

## War criminals bomb Baghdad—defend Iraq!



Daily Star



Al-Arab

US-led imperialist "alliance" (left) attempts to annihilate Iraqis through weapons of mass murder. A Baghdad suburb (right) devastated by air strikes.

# Defeat US/British imperialism in the Gulf!

When it launched the bombing of Baghdad, the White House proclaimed: "The liberation of Kuwait has begun." The Spartacist League said: "The mass murder of the Iraqi people had begun." The American-led imperialist "allies" are terror-bombing the cities and towns of Iraq. A North Vietnamese civil engineer from Haiphong said the raids "reminded him of 12 days of bombing by US B-52s which devastated his home city almost two decades ago"; a Jordanian teacher who fled Kuwait stated: "I cannot describe the suffering I saw on the way from Kuwait to Baghdad. It is inhumane what America is doing to us" (*Guardian*, 5 February).

In the first hours and days of the war, Pentagon spokesmen, military commanders, British and US government officials gave glowing reports of the high-tech war; it was "right on schedule", right on target and presumably would be over soon. The "techno euphoria" didn't last long as the first Iraqi Scuds landed on Tel Aviv. So-called press briefings became exercises in obfuscation and cover-up. No matter how insipid the question, the answer was that any answer would constitute feeding information to the "enemy". The *Independent's* (19 January) Robert Fisk wrote: "It was Winston Churchill who spoke of the need for a nation at war to surround itself with 'a bodyguard of lies'. It is inconceivable that the new Gulf war is the first conflict in

history not to use such a shield."

The war criminals in Washington and their partners in London are lying through their teeth because what they intend to do is truly horrendous. It has

### Labour Party cheers on imperialist slaughter

meant and will mean relentless terror against the Iraqi population and overwhelming civilian casualties. Amid all the talk of Saddam Hussein using chemical warfare, the US is already shelling Iraqi positions with white phosphorous. On his recent visit to London, US vice president Dan Quayle stated that the use of nuclear weapons had not been ruled out; the US Persian Gulf armada has thousands of nuclear warheads.

And the "allies" are out to assassinate Saddam Hussein. British defence minister Tom King already made clear that the allied war aims go beyond the retaking of Kuwait: "If Saddam and his forces merely withdraw to the border and we did see the liberation of Kuwait, but all the Iraqi guns and all the military machine were left on the other side of the border merely to repeat the exercise as soon as the

allies went away, that would simply not see the achievement of that [UN] resolution" (*Guardian*, 28 January). In Bush's "State of the Union" war rally in Congress, he pointedly repeated several times

that Hussein was "dead wrong".

But the imperialist invaders have not had things all their way. A top Soviet military official told the Communist Party weekly paper *Glasnost*: "They supposed that after the first bombings he would either give up or throw himself headlong into some sort of adventure. But you could hardly expect that of an opponent who had just spent eight years fighting in the desert." When the first Iraqi mechanised battalion crossed into Saudi Arabia heading for Khafji followed by the main Iraqi attack column, it was clear that the "allied" soldiers were not fighting a demoralised, starving and lice-ridden army. As even the *Sunday Times* (3 February) admitted: "For 36 hours in the streets and abandoned buildings of Khafji Iraqi soldiers fought with courage and ferocity...many of the survivors withdrew in

fighting formation all the way back behind the Kuwaiti border". The same report quotes a young Scots Guards soldier: "When we first came, we never thought it would be war. Then we thought the air force would pound them into surrender. Then we thought Saddam would pull out. Now we all know that it is actually going to happen, and we are all shit scared." Meanwhile, official bragadocio notwithstanding, it is being conceded that the Republican Guard has not been pounded into rubble. "I think we are looking at a very serious ground battle" said one "senior British military source" (*Guardian*, 5 February).

We of the Spartacist League and International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) have warned from the outset that the rapacious US ruling class which presumes to be cops of the world and its cohorts in Britain were preparing to plunge the world's working people into a bloody holocaust. And now they've started. We are for the defeat of the US and British imperialists in the Gulf and have a revolutionary defencist position towards Iraq against this arsenal of mass death and destruction. A defeat for the US/British imperialists will embolden the working people in the Middle East to deal with their own despots and butchers, including in Iraq. Leaving Baghdad after a week of the US bombardment, *Financial Times* correspondent Lamis Andoni

*continued on page 6*

# SL reply to Independent

## Red and proud of it

We reprint below an unpublished letter to the Independent dated 31 January 1991.

Dear Sir,

Alex Renton ("Strange bedfellows in the fight for peace", 23 January) says "a decent war needs a decent peace movement". I think he means "an indecent war needs a polite safety-valve", safe from communists.

CND's Marjorie Thompson agrees: "What's particularly harmful is the more lunatic and parasitic groups that are saying 'Victory to Iraq'. Some of our people think they may be *agents provocateurs*". This hoary slander makes about as much sense as the notion that Lenin was a German agent. It is intended to stop people listening to the Marxist standpoint on Washington's dirty colonialist grab for oil. In fact it is CND which has used the police to exclude left-wing groups from its demonstrations. The Spartacist League was given this treatment in Glasgow on 12 January. So much for Ms Thompson's drawing-room niceties about "you can't ban someone

from a peace protest".

We are Trotskyists, so as good Marxists we want to see Iraq beat the Anglo-American imperialist armies in the Gulf war. This aggravates CND just as our call for military defence of the Soviet Union against NATO got up Bruce Kent's nose on the anti-missile protests in the early 1980s.

CND has been campaigning for months for "effective UN sanctions" (enforced by a naval blockade) to be given time to work. More bluntly: "don't bomb the Iraqis into submission, just starve them". That's the kind of peace movement Britain's rulers and their Labour Party servitors can live with, because it accepts the war aims of George Bush and John Major.

Alex Renton and CND are afraid that as the war drags on and the casualties pile up, the people who join the anti-war demonstrations in revulsion at the awful slaughter wrought by the US and its allies will realise that the Western armies are not fighting for "justice" or "democracy" but for plain old imperial plunder. (Indeed Saddam Hussein, the butcher of

Kurds and Iraqi Communists, used to be one of their favoured sons.) Worse still from the standpoint of Britain's war effort, they will recognise in increasing numbers that the interests of working people world-wide lie with the defeat of our capitalist rulers in the Gulf. The US (following its mangy British cousin along the path of imperial decline and de-industrialisation) wants Gulf oil so that it can "compete" with Germany and Japan by armed blackmail, having failed in the world market. Down that road lies inter-imperialist trade war, and the beckoning spectre of a third world war.

Alex Renton opines "There is a real danger of war breaking out in the peace movement". There is a war atmosphere, complete with internment, deportations and rigid censorship. We don't intend to be silenced in making our arguments, openly and plainly, for a revolutionary anti-war movement that aims for strike and boycott actions by the trade unions in solidarity with the people of Iraq. It will take working-class centred revolutions to open the road to a real, new socialist world order of peace and material well-being for all.

The effort to portray our arguments as "crazed", or the product of nefarious and shadowy provocations, won't meet with much success as the true nature of this



latter-day Somme emerges from the fog of jingoism and military censorship.

Yours sincerely,  
Alex Grattan  
Spartacist League  
(British section of the International Communist League—Fourth Internationalist)

### Lenin v Social Democracy



TROTSKY

Unlike the centrists and reformists today on the British left, Lenin understood that genuine anti-imperialism was incompatible with political support to the Labour Party. Lenin directed his main fire not at the open social chauvinists (the Kinnocks of the time) but at the left-talking social democrats or "Kautskys" (the Tony Benns of the time). Following the strategy laid down by Lenin and the early Third International, the SL



LENIN

fighters to forge a communist vanguard party by splitting the working masses from the pro-capitalist tops of the Labour Party.

The fact is that "bourgeois labour parties", as a political phenomenon, have already been formed in all the foremost capitalist countries, and that unless a determined and relentless struggle is waged all along the line against these parties—or groups, trends, etc., it is all the same—there can be no question of a struggle against imperialism, or of Marxism, or of a socialist labour movement... There is not the slightest reason for thinking that these parties will disappear before the social revolution. On the contrary, the nearer the revolution approaches, the more strongly it flares up and the more sudden and violent the transitions and leaps in its progress, the greater will be the part the struggle of the revolutionary mass stream against the opportunist petty-bourgeois stream will play in the labour movement. Kautskyism is not an independent trend, because it has no roots either in the masses or in the privileged stratum which has deserted to the bourgeoisie. But the danger of Kautskyism lies in the fact that, utilising the ideology of the past, it endeavours to reconcile the proletariat with the "bourgeois labour party", to preserve the unity of the proletariat with that party and thereby enhance the latter's prestige.

—VI Lenin, "Imperialism and the Split in Socialism" (October 1916)

## WORKERS HAMMER



For a federation of workers republics in the British Isles!  
For a Socialist United States of Europe!

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## Urgent PDC fund appeal! Defend arrested Spartacist comrade!

The Partisan Defence Committee is undertaking a publicity and fund-raising campaign to mobilise support for the defence of the Spartacist comrade arrested and attacked by police in London on 2 February at the CND-organised demonstration protesting the Gulf War. Expressly on the basis of the SL's political positions on the Gulf War—for the defeat of US/British imperialism and for the defence of Iraq—and because we refused to be gagged, our comrade was dragged off the march, arrested, hit in the face with a police helmet and then charged with "obstructing a police officer" and "threatening behaviour". The Spartacist League statement issued on 4 February, printed on page 12 of this issue, details the events and political background to this gross abrogation of elementary civil liberties.

The Partisan Defence Committee is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defence organisation which champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people; this purpose is in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League. As "allied" forces rain death upon the people of Iraq, at home the British government seeks to silence those who would take a side in this dirty colonialist war. The British ruling class has now apparently de facto

outlawed advocacy of the defence of Iraq. This is of a piece with the deportations, internment and star chamber "hearings" meted out to Iraqi and other Arab residents. It is also part and parcel of the censorship and self-censorship which pervades media coverage of the war.

In these efforts, the government has been able to count on the eager complicity of the Labour Party, including its "left" wing and the CND. The political and legal defence effort necessary to spike this government gag and victimisation will cost a lot of money. We seek to mobilise all the material and moral resources at our disposal to defend our comrade and the broadest support for this just cause among the working class and left movement. This fight is also on behalf of all those who may well face similar treatment at the hands of these despicable war criminals and their local dogs of war. *Workers Hammer* urges our readers to give generously and now to the defence fund. We also request statements of support from individuals and organisations. Please send your statement, earmarked cheque and make it payable to: Partisan Defence Committee, BCM Box 4986, London WC1N 3XX. Drop the charges! No to government censorship and repression of the left!

# The left and the Gulf

## 'Vote Kinnock', 'Defend Iraq': a contradiction in terms

As the US and British imperialists launch their campaign of mass murder in the Gulf, the clear duty of communists is to fight for the defeat of the imperialist forces and the military defence of Iraq. Waging a class-struggle fight against imperialist war abroad means trade union political strikes against the war at home as well as mass, militant mobilisations on the streets. In Britain, the Labour Party has enthusiastically howled for war and the Labour "lefts" for its prelude—UN sanctions. Certainly both the Kinnockite warmongers and the Bennite wing of the Labour Party would vehemently oppose such disruption of capitalist functioning in wartime.

The loyal bourgeois "opposition" led by the CND and Tony Benn have as its latest demand an immediate "ceasefire", ie, explicit support to the continued presence of the imperialist forces in the Gulf. Indeed, CND purposely changed the venue of its rally on 26 January in order to avoid connection with the annual Bloody Sunday protest against British imperialism's crimes in Northern Ireland which had planned to join up with the CND march at Hyde Park. Moreover, CND chairman Marjorie Thompson has made unequivocal her organisation's virulent hostility to those who call for the defence of Iraq, labelling them "agents provocateurs" (see "SL reply to *Independent*", page 2). The CND in Scotland (joined by the wretched Militant outfit) sought to use the police to seal off and remove a Spartacist contingent at the 12 January demonstration because we have taken a side militarily with Iraq in the war. In London on 2 February the cops arrested an SL supporter because our contingent was chanting slogans for the military defence of Iraq; other leftists were ordered to take down a banner saying "Victory to Iraq".

The Spartacists have forthrightly raised the elementary call for the military defence of Iraq against the imperialist on-



Fake left evades taking a side to defeat imperialism. Left to right: SWP, RCP, Hands Off the Middle East Committee.

slaught. In contrast, the fake-left links in Labour's syphilitic chain have shamefully served in varying degrees as waterboys for the CND and Bennites. Loyalty to the pro-imperialist Labour Party is counterposed to waging the necessary class fight against this imperialist war.

The ultimate example is the Militant tendency; after a long period of abstaining from any activity around the Gulf, Militant surfaced as outright running dogs for Labour, calling for a general election to put the warmongering Kinnock into No 10 Downing Street. Then there's the spineless SWP. Last September, John Molyneux wrote a column where he said that "in the case of the blockade and in the event of actual war we are on the side of Iraq". But he hastened to add that to raise the slogan "Victory to Iraq" would be "a sectarian error erecting a barrier between ourselves and many of those who are genuinely opposed to the war drive or are moving to a position of opposing it

but have not yet thought matters through to the end". In short, these cynics refuse to tell the truth to the masses because it might make them unpopular, particularly with Tony Benn & Co. So *Socialist Worker* has abandoned any mention of taking sides with Iraq militarily in order to become a "participating organisation" in the Benn/CND-led committee.

There are other fake-left groups who are a little bit more subtle in the way they liquidate their politics. Thus, if you look in the newspapers of organisations like Workers Power (WP) or the Workers International League (WIL), you will find references to "victory to Iraq" and criticisms of the UN and sanctions. Yet three weeks into the bloody Gulf conflict, until WP changed its tack, the SL had been unique in marching behind banners and placards that call for defending Iraq and taking a side against imperialism.

In the case of the refusal of WP's contingents to call for defence of Iraq, it reflected capitulation to their bloc partners in one of their anti-war lash-ups (Hands Off the Middle East—HOME). In reality, Workers Power has a more left version of the SWP's methodology: they have two lines—the "party line" and the "line for the masses". Thus, the front page headline of their February issue says: "Defend Iraq! Defeat Imperialism!" But in an inside article on the "anti-war movement", which deals with how to intervene in workers organisations, they write: "Workers Power believes it is possible to build a principled and united movement against the war around three key slogans: Stop the war against Iraq! Imperialist troops out of the Gulf now! Defend Arab and Muslim communities against internment, deportation and racist attack". The absence of any slogan calling for defeat of imperialism is designed to appeal to the left Labour bureaucrats, who WP knows would never swallow such a position.

### Centrists and the Labourite swamp

HOME is a pretty weird conglomeration of fake Trotskyists like WIL, WP and

the Revolutionary Internationalist League (RIL), the bizarre and dubious Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP), the third world cheer-leaders of the Revolutionary Communist Group (RCG), and Turkish leftists. You don't have to be a genius to figure out that these groups don't have much in common, and that a lash-up like this won't last very long. The real appetite of WP, RIL and WIL is to be part of the broad Labour-left milieu; in turn, their bloc partners either oppose or take an evasive position on the need to defend Iraq against the imperialists.

At the 19 January demonstration in London, Workers Power and the WIL could be found sporting the HOME placards "Hands off the Middle East", "Imperialist forces out of the Gulf"—*period*. Things went downhill a week later when these "anti-imperialists" marched in a contingent dominated by the RCP's revolting placards calling for: "Peace in the Gulf/Western Forces Out"! Raising "Peace in the Gulf"—now the official slogan of Benn/CND—was clearly designed to appeal to pacifist sentiments. The following week on 2 February, when HOME showed up with a large "Victory to Iraq" banner—which some of their committee marched behind—the RCPers carrying this banner were sporting "Peace in the Gulf" logos!

The RCP, the largest element in the HOME committee, is capable of going in any direction at any time. It has a history of virulently anti-working class actions—the organising of strikebreaking "working miners" along with support to Thatcher's scab ballot during the miners strike, the recruitment of a "former" fascist organiser in Sheffield, running "interviews" with racist gangs in its press, cheering on the CIA-backed *mujahedin* cut-throats in Afghanistan. We, like a good number of other militants, take any "revolutionary" posturing by this outfit with a very large pinch of salt.

For its part, the eclectic RCG opposes the slogan of military defence of Iraq. Were Iraq today run by so-called "progressive" nationalists like Gerry Adams or Yassir Arafat rather than the repugnant butcher Saddam, the RCG would have no qualms about calling for its victory. Making no distinction between political support and military defence, the vicarious "third world" nationalists of the RCG have found themselves, over Iraq, partially in the camp of the Labourites they so disdain.

The RCG calls for "Victory to the workers and oppressed masses of the Middle East". Of course, any socialist worthy of the name would be in favour of that. But unless the imperialists are repelled in their military efforts to seize the Gulf, that outcome is impossible. That is why it is necessary to take a clear side in the war. A defeat for the imperialists will bring closer the day when proletarian revolution can liberate the oppressed working masses from the Saddams, sheiks and Zionist butchers. That means building an internationalist, communist vanguard party rather than tail-ending those like Arafat, who in other circumstances

*continued on page 9*



Workers Hammer

London, 2 February: police sought to suppress slogans of Spartacist contingent on anti-war march.

# After Lithuania crackdown

## Imperialists demand the Baltics

Every day we read about atrocities and massacres taking place around the world. Probably the Kurdish people in several countries suffer 20 fatalities a day. Of particular significance currently is the Turkish desire to seize the Kirkuk oil fields in the northern Kurdish areas of Iraq. In this they are apparently backed by the leadership of the new German Reich, provided that US and British imperialist force of arms prevails in the Persian Gulf.

Meanwhile the US recently hailed its "liberation" of Panama in which a thousand or more people were killed in order to get General Noriega. This is called "Operation Just Cause". And now a new major war has begun, in which half a million American troops along with several hundred thousand soldiers from Washington's client states are poised to fall upon Iraq and slaughter its people. This, of course, is called justice. But when the Soviet Union thrashes about attempting to preserve their union of nationalities, this is called criminal.

It is in this context that we view Mikhail Gorbachev's actions in Lithuania against the right-wing secessionist government of Vyautas Landsbergis. On 13 January, Soviet armed forces, using tanks, took over radio and television stations in the capital of Vilnius. Reportedly, 14 people, including one Soviet soldier, were killed. It has been announced that a National Salvation Committee, loyal to the central Soviet government, has taken power in the Baltic republic.

The crackdown in Lithuania made front-page headlines worldwide and has been blown up by the Western media into a new Soviet atrocity story. George Bush lectures Gorbachev that there was "no justification for the use of force" against "the legitimate governments of the Baltic states". The Western European Common Market is threatening to suspend its \$1 billion in aid to the USSR. And erstwhile Western European Stalinist parties, such as the French Communists and the German Party of Democratic Socialism, have joined the new anti-Soviet campaign over "poor, little" Lithuania.

"The West's Gorbachev honeymoon ends," proclaims the *Guardian*. Western ruling circles have hoped and expected that the Gorbachev regime would bring about the restoration of capitalism and dismemberment of the Soviet Union. He wilfully abandoned Eastern Europe to NATO and the Common Market. He agreed to the annexation of East Germany by the Frankfurt bankers at a time when there was still mass opposition to capitalist reunification among workers and intellectuals in the German Democratic Republic. Western, especially German, imperialism has been looking towards the break-up of the USSR, transforming the remnants into spheres of colonialist exploitation.

Since its declaration of independence last March, the Sajudis nationalist regime in Lithuania has been in the forefront of the drive to dismember the Soviet Union. In itself the secession of the small Baltic republic would not seriously diminish Soviet military and economic power. But Lithuania has become a testing ground for the break-up of the Soviet Union amid murderous nationalism and inter-communalist pogroms of all kinds. As Leninists and internationalists, we stand for the democratic reorganisation of the Soviet Union and for the right of any nationality with a leadership that opposes counterrevolution to withdraw to any extent it sees fit. But in Lithuania and the other Baltic republics the fig leaf of "national independence" is being used as a cover for capitalist restoration. And this must be fought.

Landsbergis & Co have made no secret of their desire to make "independent" Lithuania an appendage of NATO and the Common Market. They have repeatedly called on the Western powers to engage in economic and political blackmail against the Soviet government. The Sajudis nationalists waved the flag of the fascistic Lithuanian bourgeois state of the interwar years while destroying monuments commemorating the Red Army's driving out the Nazi German forces. The Baltic states have large populations that the nationalists sneeringly refer to as



Soviet paratroopers take over press centre in Vilnius.

"Soviet peoples" (Russians, Poles, Ukrainians, etc)—almost half in Latvia, 40 per cent in Estonia, 20 per cent in Lithuania. If the pro-capitalist secessionists succeed, these entire populations will be gone in one generation. No wonder Moscow has support, even enthusiastic support, against the virulently anti-democratic and racist Baltic nationalists.

On the eve of the crackdown, the new Sajudis prime minister, Albertas Simenas, declared his intent to impose an economic "shock treatment" modelled on Solidarność-ruled Poland. The Vilnius nationalist regime's attempts to install a "free market" economy had already undermined its base of support. Last month, there were large demonstrations of ethnic Lithuanians, Russians and Poles against sharp consumer price increases, which were then immediately rescinded. The heavily working-class Russian and Polish minorities were mobilised effectively against the anti-Soviet nationalist regime. The crackdown took place as factories, railroads and the Vilnius airport were shut down by striking workers demanding direct presidential rule from Moscow.

Gorbachev has accused Landsbergis & Co of seeking to set up a "bourgeois regime" under the cover of democratic slogans. This is unquestionably true. But who is Gorbachev to denounce anyone for trying to return to capitalism! The Soviet president's declared intent is to transform the Soviet Union into a market, ie capitalist, economy, although not as rapidly as Yeltsin and Wall Street would like. A recent presidential decree grants foreign investors the right to own 100 per cent of Soviet enterprises and to repatriate their profits in hard currency. Thousands of square miles of agricultural land are to be leased to private farmers. Prices of consumer goods are scheduled to be increased this coming year by 50 to 70 per cent. And Gorbachev has adopted Yeltsin's proposal to drop "Socialist" from the USSR and rename it the Union of Sovereign Soviet Republics. If Gorbachev has his way, in three or four years Lithuania would be part of a federated

capitalist country.

Many of the hardliners in the military pushing for a crackdown on the Baltic and other secessionist forces are no more committed to preserving collectivised property than is Gorbachev. Their appeals to "Soviet patriotism" are often simply a cover for Great Russian chauvinism, which can easily become a vehicle for counterrevolution. A leader of the conservative Stalinist Soyuz (Union) faction in the Congress of People's Deputies, Col Vladimir Petrushenko, talks about "our plans for the future of a great Russia", echoing the language of the tsarist minister Stolypin.

For some time, Western bourgeois forces have looked to Boris Yeltsin as a possibly preferable alternative to Gorbachev. The Lithuania crisis reveals Yeltsin as an outright traitor to the Soviet Union. He is now calling upon Russian soldiers to disobey the Soviet military command and is demanding UN action to prevent Soviet military operations in the Baltic republics. What does he want—an economic blockade of the USSR or the carpetbombing of Moscow and Leningrad by the US air force?

At best the crackdown against Lithuanian secessionists will buy some time for the multinational Soviet working class, through building a genuine communist leadership, to oust the Gorbachevs and Yeltsins (both end-products of the degenerate Stalinist bureaucracy) and to purge from the land of the October Revolution all reactionary nationalist forces, including those Great Russian chauvinists who now masquerade as Soviet patriots. The protests against the price increases in Lithuania point to the real possibility of unifying the multinational Soviet proletariat against the forces of bloody capitalist counterrevolution. To prevent the disintegration of the USSR amid fratricidal nationalism, it is necessary to recapture the *proletarian internationalism* which animated the Bolshevik party of Lenin and Trotsky.

Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 518, 18 January 1991.



Turnkey/Newsweek

Nationalists mobilise behind flag of the fascistic Lithuanian bourgeois state of the interwar years.

**Down with capitalist-imperialist dismembering of USSR!**  
**For a Socialist Soviet Federation—Return to the road of Lenin and Trotsky!**

## Government/press jingos fuel racist attacks

# No to internment and deportations!

In an action which echoes Winston Churchill's 1940 wartime order: "collar the lot", the British government has rounded up, "detained", deported or otherwise forced out over 170 people mainly of Iraqi and Palestinian origin under the guise of "threat to national security". This racist round-up has targeted not only the Arab population of Britain but has also unleashed a wave of vile racist attacks against Asians, Africans, blacks and Jews. The government began their dragnet within the first few weeks of the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, but the numbers of Arabs so victimised escalated dramatically the moment that US/British imperialism's bombs began to rain death down on the streets of Baghdad. Twenty-eight were picked up on the eve of the war and another 37 shortly thereafter. The Home Office has now acted against 162 Iraqis and twelve others.

**Smash the anti-Arab witch hunt! Free the detainees now! No deportations! No internments!**

As of 25 January, the *Times* reported that deportation notices had been served on three, while more than "70 have left Britain and 56 are held under the Immigration Act". Some have families in Britain who have not been formally "detained" but are on "notice" and will be required to leave as well. Many of these "detainees" are now being shunted back and forth between Pentonville Prison in London and a hastily set up unit at Full Sutton prison near York (where the government intends them to spend most of the "detention" period awaiting the final decision of the Home Secretary on their cases, thus minimising their contact with families, friends and lawyers). Thirty-three Iraqi students, originally served with "notices of intention to deport" have been transferred to Ministry of Defence custody because of alleged connections to the Iraqi armed forces. Declared "prisoners of war", they are now being held at Salisbury Plain's Rollestone army camp whose perimeter has been surrounded with masses of barbed wire. Their treatment recalls that of Argentinians during the dirty little Falklands/Malvinas war.

Of the 57 men and women now threatened with expulsion, some have made their home in Britain for 15 years or more; their children were born here and are British citizens. According to the *Independent* (1 February), the Home Office has "issued them with a standard deportation notice, saying they had links with terrorist groups that could carry out Iraq's threat to launch attacks in the West". According to "procedures" set forth in the 1971 Immigration Act, they have no right to hear the evidence or even the specific charges levelled against them because the government claims this could give "vital information" to the "enemy". Their only recourse to "appeal" is to appear before a panel of "three wise men", without legal representation of any kind, whom they must convince that they are not guilty of what they don't know they are charged with.

Even in the unlikely event that the judges prove sympathetic, Home Secretary Kenneth Baker can ignore the judge's recommendation and deport them anyway. Ironically, the panel of "wise men" is headed up by Lord Justice Lloyd. One of the reasons given for rushing through the panel hearings is that this very same Lord Justice is due to hear the appeal of

the Birmingham Six whose frame-up convictions are an enduring indictment of British injustice.

One "detainee", Abbas Cheblak made an application for judicial review and *habeas corpus* challenging his deportation as "misconceived". Mr Justice Simon Brown ruled in response, the courts could not investigate "matters of national security". Cheblak is a Palestinian author who holds a Lebanese passport; he has lived in Britain for 16 years and was given an indefinite leave to stay in 1987. An information officer with the Arab League, Cheblak in fact condemned Iraq's occupation of Kuwait and is an executive member of the Arab Human Rights Committee which has campaigned against Saddam Hussein. His neighbours in the Kilburn area of London, outraged by his victimisation, have organised a well-



Brian Harris

**Salisbury Plain, Wiltshire: internment camp for so-called "Iraqi soldiers" studying in Britain.**

publicised campaign for his immediate release. Many who have been deported or are threatened with deportation are political opponents of one sort or another of the Saddam Hussein regime—and a number have been simultaneously outspoken against the imperialists' criminal mass-murder bombing campaign.

### Judicial terror in the courts, race-hate terror in the streets

The roots of the British state's draconian powers of detention lie in the earlier-quoted command by Churchill during the Second World War: "collar the lot". In May 1940, 80,000 "enemy aliens" were herded into concentration camps. These included German and Austrian Jews and other refugees from the Nazis as well as Italian restaurateurs. Many were incarcerated on the Isle of Man, others sent overseas. Some of the German and Austrian Jews who managed to get into Britain before its borders were closed to Holocaust refugees were rounded up in an indiscriminate dragnet and thrown aboard the tramp steamer *Dunera* bound for a concentration camp in the Australian outback. An earlier "cargo" of Jews to Canada, on an unescorted vessel, was torpedoed by the Germans, killing hundreds.

During the Vietnam War years, the 1968 Wilson Committee report first suggested that immigrants challenging their treatment by the government appear before "three wise men" and that they be given as much information as possible without putting "security" at risk. The then-Labour government threw out the committee's recommendation for some

form of appeal system in favour of a specially vetted panel whose judgment was not binding. "The procedure was tested only once, when the German student leader Rudi Dutschke challenged, unsuccessfully, his deportation in 1970. Dutschke was represented by a QC and given a 2,500-word statement of the case against him, but an outcry over what had not been disclosed prompted the abolition of even this limited right of appeal and its replacement with the present system" (*Independent*, 1 February).

The government's anti-Arab witch hunting is designed to regiment the population as a whole for war. The racist war hysteria over alleged "terrorist" links also fuels deadly racist attacks on the streets. The *Guardian* (1 February) reported that the five-year-old son of a man held at Full Sutton was attacked at school in

eleven American Marines had been killed, one television news commentator remarked to her panel of "experts": will public opinion change now that "people" are being "killed". Not one "expert" thought to call her on this; apparently for these sorts, mass murder of Iraqis does not constitute "killing people".

Even though formal censorship exists, it isn't really necessary because the media is rigorously applying self-censorship. This, of course, is the same crew who have submitted to the draconian ban on Sinn Fein without so much as a whimper. Now the broadcasting media is banning programmes and songs deemed deleterious to war fever. The BBC press office confirmed after much prodding that it had issued "guidelines" that some 67 songs not be aired. According to the *News of the World* (20 January) this blacklist includes John Lennon's "Give Peace A Chance", Elton John's "Saturday Night's Alright For Fighting", Blondie's "Atomic"—these might "cause offence". Another report listed the Bee Gee's "Staying Alive"! (As *Private Eye* quipped: "It is considered that the word 'Life' might offend viewers at a time when so many people are losing theirs.") ITV cancelled the film *Airport* and Thames television did a self-criticism for airing the Carling Black Label *Dambusters* ad.

John Naughton, TV reviewer for the *Observer* (27 January) noted: "The 'sensitivity' of our networks is...somewhat partial". He points out that the *Time-watch* special on the extermination of the North American Indians was left on. "The point is not that this fine documentary ought to have been cancelled or postponed, but that the rules which govern censorship seem rather arbitrary. One interpretation of the imbalance might be that while it is OK to screen material showing the massacre of coloured folks, it is absolutely *Verboten* to portray WASPs on the receiving end of military hardware."

When the *Independent's* reporter Robert Fisk (23 January) exposed that "allied" junior officers and their men were getting lost all over the desert because they didn't have road maps, he was pilloried for "weakening morale". CNN reporter Peter Arnett was subjected to Washington's denunciations that he was some sort of dupe for Saddam when he said that a baby milk factory was probably a baby milk factory.

Eagerly supporting the war policies of the government, the Labour Party "opposition" has of course lifted not a finger in defence of elementary civil liberties and the victimised Iraqi and Arab people. Labour "lefts" and their CND cohorts are busy policing the "peace movement" and setting up for state repression those who take a side against the imperialists and in defence of Iraq. The organised workers movement has the social power to sink this war drive and the attendant racism and national chauvinism. And it is very much in the interest of the working class that the criminal anti-Arab campaign and endless anti-democratic "bans" be stopped. Certainly, similar measures would be used in an instant against political strike actions against the Gulf War. To unleash the power of the trade unions and their allies requires a break with the Labour Party and the forging of an authentic revolutionary party, a genuine "tribune of the people". ■

Glasgow "for being an Iraqi". Students at SOAS (a significant number from Third World countries) in London now have to undergo "security checks". Earlier, cops targeted Turkish and Kurdish workers in London who demonstrated in favour of the Turkish miners strike, part of the workers militant opposition to the war there (see *Workers Hammer* no 119).

The *Asian Times* (29 January) reported that mosques around the country have been targeted, one in Yorkshire suffered thousands of pounds worth of damage after an arson attack. Two 17-year-old Bangladeshis in Tower Hamlets were shot by white men with an air rifle. Black Labour MP Bernie Grant's offices were ransacked and scrawled with fascist race-hate slogans calling for death to blacks and Iraqis. And Jewish areas of London have witnessed an increase in fascist attacks and graffiti (eg "Scud Jews"). According to a report in *Socialist Worker* (26 January), in Newcastle 300 students gathered outside a barber shop displaying a *Sun* Union Jack poster and a sign saying "No Iraqis". Chanting, "We are all Iraqis!" the students courageously refused to move until the poster was taken down.

### Censorship, self-censorship and lies

Alongside the government's racist witch hunting on the home front, the ever-servile bourgeois media are doing their bit for the "war effort". While the tabloid gutter press whips up jingoist sentiments, the "quality" press and media offer up the same lies dressed up with an Oxbridge vocabulary for "get the bastards". Hence when it was reported that

# Defeat imperialism...

(Continued from page 1)

observed (25 January): "People in Iraq want freedom, but for the moment the battle is a matter of life and death. After the battle they will want more." Within Britain and the United States we fight for the working people to mobilise their social power in *class struggle* against the exploiters and oppressors at home.

## Labour marches in lockstep with Major/Bush

The stranglehold of the warmongering agents of capitalism who lead the Labour Party has thus far obstructed the outbreak of class resistance to the bloody war. The British rulers have committed themselves heavily to the US-led onslaught and have relied on their faithful Labour lackeys to keep opposition to a minimum. Neil Kinnock has gagged even his own shadow cabinet and calls for "the substantial disarming of Iraq by the reduction of conventional forces and the verified and complete removal of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons" (*Guardian*, 22 January). Symbiotically, Labour "left" Tony Benn and his fellows have done their bit to channel opposition to the war into support for the United Nations and sanctions and now the CND call for a "ceasefire".

Aided and abetted by Labourites, the state has upped its efforts to forcibly suppress militant opposition to the war. On 2 February London police arrested and attacked a Spartacist supporter because he was chanting slogans in defence of Iraq against the imperialist war (see statement, page 12). According to a report in *Workers Press* (31 January) police also unsuccessfully tried to force members of the Piper Alpha support group to remove their banner from a march protesting the war, in Aberdeen. The support group's banner read "Peace, Justice, Compassion" and demanded that the government retrieve the bodies of the 167 victims of that criminal industrial murder of oil workers in 1988. As was demonstrated during the work stoppages of North Sea oil workers when the war drums began beating, the bosses want to avoid any "linkage" between the exploited here and our class brothers and sisters in the Middle East. As we wrote in our leaflet to the striking oil workers in August: "When Bush, Thatcher, BP and Shell talk about 'opposing aggression', who do they think they're kidding? The only 'freedom' they're interested in is the freedom to exploit working people for profit which they carry on with a bloody disregard for human life, whether in the North Sea or the Persian Gulf... With the capitalists going off half-cocked and

**Bogged down in the Gulf: air strikes can't win the war, so US/British imperialists will have to unleash bloody slaughter on the ground.**

creating their own oil shortages, strikers could have them over a barrel."

Thus far, the efforts of both wings of the Labour Party have meant relative quiescence among the working class. But this well may not hold. Not only is it becoming increasingly clear that a bloody ground war is imminent and that much government prevarication has taken place, but things are getting increasingly desperate at home. Britain's recession is acute; writing in the *Guardian* (5 February) Alex Brummer put it: "The CBI now projects a recession on a par with the early 1980s; retail sales have slumped; investment is tumbling and unemployment (always a lagging indicator) is soaring with the alarming prospect of 2.5 million on the dole by the end of this year... Death and maimed bodies make the dole queues and the repossessed homes look somewhat trivial. But the war is no excuse for taking our eye off the ball."

Add growing opposition to the war to the growth of jobless and homeless, the widely-hated poll tax, the deteriorating National Health Service, the rundown and deadly dangerous public transport system and there is plenty of tinder for social struggle. Between its enforcement of the poll tax and its wretched support for the war criminals in London and Washington, the Labour Party has shown itself once again to be the sworn enemy of the working class and its struggles. We fight to split the working class base from the pro-capitalist tops in order to forge an authentic revolutionary party which will lead the struggle for socialist revolution.

As our American comrades wrote of the US aim to seize control of the world's oil supplies and blackmail its imperialist competitors:

"At bottom, it is not a question of Bush's ego or war-mania in the White House, no more than the assassination of an archduke was the cause of World War I,



Peter Dejong/AP

or a Japanese 'sneak attack' on Pearl Harbor brought the U.S. into World War II. This is the way imperialism works: in the final analysis, deep-going economic contradictions can only be resolved by force of arms. And until the system of competing capitalist nation-states is swept away through workers revolution, war will continue to be the fate of humanity." (*Workers Vanguard* no 519, 1 February)

While the US could well "prevail" militarily in its conflict with small, semi-colonial Iraq the fact is that neither the American population at large nor the troops in the Gulf see any stake in this war. As Bush celebrated Thanksgiving in the Saudi desert, US soldiers yelled out to reporters, "This is not our war!" Bush & Co want to wipe out the memory of the humiliating US defeat in Indochina. But the Pentagon's ban on TV cameras at Dover Air Force Base, where American war dead in the Gulf will be returning, will do little to black out the image of body bags "coming home" from the minds of bereaved parents and sweethearts and children.

Here, sections of the British ruling class have wondered aloud just what's in this war for them, and certainly not because they abhor the bloody carnage being visited upon the Iraqi people. The bulk of the money being squeezed from the Germans and Japanese in order to finance the war is going into the coffers of the US, the largest debtor nation on the planet. The Germans have been "less than forthcoming" not least because they need massive amounts of D-marks for their takeover of East Germany and Bonn's Eastern European and Soviet deals. The tensions between those who want to remain in a "special relationship" with Washington and those more prone to become part of the European Community (and get a cut of Kohl's drive to the East) have broken out repeatedly. After all, the British economy is already

under the thumb of the German bourgeoisie. So with Kinnock howling in tandem with Major Major one could be forgiven for seeing the likes of Edward Heath (Government Chief Whip at the time of the Suez adventure) or Cold Warrior par excellence Denis Healey as some sort of "doves". These arguments reflect in reality the ongoing economic decline and crisis of the clapped-out British economy in the context of the imperialist "new world order" of war and recession.

As we report in the article on the back page, "Anti-war work stoppages, protests across Europe" millions have taken to the streets and engaged in workplace actions against the NATO imperialists' onslaught in the Persian Gulf. In Germany, France, Italy, Spain, the working class and youth have expressed their revulsion and opposition. North Africa is also seething over the imperialist attack on Iraq, with volunteers enlisting to fight against the US/British forces. The *New York Times* (24 January) noted that "Pro-Iraq Sentiment Is Increasing in North Africa": "A major reason most Tunisians, Algerians and Moroccans back Mr Hussein is they see him as their brother in fighting against the rich. The masses of people have few kind words for Kuwait and were not sad that Iraq gobbled it up." Heroic miners and their allies in Turkey struck not only against their hellish conditions but also against the repressive Turgut Özal regime and its decision to turn the country into a staging area for Washington in the war. (See "Heroic coal miners strike shakes Turkey" and "Bring down Özal with workers revolution", *Workers Hammer* no 119, January 1991.)

## Middle East powder keg

The Iraqi Scud missile attacks on Israel turned Saddam Hussein into the most



Imperial War Museum



Sygm

Battle of the Somme, July 1916 (left). British lost 20,000 dead in one hour attacking entrenched German positions. Iran-Iraq war (above) produced one million dead. Washington aided both sides in this bloody slaughter.

popular Arab leader at least since Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser—and simultaneously shattered the myth of invulnerability which is one of the ideological pillars of the Zionist garrison state. Tel Aviv residents have been clogging the highways out of the city to fill up hotels in Jerusalem left vacant by the halt in tourist traffic, only to be denounced as “deserters” by the mayor of Tel Aviv. Meanwhile, dozens of Israeli Arab families have opened up their homes to Jews from areas hit by missiles.

Arabs are particularly infuriated by the outrage in Western capitals over the Scud attacks—which have produced minimal casualties—even as *thousands* of bombs rain down on Baghdad and Basra daily. One Palestinian exclaimed after the first Scuds fell on Tel Aviv: “Two missile attacks on Israel that do not kill anybody, and the whole world cries and moans.” In the three years of the *Intifada* well over 700 Palestinians, many of them young children, have been gunned down by Israeli troops. Since the Gulf War began, the entire Palestinian population in the occupied West Bank has been under house arrest, under pain of being shot on sight if they leave their homes.

Fearful that an Israeli retaliatory attack on Iraq would cause problems for the “allies” bought-and-paid-for Arab regimes, Washington rushed Patriot missile launchers and US crews to Israel. For the moment the Israelis have refrained from retaliating, anticipating some \$13 billion in additional aid from Washington as pay-off. But the Israeli rulers *will* strike at Iraq, and health minister Ehud Olmert vowed that Iraq will suffer “painful scars that would stay with them for a long time” (*New York Times*, 24 January).

What sort of “painful scars” are the Zionist madmen planning? As Israeli nuclear technician Mordechai Vanunu courageously revealed to the world, the Zionist state has more than 200 nuclear warheads. Israel's rulers have already vowed to take out the Jordanian air force should it attempt to prevent Israeli jets from flying over Jordanian airspace in order to attack Iraq. They are intent on driving the Palestinians out of the West Bank and into Jordan. The international workers movement must raise an outcry to demand: Defend the Palestinians! Israel out of the Occupied Territories!

As one of the oldest crossroads of civilisation in the world, the Middle East has always been a mosaic of numerous conflicting nationalities and ethnic and religious groupings attempting to carve out living space at each other's expense.



David Rose



Milliyet

**Palestinians in Amman, Jordan (right) demonstrate against imperialist war. Turkish miners striking to defend their living standards say: “No to war”. March to Ankara (above) was met by water cannon and bulldozers.**

Under the domination of imperialism and the imposition of artificial borders, capitalist rule in the Middle East has taken a particularly bloody and horrendous form. Israeli Jews murder Palestinian Arabs, Egyptian Muslims suppress Copts, Sunnis feud with Shi'ite and Maronite Christians in Lebanon, Alawites dominate everyone else in Syria, and everybody goes after the Kurds.

The only way out of the national and sectarian fratricide which has wracked the region—short of mutual annihilation—lies through the revolutionary destruction of capitalism and the creation of a socialist federation of the Middle East. And particularly from among the numerous oppressed minorities can come steered internationalist cadres of Bolshevik parties capable of leading the workers to power. In Iraq, it was precisely the Kurdish minority, as well as Christians and Jews, who made up the bulk of the Communist Party which was decimated by Saddam Hussein's bloody repression (using hit lists supplied by the CIA).

The key is the question of revolutionary leadership, linking the struggle of the working masses against the butchers, despots, capitalist regimes and their social-democratic running dogs to the struggle against the colonialist war. As Lenin said: war is the mother of revolution. The building of revolutionary parties from Ankara to London, Washington to Bag-

dad is the task of the International Communist League.

### Reforge the Fourth International!

The US, British rulers and their NATO allies are far from unanimous in supporting Bush/Major's single-minded focus on the Persian Gulf, and if things bog down there the imperialist war front could crack. The stage for the Gulf War was set by the collapse of Stalinist rule in Eastern Europe and the escalating crisis in the Soviet Union. No longer is the US, the leading imperialist power, restrained by fear of what the response would be from Moscow.

The death agony of Stalinism has had another effect as well: the disarray among the “socialist” and “communist” leftists in the West, who are prostrate in the face of this bloody imperialist assault. Communism was supposed to be dead, but that doesn't square very well with what's going on in the Persian Gulf. With the onset of the “first post-Cold War war”, there has been a wave of anti-war unrest encompassing sections of the working class from the very moment the shooting began and even before. This opens up tremendous possibilities for building an authentic communist vanguard.

At the outset of World War I, as well, there was a widespread sense that socialism had failed. The vote of the German Social Democracy on 4 August 1914 for

war credits to the Kaiser's government registered the collapse of the Second International, as most of its national components became rabid “social-patriotic” flag-wavers for the war aims of their “own” bourgeoisies, and much of the “left” social democracy was paralysed by social-pacifist politics. The resolutions of the Second International for internationalist socialist action against the war were revealed as so much worthless paper.

Among socialist opponents of the war, the left wing led by the Russian Bolsheviks called for a very different policy. Instead of appealing to the imperialists to make a robbers' peace, Lenin called on the workers to “turn the imperialist war into a civil war”, to bring down the warring governments by socialist revolution. And so they did, in the Bolshevik October Revolution of 1917. Key to the Bolshevik victory was their determined struggle to forge a new, genuinely revolutionary International. After Stalin's betrayal of the principles and programme of the Communist International, the Bolshevik struggle was continued by Trotsky's fight for the Fourth International.

Today the rulers in Britain and the US have marshalled all the forces at their disposal—the bourgeois press, the racist anti-Arab hysteria, the clampdown on such civil liberties as exist—to whip up a war fever. But these efforts are doomed to be transitory at best. In his “War and the Fourth International” Leon Trotsky wrote:

“For a revolutionary party, the *moment of declaration of war* is especially critical. The bourgeois and social-patriotic press in an alliance with the radio and movies will pour out upon the toiling masses torrents of chauvinistic poison....  
“Even if at the beginning of a new war the true revolutionists should again find themselves in a small minority, we cannot doubt for a single moment that this time the shift of the masses to the road of revolution will occur much faster, more decisively and relentlessly than during the first imperialist war. A new wave of insurrections can and must become victorious in the whole capitalist world.  
“It is indisputable at any rate that in our epoch only that organization that bases itself on international principles and enters into the ranks of the world party of the proletariat can root itself in the national soil. *The struggle against war means now the struggle for the Fourth International!*”

Today in countries around the world, the sections of the International Communist League fight to defeat the imperialist onslaught against the Iraqi people. *For trade union political strikes against the war! Defeat US imperialism! Defend Iraq!* ■



Workers Vanguard

**San Francisco, 26 January: Spartacist League/US and Labor Black League fight to mobilise workers power against imperialist war.**

# Leninists' non-stop liberal sideshow

As we noted in the last issue of *Workers Hammer*, the Leninist organisation has scabbed on the defence of Iraq against the imperialists, calling instead for military defeat of both sides in the Gulf War. Any organisation claiming to be the revolutionary vanguard of the Iraqi toiling masses which propounded such "defeatism" would rightly be seen as a stooge of Washington, London and their allies. Here, such a line inevitably means an appeal to liberalism.

Supporters of the *Leninist* and its Internationalist Committee may have blanched when the *Independent* (18 January) happily quoted one of its spokesmen saying "that it wants all 'imperialist' forces, Iraqi or American, out of Kuwait". But that's exactly the position of the "Provisional Central Committee of the CPGB" (The Leninist): falsely claiming Iraq is "proto-imperialist", Leninist "evenhandedly" calls for both US/Britain out of the Gulf and Iraq out of Kuwait. They share this position with such overt Labourites as Socialist Organiser. Much as the Leninist likes to ridicule the Labourite fake left, politics has its own logic.

On the eve of the invasion of Iraq, *Leninist* (15 January) headlined: "Join the non-stop picket of the US embassy/Build the anti-war movement". As everyone knows, there already is an "anti-war movement", one run by the pro-United Nations, pro-sanctions Tony Benn crowd, with their weekly peace crawls. *Leninist* says the problem is that: "One off demonstrations might have been okay during the protracted Vietnam War. What is needed today, though, must take into account the different nature of this war: the fact that it will, if it comes, last only days, not years."

Rather than struggle against the rotten



Workers Hammer  
Leninist's Non-Stop Picket of US embassy panders to "No blood for oil" pacifism while letting British imperialism off the hook.

political line of Benn & Co and their fake-left hangers on, Leninist counterposes an organisational gimmick, more-over on a completely opportunist basis. This sideshow is blatantly modelled on the impotent liberal "non-stop picket" of South Africa House by the City Anti-Apartheid group. For starters, the Leninist consciously targets only US imperialism, letting Washington's British junior partners off the hook. Furthermore, as was the case when Soviet forces treacherously withdrew from Afghanistan and the bourgeois mouthpieces proclaimed imminent victory for the CIA's mujahedin cut-throats, Leninist foolishly buys imperialist war propaganda. On the eve of the massive attack on Iraq, the imperialists promised a swift and easy victory—"only days". Needless to say, the Pentagon and its allies are not so cocky

as the war drags on, promising to be long and bloody.

To top it off, just like the Bennites and the bulk of the fake left in Britain, *Leninist* points approvingly to the anti-war protests over Vietnam. But in the US these popular-front mobilisations, organised by reformists like the American Socialist Workers Party, were explicitly premised on *not* taking a side for the military victory of the NLF in Vietnam and consciously tailored to the programme of the defeatist wing of the bourgeoisie who wanted to disentangle themselves from a losing war. Contrary to fake-left myth (and the right-wing proponents of the "stab in the back" scenario), these peace crawls did not end the Vietnam War. The US imperialists were defeated on the battlefield. Against those who ape Richard Nixon and George Bush

in proclaiming "no more Vietnams" we say: Vietnam was a victory! Two, three many defeats for imperialism!

Underscoring the fact that they are calling for a liberal Vietnam-style popular front, *Leninist* writes: "Members of the Labour Party, CNDers, muslims, Christians, communists—all who want to see a just peace—must support and build the non-stop picket." That's the kind of classless appeal to "all men of good will" to "unite around peace"—complete with an emphasis on pacifists and religious forces—that *Leninist* used to scorn when the likes of the old Euros or CPB trotted it out.

As we noted last month: "*Leninist's* current idiot capitulation to British imperialism and social democracy over the Gulf certainly owes more to the legacy of the defunct Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) which functioned for decades as third-division pimps for social democracy than the programme of Lenin's Third International." While the B-52s, Cruise missiles and Tornados rain mass death upon the people of Iraq in this filthy war for imperialist domination of the Gulf, some members of *Leninist* may re-think their "defeatist" treachery. They should have ample time to do so during their "non-stop" picket and moral witness crusade. For our part, we will continue to fight for the defeat of imperialism through class struggle at home and for the military victory of Iraq while giving not one ounce of political support to the butcher of workers and Kurds, Saddam Hussein. In so doing, we follow the tradition of Lenin and Trotsky who waged relentless political struggle against the social chauvinism and pacifist sloganeering of their day. ■

## At Glasgow Gulf demo

# Spartacists call for defence of Iraq, Militant/CND call the cops

Workers Hammer prints below a leaflet issued by the Glasgow Spartacist League following a gross provocation by supporters of the CND and Militant tendency who tried to get our comrades arrested on an anti-war demo only a matter of days before the bombing of Baghdad began. As the US and British imperialists rain down death on the Iraqi people we have been raising the call "Defeat US/British imperialism!" "Defend Iraq!" And while Neil Kinnock cheers the war and Tony Benn's UN sanctions prepared its way, the Labourite lackeys of British imperialism have demonstrated their willingness to appeal to the British state in order to silence us.

The leaflet has been widely distributed throughout the left and labour movement around Glasgow as well as at demonstrations in London and Dublin. In Glasgow on 19 January we raised our internationalist demands loud and clear despite repeated provocations against us by rabid Labourite CNDers. Over 700 copies of this leaflet were distributed to that demonstration alone. The Militant tendency has issued no response and its supporters have

responded variously by denying the facts, attempting to alibi the action or accepting the leaflet with looks of extreme discomfort. Just as Militant was prepared to shop anti-poll tax protesters to the police following the Trafalgar Square protest last March, so now these social patriots have joined with the red-baiters of CND to "cleanse" the protests of those who take a military side with Iraq against imperialist mass murder. Any organisation with a shred of communist principle should repudiate this stinking practice!

At the Saturday, 12 January march protesting impending imperialist war in the Gulf, stewards from the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) and supporters of the Militant tendency sought to use the Glasgow cops to silence and exclude the Spartacist League contingent. Enraged by our forthright military defence of Iraq and our calls for the defeat of the British and US imperialist forces in the Gulf, the CND stewards ran to the police demanding that we be removed from the demonstration when their own

efforts failed to gag us. One Jim Cameron, a Militant supporter for over a decade, West of Scotland rep on the All Britain Anti-Poll Tax Federation and recently elected Chairman of Strathclyde NALGO, approached our contingent, which was flanked by cops, yelling at the top of his voice against our slogans for military defence of Iraq against the imperialist onslaught. Having attracted the attention of the police, Cameron was then overheard telling the cops that our slogans "had nothing to do with the demonstration".

The provocations of CND/Militant had the desired effect; the police completely surrounded the Spartacist contingent and took us off the march as we approached George Square to give us "warning" that we were likely to cause a "breach of the peace" by chanting "Defend Iraq!" This followed repeated police harassment of our contingent at the behest of the CND. However, the combined efforts of CND, Militant and the cops failed to silence us. Our revolutionary internationalist chants were raised and our press well received

by many on the demonstration who had come out actually to protest imperialist war.

Calling the cops on leftists and setting them up for victimisation by the capitalist state is a grotesque provocation. Let's be quite clear about what happened here: the CND/Militant reformists fingered communists to the same British state which is about to carry out untold imperialist butchery in the Near East. They appealed to the same cops who bust anti-poll tax protesters and anti-fascist fighters, who carry out deadly repression against minorities and who were Thatcher's boot boys against the heroic striking miners. And it's not just the Spartacist League that's being set up here, at a time when the bourgeois state is gearing up an arsenal of repression, anti-"red" witch-hunts and press censorship to regiment the population for a bloody, unpopular war. Even some of these yellow socialists of the Militant/CND stripe are liable to discover that the state is none too discriminating when it comes to cracking down on anti-war protesters.



# The Gulf and the left...

(Continued from page 3)

have set the Palestinians up for slaughter by appealing to the UN and imperialists, as in Lebanon in 1982.

The RCG draws a direct identity between the Labour bureaucrats and what it calls the "privileged" British working class. With such New Leftism, it gives up any real possibility of mobilising the proletariat in struggle against imperialism through such means as trade union strikes against the war. Of course, much of what it writes about its fake-Trotskyist bloc partners and their Labourite cretinism is to the point. The problem is that when the RCG comes down to proposing action, having rejected the working class in advance, it has no-one to appeal to... but the Labour Party. Thus it calls on people to "organise to force your local Labour MPs and councillors to oppose the war". And if that doesn't work, "begin procedures to deselect them" (*Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!* February/March 1991)!

Reflecting their Labourite appetites, it is no accident that WIL, RIL and WP are also affiliated to the Campaign Against War in the Gulf (CAWG), whose founding was endorsed by Tony Benn and which has unsuccessfully sought to affiliate to the larger "Stop the War" committee. In an article in *Revolutionary Internationalist* (January-February), RIL admonishes Workers Power that a pro-sanctions position or the call for Iraq out of Kuwait should be no bar to remaining in CAWG (this amusingly under the heading "Principles"). At one level this is a squabble over how much you sell out to the popular front. In reality, however, CAWG has already politically endorsed Benn's pro-imperialist policies. Thus, it produced a statement wherein they "congratulate the 37 Labour MPs who voted against the government's Gulf war policy", ie, endorsing Benn's pro-sanctions, "war under UN auspices" line. This did not unduly trouble our fake leftists, who are perfectly prepared to swallow such betrayals in order to maintain their standing in the CAWG/Labourite swamp.

Listen to these characters, and they would have you believe that we are "sectarian" because we refuse to join one or another of these "committees", thereby

supposedly proving we oppose "united fronts". But a united front is essentially an *action*, carried out according to the principle of "strike together, march separately". Thus, we are perfectly prepared to participate in anti-war demonstrations with groups whose political programmes are at variance with ours, ensuring that all parties retain full freedom to put forward their respective programmes. We are advocates of union strikes against the war, which necessarily would involve workers of different political viewpoints. In the context of such actions, communists struggle to win workers away from their reformist misleaders to revolutionary politics. But that is a far cry from such on-going *propaganda blocs* like CAWG or HOME, in which would-be leftists liquidate class-struggle politics in order to appease their reformist allies.

Although some of these fake leftists may criticise Benn's policies now, they always hold open the prospect that he and his ilk can be pressured to the left. WIL's *Workers News* (December 1990-January 1991) claimed: "We will continue to oppose Benn's pro-imperialist politics, while critically supporting him or any other element of the labour left should it take half a step forward". Like calling for British withdrawal perhaps? As did a section of the *defeatist* US bourgeoisie when they wanted to extract themselves from a *losing* war in Vietnam, Benn could at some point demand the withdrawal of British forces from the Gulf War, the better to protect the interests of the British bourgeoisie and head off class struggle against the war and capitalism at home.

Nor do you have to be a "left" to qualify for the peace wing of the Labour Party. Take the case of Denis Healey, a veteran Cold Warrior and link to the CIA. Healey was a strong supporter of sanctions as opposed to a shooting war. He believes that it would be smarter for the bourgeoisie to do as the German capitalists and social democrats would prefer, to spend resources in attempting to consolidate capitalist regimes in the East rather than on a costly and uncertain war in the Gulf. Healey is a dove on the Middle East, but a hawk on the Soviet Union.

It's a bit rich when the likes of WIL or Workers Power trot out their "anti-imperialist" credentials over the Gulf, since they have been giving aid and comfort to

the imperialists in their attempts to smash the Soviet Union. The imperialist onslaught in the Gulf not only threatens holocaust against the Arab peoples but also poses a deadly danger to the Soviet degenerated workers state. Gorbachev & Co have criminally acquiesced to Washington over the Gulf, while the imperialists are exploiting the crisis of the Kremlin to tighten their military encirclement of the USSR. WIL writes that "The Soviet bureaucracy's offer to underwrite imperialist intervention is entirely in line with its counter-revolutionary pursuit of 'regional settlements'". But when the Soviet bureaucracy has been in conflict with imperialism, WIL and Workers Power denounced the USSR, capitulating to bourgeois public opinion and social democracy when it counted: Afghanistan, Poland, East Germany, the Baltics. WIL also joined the chorus of imperialist hysteria when Rumanian miners meted out just treatment to the counterrevolutionary scum there.

Whether it be the attempt to smash the deformed workers states or imperialist wars directed at oppressed peoples, the Labour Party has backed the bourgeoisie to the hilt: the plundering of the Middle East, Asia and Africa in the period of the Empire; the Korean War, Vietnam, dispatching troops to Northern Ireland, you name it. Yet one thing that WIL and Workers Power do not even give lip service to in their leaflets on the war is the need to forge a revolutionary workers party. That is because these fakers already have a party: the Labour Party—and even today urge workers to vote warmonger Kinnock into office. That is in stark contrast to Lenin, whose reaction to the betrayal of the social-democratic parties in August 1914 in supporting their governments in a war of imperialist slaughter was to call for the founding of a new Third International. Lenin asserted that what was necessary was a Marxist programme which "declares openly that the collapse of the Second International was brought about by opportunism, and openly calls for a Marxist International to be built up without and against the opportunists" (*Socialism and War*).

As Leninists and Trotskyists, we stand for the forging of a revolutionary party, through splitting the working class base of the Labour Party from the pro-capitalist tops. Such a party must take its place in

the ranks of a reformed Fourth International. Programmatically our International Communist League has fought all along the line against capitalist counterrevolution—against the CIA's *mujahedin* cut-throats, against Wall Street and the Western bankers' favourite "union" Solidarność, against the capitalist reunification of Germany and the counterrevolutionary nationalist movements in the Baltics using the fig leaf of "national independence" as a cover for capitalist restoration. And as revolutionary Trotskyists, we are irreconcilably for the defeat of imperialism in the Gulf, for the mobilisation of the working class on behalf of the military victory of Iraq and the struggle for proletarian revolution. Standing as obstacles to such a mobilisation are not only the Kinnocks and Benns but the motley crew of centrists trying to straddle the fence, whose political exposure and defeat is part of the process of building a revolutionary party. ■

## Spartacist...

(Continued from page 12)

in Hyde Park; the police intervened, cheered on by CNDers, and again the banner went down. From the speakers platform, Labourite celebrity Billy Bragg slanderously baited those holding the banner as being sponsored by the CIA.

It is often said that civil liberties, no less than the truth, are the first casualties of war. Thus, the present-day deportations, internment and star chamber "hearings" meted out to Iraqi and other Arab residents. Thus the government's *de facto* outlawing of advocacy of the defence of Iraq against this imperialist war. For that matter, even John Lennon's song "Give peace a chance" isn't supposed to be aired by the BBC. We point out that this government and Labour governments before it have a despicable record on this score, war or no: to name but a few, the judicial frame up of the Birmingham Six, Winchester Three and Guildford Four, the draconian "ban" on Sinn Fein and Irish republican spokesmen, the savage attack and round-up of anti-poll tax demonstrators last March.

Now these methods, used against striking miners, printworkers and their supporters, are in operation against leftists in the context of the criminal war against Iraq. Again, the government has relied on its loyal opposition to exercise such repression and violence. On 12 January, Spartacist demonstrators in Glasgow were surrounded, sealed off and threatened with arrest at the behest of the CND and Militant tendency. On 23 January the *Independent* quoted CND leader Marjorie Thompson baiting those who call for Iraq's victory as "*agents provocateurs*", expressing the wish that they be off the demonstrations. That wish is being fulfilled as the arrests, based on shadowy "complaints" against the leftists involved, begin.

Marxists have a right to organise—and indeed the duty to mobilise the necessary working-class action to oppose this bloody carnage against the Arab people on behalf of Washington's oil plunder. We call on all those in the workers movement and on the left to join us in condemning the state's attack on ourselves and others who raise the call to defeat imperialism and defend Iraq. We demand that all charges against comrade Green and others arrested at the demonstration be immediately dropped! No deportations, no internment of Iraqi and Arab people! Defeat British/US imperialism! Defend Iraq!

Spartacist League,  
British section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)  
4 February 1991.

The Spartacist contingent was singled out by the CND and its Militant cohorts because we stood out against the popular front politics of those who would keep opposition to the war within the framework of "pressuring" the capitalist class and Labour traitors to transform themselves into "peacemakers". For the past several months the likes of Tony Benn have peddled deadly illusions in the UN, that imperialist den of thieves, while endorsing sanctions against Iraq, thereby legitimising the vast buildup of imperialist forces in the Gulf that today will be used as the spearhead of military invasion.

Militant/CND called the cops on us because we take our Marxist politics seriously: we exposed this pro-capitalist crap and told the truth to working people. You can't fight imperialist war by "reasoning" with the bosses or shuffling a few faces in parliament. While other left groups buried their ostensible "anti-imperialist" politics in order to "unite" with Benn, our slogans and placards made clear that only proletarian revolution can put an end to the deadly cycle of capitalist militarism. We are for the *defeat of imperialism* in the Gulf which seeks to enslave and massacre the Arab working people. Not least the defeat of imperialism would advance the possibility of socialist revolution at home. We call for mobilising the working masses in class

struggle and political strikes against the bosses. We give no political support whatsoever to Hussein, the bloody butcher of Kurds and communists. Our call is to bring down the sheiks, the colonels, the Zionist butchers—for workers revolution throughout the Middle East!

Reformists always seek to prettify the imperialist state and its armed bodies of men, and this certainly applies to the Militant tendency. Today Militant's call is for a general election to put Labour in office, but how does one "oppose imperialism" by putting war-mongering pig Kinnock into No 10! They refuse to call for the immediate unconditional withdrawal of British troops from Northern Ireland and want to organise the strike-breaking cops into unions. During the dirty Malvinas/Falklands war, they gave not-so-backhanded support to Thatcher and the Labour chauvinists by demanding "workers sanctions" against Argentina.

In a recent leaflet they falsely proclaim: "Marxists during the Second World War argued for Labour to break from the wartime coalition, nationalise the economy and then continue the war with a socialist appeal to the German workers and troops." This is social patriotic defencist tripe. While Marxists defended the Soviet Union, they were *revolutionary defeatists* within the capitalist countries, recognising that the British and American

bourgeoisies were not fighting a war against fascism but a war for imperialist interests. But for Militant, put in a Labour government that nationalises a few bankrupt factories and, *presto*, an imperialist war is turned into its opposite.

Labourite to the core, Militant mimics the methods of Kinnock, as when it threatened to finger anti-poll tax demonstrators to the state in the aftermath of the police riot in Trafalgar Square. As for the CND, which includes not a few members of what used to be called the CPGB, we recall that it sought to mobilise the capitalist press and cops against us for our insistence on raising the demand for defence of the degenerated Soviet workers state during the Cold War II 1981 anti-missile protests. In past decades fear of provoking a war with the Soviet Union to some degree restrained military adventurism by the American ruling class, but now the disintegration and capitulation of the Kremlin Stalinist bureaucracy has given Bush the green light for bloody rampage in the Gulf.

And one thing had better be crystal clear: calling the capitalist state into the workers movement, in order to suppress revolutionary politics, is downright poison. We for one are not going to be intimidated by such tactics, and any organisation with a shred of principle should repudiate this stinking practice. ■

# Europe...

(Continued from page 12)

have been the largest on the continent.

Since the German Social Democrats' vote for war credits on 4 August 1914, and the French "Communist" Party's support (on Stalin's orders) for the French government's war budget two decades later, the social-democratic and Stalinist traitors have played out their role as "labour lieutenants of the capitalist class", sabotaging revolutions and infecting the working classes with chauvinist poison. The Gulf War has exposed the "far left" as incapable of formulating a revolutionary, proletarian and internationalist opposition to the imperialist war. Instead, as usual, they tail after the reformists, this time with social-pacifist appeals to "bring the troops home".

As in 1914 when the Second International exploded with the onset of World War I, today the implosion of Stalinism in Eastern Europe has produced massive disorientation on the left. But already in these early days of the war, there are many in the ranks of the demonstrators who recognise in the ICL's stand in defence of Iraq against imperialist attack the programme of authentic socialism and communism. We fight for proletarian opposition to the war in the spirit of Lenin and Trotsky, emphasising that *the struggle against this predatory and barbaric war means the struggle to overthrow the imperialist system through class struggle at home. The crucial factor is an authentic revolutionary leadership: reforge the Fourth International as a world party of socialist revolution.*

The following reports from our comrades around Europe indicate the revolutionary opportunities posed by this "first post-Cold War war".

## De facto general strike in northern Italy

MILANO, 22 January—This morning, train engineers carried out a half-hour strike against the war in which they effectively disrupted most rail services throughout the country. In Milano, a couple of high school collectives went to the train station in Lambrate to give their support to this action. This kind of anti-war activity in the working class has been going on for the last week.

On the day Bush's ultimatum expired, the trade-union bureaucracy called for a token five-minute strike. But in the Milano area there was a three-hour strike explicitly against the war, pretty much spontaneous, involving some ten factories. There was also a mass student rally in conjunction with the workers' action, at which spokesmen for the Lega Trotskista d'Italia intervened.

The first day of the bombardment of Iraq, 17 January, workers in Milano literally walked out of the plants with their factory councils and made their way to Milano city square where 100,000 gathered at the demonstration meeting point. This included factories like Breda, Falck, Maserati and Ansaldo, important metal factories in Milano. There were also government workers, transport workers, financial centre employees and other sectors of the working class.

In most of the major Italian cities in



La Repubblica

Rome, 13 January: Massive demonstration against impending Persian Gulf war.

the north, there was a de facto general strike. There was an immediate call for a national general strike, as the workers were furious and wanting to put a halt to the atrocities that were taking place. The trade-union bureaucracy resisted all calls for a general strike with the excuse that this would damage the economy and that it would be construed as a strike against the government!

The 19 January demonstration in Milano was primarily high school students. Some 25,000 turned up and part of the march route passed in front of the Italian air force headquarters (Italy had just lost its first Tornado bomber). The LTd'I gave out several thousand copies of its declaration on the war. With placards and leaflets which read "Defend Iraq" and "Defeat the Imperialists", accompanied by soapboxing with a megaphone, they politically engaged the high school student pacifists.

The Lega Trotskista comrades also came up against Falcemartello, the Italian group linked to the British Militant group which is deeply embedded in the NATO social democracy of the Labour Party. Falcemartello chanted "General strike against the imperialist war in the Gulf", but also (vainly) chanted "Spartaco out of the march". They showed that the kind of strike that they support is one where the reformists seek to impose on the working class the social-pacifist chains that would bind them to their "own" bourgeoisie.

Despite the trade-union bureaucracy's sabotage, small sectors of militant workers continue to fight for strikes against the war. Numerous factory councils, like Ansaldo of Milano, have made clear that they will continue to pressure the union tops to call for a general strike. But the latter have sworn their fealty to Italian capitalism, and the real line of the Communist Party (soon to be "Democratic Party of the Left"), although it formally came out against the war, is to "give sanctions a chance". As PCI leader Occhetto said in parliament, to "reinforce the embargo and the international isolation of Iraq" (*L'Unità*, 17 January).

The Catholic church has played a leading role in opposition to the war and has been pushing a position ("war is an adventure with no return," as the Pope said) which has been embraced by the PCI in its bid to give concrete expression to a popular-frontist social-chauvinist resolution to the Gulf War.

PSI (Socialist) leader Craxi has gone to great lengths insisting on the necessity of the attack. The Italian bourgeoisie would have preferred a "short war", limiting wider commitments. Italy's intervention is limited, in line not only with the desires of US imperialism but also with the limited aims of the Italian bourgeoisie.

Confindustria (the industrialists' association) came out clearly for the intervention and went after the PCI over its call for the troops out. However, the pro-war coalition is extremely fragile and under much pressure. The Milano city council last night tried to pass a motion of support to the government on the Gulf. To everyone's surprise, the motion was voted down and the Socialists are particularly sore about this.

## France: marchers defy demon, chant "Mitterrand Assassin!"

PARIS, 28 January—This is a very unpopular war, at least it was before it started. Hundreds of thousands of people marched in nearly all major cities on 12 January. In factories around the country, working-class opposition to the war is apparent. Also on the 12th, rail workers in Chambéry, where mass pickets stopped the "bullet trains" during the '86 transport strike, stopped an American arms transport bound for the Gulf from Germany via Italy. On the 13th, the national CGT confederation circulated an order to all union locals to organise 15-minute strikes to "win the peace".

Attempting to line up the workers behind "His Majesty" Mitterrand's flurry of last-minute diplomatic activity (ie, to get Saddam to capitulate), the CGT called for this strike time to be used to send "peace dove" postcards to the president and to sign petitions begging deputies to vote against the war on 17 January. In the end a handful of PS (Socialist) deputies voted with the Communist Party (PCF), the fascists and de Gaulle's son and grandson against French participation in the war. They were censured but not expelled, for even Mitterrand's war minister Chevènement is under fire for his lukewarm attitude towards the war.

When the bombing started, tens of thousands took to the streets on Thursday and Friday nights, defying a government ban on demonstrations. In the face of a

massive cop presence, machine guns at the ready, chants included "Mitterrand Assassin" and "CRS [riot police] to Kuwait". The leadership was the "Appeal of the 75" marching behind a banner saying, "No to War", which on Friday became "Stop the War". The PCF, LCR (supporters of Ernest Mandel's "United Secretariat of the Fourth International"), SOS-Racisme and Greens are prominent, as well as many *beurs* (second-generation immigrants from North Africa).

The LCR whimpered, "Mitterrand, you didn't get elected to make war." In fact, the "Socialist" president was elected, with the "critical" support of the pseudo-Trotskyist LCR, on a programme of unambiguous backing for NATO. On the left, only our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyste de France can say that they never called to vote for Algerian war criminal Mitterrand or his popular front!

On the 12th, contingents of passing Palestinians cheered as they passed the LTF's banner calling for defence of Iraq and defeat of imperialism, prominently placed on an elevated sidewalk two metres above the march. They punctuated the air with the *Intifada's* V-for-victory sign and snapped up copies of *le Bolchévik*. In Rouen, 30 people marched behind the LTF's banner, including CGT members and high school students.

North African workers and youth in France were initially dazed with anguish, as the bombing raids relentlessly rained down destruction on the Arab population in Baghdad, and the imperialist propaganda machine spewed out the lie that Saddam had been KOed without resistance. The next day they breathed a sigh of relief when the Iraqi Scuds exploded the premature triumphalism of the racist imperialists.

The working-class population of North African origin has been targeted as a potential "fifth column" in the government's "anti-terrorist" campaign: post office workers are requisitioned into security crews to make rounds and check the wastebaskets for bombs. TV shots show the Champs-Élysées at night looking like a glittery ghost town. The press played up a run on gun shops in the south, making it seem like the entire population was arming for imminent pogroms.

The *beur* youth, for the most part French citizens, have come to identify with the Palestinian *Intifada* and now Iraq, as their future looks increasingly hopeless here. *Radio Beur* in Paris is receiving more than 1500 phone calls an hour against the war. The bombing of Israel sharpened the polarisation in this country, especially on the campuses. Four Zionist leaders of SOS-Racisme immediately resigned from that organisation when it participated in the anti-war demo on Friday night.

It is a truly unholy alliance that leads the peace movement—the Communist Party/CGT and the virulently Russiaphobic social democrats of Pierre Lambert's pseudo-Trotskyist PCI. Denis Langlois, the PCI-influenced head of the "Appeal of the 75", calls for a general strike against the war, while looking to the CIA-aided FO and Mitterrand-supporting CFDT labour federations to implement it. Now an assembly of the "Appeal" is scheduled to debate what position to take on Iraq: an LCR spokesman is quoted as saying, "If we discuss that, the movement will split" (*Libération*, 28 January).

Squabbles in the "peace movement" reflect dissension in the French bourgeoisie, graphically shown in the zigzag policies of its governmental executive arm. For "negotiations" before the shooting started, Mitterrand now wants to show his military mettle, by turning over command of the French forces to the Americans. (So much for France's vaunted "operational autonomy" in NATO!) But these

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disagreements are simply over how best to defend the Middle Eastern and North African interests of this second-rate imperialist power, whose principal exports are cognac and Exocets. The PCF leadership's "anti-war" line waving the French Tricolor is chauvinist poison, which plays into the hands of Le Pen's fascists.

Now Mitterrand's police have banned three pro-Iraq Arab-language newspapers, on the grounds that in the present context they could "provoke disturbances of public order". And they are threatening to prosecute Gilles Perrault, the author of *The Red Orchestra* and a prominent opponent of French colonialism's dirty war in Algeria, for his call on French soldiers to desert over the Gulf War.

The Algerian War brought France to the brink of a civil war, and mobilisations for solidarity with the Vietnamese Revolution were what sparked the movement that led to the barricades and the pre-revolutionary general strike of 1968. Where the PCI marches today with signs saying, "No to War" and "No More Vietnams", the Ligue Trotskyste says war is the mother of revolution and proclaims: "Vietnam Was a Victory!"

### Germany: bourgeoisie looks east to Baltics, not south to Gulf

BERLIN, 28 January—The biggest demonstrations in Europe against the Middle East war have been in Germany: over 200,000 in Bonn yesterday, 150,000 in Berlin and tens of thousands more in Hamburg and elsewhere. This is no accident, for the German bourgeoisie sees the Gulf War to the south as at best a diversion from its real interests to the east, where it is aiming at the dismantling of the Soviet Union. "Unity chancellor" Kohl certainly intends to be in on the division of the spoils if Iraq is defeated. But if Washington has a hard time overcoming the "Vietnam syndrome", German imperialism has an ever bigger problem with what might be called the "Second World War syndrome".

The concerns of the German capitalist ruling class are refracted through the petty-bourgeois, German nationalist peace movement and trade-union bureaucracy. On the eve of D-Day for the US/UN *Diktat* to Iraq, the DGB labour federation called for pacifist demonstrations, which targeted Saddam Hussein as the "guilty party". Now scruffy, purple-haired Autonomen could unite with union bureaucrats in three-piece suits, sitting in at the entrances of arms manufacturers said to be breaking the blockade of Iraq. The DGB and the powerful IG-Metall union also called for "five minutes of silence" work stoppages. As the Spartakist Workers Party (SpAD) declaration on the war noted, "the bureaucrats will use any excuse to silence the working class."

However, the response to this tokenistic call has sometimes been more than the bureaucrats bargained for. The German working class has no interest in the imperialists' war aims in the Middle East or Eastern Europe. In the SPD stronghold of Düsseldorf, 80,000 workers followed the DGB call for a five-minute anti-war stoppage on the 16th. The day before, 150 apprentices at Daimler-Benz in Stuttgart and 400 workers at Bosch-Leinfelden south of Stuttgart staged 30-minute work stoppages. In Hamburg, work stoppages included the underground, buses, half the harbour and a section of the airport. Social Democrat (SPD) and Green-led teachers unions have organised student "strikes" and mass student demonstrations, but they feature school principals or the state education minister as the main speaker!

At a Gulf "peace" demonstration on 12 January, a group of Autonomen punks tore down the SpAD banner declaring "Defend Iraq! For the Defeat of USA/

NATO Imperialism!" These anarcho-chauvinists place themselves in the service of Greater Germany no less than do the Nazi skinhead terrorists who have been rampaging in the former East Germany. But at the same time that union bureaucrats, social democrats and Green peaceniks wrap themselves in the black-red-and-gold German flag, there are many others who look to the red flag of socialism. On 13 January, well over 100,000 came out to demonstrate on the anniversary of the assassination of Communist leaders Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht. This year like last, the SpAD commemorated the "Three L's" (including Lenin!), laying a wreath and soap-boxing under our banners. Over 1400



Berlin, 26 January: Spartakist Workers Party of Germany banner at Alexanderplatz protest against Gulf War.

issues of *Spartakist* were sold.

Now that the US is using Turkey as an aircraft carrier for bombing missions against northern Iraq, Germany may be directly drawn into the war. NATO secretary general Wörner declared that if Iraq defends itself from US/Turkish attacks, it would be an attack on the entire alliance, compelling all NATO members to respond. Kohl wants to use this war to eliminate the clause from the constitution that constrains the use of German armed forces outside of the NATO theatre. But actually sending the Bundeswehr into Iraq is another matter—it could be bad for business in the region and elsewhere.

The *Financial Times* (22 January) reported that "Germans are paying relatively more attention to the Soviet crisis than other Europeans." Here, too, the Social Democrat-led DGB is in the forefront of German imperialist *Ostpolitik* (eastern policy). Their call for anti-war demonstrations on the 26th included: "Send our peace demand to the address of the Soviet Union, to Mikhail Gorbachev, to stop the military aggression in the Baltic." At the demonstration itself, the Social Democrats repeatedly warned against anti-war protests taking on "anti-American" tones. The Spartakist Workers Party, which uniquely opposed the West German annexation of the DDR (the East German bureaucratically deformed workers state) last year, has repeatedly warned that the SPD is a Trojan horse of counterrevolution.

Having turned the DDR over to the Frankfurt bankers in a "peaceful" counterrevolution, now Modrow, Gysi & Co of the PDS (Party of Democratic Socialism, successor party to the former East German Stalinists) want to smooth German imperialism's *Drang nach Osten* (drive to the East). On 14 January, the PDS joined hands with the SPD, Greens and Christian Democrats in a "human chain" demonstration in Berlin that stretched from the American to the Soviet consulates, demanding "No force in Lithuania and the Gulf".

This extraparliamentary "Grand Coalition" obscenely equates Gorbachev's crackdown on Baltic counterrevolutionary secessionists inside the USSR with US

imperialism's campaign of mass murder against Iraq. (One day after the US launched its bombs on Iraq, the PDS issued an unspeakably shameful leaflet stating that "24 hours are enough"! In the Bundestag PDS superstar Gysi said: "If Germany were neutral, the government could be a force for peace negotiations." No! "Neutral" or not, the Fourth Reich of German imperialism is a force for economic spoliation and war, no less than is the decaying American empire which seeks to hide its interests behind Hitlerite talk of a "new world order".

The "human chain" demanded "Freedom for the Baltics" and "Red tanks out of Lithuania" and was followed by a vigil in front of the Soviet embassy that in-

McCann (a supporter of the Cliffite Irish SWM) cynically devoted a substantial portion of his speech to "defeat of the West and victory for Iraq", whereas in November his group boycotted a Trinity College "Break the Blockade" action, initiated by the DSYG, because it took a side against imperialism.

### Britain: Labour lackeys of Bush's war

LONDON, 22 January—The British have the largest component of imperialist forces in the Gulf after the Americans, so Neil Kinnock and the Labour Party and trade-union tops are marching in lockstep with the Tory government. As a result, since the bombing began in the Gulf anti-war demonstrations in England have been far smaller than those on the continent.

At a London demonstration of about 15,000 on 19 January, called by Labour Left MP Tony Benn's "Stop the War" committee, there was little trade-union presence. However, there were substantial numbers of foreign workers, many of whom greeted with clenched fists the *Workers Hammer* headline, "Defend Iraq! Defeat US/British imperialism!" Much of our sales went to Irish, Asian, black and other minorities, whose families have experienced first-hand the savagery of British colonialism and imperialism, and some Asian workers joined our contingent. (In contrast to the SL's forthright stand, Workers Power and its bloc partners in the "Hands Off the Middle East" committee again carried no placards or banners calling for military victory to Iraq.)

On 22 January, SL supporters participated in a lunchtime anti-war picket at London University's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). The Ministry of Defence has declared SOAS a "soft target" for "terrorist attack", an excuse to intimidate and threaten students, many of whom are from the Middle East. Already several dozen Iraqis and Palestinians in Britain have been jailed, many facing deportation. The SL says: "No deportations, no victimisations, no to internment!"

In Glasgow, on the 19th, SL supporters and sympathisers distributed a leaflet titled, "Spartacists call for defence of Iraq, Militant/CND call the cops". A Militant supporter who had sought to use the Glasgow police to exclude the Spartacist contingent is a NALGO official. As the leaflet, distributed to NALGO and other union contingents, noted: "it's not just the Spartacist League that's being set up here, at a time when the bourgeois state is gearing up an arsenal of repression, anti-'red' witchhunts and press censorship to regiment the population for a bloody, unpopular war".

Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 519, 1 February 1991.

cluded Republikaner fascists! Indeed, when Reichs chancellor Kohl looks out over the Bundestag benches, from Right to Left, he can say like Kaiser Wilhelm at the outset of World War I: "I see no parties here, only Germans."

### Ireland: Refuse to handle US/NATO warplanes at Shannon!

DUBLIN—The Dublin Spartacist Youth Group (DSYG) calls for trade-union action to boycott refuelling of military transport at Shannon International Airport, used by US warplanes on their way to the Gulf. This is not an abstract demand. The Dublin Council of Trade Unions has recently appealed to trade unionists at Shannon to implement such action.

Members of the Labour Party and Workers Party—organisers of the Gulf Peace Committee—bogus "anti-imperialists" who support the presence of British troops in Northern Ireland, tried to silence the DSYG contingent in a Dublin anti-war demo on 17 January. But sympathetic Republicans intervened in our defence. At the Dublin demo, Eamonn

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## Spartacist supporter arrested for calling for defence of Iraq—Down with government gag! Defeat US/British imperialism!

Workers Hammer prints below the Spartacist League statement issued on 4 February.

On 2 February police arrested and attacked a Spartacist supporter at the CND-organised demonstration protesting the Gulf War in London. The Spartacist contingent marched behind a banner which called for "Defeat US/British imperialism" and "Defend Iraq". Police threatened those on the Spartacist contingent that anyone chanting the slogan "Victory to Iraq" was liable to arrest under the Public Order Act. Comrade Green was seized by the cops after demonstrators in the Spartacist and other contingents refused to stop chanting their slogans. While the march halted for some 20 minutes and outraged protesters demanded "Let him go!" our comrade was dragged away and eventually thrown into a police van. Once inside, one of the arresting officers hit comrade Green on the face with a helmet; the comrade sustained a nasty injury to his mouth. He has been charged with "obstructing a police officer" and "threatening behaviour", the latter charge being a Public Order Act offence. The threats to protesters and the arrest itself are a direct implementation of the Crown Prosecution Service instructions to police on the day; this was revealed to the arrested comrade by police statements made at the station where he was charged.

We in the Spartacist League say that the workers of the world have a side in this war. We are for the *defeat* of the imperialist madmen who A-bombed Hiroshima, carpet-bombed Vietnam and today threaten to deploy nuclear weapons against Iraq. This war is being waged

for naked plunder, in part to strengthen the hand of the declining US robber imperialists against their German and Japanese capitalist rivals. The US and British governments are targeting the population of a small Arab country with bloody butchery. We say: *Defend Iraq!* Carried out with the criminal complicity of the Kremlin Stalinists, this war further threatens the Soviet Union with imperialist encirclement.

A stinging defeat for US and British imperialism in its onslaught against the Iraqi people can spark revolutionary struggle throughout the Middle East, toppling all the despots of the region—not just those out of favour with London and Washington today. The

world's oil wealth, from the North Sea to the Persian Gulf, belongs to the working people. Here we call on the working class to mobilise their social power in political strike and boycott actions against the exploiters and oppressors at home and their colonialist Gulf War. We fight to build a revolutionary party by breaking the working class from the Labour traitors right and "left". If imperialist carnage is not to be the continuing fate of humanity this system of war and destruction must be swept away through proletarian revolution.

The likes of Tony Benn and the CND endorsed the sanctions against Iraq, the prelude to war. They promoted the United Nations fig leaf for the vast build-up

of forces which have now been unleashed in the filthy war against Iraq. Now the CND leadership—these "pacifists" whose overriding loyalty is to the warmongering Labour Party of Neil Kinnock—have done their bit to set the stage for police repression against leftist participating in anti-war protests.

At the beginning of the 2 February demonstration, a line of police moved into the crowd, threatening supporters of the Hands Off the Middle East Committee with arrest if they did not pull down a banner calling for "Victory to Iraq". CND stewards applauded vociferously when the banner came down. At the end of the march, the banner was raised again

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London, 2 February: police carry out government ban at anti-war protest. Cops arrest and attack Spartacist supporter.

## Anti-war work stoppages, protests across Europe

Over the past two weeks, millions have demonstrated in various European cities calling for peace in the Middle East. Already on the day after the US began bombing Baghdad, there were anti-war work stoppages in France, Germany, Italy and Spain, ranging from a token five minutes to de facto citywide general strikes. The outpouring of protests indicates revulsion at the mass murder being unleashed by the NATO governments in the Middle East, and deep fears that the Gulf War will spill over to a continent that has been engulfed in conflagration twice already in this century.

This has put tremendous pressure on

the leaders of the trade unions and mass reformist workers parties who seek to bind the masses to the interests of their "own" national bourgeoisies. And it has opened tremendous opportunities for Marxist revolutionaries who fight for an internationalist opposition to imperialist war. As various pseudo-Trotskyists simply tail after pacifist sentiment and the reformist misleaders, the sections of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) have been unique in calling forthrightly for the defeat of imperialism and defence of Iraq.

When "Communist", "Socialist" or "Labour" misleaders talk vaguely of

"peace" in the Middle East, they offer "UN sanctions" as the alternative to war—in other words, starving the Iraqi masses into submission instead of killing them outright. They thus legitimise the vast imperialist military buildup in the Gulf, supposedly there to enforce the US-ordered "UN" embargo that was the prelude to the present barbaric war on Iraq. In so doing, they call for a more "rational" policy for their capitalist masters, often in league with "enlightened" bourgeois leaders who worry about an explosion of Arab anger provoked by the war.

Behind the calls for negotiations from

the Common Market 12, right up to the eve of Bush's 15 January ultimatum to Saddam Hussein, there was also a fear of what the US will do to its imperialist "allies" (rivals) if it succeeds in regaining control of world oil supplies. This concern is particularly strong in Germany, which together with Japan is the indirect target of Washington's Persian Gulf invasion. Particularly following its annexation of East Germany, Bonn is looking East for its expansion room (and oil supplies), and has refused to send its military forces against Iraq. It's not surprising, therefore, that the German "peace" demonstrations

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