

London public meeting of the World Socialist Web Site and Socialist Equality Party

17 June 2003

Sunday, June 22, 2:00 p.m.

University of London Union, Room 3A

Malet Street, London WC1E 7HY

(nearest Underground stations: Euston Square & Goodge Street)

Speakers:

Peter Schwarz: member of the WSWs International Editorial Board and member of the executive of the Partei für Soziale Gleichheit of Germany

Chris Marsden: member of the WSWs International Editorial Board and national secretary of the Socialist Equality Party of Great Britain

The war against Iraq represents a turning point in international politics. The US, with the full backing of the Blair government in Britain, waged an illegal war of aggression against a largely defenceless country, making clear that it is no longer prepared to recognise international institutions or abide by international laws and intends to rely instead on its military strength to further its interests. Other countries are left with the choice of either siding with the US and receiving a few crumbs in the way of compensation, or being ignored, punished ... or bombed. "Either you are with us or you are against us," as President Bush put it.

In its aftermath all the lies used to justify the war have been exposed. No weapons of mass destruction have been found and none will be. And every day brings fresh reports of the killing, arrest and often torture of Iraqis by US and British troops—confirming the war's character as one of colonial conquest in which the occupying power aims to seize control of Iraq's oil reserves and suppress all opposition by any means necessary.

Iraq is just the first step. The ultimate aim of US imperialism is the reorganisation of the entire region and the establishment of a new world order based on the submission of the entire planet to the needs of

American big business and the most naked forms of colonial-style looting and capitalist exploitation. The shattering of Iraq, the slaughter of its people, the destruction of thousands of years of Iraqi culture while oil wells and ministries are carefully protected as prelude to their privatisation—this is operation "Iraqi Freedom" in a nutshell.

The second-ranking imperial powers of Europe have demonstrated their inability to oppose this course of events. Those governments that rejected the war, such as France, Germany and Russia, made only gestures of opposition. In the war's aftermath even this token resistance has been abandoned. After Washington's military success, declarations of loyalty to the Bush administration are now piling up.

Under American pressure, the Continent's much vaunted common foreign policy collapsed like a house of cards. The US has deliberately used its influence to split the European powers and pit them against one another.

The Blair government, having first functioned as the staunchest ally of Washington in its war against Iraq, now acts as its political ally in efforts to bring the other European powers to heel.

Millions across Europe and all over the world took to the streets to express their opposition to the Iraq war. But the outcome confronts all those opposed to imperialist war with tasks that cannot be resolved by movements limited to the issue of peace. The struggle against war must be bound up with the fight for a different form of society. The only means by which Europe can be united in a progressive and harmonious fashion and made a counterweight to American imperialism is a unification from below, effected by the European working class in unity with its class brothers and sisters in the US and internationally, and in struggle against its own capitalist ruling elites. The

alternative to a fractured Europe of the big banks and corporations is the United Socialist States of Europe.



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