

Editorial

Who Are the Real Terrorists in Iraq?

During recent days, the U.S. occupation forces in Iraq have launched a campaign of bombing and rocket attacks on cities across the country. Especially hard hit were areas of Baghdad and the city of Fallujah. The attacks on Fallujah began shortly after peace talks broke down with city representatives over U.S. demands that resistance fighters must be turned over to them. While U.S. officials claim that the air strikes were confined to “terrorist strongholds”, reports from Iraqi officials and independent journalists indicate that the vast majority of victims have been civilians, including many women and children.

A pattern is beginning to emerge which indicates that the most recent American air strikes are part of a coordinated campaign designed to isolate the resistance fighters from the mainstream Iraqi

population. The U.S. first launches a bombardment campaign on a city controlled by the resistance, killing and injuring dozens of civilians. U.S. officials then meet with civil and religious authorities and promise that the bombardment will cease if the insurgents are either expelled from the city or turned over to the U.S. If the Iraqi officials do not meet the American demands, then a new and more extensive round of bombardment begins. It is clear from the casualty reports that the Americans are not targeting insurgents; rather, they are deliberately targeting civilians.

In other words, the U.S. is deliberately attacking civilians in order to achieve a political aim, namely the acceptance by the Iraqi people of the government imposed on them by the Americans. There is a name

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Americans Unable to Establish Functioning Iraqi Army

On August 7, 2003, the American administration in Iraq issued CPA Order Number 22, a directive on the creation of a new Iraqi army. According to the directive, the army was being created as “a military force for the national self-defence of a future free Iraq.” CPA Order Number 23, issued the same day, created a code of military discipline for this new army. Recruits for the new army came from the cadres of the old Iraqi army, with a smattering of new sign-ups.

Establishing an Iraqi force is critical to the American operation in Iraq. According to a document prepared by the U.S. group Global Security Inc., “The New Iraqi Army’s primary responsibilities would be for border protection, securing roads and installations, and clearing mines and unexploded bombs left over from the war. ... The US administration in Iraq envisions the new army units

...are to reflect Iraq’s religious, regional, and ethnic mix, be non-political, under law-based civilian control, and a force for defense and security – not aggression and oppression.”

The Americans have been counting on the Iraqi army to take over security operations so that they could start to withdraw American troops sometime after the Iraqi elections scheduled for January 2005. However, media reports out of Iraq make it clear that the Americans have been unable to realize this objective. In April, many of the newly formed Iraqi units abandoned their posts, with hundreds joining the resistance fighters in Fallujah. There have been numerous reports that remaining members of the Iraqi army are refusing to serve in the ongoing offensive in Fallujah.

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Revolutionary Reforms – a Program of Economic Renewal

In the previous issue of *Modern Communism* we discussed the broad features of a program for the democratic renewal of Canadian society and the necessity for such a program to include economic, political and social renewal. A program for democratic renewal forms the framework within which specific demands for revolutionary reforms can advance the interests of the Canadian people. In this issue we will begin a discussion of various revolutionary reforms of the Canadian economy which are essential for the renewal of society.

Monopoly capitalism has been disastrous for the Canadian economy in numerous ways. It has reduced the Canadian economy to being an appendage of the American economy, which means that Canadians have little, if any, control over their own economy. It has resulted in an economy which is based largely on the export of minerals, energy, lumber and agricultural commodities. This means that Canada is extremely vulnerable to economic disruptions in other parts of the world. It also means that Canadians are extremely vulnerable to the protectionist trade policies of the United States. In addition, the organization of Canada's economy to enrich the monopoly capitalists means that the natural environment and the health of Canadians are routinely sacrificed on the altar of profit.

It is becoming increasingly clear that none of these problems can be sorted out and the economy cannot be renewed unless monopoly capitalism is eliminated. What kind of program is needed to accomplish this?

The first step that must be taken is to declare a moratorium on the repayment of government debt. Such payments represent a direct transfer of monies from the federal and provincial treasuries to the richest and most powerful monopoly capitalists. The second step is to expropriate the main monopoly groups in Canada – the banks and other financial institutions, the largest manufacturing companies, the large retailers and wholesalers, the transportation and communications sectors and the energy sector. Such a step is absolutely essential if the Canadian people are to exercise any kind of meaningful control over their own economy. In this regard, ownership by Canadian capitalists is not sufficient; it has been amply demonstrated that the interests of Canadian capitalists lie with international capital and not with the Canadian people. Therefore, all of the key sectors of the Canadian economy must be owned by the Canadian people as a whole.

Control of the main means of production, finance and transportation would permit the systematic planning of the economy in such a way that the interests of individual members of society could be harmonized with those of their collectives, and the collective interests harmonized with the general interests of society. If public control of the economy is not established and these sectors remain under the control of the monopoly capitalists, then no renewal of the economy or society is possible.

Does this mean that all private ownership of the means of production must be eliminated as a starting point for renewal? No, this is the end point, not the starting point of renewal. Some forms of private ownership may exist for a long period of time without preventing the renewal of Canadian society. For example, small-scale production and small-scale retail outlets pose no threat to an economy in which the main sectors are publicly-owned and controlled, just as today this small-scale capitalism poses no threat to the control of the economy by the monopoly capitalists. In fact, in Canada today the small capitalists are also oppressed and forced to pay tribute to the monopoly capitalists. So a program for the elimination of monopoly capitalism is also in their interest.

All of the wealth of a society is created by labour transforming nature. Under a system of monopoly capitalism that wealth is expropriated by the monopoly capitalist ruling class. A portion is returned to workers in the form of wages and social services and a portion is transferred to governments for the maintenance of the social and economic infrastructure – roads, utilities, health and education, etc. The remainder is kept by the monopoly capitalists in the form of profits. If that portion of the wealth created by Canadian labour was transferred, instead, to various levels of government, then most forms of taxation could be eliminated almost overnight, while allowing various forms of social spending to increase dramatically. Therefore, even without any other changes to the economy, the expropriation of monopoly capital would make possible a significant improvement in the standard of living of all Canadians. However, more importantly, it would provide the Canadian people with the ability to completely transform both the methods and relations of production, that is to renew the Canadian economy on a modern, scientific basis.

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Part II: Terrorism - Created by Imperialism

A lot of confusion is generated in progressive and revolutionary circles on the question of terrorism. Some even suggest that terrorists are on the side of the people and are striking a blow against imperialism, arguing that the problem is just with their tactics. However, the entire history of terrorism during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries proves the opposite – the terrorists are agents of imperialism used to attack the struggles of the people and to advance the interests of the imperialists. Terrorism was created by the imperialists as a method of combatting revolution, as well as to sort out contradictions among themselves..

When the term terrorism was first coined, to describe the actions taken by the bourgeois revolutionaries in France against the titled classes, it was defined as the use of terror to govern. However, in the twentieth century, terrorism has become defined as the use of violence that deliberately targets civilians. Increasingly, this definition has been modified to apply only to individuals and small groups, with acts of state terrorism being justified as legitimate security measures. This is particularly the case in regard to the state terrorism practiced by the United States and its allies.

Europeans were the first imperialists to perfect the use of terror to subjugate entire populations. They ruled in their colonies through genocide, slavery and torture and became the masters of collective punishment as a form of intimidation. All of this was done in the name of the highest-sounding ideals of the day – bringing “civilization” to the darkest corners of Africa, Asia and the Americas, bringing religion to savage heathens, and so forth. The reality was that through the use of violence they were able to impose colonial rule and ruthlessly exploit the natural and human resources of the lands they had colonized.

Joseph Conrad was one of the first writers to expose the brutality of colonialism to European audiences. Conrad travelled around the world first with the French merchant marines and then the British merchant navy. He visited colonial outposts in every corner of the globe

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In other words, the expropriation of monopoly capital opens up a broad array of possibilities for revolutionizing the Canadian economy, as well as the relations among Canadians and between Canadians and the rest of the world. This means that it is an indispensable part of any program of revolutionary reforms.

and was shocked by what he described as the “unchecked terror” used by the Europeans to maintain power. His experiences in the Belgian Congo became the basis for his searing indictment of European colonialism – *Heart of Darkness*, published in 1902.

Imperialist powers were also the first in modern times to use violence indiscriminately against civilian populations. The U.S. used terror tactics against Aboriginal peoples in order to subjugate them and expropriate their land. The world’s people experienced state terrorism during the First World War, with both sides deliberately targetting civilians with bombings and gassings. Following that war, the world witnessed the worst crimes of the twentieth century: the Armenian genocide, the Japanese invasion of China and rape of Nanking, the Holocaust, the manufactured famine in Bengal, the Indonesian massacres of the 1960s and, most recently, the genocides in Rwanda, Burundi and Sudan.

The imperialist states also created the modern terrorist groups which commit mass murder and, borrowing the language of the early imperialists, try to justify their crimes in the name of high-sounding ideals. These groups are used in circumstances where the imperialists cannot operate openly, to undermine revolutionary struggles, to destabilize governments and to attack the economic interests of competing imperialists without actually going to war.

Two of the first modern terrorist groups to operate came into being early in the twentieth century. The Irgun (the group’s full name, Irgun Tsvai-Leumi, was Hebrew for Military National Organization) and their allies in the Stern Gang were both Zionist groups dedicated to the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine. They were also dedicated to the use of terrorism to drive the indigenous Arab population in Palestine out of their land.

In the 1930s and 1940s, Irgun and the Stern Gang were responsible for a number of assaults against civilians, including a series of attacks against Arab villagers from 1937 to 1939. Irgun claimed responsibility for a marketplace bomb set off in Haifa in February 1939 in which 24 Arabs were killed, with others killed in bombs that exploded in Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv on the same day. In 1946, Irgun blew up the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, killing close to 100 people. According to Uri Avnery, a member of Irgun who is now an Israeli peace activist, Irgun received funding from both the Polish and British governments. Both governments supported Irgun’s goal of creating a Jewish homeland – the British to consolidate a colonial base in the Middle East and both

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for this – terrorism. In fact this is precisely the definition of terrorism that the U.S. insisted be adopted by the international community following the attacks of September 11, 2001.

There are, of course, precedents for the tactics being used by the American occupation forces. These are the same tactics which were used by the Nazi occupation forces in Europe during the Second World War. In that case, too, collective punishment of civilians was used to discourage support for the resistance fighters. Following that conflict, such tactics were universally condemned as war crimes and crimes against humanity.

It is now becoming clear that this systematic use of terrorism to quell the Iraqi resistance to U.S. occupation has been in effect at least since the attacks on Najaf last spring and summer. In that case, the resistance fighters were largely from outside the city and the U.S. was partially successful in achieving its aims, in that the Mahdi Army of Muqtada al-Sadr agreed to pull out of the city under the protection of the Shiite religious leader Ali Sistani. However, the U.S. has met with little success in other cities where the resistance fighters come from, and are protected by, the local population, especially Fallujah and the Sadr City region of Baghdad. In those cities, the local leaders have refused to expel or hand over the resistance fighters to the Americans and the resistance has been growing.

There is a general consensus that the current air strikes on Iraqi cities are an attempt to influence the upcoming U.S. presidential elections in favour of George W. Bush. There is also a widespread belief that, regardless of who wins, a new round of much more powerful and destructive air strikes will be launched immediately following the elections. The aim of such a campaign would be to terrorize the Iraqi people into submission in preparation for the January elections scheduled in Iraq. The failure of those elections to take place would represent a major blow to U.S. policy in Iraq.

The experience from the Second World War and since shows that no amount of terrorism can defeat a people who are determined to win their freedom from foreign occupiers. The escalating attacks against the occupation forces in Iraq indicates that such a policy of terrorism will also fail there.

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Most recently, Hazem Shalan al-Khuzaei, the Iraqi Defence Minister, told reporters that Iraqi security forces won't be able to handle major security challenges for years. "If the multinational forces start withdrawing troops next year, it would be catastrophic," he said, adding he wanted the U.S.-led occupation forces to stay in the country for 15 years. "I want them to stay until the situation stabilizes."

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to rid their countries of Jews.

Irgun was eventually absorbed into the Israeli Defence Forces after the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, and its members continued to be associated with acts of state-sanctioned terrorism against the Arab population over the next few years. The most infamous of these acts was the Deir Yassin massacre on April 9, 1948, when Irgun and Stern gang soldiers "lined men, women and children up against the walls and shot them", as Israeli Simha Flapan writes in *The Birth of Israel*. According to Flapan, "the ruthlessness of the attack on Deir Yassin shocked Jewish and world opinion alike, drove fear and panic into the Arab population, and led to the flight of unarmed civilians from their homes all over the country."

Deir Yassin was the first in a series of such massacres, designed to enable the IDF to expel hundreds of thousands of Arab Palestinians with little resistance. In the four months after Deir Yassin, Irgun carried out similar atrocities in the Palestinian villages of Lydda, Ramle, Doueimah, Quibya and Kafr Kassme.

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