

Anarchists Against The War

Open City Anarchist Collective (NEFAC-NYC)

February 15, 2003

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The U.S. government claims that its aggression against Iraq is part of a so-called War on Terrorism, which began after September 11, 2001. Actually, the rich and powerful do not care about the deaths of the nearly three thousand working people who lost their lives in the World Trade Center attacks. If they did, they could save the lives of many times that number in their honor, by providing universal health care and by enforcing safety regulations in workplaces.

Though Saddam Hussein's regime has an interest in maintaining its ferocious domination over the Iraqi people and in increasing power in its region, Iraq had nothing to do with the crimes of September 11th. Nor does it pose a significant military threat to the U.S. It is the U.S. who is not only the main possessor of weapons of mass destruction in the world today but the main broker of these weapons to other countries. There is no dispute that Hussein is a cruel dictator. Unfortunately, the world is full of cruel dictators, most of them U.S. allies or lackeys. Hussein should be removed from power by the Iraqi people, who should also decide, for themselves, how they wish to live. There is no moral justification for the mighty U.S. to slaughter the people of Iraq on the grounds that the Iraqi state might someday be a danger. This slaughter is an act of international aggression.

The real reasons for the U.S. war are economics and power politics. Iraq sits on a huge supply of oil. Control of oil means control of the foundation of world industrial capitalism. Yet oil is a limited resource, as well as one that pollutes, contributing to the greenhouse effects that have been ruining our planet. As long as we have industrial capitalism, big corporations and their states must not only control everything within their power but must continually exceed their existing influence and range. The people of the world must replace industrial capitalism with an ecologically-balanced, cooperative system of production.

With this war, the U.S. wishes to demonstrate that it is the most powerful, most dominant state on earth, that its empire is the world. The U.S. openly seeks to dominate poorer nations to show that they must obey its will and not act independently, as Saddam Hussein attempted after being a U.S. agent. With the collapse of the state capitalist Soviet Union, a struggle for dominance is also fought out behind the scenes with wealthy competitors, the imperialist states of Europe and Japan.

Capitalist states like the U.S. exist to wage war. Their international relations are battles for supremacy. Most of their budgets are dedicated to military expenditures. Their economies are intertwined with military spending. They direct national trade and foreign investment to profit from other countries. Big wars and small wars, hot wars and cold wars—this is how and why they exist. Their weapons threaten to destroy all life and to further devastate the world's ecosystem. To limit their wars, we must put pressure on these states. To end their wars, we must end all states.

WHAT KIND OF MOVEMENT DO WE WANT?

A new anti-war movement has been growing in the U.S. and internationally. It is much greater now than at the same stage in the Vietnam war. Along with established left groups and peace organizations, the new movement includes neighborhood and church groups. It includes working people, as well as a growing representation from within organized labor. It includes Black and Latino groups and women's organizations. It overlaps with the anarchist-influenced movement

opposing neoliberalism and working to achieve international social justice, notably the cause of Palestinian liberation from colonialism and political oppression.

A large movement is necessary, including a wide range of viewpoints and methods, operating in a democratic and pluralistic fashion. As anarchists, we are prepared to work in a united front of anti-war forces, but we also intend to work critically, to say what we think in an open and honest manner. We hope to win over as much of the movement as we can to our point of view.

We need a movement that does not rely on or work with the Democratic Party. Neither in election campaigns nor on the congressional floor have Democrats opposed the war or the government's repression, though a few Democratic politicians make pro-peace statements. Their purpose is not to change the Democrats from a party of war but to divert the dissent of the anti-war movement to permissible, diffuse channels that won't upset the status quo.

We need a movement that does not have illusions in the United Nations or in multilateral action among imperialist states. The UN represents governments and their ruling classes, not the people of the world. Relying on the UN is to justify the war, not oppose it. Without supporting Saddam Hussein, we must clearly state that the U.S. has no right to intervene in other countries. We hope the U.S. is defeated in its aggression. Regardless of what the UN says, we must oppose this war.

We need a movement that has real social power to stop war. The rank-and-file of the military can do this, by refusing orders. The near-revolt of the ranks in the Vietnam war played a big part in ending it and in the abolition of the draft. Today, the military relies on the 'poor draft', which leads many working class youth into the dead end of military indenture. If U.S. service men and women see that this war is not in the interest of working people, neither in this country nor in Iraq, they may stand up against it.

The multiracial, multinational U.S. working class also has the power to stop the war, by ceasing the production and transportation of war goods. They can refuse to let pro-war concerns stop them from striking for their needs. Right now, workers with representation in organized labor are struggling for their rights. Unions are relatively weak and top-heavy with bureaucrats. But a real class struggle program would shake up the capitalists and their state.

WHAT IS ANARCHISM?

There are many confused ideas and misconceptions about anarchism or anti-authoritarian socialism. Anarchism is the most radical, participatory, decentralized and direct form of democracy. An anarchist world is one where capitalist corporations would be replaced by networks of self-governing worker and consumer cooperatives. Where armies and police forces would be replaced by popular militias. Where society would be managed by a federation of popular councils and associations. Where technology would be redesigned to function in balance with nature. Where creative, fulfilling, self-directed work would be the rule, not the exception. Where the poverty-stricken parts of the world would be helped to develop in their own way, by their own choice.

Such a world will not come about by itself. As we have seen in the attacks against the anti-globalization movement and in struggles for labor and human rights around the world, a dedicated, unified movement for social revolution will be fought aggressively, by the U.S. state and its wealthy competitors. This is what we mobilize to fight for.

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