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RABBLE ROUSER

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

The rulers constantly bombard us with the message that "communism is dead," that it hasn't worked and cannot work, and that revolutions in power lead to tyranny. One aspect of their ideological crusade is to systematically distort the revolutionary experiences of the Soviet Union and China, especially the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. And the lies and slanders they put out often have the veneer of factuality.

The RCP has initiated a project to *Set the Record Straight*. Its aim is to bring out the truth of these revolutions—their great achievements and victories, along with their mistakes and shortcomings—and to bring forward the works and insights of Bob Avakian in summing up these experiences and pointing to lessons for humanity today. The campaign will involve research, writing, debates, and outreach. It will focus on colleges and universities. We invite all who are interested to take part.

The first effort of this project is a sharp Q&A response to the charges and distortions of the bourgeoisie: *Everything You've Been Told About Communism Is Wrong: Frequently Asked Questions About Socialism, Communism, and the Cultural Revolution*. An excerpt follows:

Didn't the Maoist revolution in China promise benefits but cause needless violence and create new suffering for people?

China's socialist revolution of 1949-76 resulted in a vast improvement in life for the Chinese people. Between 1949 and 1975, life expectancy in socialist China more than doubled, from about 32 to 65 years. By the early 1970s, infant mortality rates in Shanghai were lower than in New York City!¹ All this reveals a profound reduction in the violence of everyday life. The extent of literacy swelled in the span of one generation—from about 15 percent in 1949 to some 80 to 90 percent in the mid-1970s.²

Let's go a bit more deeply into the profound difference socialism made to most people. Before the revolution came to power in 1949, China had been dominated by foreign imperialist powers. By practically all available measures, the economy was near the bottom of the world development scale. It had little industry. Agriculture was brutal serfdom. China had the most ruinous inflation in modern world history. It had a vast criminal underworld of gangsters and secret societies, and almost 90 million opium addicts. For women, it was a living hell: bride binding, arranged marriages, and child brides were widespread social practices. Prostitution was rampant in the cities.

These kinds of social evils and the extreme polarization of wealth that existed before 1949 were eradicated by the revolution: through the establishment of proletarian state power and the creation of a just

Social and Economic Achievements Under Mao

social and economic order that unleashed the masses of people and served their interests.

Only a revolution could, and did, uproot the feudal economic system in the countryside. The land reform and repudiation of peasant debt carried out under the leadership of the Communist Party in the late 1940s and early 1950s represented the most massive expropriation and redistribution of wealth from rich to poor in world history.³

The 1950 Marriage Law of revolutionary China established marriage by mutual consent, right to divorce, and outlawed the sale of children and infanticide. A new women's movement, larger and more sweeping in vision than any in history, set out to break down the subordinating division of labor between men and women and to break down the walls of domestic life.⁴

But I've read that the economy was a disaster under Mao.

You've been lied to. In reality, China's industrial economy under Mao grew impressively—at an average rate of 10 percent per year, even during the Cultural Revolution. China, the former "sick man of Asia," transformed itself into a major industrial power in the quarter century between 1949 and 1976—a rate of development comparable only to the greatest surges of growth in history.⁵ And it achieved this without relying on exploitation or foreign assistance, and in the face of a hostile international environment.

Agriculture grew by some 3 percent a year, slightly exceeding population growth. By 1970, the problem of adequately feeding China's population had been solved. This was accomplished through integrated economic planning, a system of collective agriculture that promoted grass-roots mobilization, flood control, steady investment in rural infrastructure, and the equitable distribution of food to peasants and rationing of essential foods so that all people were guaranteed their minimal requirements.⁶ This was a radical break with China's past in which floods, droughts, and feudal oppression caused routine mass starvation—a condition common today in many Third World countries. And keep in mind that the amount of arable (farmable) land in China is only 70 percent of that in the U.S.—but had to provide for four times as many people.

China under Mao accomplished what the U.S. has never done. It established a system of universal health care. Health services were provided free or at low cost, and the health system was guided by the principles of cooperation and egalitarianism. Maoist China integrated Western and traditional medicine. Some 1.3 million peasants were trained as health care providers ("barefoot doctors") to meet basic health needs in the countryside.⁷

To conclude...

Not only is the real record of Maoist China light years apart from what you've been told.

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DUMP BUSH AND DUMP THE SYSTEM!

We are proud to join with you in this anti-imperialist war protest in Boston, cradle of the American Revolution.

The brutal and criminal Bush-led U.S. imperialist wars against the people of Afghanistan and Iraq were overwhelmingly supported by representatives of both political parties! Bush was granted full war powers by Congress with only one dissenting vote. There was massive bi-partisan support for the USA PATRIOT Act and for "Plan Colombia" with \$1.6 billions directed against the liberation movement of Colombia and the Andean Region of Latin America. With little debate and virtually no opposition, record Pentagon budgets were passed of over \$400 billion a year plus the \$87 billion "down payment" allocated for the cost of occupation and "reconstruction" of Iraq. Both political parties have been enthusiastic in providing billions of new dollars to "homeland security".

While much of the 'progressive movement' has been going "light" on the Democratic Party war-mongers and focusing on the Republican National Convention in New York City next month, it is thus vitally important that we have brought this protest to the doorstep of the Democratic National Convention.

Presidential hopeful (and a darling of the AFL-CIO top leadership) Dick Gephardt brokered the deal for war with the Bush Administration. Vice Presidential candidate, John Edwards, was one of the most vocal advocates for Bush's war while on the presidential campaign trail. Bill Clinton, idol of the Democratic Party, has provided broad support for George W. Bush. John Kerry, who will be crowned this week with the nomination for president, has virtually the same position as George W. Bush when it comes to the most important political issue facing the working people of the United States and the world – the Bush-led drive for empire and unending and preemptive wars for oil (and other) profit.

There is deafening silence in the halls of Congress, and undoubtedly from the leadership of this Convention, when it comes to ending the occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan and bringing the troops home, now! In the face of the military overextension of U.S. imperialism and the invoking of "Stop Loss" measures (keeping soldiers in active duty and/or in combat longer than their enlistment) Democratic Party leaders are instead calling for a larger military.

The two political parties serve the same master: U.S. monopoly capitalism. In 1960, Kennedy was the liberal peace candidate, Nixon the conservative war candidate. Kennedy won. We got the Bay of Pigs invasion against the new revolutionary Cuba and the initial U.S. troop build-up in Vietnam. In 1964 Goldwater was the "hawk", Johnson the "dove". Johnson won. We got "Goldwater's" Vietnam. The needs of U.S. imperialism for super-profits supercede the positions of any candidate of either the Democratic or Republican branch of the WAR PARTY.

There have been fissures within the ruling class leading up to and since the invasion and occupation of Iraq. Within the Republican Party, and even within the Bush family, there were

those who promoted a multilateral approach with UN participation. In addition, sections of the Democratic Party were a major force behind the formation of the pro-imperialist "Win Without War" coalition promoting "diplomacy" in Iraq while embracing the same goals of toppling the Hussein government and controlling the vast oil resources of Iraq. However, there is overwhelming unity among those in both parties of the duopoly on the objective of imperialist plunder and full support for the so-called "War on Terrorism".

Lenin proved that "Imperialism means war". The U.S. imperialist terrorist war on the workers and oppressed peoples of the world is not a deviation of the system or the outcome of a mad "lone ranger" in the White House. It is the inevitable outcome of the imperialist economic system and its drive to maximize profit at home and abroad. US imperialism seeks to re-divide the world for the enrichment of US finance capital at the expense of its imperialist rivals and especially at the expense of working people all over the world.

George W. Bush the selected U.S. President is a particularly brutal, arrogant, dishonest, chauvinistic and corrupt representative of U.S. imperialism, the leading imperialist power, the lone "super-power", the number one terrorist. If Bush is driven from office due to opposition to his war program and drive toward fascism it will represent a positive mass sentiment among the working class and oppressed nationalities. But let there be no illusions. Dumping Bush does not "dump" imperialist war. Nor does it represent "regime change" from the Enron, Halliburton, Bechtel, Lockheed and Boeing and the corporate dominance of finance capital over our lives.

The Clinton campaign coined the phrase: "It's the economy, stupid". Our answer to the Democrats/Republicans and their apologists: "It's the system." By building revolutionary organization; by linking ourselves with the international working class and the national liberation movements, first and foremost the just and growing national liberation movement of Iraq; by building a powerful mass anti-imperialist war movement united with a strong anti-globalization movement; by defending immigrant, women's and trade union rights and other democratic rights; no matter who sits in the White House; we can win real regime change, a new American Revolution.

Peace serves the masses of humanity. The only path to world peace is through the defeat of imperialism, headed by U.S. imperialism, leading to the elimination of the system of exploitation of man by man and the establishment of Socialism.

USA—Hands off Iraq, Afghanistan, Colombia, Palestine, the Philippines and Haiti!
Workers of the World and Oppressed Peoples --Unite!

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Boxholder DLD-354, 58 Batterymarch Street, Boston, MA 02110

Write us and share you ideas on fighting imperialist war and making real "regime" change.

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THERE'S A LOT OF TALK about beheading, but this photo's authenticity was admitted in the British House of Commons. It shows a British soldier with two Malayan heads, decapitated "for identification."

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