

A PAIN IN THE ARSE FOR THE RULING CLASS...

The Pitchfork



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A DOLLAR DICTATORSHIP?

U.S. HEGEMONEY

The entire world now knows that 'Weapons of Mass Destruction' never existed in Iraq; that the invasion was based on a systematic campaign of lies and propaganda by the government and corporate media; that the primary purpose of the war was not to bring 'democracy' to the Middle East, but to secure Iraqi oil for western corporations, and to provide a military platform for the projection of US force in a critical region. Perhaps less well known is the fact that just prior to invasion the Iraqi regime had begun the process of selling its oil for Euros rather than dollars, sending shock waves through the American business establishment.

The modern oil industry was born in the US, and both prices and payments for oil are denominated in dollars. Nations are forced to buy and hold dollars, because without them they cannot buy oil. This system of so called 'petrodollars' lies at the foundation of American economic power. The mechanism works because oil exporting countries keep their enormous profits in the currency they're paid in, often investing the cash straight back into the US economy. Countries like Norway, the world's third largest oil exporter, have invested billions in stocks and US govt. bonds. Russia does the same, and Saudi Arabia may have as much as seven hundred billion dollars invested in the US. The system of petrodollars allows the US to keep demand for the dollar artificially high, to fund tax cuts for the rich, and to provide lavish programmes of military spending and corporate welfare.

But the system only works as long as oil exporting countries have confidence in the dollar and US policies.

In March 2006 the Iranian government plans to open an international, petrochemical stock exchange (Bourse), trading in Euros. Given the US/UK response to Iraq's attempt at trading oil for Euros it's hardly surprising that the war mongers in Washington and London are increasingly hysterical in their denunciations of Iran, and that conflict looks ever more likely. Despite the campaign of hatred and black propaganda the fact remains that, just as in Iraq,

there is no evidence that Iran has nuclear weapons or is in violation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty - unlike the US, the UK, France and Germany.

But the threat posed by Iran to 'dollar hegemony' means that it won't be long before we hear GW Bush and Tony Blair telling us that Jesus wants them to bomb Tehran. The corporate media's campaign of hatred against Muslims forms part of the preparation for war, it's an attempt at dehumanising people before bombing them and stealing their resources. Israel, which itself is in possession of an unspecified number of nuclear weapons, has been in the forefront of lobbying for a US attack on Iran. The Israeli air-force is one of the largest in the world, bigger than Britain's RAF, and probably more sophisticated technologically. 10% of It's based in Eastern Turkey, and they're reported to be flying reconnaissance missions over the Iranian border. The situation is made worse by the criminal cruelty of America's 'neo-conservative' billionaire elite, who openly promote the first use of nuclear weapons by the military. Only an anti-war movement that goes beyond ritual demonstrations and political lobbying can hope to stop the next disaster. We need a campaign of massive civil disobedience, of industrial action, blockades, pickets and occupation. An autonomous movement that bypasses political parties and the sterility of official protest can still stop the descent into violence. After all, they can't lock us all up, can they...?

www.voicesuk.org

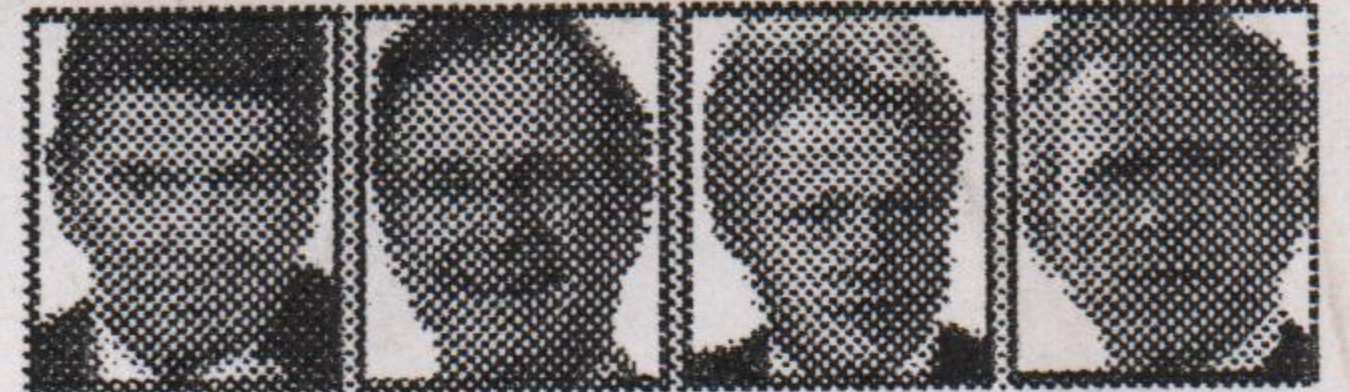
www.stopwar.org.uk

NO BORDERS

As the barriers to global corporate exploitation come down the border regimes of repression and detention intensify. Thousands are imprisoned without trial in centres across the UK. These centres are often run by private companies who benefit from the increasingly repressive legislation aimed at refugees fleeing violence. On Saturday April 8th, 11am, a demonstration is being held outside of Harmondsworth detention centre, Nr Heathrow airport, London. 2 miles off junction 4A of the M4.

Contact: noborderslondon@riseup.net

www.noborders.org.uk



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WORLDWIDE**

STRIKE BACK!

The 28th of March 2006 saw a massive strike by over a million workers acting in defiance of the bosses to protect their pension rights. The government's attack on pensions forms just one component of a business led assault on human rights, welfare and public health. It's part of a broader programme that includes privatisation, de-regulation, environmental degradation, and militarism. Underlying all of these developments is an official ideology that believes public institutions should only exist to coordinate the interests of multinational corporations and financial institutions, promoting their interests at home and fighting brutal wars to protect their profits abroad.

The rest of us can play a role as regimented producers, or passive consumers, occasionally voting in meaningless elections that offer a choice between identical business parties with indistinguishable policies and candidates. This ideology, which is shared by politicians and the media, academics and business elites, is called neo-liberalism. If the strike by public sector workers is successful then it represents a victory for us all. A victory for solidarity and compassion against an inhuman system built on greed and exploitation.

www.indymedia.org.uk

Continued overleaf...

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LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT

Why is that no matter who we vote for we end up with the same government and the same policies; the same opportunists in greasy suits spouting the same predictable sound-bites? No matter how 'radical' they appear to begin with, all the parties converge towards a cynical consensus as they approach power. Perhaps the main reason for political conformity is that real power lies elsewhere. It can be found in the 'private' economy, where big business makes the real decisions about what's produced and how resources are allocated; who gets to work and how our day to day lives are run. Politicians of every party know that any policy which threatens the 'rights' of the corporations that own Britain will lead to dis-investment, a winding down of the economy and capital strike; so they're careful to stay within a policy range acceptable to international corporations and financial institutions. But the only policies corporations can live with are ones that mean disaster for the rest of us, their primary concern is profit and market share, not human welfare and the environment. As long as fat cats and their private tyrannies retain control over industry, the land and the media, nothing can alter fundamentally. Only a social movement that takes back control of workplaces and communities can bring real democracy and political change. Until it happens political change will always remain a dream. A product sold to consumers by the same people who sell us toothpaste and Coca-Cola.

ESCAPING CORPORATE-BRAINWASHING

How we can escape from a pervasive system of brain washing and media manipulation? The millionaires who own the corporate media present a picture of the world that promotes the agenda of a ruling elite. Establishment broadcasters like the BBC are playing to the same rules. The only alternative is the internet. Check out the following links, and free your mind:

WWW.SCHNEWS.ORG.UK
WWW.INDYMEDIA.ORG.UK
WWW.ANTIWAR.COM
WWW.TRUTHOUT.ORG
WWW.COUNTERPUNCH.ORG
WWW.VOICESUK.ORG
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THE FRENCH CONNECTION

A new revolution is sweeping France. Over a million people have taken to the streets to prevent the implementation of US/UK style social policies and economic 'reforms'. In many respects the French people are fighting the social war that was lost in Britain during the nightmare Thatcher years.

But the French ruling class are having less luck than their British counterparts in taming the people. At the core of the current unrest is the CPE, a new employment law that seeks to divide working people by attacking the social rights of those under 26 years of age.

The CPE legislation is designed to bring French labour laws into the modern age of capitalist dictatorship and state repression. French bosses, horrified at the idea of human status for those disposable units of production known as industrial workers, are on the offensive. But the fight-back is gaining momentum, as youth in the industrial suburbs join up with rank and file trade unionists and angry students.

The official 'leadership' of the unions and the political parties are losing control of the struggle, with autonomous groups forming in

workplaces and communities all across France.

In the face of overwhelming public opposition the government has responded with a campaign of repression and violence, proving that the French state, for all its democratic posturing, remains a tool of the bosses and their anti-social interests.

To gain an understanding of what the French people stand to lose just take a look at Britain after twenty years of 'free market' reform and fiscal discipline: Britain has the one of the highest rates of child poverty in Europe, with numbers having trebled in just twenty years. 22% of the population now lives in poverty compared to 13% in 1979. Nearly half of employees have wages which on their own are insufficient to avoid poverty, and we have the highest number of winter deaths due to fuel poverty in Western Europe. Inequality is widening massively, with 10% of the population now owning a massive 54% of the wealth. All of these trends have accelerated rapidly under Neo-labour's party for the rich. And as the wealth gap widens and poverty increases the corporate fat cats are making a killing, with cuts in corporation tax, record profits, and privatisation placing the cherry on the corporate cake. No wonder the French are taking to the streets in their millions

Sources: UK labour force survey 1999

DEMOCRACY LTD.

The United States has deployed every imaginable device to avoid an outbreak of meaningful democracy in Iraq. Under pressure from the Shia majority, the occupation authorities were finally compelled to hold elections when earlier attempts to shelve or dilute them were vetoed at least three times by the influential Shia cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani (Financial Times, March 2005). The Shia demand for elections was forced on the 'coalition' by a massive campaign of non-violent resistance.

If democracy means taking the majority seriously then one of the questions that Bush and Blair must ask the Iraqi people is, 'do you want us here?'. They don't have to go far for the answer: an opinion poll carried out by the British Ministry of Defence in August 2005, and subsequently leaked to the press, found that '82% are strongly opposed to the presence of coalition troops', and that only 1 percent of the population

think they've 'improved security'. But Bush and Blair refuse to withdraw, preferring instead to setup a client regime based on military forces under their direct control. But there are other reasons that a democratic and sovereign Iraq will never be tolerated. Most of Iraq's oil is in the South; so are most of the Shia population, a population that would prefer to have friendly relations with Iran; already the Shia dominated interim government is beginning to establish economic, and possibly military relations. And there's more: across the border in Saudi Arabia there's a large, unhappy, Shia population, longing for autonomy and justice. They too just happen to be living in the region where most of the oil is. The outcome could lead to a 'loose, Shia federation, of Iran, Iraq and southern Saudi Arabia controlling the world's most strategically important region and its enormous energy resources. A nightmare scenario for the occupying forces, who will always prefer Democracy Limited.