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Imperialist Coalition conquers Iraq!

They call themselves The Coalition. But it is hardly a coalition of equal partners. This coalition was sort of strung together so the USA would not appear to be acting alone. But it is only an appearance. In reality Iraq is more or less fully controlled by the United States of America. Iraq has been promised free elections. But it is America who will determine when these elections will take place. The reconstruction of Iraq is fully under the control of the United States with lucrative contracts going to a massive multinational associated with Dick Cheney.

The United Nations wants to be part of the process. After all UN participation will give this occupation a fig leaf of international legality. The US is somewhat reticent because powerful players within the UN opposed their intervention and still consider it to be illegal. The US will accept UN participation on its terms alone.

The Americans will cooperate with their British allies. They acknowledge the hard yards done by Tony Blair legitimise their conquest in the eyes of world and politically correct. Blair has almost put his career in jeopardy. Acting as attorney for the US, he now faces further problems. There have been no weapons of mass destruction found within Iraq. So British MP's have convened an inquiry to explain why parliament has been misled, Since the coalition victory, Blair's public opinion support has improved . But he will be in hot water if he is exposed as promoting war under false pretences.

John Howard is sitting pretty as he has appeared to have backed a winner. The war was short and relatively (from an Australian point of view) painless. There were no Aussie casualties. The media have presented enough smiling Iraqis welcoming America for him to present the invasion force as liberators. And of course there were those spectacular pictures of the pulling down of Saddam Hussein's statue. Whether or not America can deliver the peace is not Australia's prob1cm. Howard also hopes that Australian's will receive juicy crumbs such as cheap oil and contracts to Australian companies to rebuild Iraq.

In short, with this imperialist conquest, US imperialism is in the box seat. It can control the resources of Iraq. it can use Iraq as a military base, as a springboard to control the rest of the Middle East. The message that it already has given to Syria is: woe betide if you defy our dictates. We reserve the right to invade your country as we see fit.

Baghdad is currently a city devastated. The promise of a surgically clean invasion, didn't happen. Most major buildings have been attacked. This includes the headquarters of Al Jazera television and the Palestine Hotel, home to foreign journalists. In both cases civilian news reporters were killed.

Only twenty percent of Baghdad has electricity. The people are angry at the Americans — for blowing up their power plant. There is also a serious lack of water. There is serious lack of medical supplies. This problem is as much caused by the imperialist enforced blockade as it is by the invasion. Contrary to the promise of a strategically clean attack, many homes were attacked and destroyed by bombing. Civilians have also been killed by US forces on the ground. Troops have demanded cars stop on direction (in English). If the car refuses to stop, they simply open fire.

Of course much of the damage has been caused by looting. The US invaders were reluctant to become agents of law and order before they were had Baghdad fully under their control. Why? Because they feared an alliance between looters and what remained of the previous regime. The Iraqi masses are armed. Had American troops killed civilians, in defence of private property, they could well be perceived as aggressors against the people and not as they claimed, liberators. A Baghdad guerrilla war could have erupted.

As a result, there was mass looting on an extensive scale. Looters raided everything, homes businesses, factories, hospitals and the heritage of ancient Mesopotamia. Many of the treasures of Babylon, the cradle of civilisation are lost or destroyed forever. It is noteworthy that the only building that the Americans prevented from being looted was the ministry in charge of oil production, Hospitals and national treasures were plundered at will.

The problem for the imperialist invaders is whilst they intervened in Iraq to “regime change”. they represent nobody. At least in Afghanistan the Northern Alliance represents a section of the population of that country. Ky and Thieu US puppets who ruled Vietnam at least had a section of the bourgeoisie on their side. In Iraq though gratefully welcomed by some who understandably hated Saddam, they represent no one. So they have to artificially create a comprador state apparatus.

[The imperialists desired representatives are the Iraqi National Congress who has been nurtured by Washington for decades as a movement in exile. Far from being democrats they are reactionary monarchists Not only does the I NC not represent anyone, they are hated by everyone. Imposing their administration over the Iraqi people would be a recipe for social dynamite.

The people appearing to be filling the vacuum are Shiite Moslems. This is indeed understandable. Though not the majority of the Iraqi people, they were persecuted by the Sunni regime of Saddam. They were banned from pilgrimage to holy places (within Iraq). Saddam, of course could not ban them from attending mosque. So he couldn't undermine the authority of their mullahs. They therefore have a head start in organising and mobilising. Like their Iranian counterparts they have a hatred of all things western. “Death to America”.

Also mobilising are Iraq's stalinist communists, the Communist Party of Iraq. They were banned by Saddam. The PCI aligned with Saddam's Baathists as part of their two stage block with the progressive bourgeoisie. After Saddam's victory they were banned. They paid for this alliance in blood. They were killed and imprisoned by the regime. Some of them were fingered to the Iraqi authorities by the Workers Revolutionary Party of Britain led by Gerry Healy. The WRP received Iraqi cash. A leading member was Alex Mitchell who now writes for the Sydney Sun Herald. Supporters of the Socialist Equality Party belatedly disassociated from this criminal act. It is doubtful whether the stalinists have learned anything fundamental from their bloody experience.

A Shiite Iraq, would of course, be a total disaster for the workers and peasants of Iraq. The only democracy the Shiites believe in is power to the cleric. Saddam, to his credit, allowed women the choice of being veiled or otherwise. There will be no such choice in a Shiite clerical Iraq. It will also be a disaster for working people who would be forbidden to organise except on terms acceptable to the mullahs. The far left would face at least as much repression as it did under Saddam.

The Americans clearly do not want a Shiite alternative. The Shiites have shown that they are prepared to fight. They will gain some credence as the vanguard fighting American occupation. Most Iraqi's understand that their country is being occupied. irrespective of how grateful they are that Saddam is gone, they want the occupiers to leave.

In short, there are serious problems for the US imperialist occupiers concerning how to get an appropriate administration which will administer in their interests while maintaining the appearance of democracy. Maintaining an army of occupation is an expensive exercise. They want value for money with a comprador formation who will legitimise their economic and military interests, while at the same time offering Iraqi's the appearance of democracy. America's fairytale scenario for their invasion didn't happen. There were no widespread desertions from the Iraqi armed forces. The Coalition received some determined opposition on their way to Baghdad. It took a lot more than "shock and awe" bombing to get Saddam's forces and the Iraqi people to be anything but defiant. And "shock and awe" bombing was far more widespread than the Coalition promised. But many left wing, Arab and liberal bourgeois commentators were surprised how quick and efficient victory for the imperialists was.

Before the fighting two human shields e-mailed anti-racists informing us that Iraqi people were defiant. And this included opponents of the regime such as Shiites, who at least acknowledged that Saddam, with all his faults, was Iraqi. And preferable to someone imposed by America. They considered that there was as much likelihood of the Iraqi people rising up against Saddam as the British people rising up against Winston Churchill during the second world war. Throughout the war the BBC had a reporter stationed in Baghdad. He expected the war to last for many months, He told Lateline (ABC TV) it was not a case of being shocked or awed but a case of being bombed to exhaustion. One day he woke up and found his minder gone. As well as any semblance of Baathist authority. Whilst the bombing was indeed horrendous, this desertion hardly inspired the Iraqi masses who no doubt felt that there was nothing to fight for.

So the coalition marched into Baghdad with only sporadic opposition from hard core militia.

One factor relating to this war is Kurdistan. The Kurds are divided between Turkey, Iran and Iraq none of whom recognise their national rights. In fact they all repress the Kurds, ruthlessly. The Kurds have been victims of Saddam's weapons of mass destruction. They within Turkey have had their villages destroyed by aerial bombing. Turkey has been extremely nervous. The worst possible option for them would be an independent Kurdistan on its border which may inspire Turkish Kurds to fight for independence. So Turkish troops were mobilised to patrol the border, threatening an invasion.

Kurdish forces fought as part of the Coalition. They took Kirkuk --- and proceeded to hand it back to the Coalition. In doing this they betrayed their national interest. There is no guarantee that the newly formed imperialist sponsored government will give them an autonomous area. They will not get independence.

Saddam's brutality of course assisted the imperialists. The Baathists ailed and tortured political opponents of various political persuasions (left and right). They also persecuted the Shiites. A Lebanese volunteer on arrival in Baghdad was ordered to fight, not the imperialists but the Shiite dissidents of Saddam.

Revolutionary communists support the overthrow of Saddam's regime. But we support its overthrow by the Iraqi people, especially the working class. The problem with this US sponsored "liberation" is that America is in the box seat, it not merely controls Iraq (and its resources such as oil). it can use Iraq as a military base to control the Middle East. Woe betide if you defy America's dictates.

America has been sabre rattling against Syria. And its rhetoric sounds exactly the same as last year's rhetoric against Iraq. Syria "sponsors terrorists" "has weapons of mass destruction" etc, etc. Tony Blair, in the British parliament has denied any programme to invade. But the faction led by Paul Wolfowitz, within the US State Department believe in such an invasion. In fact they want to invade Iran also. They believe in a domino effect. Apparently after having democracy imposed by the United States other Arab peoples will see the light and there will be democratic revolutions throughout the Middle East all grateful to US imperialism. All this is the stuff of dreams. It was the Wolfowitz faction who persuaded Bush of the merits of a full scale of Iraq in the first place. They also want America to invade Iran.

US imperialism is using September 11 as a license to terrorise the world and invade any country, they feel could be connected to a new terrorist raid. Basically they want weapons of mass destruction to be monopolised by either themselves or their allies. It is apparently ok for Israel to invade its neighbours and possess both chemical weapons and a nuclear arsenal. It is also apparently ok for the Israeli's to have these in defiance of UN resolutions. The new US sponsored Iraqi government will greatly assist Israel at the expense of the Palestinians.

US imperialism plunders the world's resources. It sponsors dictators and terror regimes to facilitate super exploitation. Not so long ago, in fact before they invaded Iraq. the Baathist regime was their ally in plunder in repression. It invaded Kuwait and became their enemy.

The occupation of Iraq by the imperialists must be opposed — unconditionally. They may have overthrown Saddam but they have created a mess. So too must their war drive "against terror" rationalised by the September 11 terror raid. Workers in Australia must actively oppose. US imperialist intervention and Australian assistance.

Defend North Korea!

George Bush's statement linking Iraq, Iran and North Korea as an "axis of evil" may have been good politics from the point of view rallying the patriotic American public for a war drive. But it was a disaster from the point of view of Korean Peninsula diplomacy. For the past few years, Kim Dae Jung has been slowly and cautiously trying to diplomatically seduce north Korea into an amicable relationship with the South and from there, joining the world mainstream. Kim can boast some success for this agenda.

However with the "axis of evil" speech North Korea threw any thought of peaceful coexistence out the window. Their reaction was understandable. They knew that America's intentions in relation to

Iraq were that of invasion. So it appeared to them that America would threaten them with invasion also. The bureaucrats felt that they have nothing to lose so they may as well go down fighting.

So they took the initiative. Whereas there was debate over Iraq's possible nuclear and biological arsenal, they left the world no doubt regarding theirs. They flaunted their nuclear programme. This caused a bit of embarrassment for the imperialists. They were preparing to invade a country which denied possession of such weapons, and only might have them, yet they were ignoring the "rogue state" which definitely did. It was also noteworthy concerning how much that they were prepared to negotiate to prevent a showdown with the Koreans. They refused to negotiate with Saddam at all.

This, of course only delayed the imperialists. They had to finish off the Iraqi war, and stabilise the country. But now they are preparing for action. They can't afford to allow such defiance to their world order.

North Korea is the last of the hard core stalinist states. It is a workers and peasants' state with nationalised property relationships. These property relationships must be defended unconditionally from imperialist attack and internal counter—revolution.

Of course, the bureaucracy which rules North Korea, is reactionary, strangles the organisation and power of the Korean working class. North Korea is an unpalatable Stalinist police state committed to repress the proletariat especially their class conscious representatives -- Trotskyists North Korea develops its police state while ordinary workers and peasants face starvation.

North Korea is a very isolated country. With the collapse of the Soviet block and the capitulation of the Chinese bureaucrats to capitalism, it is one of the few states to carry on Stalin's tradition with unadulterated pride. You cannot build in one country. A post capitalist country can only survive with the spread of revolution — internationally. Like all stalinists they fear international proletarian revolution. A revolutionary movement in the South or in Japan would inspire the workers of the North to rise up and overthrow the bureaucrats. This they fear.

Post capitalist states such as the old Soviet Union and China having nuclear weapons is part and parcel of the counter-revolutionary strategy of socialism in one country. Trotskyists know that the only real defence is the extension of the revolution internationally. This is what stalinists reject. Instead they counterpose arming their respective countries to the teeth. Ronald Reagan defeated the Soviet Union by showing that in contest of armaments between imperialism and stalinism, imperialism would be the victor. The stalinists tried to match the war drive and in the process destroyed the whole bloc of post capitalist states to rampant internal counter-revolution.

Trotskyists oppose the imperialist campaign to disarm North Korea, firstly because we want to defend the nationalised property relationships and secondly because the American campaign means a monopoly of weapons of mass destruction for the imperialists. They want to disarm any country which might threaten them. We oppose imperialist domination of the world and the defeat of North Korea would greatly strengthen America's hand in controlling and exploiting most of the third v. world.

Of course. we call on North Korea's workers to rise up and smash this reactionary parasitic bureaucracy

Argentine factory occupations face state repression!

Argentina is a country where the bourgeoisie are bankrupt. Literally! In fact many employers do not have sufficient to pay their employees their miserably low wages. So many owners have simply walked away, leaving workers to fend for themselves.

The response of in many workforces is to occupy these factories and place them under workers control. And many of these occupations have succeeded admirably. Some of paid off debts, paid wages, and have even accumulated a small profit. They are living proof that working people are capable of running things without a boss. Over two hundred factories of various types are under control of their workers, all over Argentina.

Yet these occupations are not the political solution. For a start, the boss's economic system is still dominant and they survive on its terms. But also the capitalist social relations remain. Irrespective of whether workers can run a factory, capitalist Argentina still cannot afford basic necessities such as health education, schooling, transport. But most important the capitalist state still runs Argentina!

Recently Argentine workers discovered that the bourgeoisie have only limited tolerance towards these worker operated factories and they will claim them back by force when they see fit.

In Buenos Aires Brukman is a clothing factory controlled by its workers. The bosses had not paid wages in full since 1995. They deserted and the workers took over. It had been under workers control since December 2001. It had been operating very efficiently. The Argentine court however decided who had property rights. And it was no surprise that they decided in favour of the bosses.

As reported by Naomi Klein of Globe and Mail Canada "The police evicted workers in the middle of the night and turned the whole block into a military zone guarded by machine guns and attack dogs

"Unable to get into the factory and complete an order of 3,000 pairs of dress trousers, the workers gathered a large crowd of supporters and announced that it was time to go back to work. At 5pm, fifty middle aged seamstresses in no-nonsense haircuts, sensible shoes and socks, walked up to the police fence. Someone pushed, the fence fell and the Brukman women, un armed, arm in arm walked through."

She goes on "They had only taken a few steps when the police began shooting teargas, water cannons, rubber bullets, then lead."

The police ruthlessly pursued the demonstrators. They even entered a children's hospital. A hundred demonstrators were arrested and thirty three seriously injured. Some with rubber bullets and one with a lead one.

This attack is of clear political significance. Brukman is a base for the far left such as the Partido Obrero. There is a federal election campaign. The Peronites are trying to maintain power. The message the aim to get over loud and clear is that we understand state power, and power is on our side. The Peronites, all shades are of course bourgeois, committed to maintaining the bankrupt system which is forcing more than half of Argentines to endure dire poverty. Over a third are unemployed. Many are starving. Some struggle to survive by searching through garbage, trying to find enough edible food amongst the rotten waste.

The bosses, the Peronites and their state have chosen to pick on the vanguard. the most high profile of the occupations. But make no mistake! As long as the capitalist state continues to rule Argentina is more of these attacks not only can happen but will happen unless important political lessons are learnt. workers in Argentina will face bloody repression.

A key lesson is that the potentially revolutionary struggles of last December. only went half the way. De La Rúa was brought down. But his replacement the bourgeois Peronist Duhalde has in no way been better. The generalised struggles have been demobilised. There have been militant struggles between sections of the unemployed (Picketers). militant workers and the state. But these have been isolated struggles. There has been a failure of revolutionary leadership to overcome this isolation, to win over other sections of the class, and to win middle class people to working class vanguard.

No revolutionary organisation has seriously raised the question of state power. Patido Obrero, for example have had as their main slogan, the bourgeois slogan of a Constituent Assembly. They failed to show that this can only be realised consistently by working class power. They failed to raise transitional demands. As a result you had an ostensibly revolutionary movement subordinated to bourgeois democracy. Their slogan "All of them have to go" is indeed true. But it fudges over whether the alternative is different parliamentary representatives or political power to independent working class organisations.

Many anarchists have considered these occupations "anarchy in action" Basically. they argued that workers could continue on occupying factory after factory and in the end, an anarchist society will be created. Some no doubt believe that the state workers (cops) will fall into line when the superiority of our new society is shown in action. We hope that this brutal experience will show them very much otherwise. The state must be smashed and workers must be organised and prepared to do it. If Argentine workers follow the anarchist strategy they will be downed in blood. Little better are those who think that workers control is autocratically revolutionary and will establish a revolutionary dynamic.

Argentina is literally bankrupt. No bourgeois force has any serious way out of this disaster. Yet the main choices posed for this election are Peronism or Peronism. Communism and socialism are not seriously on the agenda. This reflects the total bankruptcy of the Argentine far left. Argentina is a country which is potentially rich It has been one of the top ten countries in the world in terms of prosperity. Now it is a country where large sections of working people face not merely austerity but starvation. The need to construct a revolutionary party to put proletarian power on the political agenda could not be more urgent.

Communist Left calls for maximum solidarity with Argentine workers and unemployed facing state repression. Australian unions the left and labour movement must protest this repression and carry out international solidarity action.

Bougainville Australian troops prepare to leave

With all the attention on Iraq it is easy to forget that Australian troops are still patrolling the island of Bougainville. They are part of what's called a "peace process". For over thirty years, on and off Bougainville people have been fighting for independence. The struggle started in 1969 when

Australian forces with tanks forcefully assisted the British multinational Rio Tinto to expropriate the land from the Panguna people in order to establish one of the world's largest copper mines. The Bougainville people are ethnic Solomon Islanders. They are only part of Papua New Guinea due to imperialist treaties (which they were not party to).

They were included as part of Papua New Guinea by force, Gough Whitlam, who granted PNG independence refused to recognise their claim for a separate nation. After independence, successive PNG governments have refused to grant independence in order to hang on to the copper mine and for fear of destabilisation

The net result of this fighting appears to be a Bougainville autonomous area, administered by the people but still part of PNG. Communists believe that Bougainville people should be given the right to form a nation — unconditionally. Part of this peace process has involved disarmament. The Bougainville people, at least the BRA have agreed to disarm and have this policed by the PNG armed forces and Australian forces. PNG forces have now left the island. Australian forces, plan to leave in June. But the BRA are concerned. The fear that the disarmament is still not complete and those loyal to Francis Ona remain outside the peace process. The Australian government is considering letting the troops stay longer. Communists oppose any presence of Australian forces on the island of Bougainville whatsoever. We consider Francis Ona completely correct in rejecting a situation where imperialism is armed but the Bougainville people are not.