



SOCIALIST VOICE

Newsletter of the Communist Party of Ireland, Dublin

March 2003

20c (solidarity contribution: €1)

Mobilise to end this war!

ONCE again the world has been plunged into uncertainty and fear of what the future has in store, as the United States, Britain and a few hangers-on unleash the dogs of war on the people of Iraq. Many will look in disbelief at their television screens as presenters, retired generals and so-called military experts recycle opinions mouthed by spin-doctors, with journalists running around in battle fatigues, behaving in the main as if this was some big road-show and they are all part of the winning team, that the good guys once again will win the game.

The United States, Britain and the other crony states in this ramshackle alliance can't even agree on why this war must take place. It started out to rid Iraq of weapons of mass destruction, then it was to fight terrorism, then to have "regime change," then to liberate the Iraqi people. When one reason doesn't convince world opinion, then try another one.

1991: the year the Iraqi opposition was sacrificed

If it was about the liberation of the Iraqi people, then why did the "Western allies" not support the Iraqi people when they rose up against Saddam in 1991? The Iraqi people then believed the propaganda, that they would get support. But instead the Western "allies" allowed Saddam to butcher ten thousand of his opponents, as they stood by and watched. Why? Because they couldn't guarantee that a compliant regime would come to power if Saddam fell.

For one thing is certain: the interests, opinions and aspirations of the Iraqi people are of no importance. What is important is the strategic imperial interest of the United States. They want Saddamism without Saddam. That has been the case since the British set up the present state of Iraq. The Iraqi people have never been allowed to have a say.

What about the United Nations?

For a number of years the role of the United Nations has come in for serious criticism. Some of it has been justified; much of it has been manufactured, largely by the United States itself. The United States has had a strategic and systematic approach over a number of decades in undermining the United Nations and weakening it as an institution of world authority reflecting world opinion. The United States refused to pay its dues to the United Nations so as to weaken it. It was always hostile to UNICEF and other UN bodies that attempted to control or restrict the role of global capital or create a more humane world.

The United Nations, weak as it was and is, is the only body available at this moment that the vast majority of the people look to in some form or other for leadership. Since the dismemberment of the Soviet Union, the United States has attempted to push the United Nations aside. It is clear, except to those blinkered by anti-communism, both on the right and on the ultra-left, that the world is a much more dangerous place since the demise of the Soviet Union, with no counterbalance to the United States on the world stage. Those same forces that welcomed the dismemberment of the Soviet Union also wish to see the United Nations demolished. ▶▶

“ All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations. — **Charter of the United Nations** ”

Defend our independence and neutrality! Close Shannon and Baldonnell to American military aircraft!

» Why is this war happening?

The United States believes that it has achieved hegemony at a global level, and it will not allow anyone to challenge this, today or tomorrow. It will not allow “another Soviet Union.” There can be no alternative or challenge to neo-liberalist capitalism, economically, politically, or militarily.

Our world is being shaped and controlled by the power of the military-industrial complex. The government of the United States, as never before, is being run for and by the giant corporations. It is deciding that their interests must be the only interests allowed.

The role of Europe

Much has been made of the fact that Europe is split over the war on the Iraqi people. Germany took a position of opposition, albeit for opportunist reasons, during the last election. Nevertheless this position struck a deep chord with the German people. Is it not the logic of the current developments within the European Union that it requires a more independent role for itself? Does the European Union not have strategic, economic, political and military interests of its own?

The decision may have come a little prematurely for them to have presented a more united front, but the economic and political imperative is driving them that way. Not all ruling classes have the same interest, and their strategic priorities may not coincide at a particular time. The two main players in Europe have failed to fall into line. The position of both governments must be welcomed. Over the coming years we will witness the growing tendency of those centrifugal forces to pull them in a direction that will bring them into conflict with the United States.

Irish neutrality

Today, whatever fig leaf of neutrality Fianna Fáil could hold in front of itself has been blown away by the bombs dropping on Iraqi men, women, and children. The sleeveenism of Fianna Fáil and the Progressive Democrats is shocking to behold. The only reason they can't or won't stop US military aircraft using Shannon and Baldonnell is that we might lose jobs; it doesn't matter that thousands of Iraqi people are losing their lives.

This much-vaunted “special relationship” is nothing more than cowardliness and spineless opportunism. The PD leader, Mary Harney, and her anti-left rhetoric is breathtaking. She has nothing constructive to say, nor one iota of criticism to make of the role of the United States and Britain. We can't say anything about US policies, because they have taken our emigrants down the years: when previous governments had nothing to offer the Irish people but emigrate or starve, the Yanks gave us the Donnelly visas.

What is independence or freedom worth if you can't exercise it? Surely that is what they used to say about the former socialist countries and the Soviet Union! Do we not have an opinion on whether this war has any mandate from anyone? Does international law mean nothing? Has the fact that the United Nations Charter has been torn up and binned no significance? that this is an illegal war? that barbarism now stalks the world? No, we will lose a few jobs if we speak out. We would be losing “influence” in the United States and Britain.

The future

The positive development of recent months has been the politicisation of millions of ordinary people around the globe. Imperialism would love to have had this war done and dusted months ago, except that world public opinion was mobilised against it. It forced the positive role that the United Nations can play out into the open. It has exposed the callousness of the present administration in Washington: that it is the giant monopolies, arms manufacturers and oil interests that control the US government, and that George W. Bush (stupid he may be but fool he is not) is just a front man who is a willing agent for them.

People's power on a global level as never before has come to be a world force. We *can* build a better world. We can find a common cause, a common humanity in the struggle to save the world from the clutches of global capitalism. Surely today, as Rosa Luxemburg put it, we are on the threshold of choosing “barbarism or socialism.”

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**Maximum unity of all opposition forces!
Support the Iraqi people in their struggle for democracy!**