdated concept, not a reality.

This failure provides an additional opportunity for Marxists and all who seek communism and a society free of classes to struggle in order to put the worker as a human being in his right position: as a worker "who has no homeland" and a human being without religion or nationality, non Eastern and non Western. This requires a class struggle on many levels.

Communities

In this framework, the prevailing view in various communities (and here we are talking about the Arab community in general and the Iraqi community in particular) is to support "multiculturalism" because it gives some of the leading figures in these communities

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Long live Socialism!

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the opportunity to organize their constituents according to the traditions which they bring with them to the "host" country. In this sense, the community believes it will protect its identity in "exile". This framework of thinking generally is in the first place a nationalist framework, view, policy, tradition and approach. It is imposed on the "newcomer" or "migrant worker" and the "hosting" worker adapts to it.

Here is what Marx had to say on religion... (from Contribution to a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right): "The foundation of irreligious criticism is: *Man makes religion, religion does not make man.* Religion is, indeed, the self-consciousness and self-esteem of man who has either not yet won through to himself, or has already lost himself again. But *man* is no abstract being squatting outside the world. *Man is the world of man* – state, society. This state and this society produce religion, which is an *inverted consciousness of the world*, because they are an *inverted world*. Religion is the general theory of this world, its encyclopaedic compendium, its logic in popular form, its spiritual *point d'honneur*, its enthusiasm, its moral sanction, its solemn complement, and its universal basis of consolation and justification. It is the *fantastic realization* of the human essence since the *human essence* has not acquired any true reality. The struggle against religion is, therefore, indirectly the struggle *against that world* whose spiritual *aroma* is religion."

We can here replace religion with nationalism. Or add nationalism to this wonderful thesis. Then we can say man makes nationalism and he makes it every day. Man makes his "community" every

day and makes illusions for himself and the soul of these illusions including "exile", "foreigner", "Kurd", "Arab", "Iranian" and "Swede". This comes to be seen as the "real world" i.e the capitalist state with a bourgeois class and various political movements and different nationalist, democratic, reformist and Islamic parties. It is its enormous cultural and media institutions and organizations which drum up these illusions.

However, this view of people as members of "communities" contradicts the social basics: contradicts the life of the worker as a human being trying to earn his/her livelihood and struggling for ways to improve his/her situation. It's like air turbulence, having no relation to conditions on the ground and to objective realities under which the worker human being suffers. Such cultural turbulences aim to divide the ranks of workers on the basis of false identities. The notion of "communities" is a tool to lower the political and economic aspirations of the worker human being. Its purpose is to try and convince the new citizens that he cannot make common purpose with his/her fellow workers because the nation is divided into "hosts" and "migrants".

The policy of "communities" is designed to ensure that workers from Iraq, Sudan, Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, Sri Lanka, Somalia etc. who have migrated to the western countries maintain their national and religious traditions and reproduce them according to the interests of the global economy. The first impact this policy has on the workers is creating a feeling that they live in "exile", live in another "human" society and there is no connection between them and their new society because they are Arabs, Kurds, Afghans, Irani-

ans, Iraqis, Saudis, Egyptians, Algerian, Somalians, Sri Lankan Tamils etc.

The traditions they talk about are traditions classified on a global scale. So they are class traditions and in favor of the bourgeoisie on a global scale. The European, Iraqi, Egyptian, Saudi and Algerian etc. bourgeoisie benefit from the reproduction of these false identities. The bourgeoisie in the western countries "The Centre": whether that "Centre" be Germany, France, Sweden, Britain, the USA, Canada, Australia etc also benefit from reproduction of these identities. In the economic domain, this produces cheap labour in the poor countries that are under the dominance of the advanced countries through brute oppression and the support of the "multiculturalism" and cultural relativism. In the "The Centre" it also maintains and reproduces cheap labour by creating competition between the worker who was born in that country and the migrant worker. "The communities" are not expected to enjoy the same lifestyle and standard of living as "born-here" workers. When major corporations migrate to China, Malaysia, Bangladesh and the countries of Eastern Europe chasing higher profits from low paid workers they are benefiting from this global division of labour.

The idea of "culture in its wider meaning" is a reflection of a global division into the major capitalist countries and the dominated countries. The dominated countries have to provide "cheap labour" and "suppressed workers", which means workers who are poorly paid in comparison to workers in Western countries. Workers in the dominated countries are deprived of economic and political rights like the right to organize, to strike and other political and social rights. To

protect this economic advantage the capitalist class requires a repressive superstructure in the dominated countries. This superstructure is extremely reactionary, exercising oppression and tyranny in its severest forms; banning freedom of expression and the freedom to criticise, using extreme violence against women, and meting out severe punishments from imprisonment without trial to the death penalty.

This necessitates extremely reactionary and outdated ideologies, from repulsive nationalism to political Islam and bourgeois communism like Chinese communism, which is, in essence, nationalist or bourgeois democracies of the new models like what we have in Iraq: an ethnic, sectarian parliament.

So "community" and "communities" is not only alien to our concepts and elements of our struggle, it is also one of the bourgeois class strategies to prevent the worker from seeing himself as a human being, from satisfying his aspirations and from him establishing unity with other workers as men without a homeland.

Our slogan or concept i.e. that "workers have no homeland" is substantiated practically and objectively when one looks at the global market and the continuous struggle by workers to obtain jobs in any place and country in the world without been stopped by artificial borders. The migration of workers and corporations is happening on a large scale in all parts of the world.

B e c a u s e "communities" lack a real social basis, they are false elements like nationalism, religion, Eastern and Western... they do not spring from any economic realities.

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Therefore the policy of “multiculturalism”, backed by the IMF, the World Bank and Western governments which funds “communities” through their organizations with large sums under the name of NGOs and other organizations of civil society such as charities... has never worked in these “communities”. The Islamic organization as an organizations in civil society, may be able to organize scores of youth in Europe, but for terrorism only.

However Iraqi, Afghani, Somali, and Kurdish “communities” have never and will never be organized according to this policy. But it has led many to stick with reactionary traditions that favour the bourgeoisie: this is the soul of such a policy.

These traditions are malignant yeast upon which all sects of the bourgeois feeds.

Marx’s communism, our Worker-communism, requires us to organize the workers and clarify the views of the class and raise its awareness wherever we exist. The class struggle by workers is our identity and task. Therefore removing the label of “community”, “exile”, “refugee” and “migrant” is part of our political and partisan work. This requires us to bring Marxism into all topics, events, social and political conditions in these societies.

Please note: it is not within the scope of this thesis to deal with the trade unions

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The Economic Recession...

is leading the working class worldwide in this confrontation. The students, who are the successors of the working class, have taken part in the struggle of their parents to defend their future. The great demonstrations of workers and students in Greece, the massive demonstrations and strikes in France with the wide support of the public, the strikes in Spain and Portugal and demonstrations of workers and students in Britain are some trenches of the class struggle that has now begun between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie of Europe. The bourgeoisie, with full force and all its means, its intellectuals, politicians, mass media, governments, armies and police forces is taking part in the battle against working class. The latter should enter this battle with everything it has in order to win it.

Despite the relentless and selfless struggle by workers to defend their existence, living standards and their political, social and economical gains, however the working class cannot fight this fierce and comprehensive battle against the bourgeoisie only through trade unions and syndicates. The trade unions and syndicates, even the most radical and militant of them, are limited to just one side of this struggle and their ability is limited. Strikes and demonstrations are not quite enough to foil the attacks of the bourgeois governments to increase the pension age, lay off more workers, cut public services, and reduce the obligations of the state toward education, accommodation and health services when each field is fought separately while the chance of success in any single filed is low. Because these attacks are only a part of a wider class struggle which aims to keep the capitalist system living on the expense of the lives and future of the working class and its political, social and economical status.

The answer of the working class to the recession of capitalism and its whole oppressive system is socialism. To achieve this goal, we need to seize power and to organize a social revolution. The Paris Commune has proved that the solution to the greed and encroachment of the bourgeoisie on the lives and rights of the working class and deprived people is workers’ revolution and taking the state power from the bourgeoisie. The October revolution led by Lenin has proved that revolution and the establishment of the workers’ state cannot be achieved without a political party of the working class. That is why, these historical facts are once again posed before the working class in Europe and worldwide: in order to abolish this bourgeois system based on oppression and inequality and establish a modern and equal society we need revolution. And revolution can only be carried out by a Marxist militant party that has a political and social influence on the working mass.

The triumph of the working class in Europe and America in the struggle to defend their lives and achievements, and to decide their future, relies on existence of Worker-communist parties which have a clear view about the struggle of the working class and can lead it to achieve its final goal. There is a need to a party which can lead the current struggle by the workers against the bourgeois attacks and turn it to a mass political struggle to disable the machine of the bourgeois state. This is a duty put in front of every worker-communist activist, every Marxist and workers’ leader.

December 2010

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Public sector workers oppose govt. ban on union membership

Baghdad 13 November: a group of trade union activists employed in enterprises controlled by the Commerce Ministry announced the establishment of a Preparatory Committee to fight for the rights of their colleagues to belong to a union. The government’s new laws take society back to the Saddam days in banning all unions in the public sector

The activists present at the meeting were elected from their workplaces. It was held in the office of the Federation of Workers’ Councils and Unions in Iraq (FWCUI).

The meeting was attended by union and labour activists from a wide variety of workplaces. These included Hamid Hassan, Salim, Shaaban Ahmad Salman, Theaa Najim Abod, Nasir Saadon Ali, Hussein Abass Qasim, Salah Salim, Abdul Sadaa and Sadiq Hassan Mor-tatha.

Also present was Falah Alwan president of the FWCUI and Mohamad Jassim Hafith, the FWCUI’s legal advisor.

The meeting discussed ways to deal with these laws, for example how to keep holding union elections and support workers’ rights.

WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE!

FORWARD

1st December 2010A Monthly Political Paper of the Worker-communist Party of Iraq www.wpi.org.uk/english

Why Forward??

Tom Howard

A SHORT MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

The online bulletin Forward appeared regularly from early 2004 to January 2006. Its cessation was an unfortunate



Interview with Nicolas Dessant

On the Recent Workers' Protests in France

Nicolas Dessant has been active since 2003 organizing "Solidarité Inal", a French association in support of the workers' and women's movements in Iraq. Also his translated breakdown of



Writers outraged at closure of social clubs

The Iraqi Writers Union (IWU) condemns what it calls Khomeni-ism and Talabanism during a gathering to protest the Baghdad Council's decision to close social clubs and nightclubs (including the IWU's own social club). Since May 2009 the Council has closed 90 liquor outlets.

The gathering was organized by the Al-mada institution for media and art at Almutanabi Street in the middle of Baghdad. The closures were carried out by Iraqi police. In the case of the IWU social club, the manager was forced to sign a closure notice which (incorrectly) listed it as a nightclub.

The head of the IWU, Fathil Samir addressed the demonstrating writers and intellectuals saying "we do not want a Khomeni-style, Talaban-style state in Iraq. The attack on freedoms comes within the framework of a tyrannical approach which prevailed in Iraq in the past. Higher government organs should intervene and put a stop to these developments which take us back to the days of

the deposed Saddam regime".

Media personality Ali Hussein, who also addressed the rally, added "I hope the government will quickly intervene to end these detrimental and oppressive practices which suppress personal rights. Such practices take us back to the so-called 'faith campaign' launched by Saddam's regime". Ali Hussein was referring to the ban on cafes, hotels and restaurants serving alcohol introduced in 1994 during the economic international embargo against Iraq. The "faith campaign" was launched by Saddam in an attempt to win the support of Islamist leaders for his policies.

Demonstrators at the rally chanted slogans which included "Baghdad will not be another Qandahar" and "Freedoms first."

In a parallel development local authorities in the provinces of Najaf, Wasid and Basra (where Prime Minister Al Maliki's political bloc rules) have also banned the sale of alcohol

The Oppressive Regimes and Their Backers are Responsible for the Christmas Island Refugee Boat Crash Tragedy

A boat carrying about 100 asylum seekers from Iraq and Iran in its way from Indonesia to Australia in pursuit of a better and safer life smashed against the Christmas Island coastline yesterday morning. Dozens of people on-board, including children and women have died. The bodies of 30 asylum seekers were recovered. 42 people have survived the accident. Many survivors are treated for minor injuries and two seriously injured women are flown to Royal Perth Hospital for treatment. Survivors are in poor mental status and are waiting to be transferred to mainland.

This is not the first tragedy of this kind in last few years. Just in last few months there were few incidents of suicide in Australian detention centres. The last incident was the suicide of an Iraqi asylum seeker, Ahmed Al Akabi in Villawood detention centre.

The main reason behind these tragedies is the presence of oppressive religious and ethnocentric regimes in countries like Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan which oppress their citizens in all aspects. To escape oppression and insecurity under these sectarian and ethnocentric bour-

geois regimes, people are forced to take risk with their lives and the lives of their children in pursuit of a better life.

However, the United Nations and advanced countries including Australia have a role in such tragedies by involving in the wars on Iraq and Afghanistan, supporting and dealing with these oppressive regimes and denying their responsibilities toward asylum seekers. Therefore they should be condemned.

We in the Australian Committee of the Worker-communist Party of Iraq express our sorrow for the tragedy, and extend our condolence to the families and friends of the victims. We wish the injured asylum seekers speedy recovery. We hold the oppressive regimes in Iraq and Iran the responsibility of this tragedy. We condemn the UNHCR for its lack of action toward the plight of asylums seekers worldwide and the anti-refugees policies of the Australian government.

Australian Committee of the Worker-communist Party of Iraq

16th December 2010.

Continuation of p10

Let's Unite the ...

cal rights under a tyrannical state, which does everything possible to impose material and moral retreat on the society including using violence and terrorism.

This reactionary attack on statues, theatre, alcohol use, music and nightclubs is an attack on everything that reflects civilization,

modernity and human progress. It is an attack on society, its memories and its history. It is an attack on the happiness and prosperity of millions of Iraqis. These practices are aimed at bringing the masses to their knees and humiliating them so they become totally subordinated to the daily policies and agendas of the ruling militias.

Peaceful demonstrators shot by police in Suleimanya Kurdistan govt's first show of force after banning all demonstrations that do not have police approval

By Mozafer Abdulla

Last week residents in the suburb of Chia in the city of Suleimanya organized a demonstration against the opening of a factory in a residential part of their neighbourhood. Because this demonstration was organized without the approval of the police they attacked it, shooting some demonstrators and beating others. One man and one woman were seriously injured and scores of people were arrested.

Prior to this (12 December) several thousand people demonstrated in Suleimanya in front of the city council. The demonstration was organized by a group calling itself December 12, which is the day Masoud Barzani (President of Kurdistan province) signed the law. Representatives from many political groups, including Nawzad Babban a member of the politburo of the Worker-communist Party of Kurdistan, addressed the demonstrators and expressed their opposition to the law.

Demonstrations were also held in the towns of Kalar, Ranyia and Darbandykhana demanding the law be abolished.

Some months ago a draft of the law was passed by the Kurdistan parliament which is dominated by two parties: the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and

the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). The law was signed without delay by Masoud Barzani and the regional government immediately began enforcing it. This law, like most of the laws passed by the Kurdistan parliament, is reactionary and against the interests of the masses in this region. Banning the freedom to protest is an attack on basic political rights.

According to this law, no group or segment of society is allowed to organize and express any form of protest without obtaining a permit from the police and the security forces. This means any protest which is not endorsed (or at least approved) by the authorities should not proceed.

If the authorities have advance notice of protests it gives them the chance to either foil or attack them. Any group or social segment in Kurdistan that protests without the approval of the police and the security forces will face oppression and the courts.

Many political groups, human rights organizations and freedom loving people in Kurdistan have been protesting against this law from the



Worker-communist Party of Iraq in fight against officials' attacks on secularism and civil rights

The Baghdad Committee of the Worker-communist Party of Iraq launched several actions in defence of secularism and civil rights in recent days.

Firstly- against the decision of the Baghdad Council to shut down all social clubs, nightclubs and liquor shops in the city. Secondly- against the Education Ministry's decision to ban the teaching of music and drama in Baghdad's Fine Arts College and to remove various statues from the college grounds.

The party's statement opposing these measures was handed out in Baghdad on 10th December and received many favourable comments from members of the public. The following day WPIraq members participated in a demonstration in Alfardoos square where placards and banners of the party were raised and the above statement again distributed. Journalists from several media outlets interviewed WPIraq activists after the demonstration.

time it was approved by the parliament. The protests include collecting signatures, issuing statements, media campaigns and demonstrations in many cities and towns.

The KDP and the PUK, as two militia-tribalist parties are continuously striving to impose their oppressive rule on the masses of the people in Kurdistan through such reactionary laws and resolutions. They claim the new laws are to encourage law and order. However, for ordinary people, this is about restricting their rights and freedoms.

The authorities in Kurdistan realise that- due to the widening gap between rich and poor, estimated unemployment of 50 per cent, abject poverty, widespread corruption, favouritism, and the control of the economy by a handful of capitalists and party officials- protests are inevi-

table. To maintain their grip they need to pass laws which restrict the people's freedoms.

Whenever they face an issue not covered by an oppressive law of their own the authorities apply the laws of the discredited and hated Baath (Saddam) regime. For example, scores of journalists have had to face the courts for reporting on corruption. As the judiciary in Kurdistan is not independent, most of these journalists have been convicted and given heavy sentences.

This is what is actually going on in Kurdistan under the rule of the KDP and the PUK. These parties are not the fine Middle Eastern examples of democracy and supporters of human rights that many western governments and media outlets make them out to be.

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FORWARD

No 2 Round 2 20st January 2011

Let's Unite the Struggle for a Civilised Iraq!

Worker-communist Party of Iraq

A few days ago the Iraq Ministry of Education banned the teaching of drama and music in the Fine Art College in Baghdad. This attack was preceded by a Taliban-style measure... the removal of statues which had decorated the entrance of the college for many decades: statues which highlight the development of the society and its civil landmarks. These statues represent an important, live and immortal part of the history of art and civilisation in Iraq. Iraqis have always taken pride in the society's civility and secularism.

At the same time the notorious Council of Baghdad launched a city-wide operation to close social clubs and liquor shops under extremely false pretences. This too is a blatant assault on individual freedoms and the right to secular entertainment in the society: a step reminiscent of the hardened religious reaction in Iran, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan and parts of North Africa.

This string of assaults against civility and modernity is an attempt by the authorities to eradicate the secular and humanist atmosphere in the society in the so-called "New Iraq". It is an Iraq which has witnessed a destructive war, a brutal occupation, the killing of hundreds of thousands of people, the displacement of millions, the worst forms of sectarianism, ethnocentrism, tribalism and other ominous primitive sentiments: all of which have open the gates to plunder by sectarian and tribal militias and the expropriation of the civil rights and freedoms of the masses.

These measures are an out-

right attack on the society, its history, civility and freedoms. They are a source of rage and condemnation by every person concerned with the society and its humanism. These reactionaries... following in the footsteps of the Islamic regimes in Iran, Taliban in Afghanistan... are trying to bury our secular traditions alive. The statues at the entrance to the Fine Arts College, those along its walkways and those outside social clubs are historical icons of Baghdad and evidence of its civility and modernity. The medieval authorities now ruling Iraq advocate another history, a history which has nothing to do with this era and human progression.

These measures are political and those implementing them have political agendas. Liquor shops are not being closed because of "people's complaints", as the authorities allege. These claims are ridiculous and will not convince the masses in Iraq who know very well the essence of the ruling authority in Iraq and its agenda.

Those speaking for the "New Iraq" claim brazenly that respecting individual and civil rights is the hallmark of their rule and one of its fundamental pillars. However the reality is that out of 30 million people who live under the capitalist regime in today's Iraq, only a tiny minority enjoy individual and civil rights. These are either big capitalists or people living in the "green zone".

The situation for the vast majority is total absence of politi-

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The Economic Recession of Capitalism and the Response of Worker-communism!

Worker-communist Party of Kurdistan (Iraq)

The capitalist world has been in a very deep recession for three years. Although the states and the bourgeois political, ideological and economical centres tried at first to limit their crisis in a corner of the world and claimed it is a financial and banking crisis just in a limited number of countries. However the fact emerged that under the dominance of the financial capital this capitalist crisis was engulfing the whole world and was spreading to all the bases and foundations of the capital. At last the bourgeoisie was obliged to consider the current crisis deeper than the Great Recession of the late twenties of the last century and the recession before the Second World War.

The current crisis of the bourgeoisie is not the crisis of one section of bourgeoisie or a model of capitalism. It is not the crisis of the state capitalism model vis-a-vis the capitalism of the free market; but it is the crisis of the capitalism of free market itself, i.e. today's capitalist system. The capitalist system, the class system which benefits and accumulates capital by controlling the product of labor of workers, has shown its failure in concern to the economic and social life and wellbeing of humanity. The current recession proves, to the workers and the entire humanity that this class system is in conflict with the lives, living standards and the future of the human beings. That is why in order to survive the recession and prolong its life the workers, deprived people and the entire humanity have to suffer and pay sacrifices.

To overcome its crises, the bourgeoisie has always brought calamities on the society. Wars, genocides and destruction have been inflicted on the humanity as the result of confrontation and rivalry among various sections and wings of the bourgeoisie. In recent history there were two World Wars, as well as many regional and internal bloody conflicts created by the bourgeoisie states and forces. In addition, the attack of the bourgeois states on the political and economic gains of the working class, cutting the services, imposing harsher working conditions, reducing wages, increasing unemployment and making working class pay the price of saving capital, capitalists and bank owners is the solution of the bourgeoisie and its states to its recessions. The right wing parties coming to power in most European countries; the attacks by Sarkozy's government in France; the conservative government in the Britain; the so-called socialist government in Greece against workers, students and poor people; the failure of Obama's call for change after two years of serving in White House for the American bourgeoisie, show the ferocity of the attacks by the bourgeoisie in order to overcome its crisis on the expenses of the workers and deprived people.

Alongside these attacks by the bourgeoisie on the working class, the workers' fight back has begun. The working class in Europe

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