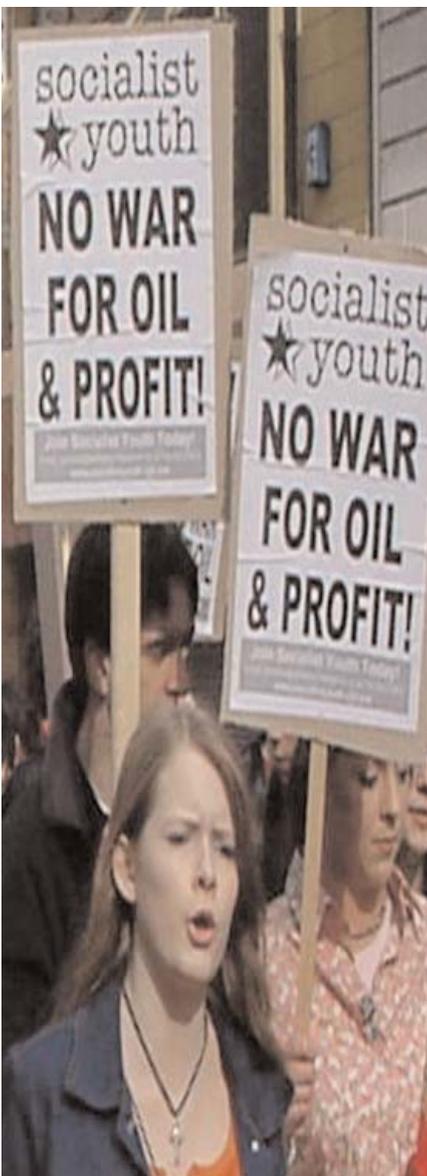


# End the occupation of Iraq



- **No more blood for oil!**
- **Money for wages, NOT war!**
- **No sectarian killings -  
Unity of Iraqi workers**

**M**arch 15th marks the 5th anniversary of the US-led invasion of Iraq. At the beginning of the war, George Bush estimated that they would 'normalise' Iraq within 4 years. Instead they have created a hell on earth with barbaric conditions for the majority of Iraqis.

The group Just Foreign Policy estimates over 1.13 million Iraqis have been killed as a result of the war and occupation. More than 3,900 American soldiers have been killed. More than 28,000 have been seriously wounded. 174 British soldiers have died during the occupation.

According to Oxfam International, 70 percent of Iraqis lack access to safe drinking water. Electricity supply is beneath pre-invasion levels. 43% of the population lives on less than 50p a day.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2.3 million people have been displaced within Iraq and another 2.3 million have fled the country. Official Iraqi Government figures state

unemployment is between 60% and 70%. Child malnutrition rates have increased from 19 percent during the economic sanctions period prior to the invasion, to 28 percent today. 8 million Iraqis are in need of emergency assistance.

## **Money for wages, NOT War**

So far, the US has spent nearly \$500 billion on the war and occupation. Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, slavishly following George Bush, have wasted more than £7.4 billion of taxpayers' money on this disastrous occupation which has no hope of succeeding. Billions of taxpayers money can be found by Gordon Brown for war, but he says there is no money for wages, for hospitals, education and other services which require much needed funding.

## **Defeat for Bush, Blair & Brown**

Instead of a 'normalised' Iraq, US imperialism is confronted with a crushing defeat. According to a recent ABC/BBC poll, 98%

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# What is Socialism?

In December at the International Panel on Climate Change in Bali, capitalist governments failed to reach agreement on setting binding targets to reduce carbon emissions. Rather than put the interests of our environment first, the governments represented at the conference acted in the interests of oil companies who make obscene profits. Capitalism is incapable of dealing with the catastrophic danger of climate change.

A global democratically planned economy is the only solution to this looming disaster. Emergency funding for the development of renewable energy, taken from the \$2 trillion spent annually on advertising and weapons is needed. This would allow all countries to develop and provide a decent standard of living while eradicating the spiralling emissions of greenhouse gases we have now.

A socialist world would put an end to the system where 1% of the world's adult population owns 40% of all wealth. Socialism would allow the immense technology and resources we have at our disposal to be put to the task of meeting the needs of the world's population. For instance it would take a fraction of the current war budget for Iraq to eradicate some of the biggest killers in our world - malaria, unclean drinking water and famine.

## Join Socialist Youth Today!

Socialist Youth is an organisation of young people which organises and fights for young peoples rights and for a socialist future. We are part of International Socialist Resistance, which unites young socialists across the world.

We were central in organising the Youth Against the War school walk-outs in 2003 which saw 15,000 school students across Northern Ireland take action against the invasion of Iraq. We campaign on a wide range of issues such as fighting sectarianism, racism, low pay, environmental destruction and sexism.

We have regular meetings where we discuss the big issues of the day and to organise our campaigning work. If you want to join Socialist Youth, fill in the form.

## Continued from overleaf

of Sunnis and 84% of Shias in Iraq want all US forces out of the country. 65% of Americans want the troops brought home. Bush is one of the most hated presidents in US history, while the US Congress' approval rating is even lower at 18%. Tony Blair will go down in the history books as a liar who went to war despite mass opposition.

The occupation has increased the likelihood of more terror attacks and has further destabilised the Middle East. It has also led to the strengthening of right-wing Islamic fundamentalism and sectarian forces in Iraq which have carried out campaigns of ethnic cleansing, threatening the potential bloody break up of the country along religious and ethnic lines. The cost of the war and occupation has been enormous, but not for everyone. Haliburton, the company that supplies the US military which has close links with the Bush regime, has won over \$16 billion in contracts since 2003. Private security firm Blackwater are under investigation for killing innocent Iraqis but still have a \$1billion contract with the US military.

## Troop Surge - can it work?

An extra 30,000 troops were sent to Iraq in June raising the total number of US troops in Iraq up to 160,000. This is part of a desperate attempt by Bush to defeat the opposition to the occupation, but it is doomed to failure. According to the Iraqi Red Crescent, the number of Iraqis forced from their homes quadrupled during the 'surge'. Attacks on occupation forces have not ceased. There are more than 2,000 attacks a month. Since the surge, according to news reports more than 7,500 Iraqis have been killed. The true figure is thought to be far higher.

The daily bombings which have scarred Iraq since the start of the occupation reduced slightly towards end of 2007. But this is largely because the sectarian conflict has completely polarised Baghdad along religious lines, physically dividing Sunni and Shia's.

Whoever is elected to the White House later this year will not withdraw the troops voluntarily. All candidates, both Republican and Democrat, are opposed to withdrawing the troops. But a movement of workers, youth and Iraq war veterans against the war can develop and exert pressure to force a withdrawal of troops. Such a movement would also need to raise the need to build a working class anti-war party to challenge the Republicans and Democrats.

## What solution for Iraq?

Socialist Youth is opposed to the reactionary anti-women, anti-gay and anti-socialist policies of some of the forces opposing the occupation in Iraq. We stand for unity of working class and young people in Iraq in their struggle for decent jobs and services, against sectarian division and the occupation. This struggle must also fight for the resources of Iraq to be democratically owned and controlled by the working people of Iraq. By developing the great resources Iraq possesses such as oil, a genuine reconstruction of Iraq could transform people's lives.

A socialist Iraq, planning its production to meet the needs of people and not the profits of US neo-conservative backed companies could act as an inspiration to workers across the Middle East. It could pose an alternative to the corrupt dictatorships in Iran and Syria and also the US-backed dictators in Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

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