

Workers Solidarity Movement

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Against capitalist war and terror

The terrorist attacks on the USA of September 11th which killed over 6,000 people have rightly outraged not only the citizens of the US but also the vast majority of the rest of the people of the world. Anarchists too share this outrage. Despite our opposition to US imperialism and global capitalism we share nothing in common with those who would kill thousands of ordinary people in order to strike at them.

Those who hijacked the planes were not ignorant conscripts manipulated by a mad man but thinking individuals. They made a choice while they cut the throats of airline workers and flew plane loads of civilians into the WTC where they knew thousands more were working. They knew that as well as the generals and top bankers who share some responsibility for US foreign policy these buildings housed thousands of secretaries, cleaners, restaurant and computer workers for whom this was just a way for them and their families to get by.

The challenge for people in the anti-war movement is to create a world where the death of 6,000 individuals anywhere as the result of a economic or political policies is as unthinkable as the death of 6,000 people in New York before this attack. We do not simply want a 'peace' that is a return to the pre-war status quo where, over 1,000,000 Iraqi civilians have died as a result of sanctions. All because the Western powers have fallen out with Saddam, an unelected dictator who has brutally repressed the people of Iraq.

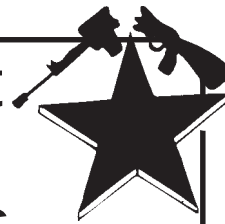
We need to start a discussion around the forbidden question of 'Why'. George Bush wants to tell us that the only question is whose side are we on. We don't accept this. As we look at the western militarists who have created a world where billions can be spent on getting man to the moon but where 19,000 children die every day from lack of access to clean water and basic medical care we do not see allies in a struggle for freedom. We see a system which, like the authoritarian religious states promoted by Islam and other organised religions, is a relic of history that stand in the way of freedom.

We oppose the war being organised by Bush and Blair not simply because it will result in the deaths of more innocent people, which it will, but also because it is a war designed to reinforce the ability of the bankers and generals to impose their will on all of us. From decade to decade they change strategy as it suits them. In the 1980's they promoted bin Laden as a useful tool against the USSR in the same way as they promoted 'Islamic fundamentalism' as a way of undermining the left and nationalist opposition throughout the 'Islamic world'. In the 1990's they promoted the Taliban as a mechanism for

stabilising Afghanistan and as recently as May 2001 sent them 43 million dollars as part of the US 'war on drugs'.

Of course, then the Taliban were only guilty of massacring Afghans who oppose them and of creating a society where women are unable to leave the house unless accompanied by a male family member and are effectively excluded from education. That was no real

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problem for Bush's *"forces of freedom and democracy"*. Now however that the Taliban have foolishly asked for evidence before they agree to the extradition of the chief US suspect everything has changed.

This is hardly a one-off example of the hypocrisy of those who rule us. Saddam Hussein was an ally as long as he restricted himself to gassing Kurds and waging war on the West's then enemy, Iran. But as soon as he invaded Kuwait and threatened western oil he became a 'new Hitler'. According to Noam Chomsky the US itself is the *"only country condemned by the World Court for international terrorism - for 'the unlawful use of force' for political ends, as the Court put it"*. The US ignored this judgement and escalated its war against Nicaragua, part of what Chomsky calls *"Washington's terrorist wars in Central America in that terrible decade, leaving 200,000 corpses and four countries in ruins"*. So let us not talk simply of the need

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to bring whoever was behind the S11 US terror attacks to justice, what about the western and pro-western masterminds of terror like Pinochet, Suharto and Kissinger.

It's not that those who rule the world: politicians, top business-men and generals, are simply evil or indeed so stupid they are incapable of seeing the hypocrisy. It is more capitalism itself has a need for severe economic, political and social inequalities. Supporting brutal dictatorships is the cheapest way of ensuring that western business continues to get oil cheaply. It keeps the wages of oil workers down and the profits of oil companies up. The military coup in 1956 in Indonesia that killed one million people, many of them named on lists handed over by the CIA to the military, ensured that Indonesia could be the centre of the sweatshop industries which today churn out cheap clothes which brand name companies make super profits from.

Those who desire justice will not find it in the military might of the USA or the religious fanaticism of the Taliban or bin Laden. A war which kills tens or hundreds of thousands of Afghans and perhaps triggers a famine in which millions will die might satisfy a thirst some feel for revenge but they would do well to remember that it was this same thirst which probably motivated the hijackers.

We need to break with the thinking behind state and religious terror. We need to build a world in which not only war but also social, political and economic inequality are abolished. In that world Bush and bin Laden alike will be historical absurdities whose motivations are as difficult to understand, and as irrelevant, as we now find the absolute monarchs and witch burners of the 16th century. Building that world requires a lot more than simply opposing this war but it does include building an anti-war movement.

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