

Socialism: The Only Solution for Iraq and America

The war in Iraq drags on and on, and the situation for working people here in the US continues to worsen, or at best stagnate. \$300 million dollars were spent to find Saddam's WMDs, and nothing turned up. So much for Bush's case for war! In the meantime, US soldiers and countless Iraqi civilians are killed every day, while their families increasingly demand that they be brought home. Working people and the youth are beginning to see through the lies of the capitalist class which could care less that entire families now live on the streets, or that 1.7 million people slid into poverty in 2002 (with African Americans particularly hard hit). The poverty rate now stands at 12.1 percent of the population - this in the richest country in the world! Median income fell 1.1 percent last year, and as usual, the poor were hardest hit. It's the same old story: the rich get richer, the poor get poorer.

The *New York Times* reported that an analysis of government data shows the gap between rich and poor more than doubled from 1979 to 2000. The gulf is such that the richest 1 percent of Americans in 2000 had more money to spend after taxes than the bottom 40 percent. The figures show 2000 as the year of the greatest economic disparity between rich and poor for any year since 1979. The richest 2.8 million Americans had \$950 billion after taxes, or 15.5 percent, of the \$6.2 trillion economic pie in 2000. The poorest 110 million Americans had less, sharing 14.4 percent of all after tax money. But the higher incomes of the last decade did not lift all people equally. In 2000, the top 1 percent of American taxpayers had \$862,700 each after taxes, on average, more than triple the \$286,300 they had, adjusted for inflation, in 1979. The bottom 40 percent in 2000 had \$21,118 each, up just 13 percent from their \$18,695 average in 1979.

But there's plenty to be happy about - if you make your living off of stocks and dividends. Corporate profits are up, but only because they have saved millions of dollars by laying off hundreds of thousands of workers, sped up production, and cut corners on health and retirement benefits, wages, and conditions. Any real recovery in the economy can only come about when companies begin investing in new productive capacity and workers. But with factories running at just around 75 percent of capacity, this is not on the agenda, since they can already increase output without investing in any new equipment. This also means that there is colossal waste of potential productive capacity which could provide jobs for

the unemployed, homes for the homeless, food for the hungry, and on and on. And why is it that in the richest country in the world, we cannot even achieve the health and education standards of nations many times poorer? This is a devastating indictment of the capitalist system - in the midst of such potential to improve the lives of everyone, factories stand idle, buildings stand empty, and millions languish in the uncertainty and humiliation of unemployment.

Many in the US today would like to see GW Bush impeached. But what is the alternative? The Democrats have proven their utter inability to provide a better way. The Workers International League believes that we need to "impeach" the capitalist system itself! It is responsible for the war, oppression, degradation, and horror which stalks the globe. It no longer plays a progressive role for the vast majority of humanity.

The problems facing the people of Iraq and the people of the United States are very similar - they can only be solved if there is generalized access to jobs, healthcare, education, electricity, food, etc. But the capitalist class cannot even provide these things here at home! Instead they spend billions of dollars to buy armaments and to pay soldiers (most of them workers in uniform) to risk their lives in an unpopular occupation. We say: let the majority of society (the working class) decide how things should be run!

Working people can trust only our own forces to solve our problems. The capitalist bosses have clearly shown where their loyalties lay - in the pursuit of profit around the globe regardless of the effects on workers or the environment. Working people in the US have nothing against the people of Iraq or of any other country. It is against the exploiting capitalist class of all countries that we must all unite in order to stop this madness.

- * **Stop the war on workers at home and abroad!**
- * **End the occupation of Iraq!**
- * **No to layoffs and factory closures!**
- * **The working class will not pay for the crisis of the bosses!**
- * **Money for jobs, healthcare, and education!**
- * **For a mass party of labor to defend the interests of working people!**
- * **Only the working class can stop the war!**
- * **Socialism is the only solution for Iraq and America!**

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