

# PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

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(COMMUNIST ORGANIZATION FOR THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL)

## U.S. Imperialism Is Waging War At Home as Well as Abroad

The U.S.'s war on the devastated people of Afghanistan is coming to an end, and the imperialists are looking for new targets. Every bomb dropped is a message to super-exploited working people everywhere not to challenge the imperialist superpower that enforces their deepening misery. The war was designed to make the world safe for capitalism to suck every last drop of profit out of the labor of workers and peasants across the globe.

But there is also a war on another front, a war at home. Our rulers are waging a class war against American workers. The entire working class is now under attack — via layoffs, cutbacks in social services and increased repression. The bosses are using divide-and-conquer tactics in their domestic war to hide the truth that their target is all of us. They need to bring down living standards for the whole working class in order to shore up their profit rates endangered by the deepening recession.

At this juncture, there is a special campaign against Arab and immigrant workers, along with the hard-hitting attacks against Blacks and Latinos that are a staple of life in America. In the wake of the criminal attack on the World Trade Center, the ruling class is forging a key weapon in its assault on immigrants, people of color and the working class at large: the suffocating blanket of patriotism, the incessant pronouncements that "united we stand." It is a big lie. There is no "we." Although politicians have called for "all" to make sacrifices, it is the workers who are sacrificing while the capitalists are crying all the way to the bank.

### 'STIMULUS' FOR CAPITAL, NOT WORKERS

Coming in the midst of the economic slowdown already under way, September 11 became the excuse for laying off hundreds of thousands of workers, slashing social service programs and opening the budgetary trough for a renewed feeding frenzy by capitalist pigs.



October: Minnesota state employees defy demands that workers must sacrifice while bosses profit.

Even before the criminal terrorist attack, a \$2 trillion tax cut bill was passed to "help the economy," i.e., to help capitalists rake in more profits. In the same spirit, after September 11 Bush gave away \$20 billion to the airline companies — who responded by slicing tens of thousands of jobs. More billions are in the works to bail out the insurance industry, in addition to legislation which will limit their payouts and will allow them to raise rates.

The Administration also pushed an "economic stimulus" bill which even many Republicans acknowledged wouldn't have done much to stimulate the economy but

was really aimed at lining the pockets of the rich. It included the repeal of the "alternative minimum tax" on corporations, a 1986 bill designed to guarantee that business paid at least some taxes. This repeal would have meant lavish givebacks to corporations, including \$1.4 billion to IBM, \$1 billion to Ford and \$800 million to General Motors. Bush and Cheney's favorite speculators, the owners of Enron, would have pocketed a quarter billion while declaring bankruptcy at their workers' expense. Other energy companies — like TXU, Chevron, Texaco, and Phillip's Petroleum — would have gotten big bites too.

### UNEMPLOYMENT RISING

The stimulus bill did not pass Congress in 2001, because the Democratic-controlled Senate and the Republican House of Representatives could not agree on details. The Democrats wanted to offer some sops to working people without actually altering the bill's blatant class bias. They favored increased spending on domestic security, minimal health coverage for displaced workers and higher unemployment benefits. They too wanted tax cuts for business, a bit less than in the Republican proposals.

On unemployment, Bush covered for the bill's naked robbery by

*continued on page 5*

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# LRPer among Targets of Threats

## N.Y. Post Attacks CUNY War Opponents

The *New York Post* is the vanguard of gutter journalism in New York City. On October 3 it ran the banner headline "CCNY BASHES AMERICA" across page 3, slandering a teach-in on the U.S. war build-up organized by the faculty union at City College (part of CUNY, the City University of New York), the Professional Staff Congress.

The *Post* depicted the forum, the PSC and City College as a whole as a nest of traitors who support or apologize for the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center. Other headlines in this and subsequent issues were "Students, profs blame attacks on U.S." "Once-proud campus a breeding ground for idiots," and "CUNY vows crackdown on anti-U.S. hatefest."

Several CCNY students and four faculty members were attacked by name. One of them, Walter Daum, a leader of the League for the Revolutionary Party (LRP) and the editor of its magazine *Proletarian Revolution*, was singled out by the *Post* in several issues for over a week for denouncing "American imperialism" and asserting that "The ultimate responsibility [for the attacks] lies with the rulers of this country, the capitalist ruling class of this country."

### "FREEDOM FIGHTERS"

The *Post's* most incendiary charge was produced by columnist Andrea Peyser: "The terrorists were fondly described as 'freedom fighters.'" That was the quote the Chancellor and some trustees used to condemn "those who seek to justify or make lame excuses for the attacks ... ." But in fact no one said anything of the sort, as the PSC's review of the videotape showed. It was an outright lie.

The label "freedom fighters" would be monstrously grotesque applied to the thugs led by Osama bin Laden or the Taliban rulers of Afghanistan. These are people who enslave women and forbid them from getting education, health care or jobs, who torture and kill Afghans who oppose them or interpret Islam differently. "Freedom" fighters indeed!

According to the *Post*, Daum "claimed that U.S. foreign policy 'created' Osama bin Laden by financing the Afghan resistance to the Soviet occupation." Only the *Post's* hack writers would be ignorant of this well-established fact. But since the *Post* denounced the term "freedom fighters," the fact is that in the 1980's, when the Afghan mujahedin (including bin Laden) were fighting against the Soviet-backed bourgeois-nationalist government and the Stalinist Russian army, Ronald Reagan often called them "freedom fighters." The *Post* is certain to have done so too — fondly, of course. If the *Post's* writers genuinely wish to unmask bin Laden-lovers, they might start by checking their own editorial archives.

### AMERICAN IMPERIALISM

"Freedom fighters" was only one of the *Post's* distortions, including outright misquotations from other speakers. It also left out the further evidence that Daum provided of the history of U.S. imperialism in creating the mass hatred of America's role that the bin Ladens of the world feed on. Economically, the U.S. dominates the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, which impose misery throughout the "third world" through debt repayment demands and austerity programs that impoverish workers and peasants. U.S. corporations superexploit workers everywhere by paying miserable wages to reap exorbitant profits for their billionaire owners.

Everyone knows that the U.S. intervenes in the Middle East to keep control of the world's oil supplies and oil profits. Central Asia has become increasingly important as a source of oil and natural gas;

Afghanistan would be a valuable pipeline route. Politically, the U.S. has for a century imposed and supported brutal and corrupt governments around the world: dictators like Trujillo and the Somozas in this hemisphere, the South African apartheidists, the Saudi kings, Saddam Hussein throughout his worst crimes before 1990, and the Taliban itself (during its reign of terror) until yesterday. And it continues to do so. Look at the "anti-terrorism" coalition the U.S. is building today. There is the Russian government, which is happy to have America keep quiet about the atrocities it is committing in its war against Chechnya. Indonesia wants U.S. support to continue for crushing its internal uprisings in Aceh and West Papua. Algeria, China, Turkey and others welcome U.S. backing for their brutal crackdowns against internal opponents. And so on.

Militarily, the U.S. has intervened to impose its will in, most recently, Iraq, Serbia, Somalia, Panama, Grenada and Nicaragua. The U.S. arms Israel, which uses American-made weapons to enforce its oppression of the Palestinians. In Iraq its bombardments and economic sanctions have killed hundreds of thousands.

### CUNY BIGWIGS JOIN THE ATTACK

The *Post* is not the only contributor to ignorance. CUNY's Chancellor issued a statement denouncing those at the PSC forum who "justify or make lame excuses for" the terrorist attacks. (He added a lame paragraph reaffirming "the free exchange of ideas" at the university.) Several trustees chimed in; one said he "would consider that behavior seditious at this time" and said he would introduce a resolution condemning the entire teach-in.

Like the *Post*, these officials choose to condemn something nobody said and avoid responding to what was actually presented. In their rush to join the witchhunt, they took the gutter paper's account for good coin, rather than check the videotape or consult any number of college administrators, faculty members and students who attended. This is the administration that did away with remedial classes at the senior colleges. Evidently they need remedial education more than CUNY students do. As a result of the *Post's* attack, and the CUNY administration's adherence to it, Daum and the other faculty members cited received hostile and threatening phone calls, letters and e-mails. One received by Daum read: "Why Don't You Take Your Sorry Ass and Get out of this Country and Go Live in Afghanistan If You Are So Critical. Hurry.....the Klan Is Coming for You!!!" The racist *Post's* lies inspired Klan-like threats, and the CUNY administration only encouraged them.

### *I Would Like More Information About the LRP/COFI*

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## THE POST'S AGENDA

One purpose of the *Post's* sensationalism is, of course, to sell newspapers and cash in on the current superpatriotic fervor. Another is to join the Bush administration and the Republican and Democratic parties in Congress whipping up this fervor in the wake of the terrorist attack. The false unity they trumpet is being used by the capitalists as a cover for their attack on the working class, its rights and living standards.

The attack on CUNY is part of an attack on the working class as a whole, which will accelerate as the recession that was already under way before September 11 worsens. As Daum observed at the City College teach-in, Bush & Co. are using the patriotic fervor to pour billions of tax dollars into the airline and arms industries and to try to cut taxes on the capitalists. But workers are getting little of these handouts; the ruling class is resorting to charity appeals to aid the families of those killed in the terrorist attack and the heroic workers who put in 12-to-20-hour days without pay to remove debris and rescue the survivors. (Most of those who respond to those appeals will be our fellow workers.) It is a bitter irony that while workers labored at the Trade Center site, brokers down the block celebrated the re-opening of the Stock Exchange by devaluing industries across the board (armaments excepted) — thereby ensuring that hundreds of thousands of workers would lose their jobs. This is the scene in which the *Post* has revived its long-term racist crusade against CUNY and its working-class student body.

The city colleges were won through struggles waged by working people demanding education as a right. They were greatly expanded and opened widely to people of color as a result of the Black liberation movement of the 1960's. (Open Admissions was won specifically by the fight at City College waged by Black and Latino students in 1969.) Since then, the capitalists and their governments have chipped away at these gains. The colleges were once free of charge; now, despite Wall Street's heady stock market boom of the past decade, the majority of their budget comes not from the state but from students' tuition. Most CUNY students have to hold down jobs while taking classes; many have to work full-time to pay for their education and support themselves and their families. Not by accident, as economic inequality has increased and the proportion of Black, Latino and immigrant students has risen, the cuts in funding have deepened. The *Post* editorial ends with a new threat against the already meager funding of City College and CUNY as a whole.

There have been similar attacks at other campuses on the academic freedom of faculty members and students who spoke out against the war build-up in this country. CUNY should be in the forefront of the fight for free speech and political truth.

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## THEIR CUNY AND OUR'S

As Daum pointed out in a letter to the City College paper *The Messenger*: "Students and staff of City College and CUNY need to fight back. The *Post* contrasts a 'once-proud campus' to the 'breeding ground for idiots' it portrays today. This praise for the past is hypocrisy. Reactionaries like the *Post* always attacked City College as a hotbed of 'reds'; it was not only the 'proletarian Harvard' but also a prime generator of radicalism in America. City College students were known for fighting against fascism in the 30's, anti-semitism in the 40's, racism in the 60's and the war on Vietnam in the 70's, cutbacks and other political assaults in the 80's and 90's. It is indeed a source of pride that City College still produces fighters against inequality, injustice and imperialist wars who won't stand for attacks by liars and hacks *Posturing* as journalists."

We too are proud that it was one of our comrades who drew the *Post's* fire for telling the truth about U.S. imperialism. Other workers who support the LRP have been vilified for speaking similarly in trade union and other meetings in New York and Chicago. The LRP has been schooled in the Trotskyist tradition of "saying what is" to other workers. We have no intention of stopping now. ●

## Ruling-Class Attack on War Critics

The American Council of Trustees and Alumni, a right-wing establishment think-tank founded by the Vice President's wife, Lynne Cheney, and last year's Democratic Vice-Presidential candidate, Senator Joseph Lieberman, issued a report in November under the implicitly racist title, "Defending Civilization: How Our Universities are Failing America and What Can Be Done About It."

ACTA's report presents a list of 117 faculty, students and campus organizations that had the nerve to either question or — horror of horrors — actually denounce the war on Afghanistan. Several of these citations, including two quotations from Walter Daum, are from the City College teach-in attacked by the *Post* — indeed, ACTA simply cribbed them from the *Post*.

ACTA claims that academia, unlike the rest of the country, is not 100 percent behind the war. Its report is an attempt to intimidate those it named and suppress any further dissent. Unfortunately, the problem is that there has been far too little opposition, on campus or elsewhere. And there is even less consistent opposition to imperialism.

ACTA's real point is to protest that academics are not doing the job the ruling class expects of them: to serve as a prop for U.S. capitalism and imperialism. They realize, however, that students are often the first to radicalize against the system's oppression. So their solution is to demand that all colleges adopt courses on U.S. history and "Western civilization" — not to tell the truth about, say, slavery or modern imperialism, but rather to brainwash a new generation of workers and intellectuals.

ACTA boasts that it has given valued advice to the CUNY trustees on "raising standards" — that is, excluding minority and poor working-class students. Its current campaign is part of the ongoing attack on civil liberties and workers' and immigrants' rights. ACTA's history shows that the super-patriotic climate that is victimizing Arabs and other Middle Eastern people is directly linked to the U.S.'s everyday racism against Blacks and Latinos. ●

[For the LRP statement on ACTA, see [www.lrp-cofi.org](http://www.lrp-cofi.org).]

# War at Home

*continued from page 1*

proposing a 13-week extension of benefits. This was no more than the usual relief Washington granted in past downturns. It excluded those unemployed prior to September 11, and it would have provided little relief in an economy plunging toward a far deeper depression and long-term mass unemployment. In any case, jobless relief went down the tubes when Congress went home for Christmas without passing any version of the bill.

Official figures, which always undercount joblessness, say that unemployment has reached over 5 percent and is climbing. Almost 900,000 workers have been thrown out of jobs since March of this year; approximately one-fourth of these losses were directly due to the effects of September 11.

Making things much worse, the "welfare reform" signed by Clinton in 1996 is now coming into full force, devastating assistance to the poorest sections of the working class. Bush said he would continue these cutbacks, and he has been able to hide behind the hoopla about sacrifice — at the same time that he opened the federal treasury for wholesale corporate looting.

Further, the vast federal deficits now being created will produce a new orgy of government borrowing, which will mean huge interest profits for capitalists but added payroll taxes on workers. Added to this is Washington's raid on Social Security funds — which were supposed to be protected but are now being spent on the war and tax breaks for the rich. Congress had discussed raiding Social Security prior to the World Trade Center/Pentagon attacks but was afraid of sparking too great an outcry. Now the war hysteria they have promoted is paying off. "United we stand" indeed!

John Sweeney, head of the AFL-CIO, urged union leaders at the federation's convention in December to "take the offensive in a war here at home" — against the president, congressional Republicans and corporations who, he said, were "waging a vicious war on working families." But for all his militant talk, Sweeney continued to back Bush's imperialist war abroad and also to support the Democrats, whose support for workers in a time of recession and mass layoffs has been more show than substance. In Sweeney's six years in office, he has failed to reverse the decline in union membership (only 12 percent of workers are in unions today); instead, his strategy has been to hand millions of dollars to the Democrats, hoping fruitlessly that this second capitalist party will offer a few sops to workers.

## ATTACKING FREEDOMS IN THE NAME OF FREEDOM

On top of the economic attack, Bush has moved in with a package of new laws and proclamations which give the government sweeping police powers, especially against immigrants and non-citizens.

For several decades, the bosses sought to import more low-waged labor than they could recruit at home. Now the recession and the new legal climate of harassment have opened these workers up to vicious attacks.

The "anti-terror" and anti-immigrant measures enacted by Bush and the Congress deny even elementary rights to the most exposed section of the working class. Middle Eastern and Central Asian immigrants, who were being terrorized from the start by racist vigilantes, now also have to deal with government agents. Over a thousand have been secretly rounded up and imprisoned for weeks without charges or legal recourse.

The centerpiece in the anti-worker offensive is the "U.S.A. P.A.T.R.I.O.T. Act," whose initials stand for "Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism." Sponsored by liberals as well as conservatives, it defines terrorism as "an attempt to intimidate

or coerce a civilian population" or change "the policy of the government by intimidation or coercion." Among its most outrageous provisions are measures that:

- Allow the indefinite detention of non-citizens (even if they are not accused of terrorism) on minor visa violations — if they cannot be deported.
- Minimize judicial review of federal telephone and internet surveillance by law enforcement officers.
- Expand the government's right to conduct secret searches.
- Give the Attorney General and the Secretary of State the power to designate domestic groups as terrorist organizations and deport any non-citizen who belongs to them.
- Grant the FBI broad access to business records about individuals without having to show evidence of a crime.
- Allow large-scale investigations of American citizens for "intelligence" purposes.

The Patriot Act is the biggest attack on immigrant rights since the Alien and Sedition Act of 1790. Its purpose is to take advantage of the "law and order" mood in the country triggered by the terrorist attack and the war in Afghanistan, to turn back the clock in terms of the rights won by the working class through struggle. It is an aggressive pre-emptive strike by the ruling class, in order to put off the class struggles which it knows are coming in the future.

On top of the Patriot Act came Bush's unilateral declaration that he will use military tribunals to try accused terrorists. This means that secret military courts will replace trials by a jury and the government can eavesdrop on attorney-client conversations.

The real aim of these measures is not to defend freedom but the opposite: to make it easier to arrest, jail and even execute immigrants, people of color, and all poor and working people — solely for the "crimes" of struggling against the worsening conditions being forced upon us.

The Patriot Act's definition of terrorism is broad enough to include strikes or other forms of working-class struggle, as well as

## Postal Workers Face Anthrax Danger

In response to the anthrax mailings, reportedly from home-grown U.S. terrorists, the government immediately protected the buildings of political bigwigs like the U.S. Senate and the Supreme Court. But postal workers, who handle the mail directly, have only grudgingly been offered antibiotics and limited testing. At the Morgan Station in New York, a huge mail processing center where anthrax spores had been found, an anti-union low-ball bidder (with a murderous record of safety violations itself) was hired by the postal bosses for the clean-up. This job was confined only to the immediate areas where spores had been discovered, and some spores have since been found on the supposedly cleaned machines.

The half-measures that have been taken are largely the result of the mass anger of the postal ranks after two Washington, D.C. workers died. But this anger has not been harnessed into an effective strategy by leaders of the postal unions, who have mostly been complacent about the threat to their members.

The head of the New York Metro local, William Smith, an independent and cantankerous reformist, has been a vocal opponent of management's callousness. But he has not used this struggle to begin a fundamental challenge to the bosses. Instead he has gone to court to seek the closing of Morgan and has resorted to incredibly ill-conceived attempts at conducting sick-outs. That these methods have been largely ineffective by no means reflects the postal workers' deep anger towards management and the government. ●

political dissent by anyone. It is an attack not just on the most vulnerable workers but on our entire class. It shows that as the economy worsens, the bosses will use all means at their disposal to repress dissent and fightbacks.

### RACE AND CLASS IN NEW YORK CITY

New York City, where the post-terrorist crisis is deepest, also shows that the target of the ruling class is the entire working class.

The Republican and Democratic politicians are pushing a \$1 billion slash in the budgets of city agencies that provide social services for the working class. In particular, the cuts will cause the City University (CUNY) to eliminate about 100 classes and 3600 students in the community colleges. Students at CUNY, especially in the community colleges, are overwhelmingly working-class, Black and Latino. This attack is part of a decades-long effort to roll back victories won by working-class students. The notoriously racist *New York Post* has led much of this attack. (See p. 3.)

Mayor Giuliani, basking in media adoration for pretending to be human after September 11, did his best to play off one section of the oppressed against another. His administration attempted to meet the city's obligations to the community colleges by diverting federal aid funds earmarked specifically for repairs to Borough of Manhattan Community College, which is located in downtown Manhattan and suffered serious damage in the terror attack.

Further, under pressure from politicians feeding on the anti-immigrant climate, CUNY announced in November that undocumented immigrant students would have their tuition effectively doubled. This ruling was based on the Clinton Administration's "Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act" of 1996 — but was not implemented until now, obviously in synch with the Bush administration's hounding of immigrants. The move will force thousands of students to drop out; it thereby deepens the racist purge at New York's public university.

The ruling class's drive to attack workers extends even to the New York Fire Department, whose work force (nearly 100 percent white) has been hailed as heroes since over 300 firefighters rushing to the rescue at the Trade Center were killed when the buildings collapsed. Billion-dollar contracts for the clean-up were quickly given to several construction companies. To save them money, Giuliani pulled most firefighters out of Ground Zero to allow the wreckage to be pulled apart with cranes and bulldozers. (Firefighters had previously been working with the construction workers to carefully search the rubble for the remains of victims before it was shipped off to a garbage dump.) All the politicians' hoopla about the dignity of the dead was quickly forgotten.

Enraged firefighters organized a protest. They were joined by construction workers, whose unions decided to strike and briefly shut down work at Ground Zero to support them. When the firefighters' protest march was met by police barricades, their anger led to fighting with the cops. Over a dozen workers were arrested, but their protest quickly won a partial backdown from the Mayor.

### SOCIALIST REVOLUTION IS THE SOLUTION!

For Marxists, the firefighters' battle with Giuliani and the cops highlights the dialectical contradiction in the war at home. These workers are demonstrating a strong class solidarity with their fallen comrades. At the same time, they are contributing significantly to the super-patriotic celebrations. This displaced solidarity towards the bourgeois state — even as it revs up the attack on oppressed sections of their own class, and even at times on themselves — is what Marx called "false community."

The class war in the U.S. has been overwhelmingly one-sided. But the working class has begun to fight back. The October strike by government workers in Minnesota continued even after it was attacked by the media as treasonous. City workers in New York have contracts coming up, and although Mayor Giuliani declared

that asking for raises after September 11 was "unpatriotic" and the press has already labeled them "pickpockets," many are fed up with being told to sacrifice while the bosses rake it in.

The capitalist system is in real trouble. Wall Street commentators are blaming the terror attack for the recession. In reality, September 11 accelerated the plunge of an already weakening economy. U.S. capitalism is facing the same growing crisis that has already hit capitalism elsewhere. So the World Trade Center attacks gave the ruling class an excuse for the profit-gouging at workers' expense they had been shooting for all along.

Liberal populists say that the problem is simply corporate greed. In reality, the capitalists' personal lust for wealth only serves to drive the pursuit of the profits that their system needs to survive. Despite the upturn in the 1990's, the rate of profit has dropped since the post-World War II boom ended three decades ago. The imperialist piranhas are in a feeding frenzy to offset the threat of falling profits. This tendency, built into the system, can only be reversed through a depression or an inter-imperialist war.

A significant turn in workers' attitudes was reflected at the Delegate Assembly of the New York hospital union, 1199 SEIU, on December 11. In a discussion of the union's proposed deal with Governor Pataki to extend the hospital contract, an LRP supporter criticized the extension as a capitulation, at a time when the bosses are attacking unions across the board. In the previous Assembly our anti-war position was shouted down; this time, a pro-war blowhard tried to shut us up, but many delegates supported us. Our comrade concluded by pointing out that politicians like Pataki make concessions only when they fear the mobilization and power of the workers — again to substantial applause.

Most workers do not yet see that the so-called war on terrorism abroad and the economic and social attacks on them at home are part of the same class war by imperialism, the chief enemy of all humanity. As the struggle inevitably deepens, the lesson will increasingly be learned; but only if revolutionary workers show the way forward. We in the League for the Revolutionary Party are doing everything we can, in workplaces, unions and schools, to help lead the struggles now beginning to break out and the anti-war sentiment as it grows.

To help show our fellow-workers the truth of the ruling class's double-edged war, revolutionaries inside the unions must place demands on the union leaderships to fight repressive laws like the Patriot Act, the attacks on CUNY students and the broader attacks on the whole working class. We fight against the imperialists' war in the unions, not just in anti-war protests. We must also expose at every turn the union bureaucrats' hesitancy and cowardice, stemming from their solidarity with the capitalist system.

Within the anti-war protests, revolutionaries must fight for working-class leadership, on the basis of uncompromising opposition to the imperialist war against working-class and oppressed people at home as well as abroad. The middle class-led movement against the Vietnam War helped end that conflict but allowed imperialism to survive and expand again. We all face the consequences today. It is the task of all genuine revolutionaries to join in the struggle to build a new vanguard party of the working class. ●

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# Afghanistan

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the U.S. ruling class to restrain the class struggle at home and keep its imperialist rivals in tow. But even before that, Russia's economic weakness (as a stultified form of capitalism) meant that the U.S. had to find a new evil. And imperialism has managed to create a multitude of horrors it can choose from. Thus was born the struggle against international terrorism, whose fruits we see today.

Powerful elements in and around Bush's administration want to attack Iraq to oust Saddam Hussein, but such a move risks triggering further mass protests in the Arab world, endangering the already tenuous rule of imperialism's pawns. It would also crack the surface unity with its fellow imperialists. So the U.S. may next move on countries that can be more directly linked to bin Laden — Sudan, Somalia and Yemen.

The terror attack on the World Trade Center has enabled the White House to whip up patriotic fervor as a mask for a stealth campaign against workers, immigrants and oppressed people in the U.S. Rising concern among American workers over the assault at home cannot be allowed to divert revolutionaries from also showing that our ruling class is using the war as a cover for a bloody campaign designed to crush the anti-imperialist masses abroad.

## IMPERIALISM RESPONSIBLE FOR TERRORISM

The aims of the U.S. ruling class are in no way in the interests of workers anywhere. Workers in this country have every right to be outraged at the terrorist attack that massacred so many of their own class brothers and sisters, but the U.S. government has no legitimacy in waging a fight against terrorism. Long before Afghanistan, the U.S. slaughtered masses in far greater numbers than were killed on September 11 — in recent decades, in its attacks against Iraq, Nicaragua, Somalia, Panama and Sudan. At the end of the Gulf War, tens of thousands of fleeing, unarmed Iraqi soldiers were napalmed and firebombed to death. These are just a few of many examples. The U.S. ruling class is the greatest terrorist force on the planet.

Moreover, capitalism has created the conditions across the world that breed justified hatred of imperialism. With the help of betrayals led chiefly by the Stalinist "Communist" parties, the U.S. has eliminated left-appearing and working-class alternatives wherever possible. To carry out its repression, the U.S. armed and funded right-wing reactionaries and local dictators. Thus it aided and abetted both bin Laden and the Taliban. It sponsored Saddam Hussein, Noriega, Milosevic and a variety of other dictators it now denounces as devil figures.

## WASHINGTON'S REACTIONARY PAWNS

The U.S. is forced to continually seek out reactionary pawns abroad to deflect mass hostility. But they have their own interests; their inevitable unreliability means that Washington will have to increase its own use of naked military terror to keep both pawns and masses in line.

The U.S. claims to stand for democracy and freedom; in reality it champions exploitation and aids reaction. Thus it has paved the way for millions to tolerate terrorism as the only visible response. That is why U.S. imperialism bears the ultimate responsibility even for the terrorist attacks on U.S. soil. Nevertheless, concrete mass support for the fundamentalist terrorists has been limited. For example, there is mass hostility in Pakistan to General Pervez Musharraf's regime and its kowtowing to the American carpet bombing of Afghanistan. Yet the demonstrations

and riots led by clerical reactionaries have been small. The restive urban working class has little sympathy for the right wing and is searching for an alternative. The mass protest struggles by workers and peasants against the World Bank and the IMF in Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador and South Korea are likewise seedbeds for a coming leftward shift, within which will come the struggle of workers to forge their own revolutionary communist party.

Nothing more exposes the U.S. claim to be the anti-terrorist champion than its political, military and financial support for the terrorist regime in Israel. After September 11, the Sharon government — the most extreme in Israel's belligerent history — hoped to gain a free hand to punish the Palestinians for their *intifada* struggle against oppression. When Israel launched attacks on the occupied territories in the West Bank and Gaza, the U.S. objected that this "recklessness" would undermine the coalition against bin Laden. Sharon then demanded that Yasser Arafat restrain the resistance, which it labels terrorist in its entirety. Since Arafat (for all his willingness) cannot hold back the struggle, Israel staged political assassinations and other deadly provocations to trigger the Islamist organizations' terrorist response. As of now, the U.S. has given the green light to Israel's massive military reprisals.

## IMPERIALISM AND THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

The militarist atrocities committed by the U.S. in Afghanistan, Iraq, Serbia and elsewhere are not simply unfortunate foreign policy options chosen by the government. Imperialism is a daily fact of life for the masses of the world, manifested not only through warfare but also in the debt-slavery imposed on countries like Argentina and in the control of the oil riches of Arabia by a handful of corporations, almost entirely American-owned. The military campaigns we fight against are the inevitable result of this superexploitation of the globe. Imperialism is not a policy but an essential characteristic of capitalism for the past hundred years.

That is why nothing short of socialist revolution can put an end to imperialist war. Proletarian revolutionaries today work to build the broadest possible united actions to fight against the war. But as long as imperialism exists, this war will only give way to more wars and even greater slaughter. Stopping the war is a worthwhile basis for broad coalitions. But revolutionaries must patiently show their fellow workers that only class war against capitalism can put a real end to imperialist bloodletting. Anti-war fighters cannot allow the struggle to degenerate into the diversionary pacifist claptrap that poses no threat to the imperialist warmakers.

## "PEACE ON EARTH"?

For example, the New York Coalition for Peace and Justice called a march at the Rockefeller Center Christmas tree under the pathetically fraudulent theme, "Peace on Earth, Good Will Towards All." The working class needs not good will but class hatred towards its exploiters, who will permit no peace on earth or anywhere else as long as they rule. We join in such demonstrations only under our own slogans against the war and for the overthrow of imperialism.

As communists and internationalists, we disdain to hide our views. Since imperialism is the greatest enemy of the working class everywhere, we stand for the defeat of American imperialism in its war against the people of Afghanistan, and for the defense of the Middle Eastern and Central Asian masses. We work to defend workers at home and abroad against the attack on them by the U.S. ruling class. We openly stand opposed to the patriotic hype sweeping the United States. We seek to turn the imperialist war into a working-class war against the biggest perpetrators of terrorism, the U.S. ruling class. ●

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# PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

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Supplement — Winter 2002

## U.S. Out of Afghanistan! Defeat Imperialism! *Re-create the Fourth International!*

American imperialism is crowing triumphantly over Afghanistan. The Taliban, deprived of the outside support that brought it to power, has been routed. At this writing Osama bin Laden's Al-Qaeda forces are being besieged. The U.S. military has acquired bases in former Soviet Central Asia and Afghanistan, while thousands of its troops are on the ground. An interim regime has been stitched together under the U.S. pressure.

But beneath the hype plastered all over the capitalist media is the reality of a shaky coalition of CIA pawns, ethnic demagogues, squabbling drug bosses and warlords no less bloody or repressive than the Taliban. The joy of the crowds who cheered the ouster of the Taliban and Al Qaeda from the cities has been accompanied by a seething hatred for the imperialists.

### UTOPIAN "REALISM"

No wonder: U.S. bombers have conducted a rain of terror against innocents as well as Islamist soldiers. More civilians have now been killed by the U.S. in Afghanistan than lost their lives in the criminal World Trade Center attack. The U.S. war has increased the numbers and suffering of hundreds of thousands of refugees and has exposed millions more to the threat of starvation. This is the fruit of Washington's crusade of "good versus evil." And Afghanistan is only the beginning of a prolonged war against the new universal enemy, terrorism.

Would-be realists in the middle-class U.S. and European left spin "answers" to war: "Justice, not vengeance," "impartial international tribunals," "a democratic foreign policy," "United Nations peacekeepers." In the imperialist-dominated world today, these proposals are utopian diversions relying on veiled super-power institutions. On the other hand, masses who have suffered the reality of imperialist exploitation, oppression and war are offered no alternative but dead-end religious fundamentalism.

There is only one genuine solution: doing away with capitalist imperialism through socialist revolutions across the world led by the working class. For those who have not grown cynical in the struggle for a world of peace and abundance, the foremost task is the re-creation of a world party of socialist revolution, composed of revolutionary workers' parties in each country — the Fourth International.

### IMPERIALISM AND THE AFGHAN QUAGMIRE

Afghanistan has long been used as a buffer zone by rival imperialist powers intent on dominating Central Asia. Today, the U.S.'s temporarily allied but really rival imperialist nations — Britain, France, Germany, Russia — all scheme to get into the country through diplomacy and the long-term stationing of troops. The U.S. does not want their "peacekeepers" yet — it prefers an initial monopoly of force in order to control whatever government may emerge.

Despite its reluctance to sink deeper into the Afghan quagmire, the need to stabilize Central Asia and the Gulf region

demands that Washington exercise a heavy hand. It needs to keep a grip on local forces and a choke-hold over the region's oil production in order to thwart the strategic ambitions of the other imperialists. Further, the U.S. has to keep the capitalist rulers of Pakistan, India, China and Iran from using Afghanistan as a battleground for their conflicts.

The most likely outcome is in effect a military protectorate like what the U.S. has installed in Bosnia and Kosovo. But the difficulties will be even greater in Afghanistan, given the absence of an indigenous unifying force with any real popularity to serve as the imperialists' local police.

There is no answer to the present horror in Afghanistan itself. Historically, the Afghan state has presided over a chaotic collection of hostile warlords and disparate ethnic groups. Afghanistan never had a successful national bourgeois revolution and was never allowed to become an integrated nation. In this epoch, the working class is the only force that can carry out such a revolution on its path to socialism. But the working class in Afghanistan is far too small to do that on its own.

Socialism is impossible in any one country alone, and Afghanistan is especially dependent on an international solution. Given the region's worsening conditions and the imperialists' deepening penetration, mass struggles against imperialism are inevitable. Working-class actions are reviving in Pakistan and Iran. Within that movement, opportunities for decisive interventions by revolutionary workers' organizations are objectively growing, in the region and in the rest of the world.

### IMPERIALISM IN CRISIS

The U.S. remains the world's sole superpower, but even so it lacks the resources and authority to stabilize a region so vital to its profits and international hegemony. The growing economic crisis, which has afflicted capitalism around the world, has now penetrated the American economy. There will be no real stabilization or Marshall Plan-type rescue in Afghanistan — nor, for that matter, in Argentina, the Middle East, Africa, the Pacific Rim or anywhere else where crisis conditions are already rampant.

The U.S. dominates the World Bank and IMF, which impose economic misery across the "third world" through their austerity packages and debt repayment demands. The super-exploitation practiced by the imperialists through sub-minimal wages keeps millions of workers in a state of misery. Imperialism controls the extraction of oil and other minerals and forces producers to switch to cash crops (like opium in Afghanistan), making even rich areas become poor.

The imperialists need to deepen their exploitation because of the crisis; that makes stepped-up military intervention necessary. The "war on terror" is the U.S.'s cover for mobilizing to quell the rising tide of anti-imperialist hostility around the world. Until a decade ago, Soviet Russia served as the "evil" enemy that enabled

*continued on page 7*