

Against imperialist war! Against pacifist illusions! For class struggle in all countries!

Once again the Middle East is plunged into horror. Like his father in 1991, George W Bush has promised a 'clean' war. We know just what these hypocritical, cynical promises are worth. Once again a deluge of bombs is descending on Iraq. And while the 'civilised' powers inflict death and misery on an already famished 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 'arch-enemy', 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 mobilise 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

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

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.

its existence threatens the very survival of mankind.

- 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 enrol 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 defence 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 any solidarity with our own exploiters, whether they are for or against the war today, whether they be American, British, Spanish, French, German, Chinese, Russian, Australian, or Iraqi!***
- ***For the international solidarity of the working class!***

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