

why we must **end** the occupation of Iraq:

The invasion of Iraq in 2003 was an immoral act based on lies - and the occupation is a continuation of it. It is rooted in a disregard for human rights and human life and has resulted in three years of appalling suffering.

Occupation = violence, death and destruction George Bush's admission that 30,000 Iraqi civilians had been killed so far is a gross under-estimate. The Lancet concluded that 100,000 people had died as a result of the war during its first 18 months. Since then, violence has increased. A Pentagon report says that sixty Iraqis are killed on average every day. In recent months, occupying forces have stepped up air-strikes in densely populated areas - killing and injuring civilians and destroying hospitals, schools and homes.

Occupation = poverty and plunder 20% of Iraqis now live below the poverty line, eight million on less than a dollar a day. Yet in February 2006, the Government slashed allocations for food rations by 25%. On the orders of the IMF, the government also cut fuel subsidies, leading to a five-fold increase in prices. The occupiers are forcing through public sector job cuts and an economy open to foreign corporations.

Occupation = economic and social breakdown A MoD poll showed that 71% of Iraqis rarely get clean water and 47% never have enough electricity. The US foreign aid agency says Iraq is suffering a "social breakdown" in which criminals have "almost free rein". Since the occupation began, more than 300 educators, scientists and intellectuals have been assassinated.

Occupation = human rights abuses Amnesty International describes the human rights situation as "dire." Occupying forces have detained without charge or trial more than 35,000 Iraqis. Currently, 17,000 are being held in US or British camps - a 300% increase over March 2004. According to the former UN Human Rights chief in Iraq, in Baghdad alone, every month hundreds of Iraqis are tortured to death or summarily executed by death squads working from the Ministry of the Interior.

Occupation = no reconstruction The only new funds allocated by the US are for prisons. Over the last three years, more than half the money earmarked for rebuilding civilian infrastructure has been diverted to "security" needs. According to an official US audit, 60% of planned water and sanitation projects have not been carried out.

Occupation = corruption In one of the largest thefts in history, one billion dollars was plundered from Iraq's defence budget. Government sources say "mafia-like gangs" run the oil ministry. Transparency International warned in 2005 that post-war Iraq could be "the biggest corruption scandal in history."

Civil war? The occupiers have pursued a reckless divide-and-rule strategy, insisting Iraqis be represented in religious or ethnic blocks, and playing off one ...

... group against another. As a result, sectarian tensions and terrorist violence have risen. Whoever is responsible for them, which is often unclear, the occupation is not preventing them. But after the bombing of the mosque in Samarra, hundreds of thousands of protesters, both Sunni and Shia, took to the streets to call for an end to both religious division and the occupation.

What Iraqis want In a MoD poll, 82% said they were "strongly opposed" to the presence of coalition troops. Nearly all the groups that took part in the elections last year have called for a timetable for withdrawal - but the US and Britain refuse to issue one.

The US-UK occupation is the problem, not the solution The US and British governments proclaim one turning-point after another, but the war continues, with 140,000 US and 8,000 British troops battling to control a country where they are not welcome. The British operation now costs £1 billion a year. We need to withdraw now and provide financial reparations for the damage we have done.

For more details and references, see the IOF Newsletter archive on:
www.iraqoccupationfocus.org.uk

Iraq Occupation Focus Campaigning to end the occupation of Iraq
www.iraqoccupationfocus.org.uk
PO Box 44680, London N16 7XX | iraqfocus@riseup.net

Iraq Occupation Focus was formed by anti-war activists in 2003 and has organised a series of meetings, speaking tours and large-scale teach-ins to inform people about the occupation and build solidarity with Iraqi civil society groups. Visit our website to subscribe to our email newsletter.

Friday 16 June

public meeting

Anthony Arnove

US activist and author of
The Logic of Withdrawal

Tariq Ali

writer and activist

Glen Rangwala*

exposed the Blair
Government's 'dodgy
dossier'

7.00 p.m. Main Hall,
Indian YMCA,
41 Fitzroy Square, W1

Free entry

Open discussion

**to be confirmed*



IRAQ
OCCUPATION
FOCUS