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Address all correspondence to
DISCUSSION BULLETIN, P.O. Box 1564, Grand Rapids, MI 49501

E-mail <fgirard@iserv.net>  Website <www.libertarian.socialism.4t.com>

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About This Issue

The decision to stop publishing the DB must have been influenced by a premonition of future problems. The first of these came in May and affected the delivery of DB119 to overseas readers. The US Post Office, after a delay of two weeks, bundled up issues directed to Europe, Asia, and Australia accompanying them with a notice that the old surface rate of $1.04 no longer applied and that all such mail had to pay air mail rates. Consequently a six-issue sub that cost the subscriber $5 would now cost the DB from $9.60 to $10.20 for postage alone. As a result of this incident these issues had to be remailed and overseas readers received DB119 about a month late. The other problem was that the DB’s workforce was struck by an attack of pneumonia that resulted in a three-week hospital stay. As a result readers are unlikely to receive DB 120 much before the end of August.

As promised in this department of DB119, most of 120 is devoted to the leaflets distributed by groups in our political sector. I tried to include all groups, but failed in some respects. The only anarchist-communist leaflet was published in DB119, “Stop the Everyday War” from Slingshot. The DeLeonist

About the Discussion Bulletin

The Discussion Bulletin is a bimonthly magazine affiliated with the Industrial Union Caucus in Education (IUCE) It serves as the financially and politically independent forum of a relatively unknown sector of political thought that places the great divide in the “left” not between anarchists and Marxists but between capitalism’s statist leftwing of vanguardists and social democrats and the real revolutionaries of our era: the non-market, anti-statist, libertarian socialists. They are organized in small groups of syndicalists, anarcho-communists, libertarian municipalists, world socialists, socialist industrial unionists, council communists, and left communists. The perspective of these groups with their rejection of capitalism’s wage, market, and money system as well as capitalist politics and capitalist unionism constitutes the only real alternative to capitalism in both its market and statist phases.

In the DB the often antagonistic groups that make up this sector can debate and discuss the issues that divide them and gain some understanding of their history and future possibilities. Among the latter might be movement toward at least limited co-operation.

The pages of the DB are open to anyone in this political sector, the only limitation being that submissions be typewritten, single-spaced, and copier ready. We do not editing here. As to content, we assume that submissions will be relevant to the purpose of the DB and will avoid personal attacks.

Back Issues: All back issues (Nos. 1-120) are available. One dollar each (plus postage).
They really take us for fools!
Are they right?

Who are "they"? The politicians who decide about wars and our misery, who supposedly "represent" us but who are actually only the managers of the interests of the owners of capital in each country.

Who are "we"? Those who in all countries, developed or underdeveloped, produce and operate practically everything in society including the arms factories, and who in times of economic crisis and war (which often go together) see our daily anguish getting worse, under the reality of threat of unemployment and, for some of us, under the fire of bombs or as cannon fodder.

They take us for fools, because they all tell lies, coldly, cynically
Both those of them who have gone to war and those of them who are against it. Those who are waging the war are not doing so for the reasons they claim: Bush and Co speak of a crusade against a tyrant, of a struggle of democracy against dictatorship, whereas it's a question of oil, markets and geo-strategical positions. The governments that are against this military intervention speak of loving peace and of humanitarianism, whereas it is a question of... oil, markets and geo-strategical positions. The so-called opponents of the war also have blood and gun-powder on their hands. The French government, today the most anti-war and anti-American, bears a direct responsibility for the different wars in former Yugoslavia, in the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, in the first Gulf War, in the war in Afghanistan; its soldiers permanently play an active and bloody role of neo-colonial police in Africa, as at this moment in the Ivory Coast. German capitalism is no different, not to mention Russian capitalism.

Are they right to think we believe what they tell us?
The opinion polls, despite being known to be the subject of multiple manipulations, are clear: for the great majority of the population of countries which publish these kinds of enquiries, politicians have become the subject of mistrust where it's not disgust. Many of us today distrust the discourse which the politicians employ to justify or oppose this, second Gulf War. Rarely has the sordidly economic character of wars appeared so openly. To the extent that sometimes even the most blasé, in front of their television, get the impression of seeing a crime against humanity during "prime time".

However, some of us console ourselves by believing what our politicians tells us... as with religions, for which the world does not appear as bad as it is. Sometimes people even go as far as voting for one of them, as if the candidates for the management of capitalism could be any different from each other.

People console themselves with lies because they have no alternative project. Because we are convinced that a different world, a world not governed by money and profit, where human welfare can become the only aim of production, of all activity, is a pure unrealisable utopia.

As long as we think this way, we will be condemned to submit to their laws, their exploitation, their absurd wars, their mad self-destruction of the planet. And to console ourselves we will be pushed into believing their lies.

Another world is possible
The existence of a new world, a new society without classes or fatherlands, based on the general free availability of goods, on co-operation and sharing, depends, however, on us and only on us. On those who do not benefit from the laws of the market, who do not live from the exploitation of others, who are exploited (when we are not left on the street) and who by our daily work make exist the machine which mangles us. It is us who produce all the material means which make wars possible, it is us who feed and maintain the politicians and the military who wage them. It is us who could take all decision-making power
from them by taking it ourselves, collectively by becoming the masters of the means of production so as to orient them exclusively towards satisfying human needs.

The old slogan "Proletarians of All Lands, Unite!" is more relevant than ever. Not only because only the uniting of those who world-wide suffer from the system can stop the logic of capitali

ism, but also because the material, the technological means of this same uniting are developing before our eyes. They develop our confidence in ourselves. Transform our immediate, partial struggles into parts of the struggle against capitalism itself, seeking the widest unity, discussing collectively the shape of the society that we can and must build. There is no other way, if we are working for a day when there will no longer be anybody to take us for fools.

Some internationalists.
20 March 2003
Internet address: cerclediscussionparis@hotmail.com

WAR AND ARMED PEACE ARE TWO CLOSELY LINKED MOMENTS OF CAPITALIST LIFE

With the second military campaign against Iraq, wanted, meticulously prepared and programmed by the planet's biggest economic and military power, the world is entering a period where armed peace gives way more and more frequently to open warfare. Arrogantly, the highest representatives of the American state repeat that nothing can stop them.

The pretext? The sinister dictatorship of Saddam Hussein, notorious murderer and perpetrator of massacres, gasser of thousands of Kurds while supported by the great powers, including France, Germany and the US, because he had made himself an instrument of their policies. Today more than ever, Saddam acts as a foil to try to make us believe that the Anglo-American army and the other forces that rally to it want to do the work of democracy by crushing the Iraqi population under their bombs. Let's not be fooled, the American high command certainly wants to destroy the national socialist regime of the Ba'th party. No one will regret its passing. It is certain that the Kurds or the Shi'ites of Iraq won't complain about the disappearance of the clique in power in Baghdad, even by means of external intervention. But this is not the central point.

The first war on Iraq, thirteen years ago, did not include the objective of chasing out Saddam Hussein and his friends. But the American troops were perfectly capable of doing it. General Norman Schwarzkopf, the American military chief in the Gulf in 1991, wrote in his memoirs that the annihilation of the Republican Guards - the best guard dogs of the regime - was within reach of his troops, and so was the demolition of the Iraqi state. It is the father of the current American president who, through Colin Powell, Commander in Chief of the army at the time, ordered a halt to operations.

Since then the regime of the dictator of Baghdad has never been in better health. Saddam takes three meals a day in his sumptuous palaces while the population suffers from lack of food and medicine, and dies from the embargo decided on by the same United Nations which is considered by a good number of paceniks today to be a rampart against the warmongering determination of George W. Bush.

Countries in the camp of war and the countries in that of pseudo-peace declare in unison that they are inspired by the desire to install a real democracy in Iraq. They are lying.

The real reasons for the coming war are completely different. The US and the UK couldn't care less about dictators, bloody or otherwise. The same goes for the pseudo-champions of peace, the French and German states. All over the world these states and the others are perfectly accepting of tyrants in power,
when they haven't put them in power themselves (as is most often the case). It is in the name of keeping the peace that Bush and Blair want this war. Chirac and Schröder put on their best dove of peace expressions while their principle "peaceful" allies are Russia, which has in the past exterminated Chechens, and China, which for a long time has carried out a pitiless repression, notably against the Tibetans, and which has always aimed at annexing Taiwan. In fact France and Germany did not prevent themselves from participating in the first Iraq war, in agreement with their American friend.

Raising the Stakes

It's obviously about oil. But we still need to have a good look at this. The oil resources of the Gulf, of which Iraq is one of four components, represent 60% of the proved world reserves. Consequently, the energy issue is definitely central.

But the oil coming from Iraq represents less than 4% of the consumption of the US. This is therefore not the deciding factor in the American military adventure. On the other hand, even in 2001, the US bought more than half of the Iraqi oil authorised for export under the "oil for food" plan, far more than Europe (less than 20% of Iraqi oil exports). What's more, the Iraqi state asks nothing more than to be able to benefit from providing the US with oil. It is the embargo decided by the United Nations which prevents it.

So why war, then? Like all states, the American state is supposed to defend the fundamental interests of its national fraction of global capital. Like all capitalist wars, the war which it is pursuing is only the continuation of the armed peace of the markets carried out by violent means. With the embargo having failed in the objective of bringing down the Iraqi regime, its place is taken by war! By this dodge the American state wants to not just safeguard its own oil supply, but the control of the global sources and distribution of hydrocarbons. Thus it is counting on stealing a march on the other economic competitor countries who could, a second time, threaten the supremacy of the US on the commodity and capital markets. Now, the new world power which is coming up quickly, and which in the next few years will become the biggest importer of oil in the world, is China.

China and the Euro in their Sights

For the first time in history in 2002, China attracted more foreign capital than the United States. For the whole of last year, trade between China and the US showed a surplus of more than 100 billion dollars for the first time. In the area of mobile phones China is the world's biggest market with more than 200 million users. Around two million mobile telephones are sold per month in that country. In the area of information technology, China creates 50,000 engineers every year, against 30,000 in the US. The list could be much longer. Let's stop there.

For this formidable development of Chinese capitalism to be possible, it needs energy, a lot of energy. Only a decade ago China was exporting oil. Since 1994, it's been the reverse. International Energy Agency estimates that in 2030 China will have to import as much oil as the US imports now. is where the US interest in directly controlling all the taps of the world's biggest proven reserves of oil comes from.

In passing, and it is a not insignificant factor, the American administration intends, through war with Iraq, to reinforce its currency, particularly against the Euro. A strong currency in relation to the Euro allows the US to continue attracting European and Asian finance capital, lured by exchange rates favourable to the dollar. Let's remember that in the 1990s a great deal of European capital landed in Wall Street and that almost half the American government bonds are kept in the vaults of the central banks of the Far East.

Even now 70% of world trade takes place in dollars while the US accounts for more than a fifth of
world commodity production. By reaffirming its military power against all those who can or could contradict the domination of American capitalism, the Bush administration intends to continue to attract to the US the benefits of the finance capitals that the US is exporting. And watch out little Euro, if you dream of playing at being big...

The economic crisis of 2001 /beginning of 2002 was exceptionally severe, particularly for the US. The period of stagnation which followed is far from being over. Capital is convalescing and is treating itself with hatchet restructuring, cutting the costs of production while intensifying the dirty tricks between businesses and competitive markets.

The American state has supported its economy as far as it can, and it has cost it dear. In 2000, the US federal budget possessed a surplus of 300 billion dollars. It is expected that in 2004, the federal state account will be in deficit by more than 300 billion dollars. The solidity of a currency is directly linked to the good health of its economy. When this falters, the use of arms can help to redress the exchange rate.

In the society of capital, war is a normal means of resolving difficulties. Under its dictatorship, real peace never exists, and when it seems to be taken up, it serves to prepare new armed conflicts.

Only fools and the incurably naive can believe that the villainy of some and the dictatorship of others are the real causes of wars. It is not the good guys who are fighting the bad. It is rather capitalist states who have (or don't have) interests in unleashing such or such a war. One lot go to war, the others present themselves as peace-loving.

This time the French government and the all the French political forces, from the extreme right to the extreme left, are arrayed in the second category. And for good reason! Even in January, during the trade fair in Baghdad, France was crowned as the number one business partner of Iraq! Dictatorship or not, business is business. It's even worth Mr. Chirac having Mr. Bush pulling faces at him!

Yes, Against Wars, but also Against the Armed Peace of Capital

Workers of the whole world have nothing to gain from this war and a lot to lose. This war is not ours. There is nothing to gain for the workers of the US or the proletarians of Iraq. It is the war of American capital against other fractions of world capital in Iraq, in China, in Europe and elsewhere. For us there is nothing to choose between Bush, Saddam or the ChiracSchröder pair and their friends Putin and Hu Jintao, the new master of Beijing.

It is always the workers, the without-reserves and the poor peasants who are the biggest victims of capitalist wars, not the tyrants in power or the democratic tenants of capital.

All around the world there are millions of demonstrators for peace. But that doesn't stop war. Demonstrators or not, UN resolutions or not, Security Council agreement or not, Bush has chosen to start a war against Iraq. In Iraq, the dictator and his clique exhort the population to fight house by house to defend them. All say to their populations : "Go on! Kill each other We must not fall into that trap.

The only way to prevent their warmongering initiatives is the struggle against all forms of capitalist domination. Against Saddam Hussein and his murderous regime, against the barbarism which Bush and his lackeys are preparing, against the "normal and peaceful" pursuit of business and exploitation imposed on us by Chirac, Schröder, Putin and Hu Jintao.

CAPITALISM ALWAYS MEANS EXPLOITATION! OPPRESSION, FACTORY CLOSURES, UNEMPLOYMENT, ARMED PEACE ALONG WITH WAR, WHENEVER IT IS NECESSARY FOR ITS SURVIVAL.
WHEN THE WEAPONS ARE SILENT, IT IS TO BETTER PREPARE NEW
MURDEROUS CONFRONTATIONS...
ONLY A VICTORIOUS PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION CAN FINISH
EXPLOITATION AND WAR FOR GOOD.


MOUVEMENT COMMUNISTE
For all correspondence, write, without any name, to: B.P. 1666, Centre Monnaie, Bruxelles.

Socialist Party Peace Policy

It requires no crystal ball, no advanced degree in foreign affairs, to observe that the "healthy competition" of capitalist rivalry has become more vicious and ruthless recently. The increase in US military expenditure this year is greater than any previous year ever, signalling not only that there are profits to be had, but that they will be fought over. The current US military manoeuvring for control of Iraq's oil is just part of a wider game plan for the western corporate elite.

The foolish and the fearful might delude themselves that this new weaponry might never be used, that it is defensive. The reality is that the, US arsenal of the 21st Century is being built for use, the reasons for its use are increasing and it is only a matter of time before capitalism turns very nasty and threatens to blow us all up. Such a holocaust may not be the intention of gobocop. But new challengers, armed with their own weapons of mass destruction, are fast arriving on the scene. The ticking of the clock as the moments lead up to the next war is all too audible to those whose fingers are not placed tightly in their cars.

All of the major parties have "defence" policies which are really war policies. Even if they are opposed to an attack on Iraq, as the Liberal Democrats are, they a more than ready to give a nod to a different war elsewhere. Or, to be blunt about it, they all have strategies for killing large numbers of people. That is what they are doing when they ask you to vote for their "defence" policy: choose their strategy for murdering people you have never even met in preference to that of the next party. To vote for the parties is to become a willing accomplice in the preparations for mass murder. The current and absurd deterrence strategy is best described by the dictum, "If you want peace prepare for war". That is the policy accepted by most of the parties aiming to run capitalism. It is like saying if you want virginity among teenagers build brothels in the schools. You do not achieve peace by preparing for its opposite: if you prepare for war there will be a war.

Nobody should be taken in for one minute by the Labour Party lie that they are, by acting preemptively against Saddam, presenting a more peaceful policy. On the contrary, theirs an alternative war policy - a policy dependent on conventional methods of mass murder while at the same time remaining in loyal alliance with the NATO nuclear murder gang. It is like a gang of muggers saying that in the future they will give up using knives and will rely on beating the same people up with wooden sticks. But at the same time they remind their victims that their friends in the bigger gang still have knives. If any one sides with the warmongers of New Labour in the belief that conventional weapons are about decent warfare they should goand talk to the conscript soldiers of Iran and Iraq, or to victims of the Falklands war.

Wars are not the result of workers in Iran, Russia or China falling out with workers in the USA. Most of the British workers who unthinking accept Labour's line that "we must defend ourselves effectively" do not have any enemies in Moscow or Baghdad or Beijing or Pyongyang. Most workers Britain have never met an Iraqi, let alone fallen out with one sufficiently to want blow them up. Most Iraqis have never met an American. If you repeat a lie often enough people may begin to believe it and so they keep telling us that we must be defend against Iraq and other errant Islamic
countries. After a while "Iraqis" are seen as monstrous, threatening, inhumane beings, fit only for unprovoked nuclear and chemical attack. And to many Moslem workers, indoctrinated by the same lies with their own class, we are perceived similarly as a wicked enemy, often a satanic enemy. What you must never forget -- because then you have finally brainwashed -- is that there is nobody out there you need to kill and there are no enemies out there with a grievance against you. War is not about our interests, but those of the bosses who rob us so that they can be rich and powerful. War is about the competition between capitalists. If you are to die it will be for them. Ponder that as the masters of war ask or your support in the coming weeks.

Capitalism is the cause of war in the modern world. The Socialist Party is unequivocally opposed to the world wide capitalist system. We are opposed to it in the Middle East as much as in Britain, Africa or the USA. The rivalry over profits, trade routes, markets and raw materials which is generated by capitalism makes war inevitable. It follows from this that you cannot simply oppose war unless you are out to end capitalism. Sadly, all too many workers, who are sincere in their belief that war is an outrage, nevertheless unwittingly support capitalism's conflicts by simply voting for or capitalist politicians at election time, by remaining within political parties which are out to defend the apolitical system in its various forms and guises. It is futile to try to remove an effect without removing its cause. Thus campaigning against war now, whilst not objecting to capitalism, simply means that you will end up again protesting when the next war breaks out.

Workers have no country. Nationalism is based on the lie that workers save their own country, that the British have an obligation to Britain and likewise with the workers of the USA and Iraq. Workers who do not own or control Britain have no obligation to the bosses who own and control it. Our sole interest is in cooperating with our fellow workers across the world who similarly save no country. Why should we die defending what is not ours and which we will never benefit from? In the contrary, our object is to obtain what is not now the possession of our class -- the earth and its natural and industrial resources. The class war - between the parasites who possess and the workers who produce -- is the real struggle that need concern us. And to win that war we need not initiate the violence which is characteristic of capitalism's wars.

The war we advocate is to be waged on the battlefield of ideas - for the hearts and minds of the world's people. And once we unite there will be no force that will stop us taking the earth into our common possession.

Socialism will allow humanity to co-exist in peace. There is nothing natural about war. Are we born with a desire to kill people who speak a different language or who have a different skin hue? No! In fact, peaceful cooperation is more fitting for human beings who are potentially rational human beings. Once we live in a world of common ownership and democratic control of resources there will simply be no reason to kill one another. No Empires to build or markets to expand or profits to increase. Socialism will be a social system in which war will be pointless. Peace will be the norm. There will be no socialism without socialists to bring it about, just as there will be no capitalism or war without workers to support such insanity.

Stop and think the next time you hear Bush and Blair present their case for war, the next time you read a tabloid headline supporting the government line. Think of the peace which could come about and think of the screams which are the human sound effects of war, and for your own sake, think hard!

The Socialist Party, 52 Clapham High Street, London, SW4 7UN England
The War for Oil

The US and Britain has led a ten year war against Iraq using weapons of economic sanctions and repeated bombings. As a result estimates put the death of children in the region of 500,000. This war is now reaching a new phase with a planned invasion. We are told that it is about stopping a barbaric 'regime' having the capability of using nuclear armaments, poison gas and long-range missiles. This could not be further than the truth. The war has been and is about oil and strategic interests.

That the war is really about oil and strategic interests is supported by non-socialists and the capitalist media. The US historian, Professor Michael Klare wrote recently, "If the real motives were made clear that this is a grab for oil and an attempt to break the back of OPEC - it would make our motives look more predatory than exemplary." (Current History March 2002).

The Washington Post reported that US, British, French and Russian oil companies have already started the rush for a stake in Iraq's oilfields. The former CIA director James R. James Woolsey told the Washington Post that if France and Russia backed the US-led war, "we'll do the best we can to insure that the new government and American companies work closely with them" (September 15th 2002).

Another US newspaper, the San Francisco Chronicle stated: "The world's biggest oil bonanza in recent memory may just be round the corner, giving US oil companies huge profits and American consumers cheap gasoline for decades to come. And it all may come courtesy of a war with Iraq. Once production reaches full capacity the enormous increase in supply could weaken OPEC and shift the balance of power among the world's major producers" (September 29th 2002).

The importance of Iraq as a source for oil is well known. Iraq has the second largest oil reserves in the world, some 112 billion barrels, second only to Saudi Arabia; with perhaps double that in undiscovered reserves.

For Socialists, capitalism causes war. It is the Socialist contention that the basic cause of war in the modern world is the way in which society is organised around the exploitation of the working class and the competitive pursuit of profit. The cause of war is the constant rivalry between competing nation states.

The working class of the world has no interest in war. Workers have no country. They own no mineral resources like oil. Workers have no strategic interests to protect. And workers have no trade routes to fight over. It is not enough merely to protest against this war. To get rid of war, Socialists argue, we must get rid of capitalism, based as it is on competition and exploitation. This is the system which inevitably causes war.

To end capitalism is in the interests of the vast majority of the world's working class. The only solution is SOCIALISM - a global system of common ownership, with production for use, not for profit, based on the principles: "From each according to their ability, to each according to their needs."

We repeat what we said at the outbreak of war in 1914, and again in 1939:

"Having no quarrel with the working class of any country, we extend to our fellow workers of all lands the expression of our goodwill and socialist fraternity, and pledge ourselves to work for the overthrow of capitalism and the triumph of socialism"

THE WORLD FOR THE WORKERS!

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN
WHY WAR ON IRAQ?

It's Not (All) About Oil

Millions of Americans oppose the Bush administration's determination to wage war on Iraq, and they are speaking out. Their slogans make it clear that they believe that Iraq's oil is at the bottom of the Bush administration's warmongering. They do not want men, women and children slaughtered to make the Middle East safe for American oil companies. They have joined the antiwar movement in the belief that their opinions count and that their voices will be heard. They believe that public sentiment will be enough to deter the administration and to stop the war before it starts.

The Socialist Labor Party also opposes the administration's war plans. Indeed, the SLP has stood up and spoken out against every war since the 1890s. The SLP, however, knows from experience that public sentiment has little influence on the foreign policy decisions of the government. History shows that similar movements preceded every major war of the 20th century, but succeeded in stopping none. Even now some within and close to the Bush administration are advising the president to ignore the massive antiwar sentiment, presumably on the theory that it will disintegrate once the bombs start to fall. "Mr. Bush's advisers are telling him to ignore them [the demonstrations] and forge ahead, as are some leading prowar Republicans."


President Bush has taken that advice. He has already expressed his contempt for the antiwar movement. "Size of protest, it's like deciding, 'Well I'm going to decide policy based on a focus group,'" he said after the demonstrations on February 15.

The president also expressed his contempt for democracy. "Democracy is a beautiful thing," he said. "People are allowed to express their opinion, and I welcome people's right to say what they believe." In short, the beauty of democracy is that it allows people to blow off steam.

Credibility is due. President Bush understands that opinion does not decide policy. President Bush did not mention Saddam Hussein by name in his State of the Union address on January 28. He did not mention oil. But he referred to both when he said: "A brutal dictator, with a history of reckless aggression, with ties to terrorism, with great potential wealth, will not be permitted to dominate a vital region and threaten the United States."

The "vital region" is the Middle East, of course, and oil is what makes it vital. American capitalism's dependence on foreign oil sources has grown steadily since the end of World War II. The United States now imports half of the oil that is consumed on American markets, and one-third of what it imports comes from the Middle East. The stake that U.S. capitalism has in the flow of oil from that part of the world is an established fact that even the Bush administration would not deny. Indeed, that growing dependency is behind efforts to open up new areas for oil exploration in Alaska and for development of offshore oil operations.

If by imperialism one understands the forcible subjugation of another nation or nations, for whatever alleged purpose, then the United States is an imperialist nation bent on dominating markets and controlling resources for the benefit of its ruling class. For despite all the lip service to peace, democracy, international law, human rights, etc., the stakes in Iraq and the Middle East generally are grossly materialistic. Markets, spheres of influence and sources of raw materials vital to the industries of all nations have been at the root of every major war of modern times, and the present situation is no exception.

What brings on these economic rivalries that are the root cause of war in today's world? Under the
capitalist system the workers receive in wages only a fraction of the product of their labor, hence can buy back only a fraction. What the workers cannot buy back, and what the capitalists cannot consume in extravagant living, or use up in expanding industry, or in willful destruction, must be sold or bartered in foreign markets. This is the reason capitalist nations will do anything, even to the point of waging war, to preserve and extend their foreign markets and spheres of influence, and to dominate sources of raw materials and cheap labor. As the "Guardian," an English newspaper, recently put it: "The underlying problem the U.S. confronts is the fact that periodically afflicts all successful economies: the over-accumulation of capital. Excessive production of any good—be it cars or shoes or bananas—means that unless new markets can be found, the price of that product falls and profits collapse. Just as it was in the early 1930s, the U.S. is suffering from surpluses of commodities, manufactured products, manufacturing capacity and money. Just as it was then, it is also faced with a surplus of labor, yet the two surpluses, as before, cannot be profitably matched. This problem has been developing in the U.S. since 1973. It has now tried every available means of solving it and, by doing so, maintaining its global dominance. The only remaining, politically viable option is war." Obviously it is ludicrous to describe as "successful" a system that produces such contradictions and has no better way of coping with them than war. Apart from that, however, this evaluation is essentially correct.

The "Guardian" continued by citing some of the advantages the U.S. hopes to gain by resorting to its "solution" to its problems—another war on Iraq.

"Attacking Iraq offers the U.S. means of offloading capital while maintaining its global dominance. The first is the creation of new geographical space for economic expansion. The second is military spending (a process some people call 'military Keynesianism'). The third is the ability to control the economies of other nations by controlling the supply of oil. This, as global oil reserves diminish, will become an even more powerful lever...."

Under the overriding competitive profit motive inherent in capitalism, and in the reaching out for control over sources of oil and other raw materials so vital to modern industry, clashes are inevitable.

Considering the basic cause and real factors that have produced the wars that have plagued the world dominated by capitalism, it is obviously irrational to blame international disputes and wars on this or that individual or group of individuals. Capitalism means war.

Saddam Hussein and his government may be utterly crushed by another war, but at a horrendous price in human blood and suffering. None of the basic problems that beset the Middle East and its long-suffering peoples will be solved. It will not resolve the contradictions of capitalism or make the world a safer place. For when the war ends, the identical process will start again, leading to new clashes of interest and in time to the next greater and more destructive war.

Can we do anything about that? The SLP believes we can.

We believe that the American working class must at last come to recognize that the competitive capitalist system of private ownership of the land and plants of production, means of transportation, mines, etc., is in fact the basic cause of the present state of world anarchy, and of wars, declared and undeclared. To avoid future wars, therefore, the capitalist cause must be abolished. Society must be reorganized on socialist lines, replacing private (and state) ownership and competition with social ownership and cooperation.

We must make the factories, mills, mines, railroads and all the other means of social production the collective property of society so that we can produce things to satisfy human needs instead of for the profit of the few. Only then can the competitive, war-breeding struggle for international markets, spheres of influence and sources of raw materials be ended. Only then will the nations of the world have an economic foundation for lasting cooperation, harmony and peace.
Socialism—genuine socialism—is literally the hope of humanity.

Socialist Labor Party of America, P.O. Box 218, Mountain View, CA 94042-0218

www.slp.org  e-mail: socialists@slp.org

From the War in the Gulf, to the War at Home

No War but the Class War!

On Wednesday March 19 2003 at about 9:30 PM, the United States and its allies began a murderous assault upon Iraq. The millions in the United States and around the world, who marched against war, have seen their "message" ignored. But war is the health of the modern state. Capital can no more give up war, than it can give up exploitation. In attacking Iraq, the largest imperialist power on earth has picked on a somewhat smaller one: The big fish eat the small fish. Whether the small fish has any teeth remains to be seen. In Afghanistan, the US had a fairly easy time in achieving their goal of ousting the Taliban, even though it failed to capture Bin Laden or senior Talibean officials. Even Bush confessed, to reporter Bob Woodward, that the war in Afghanistan was almost too good to be true." But Iraq promises to be a much more costly war for the US.

Air strikes, which terrorize the Iraqi population and destroy their cities, can only accomplish so much for the US. And the looming ground presents the spectre of heavy US casualties, which will certainly undermine support for the war at home. The last time the US sustained any significant casualties was during the Vietnam War, and the deaths of US troops in any significant number will surely resurrect those demons.

And the US risks more. The longer the war continues, the greater the disruption of oil production and the greater the possibility the global economy will sink into recession.

The Iraqi Kurds have received encouragement to rise up against Hussein and the offer of a Kurdish State has been floated, but such a development is opposed by Turkey. Although it recently agreed to let the US use its airspace even as it moved its troops to the Iraqi border, in anticipation of a Kurdish uprising and to send a message to its own Kurdish population. If the war drags on, the deeply unpopular Arab nations of the region could well be drawn into the conflict; ironically one of Bin Laden's stated goals.

So why has the U.S. Chosen to embark on this gamble? Quite simply they have no other choice. The war has little to do with economy. The US economy is trembling under 31 trillion dollars of debt, and with a faltering stock market and a plummeting dollar, massive oil reserves and the possibility of a permanent US presence in the Gulf makes for an attractive prize. In short, it is the capitalist system that has brought the world to war.

And only through a break with the capitalist system can future wars be averted. Not by appeals to so-called moderate nations like Canada, which plays 'soft cop' in this conflict appealing to the United Nations to continue its starvation sanctions. Not by chanting "Vive la France.

For France has its own reasons for opposing the US, and they have little to do with concern for the Iraqi people; rather, they concern the French imperialist state's position vis-a-vis the US.

To break with capitalism means to engage in class struggle: This means bringing the economy to a halt. The most powerful weapon working people have is to withdraw labour from the capitalist system. During the war in Afghanistan, dockworkers in Nagasaki, Japan refused to load military supplies bound for the region. Train drivers, who refused to move a freight train carrying ammunition for British forces
bound for the Gulf, repeated this action in Britain in January. And while only a full scale break with
capitalism can create a new world, resistance can be practiced on multiple levels: absenteeism, informal
work to rule actions ("go-slows"), even occupations and creative industrial repairs.
If actions against the war were significant and the battle in Iraq does not go smoothly, it could provoke the
kind of breakdown in authority in the armed forces as was seen in Vietnam: desertions, mutinies and a
concern for one's own survival over that of the unit. Were these conditions to take shape, the imperialist
war might well begin to resemble a civil war.
And in these conditions, begins the fight to build a new world: A world without war, without classes,
without bosses, without money. For communism.

(From Red & Black Notes No. 16-17, Spring 2003 / PO Box 47643, Don Mills, ON, M3C 3S7, Canada)

Down With Capitalist War! Down With Capitalist Peace!

A Plague on Both your Houses!

For many with an interest in the impending war in Iraq, the conflict is about choosing sides.

For Bush and Blair, 'you're either with us or you're against us.' As the days go by, the US has
become more brazen in its rhetoric and more willing to go it alone. US Defense Secretary recently
commented, the only way for war to be averted is for Saddam Hussein to flee Iraq or be overthrown. That
this comment was repeated on page 1 of the Globe and Mail mere inches from a story about Stalin's
murder by his henchmen means subtext too has chosen a side.

While the US's erstwhile European allies are expressing reluctance, it is only because they see the
US's actions as a way to strengthen its position relative to their own through the seizure of Iraqi oil and the
establishment of a semi-permanent US base in Iraq. Nevertheless, the reluctant allies will likely get on
board because they fear the US will go ahead and they will be left out in the cold.

In addition to their tactical concerns, the US's usual allies fear that choosing war at this time will
have further consequences. A disruption of the oil supply from the Middle East, in addition to the
disruption in Venezuela will create a catastrophic "oil shock." As the hardly radical Goldman-Sachs
commented, the result of a war in Iraq may be less "Desert Storm," than "a Perfect Storm."

But for the US, the issue of war with Iraq has become increasingly urgent. While few within the
Bush administration argue that the war will revitalize the sagging US economy, it is precisely that economy
which is pushing the US toward war. Trillions of dollars of debt, a stock market bubble that is about to burst and
a plunging US dollar, make a war to secure massive oil reserves, and a conundrum which is paid for in
dollars an irresistible prize. Never mind that the war will create untold devastation, what matters is the
continuance of the capitalist economy.

For many who oppose, in some form or other, the US actions, it's also about choices, and choosing a
more palatable option than war. For some this has meant calling on the UN to settle the crisis or the
continuance of the sanctions which have already caused horrific suffering in Iraq.

Many people see the war as irrational, viewing the conflict as a clash of ego: If only the cowboy in
the White House and the Butcher in Baghdad would listen to reason. Chanting 'No blood for oil,' and
'Give peace a chance,' the organizers of peace demonstrations call for ever greater demonstrations that will
send our rulers a message they cannot ignore.

For these activists, the solution is not war but peace: If saner heads can prevail, a military solution
can be avoided. Unfortunately, the glaring error in their thinking is that war and peace are not counter-
posed to each other; war and peace are merely different policies for capital to ensure its rule.

The second imperialist world war between 1939 and 1945 claimed tens of millions of lives. But the "peace" which followed it also claimed untold millions of lives across the globe, as capital has engaged in low level, and sometimes not so low level wars to preserve the imperialist "peace." It is the peace of the grave. The only way to stop war is to uproot the entire capitalist system.

For others on the left, it's about defeating imperialism. This has led some, most notably the Trotskyists, to claim opposition to imperialism in this conflict means support to Iraq in the hope of bloodying the nose of the "main" imperialist power - Saddam Hussein, the butcher of the Iraqi workers' movement; Saddam Hussein, the former errand boy of US imperialism after the fall of the Shah; Saddam Hussein, for whom Iraqi workers should shed blood?

While sounding radical, the position is essentially a lesser evilism. The demand to defend Iraq, while attempting to distinguish between military and political support (in reality military support always entails political support), may draw some support, but few were willing to extend the logic of this position to last year's fighters against imperialism, the Taliban.

Capitalism is a world system, and the wars it generates are wars between the greater and lesser imperialist powers for the right to exploit and rule. Yesterday's national liberation movements fighting against imperialism are today's exploiters of labour and tomorrow's allies of larger imperialist powers. Saddam Hussein was once a trusted friend, Vietnam a deadly enemy. Swings and roundabouts.

We will not choose between the greater and lesser powers. "You've made worm's meat of me. A plague on both your houses." gasped Mercutio at his death at the hands of the Prince of Cats. We reject capitalist war and capitalist peace. We reject George Bush's US and Saddam Hussein's Iraq.

For a world without bosses, without money, without war and without classes. For communism.
Red & Black Notes
March 8, 2003

rage, rage against the dying of the light...

The Bush administration campaigns for war abroad while at home it engages in an onslaught on America's wildlife & natural environment. Behind the new American Fuhrer stand the big oil companies. It is they who are calling for the lifting of hunting restrictions, the repeal of protection clauses on animal species such as America's wolves and bears, the opening of natural reservations to oil drilling, the boycotting of environmental summits & agreements, and the replacement of Saddam Hussein with an American puppet regime in Iraq - leading them closer to the rich oil reserves of the Caucasus.

The horrific attacks on the World Trade Center of September 11th 2001 conveniently led to the American seizure of Afghanistan which brought Bush that much closer to control of the world's oil fields - there remains the bogeyman of Saddam Hussein in Iraq.

Empires operate by expanding via the creation of bogeymen. The claims of Saddam Hussein possessing weapons of mass destruction (whether he does or not: all weapons possessed by all capitalist states are weapons of mass destruction, of which the United States has the virtual monopoly) and the putting forward of this as a reason - as the sole reason - for attacking him, has to be the most crass of reasons ever put forward by an Imperial power for military expansion, given the condition of Iraq as an economic and military entity following the Gulf War of 1990 and the regular daily bombing of that country ever since. Two no-fly zones were created ostensibly to protect the Kurdish people, yet we
believe this to be partly the case only in the south. The northern no-fly zone gives the Allies control of
the northern oilfields and provided Turkey with protection for regular heavy military intrusions
throughout the 1990s against the north Iraqi Kurds. In exchange for this, Turkey gave the US the use of
airfields during the Gulf War. According to The New Internationalist, bombing has been daily since
1998 and has gone unreported by the regular media. There is scarcely an Iraqi village which does not
have its share of birth mutations as a result of depleted uranium resulting from the bombings, and babies
have been born with their entrails on the outside of their bodies. The same paper has offered evidence
that flies have been dropped, one species of which is a destructive pest formerly found only in the United
States, never before in Iraq or the Middle East.

Saddam Hussein was throughout the 1980s the champion of the West, fighting the then
bogeyman, Khomeini of Iran. Iran is still sure to be the next bogeyman once Hussein's Iraq is destroyed
and his dictator overthrown, positioning the United States and Britain closer to
the Caucasian oil-reserves, the richest in the world as yet barely tapped. We can then expect to see
tensions with Russia arise again and hear more of the Caucasian states in the news: namely Azerbaijan,
Armenia, Georgia & the Ukraine. That will be when things really become dangerous for us all, as the
two capitalist nuclear powers face off over the squabable about access to oil and the immense profits to be
reached therefrom. We will hear of more bogeymen, not less; of more terrorists, not less; as the
American President spouts on about "freedom" & "democracy" in the name of his oil-baron sponsors.

The overthrow of Saddam Hussein will make the danger of a final holocaust a greater reality,
not a lesser, since his removal will bring the US and Russia close to the brink again. War is the
instrument of the capitalists of the world for breaking down one another's trade barriers and expanding
their rival spheres of influence. It has nothing whatsoever to do with any values we ought to espouse and
is nothing more than mass murder for the sake of profit on the part of those who own the planet: the
international capitalist class.

When Saddam Hussein and Iran were sending boy soldiers out to murder each other in World
War One-type conditions during the Iran-Iraq War, Hussein was the hero of the West: the "defender" of
western "democracy" (meaning of oil interests). The present U.S. war, the same as Hussein's reason for
the invasion of Kuwait, was control of the Gulf with its access to the sea and in particular over the
islands owned by Iran. Having failed to secure this access for his oil exports, Hussein was obliged, as
head of a state and representative of his own capitalist class, to seize Kuwait. Nonetheless, that move
made him, in the eyes of the American capitalist class, a stooge who had turned, which was made clear
to him. If Empires need stooges, they also need to publicly punish those who get uppity and prove a
nuisance to their former patrons. This has been the case with Saddam Hussein, and has been curse of the
long suffering people of Iraq who have had to, and are continuing to, pay the price - with 100,000
civilian casualties of war and 500,000 child mortalities resulting from the embargo since. Like others
before him, Hussein is a stooge who has proven recalcitrant. The fact that his dictatorship is
paradoxically the most liberal of the Arab states cuts nothing with the US. It is not in America's interest
to mention such a thing. Oil is the name of the game.

While the war-drums beat in the West, the Bush administration (in the hands of a man who, we
are told, enjoyed, as Governor of Texas, playing computer games while signing death warrants) is
proceeding with a general assault upon anything that stands in the way of the oil-barons at home.
America's animals are being delivered over to the huntsmen - including religious fundamentalists who
believe killing wolves (as wolves are considered by them to be "the emissaries of Satan") ensures them
salvation. Aerial gunning of wildlife, we are told, has resumed, with the aim of clearing the forests of
animals so that oil drilling can commence, The Arctic is also under threat for the same reason, as Bush
the Fuchrer, henchman of the oil-barons, ignores all national and international environmental agreements
on pollution, on the decimation of wildlife, on deforestation & on mad construction.
Bush cites Iraq's refusal to comply with UN resolutions as evidence of Saddam's contempt for the world. Yet that US ally, Israel, is in breach of as many UN resolutions as the errant Iraq. And the US itself has refused to accept a ruling from the International Court of Justice condemning its "unlawful use of force" during its terrorist war against Nicaragua, and for which it was also ordered to pay substantial reparations. Dismissing that particular ruling and refusing to pay, the US went on to intensify that assault.

That the US is concerned with the chemical facilities Iraq might have is understandable. Saddam certainly has the technological knowhow. It came courtesy of the US when they sponsored Saddam in his war with Iran. Back in 1994, the United States Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs produced a report entitled US Chemical and Biological Warfare-Related Dual Use Exports to Iraq and their Possible Impact on the Health Consequences of the Persian Gulf War. It concluded:

"The United States provided the Government of Iraq with 'dual use' licensed materials which assisted in the development of Iraqi chemical, biological, and missile-system programs, including: chemical warfare agent precursors; chemical warfare agent production facility plans and technical drawings ... chemical warhead filling equipment-, biological warfare related materials; Missile fabrication equipment; and, missile-system guidance equipment."

Capitalism is a war-prone society in that built into it is perpetual conflict between rival states over markets, raw material sources, trade routes and investment outlets, for the profit-seeking capitalist corporations they exist to protect. You can't have capitalism without wars, the threat of war and preparations for war.

So if you're thinking of demonstrating against war, then take our advice and invest in a sturdy anti-war banner, for if you are prepared to oppose war without opposing the very system that gives rise to it, then you'll be demonstrating for quite some time to come. Alternatively you can join the movement that believes that to end wars we must first put an end to capitalism.

We must unite to establish a world community without frontiers where all the resources of the planet would be at the disposal of all the people of the planet. Then we could use them to end world poverty, hunger and preventable disease once and for all and rapidly move towards applying the principle "from each according to their abilities, to each according to their needs", ensuring that no man, woman or child anywhere on Earth goes without adequate food, clothing, shelter or other amenities. A moneyless, classless, wageless, stateless world where wars and weapons of mass destruction would be things of the past. Not only did capitalism's wars in the last century cause the death of hundreds of millions — and waste on an unfathomable level, but even in peacetime capitalism remains an extraordinarily wasteful society. Things that people need are produced only if they are profitable to sell, even though we have the technology today to meet our needs. This rationing of wealth based on how much money we received in wages, salaries or state benefits will be abolished when we stop producing for sale, and produce to meet needs instead. Think of the totally useless professions and the enormous quantity of resources and energy they employ that do not contribute to the production of wealth at all - ticketing, insuring, banking, insuring, advertising, policing, militarizing, selling, buying. And the sheer millions of unemployment or starving around the world. When employment and the market system has been abolished, and the means of producing wealth are owned and democratically controlled by the population, we may liberate our technology and creativity to live a life of abundance, working as much or as little as we please.

It is time that humanity organized to bring about a society in which the planet will truly be in the hands of the world's people. War is the proof of our impotence and our voicelessness. Our very advanced technology and our social system of owners and nonowners, of buying and selling, and of money, which
is from the Victorian past are in tension with each other, as the latter is not able to release the potential of the former. It is time for us to create a world that we may truly call ours, for ourselves, our children, and our planet. Take the toys away from the ruling boys! Awake to your own powers, fellow citizens!

by the World Socialist Party in Chicago www.worldsocialism.org

International Communist Current

Against imperialist war! Against pacifist illusions!

For class struggle in all countries!

Once again the Middle East is plunged in horror. Once again a deluge of bombs is descending on Iraq. And while the 'civilized' powers inflict death and misery on an already-maimed population, a deluge of lies descends on the rest of the world in order to justify this war, or to confuse and distort any real opposition to it.

The US and Britain are lying!
They tell us that this is a war to get rid of weapons of mass destruction. In reality this is a war by weapons of mass destruction, and one of its main purposes is to demonstrate just how massive and destructive are the weapons available to the USA, in order to discourage anyone from challenging its world 'leadership'. What's more, Saddam's chemical weapons were supplied by the US and Britain during the 80s; they helped him use these weapons in the Iran-Iraq war of 1980-88 and said nothing when he gassed the Kurds of Halabja in March 1988.

They tell us this is a war against terrorism. But all states - not just 'failed' states like Afghanistan or Iraq, or would-be states like the PLO - use terrorism as an instrument of war. Britain has long used the loyalist gangs in Northern Ireland to do its dirty work, America's current 'archenemy', Bin Laden, was trained by the CIA to fight Russia in Afghanistan. As for Spain, allied today to Britain and the US, it used the GAL death squads to eliminate without trial the terrorists of the ETA. Worse than that: the same states who lecture the world about the terrorist danger have not hesitated to exploit terrorist attacks against their own civilians in order to mobilize support for war. Evidence is mounting, up that the US state, though informed well in advance about al-Qaida's plans for an attack on American soil, did nothing to prevent it.

France, Germany, and Russia are also warmongers!
These lies are becoming more and more obvious today. But the countries and politicians who claim to be 'against the war' are spreading even more dangerous lies.

They tell us that this war is wrong because it is not sanctioned by the UN. But the 1991 war, which massacred hundreds of thousands of Iraqis and then gave Saddam a free hand to slaughter those who rose up against him, was a 'legal' war approved by the UN. The UN is not some defender of international justice, but a den of thieves where the great powers play out their sordid intrigues and rivalries.

Today, Chirac, Schröder and Putin have the gall to pose as 'the friends of peace'. But, the pacifist credentials of the anti-US 'alliance' are a fraud: at this very moment France - which was primarily responsible for arming and training the Hutu death squads in Rwanda - is carrying out a military intervention to defend its imperialist interests in the Ivory Coast. Germany, by encouraging the secession
of Croatia and Slovenia from Yugoslavia, provoked the decade-long war in the Balkans with the aim of expanding its influence towards the Mediterranean and the Middle East. Russian troops are still devastating Chechnya and slaughtering its population.

**Capitalism is imperialism!**
The countries who have been trying to block the USA's war plans are doing it for their own, national and imperialist reasons. They know that the real target of the 'war on terror' is not Saddam or Bin Laden, but themselves.

The USA makes no secret about its overall imperialist strategy. Since the collapse of the Russian imperialist bloc at the end of the 1980s, it has pledged itself to using its crushing military superiority to prevent the rise of any new power or coalition able to compete with it. This has been the real goal of all the USA's big military actions since 1991 - the Gulf war in 91, Kosovo in 99, Afghanistan 2001. And yet each action has only increased the challenge to its authority by other powers, large and small. This in turn has led the US to pursue its strategy on an even bigger scale. It now aims to take direct control of Central Asia and the Middle East, and to extend its field of action to the Far East as well. Faced with the indiscipline of its main rivals - France and Germany in particular - it seeks nothing less than the encirclement of Europe, including the ability to use its control of Middle East oil as a weapon against the European powers and Japan. France, Germany and the rest are on the defensive, but they are still active players in this great game of imperialism.

Capitalist states don't behave like this because they have evil or stupid leaders, but because ever since 1914 and the First World War, global capitalism has meant global war. Having carved up the planet among themselves, the different national powers could no longer expand peacefully without grabbing the markets and resources of their rivals. Today all states are imperialist and all the wars of the 20th and 21st centuries - including the so-called anti-fascist war of 39-45, including all so-called 'wars of national liberation', including the 'holy war' preached by Bin Laden and Co. - have been imperialist wars.

*Capitalism cannot live except by war. This is proof that capitalism has long been a barrier to human progress. That its existence threatens the very survival of mankind.*

**Against all pacifist illusions!**
In February, millions took to the streets to join in demonstrations which proclaimed that this was the way to 'Stop the War'. And yet the war has gone ahead & Neither vetoes at the UN, nor appeals to fine ideals like democracy and peace, have stopped the war machine from rumbling on.

A hundred years of imperialist conflict has shown that pacifism can never stop capitalism from going to war. In fact, it has always been used to prepare the way to war by spreading all kinds of dangerous illusions:
- illusions about the peaceful interests of some capitalist states, some capitalist parties, or UN;
- illusions that war can be opposed by peaceful, legal means
- illusions that 'democracy' is an antidote to the war drive, that the 'will of the people' can stop the leaders from going to war
- illusions that there could one day be world peace without getting rid of the capitalist system

These illusions can only disarm any real opposition to capitalism's innate war drive. Worse still, they prepare to enroll the population for war: for if one capitalism is 'good', 'peaceful', and respects the people's interests, then we are bound to take up arms in its defense when it is threatened by a 'bad', 'anti-democratic', 'warmonger' capitalism. And this is why these illusions are deliberately encouraged by all the political forces of the ruling class, and above all by the parties of the so-called 'left', from the social democrats to the Trotskyists.
Against Imperialist war —international class struggle!

War between capitalist nations can only be opposed by a movement which has no national interests to defend - by the international movement of the working class.

In all wars it is the exploited majority that pays the highest price, whether as soldiers or civilians in the direct line of fire, or as producers and consumers who are asked to work harder and eat less for the national interest.

But the working class is not a mere passive victim of war. It was the mass strikes and mutinies of 1917-18 which brought the first world war to an end; only when that revolutionary wave was defeated was capitalism able to launch itself into the second world butchery. And when the working class reappeared on the stage of history, at the end of the 1960s, its resistance to the capitalist crisis stood in the way of a third world war. In fact, the main reason why the present conflicts take the form they do - 'police' actions directed at scapegoats like Saddam- is that capitalism today is not in a position to dragoon the working class into an open conflict between the big imperialist powers.

The working class cannot avoid a confrontation with the system that exploits us. The very source of capitalism's flight into war - its inability to develop economic prosperity, its crisis - leads to never-ending attacks on working class living standards through increased exploitation, unemployment and cuts in social benefits. The march towards war will greatly accelerate these attacks and demand ever-greater sacrifices from the exploited. Thus the necessary and inevitable struggle against the effects of the economic crisis is also the struggle against war.

Today the working class struggle can only be a defensive one. But it contains the seeds of an offensive, revolutionary struggle, of a class war against the whole capitalist system. That struggle alone can destroy the capitalist war machine and lead humanity towards a world community which has put imperialist wars and national frontiers in the dustbin of history.

* Against any solidarity with our own exploiters, whether they are for or against they war today, whether they be American, British, Spanish, French, German, Chinese, Russian, or Iraqi!

* For the international solidarity of the working class!

International Communist Current, Mar. 2003

This leaflet is being distributed in the following countries: USA, Mexico, Venezuela, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Holland, Belgium, Sweden, India, Australia, Russia
Internationalism, PO Box 288, New York, NY 10018
www.internationalism.org
The Coming War with Iraq

War has been called "business by other means". This is an oversimplification, of course. Undoubtedly, economic conflict over material resources, markets, trade routes and so on, is a crucial factor in modern war but it does not operate in isolation; the ruling ideas of society play a role too. Without significant support for war in our society it would be much more difficult to wage a war. That's why our "great" leaders spend so long trying to convince us, and scare us, into thinking that war is both acceptable and inevitable. It is neither.

Bogus reasons for war

People are right to be cynical about the claims of the warmongering politicians. Most realise that this is not really a dispute about "weapons of mass destruction" (which are, probably, exclusively held by the United States and its allies in this conflict given that, according to UNSCOM arms inspectors, Iraq had already lost 90-95% of its WMD by 1998). It can't be about the supposed links between Iraq and Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda terrorist network (which remain unproven or extremely tenuous), nor about Iraq's non-compliance with UN resolutions (which the US and its ally, Israel have repeatedly flouted themselves). It can't even be about the alleged military threat that Iraq poses to the West (which is plain daft since the regime knows very well that it would be totally outgunned and completely obliterated if it tried to make good such a threat).

The significance of oil

In contrast, there are apparently compelling reasons for thinking that what lies behind the determination to topple Saddam Hussein has to do with oil. Consider the facts: Iraqi oil production is currently 3 million barrels per day (compared to 77 million for the world as a whole). Nevertheless, Iraq has the second largest reserves in the world and, what's more, these reserves are of a relatively high quality and easily extractable. If export controls were lifted and investment was allowed into the country it is estimated that Iraq would be able to supply 10% of the world's oil needs, and do so for at least a century. At the same time, as Robert Fisk has noted; "The US Department of Energy announced at the beginning of this month that by 2025, US oil imports will account for perhaps 70 per cent of total US domestic demand (it was 55 per cent two years ago). As Michael Renner of the Worldwatch Institute put it recently, "US oil deposits are increasingly depleted, and many other non-Opec fields are beginning to run dry. The bulk of future supplies will have to come from the Gulf region." No wonder the whole Bush energy policy is based on the increasing consumption of oil. Some 70 percent of the world's proven oil reserves are in the Middle East." (The Independent, January 18, 2003).

Thus, it is easy to see why, when the US announced that it's goal in Iraq was regime change, The Times should have run headlines like the "West sees glittering prizes ahead in giant oilfields" (11.07.02). Removing Saddam would open h-aq's rich new oilfields to western bidders, lessen dependence on Saudi oil and undermine OPEC's ability to "hold the West to ransom". Which is why oil companies have already begun to strike deals with Iraqi political groups in exile.

Against "Anti-Americanism"

Nevertheless, this does not justify the kind of facile anti-Americanism which is becoming increasingly prevalent, identifying "America" as the problem and as the real threat to peace. The problem in fact originates at a deeper level; it springs from the competitive nature of global capitalism in which every state on the face of the earth is implicated. Ironically, this "Anti-Americanism" which sees the problem in
simplistic national terms is consistent with a kind of nationalistic outlook that governments themselves encourage and rely upon in their efforts to promote war. It induces us to take sides against America and, by implication, with Iraq in a conflict which is irrelevant to the interests of the vast majority of people on both sides.

It is unquestionably true that Saddam Hussein heads a vicious, brutal and murderous regime that has no hesitation about using whatever it takes to keep itself in power. The sooner it goes, the better, not least for the Iraqi population in general. But our opposition to this regime does not require us to support its western enemies; the enemy of an enemy is not necessarily a friend.

Motive and consequences

What these Western enemies are proposing is the use of military force to oust this regime but the reason they are proposing this is not because they have the interests of the Iraqi population at heart, many thousands of whom will certainly perish in order for the Western powers to get their way; it is rather because they have their own interests in mind. By supporting this action we would be endorsing precisely these grubby commercial motives that lie at the very heart of this proposal. We would be complicit in perpetuating the lie that Bush and Blair want to wage war on Iraq because it will ultimately benefit Iraq. Therefore we must oppose, without compromise, what they propose.

In any case, the argument that the outcome of a war against Iraq will be to the advantage of its population and the wider region in the long run even if this was not the real purpose of such a war is far from proven. According to this argument, the replacement of the current Iraqi dictatorship by a moderate pro-western and relatively democratic government will significantly improve human rights in the country and create a stable political climate in which economic growth for the Iraqi people will be possible. However, this is unlikely to be the case. More probably, the effect of such a devastating war will be to further destabilise an already volatile Middle East. It will serve to sow the seeds of yet more bitterness, hatred and irrational fanaticism, leaving an even larger legacy of violence for years, if not decades, to come. As for the argument that war will bring economic benefits to the Iraqi population as a whole by creating a climate of political stability, even if this were the case this has to be balanced against the enormous devastation that war will inflict on Iraq that will take many years to redress. Following the last Gulf War, Iraq's GDP collapsed from $68 billions in 1989 to a mere $245 millions. There was widespread destruction of the economic infrastructure and an enormous increase in deaths through malnutrition and disease. Another war against Iraq is likely to be even more devastating since many analysts believe it will have to involve Allied ground forces in street fighting with the most fearsome of the Iraqi armed forces. According to Harsh McRae; "The highest estimates of the costs of a Middle East war, which include a sharp rise in the oil price, are around $600bn. That would be equivalent to only about six months' natural growth. But if supplies were to be seriously disrupted and the oil price were to rise to, say, $80 a barrel, then a serious world recession would follow." (The Independent, January 1, 2003). If this were to happen this would undoubtedly further delay the economic reconstruction of Iraq. The resulting prolongation of intense poverty can be expected to provide a fertile breeding ground for a further cycle of violence. Add to this the ecological damage that follows every war, especially one that might easily result in the mass burning of oil wells, then as individuals we can easily fall into apathetic despair. But the world does not have to be organised this way. There is no law that says we have to compete and fight over the wealth of the planet. Consenting to how the world is organised today will continue the cycle of violence, as conflict is built into our economic system. Ultimately it's a choice the people of our world will have to make. Against the forces of the ruling economic and political classes we may seem to be powerless but when we withdraw our consent for the madness of economic competition then wars will simply stop. Now seems like a pretty good time to start.

CAPITALISM MEANS WAR, MORE WAR, AND THEN MORE WAR!

What is Capitalism?
Capitalism is a global system of exploitation, production for maximum profit, and ruthless competition and plunder. In its thirst for markets, natural resources and lowest wage production, capitalist corporations and businesses must compete world-wide to secure the highest rates of profit possible, at any cost.

U.S. capitalism is about to launch yet another blitzkrieg war to quickly seize the rich Iraqi Oil fields before any powerful workers’ anti-capitalist movements can be built up. The U.S. anti-war movement must target the capitalist system because this system’s continuation of “business as usual” inevitably means more deadly capitalist wars abroad and deepening attacks on the working class at home. The oh so patriotic bosses’ policy is “United we stand” on your necks so they can continue their scorched earth assaults on workers’ living standards by slashing health care, education, jobs, the environment, etc.

On the Slogan “Support Our Troops”
Don’t fall for the ruling class propaganda of “support our troops.” This is a devious method of trying to unite the anti-war movement with the warmongers in the Pentagon, Congress, the White House and Wall Street, who are the real “axis of evil.” “Support our troops” means in practice lending support to the Oil War, mass murder and more empire building. This is a key tactic of both parties of war, Republicans and Democrats, a “bi-partisan” method of ideologically making common ground with their various constituencies to back imperialist war.

In reality, the U.S. government doesn’t give a damn about “the troops” once they’ve been chewed up and spit out as cannon fodder for capital’s profiteering. In past wars hundreds of thousands of troops have returned from the killing fields with their lives physically and/or mentally shattered. These troops have often been ignored or swept aside for years with the Veterans Administration and War Department telling them “its all in your mind.”

To End War, End Capitalism
The plundering and bloodsucking will increase until the workers and their allies get organized in new organizations that have as their ultimate goal, the overthrow of the whole wage slave order. Let’s build a revolutionary movement that fights for a worker ruled society that will abolish wage slavery, money, buying and selling, profits, nation states, competition, poverty, racism and sexism, and create a system of social control of production geared to meet human needs.

US Workers’ Voice
Box 57483, Los Angeles, CA 90057
New Internationalist Journal
$2/20 copies p/p. 02/10/03
New Union Party published no leaflets that I know of but distributed thousands of its free newspaper the *New Unionist*. Other groups not represented here may have used the same strategy.

The DB presents this array of revolutionary leaflets to demonstrate their similarity in content and the striking difference between them and those of the mainline "peacists," as they call themselves here in OR. Leaflets of the peace and justice crowd seem to concentrate on the horrors of war, the motives of the government, and the evil nature of Bush and his lieutenants. Nothing I saw mentioned capitalism as the cause of war. On the other hand, every one of our leaflets named capitalism as the enemy and pointed out the capitalist cause.

Of course there are differences in emphasis and style. The major one that I noticed is that groups like DeLeonists and the WSM (SPGB and kindred) used this opportunity to explain just how capitalism by its basic nature requires war in order to avoid economic stagnation. This emphasis derived from the orientation of groups that descended directly from the socialism of the Second International with its emphasis on educating the working class. Left communists who derived their political positions from Leninism with its underlying philosophy that the role of revolutionaries is to lead the working class, not to educate it.

In the first of the "non-leaflets" Aaron Smeaton expands on the article by MacIntosh in DB118 regarding the history of the Italian Communist Left with special attention to Amadeo Bordiga and his "ism." Dave Stratman's "The U.S. as Fourth Reich" develops the thesis of John Spritzler's book, *The People as Enemy: The Leaders' Hidden Agenda in WWII*, as a paradigm for the role the U.S. is now playing in world politics.

A major benefit of the decision to stop publication of the DB has been the dozens of notes and e-mails expressing regret at this move and grateful for the twenty years it has been kept alive. My ego won't allow me to simply mention them; instead I have decided to print Dr. Who's comments as representative of the sentiments which many readers expressed.

As usual we end with some notes, announcements, and short reviews—in rather abbreviated form.

**Finances**

Not unexpectedly receipts dwindled after the announcement of the DB's impending demise. For the first time in years we end with a deficit. But not to worry. Before filing for Chapter 11, I gave myself as CEO a golden parachute of imposing dimensions (to hell with the stockholders!). This should cover the final expenses of the DB including the refunds for unfilled subs. In this connection I want to repeat my thanks to the large number of subscribers who volunteered to forego reimbursement.

**Contributions:** Charles Bateman $3; John V. Craven $10; Joe Tupper $40; Ron Somerlott $20; Anonymous $50; Richard Evanoff $15. Total $138. Thank you, comrades.

**BALANCE**

April 24, 2003

$11.41

**RECEIPTS**

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(to p. 30)
There are points made by Macintosh in his piece *Bordiga, Bordigism and the Communist Left* that could use a little background for those who aren’t familiar with the Italian Communist Left. Much of the sources for the history and experience of the Italian Communist Left are, obviously, written in Italian and not readily available to those approaching the subject from outside the political tendencies which directly grew out of this experience or who do not have at least a reading knowledge of Italian. This short overview aims to put forward a short account of key factors that may help illuminate some unfamiliar or confused aspects of the development of this tendency.

The experience of Fascism left the Italian Communist Left dispersed, in exile abroad, in prisons, in internal exile to the Italian islands and forced underground. The militants of the Italian Left kept publishing *Prometeo* until 1938. Bordiga after his first arrest, in 1922, was increasingly sidelined as Gramsci and Togliatti’s center, guided by the Comintern, maneuvered to take complete control of the party. Bordiga rapidly found himself increasingly isolated both in the International and within his own party. He found himself forced to put forward the constantly changing opportunistic tactics dictated by the Moscow center. The Communist Party of Italy was formed late. Only after a bitter and protracted struggle had taken place between the Italian Left and Italian Social Democracy were the first steps taken to form the PCd’I. So by 1921, when these militants were finally able to form the Communist Party of Italy, the revolutionary wave had passed. The name of the new Italian party was the Communist Party of Italy (Partito comunista d’Italia). This was to indicate that the Italian party was merely a part of a single international revolutionary party. It signified the origins and struggle that created the Italian party, which was formed around the central issue of adherence to the Communist International. Not until the counterrevolutionaries assumed total control of the party, largely undertaken in the name of “bolshevization”, did they change the name of the party to the Italian Communist Party. This was not a matter of semantics but of the nationalist and bourgeois perspective of the counterrevolutionaries that took power within the Italian party and within the Comintern as a whole.

By 1926, Bordiga had almost wholly withdrawn from an active political life. So, even though Bordiga signed onto the *Platform of the Committee of Intesa* of 1925, the Italian Communist Left was on its’ own and Bordiga had already withdrawn out of active political life in Italy. This 1925 platform signified the separation of the Italian Communist Left from the Communist Party of Italy and the beginning of the existence of the Italian Communist Left as a separate entity. *Prometeo*, the journal of the Communist Left in Italy, continued as the main voice of the Italian Left. The militants of the Italian Left restarted the journal *Prometeo* in 1943, publishing it clandestinely, after a gap in publication of five years. Bordiga did not return to active politics until the late 1940s, several years after the militants of the Italian Left formed Internationalist Communist Party (Partito Comunista Internazionalista, generally identifying itself by its paper *Battaglia Comunista*). During the intervening period the groups around *Prometeo* (and the publications of the Italian Left in exile) elaborated their theory independently of any contribution from Bordiga. So for much of the key period of their theoretical development Bordiga was not active or even present. Their theory was developed collectively and was not simply the product of any one militant or theorist despite the
importance of Bordiga as a leader and the strength of his writing.

Bordiga chose not to participate in the initial founding of the PCI\text{Int}, even though he his comrades invited him to attend and had arranged for his transport to participate in the formal founding of the new party at its' first national conference in Turin from December 1945 to January 1946. Bordiga never officially joined the PCI\text{Int}. From the start of Bordiga's return to political activity, in 1949, there were clear divisions between his conceptions and those of his theoretical "heirs", whom he regarded as having wrongly moved away from the positions of the Italian Left of the twenties. When the split between the Bordigists and the rest of the Italian Communist Left occurred in 1952, it was accompanied by a sense of betrayal on the part of those who had struggled, in the face of Fascism, Stalinism and imperialist war, to bring the party into being. This split was not simply between two individuals, Onorato Damen and Amadeo Bordiga. It had its basis in differences over the theory and tactics of the party in regards to parliaments, unions, the role of revolutionaries in relation to national liberation movements, the role of the party in relation to the class and questions around party organization. While Bordiga, and those that followed him, sought a return to the positions of the Italian Left back in the early 1920s, the group that remained within the PCI\text{Int} around Battaglia comunista refused to abandon the theoretical gains made from their own political experiences. When Left Communists speak of "Bordigists" they generally mean those people who left in 1952 to join with Bordiga in forming his International Communist Party. Those who did not go and join Bordiga's party do not consider themselves Bordigist, nor did they consider themselves his "followers". The political successors and splits of this party that Bordiga formed in 1952 are the ones generally called "Bordigist". The experience of the Italian Communist Left cannot be simplified into one of subordination and domination by Bordiga or any single theorist or leader and this is precisely what makes them a little harder to pin down than some other political tendencies. Labels such as "Bordigist", or "neo-Bordigist" or "ultra-leninist" do not describe the nature of the tendency as much as obscure it in the absence of an analysis.

The Italian Communist Left had to deal with the betrayal of the working class by a party that they had only formed five years beforehand. So in the period from 1921 to 1926 they had all been isolated within the party and essentially forced to stay silent or quit the party. Their actual period within the Communist Party of Italy, and the Communist International was only FIVE active years. This is not a very long period of time considering that the struggle of the Italian Left, within Social Democracy, against the reformist current around Turati took considerably longer. The struggle of the Italian Left within Social Democracy lasted, from its beginnings with the creation of the tiny Marxist paper La Soffitta (lit. The Attic — challenging the reformists who regarded Marxism as having been relegated "to the attic") in 1912, to the formation of the PCd'I in 1921. It was this struggle within Italian Social Democracy that formed the basis of their experience through which their approach to subsequent developments was based. Thus instead of viewing the International as a collection of separate national party organizations as under Social Democracy they viewed the International as a world revolutionary party. Adhering to the International meant dispensing with the opportunism and reformism of the 2nd International, which was one of the key issues in the struggle with Turati and Italian Social Democracy.

Some things need to be mentioned in regards to understanding the position taken
by the Italian Communist Left regarding democracy, worker's councils and revolutionary organization. Democracy was the historical form with which the bourgeoisie allowed Fascism to take power and crush the working class. The democracy of worker's councils, of the proletariat in its struggle, is not something that was ever treated contemptuously by the Italian Left. For the Italian Communist Left the worker's councils were organizations that could only grow in the course of class struggle and revolution. Worker's councils were, and are seen as the form of rule by and for the proletariat whose task is to establish an order that disenfranchises and destroys the capitalists as a class. The councils function as the revolutionary party too must function, on the proletarian basis of elected and immediately revocable delegates (larger bodies electing smaller bodies, democratic centralism). As permanent institutions within capitalism they could only become like trade unions. The councils were seen as the measure of the militancy and combativeness of the class. They regarded the collapse of the councils as another sign of the passing of the revolutionary wave. The Italian Communist Left did not create a fetish out of Workers' Councils. Rather they regarded them as having their context and relevance within revolutionary struggle. Outside of the context of a revolutionary upheaval workers' councils can only become like trade unions either being absorbed or crushed by the bourgeoisie. Groups that come out of the Italian Communist Left generally see a revolutionary party of proletarians organized on an international scale and in the forefront of the struggles of the revolutionary working class as necessary for the overthrow of the capitalism. While the conception of the role of the party and its organization differs between the "Bordigist" elements and non-Bordigist elements of the Italian Communist Left, Battaglia Comunista and the groups joined with it in the IBRP, have never seen the role of this party as one of taking power in the name of the proletariat.

The strength of the theoretical outlook of the Italian Communist Left lays in their materialist analysis of events as they evolved in respect to their experiences in struggle under extraordinarily difficult circumstances. This analysis did not remain static in the sense of attempting to hold an unvarying analysis of events in the face of imperialist war and counterrevolution. That their development took place in the context of the growth of fascism followed by Second World War, through the worst period of the counterrevolution, makes their experience particularly instructive for those seeking to understand the development of capitalism into the present period.

A. Smeaton

Those who want to learn more about the origins of the Italian Communist Left might want to read the Communist Workers Organisation pamphlet The Platform of the Committee of Intesa 1925, available by sending 2f ($4.00US includes postage) to:

CWO Publications
P. O. Box 338
Sheffield
S3 9YX
UK
THE U.S. AS FOURTH REICH
By Dave Stratman
September 2, 2002
newdemocracyworld.org

The U.S. is making itself an object of fear and hatred throughout the world. Bush Administration spokesmen have promised the world "endless war" against as many as sixty countries, have claimed for the U.S. the right to launch pre-emptive war on any nation which the U.S. suspects may become a threat in the future, and have reserved the right to first use of nuclear weapons. The U.S. now seems about to launch a pre-emptive war against Iraq which is likely to result in tens of thousands of civilian deaths, not to mention substantial U.S. military casualties, a war for which the U.S. has support only from U.S. Pekinese Tony Blair and Israel.

Has the Bush regime become unhinged? Or do its extremely bellicose policies serve some arcane strategic purpose which U.S. ruling circles believe make them worth their enormous political and economic costs?

As ill-considered as these war-like policies may seem, in fact there are powerful strategic reasons behind them.

The media are full of stories about Israel and Iraq and other arenas where the overwhelming military might of the U.S. and its client state leads many people to feel utterly powerless and hopeless about the possibility of ordinary people changing the world. Missing from our front pages, or indeed anywhere in the mainstream media, are stories about the rising levels of mass resistance to capitalism around the globe: general strikes in Italy and Spain; labor unrest of historic proportions in China; South America in flames; with unrest in Brazil, insurrections and factory seizures in Argentina, strikes and riots in Uruguay, insurrections against privatization in Peru, mass mobilizations in Venezuela; and a level of disillusionment with corporate thievery in the U.S. not seen since the 1930s. Couple all these with growing danger of financial collapse and global deflation, and the future of capitalism begins to look shaky indeed.

The war plans and rhetoric of the Bush administration are meant to distract attention from capitalism's profound strategic weakness and focus instead on its overwhelming military strength, with the result that, even as capitalist economic and ideological power unravels, it appears to be insuperably strong. But the bellicose policies of the U.S. have in addition more profound goals than to serve as diversionary emblems of overwhelming military power. This is what gets us to consideration of the U.S. as Fourth Reich.

As dangerous as World War II was for world capitalism, war for and against the Third Reich was meant to save the world system of elite rule. The world was deep in Depression in the 1930s. Anti-capitalist sentiment was on the rise and workers' movements were increasingly powerful. Germany was on the verge of civil war when Hitler was appointed Chancellor by the German elite on January 30, 1933 to crush the growing workers' movement, which he proceeded to do with concentration camps for 100,000 Communists and militant workers. Japan was riven by strikes and anti-capitalist sentiment when the military leadership...
invaded China in 1937 in a desperate drive for natural resources and national unity. French capitalists were besieged by factory occupations and welcomed the Nazi invaders. Industrial unionism and sit-down strikes were sweeping the U.S. in the USSR Stalin was holding onto power through ferocious repression, with executions or the gulag for millions of workers, peasants, and Old Bolsheviks.

War gave the Nazi regime a national purpose and an external enemy to justify Gestapo domination of German life; while Hitler and many of his closest henchmen died or were imprisoned after the war, the industrial elite which had placed him in power prospered. War brought unity and national purpose to a British society riven by class conflict. The French Vichy government collaborated with the occupying Nazis to break French workers' unions. U.S. corporations imposed a No-Strike Pledge on workers for the duration of the war and consolidated corporate power in American life. The German invasion came close to shattering Soviet power, but national resistance to the Nazis in the end saved Stalin's rule and helped keep the USSR from internal collapse for another fifty years.

Mobilization for war led these economies out of Depression. In the U.S., FDR's New Deal programs had negligible effect. What saved the U.S. economy was producing tanks and ships and planes for WWII. Mobilization for war led Nazi Germany from massive unemployment to a labor shortage.

What does any of this have to do with the present day? I submit that the U.S. has determined (whether with the connivance of its elite partners is not clear) to serve a role similar to that of the Nazi regime in the 1930s and '40s. The U.S. will play Fourth Reich to the other governments of the world, in particular to those most likely to be threatened by mass insurrections and revolutionary upheavals in the coming years: China, certain Western European powers, and South American nations.

The U.S. will go on the attack against many of the world's people - especially those who have the misfortune to be sitting on top of a lot of oil - to insure elite control of world resources and, more importantly, to police against revolutionary movements, all in the name of "fighting terrorism." Ironically though it will be the excessive violence and lawlessness of the U.S. approach that will be most useful to governing elites.

The growing anti-capitalist movement among the world's workers and other people presents the world business elite with a deeply threatening situation. The elites of each of the countries in which resistance is growing need an external enemy against which they can lead their own people, either in real battle or in moral indignation. They need to be able to say that the problem in Italy or Spain or China is not Italian or Chinese leaders or the capitalist system: the problem is the Americans.

The role of the U.S. will be to act as a stimulant and target of world anger so that the burgeoning world anti-capitalist movement can be turned into an anti-American movement, in which the working classes of China and Spain and Italy and France and South America can be recruited into movements of national unity - Popular Fronts - against the Americans. In this way - or so it is hoped - potentially revolutionary working class movements will be transformed into nationalist movements under elite leadership.

Does this strategy seem far-fetched? In fact it is nothing new for the U.S., but merely playing out on a world scale its strategy in the Middle East. The U.S. has long used Israeli
as a lightening rod to deflect the class anger of impoverished Arab workers away from their own rulers, thus keeping in power shaky U.S. client regimes throughout the region.

This is also the strategy the U.S. used in Iran to prevent the revolution against the Shah from sweeping away capitalist control there and sparking a prairie fire of democratic revolution in the Middle East. The U.S. secretly colluded with the Ayatollah Khomeini, even as he attacked the U.S. as the “Great Satan” and took over the U.S. Embassy in Teheran and held Americans captive. The U.S. was perfectly willing to permit, even encourage, this storm of anti-Americanism, since it deflected popular anger away from capitalism and class rule itself and permitted the reactionary regime of the mullahs to consolidate its grip on Iranian society.

Playing the role of the Fourth Reich will have an added benefit for the U.S. elite. As Fourth Reich-like policies bring the U.S. under attack from terrorists and lead to real war, they will be used to justify tighter and tighter government control of the U.S. population. Constitutional protections will prove as flimsy as the prisoners’ huts at Guantanamo.

The U.S. strategy amounts to a very serious gamble with enormous stakes. While it is intended to intimidate people and make them feel powerless, it does so at the cost of calling into question the ability of capitalism to offer them a secure future. In other words, embarking on endless war will intensify the strategic erosion of capitalist ideological control while strengthening the capitalist state. While making war will immediately strengthen the hand of the rulers, over time it will undermine their position.

It is worth recalling here the complicated history of WWII and of nations which succumbed to German or Japanese invasion. While people were initially stunned into defeated silence by invasion and occupation, over time they organized Resistance movements which rose up not only against their foreign occupiers but also against their own business and aristocratic classes which had collaborated with the enemy. As the German occupiers were routed in France, Italy, and Greece, sweeping social revolutions were only narrowly prevented when Communist parties obedient to Stalin succeeded in disarming triumphant Resistance forces. Communist-led partisan forces under Tito in Yugoslavia refused Stalin’s order, defeated Nazi occupiers and native Fascist forces alike, and took power. The Chinese Communist Party likewise refused Stalin’s orders to desist; after waging civil war from 1946 to 1949, Mao’s forces defeated Chinese Nationalist armies and seized state power.

Even peoples who had not suffered occupation emerged from the war with greatly raised expectations of what their societies should be like, expectations which threatened their rulers. British voters swept Churchill and the Tories from power at war’s end and established a welfare state. Workers in the U.S., which had suffered none of the ravages of war that European countries had endured, in 1946 embarked on the greatest strike wave in our history, it took the Taft-Hartley Act, the declaration of the Cold War, and a ferocious anti-Communist campaign to bring labor under control. (Communists in the labor movement were particularly vulnerable to attack since they had vigorously supported the No Strike Pledge during the war and had led the attack on rank-and-file militants who resisted it.)

Will elite strategy lead to another world war? Given the embattled situation of world capital
and the trajectory of history in the last fifty years, a war involving, say, China and perhaps India or some other Asian powers vs. the U.S. or some mix of European powers, may be more possible than we would like to think. Capitalism is running out of options. The future depends largely on how threatened governing elites feel and to what lengths they believe they must go to protect their rule. One can imagine, for example, a Chinese Communist government threatened by domestic upheaval attacking Taiwan in a desperate bid for national unity, realizing that this will bring war with the U.S. The consequences of such possible developments are unforeseeable.

As the air waves ring with threats by U.S. officials against Iraq, it is sobering to reflect that the Bush regime has staked its entire credibility on more terrorist acts occurring; indeed Administration policies in Israel and Afghanistan and Iraq seem calculated to stir up more attacks on Americans. Cheney, Rumsfeld, and Ashcroft have promised us some new terrorist outrage. Let us hope that this Administration does not decide to furnish us with the terrorist catastrophe that it has promised.

Will the elite strategy succeed? Only time will tell, but the facade of Bush's post-September 11 power-grab seems to be cracking, as more and more Americans connect the dots between the "war on terrorism," attacks on Constitutional rights, Wall Street thievery, and government promises of endless war. No one likes to admit that entities as powerful as the U.S. government and Corporate America are not our friends but our enemies, but many people are coming to this conclusion and are finding their voices. What seems undeniably true is that the world has entered a new and dangerous period of war and revolution in which the fate of humanity hangs in the balance.

(from p. 23)

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BALANCE August 16, 2003

(Deficit) $18.58

Fraternally submitted

Frank Girard
Farewell, Discussion Bulletin. I will miss you. Its arrival in the mail was something to look forward to. Considering its radical contents, its very name underlined its modesty, just as the revolutionaries that we are are often hidden behind the anonymity of our ordinary appearance and lives. You never know who will turn out to be another comrade, and eventually all will be. It looked like a punk fanzine, black and white, each article in the font and text quality of the contributor’s typewriter. Small enough to carry in one’s pocket, it made the rounds of neighborhoods, got left purposely on bus seats or in supermarkets, was mailed to other enquiring minds around the globe, spreading the word like pamphlets of working-class rather than capitalist Committees of Correspondence.

All sorts came out of the closet to get their tracts published in the only place that would accept them – communists, socialists, syndicalists and anarchists of remarkably similar hue. What they all proclaimed was a world in which the right to be lazy would be as staunchly defended as is the right to work or to defend the masters’ nations at present. They all put people before profits, liberty before oppression, and contrasted the communal ethic of tomorrow with the greed and exploitation of today. In so doing, we all felt part of a somewhat larger community than we ordinarily might in our little bands of revolutionaries, and all had blatantly confirmed before our eyes the historical materialist hypothesis that the conditions of society produce socialists, and not just our own propaganda efforts.

Those of us who read you and wrote for you, Discussion Bulletin, will mourn your loss, but we will do so empowered by the discussion that arose, confident that despite our differences, a veritable community and tradition of nonmarket nonstatist socialists exist, each urging in their own way their fellows in the exploited class to take over the bakery for themselves. In this vital historical venture, the Discussion Bulletin was an early view into the types of dialogues and debates that a large anti-capitalist movement will likely entertain as they organize successfully for a society in which we humans will finally be free to enjoy not just the fruits of our labor, but also the pleasures of our senses, the dictates of our creativity, and the rich beauty of our planetary home. For this unique view, which allowed us to learn from the critiques of each other while testing and strengthening our own, we deeply thank the Discussion Bulletin, and above all we thank Frank Girard for his open-mindedness, vision, persistence, and sheer labor which seemed a labor of love. He has become a comrade to all revolutionaries, reminding us of our roots and showing us the many inspired paths out of the mire.

The Bulletin is dead! Long live the Bulletin! Long live the Revolution!

Dr. Who
NOTES, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND SHORT REVIEWS

Redline Publications has just issued the second “Revised and Enlarged” edition of their catalogue. It remains, to the best of my knowledge, the only source of DeLeonist literature aside from the Socialist Labor Party’s publishing arm, New York Labor News (located now at P.O. Box 208, Mountain View, CA 94042). As nearly as I can see it contains everything the SLP still publishes by De Leon as well as the rather embarrassingly (in my opinion) uncritical speeches praising him delivered by SLP’s onetime national secretary Arnold Petersen as well as pamphlets by Eric Hass, a former editor of the Weekly People. Besides what amounts to much of the contents of the latest NYLN catalogue, including the SLP’s National Convention Reports, this issue includes an assortment of books and pamphlets by the Marxist “theoretical giants” of pre-WWI European socialism, Rosa Luxemburg, Anton Pannekoek, Plekhanov (four titles), Lafargue (three titles), William Morris (three titles), Franz Mehring (two titles—both new to me), Kautsky, Bernstein, Bebel, and both Wilhelm and Karl Liebknecht. A feature of this edition is several examples of the art of SLP cartoonists during the Weekly People’s heyday and two pages devoted to the art of Walter Crane. The 28-page catalogue can be obtained free from Redline Publications, PO Box 6700, Sawbridgeworth CM21 0WA, England.

Call for Submissions to a New Journal—Common Voice is the heading of an e-mail received last month from the World in Common Group. They hope to fill the vacancy left by the demise of the DB. Their letter speaks of wanting to “give a voice to the ‘thin red/black line’ of the anti-statist, anti-market political sector....” They are seeking material for an inaugural issue with the theme Ecology/Environmentalism to be published in October 2003. Submissions should be received by September 30, 2003 and may include material especially written for Common Voice or material published elsewhere. Send submissions to The Editorial Team, Common Voice, Box 44, Greenleaf Bookshop, 82 Colston Street, Bristol BS1 5BB.

A Final Note: I want to wish the Common Voice people success in their publishing venture and will gladly help them in any way I can. The same is true for any other group in our political sector. Finally, I want to say that you haven’t heard the last from PO Box 1564. I’m already thinking about a supplement that will complete unfinished debates as well as some pamphlet publishing and free literature distribution.

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