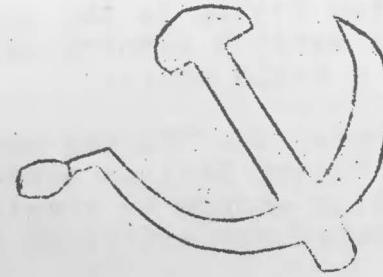


Finisbury

Communist



AN ANTI-REVISIONIST JOURNAL

N° 313

FEB 1991

WHAT CLIMBDOWN?

Right up to the last moment, the pundits were expecting Iraq to pull out of at least part of Kuwait. The United States refused to negotiate for anything except a complete and unconditional pull out.

All everybody had to do was stand firm and call Iraq's bluff. But Iraq was not bluffing. And hence we have war.

Nobody really expects Iraq to beat America, Britain and their allies militarily.

If Iraq was solely concerned with military victories, it would have done better to have gone straight into Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates last August when there was nothing to stop it. Alternatively, Iraq could have made a first strike against the US forces or against Israel before it was attacked itself.

As things were, Iraq sat back and waited to be attacked. This has put Iraq at a military disadvantage. But it has also given it the political advantage, at least as far as the Arab and Islamic peoples are concerned.

Iraq has grabbed what is rightfully Iraq's. For this it is being attacked by the major world imperialist powers and their puppets.

Iraq's firm stand means that Britain and America are faced with a continuously escalating mess. Even if Iraq loses abjectly, the problems which it was facing have still got to be solved. The Kurds will have been presented with a golden opportunity of establishing their own state. Whatever US puppet regime is set up in Baghdad will be unable to cope with them and with Iraq's persistent and growing financial crisis.

Millions of Arabs will contrast the subservience of their own rulers with Iraq's stand. They will take appropriate action.

The United States is the one superpower which is left. By superpower is meant a country which is capable of an active military role on a world scale.

Up till now, the USA has managed to attract considerable support for its United Nations anti-Iraq manoeuvres. Even so, few countries are foolish enough to commit military forces to the Gulf. Mrs Thatcher was notorious for her pro-American approach.

Provided Iraq continues to stand firm, the only way for the US now is down. Already People's China, representing more people than the rest of the Security Council put together, has distanced itself from the United States' military action.

The United States is in an economic mess. The more it can be defeated or isolated, or even be shown to have miscalculated, the more difficult will it be for it to play its superpower games again.

The United States is not likely to pay much attention to British left wing calls for it to get out of the Gulf. As it is on a hiding to nothing out there, nobody should be unduly worried by this.

The important thing is to use the occasion to break the Anglo-US alliance once and for all.

As communists said about the Korean war, 40 years ago. Not a man, not a gun for America's war! Hands off Iraq!

OUT OF THE BARREL OF A GUN

Gorbachev was all in favour of a deadline for compliance with the United States (sorry, United Nations) anti-Iraq resolutions.

Coincidentally, the Soviet armed forces intervened in Lithuania and Latvia about the time of the deadline, when world attention was focussed elsewhere. Several unarmed people were killed.

When the Chinese communists originally said that political power grows out of the barrel of a gun, this seemed outlandish to many. It is now proved to be true all over the world. Governments may be elected. But attention is concentrated on whether the armed forces will allow them to come to power.

Political parties still have some advantages. They can create enthusiasm among the people for reform, production, hard work, belt-tightening, etc. Armed forces can not. Particularly not alien armed forces.

Without the enthusiasm of the people, things just will not happen.

Official "communism" suffered its biggest eclipse in Hungary, Czechoslovakia and East Germany, where alien armed forces and puppet police were used against the people.

We do not know how many Lithuanians and Latvians remained pro-Soviet. Their numbers will be a good deal less after the killings by the Soviet armed forces.

Those Lithuanians and Latvians who were sceptical about the value of guns will now be doing their best to obtain some.

UNITY - AROUND WHAT?

At the CPB's Unity Conference on January 19th, speakers from the following organisations were permitted by the chair.

Communist Party of Britain	23
New Communist Party	16
Communist Party of Great Britain	5
Others	5
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In addition, Mike Hicks of the CPB and Eric Trevett of the NCP were allowed time from the platform; Mary Rosser and Monty Goldman of the Morning Star and CPB were able to make an appeal for the Morning Star. Fraternal delegates also had a look in. One of these was Bill Pomeroy from the Phillipines Communist Party. (Yes, it's the CP that is not fighting the government). Another was Sonia Bunting of the South African Communist Party, on the point of going back after 27 years in the UK, much the same time as Bill has been here.

Nearly all the speakers were desperate for unity. A United Communist party was needed to do this, that, and the other. Fight fascism, pull Britain out of the Common Market, provide comradeship, you name it.

No mention was made of the colossal differences which exist, even between the CPB and the NCP, for whom the conference was evidently designed.

To the CPB, Gorbachev is the greatest thing since sliced caviare. To the NCP he is a sell-out. The CPB calls for sanctions to have time to work. The NCP is against sanctions. The CPB supports a

moderately revisionist version of the British Road to Socialism. The NCP does not.

It was generally agreed by CPB and NCP and the few dissident CPGB speakers to have unity in action around the issues plus further contacts and discussions.

If anybody thinks this is going to lead to a united party, they will have a rude awakening.

THAT WAS THE MOST UNKINDEST CUT OF ALL.

Gorby has suspended the 6000 daily order for the Morning Star for 1991 because of "a shortage of foreign exchange". This will entail a loss to the paper of £400,000. The Star has already lost £400,000 because of the cut from 12,000 to 6,000 in 1990.

Why cut the lot? Surely somebody in the Soviet Union wants to read the paper. Or were the whole 6,000 going for immediate pulping?

Suspension is a nice word. The Morning Star has been slavish in its adoration of Gorbachev. Perestroika still means something to the Star. The paper practically blamed the unarmed Lithuanians for wilfully attacking the tanks.

And now the poor old Star has got to carry on being slavish for 1991, without the £400,000 bribe. All on the offchance that sales to the Soviet Union might cease to be suspended in 1992.

As Lord Wentworth said just before they chopped his head off "Put not your trust in princes for in them is no salvation".

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE UNITY CONFERENCE DISCUSSION

MR. (MS). USSR gave us 5 days' notice of loss of sales
KD. I welcome no more subsidies from USSR.

RG. (Wales CPB). We ignore the national question at our peril

SE. (TGWU). Unless we get unity there will be no communist organisations left.

RF. (NCP). We're in the worst situation since Noah's Flood
NCP Youth Movement rep. : Gorbachev leadership has now given green light to imperialist aggression in Iraq

Doncaster CPB Rep.: The average age of our branch is 28. All activists. We work with NCP.

PC. (Greenwich NCP). Modern revisionism denies the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Printed and published by Finsbury Communist Association
72 Compton Street, London EC1V 0BN