

Neither Washington nor Beijing, but international socialism!

The arrogance of the US ruling class, heightened by their years as the sole world superpower since 1991, threatens to plunge the world back into a new nuclear arms race.

George W Bush's "National Missile Defence" project will siphon off much-needed resources to arms-industry profiteers. Designed to demonstrate US invulnerability and overwhelming dominance to the world, it may well set going a new global arms race.

To justify its military plans, Bush's administration is waving the flag and talking up enemies. It chose to "talk tough" in its confrontation with the Chinese government over its grounded spy plane.

China's neo-Stalinist bureaucrats can match Washington for arrogance. When ruling-class big-power arrogance meets ruling-class big-power arrogance, millions of ordinary human lives can be put at risk. No-one should be complacent about the potential for destructive escalation in this conflict.

This is not yet a full-blown New Cold War. The basic trend of US-Chinese relations since

the 1970s has been towards accommodation, the re-entry of US capital into China and the re-entry of China into world trade. It is too soon to say that the spy-plane crisis marks the end of that trend, rather than an episodic conflict.

But we should learn lessons from the first Cold War. Then, all too many people on the left got trapped in the narrow alternatives of "power politics". Because they were rightly opposed to US imperialism, they thought they had to support, or half-support, or "defend", or deny the existence of, the rival Russian imperialism. That was an abdication of socialist responsibility to the oppressed peoples of Eastern Europe and the USSR.

We should not fall into the same trap again and think that opposing US imperialism means we have to side with Chinese imperialism. China is not only one of the most brutal regimes

in the world with its treatment of its own workers the country has vast slave-labour camps, and independent trade unions are persecuted but also an imperialist power. However much we disagree with the Tibetan leaders in exile, or the government of Taiwan, the peoples of Tibet and of Taiwan have the right to self-determination.

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The future of the Socialist Alliance

- Party, federation or what?
 - What sort of democracy?
 - What orientation in the trade unions?
- An open platform for contributions from all the tendencies and viewpoints in the Alliance.**

5.30pm, Wednesday 11 July

"The Plough", Museum Street (a short walk down Gower Street).

● Meeting organised by Workers' Liberty

Workers' Liberty

Bulletin for the discussion at "Marxism 2001", no.3.



Lost Texts of Critical Marxism

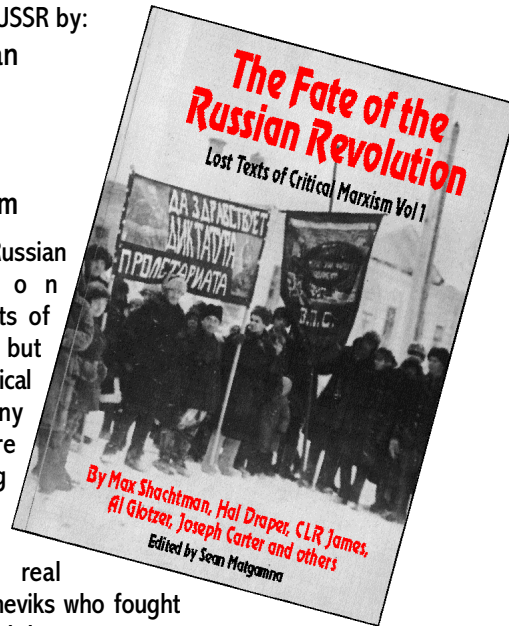
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