

chapter twelve

Is Truth Enough?

The Bush Administration's Lies and the Anti-War Movement's Truths

Polls and Truth

I was preparing an update on the developments in the oil industry in Iraq since the US invasion last year when I noticed on the front page of the March 17, 2004 *Portland Press Herald* a graph showing the results of a poll taken in eight countries concerning the motives of the Bush Administration in launching the war on terrorism (which it elides with its invasion and occupation of Iraq). It was very disconcerting and has forced me to think again about politics and truth. Along with a little summary up-date of the situation of Iraqi oil industry one year into the occupation then, I want to look more carefully at the consequences of the truth for our political work.

For those who have not seen the newspaper, let me describe the results: 58% of the respondents in France, 60% in Germany, 33% in the UK, 71% in Jordan, 63% in Morocco, 54% in Pakistan, 51% in Russia, and 64% in Turkey claimed that "control of Mideast oil" was an important motivation for the Bush Administration's "war on terror" and hence its invasion and occupation of Iraq. In the US, however, only 18% claimed "control of Mideast oil" to be an important motivation.

Surely, one must take polls with a grain of salt, since they are so dependent upon what, how and of whom questions are asked (especially in any international poll). Another issue to keep in mind is that the respondents were asked about the *motivations* of the Bush Administration in invading Iraq, an inherently difficult question, given the notorious difficulty of determining the motivations "behind" the act of any agent. These caveats aside, the results are still striking, but it is equally hard to determine the motivations of those polled. Is it that US respondents are "brainwashed"

and the people in Europe, Russia and the Islamic world can see clearly on this matter? Should we just pack up our movement and sail across the Atlantic to more agreeable climates?

All joking aside, how do we account for the differences in interpreting the motivations behind the US government's actions? An answer to this question is important for our movement. For if a majority of people in the US did think that the "real reason" behind the Bush Administration's decision to invade Iraq was to control "Middle East" (while recognizing all the "orientalist" objections to the term) oil, they would then be forced to conclude that the hundreds of dead and thousands of wounded US troops (much less the tens of thousands of Iraqi casualties) were sacrificed for the profits of giant oil companies like Exxon, Mobil, ConocoPhillips, and ChevronTexaco. According to this reasoning: the truth (or more accurately, acknowledging the truth) will make us free (or at least help end the war)! If only we in the anti-war movement overcame the Bush Administration's propaganda and convinced our "fellow Americans" of the fact that the Iraq invasion and occupation was an "oil-driven war" (as Camilo Mejia, the Florida National Guard Staff Sgt. who has refused to return to Iraq and faces many years in prison, believes), then there would be a mass rejection of the war similar to what eventually happened during the Vietnam war.

Truth and Consequences

Yet, if Truth should make us free, then the anti-war movement would be enjoying Liberty itself. Let us consider what the "average" movement activist was saying to his/her fellows in the US in February of 2003:

- give the inspectors a chance to investigate whether Saddam was stupid enough to have weapons of mass destruction after such a long period of surveillance
- there is no credible evidence to link the Iraqi Ba'athist regime with Al-Qaeda, since there were decades of hostility between Bin Laden's and Hussein's politics and projects;
- there was neither reason to believe that Saddam Hussein's regime was any more capable to inflicting mass human rights abuses in the near future than any other Middle East government (Israel included), nor that the people in Iraq would welcome a US occupation.

On each of these points we were proven correct as was our slogan “NO BLOOD FOR OIL!” We argued in the run-up to the war that the justifications the Bush Administration was producing did not “add up” and that the war would lead to the creation of a US petroleum colony in the Middle East (with all the inevitable struggle and carnage that would follow). What we meant then (and now) by the slogan “NO BLOOD FOR OIL” had many levels and we should remind ourselves about them:

Level 1: No Blood for Oil, literally

The Bush Administration is planning war as a way to plunder and take control (first directly and later through proxies) the oil fields of Iraq.

Level 2: No Blood for Privatization of Oil Resources

The US has been the leader in imposing neoliberal/globalization policies around the planet. One commodity after another has been “neoliberalized,” but oil has escaped this fate. Most of the nationalizations of oil companies took place between 1969 and 1973, but it has been almost impossible for these companies to be reprivatized, even though the national telecoms and airlines were put on the auction block in many of these same countries (e.g., Nigeria). The US government wants to reverse the nationalization process and an occupied Iraq is a propitious place for this reversal. An added benefit of this privatization would be the undermining of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), an cherished goal of those in the US who have been demanding the imposition of neoliberal globalization on the oil industry world-wide.

Level 3: No Blood for Neoliberalism

One of the main diplomatic failures of the Bush Administration has been to give the impression that this new “world domination” strategy is a product of a spontaneous Nietzschean will to power. Their claim that the urgency of the Iraq invasion and take-over is due to some imminent threat to national security posed by Hussein’s weapons of mass destruction has been rejected even by many of their most loyal defenders. There is an emergency the Bush Administration is responding to, but it is not a military one...it is political-economic one.

The neoliberal system of capitalist accumulation (what we in the US call “globalization”) that replaced the Keynesian one in the late 1970s has been in deep

crisis since 1997 and the Bush Administration must respond to this crisis or it too will be thrown out by its masters (if not by its subjects!) One of the most important questions of a neoliberal order is: who will be in enforcer when countries wish to opt out of the system (for whatever reason). The US government has decided that it is the only power capable to do the job and Iraq's Baathist regime was one of the glaring recalcitrants. Its destruction was to have a "demonstration effect" on all other actual or potential "rule breakers."

Let us see how each these levels have fared in the last year.

As for Level 1, the US did indeed get to plunder Iraqi oil fields on the basis of its invasion and occupation of the country *with the assistance of the UN*. For on May 22, 2003 the UN Security Council not only lifted trade sanctions against Iraq but it also placed the control of Iraqi oil revenues in US hands in Resolution 1483. The mechanism to accomplish this transfer is "the Development Fund for Iraq" in which all the UN oil-for-food moneys (approximately \$13 billion) and all future oil revenue go to. This Fund is managed by the US-controlled Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) until an "internationally recognized, representative government of Iraq [is] properly constituted." Though there is an oversight board—composed of UN, IMF, World Bank, and Arab Fund for Social and Economic Development members—this board has no power over financial disbursement arrangements. The CPA has an absolute say over where the money goes. Consequently, US firms like Bechtel have had an inside track, especially since many of the contracts require a security clearance that only US citizens can acquire. (The fate of the Fund is unclear in the light of the creation of that chimerical being, the "transitional government," whose job is to write a constitution and prepare for elections by December 2005.)

Level 2 has a similar story. The US planners who followed in the van of the Abrams tanks and cruise missiles were certainly determined to create a post-Saddam Iraq that was a haven of free markets, "the best democracy money could buy," and privatization of government assets. The golden grail of such a quest, of course, was the privatization of the oil industry itself. A significant step in that direction was taken on September 19, 2003 when the CPA chief, Paul Bremer, promulgated Order 39 which called for the privatization of two hundred state companies; and permitted 100% foreign ownership of Iraqi banks, mines and factories as well as 100% repatriation of profits.

The unilateral invasion of Iraq and swift destruction of neoliberalism's favorite pariah, Saddam Hussein's Baathist regime, definitely emboldened those who claimed

that only the US can save the neoliberal order from a nation-state exodus (our Level 3). The invasion's success certainly created a sense of caution among neoliberalism's nation-state recalcitrants that were on "supporters of terrorism" and/or "failed state" lists in the State Department. There were many different reactions to the invasion in the vicinity of Iraq, from the Iranian theocrats' ratcheting up the hard-line repression of their "liberal" political opponents to the Libyan government's swiftness in revealing its nuclear program and settling the Lockerbie claims.

The US message from Baghdad was heard far beyond the confines of the Middle East, however. US troops continued to expand their bases into Central Asia, to return to the Philippines, and to reserve the right to intervene anywhere neoliberalism was in trouble. For example, in December 2003 Jean-Bertrand Aristide demanded as part of the bicentennial of the victory of the Haitian Revolution \$21 billion from the French government as repayment for the reparations the French forced the Haitian government for nearly a century to pay to the slave owners who were expropriated by the victorious slaves at the end of the revolution. Such a demand, of course, was an anathema to the neoliberal world order which only sees the past as the basis to impose debt on workers and not vice versa! Aristide's demand immediately led to the "uprising" of the Cannibal Army in Gonaïves and the return of convicted assassin Louis Hodel Chamblain to Haiti to initiate a *coup d'état* that the US military ended with the kidnapping of Aristide. Now there are thousands of US (and French) troops in Haiti enforcing the neoliberal order and stopping Aristide from "stirring up the past"!

However, the success of the Iraq invasion on these three levels was soon checked by the rise of one of the most remarkable military-political phenomena in recent history: the armed resistance to the US occupation in Iraq. This resistance is remarkable since it is an urban guerrilla without any significant foreign state support, no rural safe havens, no external funding of any obvious sort, no regular re-supply routes, no open political organization with a unified program, strategy and tactics. If the US, in a desperate effort to create a legitimate organ by which to rule Iraq and its oil has given birth to a political chimera, the CPA-IGC-transitional government, the resistance it has unleashed is the equivalent of an "invisible hydra."

This resistance has had important consequences for all these levels:

First, the resistance has, in effect, made almost one half of the pipeline system for Iraqi oil inoperable through sabotage for nearly a year. Iraq's operative oil fields are in the northern and southern parts of the country. Before the war, the southern oil was pumped to the Persian Gulf ports and shipped by tanker. This is still happening and

constitutes the bulk of Iraqi oil that is being exported. The northern oil was largely sent by pipeline through Kurdistan to the Turkish port of Ceyhan. This is the route that has largely been shut down due to the persistent attacks of the resistance. *The Wall Street Journal* (Europe) reported on March 1, 2004 that although exports from the southern ports are about 1.5 million barrels a day, "Iraq's only other major export route—a pipeline from the northern oil fields at Kirkuk to Turkey's Mediterranean port of Ceyhan—has yet to resume pumping on a regular basis due to sabotage." This fact puts into question many of the CPA's "Stalinoid"-smelling statistics being thrown around in the run-up to the first anniversary of the invasion that proclaim oil exports had passed the pre-invasion levels. Certainly, the effective loss of the northern fields to the resistance undermines any US claim to completely control the Iraqi oil production cycle.

Second, the resistance has largely enforced the Hague Convention of 1907 (which denied the right of conquerors to dispose of the non-military property of the defeated) and made most of the Bush Administration's ambitious privatization schemes "null and void."

Barely three months after Bremer's Order 39 was promulgated the resistance's attacks were credited (in an article in the December 28, 2003 edition of the *Washington Post* by Rajiv Chandrasekaran) as the reason why the CPA had to "retreat" from slash-and-burn privatizations and other "brilliant" neoliberal "solutions" to Iraq's many social and economic problems. Chandrasekaran gave as a salient example the fate of a state-owned Vegetable Oil company that was high on Bremer's privatization list. The company's director, Faez Ghani Aziz, agreed with Bremer and he began to "downsize" the operation and look for foreign investors. But in July 2003, as Chandrasekaran puts it:

After refusing to rehire dozens of workers who had been dismissed before the war, Aziz,...was gunned down on the way to work. His killing sent a wave of panic through the Ministry of Industry. All of a sudden, no one wanted to talk about privatization.

Indeed, by December 2003, Chandrasekaran reports, the CPA stipulated that privatizations would be authorized only if the purchasing corporations could guarantee that the new private firms would not lay off any workers.

A similar retreat can be seen from Bremer's and the Bush Administration's original goal of privatizing the Iraqi oil industry during the occupation. That goal is now on hold because of the resistance. Even the Iraqi Governing Council, whose members were

hand picked by the US, has rejected Bremer's repeated proposals to privatize the oil industry. At best, Bremer is now feverishly working on re-establishing the national company, Iraq National Oil Co. (INOC), which ran the oil sector from 1964 to 1987. The Hussein government dissolved the INOC into the Ministry of Oil, to have even more direct control over it at the end of the Iran-Iraq War. The idea behind reviving the INOC being, according to the Robert McKee, the oil chief in the CPA, that "a state oil company...allows a significant outside investment in the industry" (Reuters, 2/29/04, *Iraq Co. to Run Oil Sector by July*). Thus Bremer and Co. must settle for "half a loaf," due to the resistance.

This failure to privatize the Iraqi economy (especially the oil sector) will also have consequences on Iraq's future relation to OPEC. For the Bush Administration assumed that, under the supervision of the giant oil companies, the post-Saddam Iraq would either leave OPEC or become a "spoiler" from the inside. But with a resistance making such a privatization more problematic, the post-Saddam oil industry might very well find itself in alliance with one or more of its OPEC neighbors (Saudi Arabia, Iran and Kuwait). At any rate, the vision of an Iraq becoming the 21st century source for the profits of the major US-based oil companies and low gas prices for its SUVs is increasingly distant.

The Iraqi resistance has also put into question the US government's claim to be the SWAT team (or slave catcher) of the neoliberal world order (our Level 3). This claim was pumped up by the rapid collapse of the Hussein's regime (and his pathetic capture). Surely any "leader" of a Third World country thinking of declaring a debt default or a foreign policy initiative antagonistic to the US (like openly supporting the Cuban government) would remember those days in Baghdad in late March of 2003, when the maximum leader was turned into a mouse in a hole. But the fact that the resistance has tied the US military down for almost a year and has forced its leaders to strain their personnel to the limit has shown to the world that the Bush Administration is really not capable of the title it claims for itself: being the military arbiter of the world market. This failure will have tremendous consequences for the fate of the US imperial ambitions as well as the future of the neoliberal project.

Lies and Truth in Politics

The moral of this story, then, seems to be: *they* in the Bush Administration are liars, we in the anti-war movement are truth tellers, and that's that. *They* lied about the WMD, the al-Qaeda link, Saddam's dangerousness to the Iraqi people, and the lack of

resistance the US troops would face during the occupation. We told the truth about the Bushites' real economic motivations. In fact, the bulk of political discourse concerning Iraq in the last year has been ... philosophical, for want of a better word. The big issues have been epistemological (i.e., who knew what, when and how?) and/or semantic (i.e., who spoke falsehoods and who told the truth?).

Indeed, one of the most commented upon recent revelations did not have to do with sex scandals in the White House, but with the influence of a long dead political philosopher on the thinking of the people around Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld: Leo Strauss! In Tim Robbins' latest play, "Embedded," Strauss's words are spoken by a mesmerized chorus of masked acolytes suggesting the figures of Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Perle, Condoleezza Rice and others in the Bush Administration's inner circle. What was so scandalous about Leo Strauss that would get a rise out of Robbins? It is very simple: Strauss transferred Plato's famous justification of the philosopher kings and queens lying to the lower classes in their utopia (what Plato called "the noble lie") to a contemporary democracy. Strauss—disdaining the rhetoric of transparency in democratic discourse—argued that it was perfectly ethical for wiser political heads to proclaim lies to the public as long as these lies made it possible to make the political decisions that should be made (but that the majority of people, knowing the truth, would have rejected).

The revelation of Strauss's ideology of ethical mendacity within the White House added to the importance of the politics of truth (and falsehood), at least to the opponents of the Bush Administration and the anti-war movement. We began to see the Bushites as not just occasional, but principled liars who cannot be "found out" simply because they believe that their lies are means to ethical ends, unlike Bill Clinton's purely utilitarian lies about his sexual relations with Monica Lewinski. Thus the question for us was, how can we in the anti-war movement counter these "super-lies"? But for all our efforts, we could still only get 18% of the population to believe that the Iraq War as an exchange of blood for oil one year later!

Something is wrong. Perhaps we are looking at the wrong end of the problem. Instead of studying the liar, we should also examine the "liee," i.e., the gullible one. The latter, not the former, might be the source of the problem. Is there a will to believe lies which is stronger than the will to lie? Is there something that Leo Strauss forgot? Are the ignorant masses more cunning than their lying masters? In order to explore this question, we will have to confront another question: why do so many support the war, when they can clearly see the mendacity it is based on? What could their interest

be in being gullible? Is it that many of the 82% of the poll's respondents who do not believe that "control of Mideast oil" was a motivation for the Bush Administration's war on terrorism-based invasion of Iraq are saying something to us? What could it be?

The Bush Deal

In order to begin to answer these questions about that enigmatic sphinx, the US working class, let me return to the poll I started with. As I said, polls are very tricky things and depend upon what question is asked. In this case, the graph appearing in the *Portland Press Herald* was the product of a compound question. The first question asked was: *Do you think the US led war on terrorism is a sincere effort to reduce international terrorism or don't you believe that?* 67% of the polled in the US responded "Yes" to that question (whereas in Germany 29% answered "Yes"). The 27% in the US that responded "Not sincere" or "Both" were then asked a subsequent question: *Why do you think the US is conducting the war on terrorism? Is control of Mideast oil an important reason why the US is doing this or not?* A large part of that group answered "Yes." Indeed, it made up 18% of the total of the people polled in the US. Therefore, we are led to surmise that a large majority of people in the US see the war in Iraq is part of the sincerely motivated Bush Administration's "war on terrorism." Indeed, without September 11, 2001 there probably would not have been a March 20, 2003.

But why is this the case in the face of so much contrary evidence? Is there a will or an interest behind so many US workers' belief in the Bush Administration's war on terrorism? I think so, and it is important to isolate this interest, examine it, and suggest substitutes for it. One way of understanding the "the war on terrorism" and the military build-up it has justified (as well as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan) then, is that they are parts of a "deal" the Bush Administration is offering to some workers in the US that will give them limited guarantees of wages in a period when there is a widespread perception that almost any job can be exported.

A key part of this deal is a tremendous increase in the traditional military and the new "homeland security" budgets which should lead to many new jobs. In one sense this increased expenditure (financed by enormous budget deficits) is a form of "military Keynesianism," i.e., the use of government funds directed to the military to "stimulate" economic activity in a period of decreasing private investment and profitability. But the Bush Administration is anxious that this increased expenditure is directed not to civil servants and government agencies, but to private firms contracted

to do the work that unionized government workers did. This privatization of government services would guarantee that the hundreds of billions of dollars increase in the Federal budget that has taken place since Sept. 11, 2001 would not result in an increase of the predominantly unionized government employment, but would instead consign hiring procedures to private contractors (from cleaning companies to “rent a soldier” operations) heavily relying on non-union labor.

This anti-union privatization would be the solution to the contradiction posed by the Bush Administration’s revival of military Keynesianism with the neoliberal agenda’s commitment to undermine any increase in workers’ power and security. The elements of this contradiction were evoked by Michael Kalecki in the 1940s in the question: how is it possible for the state to invest in social reproduction without strengthening the working class? Of course, capital’s general preference is to invest in “disciplinary” branches like the police and military rather than in housing, medical care or education, but even military/police spending creates a guaranteed sphere of unionized employment for millions of mechanics, secretaries and janitors. Indeed, government workers constitute the largest segment of unionized workers that whose rate of unionization (35%) has not declined in recent years.

The Bush Administration’s plan for a massive use of non-union private contractors that would at the same time offer “national security” guaranteed jobs for US citizen workers satisfies the conditions of the problem it faces. In effect, the Bush Administration is proposing a subtle mixture of neoliberalism (privatization) *and* Keynesian deficit spending to get and keep US capital out of a crisis for the near future, which would, at the same time, promise non-union jobs in a hugely expanded and privatized “national security” sector to citizen workers while further driving immigrant workers into illegality and wage slavery.

September 11, 2001 and March 20, 2003 together mark a turning point in the history of the US working class, initiating a decisive crisis in the US workers’ rights to legally resist exploitation and a temptation to turn against immigrants in the US and workers in lands occupied by the US military. Through the Patriot Act and the Homeland Security Act, a powerful machine has been set in motion intended to undermine unionization and contain working class organizing drives and wage demands, especially in the case of immigrant workers, presently the most militant US workers.

With the rhetoric of the “war on terror” and “national security,” the Bush Administration has offered a barbed deal to the US working class reminiscent of that

offered to German workers in the Depression. A select part of the working class, mostly white or native-born, is being promised a future in an economy bloated by US anti-terrorist and foreign war-related government procurements that foreign companies (and workers) could not compete for because they would be labeled “national security” contracts (and jobs) reserved for US companies and workers. Thus, Bechtel and Halliburton are given contracts in Iraq because they can meet “national security” clearance requirements foreign companies cannot. Meanwhile, the remaining non-citizen workers in the US must live under the threat of being labeled “terrorists”—should their activism exceed what business can accommodate to—and of being stripped of their rights, at best deported, at worst incarcerated for an indefinite time in a concentration camp like Guantanamo.

This complex “deal,” I claim, is increasingly being identified with the “war on terrorism.” Consequently, the use of this term is not simply an expression of some personal fear of actual terrorist attacks but is increasingly become a code term for the new form of military Keynesianism which promises jobs and a little job security to US citizen workers fearful of the international competition. In other words, the war on terrorism is less and less about images of the collapsing Twin Towers and more and more about billions of dollars of government contracts and millions of jobs that are going along with them.

Will the “citizen workers” of the US accept this deal and will non-citizen US workers silently suffer their condemnation to “wage slavery”? Their collective choice remains unclear as of the moment. But what we know is that in the last two years, about two hundred and sixty cities (including the city of Portland, Maine as of March 15, 2004!) have passed resolutions defending their residents’ (especially immigrants’) civil rights from the threat posed by the Patriot Act, the Homeland Security Act and the related legislation. Moreover, immigrant workers are refusing to become invisible. For example, in the face of enormous intimidation, in the Fall of 2003 hundreds of immigrant workers undertook a “Freedom Ride” across the country, from Los Angeles to Washington, with stops in dozens of towns and cities, to make their case to other workers against the provisions of the Patriot Act and similar anti-immigrant legislation. These are small but significant harbingers of the decisive decisions that are to be taken by the US proletarians in the coming year that *could* lead to the rejection of the Bush Administration’s “war on terrorism” deal. Can the anti-war movement use its resources to strengthen the rejection of the deal?

A Politics of Truth?

If we still want a politics of truth in a world of the master's lies and the precisely timed gullibility of many of our fellow US workers, then we must be truthful with ourselves, sober up and assess our situation and the possibilities for effective action.

First, we should recognize some of the unique elements of our situation, the most important being that we are opposing a war of occupation waged against an Iraqi resistance movement that has no discernable political program, strategy, or even tactics. This is quite different from the anti-Vietnam war movement of the 1960s and early 1970s and of the anti-Central America War movement of the 1980s (the training ground of many older militants of the present movement). In those previous movements the US government's opponent was well known. Whatever you thought of them, the Vietcong, the FMLN, and the Sandanistas were political organizations with a public, even international presence in contact with the US anti-war movements. This is not the case with the Iraqi resistance in 2004. We are ignorant about something we should know about. We must face the political vulnerability of our ignorance and work hard to turn this ignorance to knowledge.

Second, the situation is going to change on July 1, 2004. Using a classic "prestidigital" trick, the Bush Administration on that day will swiftly transform an occupying army into an "invited police force" asked to keep order by a "transitional" government concerned about terrorism in its borders. At that very moment, guerrilla resistance fighters will officially become terrorists, and hence open to the kind of treatment accorded to fighters in Afghanistan (including shipment to Guantanamo). Our movement will then have to face the consequences of this categorical slight-of-hand, since we will find ourselves attacked by the Bush Administration as supporters of terrorism. The key to the trick was the recent "constitution" "passed" by the US-hand picked Iraqi Governing Council and approved by the CPA. This constitution (*especially with all its attractive civil liberties trappings*) must be decisively deligitimated by our movement. In this fight, we should remember that "constitutions" are fetishized by many in the US working class, so we have to confront many of the prejudices that have "frozen" political change in the US for the last two hundred years.

Third, let me say this again, "respect your enemies." The antiwar movement's lack of interest in the Bush Administration is one reason why we fail to grasp the underlying imperatives propelling its actions. We look at the ungrammatical President, the secretive Vice-President, the Dr. Strangelovian Secretary of Defense and the Lady Macbeth-like National Security Advisor and conclude that they are "just" lackeys of a

right-wing conspiracy fueled by the “majors” in oil industry. Such reductionism is not completely accurate, for they are responding to a major crisis throughout the machinery of capitalism that goes beyond (but definitely includes) the profits of the oil companies and the “control of Mideast oil.” The Bush Administration has offered a “solution” to this crisis: a war on terrorism, and all that it means. Their political replacements (*perhaps* the Democrats) might offer a more multilateral, more union-friendly variant of “the war on terrorism” or a completely “new” solution, but either option must deal with the worldwide crisis of neoliberalism, because that is their business as residents of the White House.

Fourth, we not only must understand the “invisible hydra” of the Iraqi resistance. There is a Sphinx closer to home whose riddle needs to be answered: the US working class. It is a complex beast and bitterly divided within itself. Many of the 67% of US workers who attested in the poll to their belief in the sincerity of the Bush Administration’s commitment to the war on terrorism are terrorized all right, but not of al-Qaeda personally blowing them up. They are terrified of being made jobless and homeless by the power of capital to move beyond US borders and use foreign workers against them. That is why the “helping hand” from capital that the Bush Administration is offering white or citizen workers through the “war on terrorism” is so attractive. It holds out the possibility to them that they can escape the international competition for jobs in a globalized labor market through their status as “loyal” citizens that will make them “irreplaceable.” Can our movement offer a better answer to the real terror of the US working class?

March 20, 2004