

Statement on “World Can’t Wait”

It’s not just Bush’s program—a powerful movement against repression and war requires politics independent of the equally imperialist Democratic Party

George W. Bush is one of the most hated Presidents in the history of the United States. With opposition to Bush’s agenda of war, torture, repression and overall reactionary assault on the rights and livelihood of the masses of people at an all time high, many people have begun looking for a way out of this mess. And, with near-imminent U.S. imperialist defeat in Iraq, a quagmire in Afghanistan and growing dissent here at home, the U.S. ruling class is starting to fight amongst itself. It too is looking for a way out.

The Seattle Anti-Imperialist Committee (SAIC) believes that a social and political crisis serious enough to prompt the ruling class to seek to defuse the situation and cut its losses by ditching Bush would definitely be a good thing for the masses of people. Such a crisis could potentially provide openings for the forces opposed to U.S. imperialism both in this country and around the world. However, such a crisis can only come about as a result of mass struggles—struggles that must break out of the bounds of bourgeois politics if they’re to be effective. It will not stem from the “courage” or “backbone” of Bush’s ruling class rivals, nor will it be a result of radical activists replacing anti-imperialist and revolutionary politics with lesser-evilist demands that “Bush step down”.

While anti-imperialists would certainly seek to take advantage of such a crisis to the maximum extent possible, we base our politics first and foremost on the masses of the world’s people, *not* on the internal struggles within the U.S. imperialist bourgeoisie—struggles that are often reflected in the contradictions between the Democratic and Republican parties. In the final analysis, the Bush agenda is the agenda of the ruling class. The mass movements we must necessarily build against Bush also need to be built against his future imperialist successors and the imperialist system as a whole.

Here we are obliged to note that such movements cannot be built without struggle, criticism and self-criticism. As anti-imperialists, we commit ourselves to struggling for the correct line and building an anti-imperialist mass movement. This places us in direct opposition to those who seek to channel activists’ energy into dead-end reform schemes, etc. Passivity in the face of wrong and mistaken views helps to serve the imperialist bourgeoisie. Ruthless struggle against opportunism, reformism and erroneous political lines serves to raise political consciousness and supports the worldwide struggle against imperialism and reaction everywhere.

What is “World Can’t Wait”?

“World Can’t Wait” (WCW) is a group of activists, intellectuals, liberal politicians and others united around WCW’s “Call” entitled “The World Can’t Wait, Drive Out The Bush Regime!”

According to the WCW website:

Supporters of the Revolutionary Communist Party [RCP] helped initiate it. They have said they’re in it because they think it’s absolutely urgent to get rid of this regime, that it would both lift a huge burden from the world and would also give people a sense of their own potential power, and they think all that would open up avenues to get to the society they want. Same as a whole lot of other people in World Can’t Wait - which, by the way, includes Greens, Christians, Republicans, anarchists, Muslims, Jews, feminists, Democrats, pacifists, and people who claim no affiliation - who also think it’s urgent to drive out the Bush Regime and who also think it can help lead to bigger changes that they want in society, coming from their own viewpoints.¹

It is no secret, however, that RCP activists make up a large portion of WCW. Three out of the four initiators of the WCW call are well-known RCP supporters. The RCP’s paper, *Revolution*, has given prominent coverage to WCW events and the RCP has thus far given WCW its uncritical backing. In short, “helped initiate” is a misleading understatement. Since WCW’s founding in the summer of 2005, its circles have expanded somewhat beyond the small RCP (no doubt a result of much hard work on the part of rank and file RCP supporters). The main point we’d like people to consider is precisely what kind of meaningful progressive change could arise from such a mish-mash of middle class and outright imperialist ruling class political forces.

Many have voiced criticism, concern and even surprise at the fact that an organization describing itself as “revolutionary” would start a campaign that focuses on a particular political leader (Bush) but remains virtually silent about the capitalist-imperialist political and economic system he presides over.

Political Background

In recognition of the Democratic Party’s overall complicity in the Bush administration’s reactionary program, WCW included the following sentences in their “Call”: “There is not going to be some savior from the Democratic Party. This whole idea of putting our hopes and energies into ‘leaders’ who tell us to seek common ground with fascists and religious fanatics is proving every day to be a disaster, and actually serves to demobilize people.”²

The Democrats and Republicans are currently the two main parties of American imperialism and have been...for as long as monopoly capitalism has been consolidated in the U.S. (around the turn of the 20th century). While these two parties differ in tactics, they are both fully a part of the imperialist system. Despite occasional disunity over particular programs or other political questions, these parties are strongly united against the vast majority of people in this country and around the world.

WCW’s token criticism of the Democrats mentions none of this. Indeed, it is so vague and inoffensive that Democratic Party groups such as the Progressive Democrats of America and a number of elected officials have been strong supporters of this campaign. Clearly, “there’s not going to be a savior” means different things to different people.

Moreover, the practice of WCW suggests this statement was vague *intentionally*. Rank and file RCP supporters may imagine “there’s not going to be a savior” to be a content-rich criticism of one of the principal political expressions of U.S. imperialism. But a far, far greater number of people interpret this campaign as a call for people to pressure the Democrats into being a “real” oppositional party. And who’s surprised?

Not only does WCW fail to expose the real nature of the imperialist Democratic Party, they also allow locally prominent Democrats to speak at their rallies, etc. On one hand, we're told that there's "not going to be a savior from the Democratic Party" and on the other hand, WCW continually presents us with various Democrats as if they're a force to be united with.

U.S. Representatives John Conyers, Cynthia McKinney, Bobby Rush, and Maxine Waters are four such Democrats. New York State Senator Tom Duane is another. On December 12, 2005, Sen. Duane got on Fox News' *O'Reilly Factor* to promote the "World Can't Wait" campaign and to raise the alarm about what Bush is up to. Would Sen. Duane do this if WCW's criticism of his party wasn't so devoid of content? Would the Progressive Democrats of America enthusiastically mobilize their liberal, petit-bourgeois social base if the WCW Call contained the tiniest shred of exposure of the Democratic Party's imperialist bourgeois class character? Of course not.

Worth noting is the further degeneration from "Drive Out the Bush Regime" to their new leading slogan of "Bush Step Down" and then, literally in small print, "And Take Your Program With You." But both slogans have effectively served as a "radical" coat of paint on the more mainstream liberal call to "Impeach Bush".

From the beginning the call to "Impeach Bush" has been sponsored by a wing of the imperialist Democratic Party as part of its own, narrow, ruling class power play (i.e., they want George W. Bush's White House for themselves). Since the WCW's politics objectively dovetail with the liberal-

For class-struggle against imperialism!

With over 100,000 dead Iraqis (mostly civilians) and over 2,000 dead American workers in uniform as a result of the U.S. imperialist invasion and occupation of Iraq, the invasion and occupation of Afghanistan, the occupation of Haiti, torture from Guantanamo Bay to Abu Ghraib, increased attacks on abortion rights, intensified harassment of immigrants and Muslim Americans, expanded wiretapping and other surveillance of targeted communities and political activists, along with other outrages associated with the USA PATRIOT Act, it is not hyperbole to describe the Bush administration as blood-soaked and very dangerous. However, the imperialist Democratic Party, despite a few shallow complaints from the leadership (meant to pacify its often well-intentioned grassroots supporters), has been strongly supportive of nearly every move Bush makes. This is one of several reasons that SAIC has always stressed the need to target the entire imperialist system which gives us war, repression and people like George W. Bush.

This same imperialist system gave us the Democrat Roosevelt who herded over 100,000 ethnic Japanese into internment camps—purely on the basis of nationality and wartime hysteria. This same imperialist system gave us the Democrat Truman who became the first world leader to use nuclear weapons (against the civilian population of an imperialist rival). This same imperialist system gave us Johnson who escalated the U.S. imperialist aggression against the people of Viet Nam and its national liberation struggle. This same imperialist system gave us the Democrat Carter who armed and prodded their then-proxy regime of Ba'athist Iraq to attack Iran—resulting in an all-out bloodbath in which over 1,000,000 Iranians and Iraqis perished. This same imperialist system gave us the Democrat Clinton whose continuation of the United Nations sanctions regime led to the deaths of over 500,000 Iraqi children.

Since 1948, every U.S. President—Republican *and* Democrat—have given massive military, financial and political support to Zionist Israel, a white racist settler state

imperialist's power play, SAIC was not at all surprised to find a WCW website article calling on readers to pressure the Democratic Party to actually go ahead and impeach "the bum".³

Moreover, for the past few months the RCP has been working very hard to channel the energy of activists into the "World Can't Wait" campaign and its single demand that "Bush step down". If, as a result, activists don't have time to help build anti-imperialist contingents for anti-war demonstrations, don't have time to build support for the New York City transit workers strike, don't have time to build the movement to confront the Nazis in Olympia and Seattle, etc., this is apparently justified with lectures about the dangers of "Christian fascism" as represented by the Bush administration.

This is bogus—not because Bush and co. aren't dangerous reactionaries—but because more truly mass exposures of the reactionary nature of Bush (and not only Bush) are only going to come from work to further advance the struggles of the oppressed. And raising the class consciousness and organization of these struggles, drawing more people into them, beginning to combine them together, etc., is the path toward defeating U.S. imperialism's trend towards fascism.

The RCP has, in its theoretical work, spoken of the need for "re-polarization" and apparently views a campaign like WCW as laying part of the groundwork for an eventual RCP seizure of power. Whatever one may think of this, let us point out that a *working class* seizure of power will require nothing short of mass working class *consciousness and organization*. It will not be the product of pseudo-revolutionary shortcuts.

founded on stolen Palestinian land which is routinely condemned for their apartheid-like treatment of the native Arab population. In Germany and Italy, it was *imperialism* which gave rise to the fascist trailblazers Hitler and Mussolini. Today it is estimated that around 40,000 people die from starvation and treatable disease *every day* for reasons directly linked to the economic, political and military domination of the world by a handful of rich imperialist bourgeoisie. We have only listed a relatively small handful of the untold numbers of outrages perpetuated by imperialism and its lackeys all around the world. In short, imperialism kills millions.

In a previous SAIC leaflet, we stated:

Defeating imperialism is only possible through the independent political action of the masses, particularly the workers, oppressed nationalities and youth. It is the working class that is squeezed to pay for the wars of the rich, and whose precious sons and daughters perish in them; and it is this class which has the most to gain and the least to lose from eliminating imperialism. It is therefore the working class which must play the decisive role and assume leadership of the developing anti-imperialist struggle. In short, this means developing and building a genuine anti-imperialist movement truly independent of the bourgeoisie and its opportunist allies.⁴

It is imperative that we work to build the mass movements against "our own" ruling class and its brutal system of imperialist exploitation, domination and war. We fight for a brighter future but the road is torturous and, unfortunately, there are no shortcuts. It is our internationalist duty to build a *class-based* mass movement against Bush and the entire imperialist system he represents.

Seattle Anti-Imperialist Committee, January 30, 2006

¹ "Frequently Asked Questions." WorldCantWait.net, Fall 2005

² "The World Can't Wait—Drive out the Bush Regime! Call." World Can't Wait, June 2005

³ "If You Want the Bum Impeached..." WorldCantWait.net, January, 2006

⁴ "It's not just Bush's war—target imperialism!" Seattle Anti-Imperialist Committee, December 5, 2005