

Only the Working Class Can Stop the War

Four more years of Bush means four more years of war, impoverishment, misery, and degradation for the people of Iraq, the United States, and the world as a whole. The invasion of Iraq was the natural result of a system that places private gain for a handful of individuals above the interests of literally billions of other human beings. After all, foreign policy is an extension of domestic policy: for those in power, the drive for maximum profits at home and abroad is the only “morality” that really matters. The world economy is in crisis, and the only way for the bosses to get out of the hole they have gotten themselves into is to go to war over markets and spheres of influence, and by attacking our already deteriorating quality of life here at home. The moves to privatize social security in the U.S. and the pulverization of Fallujah in Iraq are just the beginning. This is the reality of “free market” capitalism in the 21st century. The so-called New World Order of the “Pax Americana” has instead resulted in endless conflicts around the world. As author Gore Vidal put it, the U.S. government is now waging “perpetual war for perpetual peace”.

Billions have been spent on the occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan, and billions more will be needed. American workers have gained absolutely nothing from this expenditure. Instead of using those vast sums of money to provide quality education, housing, health care, and jobs here at home, thousands of American troops have been killed or wounded, while Iraq is a shambles and some 100,000 mostly civilian Iraqis have perished. Iraq is no closer to genuine “democracy” today than it was under the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein. The prisons, interrogations, torture, and repression of the trade unions is the same if not worse. Food and electricity shortages affect millions, while the lack of clean water, decent housing and jobs have all gotten worse since Iraq was “liberated”. Only mega-corporations with close ties to the White House have profited.

The only way to pay for these military adventures is to attack the rights, wages, conditions, and dignity of working people here in the U.S. For millions of Americans, the days of full employment and an ever-improving quality of life are long gone. The U.S. economy has to come up with 150,000 jobs each month just to keep up with the growing workforce, yet most months, even this low level of job-creation is not achieved. Federal and personal debt levels have reached dizzying heights, and the U.S. dollar is losing value almost daily, threatening to bring the entire economy tumbling down. The effects of such a crisis would be devastating for working people. That’s not to say that things aren’t going well for some people. The old cliché about the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer has acquired new mean-

ing. The top one percent of Americans now control more combined wealth than the bottom 95 percent.

Bush’s re-election in no way signifies a “mandate” from the American people. In fact, quite the opposite is true. Millions voted against him and his pro-war and anti-worker policies, while millions of others just stayed at home, uninspired by the lackluster “opposition” candidate. Why vote for “the other guy” when he is a carbon copy of the incumbent? The Democrats gave Bush a blank check to go to war in Iraq, proposed sending 40,000 more troops into the quagmire, and even criticized Bush for “hesitating” to assault Fallujah. Kerry’s true loyalties and take on the elections were summed up in an article he wrote for the *Wall Street Journal*. In it, he made it clear that his administration would not only protect business but contain any challenge to its rule. He described the election as “a change in CEO,” and added: “election day will be a national shareholders’ meeting.” Let’s face it: both the Republicans and the Democrats are in the pockets of big business, and no matter which party is in power, they will defend the interests of the wealthy against those of workers and the poor. No wonder millions chose not to bother voting at all despite their disgust with Bush.

The anger of millions of workers and young people against Bush and his cronies is entirely justified. We need to fight against these attacks in our workplaces, schools communities, and on the streets. But without a political alternative by and for working people, it is inevitable that one or another big business party will continue to dominate our lives. Putting an end to the corporate party duopoly is the urgent task of the U.S. labor movement. Only a mass workers’ party can end the cycle of war and impoverishment that affects us all.

- * Stop the war on workers at home and abroad!
- * End the occupation of Iraq! For the immediate withdrawal of all foreign troops - let the Iraqi people decide!
- * The working class will not pay for the crisis of the bosses! Money for jobs, health care, and education!
- * For a mass party of labor based on the unions to defend the interests of working people!

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