

Major/Kinnock right behind Bush's war

Defend Iraq!

Hosefros/NY Times



Defeat US/British imperialism!

For the new year world capitalism openly promises war and depression. As the imperialists trumpet the "death of Communism", the economies of the bankrupt US empire as well as the British ex-empire, to name two, are in the kind of tailspins foreseen by Karl Marx and others over a century ago. While Gorbachev & Co rush to join the Western bourgeoisie in stomping on the grave of Lenin, Bush's White House is calling forth a major imperialist military adventure in a desperate attempt to rescue the American empire from the dustbin of history, confirming Lenin's insistence that imperialism continually produces war.

And the war drums get louder: the heavy US tank battalions from the NATO/German theatre are now arriving and getting a sand-colour paint job; the second wave of aircraft carriers (*America* and *Roosevelt*) just left the East Coast and will reportedly be on station by 12 January. Britain and France have filled out their expeditionary corps. Thatcher's successor Major remains the staunchest of European allies in the US war drive in the Gulf with slavish backing by the Kinnock leadership of the Labour Party. Medical reservists are being called up (in the largest numbers since Suez) after it became clear that volunteers were in short supply. When the Commander-in-Chief of British forces in the Gulf, Lieutenant-General Sir Peter de la Billiere said that a war would be "swift" and casualties not "unnecessarily high" the brigadier heading up the Desert Rats, Patrick Cordingley, publicly disagreed. He said: "You can't expect two forces of this

size not to cause considerable casualties, and the British public must, in my view, be prepared for that" (*Guardian*, 30 November 1990).

The bottom line is that *Bush wants war* for reasons that have little to do with Saddam Hussein and of course nothing to do with high moral principle. The accelerating slide of the US economy into a bottomless pit has only led to a more frenzied escalation of the military mobilisation despite the mounting costs. (War as a "solution" to economic crises... Karl Marx right again!) On 29 November the US rammed its war resolution No. 678

through the UN Security Council, twisting arms, crassly buying votes and summoning all the foreign ministers to New York to sign on. The next day, Bush announced a "peace" sop—namely that he would send Secretary of State Baker to Baghdad to meet with Hussein. Hussein released all the hostages as a goodwill gesture. But the White House is determined that *the war over Kuwait must take place*, they can't have their *casus belli* reduced to such a ridiculous issue as sovereignty over a couple of uninhabited islands.

As we go to press, US Secretary of State Baker has announced following his

9 January meeting with the Iraqi foreign minister Aziz that: "The Iraqi leadership must have no doubt that the 28 nations which have deployed forces to the Gulf in support of the United Nations have both the power and the will to evict Iraq from Kuwait." Ominously, Baker continued that he "did not hear anything that to me demonstrated flexibility" (ie, Saddam's unconditional surrender to the imperialists). Aziz announced: "We shall not accept to be treated as a nation of underdogs." It's not as if the Iraqi strongman is unwilling to deal. As his information minister Naji Al-Hadithi, pointedly told a journalist for the *New York Village Voice* (1 January):

"So we do control 20 per cent of the world's oil. Until August 2 we were exporting one-third of it to the U.S., even though we knew you had a hostile policy toward us. You know we cannot irrigate the desert with our oil. We cannot drink it. All we can do is sell it."

Al-Hadithi pointed out how the US uses its control of the grain market and technology as a club with which to beat foes and allies over the head—"you are always using food and know-how as political weapons in the Third World"—and added: "As far as Kuwait is concerned, it seems that all the Emir is interested in is his 70 wives. He still has all his money, even without Kuwait. You want to make the Kuwaitis happy? Then why not have the U.S. rent him another 70 rooms over at the Taif Sheraton where he's staying."

Establishment "foreign policy experts" have mooted terms for a deal, in which

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Workers Hammer

Spartacist contingent on 10 October, 1990 London demonstration.

PDC demands freedom now for Birmingham Six

We print below the statement of the Partisan Defence Committee sent on 3 January to Home Secretary Kenneth Baker.

Dear Home Secretary,

The Partisan Defence Committee vehemently protests the continued racist and vindictive imprisonment of the Birmingham Six: Patrick Hill, Hugh Callaghan, Johnny Walker, Richard McIlkenny, Gerry Hunter and Billy Power.

Framed for the 1974 Birmingham pub bombings of which they are innocent, these men were victims of British "justice" long before they ever got to the shabby proceedings which passed for their trial. Evidence of their having played any part in the bombings was non-existent. Beatings, sleep deprivation and psychological torture were used by the notorious

West Midlands police to extract four phoney "confessions", all of which were later retracted. Walker had his life threatened at gun-point. Power was dragged to a window by detectives threatening to throw him to his death. Yet evidence and testimony by the Six of these beatings and death threats were ignored throughout the trial.

The only other basis for their conviction rested on the highly dubious evidence of Home Office forensic scientist Frank Skuse purporting to show that two of the men had handled nitroglycerine. The tests Skuse carried out were based on a procedure so discredited that it is no longer even used. Any forensic "evidence" of the men having handled nitroglycerine could be accounted for by the men having been playing cards. Now Skuse has been "retired" for "limited efficiency" and many



Press Association

The Birmingham Six photographed shortly after their arrest. Free them now!

of the cops involved in framing the Six are under investigation for corruption and fabricating evidence as latter-day members of the infamous West Midlands Serious Crimes Squad. Grotesquely their victims remain imprisoned.

Evidence was never the real issue around the case of the Birmingham Six anyway, except insofar as it had to be fabricated. What was at issue was the determination of the British state to bludgeon into submission anyone who resisted racist, imperialist terror. The Labour Home Secretary used the bombings to introduce the draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act, the basics of which both the Labour Party and the Tories have supported ever since. Like the Guildford Four and the Maguire Seven, the Birmingham Six were "guilty" only of being Irish and in some of their cases of wishing to attend the funeral of a friend who was an IRA member.

The Birmingham Six are not the only victims of British state terror. The Tottenham Three were imprisoned in an attempt to cow those in the minority communities who would rise up and defend their homes and families against

racist cop rampage. The PDC demands their freedom now! The same judicial system, personified by the likes of Lord Lane, was used during the miners strike to frame and imprison hundreds of the most militant miners in their heroic struggle to defend their union and their communities against capitalist devastation.

Now the Six and their tenacious defenders have won for the third time the right to appeal their life convictions. The future of these men must not rest with the reactionary dinosaurs sitting in the English Court of Appeal. These Lords of injustice have for years, like Denning in 1981, pontificated about the need to preserve the "integrity" of the British judiciary over the most basic rights of these men.

We demand that the continued vindictive, racist imprisonment of the Birmingham Six cease now. They must be released immediately and your office issue a clear, unequivocal declaration of their innocence.

Yours sincerely

Robert Cole,
for the Partisan Defence Committee

Imperialism and war



TROTSKY

With the collapse of the Stalinist regimes of Eastern Europe and the crisis in the Soviet Union, Western capitalist rulers proclaimed "victory" in the Cold War. Liberals spoke of a "peace dividend". Yet at this very moment Washington launched a new imperialist war in the Persian Gulf, targeting Iraq and seeking to reassert US military dominance as it trumpeted a New World Order. This reaffirms Lenin's dictum that



LENIN

imperialism inevitably engenders wars for markets, plunder, subjugation of small nations and world domination. In 1917, as he politically armed the Bolsheviks to undertake the fight for power to the soviets, Lenin submitted this thesis as part of the party programme.

World capitalism has at the present time, i.e., about the beginning of the twentieth century, reached the stage of imperialism. Imperialism, or the epoch of finance capital, is a high stage of development of the capitalist economic system, one in which monopolist associations of capitalists—syndicates, cartels, and trusts—have assumed decisive importance; in which enormously concentrated banking capital has fused with industrial capital; in which the export of capital to foreign countries has assumed vast dimensions; in which the whole world has been divided up territorially among the richer countries, and the economic carve-up of the world among international trusts has begun.

Imperialist wars, i.e., wars for world domination, for markets for banking capital and for the subjugation of small and weaker nations, are inevitable under such a state of affairs. The first great imperialist war, the war of 1914-17, is precisely such a war.

The extremely high level of development which world capitalism in general has attained, the replacement of free competition by monopoly capitalism, the fact that the banks and the capitalist associations have prepared the machinery for the social regulation of the process of production and distribution of products, the rise in the cost of living and increased oppression of the working class by the syndicates due to the growth of capitalist monopolies, the tremendous obstacles standing in the way of the proletariat's economic and political struggle, the horrors, misery, ruin, and brutalisation caused by the imperialist war—all these factors transform the present stage of capitalist development into an era of proletarian socialist revolution.

That era has dawned.

Only a proletarian socialist revolution can lead humanity out of the impasse which imperialism and imperialist wars have created.

—VI Lenin, "Revision of the Party Programme" (May 1917)

WORKERS HAMMER



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For a Socialist United States of Europe!

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Ranting bigot sends down 16

Down with anti-gay, anti-sex witch hunt!

In a decision without effective precedent in English legal history, Judge James Rant convicted 15 men on 19 December for engaging in sado-masochistic sexual activity in an absolutely classic case of "crimes" without victims. While the men do not deny their sexual practices, they did not know they were doing anything "illegal", nor did anyone else for that matter until Judge Rant's ruling. All acts took place in private between consenting individuals. The 19 December decision not only fuels the witch hunt inaugurated against homosexuals in the wake of the AIDS hysteria but also sets an ominous precedent for further state interference in and regulation of consensual sexual acts between and amongst individuals. Indeed, Rant asserted that consent was not a factor in the defence. Government, get your snoops out of the bedroom now!

For an example of sadistic torture one can look at the way these men are being treated by the bourgeois state. Eight of them have been sentenced to prison terms—two for as long as four and a half years and the remaining seven have been convicted with some form of probation (another man earlier in the case received a two-year conditional discharge). They were formally convicted on such charges as "keeping a disorderly house", "assault", "aiding and abetting actual bodily harm" on themselves and others, and publishing "indecent" photographs. There was no jury and Rant dredged the law books to get his convictions. All 16 men have had their lives ruined. Their names, photos and addresses have been published widely in the bourgeois papers and most of the men have lost their jobs. Those who go to prison will be subjected to extreme abuse from some prison guards and some of their fellow prisoners. Drop all the charges against the 16! Free the eight imprisoned men now!

When looking for a legal "precedent" under which to try this case, all the state could find was one prosecution of a couple for spanking each other in the 1930s. Moreover, on the basis of the videos these men had made for their private use, the police originally investigated possible "murder" charges—even bringing out sniffer dogs in one case to dig up a garden. As the *Independent* (20 December 1990) put it: "after a huge investigation it could not produce one genuine victim". When the state found no "murders" (or even any case of medical treatment for injuries) it went ahead with the so-called trial anyway based on both the judge's and policemen's "repulsion" of videos. Who cares if they were repulsed—the videos weren't made to sexually excite them in the first place.

The fact that Judge Rant went out of his way in passing sentence to announce, "This is not a witch-hunt against homosexuals..." (*Guardian* 20 December 1990), is a dead giveaway that the issue of homophobia is indeed deeply linked to the case going to trial in the first place; much was made of the "corruption" of "younger men". The bourgeois media reportage of the case highlighted the fact that one man who took part in the group's activities had died of AIDS and another was HIV positive. It was government inflamed AIDS-related hysteria of the mid-1980s that paved the way for the viciously anti-homosexual Section 28 law



Bill Robinson

Kensington in London, August 1989: singer Jimmy Somerville at Act Up demonstration protesting reactionary bourgeois anti-AIDS hysteria.

— one of the most draconian anti-gay laws in Europe. In this climate over 5000 homosexuals were convicted under various "laws" in 1988 while murderous assaults on homosexuals are rapidly escalating on the streets. The profound anti-homosexual prejudice that pervades the courts has meant that several of the defendants in the trial received much harsher sentences than some convicted "gay-bashers".

Many of this group's activities were more "heavy" than, for example, prostitutes spanking members of the British establishment which featured in the Cynthia Payne trial. The fact is that, just as in the Payne case, there were no "victims". It can be pointed out that genuine bestiality and brutality of the public school life (today more psychological than in the past when it also had a large physical component) which is deemed a necessary test of manhood for public school boys groomed for the ruling circles, may well have played a role in informing the preferences for certain sexual activities in this case. Only recently were such barbarities as caning banned in schools.

When two members of the Paedophile Information Exchange were imprisoned for advocating that youth under the "age of consent" should be allowed to screw, we published "Free the jailed PIE members!" (*Workers Hammer* no 64, December 1984) laying out our opposition to age of consent laws (and moreover laws against "buggery", "sodomy" etc). We said then: "As Marxists we do not presume to advocate any particular mode of consensual sexual behaviour." We oppose attempts to fit human sexuality into legislated norms. The guiding principle for sexual relations should be one of effective consent—mutual agreement and understanding as opposed to coercion. The state has no business interfering!

But state interference is exactly what

dience and to inculcating reactionary values.

Fighting the victimisation of these men is a test of basic political decency. While even the bourgeois *Times* and *Independent* have editorialised (with accompanying bourgeois moralism) against the court's decision, the Labour Party has remained silent. Of course the same Labour Party not only aided and abetted the passage of the vile anti-homosexual Section 28 but Labour's Neil "I am a reactionary" Kinnock conducted his very own anti-gay purge within the party during the last general election. Labour "lefts" such as Clare Short and Dawn Primarolo have been in the forefront of the reactionary anti-pornography "banning" campaign.

In contrast to the rampant social reaction fostered by the decrepit capitalist rulers, the Russian Bolsheviks under Lenin and Trotsky swept away the garbage of tsarist reaction in the October Revolution. A pamphlet written in the early days of the Revolution by Dr Grigori Batkis, director of the Moscow Institute of Social Hygiene, explained the Soviets' revolutionary laws:

"It declares the absolute non-interference of the state and society into sexual matters, so long as nobody is injured and no one's interests are encroached upon...."

"Concerning homosexuality, sodomy, and various other forms of sexual gratification, which are set down in European legislation as offenses against public morality—Soviet legislation treats these exactly the same as so-called 'natural' intercourse. All forms of sexual intercourse are private matters."

—quoted in John Lauritsen and David Thorstad, *The Early Homosexual Rights Movement* (1974)

It is in the interests of the workers movement and all those who would defend basic democratic rights to smash this outrageous verdict and free the imprisoned men. Where there is no crime, there should be no victims. Government out of the bedroom! ■

Just out!
Women and Revolution

Winter 1990-91, no 38
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Leninist scabs on defence of Iraq

Using Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait as a pretext, the imperialists are poised to rain death and destruction on the Arab masses for the sake of Big Oil. Bush, Major, Mitterrand et al are enemies not only of their working masses at home but are a deadly threat to the proletariat and the oppressed of the whole world. The defeat of the imperialists in a shooting war with Iraq would be a victory for the international proletariat. Revolutionaries have a clear duty to mobilise the working class in *military defence* of Iraq against imperialist aggression. At the same time, we do not give one ounce of political support to Saddam Hussein, the bloody butcher of Kurds and communists, and we call for proletarian revolution throughout the Middle East against the sheiks, colonels and Zionist butchers.

Numerous fake-left groups give lip service to opposing imperialism while in practice subordinating themselves to being a left tail on the popular front "peace" movement engineered by the likes of Tony Benn. At first glance, the *Leninist* organisation might seem to be a militant alternative: they ostentatiously denounce Benn for his pro-sanctions call; in counterposition to the Labourite crowd like Workers Power, Socialist Organiser etc, *Leninist* calls for standing candidates against Neil Kinnock's chauvinist pro-war outfit. Yet at the same time, *Leninist* argues for a bizarre position of "a pox on both your houses": "Fighting for defeat of the US-led war machine in the Gulf should not lead anyone to call for the victory of Saddam Hussein's Iraq" (*Leninist* no 97, 6 December 1990). This line, which tries to blame war in the Gulf equally on Iraq and the imperialists is a shameless cop-out. What more clear-cut case could there be of naked imperialist aggression, with the US seeking to shore up its declining hegemony through a brutal military occupation of the Persian Gulf, in which lie half the world oil reserves. And, while the sell-out Kremlin leaders grotesquely join the imperialist war drive, the fact is that this major mobilisation 700 miles from the Soviet Union constitutes a deadly danger to the homeland of the October Revolution.

In an effort to justify this line, *Leninist* puts forward a number of bogus arguments. It attempts to assert that the massive military incursion today by at least half a million troops from the US, Britain, France et al, backed up by tactical nuclear weapons, is somehow analogous to the dirty little Malvinas/Falklands war, fought for sheep-infested islands thousands of miles from anything important. The Thatcher-Galtieri imbroglio, in which Britain did not even attempt to invade Argentina, was obviously far different from a colonial war of conquest and subjugation, such as the Japanese occupation of China in 1937, or the imperialist oil grab today. As we wrote in *Spartacist Britain* (no 42, May 1982) had there been an invasion, different considerations would apply:

"In the Falklands, the British are not oppressing Argentina nor, in fact, any Argentines.... It is certainly conceivable, particularly with a decisive American military involvement, that this war could take on the character of an outright imperialist policing action posing military support to Argentina."

But such elementary distinctions are ignored by *Leninist*. Labelling Iraq "proto-imperialist", whatever that means, they erase any distinction between the real imperialists and their victims. "Even-handedly" equating Iraq's seizure of Kuwait with the imperialist invasion of the Gulf, last summer *Leninist* circulated a letter dated 22 August 1990 to left

organisations proposing: "It is in our interests to mobilise against both the interventions of imperialism and of Iraq. This is urgent, and the opportunity must be seized now. We therefore propose the organisation of a demonstration in London under the slogans 'Imperialism out of the Gulf!' and 'Iraq out of Kuwait!'...."

Thus, with its parody of Marxism, *Leninist* ends up with the slogan of "Iraq out of Kuwait"—which just happens to be the same slogan George Bush is using to mobilise for war against Iraq, the same slogan employed by social democrats like Tony Benn in order to dismantle serious

and semi-colonial world in struggles against imperialism. In his 1915 pamphlet "Socialism and War", he argued that:

"If tomorrow, Morocco were to declare war on France, or India on Britain, or Persia or China on Russia, and so on, these would be 'just', and 'defensive' wars, *irrespective* of who would be the first to attack; any socialist would wish the oppressed, dependent and unequal states victory over the oppressor, slaveholding and predatory 'Great' Powers."

When Lenin wrote this, Morocco was ruled by the sultan Mulai Yusuf, Persia by the military dictator Ephraim Khan



Christopher Morris/Black Star

Iraqi masses prepare to repel murderous imperialist onslaught. *Leninist* refuses to take a side in their defence.

anti-imperialist struggle. Obviously embarrassed at the prospect of sounding like the reformist Labourites they claim to oppose, as of late *Leninist* has conveniently "disappeared" this slogan from the pages of its press. In rejecting their proposal at the time as a capitulation to the British/US imperialist hysteria over "poor little Kuwait", we noted in a letter dated 26 August 1990:

"However, we do not call for 'Iraq out of Kuwait'. This slogan implies that the world working class has some interest in maintaining the border established by British imperialism which divides Iraq from Kuwait.

"To the contrary, for us the working class has *no side* in the squalid wars over oil, ports and territory which have plagued the region under the rule of assorted sheiks and colonels. We *do* have great interest in the profits sweated out of oil workers from the Gulf to the North Sea to the Gulf of Mexico: our interest is that this wealth go to the working people of the world....

"Furthermore, we do not see any genuine national question posed: unlike the genuine Kurdish national minority which is daily repressed by Iraq and the other oppressor nations, Kuwait was simply one of many essentially artificial creations carved out by the occupying colonialists."

Lenin v The Leninist

The *Leninist's* refusal to struggle against imperialist aggression in the Gulf is totally counterposed to the teachings and practice of the Bolshevik Party. Lenin himself intransigently fought against all manifestations of chauvinism against the oppressed. In the context of the first inter-imperialist war, where Lenin feared that some socialists would draw the false conclusion that all wars were reactionary, he hastened to remind them of their obligation to aid the peoples of the colo-

and China by the warlord Yuan Shikai—rulers just as bloody and reactionary as Iraq's Saddam Hussein. Communists do not confuse *military* defence with *political* support to these brutal regimes. As Panama's Noriega and Iraq's Hussein show, it is possible for even the most reactionary tinpot tyrants to find themselves under massive military attack by their erstwhile imperialist masters.

As opposed to Kautsky & Co, who believed the imperialists could somehow come to peaceful terms with each other, Lenin understood that the struggle of the great powers to divide up the world at the expense of their imperialist rivals—as today the Americans try to corner the oil reserves at the expense of the German and Japanese capitalists—inevitably meant new outbreaks of attempts to annex and enslave the oppressed masses. "National wars *against* the imperialist powers are not only possible and probable; they are inevitable, *progressive* and *revolutionary*...." ("The Junius Pamphlet"). And Lenin had plenty of scathing words for the social chauvinists who refused to struggle against imperialism: "To deny all possibility of national wars under imperialism is wrong in theory, obviously mistaken historically, and tantamount to European chauvinism in practice: we who belong to nations that oppress hundreds of millions in Europe, Africa, Asia, etc., are invited to tell the oppressed peoples that it is 'impossible' for them to wage war against 'our' nations!" (*Military Programme of Proletarian Revolution*)

The early Communist International, founded after the successful October Revolution, devoted many of its tasks to forging real bonds between the proletariat of the West, the revolutionary Soviet state, and the oppressed masses of the

economically backward areas of the world. Indeed, the Comintern insisted that paper resolutions in favour of self-determination and independence were not enough. Thus, one of the famous 21 Conditions for admission to the Comintern asserted in part: "Any party wishing to join the Third International must ruthlessly expose the colonial machinations of the imperialists of its 'own' country, must support—in deed, not merely in word—every colonial liberation movement...and conduct systematic agitation among the armed forces against all oppression of the colonial peoples." This work of the early Comintern was later continued by Trotsky and the Fourth International; in counterposition, the degenerated Stalinist Comintern betrayed again and again the struggles of the masses of the colonial world in pursuit of a popular front alliance with the "democratic" imperialists of the US, Britain and France. (Iraq is in fact an example of this Stalinist policy of betrayal; see "Saddam Hussein's war on Kurds, leftists", p 8.)

The Middle East has been ravaged by imperialism and colonialism for centuries. Today workers and oppressed in Iraq and elsewhere are at their posts grimly determined to defend themselves from enslavement by American military might. Those such as *Leninist*, who cannot bring themselves to call for a victory over imperialism in such a clear and obvious situation are of no use whatsoever in the struggle for the proletarian liberation of the oppressed working masses. Moreover, any organisation claiming to be the revolutionary vanguard of the Iraqi toiling masses which propounded "defeatism" in the context of the impending imperialist onslaught would rightly be seen as a stooge of the imperialists. Such a grotesque caricature of "communism" would in turn only serve to strengthen the hold of the likes of Hussein's Ba'ath party over the working class.

Whatever the elements of muddleheadedness and idiot sectarianism that are also involved, the objective thrust of their line reflects exactly that "Eurochauvinism" that Lenin and Trotsky fought against. It is a position that can be rightly called "left in form, right in essence". The *Leninist* today is a nationally limited eclectic sect, manifestly disoriented by the collapse of Stalinism. The flip side of its inability to draw a distinction between military and political support, reflected over the Gulf, has always been capitulation to so-called "progressive" petty-bourgeois nationalism and popular frontism. Thus, it cheers on Green nationalism in Ireland, and saw the PDPA as the engine of social transformation in Afghanistan. Not long ago it was still grooving on the "armed struggle" in South Africa, until it suddenly "discovered" that the SACP were a bunch of class collaborationists.

In contradistinction to its marked affinity for ersatz nationalism, *Leninist* has reserved its deepest contempt for our proletarian *internationalist* undertakings, whether it be our proposal to organise a brigade to fight the mujahedin in Afghanistan following Gorbachev's treacherous withdrawal of the Red Army or pouring resources from the ICL into the fight against capitalist restoration in Germany. *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. ■

Irish Workers Group

Bogus anti-imperialists orbit social democracy

As readers of *Workers Hammer* will know, the Irish affiliates of the rightward lunging British centrists of Workers Power—the Irish Workers Group (IWG)—have been the main vehicle for Workers Power to respond to the polemics of the Spartacist League/ICL. We recently published the IWG's 28 pages on "The Politics of the Spartacists"—a literary output coinciding with the sharp right turn Workers Power/IWG undertook when confronted by the events in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union—in a bulletin entitled "Hate Trotskyism, Hate the Spartacists" (see advertisement below).

In the last issue of the IWG's *Class Struggle* (December 1990) the IWG has provided us with another opportunity to take up our on-going debate with the League for a Revolutionary Communist International (LRCI). They published two articles about the demonstration which took place on 9 November at Trinity College Dublin—one polemicising against the Socialist Workers Movement (SWM) and the other against the Dublin Spartacist Youth Group (DSYG). In this first campus demonstration in Ireland against imperialist war moves in the Gulf, some thirty students and workers came out to protest against the warmongering of the US, its imperialist allies and United Nations fig leaf. The united front action took place as a result of the DSYG's proposal to rally under the slogans: "US, British, French troops out of the Persian Gulf! Break the blockade of Iraq! No to UN sanctions! Stop the refuelling of US warplanes at Shannon! Trade unions must black imperialist war preparations!" It was endorsed by the TCD Anarcho-Communists, TCD Labour Society, TCD Republican Society and TCD Socialist Society as well as the IWG.

As a principled united front, all parties retained complete freedom to put forward their politics while coming together in joint action. DSYG comrades carried placards demanding "Soviet Union: Rescind Arms Embargo of Iraq", "Trade Unions Must Black Imperialist War Preparations" and "Down with the Sheiks, Colonels, Zionist Butchers: For Workers Revolution in the Middle East". The DSYG spokesman contrasted our revolutionary internationalist programme to the reformism of the Socialist Workers Movement (SWM) and the centrist waffling of the IWG.

For its part, the SWM opposed the demonstration outright. The IWG writes of them:

"When a student assembly in TCD was asked in a motion from the Socialist Society to join a campus demonstration for troops out, and against the sanctions and blockade, it was SWM who went to the rostrum and told the student body that the masses were not ready (i.e. the students themselves) to oppose the blockade and sanctions and therefore they should delete the reference to these issues in the platform of the demo."

Then, on the same page, in its article "Campus Demo Against Gulf War Blighted by Sectarians" the IWG attacks the DSYG because we were not prepared to "delete" the demands which opposed the



Workers Hammer

London: Spartacist contingent on 1 September protest march against US and Britain in Gulf.

blockade and sanctions! *Class Struggle* asserts:

"They [the DSYG] tried to argue that the support of the Student Assembly should not be sought for the demo as the price of getting such real support might result in the Student Union refusing to go the whole way with the proposed demands. Better to proclaim the full platform to an empty square than to win an audience to partially oppose imperialism as a step in the fight to win them to our whole platform!"

In addition to flatly contradicting itself here, the IWG has resorted to a lie so foolish that we can only assume its article is not for consumption among students at Trinity. It is common knowledge that our comrades authored the motion calling at the student assembly for endorsement of the united-front demonstration—a motion presented by the Socialist Society and seconded by the DSYG.

The thoroughly opportunist SWM have served shamelessly as the "socialist" tails to Labour "lefts" such as Tony Benn in Britain and Michael D Higgins in Ireland who support UN sanctions—the prelude to war. Thus, their opposition to the demonstration. But what is the IWG on about? Simply, in the event that there were some "broad movement" of the Bennite sort in Ireland to which it could capitulate, the IWG's attachment to the demands against the blockade of Iraq and UN sanctions could easily go out the window. But the IWG could only "capitulate" in this instance to the DSYG-initiated united front protest. (Incidentally rubbishing their own claim that the Spartacists "chronically refuse the united front tactic".)

As *Class Struggle* puts it: "Certainly when a progressive movement of anti war Troops Out sentiment already exists or is emerging it will be the height of sectarianism to refuse to support such an initiative as long as it does not as a movement support sanctions". And the IWG's British cohorts in Workers Power have explicitly stated: "If we lose the arguments decisively for a broad anti-im-

perialist campaign in the workers' organisations, then we will work within a pacifist Stop the War movement..." (*Workers Power*, October 1990). Workers Power may be found in a lash-up—the Campaign Against War in the Gulf—which has certainly tried to join Benn's bandwagon, UN sanctions and all.

Our goal is to organise proletarian opposition to the Gulf war against our "own" bourgeoisie and for the military defence of Iraq, for workers revolution in the imperialist centres as well as throughout the Middle East. This has nothing in common with acting as a left wing pressure group on those who saw the UN sanctions as a better means for the imperialists to carry out their oil grab in the Middle East.

The bottom line for the centrists of WP/IWG is that taking a side in the military confrontation between rapacious imperialism and Iraq is a dispensable element in "anti-war" work. In Ireland, where the bourgeoisie is marginally involved in the imperialist war mobilisation, the IWG's longed-for "progressive move-

ment" doesn't exist. That has not prevented the IWG from penning its letter of application just in case. Furthermore, both the IWG and Workers Power have bowed to the imperialist warmongers over the plight of "poor little Kuwait" with the absurd demand for the "self-determination" for "all who live and work" in that artificial statelet comprised of disenfranchised Palestinian, other Arab and Southeast Asian workers.

So behind the IWG's petty, dishonest "polemic" (which must have been greeted with some hilarity among the left in Dublin) lie not only organisational pique but also fundamental political differences. As opposed to the Trinity united-front action, the IWG's talk of "building" an ongoing "campaign" reveals its desire to construct a propaganda bloc to provide left pressure on the likes of Michael D Higgins. Thus, *Class Struggle* raises the call to "force" the Labour Party and Workers Party "to join in mobilising an anti-imperialist campaign against imperialist sanctions and war". The Labour and Workers Parties have notoriously pro-imperialist positions on Northern Ireland. It was the Labour Party, as the enthusiastic junior partner of Fine Gael in a coalition government, that brought you the Anglo-Irish Agreement, with its twin goals of drawing Ireland closer to NATO and strengthening British/Irish collaboration in repression of the Republicans. The Workers Party is such a grovelling servant of British imperialism that it has praised the RUC as the "best community police force in the world!"

The IWG huffs and puffs that the "bogus 'neutrality' of the Irish state and its Labour and Workers Party defenders which daily fuels US warplanes for the Gulf" be "exposed"...by pleading with these very parties to mobilise against imperialist war. This is consistent with the IWG's habitual electoral support to the Irish Labour Party. Thus, when it made its eleventh-hour call for abstention in the recent Irish presidential elections where Labour-backed Mary Robinson's popular-front trap was widely painted as a "pro-

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Iraq...

(Continued from page 1)

Hussein withdraws from Kuwait, and then after a "decent interval" the restored emir of Kuwait grants Hussein a lease on the islands he needs to give Iraq an outlet to the sea beyond artillery range from Iran, and perhaps more control over the disputed Rumaila oil field. So that Hussein can save face, and Bush can show he's got *cojones* (balls), perhaps they would start off with some heavy US air strikes on Iraqi forces (without risking heavy US casualties). And Washington would have an excuse to keep a large "peacekeeping" force permanently stationed in the region, one of its goals from the outset. Nobody can claim this is beneath the scruples of the White House. But Bush seems to have upped the ante to such a level that he is committed to driving out Hussein's forces with a large-scale ground attack. This could be bloody indeed for the US.

The Iraqi information minister noted that despite US air superiority, "we know a conflict like this will be settled on the ground":

"We are the defenders. In military terms, an invader needs a three-to-one advantage. We have over a million men in arms. I don't think the entire U.S. army is that big. And here we accept sacrifice. Do you know that during the war with Iran we lost 53,000 men just to regain one small city.... Fifty-three thousand men is what you lost during the entire Vietnam War. Do you think Mr. Bush can afford to lose 53,000 men to defend some hole in the Saudi desert?"

With their battle-hardened million-man army, some pretty sophisticated Western weapons systems (bought from France or seized from Kuwait) plus the superior MIG-29 fighters, as well as tank traps filled with drums of napalm and, of course, their chemical weapons, Iraq's rulers are set to make a ground assault as costly as they can for the imperialist invaders.

The Pentagon knows all this and so every month they keep saying they need a few more weeks, a lot more tanks, more planes, more ships, more everything. So when Lt Gen Calvin AH Waller, the deputy US commander in the Gulf, said that US forces wouldn't be combat ready on 15 January, the brickbats started flying. Even the staid *New York Times* (27 December 1990) started talking about "McClellanism", referring to Civil War general George B McClellan, whose penchant for delay so frustrated Lincoln that he finally fired him and installed Grant. Ironically, if it were up to the Vietnam-shell-shocked Pentagon there might not be a war, but thanks to a spineless Congress it's all been left to the warmonger in the Oval Office.

As the *Los Angeles Times* (28 December 1990) reports, the word from "senior government officials" is that Bush has decided to "move quickly to launch a massive military attack" soon after the 15 January deadline. Having assembled the largest armada since World War II (with six aircraft carrier battle groups) and a troop buildup that was not reached until halfway through that imperialist war, the Americans can "prevail" militarily. The Pentagon wants to try out all of their high-tech weapons, from cruise missiles and the M1 tank to "stealth" fighters, and even if most of them miss their targets (as in Panama), with such a concentration of firepower they will eventually hit something. The Iraqis have no sources of resupply, so it's only a matter of time until they run out of tanks.

But the US doesn't have unlimited time—they have to get it over with in a hurry if they want to keep their international "coalition" from breaking up,

and to avoid serious turmoil at home, where opinion polls continue to show a majority opposed to military action in the Gulf. Above all, the big question will be: what has Washington won if it "wins" on the battlefield? In addition to the prospect of a bloody slog on to Baghdad, unless they get rid of Hussein (the way Reagan tried to assassinate Qaddafi with the air strike against Libya), they will have succeeded in rousing tens of millions throughout the Arab world against the imperialist crusaders who will cold-bloodedly slaughter hundreds of thousands of men, women and children, after

bloody US aggression against Panama, Grenada, Libya, Nicaragua...?) and cynical references to the two-bit tyrant Saddam Hussein as another "Hitler", the American invasion is a crass grab for control of a resource which has been at the centre of imperialist aggrandisement—oil. The immediate US target is Iraq, but ultimately its aim is to bring its economically more dynamic imperialist arch-rivals Germany and Japan to heel. (No wonder that those two "allies" have hung back from sending any troops to the "international" coalition force in Saudi Arabia, and have dropped only a few

the White House if the scapegoat for the economic crisis could be personified by Saddam Hussein rather than Neil (son of George) Bush. The Gulf war is also convenient to the "military-industrial complex", which was facing big cutbacks and is now getting new orders. But this time around, with the US budget deficit already soaring before the Persian Gulf invasion, war could really sink American capitalism instead of saving it.

Decline of the US empire

So today history repeats itself, with variations. The US is no longer undisputed master of the capitalist world, and in fact its vanquished World War II enemies have now emerged with more modern and productive economic engines. Rivalries are already breaking out, such as at the trade talks in Brussels, which collapsed at the beginning of December. The US' big advantage is that it still retains a war machine built in the Cold War and aimed at the Soviet Union. Now that the latter appears to be disintegrating, Bush has decided to seize the window of imperialist opportunity: before its war machine collapses on the empty shell of the American economy, he will hurl it into the Middle East, seize the world's oil, and blackmail his would-be creditor-masters back into submission by threatening to turn off the spigot.

The evidence of US imperialist decline is so widespread it has become the subject of heated controversy among bourgeois scholars, triggered by Paul Kennedy's 1987 book, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*. Kennedy's suggestion that the evident decay has all the earmarks of classical imperial decline à la "Spain around 1600 or the British Empire around 1900" ignited a hue and cry from the bought-and-paid-for intelligentsia trying to deny reality. As he wrote, the US:

"is the inheritor of a vast array of strategical commitments which had been made decades earlier, when the nation's political, economic, and military capacity to influence world affairs seemed so much more assured. In consequence, the United States now runs the risk, so familiar to historians of the rise and fall of previous Great Powers, of what might roughly be called 'imperial overstretch'; that is to say, decision-makers in Washington must face the awkward and enduring fact that the sum total of the United States' global interests and obligations is nowadays far larger than the country's power to defend them all simultaneously."

And while he is no Marxist, Kennedy felt compelled to quote Engels—"nothing is more dependent on economic conditions than precisely the army and the navy"—a fact which does not augur well for America's future imperial adventures.

In an interview with the German news magazine *Der Spiegel* (3 September 1990), Kennedy drew a historical parallel to the Gulf war:

"America is in danger of suffering a national blindness which has previously afflicted many great powers, when they sent their armed forces halfway around the globe.

"Great Britain was capable of a similar display of power in 1899-1900, when it got involved in its bitter conflict with South Africa's Boers, 10,000 kilometers from home. London mobilized more than 300,000 soldiers from all parts of the world. The Royal Navy ruled the waves, no other power was capable of such an effort. That seemed to give the lie to the pessimists of the late Victorian era: England was, so it seemed, still Number One in the world."

Yet even though Britain "won" the battles, the Boer War exposed the advanced corrosion of the decaying Em-



Frans-Laurent Masereel

In 20th century, control of oil is casus belli. Antiwar poster from World War I, "For Oil", by Belgian artist Frans-Laurent Masereel.

first trying to starve them out. The fury could lead to the toppling of the narrowly based pro-Western regimes which have acted as front men for Bush, including in such key states as Egypt.

From the outset, the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) has sharply opposed the US-led invasion of the Persian Gulf. Between the bloody Iraqi strongman and the autocratic ruling family of Kuwait per se, the world working class has no side. We take the side of the Arab masses, calling to bring down the sheiks, the colonels, the Zionist butchers—for workers revolution throughout the Middle East! While various liberals and reformists have lined up behind Bush's "United Nations" cover, supporting the UN "sanctions" which are an embargo, an act of war enforced by the US-NATO fleet, we proclaimed "Break the Blockade of Iraq!" While Bush attempts to assert US global hegemony at gunpoint, this time with the treacherous complicity and support of the sellout Kremlin bureaucracy, the Spartacists call to "Defend Iraq! Defeat US/British Imperialism!"

War-depression

So now war is coming to the Middle East, one of the few wars whose approximate starting date is known by all parties beforehand. Despite Bush's feeble talk of opposition to aggression (what about

pfennigs and yen into the American tin cup.) In fact, with his rhetoric of a US-dominated "New World Order" and his string of ultimatums, it is war criminal Bush who is acting as a Hitler.

Dispatching "rapid deployment" forces to Saudi Arabia last summer even as Secretary of State Baker was squeezing the requisite "request" from King Fahd, the American president claimed US troops were being sent in to defend "our way of life". Around the world, the Hollywood conman Reagan managed to sell the "American way of life" to the gullible as the road to instant prosperity. But after the Marines landed in Panama a year ago, installing a puppet president sworn in on a US air base, instead of the \$1 billion in aid promised by Bush only a pittance has arrived and thousands are still homeless, living in sweltering hangars. And when US-backed Solidarność took office in Poland in 1989, instead of being showered with dollars, the Polish population was subjected to brutal capitalist austerity that has meant unemployment and hunger.

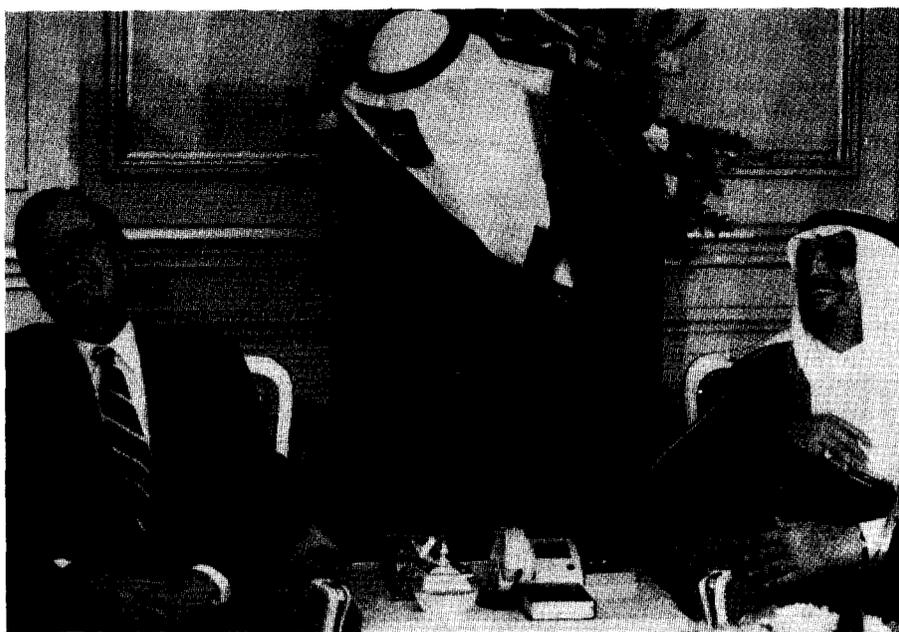
With two stock market crashes in three years, and now the entire financial system in jeopardy, American capitalism is in deep trouble. And as it became evident that the Reaganite Roaring '80s were not about to be followed by the Golden '90s, that recession/depression could no longer be held off, it certainly was convenient to

pire, which had been living a parasitic existence off the spoils of colonial plunder: "...the declining competitiveness of industry, the falling investments and growing trade deficit. And yet it was these weaknesses, not defeats on the battlefield, which later led to the collapse of its power." It might also be noted that in launching its attack on the Boers, "perfidious Albion" proclaimed aims of exalted moral purpose. That they could thereby grab the fabulously wealthy gold mines in the Transvaal, and that the British Army could try out its new Maxim machine gun, was just, well, "convenient". Sound familiar?

Today, Germany and Japan are feeling their increased imperialist muscle. Despite Bush/Baker's attempts to strongarm them into paying for the military buildup in the Gulf, neither has come up with more than a measly billion dollars or so. Both governments, however, have shown great interest in eliminating the "peace" provisions of their US-imposed constitutions which prohibit foreign military interventions. (In Japan this has run up against widespread pacifist sentiment in the population.) When the US demanded that Tokyo cough up more, the Japanese parliament instead shaved its war ("self-defence") budget.

In Europe, Kohl's Fourth Reich, having swallowed up the former DDR (East German) deformed workers state into an imperialist Greater Germany, is no longer the "economic giant and political pygmy" that Social Democratic former chancellor Helmut Schmidt called it, but the proverbial 800-pound gorilla which can sit anywhere it wants. Following the collapse of Hitler's Reich in 1945, novelist Thomas Mann called for "a European Germany, not a German Europe". What we now have is indeed a German-dominated Europe, in which the Yugoslav, Danish, Austrian and Benelux currencies are formally tied to the D-mark, which is also the common currency for trade with Eastern Europe, and Bonn has the final say in the Common Market.

Angered over British opposition to German reunification, epitomised by the "Ridley affair" in which one of Margaret Thatcher's cabinet ministers likened Kohl to Hitler, the new German Europe engineered the downfall of the Iron Lady whose hated poll tax at home had pushed even Tory bigwigs into opposition. It is also noteworthy that the Persian Gulf crisis is the first international crisis since World War II where money didn't flee to the US dollar. Instead the German mark and Japanese yen have become the currencies of refuge. Significantly, the Belgian, British, Danish, Dutch, French, Italian and Spanish ships in the Gulf are under the command of the "West European



Bush meets with King Fahd of Saudi Arabia during his autumn world tour to consolidate support for US imperialism's war drive (left). Labour leader Neil Kinnock (top right) and Tory Prime Minister John Major (bottom right) line up behind US war moves.

Union", an obscure committee in London which doesn't even have secure phone lines to the Continent but was resuscitated in order that European forces not be placed under American (NATO) control.

In the 1970s, Jimmy Carter and various of his cohorts pushed the theme of "Trilateralism", in which the future would be dominated by cooperation of the three power centres of Japan, West Europe and the United States. The current power configuration is indeed triangular, but it is hardly marked by all-sided cooperation. Rather, the world is being redivided into a Pacific area dominated by the Japanese yen, a Europe dominated by the deutschmark, and the Western hemisphere controlled by the US dollar. Hence Bush's push to expand the US-Canada free trade agreement to include Mexico, and then the rest of Latin America. But simultaneously Washington wants to teach its obstreperous imperialist allies that this is now a "one superpower world".

Oil and empire

Washington wants to gain total control of Persian Gulf oil in order to once again be able to squeeze its Japanese and German rivals and be master of the capitalist world again. And in the imperialist world there is only one way to do this—war. As Joseph Nye, author of *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (1990), a latter-day invocation of Manifest Destiny, recently put it, "the gulf will be a defining point", as it will decide whether the US can still "lead" (read dominate).

In the 20th century, oil is what fuels

an empire—tanks cannot move without it, not to mention planes and industry. This is even more true today now that armies have been completely mechanised: the Nazi army which invaded Russia in 1941 was still dependent on 650,000 horses, more than the number of motorised vehicles at its disposal, but it was the Panzer (tank) corps which made the difference, and they consumed vast quantities of fuel.

Hitler said he wanted *Lebensraum* when he invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941, but more to the point, he was desperate to get Russian oil for his tanks. According to the postwar interrogation of German foreign ministry official Hans Kolbe, who spied for the US during the war, "The German need to obtain Soviet oil was deemed the primary reason for the attack.... Since the Soviet deliveries were insufficient to satisfy German demands for bringing the war [in the west] to a conclusion, the only recourse appeared to be the seizure and exploitation by the Germans of oil resources in the Soviet Union" (see Robert Goralski and Russell Freeburg, *Oil & War: How the Deadly Struggle for Fuel in WWII Meant Victory or Defeat* [1987]).

Japan's Rising Sun empire was even more desperate for oil since it had to import it all—in 1937, for instance, Japan got 80 per cent of its oil from California. So Japan sent its army and navy into Southeast Asia in June 1941 to grab the oil. US president Franklin D Roosevelt said that he had held off from cutting oil exports to Japan because "if we cut the oil off, they probably would have gone down to the Dutch East Indies a year ago, and you would have had war." (A year earlier, the US had embargoed scrap iron exports to Japan.) With the Japanese invasion of Indochina, FDR imposed a freeze on Japanese assets in the US, which led to a de facto embargo on oil exports to Japan.

The Japanese war machine would now have to deplete its oil stocks and would eventually grind to a halt. Japanese foreign minister Toyoda explained in a secret message to his ambassadors to Germany and the US that "the Japanese Empire, to save its very life must take measures to secure the raw materials of the South Seas." Thus it was widely expected in US government circles in 1941 that FDR's embargo would force Japanese imperialism to attack. Historian Herbert Feis wrote in *The Road to Pearl Harbor* (1950), "From now on the oil gauge and the clock stood side by side. Each fall in



the level brought the hour of decision closer." Secretary of War Henry L Stimson wrote in his diary about a meeting with FDR on 25 November 1941, less than two weeks before Pearl Harbor:

"He brought up the event that we were likely to be attacked perhaps (as soon as) next Monday, for the Japanese are notorious for making an attack without warning, and the question was how we should maneuver them into the position of firing the first shot without allowing too much danger to ourselves. It was a difficult proposition."

—William Appleman Williams, ed, *The Shaping of American Diplomacy* (1956)

Whether or not FDR knew Pearl Harbor would be the site of the Japanese attack, it was clear he expected a war with the Japanese triggered by his oil embargo.

Likewise, control over oil supplies was a major issue in the first imperialist world war. The conflict was preceded by a battle over redivision of world oil between the US Rockefellers (Standard Oil), together with the Rothschild-Nobel trust which controlled Russia's Baku oil fields, and the Germans who controlled Romanian fields. At the outbreak of the war the British moved to seize the Persian Gulf oil fields around Basra. Four years later, they moved on Mosul in northern Mesopotamia in order to grab the oil reserves there. Subsequently, the Foreign Office in London drew up the artificial borders between Saudi Arabia, the British-installed monarchy of Iraq and its protectorate of Kuwait in order to secure its domination of the area.

As Lenin noted in his pamphlet *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, written in 1916, "The more capitalism is developed, the more strongly the shortage of raw materials is felt, the more intense the competition and the hunt for sources of raw materials throughout the whole world, the more desperate the struggle for the acquisition of colonies." All the more so today, though the colonies may be disguised as neocolonies and oil sheikdoms.

For class struggle against imperialist war!

In the whole Gulf crisis, one of the biggest concerns of the White House and the Pentagon has been the "home

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Coffins start going back to US: one of 21 seamen killed in ferry accident off Israeli coast.

Saddam Hussein's war on Kurds, leftists

Iraqi rulers' bloody reign

As the White House assembles the most massive American expeditionary force since the Vietnam War, the Spartacist League has marched in protest demonstrations under our banners calling to "Break the Blockade of Iraq! Defeat US Imperialism!" We stand with the people of Iraq against this imperialist aggression which will take hundreds of thousands of lives to impose Bush's "New World Order". And we stand with the working people and oppressed of Iraq against their bloody rulers, Saddam Hussein and his Ba'ath party, who were until recently backed by the US. In particular, we denounce the Ba'ath nationalists' slaughter of Iraqi Communist Party members and war against the Kurdish national minority, carried out with Washington's complicity.

A press report from more than a decade ago describes the hideous tortures which were meted out by the security police under Saddam Hussein's direction:

"For example, prisoners are beaten with hoses, burned with cigarettes, given electric shocks, beaten on the sexual organs, stomach and chest until they vomit; prisoners are hanged, their heads are plunged into toilet bowls, they are forced to perform degrading acts; others are driven outside the city and shots are fired over their heads, etc. Some of those who have undergone such treatment have been mutilated or paralyzed. Others have been tortured to death."

—Le Monde, 23 March 1979

Today imperialist rulers and Western media rehash stories of babies in Kuwaiti hospitals being yanked off life-support systems, but they were virtually silent about the tortures detailed above. This is because the thousands of men and women who endured that terrible ordeal, and the many who died in it, were Communists. The purpose of this repression was to liquidate the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP). And as he carried out this gruesome task, Saddam Hussein had the support of US imperialism.

In a previous article ("Iraqi Rulers' Bloody Road to Power", *Workers Vanguard* no 511, 5 October 1990), we described how the Ba'ath party came to power in Iraq as a result of the crushing of the revolutionary upsurge which followed the 1958 coup against the British-installed monarchy. The possibility was posed of uniting the Kurds and all oppressed behind the powerful CP-led working class in overthrowing the bourgeois order, but the Iraqi Communist Party subordinated itself to the nationalist regime of General Qassem. As the CP caved in (on orders from Moscow, which wanted to facilitate Khrushchev's Camp David parley with Eisenhower), militant workers were set

up for repression and Kurds were pushed into the camp of traditional chieftains. When in 1963 Qassem's nationalist rivals of the Ba'ath party brokered a military coup, the result was a nine-month reign of terror. Ba'athist goons using lists supplied by the CIA dragged Communist militants from their homes and murdered thousands.

The ICP's suicidal capitulations in

diplomatic manoeuvres, they have for decades sold out to tinpot dictators like Saddam Hussein instead of mobilising the working class to sweep them away.

Arab nationalism and anti-Communist repression

In 1968 the Ba'athists were able to return to power in another military



Siamand Bana

Tens of thousands of Kurds were driven out of Iraq by army offensive in summer of 1988.

Iraq were only playing out the logic of Stalin's anti-revolutionary policies, summed up in the dogma of building "socialism in one country", the USSR. Under this nationalist watchword, which translated into opposing struggles for socialism elsewhere, the Chinese Communists were ordered to subordinate themselves to the bourgeois-nationalist Kuomintang, leading to the Shanghai massacre of 1927 under Chiang Kai-shek. Likewise the Indonesian CP was told by both Moscow and Beijing to follow the baton of nationalist leader Sukarno, resulting in the 1965 massacre of half a million leftists. A measure of the Kremlin Stalinists' betrayal of Marxism is that, for the sake of dip-

lomatic manoeuvres, they have for decades sold out to tinpot dictators like Saddam Hussein instead of mobilising the working class to sweep them away. coup. Saddam Hussein set up a vast security apparatus whose chief—like himself, a prominent torturer under the previous Ba'ath regime—"had a penchant for conducting interrogations personally and extinguishing his cigarette inside the eyeballs of his victims" (Samir al-Khalil, *Republic of Fear* [1989]). Once again the nationalists' hand was strengthened by the capitulation of the Iraqi CP, which prostrated itself before the Ba'athists only to be crushed under their heel. In the first years of the regime, scores of Communists were arrested and tortured to death. Yet when the USSR signed a 1972 "friendship" treaty with Iraq, two CP leaders entered the government.

Reinforced by Soviet arms and assured of CP conciliation, the Ba'athists in March 1974 launched a massive military assault against the Kurds. For almost a year the Iraqi army napalmed and phosphorus-bombed Kurdish villages, driving thousands from their homes. Yet as the Kurds successfully held out, the Ba'athist regime turned for help to Washington and its ally, the shah of Iran. The US imperialists, anxious to woo Iraq back into the pro-imperialist fold, were only too willing to help the Ba'athist regime smash the Kurds. So the CIA suddenly cut off their man, the feudalist "general" Mustafa Barzani. Iran agreed to close the border and cut off military aid to the Barzani-led insurgents, in return for Iraqi renunciation of its claim to the eastern bank of the Shatt al-Arab (the

estuary of the river Tigris), its only outlet to the Persian Gulf.

As the Kurdish resistance collapsed, the Ba'ath launched a policy of forced "Arabisation" of Kurdish regions, especially the oil-rich northern regions of Kirkuk and Mosul. Hundreds of thousands of Kurds were loaded on army trucks with what belongings they could carry and transported to the southwestern desert where some half a million Kurds are today held in wretched concentration camps. Arab peasants from the south were offered a financial incentive to resettle the abandoned lands.

Having served its purpose, the Iraqi Communist Party again fell under the Ba'ath's fire. A growing number of CPers were imprisoned even as CP ministers were part of the government. Most were charged with carrying out political work in the army. In May 1978, at least 21 CP members and supporters in the army were executed, opening a new paroxysm of terror. Yet the Stalinists would pursue the path of class collaboration to the grisly end. A conference of CPs of the Arab countries in late 1978, while condemning the wave of repression in Iraq, pleaded that "a progressive Arab front" uniting Communists and Ba'athists was "indispensable" (*Le Monde*, 7 January 1979). For a full year after the eruption of anti-Communist repression, the CP government ministers would cling helplessly to their cabinet portfolios. By the spring of 1979 what was left of the Iraqi CP was either in exile or—an estimated 15,000 of them—in prison.

The wave of repression against Iraqi Communists provoked outrage on the part of working-class organisations around the world. The Spartacist tendency noted: "This juridical murder [of the 21 CPers] was part of a major crackdown on the mass party of the Iraqi proletariat by the bourgeois-nationalist Ba'athist regime" (*WV* no 230, 27 April 1979). The imperialists did not protest the slaughter. They understood that it was part of a turn by Iraq towards the West—resulting in closer economic ties, arms purchases and toned-down opposition to the Egypt-Israel "peace" accord. A *New York Times* (30 July 1978) dispatch, noting the massacre of ICP members, was headlined "Iraq Is Now Seeking a Moderate Image".

For a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan!

In the carve-up of the Ottoman Empire following World War I, the Kurdish homeland was divided among four bourgeois states—Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Syria—and the Kurds were subjected to savage repression in all of them. The 1920 Treaty of Sèvres, which formalised the imperialist division of the "spoils of war", envisaged the formation of a (highly truncated) Kurdish state under US mandate. Yet the British imperialists, anxious that this might undermine their control of the oil-rich province of Mosul, were quick to abandon even this caricature of "national self-determination".

In Iran, under both the shahs and the mullahs, Kurds have been denied even the most minimal national rights. In NATO Turkey they are officially designated "mountain Turks"—even speaking the Kurdish language in public can result in arrest, fines and torture. Small wonder that the US, as it works to com-

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Kurdish homeland carved up by imperialists. Today it is divided among four capitalist states and the Soviet Union.

Glasgow anti-fascists shut down BNP rally

GLASGOW—Twice in a two week period anti-fascist protesters have confronted the BNP scum on the streets of this city. On 24 November, on the occasion of the annual march against racism and fascism, two dozen ragged BNPers were pinned behind a protective wall of mounted cops. Then on 8 December some 50 fascists gathered for a "secret" race-hate rally to be addressed by BNP national Führer John Tyndall. Earlier, Tyndall's Glasgow henchman Stephen Sinclair had boasted: "We've deliberately disinforming all those Reds about our rally. Let them try and find us" ([Glasgow] *Sunday Mail*, 9 December).

And the anti-fascists did, reducing to shambles the plans of the BNP to spew their genocidal filth—particularly directed against Glasgow's large Asian population and its 11,000 Jews. With over a thousand determined students, leftists, Asians, blacks and gay activists ringing the meeting place, the cops moved in with vans to rescue the BNP. Debris flew and Sinclair "was later led from the meeting place by police under a hail of missiles and chants" (*Sunday Mail*, 9 December). More than two dozen protesters were arrested; charges against nine of them have already been dropped, but the rest face trial on 21 March. The Nazi-lovers, flaunting Hitler salutes, were predictably let off free. The Spartacist League demands: Drop the charges against all the anti-fascist militants now! Integrated militias of workers and minorities must crush the fascist vermin in the egg!

Race terror is on the rise in Scotland. The hideous stabbing murder of Somali student Ahmed Shekh by National Front "casuals" in Edinburgh in 1989 exploded the Labourite myth that there is "no racism up here". In Edinburgh, swastikas have been daubed on Heriot-Watt University's Jewish Society posters and Ku Klux Klan slogans scrawled in prayer quarters for Muslim students. The Glasgow-based Scottish Asian Action Committee has been inundated with hate-filled anonymous letters, while many Asian families have removed the nameplate from their front door.

Recently *Scotland on Sunday* (16 December) detailed a sharp escalation of anti-Semitic attacks in Scotland and throughout Britain, in the context of the virulent increase of fascist activity that has been unleashed by capitalist restorationist forces in Eastern Europe. Gravestones at Dundee's synagogue were desecrated and daubed with the Hebrew word *shochet*, meaning slaughter, while swastikas and runic signs appeared at the entrance to the building and on nearby garages next to two-foot lettering spelling out "Jacob must die". This is a reference to Albert Jacob, who represents Dundee on the Board of Deputies of British Jews and is also chair of the Tayside Community Relations Council. Jacob had correctly warned: "With xenophobia and racism rife across Europe it has never been so important to stand up ahead of the barriers coming down in 1992 and the spread of this poison... Starving the likes of these people of the oxygen of publicity was shown in Germany not to work. The lessons of ignoring one man who was dismissed as a nut underlines that that dreadful mistake cannot be repeated."

The deadly danger represented by even a single fascist attack ought to be self-evident to those claiming to be leftists. But this is far from being the case

with Britain's ostensible left, most of which has been swept up in the pro-imperialist drive to smash the deformed workers states. A case in point is the virulently anti-Soviet Socialist Workers Party, which scandalously remained silent

particularly the Militant were prominently involved in the recent anti-fascist demonstrations in Scotland. However, crucially absent has been a strategy that recognises the centrality of the organised working class as the only social force that can

just as Labour councils have enforced the poll tax. In contrast, the Spartacist contingent on the 24 November march in Glasgow raised such slogans as "Unions and minorities must crush the fascist scum" and "For a Bolshevik party!"

The social decay of de-industrialised Britain is manifest in Scotland; the devastation of major industry has created a

Glasgow, 24 November 1990: Spartacist contingent on the city's annual anti-racism/anti-fascism march calls for "Union/Minority Mobilisations to Smash the Fascists!"



when one of its members was hospitalised with 13 stitches last February after being set upon outside a public Glasgow SWP meeting by a dozen BNP fascists wielding sticks, bottles and knives and screaming "Sieg Heil"! The SWP avoided publicising the attack, let alone warning and campaigning in the workers movement to organise defence against these fascist terrorists. Even the bourgeois press gave more coverage to the case once it came to court last November, when four of the thugs received 12-month slap-on-the-wrist sentences.

The SWP's Anti Nazi League in the 1970s was a popular front alliance with Labour Party chatterers (including Neil Kinnock), bishops and rock musicians that was designed to demobilise serious anti-fascist struggle. Subsequently the SWP line has been to ignore the fascists: "We are saying, at present, 'organise specifically against the nazis, and we'll build their organisation'... If the nazis start paper sales we should not pay them any special attention. If they attack a SW sale, make a tactical retreat and start again the following week" (*Discussion Bulletin*, August 1984).

Then there is the Labourite Militant Tendency, whose frequent colour blindness reflects the chauvinism of the Labour Party tops. Despicably, prominent Militant spokesman Tommy Sheridan fulminated against the "Japs" at a 5 December gathering of regional readers and supporters in Glasgow, while sharing the platform with *Militant* editor and keynote speaker Peter Taaffe. Last autumn Militant demobilised anti-fascist youth in Pollok who wanted to teach the BNP a lesson they so richly deserve by proposing a "debate" with the murderous race terrorists instead. A *Workers Hammer* article (*WH* no 111, November/December 1989) exposing this suicidal strategy was widely circulated among Militant supporters.

To their credit, both the SWP and

decisively crush the fascists. Militant failed even to mobilise a single banner from the CPSA union, where they claim a significant base of support and which could have acted as a springboard for mobilising other, more strategic, unions. Combative, mass contingents of trade unionists not only have the power to drive the NF, BNP and their ilk off the streets, but make it far more difficult for the cops to victimise relatively small numbers of leftists. The Spartacist League/US has over the years initiated several such substantial trade union/black mobilisations that have prevented the fascists from marching in large cities.

Both the SWP and the Militant Tendency are lined up to put Ramsay MacKinnock into government. Yet many of their supporters who have turned out to stop the fascists are only too well aware that it has been the local Labour council that has unleashed the cops against them,

layer of almost permanently lumpenised youth, among whom fascist outfits will ply their race-hate trade. Nor is this simply the product of Thatcherism or Tory rule. The Labour Party in government not only sets the cops against anti-fascist militants but its policies of economic austerity prop up the rotting capitalist system which is the breeding ground for the fascist vermin. It is not an accident that the fascists in Britain grew rapidly under the last Labour government, which enforced the "social contract" and widespread economic dislocation. The Spartacist League fights to build a genuinely revolutionary workers party, forged through splitting the Labour Party's working-class base from its pro-capitalist tops, that will lead the struggle to put an end to this racist capitalist system once and for all. The mobilisation of the organised working class to smash fascist attacks is a key task on the road to victorious workers revolution. ■

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Saddam...

(Continued from page 8)

bine these countries in a military alliance against Iraq, has been reluctant to press the question of the oppression of the Kurds. As an Iraqi Kurdish leader recently noted, "The West never misses an opportunity to forget about the Kurds" (*Wall Street Journal*, 3 December 1990).

In the 1980s, Kurdistan became a battlefield during the decade-long reactionary border war between Iran and Iraq. Baghdad carried out massive population transfers of hundreds of thousands designed to disperse the Kurdish national minority—20 per cent of Iraq's population. During fighting in March 1988 over the border village of Halabjah, several thousand Kurds were killed in a poison gas attack, although evidence indicates that both Iraq and Iran may have used chemical weapons there. Immediately following the truce with Iran, in August of that year an Iraqi offensive drove 65,000 Kurds over the border into Turkey. An international uproar ensued over allegations of Iraqi use of nerve and mustard gas, and the US Senate (eager to back off from Washington's pro-Iraq stance during the war) voted sanctions against Baghdad, but no clear evidence such as victims' bodies was produced.

It is often forgotten that, besides the four capitalist states which are inhabited by Kurds, there is a fifth country which includes a significant Kurdish population—the Soviet Union. A conference held in Moscow last July to discuss the question of Soviet Kurds became a point of attraction bringing together Kurds internationally. In 1923, the young Soviet state created an Autonomous Republic of Kurdistan, roughly situated between Armenia and Azerbaijan—the so-called "Red Kurdistan"—which constituted "a beacon to the entire Kurdish people" (Gerard Chaliand [ed], *People Without a Country* [1980]).

The Bolsheviks were able to cut

across national divisions by offering full democratic rights to all nationalities. Lenin insisted that the USSR must be a genuinely free union of peoples. In order to accommodate the myriad peoples at different levels of national consolidation, a variety of soviet republics were established, including Union Republics for fully formed nations, Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics for nationalities, as well as Autonomous Oblasts and Nationality Okrugs for various tribes. In areas of heavy interpenetration of peoples, such as the Caucasus, this produced a complicated checker-board of autonomous regions while setting an internationalist framework for intercourse among the peoples.

It was precisely over the national question in the Caucasus that the first decisive political fight against the developing Stalinist bureaucracy was waged by Lenin. When Stalin attempted to force the Georgian, Azerbaijani and Armenian republics into a Transcaucasian federation, Lenin broke with him in late 1922. Lenin proposed to Trotsky a bloc against Stalin's chauvinist policies on the national question, and called in his suppressed "Testament" for the removal of Stalin from his post as general secretary. Stalinist rule would become synonymous with Great Russian chauvinism, national oppression and forcible population transfers. In 1929 the Stalinist bureaucracy put an end to the autonomous republic of "Red Kurdistan", and in the '30s many Kurds were deported from the Caucasus to Central Asia. Today this area has become the scene of communalist bloodletting as Gorbachev's policies of economic decentralisation have intensified national rivalries.

The second time a Kurdish republic was established was under the military exigencies of World War II, when the occupation of northern Iran by the Soviet army led to the establishment in late 1945 of autonomous republics in Iranian Azerbaijan and in Kurdistan

(the so-called Mahabad Republic). In the latter Kurdish was established as the official language of government and schools, and Kurdish periodicals appeared for the first time (including a newspaper for women). Led by a notable from the town of Mahabad, Qazi Muhammad, and supported by certain tribal leaders in the surrounding countryside (as well as the exiled Barzani clan from neighbouring Iraqi Kurdistan), the short-lived republic made no real attempts in the direction of land reform. Yet it served as a rallying point for Kurdish exiles from Turkey, Iraq and Syria who came to Mahabad, seeing it as the core of the Kurdish liberation struggle throughout the Middle East.

Yet unlike Eastern Europe, where under the pressure of imperialism's Cold War Stalin was forced to carry out a bureaucratic overturn of capitalism, the Red Army withdrew from Iran in early 1946. The Kremlin hoped thereby to obtain oil and gas concessions from the shah, and also feared that a social revolution in Iranian Azerbaijan would raise the question of unity with Soviet Azerbaijan, opening the Pandora's box of demands for genuine self-determination within the USSR. As a result of Soviet withdrawal, the republics in Azerbaijan and Kurdistan collapsed, sacrificed on the altar of Stalin's vain search for "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism.

The failure to achieve an autonomous homeland for the Kurds has left a splintered movement of innumerable Kurdish nationalist groups from the many Kurdistan Democratic Parties—the KDP of Iran, which was launched several months before the founding of the Mahabad Republic; the KDP (Iraq), which was founded by Barzani as he fled Mahabad; the pro-government Iraqi KDP, founded in the '70s in the shadow of the ruling Ba'ath party; the KDP of Turkey, which was founded by Barzani supporters in Turkey—to a myriad of other more left wing formations. Divided as they are,

Kurdish nationalists still tend to look with favour upon the Soviet Union.

The Spartacist tendency, now the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), has energetically upheld the right of the Kurdish nation to self-determination. Several years ago, a representative of our tendency had the opportunity to address a conference of Kurdish militants held in central Europe. Our message of solidarity (*WV* no 362, 14 September 1984) called "For a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan!":

"Comrades, it was the great historic example of the Russian Revolution which dramatically confirmed that in the epoch of imperialism's decline, democratic rights and principles can be fully realised only by the revolutionary proletariat in power.... That the Kurdish proletariat exists primarily in the diaspora naturally and inevitably complicates your political tasks, but it is a problem that has been faced before. Indeed it was the resolute struggle of the Bolshevik Party for the right of self-determination for even the most underdeveloped of the oppressed nationalities in the tsar's prison house of nations which facilitated the conquest of power by the proletariat in Russia."

We support the establishment of a Kurdish state, yet as the solution to Kurdish oppression means defeating four reactionary bourgeois regimes, it can scarcely be conceived independently of the struggle for socialist revolution throughout the region. The Kurdish masses must look to an alliance with the Arab, Persian and Turkish proletariat. Saddam Hussein and all the reactionary rulers of the Middle East must be brought down by the working people and oppressed who have suffered under their heel. This requires the construction of working-class parties fighting for a socialist federation of the Middle East.

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IWG...

(Continued from page 5)

gressive", the IWG's statement passed over in silence Robinson's accommodation to the Unionist ascendancy in the North. In fact, it did not even mention the elementary demand for immediate, unconditional withdrawal of British troops from Northern Ireland. This is a particularly craven omission given that the Paisleyite forces in the North at least tacitly approved of Robinson's election.

But their much-vaunted "anti-imperialist united front" (which has in the past included the likes of the reactionary and murderous Iranian regime under Khomeini) is not restricted to the likes of the Labour Party in the South. The IWG also capitulates to petty-bourgeois Green nationalism in the North. Thus, its support to Sinn Fein in Northern Ireland and its echoing of Sinn Fein's programme for the forcible reunification of Ireland ("self-determination for the Irish nation").

Workers Power in Britain uncritically enthuses over the IRA—a must to maintain "street cred" within the far left. At

the same time, like virtually all of the British left, Workers Power remains eternally loyal to the British Labour Party which sent the troops into Northern Ireland, rammed through the Prevention of Terrorism Act, framed-up the Birmingham Six. When their vicarious cheerleading for Green nationalism inevitably conflicts with capitulating to the Labourites, Workers Power has flinched in the latter direction, too. Thus, during the H-block hunger strikes, WP actively fought against the demonstrations being based on the call for the withdrawal of British troops as a concession to the liberals, Labourites (and Sinn Fein).

Over a year ago, we nailed the IWG for its grotesque call upon the Irish bourgeois state to expel the ambassador of the Chinese deformed workers state following the criminal Tiananmen Square massacre. It turned out that this "third camp" atrocity (publicly retracted by the IWG in the first of its anti-Spartacist diatribes) was but a harbinger of the hard right turn taken by the LRCI in Britain, Ireland and elsewhere. In May of last year, Workers Power went so far as to demand of the then-government of Margaret Thatcher to

send aid to the counterrevolutionary Sajudis secessionists in Lithuania. Needless to say, there was no "retraction" of this obscenity, the sort of line that would make even the likes of *Socialist Organizer's* Sean Matgamna or the SWP's Tony Cliff blush.

Workers Power's rightward motion came to a head on their home terrain last summer with the now-infamous Yuri Butchenko affair, having organised the tour to Britain of this "Russian worker" knowing at the very least that he was connected to the fascist NTS outfit. Then all hell broke loose when Butchenko appeared at a press conference with super-scab Roy Lynk of the UDM to further the witchhunt against NUM leader Arthur Scargill. Workers Power issued reams of denials, non-denials and self-contradictory statements in the aftermath. And the

IWG, now confronted with the establishment of the DSYG, added its own version of the Workers Power defence brief in its second anti-Spartacist diatribe.

The IWG's fulminations over what would seem to be a perfectly straightforward and modestly successful campus united-front protest must be seen in this context. That the IWG wants to take anti-imperialist opposition to the Gulf war into the camp of the wretchedly pro-capitalist Labour Party and Workers Party is only one example of the turn of the LRCI as a whole towards the "Third Camp" of social democracy over the Russian question. It is now too kindly to say that Workers Power/IWG are centrists who only flinch when it counts. Their orbit around the rotting corpse of social democracy has evidently become a way of life. ■

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Turkish miners...

(Continued from page 12)

fat president in Ankara is a workers enemy, Zonguldak will be the grave of the regime," and call "workers hand in hand to the general strike". By declaring the 3 January general strike "illegal", Özal has indeed put his regime on a direct collision course with organised labour.

The miners were once among the best-paid workers in Turkey. But ten years of military and bonapartist dictatorship following the NATO army coup, combined with 200 per cent inflation, has caused a catastrophic drop in their living standards and working conditions as well as those of other workers in Turkey. Miners average \$165 a month, less than a superexploited black miner in racist South Africa. Average life expectancy in Turkey is 67 years, in Zonguldak 57, and for underground miners 47. In the last ten years, 3164 have died in the Zonguldak mines, where there has been no investment since 1956.

The just demands of the Zonguldak miners for a 450 per cent wage increase and safer working conditions have mobilised the entire town. Mine occupations are accompanied by daily rallies and demonstrations, signs supporting the strike hang in every shop, the entire political spectrum from leftists to the social democrats and even the right-wing Dogruyol Party have announced support for the strike. No doubt the popular-frontist opposition wants to channel workers' combativity into getting a more "democratic" façade on vicious Turkish capitalism than the widely hated Özal dictatorship. A special military unit is stationed nearby at Kilimli to keep the miners in line. When they proved inadequate to stop the Zonguldak strike, Özal, who massacred dozens of workers during this year's May Day demonstrations, bussed



Doug Mills/AP

Bush lines up Turkish President Özal as junior partner for US imperialism in the Middle East.

in 10,000 heavily armed police and soldiers. But support for the strike in the region is so solid that they have been relegated to directing traffic.

The Zonguldak strike has also inspired Turkish and Kurdish immigrant workers, particularly in Germany where they are a militant strategic component of the industrial proletariat. The strike received official backing from IG Metall and IG Bergbau (miners) and from the German DGB trade-union federation after Turkish and Kurdish union officials and workers staged a short occupation of DGB offices in Hamburg. Miners in the Ruhr, a large number of whom are Turkish and Kurdish, staged a one-hour solidarity strike this past week. Solidarity demonstrations are scheduled in Köln, Hamburg and Berlin to coincide with the 3 January general strike in Turkey.

Strike supporters have called on the German union movement to refuse to handle any coal being shipped to Turk-

ey. The DGB has stated that no coal is being sent, but they said the same during the 1984-85 British coal miners strike when German coal in fact was being shipped from Duisburg via Rotterdam. Supporters of the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany (SpAD) have called on Hamburg dock workers and other trade unionists to back the Zonguldak strikers with monetary support and by vigilantly looking to stop strikebreaking shipments of coal to Turkey.

The solidarity actions take place at a time when the workers movement in Germany must fight assaults by the Bonn bourgeoisie on their immigrant co-workers as new racist anti-immigrant laws go into effect in 1991. Recently local authorities ordered the expulsion of a Turkish family on "ecological" grounds: overpopulation! Moreover, in a number of factories in the Berlin area, workers from the former DDR (East Germany) are being hired at

wages substantially below those being paid to the Turkish workers. The SpAD calls for equal wages East and West, and demands "Full citizenship rights for immigrant workers". During the recent Bundestag (parliament) election campaign the Spartakist programme was also published in Turkish (as well as Portuguese and Polish). Immigrant workers can play a key role in working-class resistance to the Fourth Reich of German imperialism.

In Turkey, the German army is active in training Turkish military units used to savagely suppress the more than ten million Kurds of eastern Anatolia. To this must be added the thousands of Kurdish refugees driven out of Iraq by Saddam Hussein in 1988, suffering yet another winter on the Turkish side of the border in tents. Turkish and Kurdish militants active in building support in Germany for the Zonguldak strike have told us that the miners have also raised the demand for the right of Kurds to use their own language. The Kurdish nation is balkanised between Syria and Iran as well as Turkey and Iraq; fighting Kurdish national oppression is key to proletarian unity in the Middle East: For a socialist republic of united Kurdistan!

The Zonguldak strike and the rising tide of class struggle in Turkey, the imperialist war mobilisation against Iraq and the dramatic collapse of Stalinism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union create a rich opportunity to win Turkish and Kurdish leftists and workers to the genuine communism of Lenin and Trotsky. Desperately needed is an internationalist workers party that fights all forms of oppression, especially of women and the Kurdish nation, and fights uncompromisingly for working-class political power. Victory to the heroic Zonguldak miners! For the internationalist unity of Kurdish and Turkish workers! Bring down Özal with workers revolution!

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Iraq...

(Continued from page 7)

front". After an initial wave of enthusiasm for Bush's "tough" stance of immediately sending in the 82nd Airborne, it has dawned on the American population that "their" president actually intends to go to war. And they're not crazy about it. One poll after another shows three-fifths to two-thirds of the population against attacking Iraq. The Catholic Pope decried the coming war, and the Protestant National Council of Churches has called for a day of prayer and fasting against the war. But George

Bush is operating on the proposition that if you hold state power, it doesn't matter a hell of a lot what the population thinks. Or, as one Hollywood executive remarked, you can fool all of the people, all of the time, "if the budget is big enough and the advertising is right".

In Britain, opposition to the government and Kinnock's warmongering has been channelled into the Tony Benn/CND-organised Committee to Stop War in the Gulf. This lash-up of Labour "lefts" and bourgeois pacifists have held meetings and rallies under the slogan "Support the UN". Now of course, the UN has done the bidding of US imperialism and sanctioned the 15 January war date. So we will probably be hearing less appeals to the sanctity of that imperialist den of thieves. But what you can be sure won't be heard from the podium at the upcoming 12 January national demonstrations is any hint that in this war the working people of the world have a side for the military defeat of imperialism and the defence of Iraq. Nor that the road to peace lies only in the mobilisation of the working class to smash *capitalism* once and for all. Mass, militant mobilisations and political strikes against the war will run straight up against the hostility of the Labour and TUC misleaders. It is necessary to break from the Labour traitors, right and "left" and forge the party of socialist revolution.

From the Middle East to Europe and the United States, the key is to build a revolutionary, internationalist workers party fighting against the imperialist system of war and brutal exploitation. As

Lenin wrote on the fourth anniversary of the Russian October Revolution, "the millions who are thinking about the causes of the recent war and of the approaching future war are more and more clearly realising the grim and inexorable truth that it is impossible to

escape imperialist war, and imperialist peace...which inevitably engenders imperialist war, that it is impossible to escape that inferno, *except by a Bolshevik struggle and a Bolshevik revolution.*"

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Özal...

(Continued from page 12)

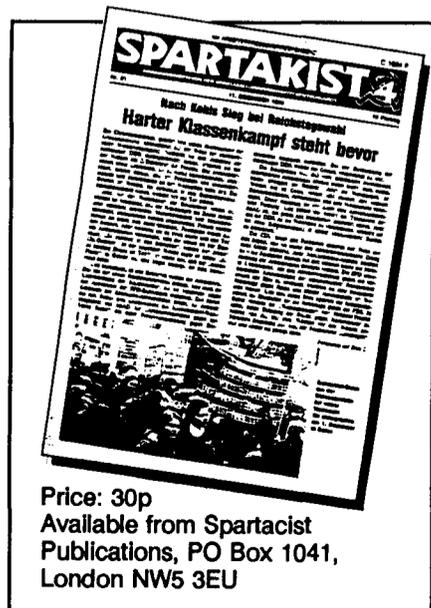
transiently to make their "voice heard" in the service of maintaining the rule of their class enemies under a more "democratic" guise. The solution to the genuine democratic and social tasks lies only in the seizure of state power by the working class.

Sympathy actions among the Turkish and Kurdish communities in both Germany and Britain took place on the day of the general strike. In Britain, as many as 2000 staged 24-hour strike action in solidarity with their class brothers and sisters in Turkey. Cops attacked pickets in the London Borough of Hackney where strikes had closed several local factories and sweatshops. Some 65 people were arrested and detained at Stoke Newington. *Workers Hammer* has been told that all of those arrested were beaten up in the police station and that many were forced to sign a statement declaring that they will leave the country if they fail to win their case in court. Moreover, they were only released under the condition that they not take part in any further

actions. The workers movement here must take up the demand for the freedom of all those arrested, dropping of the charges and no deportations of the Turkish and Kurdish militants!

Our comrades in Berlin and Hamburg as well as in London distributed a Turkish-language version of the article printed on page 12 to solidarity demonstrations and Turkish/Kurdish centres. In Berlin, the contingent of the Spartakist Arbeiter Partei Deutschlands was excluded by the organisers of the "solidarity" march precisely because we refused to allow our placard with the slogan "Defend Iraq—for the defeat of the USA/NATO imperialists" to be censored. These popular-frontist/guerrillaist "warriors" don't take a side in the impending imperialist attack even as the miners and Turkish workers struggle heroically not only against their brutal exploitation but also the war moves of the Turkish rulers.

The Turkish workers strikes point the way to the sort of militant class action urgently called for against the bloody imperialist carnage about to be launched in the Gulf by the US government and its allies. For internationalist unity with the Kurdish and Turkish workers! Bring down Özal with workers revolution! ■



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Heroic coal miners strike shakes Turkey

BERLIN, 30 December—For more than a month, 48,000 coal miners have waged an heroic strike that has galvanised the Black Sea town of Zonguldak, Turkey. Their strike has inspired the combative and restless working class, Kurdish and Turkish, throughout Turkey, fed up with the repressive Turgot Özal dictatorship. Solidarity strikes have occurred in Kurdish eastern Anatolia as well as among Turkish workers. On 26 December, over 100,000 metal workers went on strike for better wages. Thousands of textile workers have also been on strike for more than a week. The strike movement is already the largest union action in Turkey since 1980. Turkey's largest trade-union federation, Türk-İS representing two million workers, has called a general strike for 3 January.

The strike comes as the right-wing Özal government has aggressively committed Turkey to the imperialist war against Iraq. In response, the Zonguldak strikers have also made one of their demands: No to the war! Turkey is NATO's front line in the Middle East. Özal has not only turned off the pipeline for Iraqi oil exports but invited US forces and the German Luftwaffe to use Turkey as a staging area for an in-

Mass meeting of striking coal miners in Zonguldak, Turkey. Sparked by low wages and repressive dictatorship, strike wave is largest union action since 1980 coup.



vasion of Iraq. The massively unpopular war drive has also meant stepped-up repression at home. A 16-year-old female student who hung a sign "No to War" in her school lava-

tory was immediately arrested and is threatened with a 24-year prison sentence.

Thus the strike is clearly not just over economic demands. As the popular Zonguldak union and strike leader

Semsi Denizler told a reporter: "We want Özal's head" (*tageszeitung*, 15 December 1990). Children and women parade through the town chanting, "The

continued on page 11

Bring down Özal with workers revolution!

9 January—A powerful general strike of more than two million workers shut down all the large cities of Turkey on 3 January. In Istanbul public transportation was brought to a complete standstill. Electricity and telephones were repeatedly interrupted. The Turkish and Kurdish workers impressively demonstrated their solidarity with the striking miners and metal workers. University students boycotted classes and in many large towns shopkeepers closed shutters. Since 26 December nearly 150,000 private sector metal workers have been on strike and at least 135,000 textile workers may be on strike soon.

A massive march of striking miners began on 4 January; 60,000 miners and their families marched out of Zonguldak. Soon this number rose to 100,000. When the workers passed the prisons, they were applauded by prisoners who chanted: "For general amnesty. Empty the dungeons!" As we go to press, reports from Turkey are that the miners leader Semsi Denizler "suspended" the march in order to hold pay talks with the government. Miners started to return back to Zonguldak in groups after Denizler's speech; earlier miners' wives—who had been in the forefront of the march—were weep-

ing. In the capital, military preparations had been underway in expectation of the miners' arrival; roadblocks were set up to the entrances of the city and with the heavy military mobilisation, Ankara was starting to look under siege. Headlines and captions in the Turkish press captured the situation: "Workers on the road, State security on its feet".

The *Independent* (7 January) noted: "What is especially worrying for the government is the way labour protests are becoming mixed with anti-war sentiment. Yesterday tens of thousands of Turks gathered in southern port of Iskenderun...to roaring cries of 'No to war' and 'The miners are not alone.'" The explosion of popularly-supported class struggle in Turkey threatens the stability of this NATO front-line state on the eve of the imperialists' threatened strike against Iraq. As part of the military preparation for war, the brutal terror in Turkish Kurdistan and the evacuations of whole villages have dramatically increased in the last few months. *The Voice of Kurdistan* (January 1991) wrote:

"The Turkish state is mobilising for war with the army, government, parliament and press. The air-base of Incirlik is

crammed full of US war planes. The Turkish air force has been transferred to the military air bases of Diyarbakir and Batman. US military advisers are stationed all over Kurdistan....

"Since July the Turkish army in Kurdistan has been in continuous operation.... whole villages are being depopulated and razed to the ground.... Entire groups of innocent peasants are being massacred. Half of Kurdistan is a war zone and is a Prohibited Area."

The Turkish state has fantasies of occupying the oil-rich areas of Mosul and Kirkuk and the German bourgeoisie would also not be adverse to having these areas come under "Turkish" rather than under direct American control. But the Turkish rulers' bloody war preparations have been opposed by a strong working-class mobilisation. Militant strikers in Zonguldak demanded: who is this war for? Who is the Emir of Kuwait? We won't send our children to the battlefield; we don't even have enough bread to eat here.

Last month, the head of the army resigned in opposition to Özal's war policy and a Gulf military adventure; talk of a military coup appeared in the Turkish press. Today the situation is deeply

polarised along class lines—with the miners at the fore of generalised working-class struggle. The danger is that the misleaders of the workers (eg, the Türk-İS confederation which opposed the miners march from the outset) and the reformist left will succeed in derailing the proletarian mobilisation against the Özal regime into the establishment of a "progressive" popular-front government. Those fake leftists who want to label the reactionary Özal military regime as "fascist" do so in the service of holding the door open to such a bloc with the "democratic" bourgeois opposition.

What is urgently necessary is the fight to smash capitalism and replace the Turkish capitalists' rule with the dictatorship of the proletariat. Such a struggle requires the construction of a revolutionary Leninist vanguard capable of drawing the fight of all the oppressed—not least the Kurdish people in their just national struggle—behind the revolutionary working class. In calling off the miners action, Denizler announced: "Our workers made their voice heard in the world. You got registered in history. I am proud of you." But the miners have not fought so in-

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