

THE SHAME OF THE WAR— AND THE CHALLENGE WE FACE

The U.S. and Britain have declared victory in their war against Iraq and an ugly occupation is underway. But the questions, the arguments and the resistance won't go away. And they *shouldn't* go away. The stakes are too high. What is happening in Iraq—and how we understand it and what we do about it—will shape the future of every person on the planet.

THE WAR WAS WRONG, THE OCCUPATION IS WRONG—THE RESISTANCE IS RIGHT

This war had nothing to do with preventing another September 11, getting rid of weapons of mass destruction, or liberating the Iraqi people. And millions of people around the world knew the truth and rose in resistance to stop it. As the inside word from the White House had it, "Iraq is about more than Iraq." And so it is; it's about the violent emergence of a new Roman empire—our own government.

A predatory power structure is imposing its will and authority over the people and rich resources of Iraq. They aim to turn Iraq into a launching pad from which to reshape the Middle East—and the world. As RCP Chairman Bob Avakian wrote in the winter of 2002: "They have ambitions of essentially reshuffling the whole deck, reordering the whole situation—beginning with the strategic areas of central and south Asia and the Middle East...but even beyond that, on a world scale."

What has this war meant to the people of Iraq?

If you search the back pages of the newspapers, you *may* find mention of the injured man in a Baghdad hospital whose family can't bear to tell him that his three young daughters were murdered by U.S. bombs; you *may* read of the ten people—including five children under five years old—killed at an Army checkpoint near Karbala; and you *may* find out that the dozens who died in a Baghdad market were proven after all to be killed by U.S. Cruise missiles.

Thousands of Iraqi civilians have already been killed and maimed in this war.

And what of the U.S. and British soldiers who died, as the father of the dead Marine Jesus A. Suarez del Solar told reporters, for "Bush's oil"? Their deaths are bitter ones indeed—another generation of young men and women are being turned into occupiers and brutalizers of a poor country in the name of 'democracy.'

Where is the justice in any of this?

Occupiers Cannot Be Liberators

Take a look at this occupation. During its first week, seriously wounded people crowded Iraq's looted hospitals, where doctors had to perform amputations and other serious operations without anesthesia or even clean water. The American bombing deprived Iraqis of water, electricity, food, everything—was this done to "show who's boss"? The Iraqi National Museum, housing the treasures of humanity's earliest rise to civilization, was plundered. The National Library burnt down, unprotected, as precious documents of the history of a people went up in smoke.

But *one* institution remained safe: as one Iraqi man bitterly told the *New York Times*, "Just the Ministry of Oil has a guard, that's all [the Americans] are interested in."

Meanwhile, U.S. soldiers are killing Iraqi people for "ignoring orders to halt"—given in a language they don't understand. The U.S. armed forces have brought back Saddam Hussein's old police force to patrol the streets. And on April 14, U.S. Marines fired on a political protest in Mosul, killing 13 people. The occupation has brought South Central Los Angeles to Baghdad and the West Bank to Mosul.

Now, U.S. generals hold conferences to "bring democracy to Iraq." But any elections will take place under the guns of the U.S. Army.

The U.S. has utterly violated Iraq's national sovereignty, humiliated its people, and trampled on its culture—all in the name of "liberation"! But liberation won't come from the U.S. government, and it can't come from the UN either. The Iraqi people will only win real self-determination and democracy through resistance—a resistance that is growing even now.

We should not support this occupation in any way. We should not fall for the trick of trying to "improve" it. Instead, we should join with others, in Iraq and around the world, demanding the U.S. and Britain get the hell out of Iraq. And we should welcome the resistance to this occupation, especially resistance that comes from the grassroots Iraqi people, and support those forces who emerge among them that genuinely stand for liberation.

TWO DIFFERENT FUTURES, TWO DIFFERENT ROADS

"Things will be radically different and the America we have known will not exist in the same way anymore."

Bob Avakian,
Chairman, Revolutionary Communist Party

There will be no going back to normal. Already Bush's people talk of "where next"; his "Bush doctrine" calls for overwhelming economic, political and military superiority in the face of many problems and any challenges. Get ready for Perma-War.

With this comes an extreme program of domestic repression and restriction of civil liberties—all in the name of safety. Ashcroft's Justice Department has victimized immigrants, throwing "innocent until proven guilty" out the window. New laws grant the government unprecedented powers to infiltrate political and religious groups, wire-tap phones, secretly search homes and offices, and snoop on people's internet activity and even their library books.

This is a hard time. Still, this is also a time of hope—even great hope. The simple truth is that Bush's juggernaut goes against the interests of the people of this planet, including the overwhelming majority of people in this country. And because of people's fierce resistance to this awful plan, thousands became millions and then grew into tens of millions, worldwide.

This powerful resistance did not stop the war. But millions in the U.S. defied their own government and stood shoulder to shoulder with people across the planet to tell the world: "Not in our name."

The U.S. imperialists are puffed up and arrogant, boasting of their military machine, but they are politically isolated and hated around the world.

It is up to the people of the world to carve out a future worth living.

THE BATTLE AT HAND AND THE NEED FOR REVOLUTION

Looking at the resistance that has been waged all over the globe—isn't it clear that humanity is capable of so much more than the madness and horrors we are trapped in today?

What if people who courageously sacrifice and risk personal safety for people they've never met, thousands of miles away, set the tone for society—rather than being slandered, spied on, and attacked?

What if technology and science, rather than producing bunker busters, Black Hawks and surveillance systems, and all the other means of enslavement and profit, were used to solve problems of medicine and developing energy sources that didn't destroy the earth?

What if people who have suffered under brutal regimes had the power to remake their own societies, free from the hand of foreign intervention that backed the brutal regimes in the first place?

For our part, in the RCP, we believe a better world is not only possible, it is crying out to be created.

As we join with millions to strengthen our resistance, we do so with the understanding that realizing this vision of the world and really transforming society will take nothing less than a proletarian revolution—a revolution aimed at *all* brands of imperialism, *all* systems of exploitation and oppression, *all* tradition's chains.

The whole history of the U.S. teaches us that as long as this class of capitalist/imperialists holds power, they are going to keep on plunging the people into unjust wars.

We are now witnessing the workings of a system that has placed ruthless calculating cliques of empire-builders in charge of unprecedented military power. They see an historic opportunity to dominate the world, and stopping them will mean *denying* them that opportunity—*defeating* them through great struggle and sacrifice.

So we need to build our resistance and build it strong—with the aim of stopping this machinery of war and repression. But we also need to understand that, unless things advance to the point where the masses of people overthrow the old, oppressive order and bring into being a whole new, revolutionary political power, this system is going to keep on coming back with more oppression and suffering for the masses of people.

On May 1st, International Workers Day, 2003, we invite you to join us—to infuse our resistance with the spirit that we have a world to win and dare to forge a path to win it.



Baghdad, March 26.

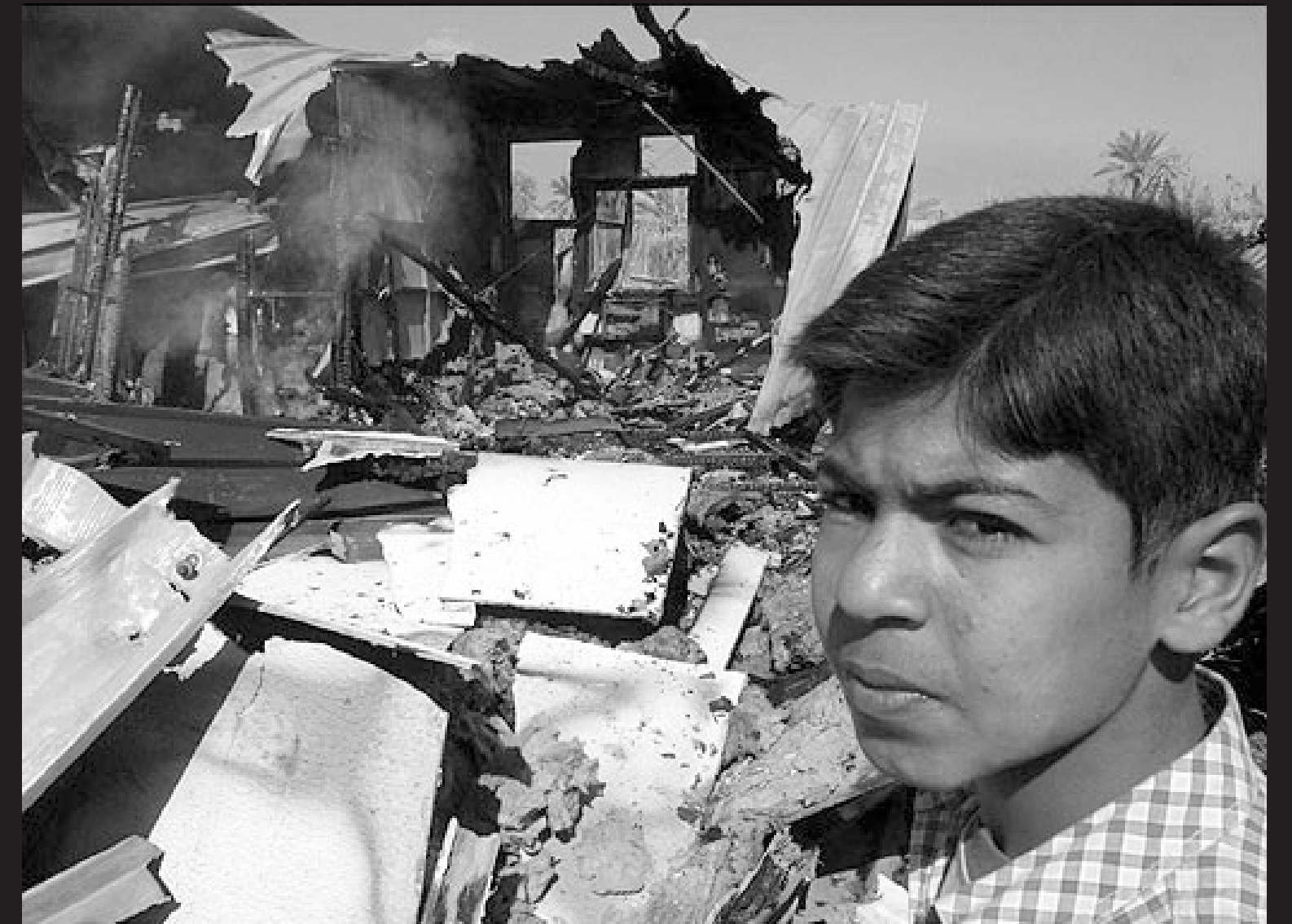
Occupiers Are Not Liberators! U.S. Out of Iraq!



Occupation troops in the streets of Basra, southern Iraq.



At a U.S./British military checkpoint in southern Iraq.



Baghdad, March 27.



Family confronts U.S. troops in Baghdad, April 9.



U.S. Apache helicopter shot down near Baghdad.



Iraqis protest against U.S. occupation, April 18.