



Bulletin for the exam period Update on Iraq Plans for future campaigns

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Youth against the war

Update on Iraq

Unfortunately, events in Iraq have developed as ISR predicted – the US troops in Iraq stood by while hospitals, schools and museums were looted while using the mass of their forces to defend the oil wells. The draft resolution, put to the UN by Bush and Blair, gives total control of Iraq's oil revenues to the US and UK. What a surprise! US and UK oil companies are already announcing massive profits – BP made over a million pounds every hour last year! What was Blair saying about it not being a war for oil and wealth?

The promises of democracy to the Iraqi people have also been forgotten. Not only have they not been given democratic control of the oil but members of Saddam's hated Ba'ath party have been made managers of the refineries and the plans for the interim government have been repeatedly postponed. It's clear that, despite the words and promises of Bush and Blair, they had no interest in genuine democracy or of really improving the lives of ordinary people and young people in Iraq. The US and British governments will only allow a new regime that supports the interests of imperialism. They are only interested in the oil, wealth and prestige that the war and its spoils could bring them and their fat cat friends.



Anti-war movement

All over the world and in Britain millions of people came out in protest against the war. This huge show of opposition did have some effect – the initial "shock and awe" was more restrained than was expected – but the protests alone did not manage to stop the war.

ISR triggered the idea of school and college student strikes and many thousands of young people across the country organised and took part in this mass protest. Young people were showing the way forward for the anti-war movement. Many workers were really inspired by the strikes and many teachers walked out with the students.

But many workers were hesitant to take this important step. Why was this? ISR thinks that Thatcher's anti-trade union laws, which make striking spontaneously illegal, and which Blair upholds, made it very difficult. We also think that the trade union leaders should have given a better lead and more support to workers. The left union leaders agreed that mass industrial action could have forced Blair out of the war but failed concretely to organise workers to join the action of students.

Role of young people

The war, and its aftermath, has made many people very angry. This is especially true for young people. The student strikes and their success showed the importance of being organised and working together to express this anger most effectively.

We are continually attacked for being apathetic and when we do something to try and get our voices heard we are attacked for truanting. Young people are becoming politicised and confident to fight back against the system. The response from police and schools in some areas has shown that this is seen as a threat to the government. The government knows that when we fight together as a class, workers and young people are more powerful than the government and their fat cat friends. Blair and Co see campaigns like Youth Against the War as a threat because they want to maintain the rule of big business, which means continued exploitation and destruction.



School students' unions would be one good way of continuing this process and could be used to fight on other issues which affect school and college students, such as uniforms, SATs and exams, canteen food and the right to discuss issues like the war, racism and other things that we're angry about. ISR fights against the war and on many other issues that concern young people.

Who are International Socialist Resistance?

International Socialist Resistance (ISR) is continuing to help build the anti-war and anti-capitalist movements internationally. We must build on the links and support within the trade union movement and local communities - where working-class people are fighting against the effects of capitalism, such as low pay, cuts to public services and the destruction of the environment. We believe it is vital that the socialist alternative is raised and discussed within the anti-capitalist movement. There is more than enough wealth to provide good standards of living and genuine democratic rights for everyone. That wealth needs to be taken out of private hands and used for the benefit of all. We need a socialist society, where democratic planning of the resources of the world could abolish poverty and war for good. While we certainly think it is important to continue to campaign on the war, we are not a single-issue campaign group and address other issues.

Anti-racism and anti-BNP

Racism is something that many of us are extremely angry about. It is also something that is difficult to fight against on your own. Things like police racism and racist employers need to be taken up. There are campaigns of young people and workers.

The new far-right British National Party (BNP) now has 16 councillors in England. They are becoming more confident to spread their ideas of racism, hatred and division. ISR does not think that this represents a big increase of support for the far-right racism. But rather the fact that many people do not want to vote for any of the three right-wing parties. The Tories, New Labour and the Lib Dems are all in favour of privatisation and cuts and cannot offer an alternative way to run society which is becoming more unequal than ever.

To stop the growth of the BNP and other far-right groups, we have to build a movement from below. We can't trust New Labour, whose policies have allowed the BNP to grow. We can't trust the police, who allow the BNP to march and organise while banning the local community from coming out to protest against them.

The campaign against the BNP must take up the issues that can unite working class people – like low-pay, privatisation and cuts in schools. To undercut support for the BNP this campaign must fight for proper investment in local services, secure jobs that pay a living wage, affordable housing and quality education for all. Please get in contact if you would like to get involved or if you have any ideas for this campaign.

This year's ISR national conference will take place on Saturday 22nd November in London. ISR conference is an opportunity for members and supporters of ISR to come together to discuss the situation facing young people, to assess the work of ISR and to make plans for further campaigns. Tickets are £4 waged and £2 unwaged, please contact us for more info.

If you are anti-war, anti-cuts, anti-privatisation... come to Socialism 2003 and discuss the socialist alternative to Blairism

☛ Saturday 28th June 3.00 - 7.00pm & Sunday 29th June 10.00 - 4.30pm

☛ A weekend of discussion and debate hosted by the Socialist Party. International Socialist Resistance has been invited to run a course at Socialism 2003 and we will be discussing fighting education cuts and SATs and how can school students win the right to strike and protests. And what is socialism and how do we achieve it - question and answer session.

☛ If you would like more information and to book tickets, please contact ISR or e-mail; socialism@socialistparty.org.uk or call 02089888777



Education

When the Labour Party came to power in 1997 they used the slogan, "Education, Education, Education" but in reality spending on education under New Labour has been the lowest since the 1960s. We need to oppose the cuts in education and we also need to oppose SATs and tuition fees.

Students in Britain are the most tested in Europe. This causes a lot of stress and anxiety. It means that subjects like art and music are pushed to one side. We will be supporting the NUT boycott of SATs as well as continuing to fight for free education at all levels and the reintroduction of a living grant available to all from the age of 16.

When we fight for free education we are fighting for a concession from the government. Under capitalism we have to struggle continuously for every right. The government is intent on making more and more cuts, in the interests of their fat cat friends as the aftermath of the war has shown.

After the 2nd world war workers in Britain won the right to free education. This has been gradually worn away by the government who act on behalf of the interests of the rich fat cats. As well as fighting for free education and on these other issues we need to fight for the way the world is run to be changed, for "system change", for socialism where the world is run democratically on the basis of the needs of the population and not for the profits of a rich few.

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I enclose £2 unwaged / £4 waged (please make cheques and postal orders payable to ISR.)

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