

## Mass ferment flows into U.S. anti-war movement

by Nancy Spannaus

When Lyndon LaRouche projected in June of 1989 that the popular upsurge against oligarchical tyranny then erupting in Communist China would likely arrive in the United States approximately 18 months later, there was no immediate detonator for such an upsurge on the horizon. Today, the combination of Bush's war and the economic depression in the United States has sparked mass political action that is combining forces from the churches, civil rights layers, and students, in a new anti-war movement.

There are two levels of activity represented in this anti-war mobilization. On the one hand, there are the officially called demonstrations and the official statements from constituency groups. Some of these, such as the anti-war coalitions, are heavily composed of what might be called professional anti-war activists, but the civil rights and church groups have taken qualitatively new actions against the war.

On the other side, there is an increasing level of spontaneous anti-war activity which is bringing in previously apolitical layers in the universities, high schools, and small towns. The high level of this activity, both before the war broke out and even under conditions of the most intensive pro-war propaganda, is now intersecting the more organized activity, and putting the anti-war movement on the edge of becoming a truly mass-based political movement.

### Massive demonstrations

One of the crucial ingredients for such a transformation is the input from the LaRouche movement, which has clearly defined both the genocidal policy commitment which led to the war, and the economic policy solutions, which have been uniquely put forward by newly filed presidential candidate and political prisoner Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr.

The demonstrations that swept the United States, even in

the few days after Bush started the bombing and over the Martin Luther King Day weekend, dwarfed anything that appeared for years after the beginning of the Vietnam War. In San Francisco, organizers estimate 200,000; in Washington, D.C. the estimate is 50,000. But there were also tens of thousands in places such as Minneapolis, Minnesota, and thousands in Austin, Texas, Chicago, and other smaller cities.

Contrary to the news media, the overall character of these peace group-dominated demonstrations was not flag-burning and violence. Those events occurred near the end, or on the edges, and received all the publicity. But, as exemplified by the Washington demonstration, the crowd primarily listened to speeches which denounced the New World Order as a new imperialism, and called for bringing the troops home. A sizable portion of the demonstrators were students, including delegations from the black Hampton University in Virginia, Oberlin College in Ohio, the University of Buffalo, and many others.

The Washington demonstration, sponsored by the Coalition to Stop U.S. Intervention in the Middle East, featured Coalition founder and former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, Jesse Jackson, and old anti-Vietnam War activist Daniel Ellsberg. Clark's speech concentrated on denouncing Bush's "imperial presidency," and contrasted Bush's ego ideal, the unabashed imperialist Teddy Roosevelt, with the modern martyr for peace, Dr. Martin Luther King. Clark condemned Bush for his abandonment of Lithuania, as well as his aggression against Iraq.

Also visible at the Washington demonstration were representatives of Pax Christi, a peace organization of the Catholic Church; CISPES, the group organized against the U.S. role in El Salvador; a number of labor unions; and a 200-250 person delegation of supporters of Lyndon LaRouche.

## Church and black leaders speak up

Nearly every section of the civil rights movement, as well as black organizations such as the Nation of Islam, have gone into mobilization against Bush's war in the Middle East. This provides the anti-war movement with a much more working-class character than it had in the Vietnam War era.

Most striking in this regard was a statement issued by Martin Luther King's widow, Coretta Scott King, on Jan. 18. Mrs. King is not known for being a radical, and this is reflected in her continued support for genocidal sanctions against Iraq. But Mrs. King's statement calls for a nationwide mobilization for a ceasefire in the Persian Gulf. Her statement read in part:

"I join with peace-loving people everywhere in deploring and strongly opposing this misguided and tragic war, and I appeal to President Bush to halt U.S. military action against Iraq. This war will only feed the cycle of revenge and retaliation and cause incalculable grief and economic hardship for the American and Iraqi people for many years to come. . . . Trading the blood of young Americans for oil is an exchange that is unworthy of a great democracy. We can best support our young men and women in the Persian Gulf by working for a ceasefire so that they can return safely home to their families."

Catholic Church activists are also carrying out vigorous public activity against the war. In addition to the statements adopted by the Bishops Conference and from individuals, two Roman Catholic bishops have taken arrests from their anti-war activity. Bishop Thomas J. Gumbelton of Detroit and Bishop Walter F. Sullivan of Richmond, the president and president-elect of Pax Christi respectively, held a press conference and a several hundred person demonstration in front of the White House on Jan. 22, before they chose to kneel down and pray and be arrested. Interestingly enough, there has been virtually no visual coverage of the two bishops being carried away by police.

At the press conference, Gumbelton announced that 31 Roman Catholic bishops in the United States and the heads of 70 religious orders have joined a call for an immediate ceasefire. He vigorously declared that the Middle East needs development, not destruction, and denounced Bush's New World Order, stating that it has nothing to do with the hopes of the world's population for economic justice. Bishop Gumbelton also stressed that the Catholic Church "will not be silent" as it was for such a long time during the Vietnam War.

## Students and housewives

Perhaps the most important indication that the anti-war movement is capturing Middle America as well, however, is the activity emerging from high school students, universities, and small towns throughout the United States. These are previously apolitical layers of the population, who have been compelled by the insanity of the war drive to enter the political arena.

A few examples characterize the situation. A couple of

weeks before the war broke out, *EIR* received a report of citizens in Montana, who had taken to eating their lunch outside the courthouse in frigid weather in protest against the war. Small towns in Colorado and Pennsylvania have seen anti-war pickets of up to 100 persons. And in the Baltimore working-class suburb of Dundalk, an anti-war demonstration of 5,000 people occurred the weekend before war began—organized by a hairdresser!

The political mood is also spreading among high school students in a manner not seen since the civil rights movement in the South. Before the war broke out, high school students were holding teach-ins and spontaneous demonstrations from California to Chicago to Long Island, New York. On Long Island, the students decided to travel from school to school, to pull out more students in protest.

University campuses are also hot, with meetings of several hundred students on the war coming together on short notice. The meetings are polarized in many cases, but quite political. In some cases, students are just taking off for Washington to voice their protest.

## The LaRouche role

Playing a major role in the activation and education of the emergent anti-war movement is the LaRouche movement. LaRouche, who drafted a Middle East development plan for peace back in the mid-1970s and has updated it as an Oasis Plan for the present period, has offered himself as a negotiator to find an end to the war. Because LaRouche's programs address the joint problems of the depression collapse in the United States, and the global malthusian economic policies which have led to the neo-colonialist Gulf deployment, his movement is an essential ingredient in building the kind of mass movement which can force Bush to reverse his policy—by impeachment or otherwise.

To say that pro-war forces are upset about this is an understatement, but they have held back in their explicitly political attack on LaRouche's anti-war activity, for fear that that might backfire.

But on Jan. 22, the *Boston Globe* broke the blackout, and in a prominent article entitled "Peace activists express concern about anti-Semites in movement," attacked Ramsey Clark, the Nation of Islam, and LaRouche's movement for working together. Dragged out to lead the attack are the director of the Boston office of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) of B'nai B'rith, and drug lobby scribbler Chip Berlet, both members of the "Get LaRouche" task force. The article claims that all three are spreading anti-Semitism by not condemning Saddam Hussein's invasion and opposing economic sanctions. It's all right for others to criticize Israel, the ADLer is quoted, but not LaRouche.

The article is a blatant attempt to force Clark to separate himself from LaRouche, whom he is representing on appeal, and to narrow the coalition. It is unlikely to succeed as mass ferment spreads.