



Iraq: Power play

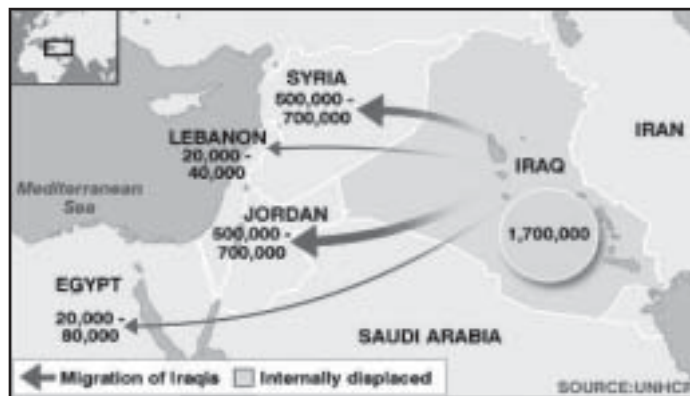
THE NEVER ENDING cycle of violence increasingly continues unabated in Iraq with catastrophic effects on its population. An estimated 1.8 million have fled Iraq (population: 17 million) and another 1.7 million have been internally displaced since the US led invasion in 2003. The insurgency continues with or without Saddam Hussein, with daily attacks on American troops rising from 14 in July 2003 to 70 two years later and now to 185. The civilian death toll is estimated to be in the hundreds of thousands.

The Occupiers

The levels of violence in Iraq mean that US forces there are increasingly at risk. Reports in the Arab press even suggest generals were forced to quell a mutiny in their ranks during late December; and it has been claimed deserters are fleeing to claim asylum in Syria. Even official government figures show that over 8 000 US troops and 1 000 British troops have deserted since the war started, most going into hiding though some US deserters have sought asylum in Canada, where they are supported by the anti-war movement.

As the multi-national force struggles to gain any grip on the situation on the ground, the Bush administration is desperately searching for an exit strategy. Bush announced recently that a further 21 500 US troops were to be sent out to Iraq and these are joined by a second US carrier group. This is the first time two carrier groups have been stationed in the Persian Gulf since the 2003 invasion.

Though the increase in military fire power could be seen as an attempt to solve the Iraq question, it is just as



much about power play with Iran. In the current situation the US seems bogged down and demoralised, the Iranian Authorities seem set on antagonising this and stand accused having a powerful hand in the violence in Iraq. So for the US government it's not only about being seen to stamp their authority on Iraq, they want a show military strength to be seen by Iran.

The Insurgency

As well as the mortal danger civilians in Iraq face from the occupying troops the insurgents in Iraq have been busy terrorising the civilian population too. Competing militia factions have shown you don't need the backing of a state to engage in callous murder, though neighbouring states like Iran and Syria are backing some factions. Sunni and Shi'ite muslims, as well as nationalists groups, are committing atrocities on a daily basis as they try to carve out power for themselves.

The almost random nature of the killing is sowing suspicion and distrust amongst the population, leading to segregation as communities close in. This forms a vicious circle, which is help-

ing to fuel the civil war as battle lines are drawn across society. But attempts are being made in Iraq to organise across sectarian divisions, and outside of the twisted logic of murderous militias.

Someone else's war

Iraq, like so many lands before it, is now living out the nightmare being used as a playground for somebody else's war. Its population suffers continually and pays the costs of war at first hand, whilst those in power sit in safety hoping the game will fall in their favour. Democracies, dictatorships, religious bigots and nationalist fanatics have between them turned Iraq into a hell hole. The only hope of building an alternative lies with those that have resisted the pressures to side with a band of killers. ★

STOP TRIDENT!

See article inside...



ON THE FRONTLINE

Our regular look at workplace struggles:

- Posties:

THERE IS GROWING anger among postal workers as management ignores national and local agreements. Cuts are being pushed through almost everywhere and some mail centres are threatened with closure.

At several offices full time jobs are being replaced by part time ones when they fall vacant. There is a long and noble history of wildcat strikes amongst posties. Now pressure is mounting for the union to hold a national strike ballot. The union leaders may well have to agree to this pressure and then sabotage any effective strike action. Links have got to be built between different sorting centres across Britain, so that individual centres do not fight alone and are not bamboozled by union bureaucrats.

- Health workers:

The same sort of pressure is growing over making March 3rd a more effective day of action against conditions and pay in the NHS. The union leaders agreed to undertake action on that day and then have organised- or failed to organise- half hearted actions on a purely local basis. This is what they intend to do on March 3rd- organise purely regional and badly publicised regional actions.

- Social security and job centres:

Civil service workers in the PCS union voted to strike on January 31st against cuts, privatisation and low pay. Social security centres are being closed down and their work is being farmed out to call centres. Gordon Brown is driving forward the plan to axe 104,000 jobs in the civil service. Given the scale of the attacks, a one-day strike under the control of the union leaders is hardly enough, and workers will have to push to escalate the actions.

- BA cabin crews:

As we go to press, some 11,000 cabin crew at British Airways (BA) were set to strike from 29th to 31st January. Support for the strike call was massive with a mass meeting of 1,000 at Heathrow. Workers are fed up with management taking a tough line of sickness, forcing them to turn up for work if they are ill. ★

TRIDENT – A “MEANINGFUL DEBATE”?

TONY BLAIR WANTS to replace the Trident “defence” system with a newer and upgraded version. He wants a “meaningful debate” about whether this is justified and whether Britain should remain a major actor on the world stage.

This apparent willingness to hold a debate is due more to public outcry, especially in Scotland, about the need for a renewal of a vastly expensive system which has never been used. These plans for a £20 billion (!) upgrade of the Trident submarine, are being countered by protesters as part of Faslane 365 campaign, which plans to hold a year-long blockade. Support across Europe is growing for this blockade.

At the same time, and well before this “debate”, massive work to upgrade the nuclear warhead factory at Aldermaston continues without pause. A recent industry report suggested that construction firms are expecting £12bn to be spent on it over the next 12 years. A strange situation if the debate has not yet taken place and therefore no decision has been made!

Even before upgrading, in its present form, when fully armed a single Trident submarine has the firepower to incinerate between 100 and 200 million people. When we talk about Trident we are referring to a weapons system that comprises a fleet of nuclear-powered submarines armed with nuclear weapons.

The Trident submarine is armed with 16 Trident II D5 ballistic missiles. Each submarine carries 48 warheads distributed among 12 missiles. Each warhead has an explosive power of 100 kilotons.

A 100 kiloton detonation would



have about seven times the destructive power of the Hiroshima bomb which killed 140,000 people, the majority of them civilians.

£1.5bn a year is being spent of Trident, or £30m a week. What for? They are not for defence – Trident is a first-strike weapon. £5 million a day is being spent on this system. The cost of one Trident submarine is equivalent to employing 75,000 nurses, the annual running cost of 1,500 primary schools, or keeping the resistance editors in beer until well into the next millennium.

But it's not just about what the money should be spent on. It's about whether we want a system run by war-mongering, corrupt and venal politicians and their henchmen in the military.

Before the “debate” has begun, we already give our answer. Reinforce the blockade in Scotland and put out the message loud and clear that the Trident renewal juggernaut must be stopped dead in its tracks. ★

ID CARD UPDATE

IT SEEMS THE government has now decided to cobble together three existing databases, instead of going ahead with the original proposal for a new database. The information will be split between computers at the Home Office, the Department for Work and Pensions and the Immigration and Passport Service.

It's not a u-turn as has been reported elsewhere, it's just a way of saving a few quid. The 69 regional offices for citizens to supply their biometric



details will be created this year, some of them by the private sector.

Just before Christmas the government's 'Strategic Action Plan for the National Identity Scheme' appeared. The main points of the report are that the way is being prepared for wholesale data-sharing, and information can be provided without consent to, for example, government departments or other public bodies. Also, in mid 2007, a live pilot of interviewing first-time adult passport applications is planned. ★

CELEBRITY PRATS OF THE MONTH



Bush's panel of advisors decide the future of Iraq.

Collectively awarded to Bush's advisors and Bush himself.

WE READ IN the news that "One of President Bush's most senior advisers, Dan Bartlett, told the BBC: "2007 is going to be a difficult year. *There is going to be violence.*" No shit, Sherlock! Coming to the fourth anniversary of an invasion that has led to hundreds of thousands of deaths, a country ruined and torn apart by a bloody civil war, occupied by foreign armies and governed by inept sectarian politicians it has dawned on someone in the White House that not all is good in Iraq. But they make it sound like someone from finance is going to slap the IT guy in the staff room, or like a bout of fisticuffs between boy scouts. We can only be amazed at their powers of deduction.

Because of this "violence", and after many minutes of intense reflection, they have come up with the following plan: let's step up the killing by sending more soldiers, let's not talk with any other country in case they prove to be smarter asses than ourselves, and let's ignore any recommendation being made on the contrary by whatever panel of politicians (like the Iraq Study Group). Mr. Bush has decided to stick to his guns ignoring the will of the American people, which sent him a very clear message in the last elections. That he has ignored all warnings is a proof of how useless the whole democratic process is. You vote them, they do whatever the heck they want. Sounds like the UK and Tony Blair! Meantime the opposition to the war is mounting, which shows how much cleverer than the politicians the people are. ★

GREEKS GET GOING

Greek students occupy, workers go on strike

SOME 240 UNIVERSITY departments across Greece are being occupied by their students in a challenge to the New Democracy government.

They are in response to plans to allow private, fee paying universities to enter the system. As parliament was due to discuss the changes in mid-January thousands of students surrounded the building from noon until

after 9pm. Across Greece there were similar demonstrations. The teachers' and lecturers' unions organised a 24-hour strike. Civil servants, health workers and local government workers held four-hour stoppages in support.

The government brought forward the plan for the universities in the knowledge that they would be supported by Pasok, the Greek centre left party. Both parties are committed to market reform of the education system. ★

TIME
BOMB



This months look at history focuses on the Russian Revolution of February 1917.

How did they revolt?

FOLLOWING THE INTERNATIONAL Women's Day on Feb 23rd 1917 (8th March in the West, the Russian calendar then being 13 days behind that of the West) workers refused to return to work and marched towards the town hall of Petrograd. On Sunday 26th the government sent out soldiers to shoot the protesters. 50 were killed and 100 wounded. However, by Monday 27th, the troops abandoned their command and joined the insurgents' side. With the collapse of military authority, the cabinet was forced to resign by night-fall. Tsar Nicholas II followed suit, abdicating on the 2 March in place of a provisional government. The provisional government tried to continue with the war and because of this was swept aside in October, but that's another story ...

What antagonised an entire nation?

Starvation. Despite the war, in 1916, strikes were already beginning as workers were forced to survive on potatoes, deprived of flour and sugar. That same year, declining wages and the breakdown of the transport system only intensified an already critical situation. Whilst the whole of Russia starved, the conservative tsar Nicholas II advocated ideals of family and religion – a recipe for disaster it seemed.

Who was behind the revolt?

Historians are generally agreed that there was no single, organised, group responsible for the 1917 Russian revolution; that it was in fact, the spontaneous outbreak of an exhausted population.

The agitation and educational work carried on by the revolutionary elements (the Socialists of various groups, including the Anarchists) had taught the masses to understand that Tsardom must be done away with. So widespread had this sentiment become that even the army -the most unenlightened group in Russia, as in every land, had lost faith in the existing conditions. The people had outgrown the despotism, had freed themselves in mind and spirit from it, and thereby gained the strength and possibility of freeing themselves actually, physically. ★

News about Greek anarchist prisoners **ANARCHISTS IN ATHENS** and Thessaloniki took action in support of anarchist detainees, some of whom were arrested during the May 6 European Social Forum protests, three of whom are still imprisoned. Two of these prisoners Tarasios Zadorozni and Gerasimos Kyriakopoulos began a hunger strike protest against their imprisonment. More information from Indymedia Athens.

Sagada 11 in The Philippines released!

Great news – the 11 young anarchists imprisoned and tortured in The Philippines after being accused of a Maoist guerilla attack have been freed (see resistance 88)!

On Dec. 21, 2006, they were released with the court decision that the multiple murder and arson case was dismissed due to lack of evidence.

No victory is claimed by either party. No compensation for the damages only stories to tell about their experiences. Before day-break, amongst the released, Rundren, Jethro and Anderson were immediately sent back to their local hometown and arrived around 7 am at the Davao Airport to be welcomed by the Mayor and to rendezvous with relatives and peers.

The Sagada backpackers wish to thank those who helped with the campaign- from

the streets to the internet, from here and abroad – those whose faces they've never even seen

Write and support Daniel McGowan

Daniel is a US environmental and social justice activist. He was charged in federal court on many counts of arson, property destruction and conspiracy, all relating to two incidents in Oregon in 2001. Until recently, Daniel was offered two choices by the government: co-operate by informing on other people, or go to trial and face life in prison. His only real option was to plead not guilty until he could reach a resolution of the case that permitted him to honour his principles. Now, as a result of months of litigation and negotiation, Daniel was able to admit to his role in these two incidents, while not implicating any other people who might have been involved. The government will seek a sentence of eight years, while Daniel's lawyers will seek a sentence of no more than 63 months.

www.supportdaniel.org
POB 106, NY, NY 10156, USA ★

Info from: www.brightonabc.org.uk



The Anarchist Federation is an organisation of class struggle anarchists aiming to abolish capitalism and all oppression to create a free and equal society. This is Anarchist Communism.

We see today's society as being divided into two main opposing classes: the ruling class which controls all the power and wealth, and the working class which the rulers exploit to maintain this. By racism, sexism and other forms of oppression, as well as war and environmental destruction the rulers weaken and divide us. Only the direct action of working class people can defeat these attacks and ultimately overthrow capitalism.

As the capitalist system rules the whole world, its destruction must be complete and world wide. We reject attempts to reform it, such as working through parliament and national liberation movements, as they fail to challenge capitalism itself. Unions also work as a part of the capitalist system, so although workers struggle within them they will be unable to bring about capitalism's destruction unless they go beyond these limits.

Organisation is vital if we're to beat the bosses, so we work for a united anarchist movement and are affiliated to the International of Anarchist Federations.

The Anarchist Federation has members across Britain and Ireland fighting for the kind of world outlined above.

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Also visit: www.afed.org.uk
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Subscriptions to resistance costs £4 from the address above for 12 issues. A two issue subscription to our magazine, Organise! for revolutionary anarchism, is also £4.

You can subscribe to resistance by email for free via the website above.

SUBVERT!

When going on demonstrations stay sober, don't talk to the police and if you're arrested give only your name and address then say 'no comment' to any other questions. For more info visit: www.ldmg.org.uk

February

7 - Patient Privacy in the Database State – Public Meeting. The govt is planning to upload confidential NHS patient records onto a database – but how will it link in with the new ID cards and other surveillance? At Friends Meeting House, Ship Street, Brighton, 7pm-9.30pm. Chaired by Phil Booth - NO2ID National Co-ordinator, with speakers including Prof. Ross Anderson - Professor of Security Engineering at Cambridge University, Helen Wilkinson - National Co-ordinator of TheBigOptOut.org and others. For more see www.no2id.net www.nhsconfidentiality.org

8 - "What is Anarchism?" Starting off a series of meetings on anarchist theory, London group of the Anarchist Federation is holding a public meeting on What is Anarchism? at 7pm at Marchmont Community Centre, Marchmont Street, London WC1. There will be time for discussion and

questions. Refreshments will be provided. Free entry. Disabled access. Nearest tube Russell Square

24 - No Trident / Troops Out of Iraq - National Demonstration. Assemble 12 noon - central London (exact location to be announced later). Rally in Trafalgar Square. Come and demonstrate against government plans to replace the Trident nuclear weapons system with a new generation of weapons of mass destruction. Organised by CND and the Stop the War Coalition. For more see www.cnduk.org

March

10 - Benefit gig raising money for Oaxaca rebellion, featuring great punk, ska and hardcore bands, as well as spoken word stuff and political stalls. Headliners: The King Blues. When: March 10th, 4pm. Where: The Face Bar, Battle Street, Reading Contact: ragecollective@hotmail.co.uk

19 - There will be a Global Day Of Action against the "War On Terror", on the fourth anniversary of the invasion of Iraq. To find out what's happening in Britain on this day visit: <http://m19wiki.pbwiki.com> ★