



# Break with ALP, Party of Racism, Depression and War!

No credit



Hawke, regional deputy sheriff for Bush's bankrupt U.S. empire.

## For Political Strikes Against the War!

FEBRUARY 21—Hours after U.S. bombers began pouring fire and death on the people of Baghdad, Prime Minister Hawke, buoyed by a personal phone call from U.S. President Bush, mustered his press corps to announce that Australia stood shoulder to shoulder in "the great quest for a new world order of peace, security and freedom." Days later a special sitting of parliament was convened to put the official seal on the war effort. But while the government was proclaiming "The liberation of Kuwait has begun," we of the Spartacist League said "The mass murder of the Iraqi people has begun."

On 15 February the media fantasy of a seemingly bloodless "technological" war was interrupted by scenes of the hundreds of Iraqi civilians incinerated in a Baghdad bomb shelter. Hawke and Foreign Minister Evans rushed to defend this cold-blooded war crime, echoing Washington's line that the shelter was a "legitimate military target." Meanwhile Jordanian protesters outside the U.S. embassy in Amman carried placards that read: "Bravo! U.S. kills women and children—

what a target" and "America's Valentine gift to Iraqi children—bombs." Far from being an isolated act, the bombing of the Baghdad civilian bomb shelter captured what this war is all about as the people of this semi-colonial country are subjected to the most massive aerial bombardment in world history.

### U.S. Bases Mean Mass Murder!

Australia has two frigates and a supply ship stationed alongside the USS *Midway* in the Gulf, but it is the U.S. bases that represent Australia's greatest contribution to the war. A senior government official said: "even if Australia sent every aircraft, ship, tank and serviceman to join the Allied force in the Gulf it would be less of a contribution to the war effort than the role being played by the joint facilities" (*Australian Financial Review*, 25 January). The spy satellite ground stations at Pine Gap and Nurrungar collect electronic and photographic intelligence from around the world which is being used in the murderous bombing of Iraq, and

*continued on page 6*

# Sink U.S. and Australian Imperialism! Defend Iraq!

The following article is reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* (No. 520, 15 February 1991), fortnightly paper of the Spartacist League/U.S., section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) which is fighting to defeat imperialism from within the belly of the beast.

FEBRUARY 11—Four weeks into the U.S. air war against Iraq, the Pentagon and George Bush keep repeating hypnotically that everything is "on course" and "on schedule." The mass media lull the public to sleep with round-the-clock lies and images of an antiseptic war in which not a drop of blood nor a mangled body ever appears on the TV screen. But the only thing which is on schedule is the mass slaughter being visited on the Iraqi people by the U.S. war criminals.

The A-bomb which leveled Hiroshima carried 15,000 tons of explosive firepower. That much and more is what is being rained down on Iraq by the U.S. and its allies every day. Homes and hospitals, schools and factories are being turned into rubble. City bridges in Baghdad are destroyed. Not content to drop their payloads of death from the air, U.S. pilots even strafe civilians fleeing for

*continued on page 8*



"Apocalypse Now" in the desert.

Dejong/AP

# Defence of Iraq Banned in Britain

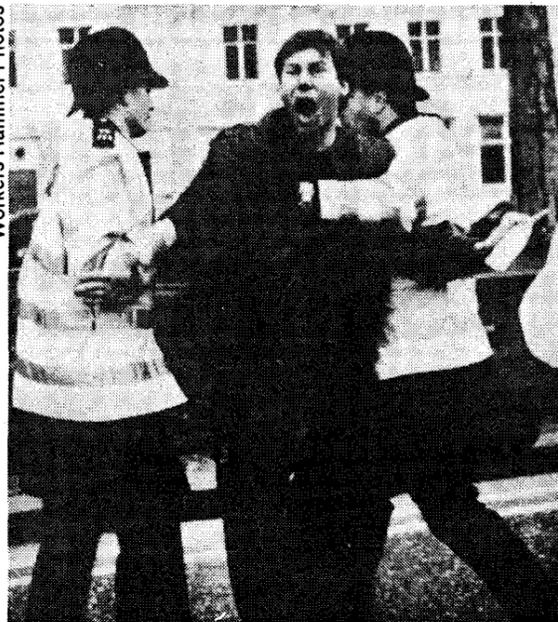
LONDON—On February 2, police arrested and attacked a Spartacist supporter at the demonstration organised by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament protesting the Gulf War in London. The Spartacist contingent marched behind a banner which called for "Defeat U.S./British Imperialism!" and "Defend Iraq!" Police threatened that anyone chanting "Victory to Iraq" was liable to arrest under the Public Order Act. Comrade Alastair Green was seized by the cops after demonstrators refused to stop chanting their slogans.

While the march halted for 20 minutes and outraged protesters demanded "Let him go!" our comrade was dragged away and eventually thrown into a police van. Inside the van, one of the arresting officers hit Green on the face with a helmet; the comrade sustained a nasty injury to his mouth. He has been charged with "obstructing a police officer" and "threatening behaviour."

At the beginning of the February 2 demonstration, a line of police moved into the crowd to force leftists carrying a banner of the Hands Off the Middle East Committee calling for "Victory to Iraq" to pull it down under threat of arrest. CND stewards applauded vociferously when the banner came down. At the end of the march, the banner was raised again in Hyde Park; the police intervened, cheered on by CNDers, and again the banner went down.

The Spartacist League/Britain had marched with its banner along with an "anti-imperialist contingent" of other left groups (including Workers Power, the Workers International League and supporters of the Revolutionary Communist Party). Later on, after repeated cop threats and harassment the police

## Spartacist Arrested at Hyde Park



Workers Hammer Photos



Alastair Green seized by police at February 2 demonstration.

threatened that the next person who chanted "Victory to Iraq" would be arrested, and they waded into the Spartacist contingent and roughly seized comrade Green.

The threats to protesters and the arrest itself were a direct implementation of the Crown Prosecution Service instructions to police on the day.

It is often said that civil liberties, no less than the truth, are among the first casualties of war. Thus the present-day star chamber "hearings" against Iraqi and other Arab residents. This government and Labour governments before

it have a despicable record on this score, war or no: to name but a few, the judicial frame-up of the Birmingham Six, Winchester Three and Guildford Four, the "ban" on Sinn Fein and Irish Republican spokesmen, the savage attack and roundup of anti-poll-tax demonstrators last March.

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

The likes of Labour left MP Tony Benn and the CND endorsed the sanctions against Iraq, the prelude to war. They promoted the United Nations as a fig leaf for the vast buildup of forces which have now been unleashed in the filthy war against Iraq. Now the CND leadership—those "pacifists" whose overriding loyalty is to the warmongering Labour Party of Neil Kinnock—have done their bit to set the stage for police

repression against leftists participating in antiwar protests.

The "Hands Off the Middle East Committee" has voted unanimously to endorse Alastair Green's united front defence. Marxists have the right to organise, and the duty to mobilise working-class action against the slaughter of the Arab peoples on behalf of Washington's oil plunder. We call on all those in the workers movement and on the left to join us in condemning the state's attack on ourselves and others who raise the call to defend Iraq. We demand that all charges against comrade Green and others arrested at the demonstration be immediately dropped! No deportations, no internment of Iraqi and Arab people! Defeat British/U.S. imperialism! Defend Iraq! ■

Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard*, No. 520, 15 February 1991.

The Partisan Defence Committee is undertaking a publicity and fund-raising campaign to mobilise support for the Spartacist comrade, Alastair Green. Because Green refused to be gagged, he is being victimized expressly on the basis of the SL's political positions on the Gulf War—for the defeat of U.S./British imperialism and for the defence of Iraq. Contributions to Alastair Green's defence can be sent, earmarked and payable to: Partisan Defence Committee, PO Box Q217, Queen Victoria Building, Sydney, NSW, 2000.

## Smash Racist Anti-Arab "Terrorism" Witchhunt!

The Hawke government's hysterical "anti-terrorism" campaign has the country at its highest and longest sustained state of terrorist alert ever. Thousands of ASIO and Federal Police staff have been engaged to combat "terrorism." The immediate targets are Arab Australians. NSW Police Minister Pickering calls it "keeping an eye out for the odd malcontent who might misbehave" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 January). Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Gareth Evans, who thinks that assassinating Saddam Hussein would be "a bonus," expelled the Iraqi charge d'affaires, Saad Omran, for warning that Australian interests would be subject to attack if the government increased its involvement in the war. This was followed up by imposing a 50 kilometre travel restriction on Iraqi diplomats based in Canberra.

There is terrorism in Australia alright, and at the moment it's directed at Arab Australians. In January a mosque in the Sydney suburb of Rooty Hill was firebombed, the latest in a series of similar attacks targeting Islamic colleges, cultural centres and schools. Hawke gave the green light for this kind of terror in August last year, when he dismissed Arab Australian opposition to the war as just "a minority." Since then, racist attacks on Arab and other minority Islamic communities have been a daily occurrence, including attacks on children, Arabic speakers and

especially cowardly abuse and harassment of women wearing Islamic head-dress, who could just as easily be Indonesian as Arab. The victims of racist persecution are not restricted to people of Arab descent. Virtually anyone who isn't obviously Anglo-Saxon can be a target. Recently one of our comrades, who is of Greek descent, was harassed at a bus stop, with the words "we're going to get you now." The climate of race-hate and war hysteria has also emboldened neo-Nazi groups, who have targeted Jewish schools, synagogues and a large Zionist meeting in Melbourne.

This terror campaign underscores the justifiable fear of Arab Australians being rounded up and put in concentration camps by the xenophobic capitalist rulers, as were immigrants of German and Italian descent during World War II. Ex-Democrat leader, Don Chipp, said it openly when he advocated that Arabs and Muslims who publicly support Saddam's case "with impunity" be "charged, and if found guilty of sedition or treason, put away for the duration" (*Sunday Telegraph*, 27 January). We call on the union movement and all defenders of democratic rights to join in smashing this racist "terrorism" campaign. A good start would be the formation of trade union-based workers defence guards to defend Arab religious and community centres. For mass union/minority action to smash racist terror!

## To Our Readers

In early February, a meeting of the Central Committee of the Spartacist League of Australia decided to reduce the frequency of *Australasian Spartacist* to quarterly for this year. Subscription prices have been changed accordingly to \$3 for 4 issues (1 year) and \$5 airmail.

This decision was based on our current capacities and aims at a better utilisation of our resources. With youth and working people being politicised by the Gulf War, *Australasian Spartacist* remains key to winning militants to our program. We look forward to resuming more frequent publication in the near future. ■

Australasian

# SPARTACIST



For a workers republic of Australia, part of a socialist Asia!

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CIRCULATION: Kathie Tresca

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# Policing Anti-War Protest for Hawke

## Cox, Uren Target Marxist SL

Bloody mass murder has been unleashed against the Iraqi people. U.S. imperialism, backed by its Australian junior partner, aims to grab control of Near East oil. Bush has proclaimed a "New World Order" with the U.S. as cops of the world, and Hawke has enlisted to be his regional deputy sheriff.

We in the Spartacist League (SL) say that the workers of the world have a side in this war—for the *defeat* of U.S. and Australian imperialism and the *defence* of Iraq! Because of our intransigent anti-imperialist line prominent "peace movement" spokesmen Eva Cox and Tom Uren have publicly attacked us. In the context of the war hysteria, "anti-terrorist" campaigns, anti-Arab racism and media censorship, they are doing their bit to set us up for police repression. Already the British government has de facto banned defence of Iraq, and on 2 February Spartacist League/Britain supporter, Alastair Green, was arrested for these politics.

The widespread opposition to the Gulf War covers a range of political views. The Marxist program of the Spartacist League represents the class interests of the proletariat. We fight for the working class to use its muscle, calling for political strikes and boycotts against the war. Only the working class has the social power to stop imperialist war, through workers revolution to sweep away the whole rotting capitalist system which breeds it. A defeat for U.S. and Australian imperialism in the Gulf would greatly enhance the capacity of the working people of the Near East, including Iraq, to overthrow their despotic rulers. But at the moment the peace protests are dominated politically by groups like the Network for Peace or the Sydney Bring the Frigates Home Coalition, who want to keep opposition to the war safe for Australian imperialism and the Hawke Labor government.

In an interview on ABC radio 2BL on 23 January this year, Eva Cox, social policy consultant, secretary of the NSW Council for Civil Liberties and long-time member of the bourgeois Women's Electoral Lobby, singled out the Spartacist League for attack. Referring to the 19 January Sydney anti-war demonstration, interviewer John Doyle raised the "if not alarming, certainly remarkable observations...that there were people carrying placards saying victory to Iraq." Cox responded: "I remember from the Vietnam days, the Spartacist League

always turns up with banners at everything which are completely contradictory to everything." Actually the SL didn't have an organised presence in this country until 1973, and rather than "Victory to Iraq" the slogans we carried on 19 January were "Defeat U.S. and Australian Imperialism!" "Defend Iraq!" and "For Political Strikes Against the War!" What is true, and what she was at pains to reassure the interviewer about, is that the bourgeois feminist Cox is a bitter, long-time opponent of the interests of the working class. She continued: "You know, either you censor them... strangle them or do something violent to them, or else if you're a peace movement you let them all march." Cox may not want to be seen to be engaging in political censorship herself, but she is inviting state repression against us.

The British Labour Party-loyal opposition set the stage for the attack on and arrest of Alastair Green in London. Earlier, in Glasgow on 12 January, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the Militant Tendency (parent of the Militant group in Australia) called the cops on the Spartacist contingent. CND stewards applauded when a Hands Off the Middle East Committee "Victory to Iraq" banner was pulled down by police at the 2 February London demo. Internationally we have launched a defence campaign, demanding: drop all charges against the anti-war demonstrators! (See opposite page.)

A week after the Cox interview, on 30 January, the Bring the Frigates Home Coalition held a public meeting in Sydney featuring retired federal ALP "left" MP Tom Uren. During the question period a Spartacist spokesman put forward our program for workers action to defeat the imperialist forces and defend Iraq, calling for breaking the U.S. Alliance and driving out the U.S. bases, and concluding that "the only real successful anti-war movement was the 1917 October Revolution led by the Bolsheviks."

Uren responded with a tirade against us. To illustrate "these people's mentality," he talked about a 1967 protest rally in Sydney against South Vietnam's Marshal Ky, claiming there was a "minority who wanted violence" against the police, and that we reminded him of this "rent-a-crowd." Let's be clear. The real violence during the years of Vietnam anti-war protests came from the cops, who attacked demonstrators with clubs, charged crowds on horseback, raided houses of

An Nahar

activists, imprisoned draft resisters and spied on thousands of "disloyal elements." So, Cox threatens violence against us, Uren falsely paints us as a fringe group intent on violence against the police. Both are trying to seal us off and set us up for violence at the hands of the state.

Why are we drawing all this fire, quite disproportionate to our size? Firstly, because Cox, Uren and their ilk are coping flak from the Hawke government, which wants to suppress all dissent. They are trying to prove their loyalty. Secondly, the worst nightmares of the bourgeoisie involve opposition to the war linking up with the working class and becoming explicitly anti-imperialist—which is what we stand for. The working class hates the ALP government. When the bombing began, wharfies walked off

campaign involving violence-baiting of the union. For Uren it makes a logical transition from member of the Cold War Hawke government to policeman for the peace movement.

In the U.S. during the Vietnam War the Spartacist League fought for a class struggle opposition to imperialism, for the military victory of the NLF and for political strikes against the war. And in Australia we uphold the traditions from that time, such as the maritime workers strikes against the war and the mobilisation of wharfies defence guards against cop attacks on Moratorium marchers, which showed the way to fight imperialism. Tom Uren stands counterposed to this. We say "Vietnam was a Victory! Two, three, many defeats for U.S. and Australian imperialism!" Uren spoke for the defeatist wing of the bourgeoisie, which wanted to extricate itself from a losing war. Over this war Uren and other popular-frontist "peace" leaders pledge their allegiance to the capitalist "national interest" by appealing to White Australia racism. Uren wants the Gulf forces to be brought home so they can guard against what he calls "the Japanese samurai." But the bourgeoisie's enthusiasm for the Gulf War is precisely because the U.S. aims to put Germany and Japan

Asp photo



SL contingent, Sydney, 19 January. The anti-imperialist politics the Laborites want to squash.

the job and in Brisbane they called for a one-day national general strike. We may yet be small, but our program is potent.

We are a legal, Marxist, political party which organises amongst the working class and oppressed. We will vigorously defend our rights, and by doing so we also defend the many others who are in the crosshairs of the state. Hawke is trying to whip up war fever at home with an hysterical "anti-terrorist" campaign. The secret police such as ASIO have been unleashed. Already there is a spate of racist terror against Arabs, from bombings of mosques to street attacks on women in Arabic headdress. Fascist groups are targeting Jews. The International Socialist Organisation recently found a bomb outside their Brisbane offices after a peace march. We call for trade union-based workers defence guards to defend immigrant and other oppressed communities against racist attacks. The purpose of the security blitz is not to stave off terrorism but to suppress dissent and regiment the population. Civil liberties, along with the truth, are the first casualties of war.

The truth about Uren is his line for sanctions against Iraq, for which he has "no apologies," means starving the Iraqi people into submission. Sanctions are an act of war, and were the direct precursor to this war! Uren was a minister in the Hawke government while it was slashing jobs, cutting wages under the Accord, busting unions, and while Aboriginals were being killed in unprecedented numbers in state custody. We might add that the busting of the BLF in 1986 was preceded by a massive witchhunting cam-

over a barrel by grabbing control of Middle East oil.

In the midst of reactionary imperialist war, the reformist left tailor their politics to suit the ALP and bourgeois liberals. We Trotskyists on the other hand speak the truth: the ALP is the party of racism, depression and war! Its hold on the working class must be broken, by building a workers party of the Bolshevik type to lead the socialist revolution. We are committed to this task. Join us! ■



Tom Uren (front row, second from right) in Sydney anti-war march; keeping the protests in line for Labor.

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# Saddam Hussein's War on Kurds, Leftists

The following article has been adapted from Workers Vanguard No. 517, 4 January 1991, fortnightly paper of the Spartacist League/U.S.

As the U.S. and its allies rain death and destruction on the Iraqi people, the Spartacist League has marched in protest demonstrations under our banners calling to "Defeat U.S. and Australian Imperialism! Defend Iraq!" 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 U.S. 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 U.S. imperialism.

In a previous article ("Iraqi Rulers' Bloody Road to Power," *WV* 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

## Iraqi Rulers' Bloody Reign

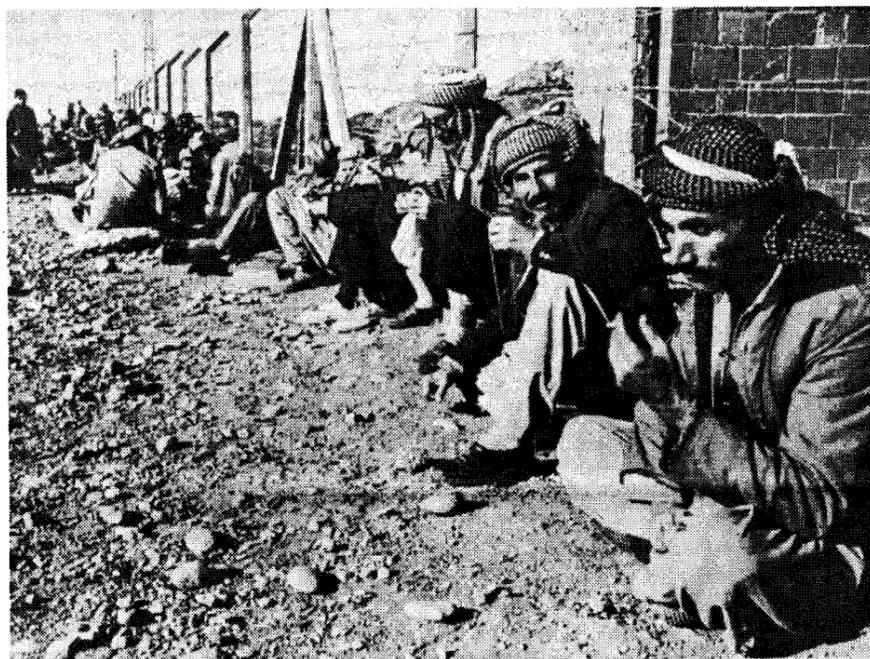
Eisenhower), militant workers were set up for repression and Kurds were pushed into the camp of traditional chieftains. When in 1963 Qassem's nationalist rivals of the Ba'ath party brokered a military coup, the result was a nine-month reign of terror. Ba'athist goons using lists supplied by the CIA dragged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

The ICP's suicidal capitulations in Iraq were only playing out the logic of Stalin's

like Saddam Hussein instead of mobilizing 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 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



Der Spiegel

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

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 diplomatic maneuvers, they have for decades sold out to tinpot dictators

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 U.S. 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 "Arabization" 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 south-western desert where some half 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 organizations 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 toward 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 formalized the imperialist division of the "spoils of war," envisaged the formation of a (highly truncated) Kurdish state under U.S. 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 U.S., as it works to combine 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



New York Times Map

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

national minority—20 percent 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 U.S. 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 checkerboard 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



Le Bolchevik  
Ligue Trotskyste de France demonstrates in October against imperialist invasion of Persian Gulf. Sign (right) reads, "For a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan!"

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 decentralization 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 ap-

peared 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 neighboring 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 Near East.

Yet unlike East Europe, where under

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 favor 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 Near 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 Near East. ■



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27 February – 26 March

## Party of War...

(continued from page 1)

shared with the nuclear-armed Israeli rulers. The central function of these bases has always been preparing a nuclear first strike on the Soviet Union, and they also target the peoples of the world—the working class must drive them out now!

If imperialist carnage is not to be the continuing fate of humanity until this system finally incinerates all of civilisation in a nuclear fireball, it must be swept away through proletarian revolution. A stinging defeat for U.S. and Australian imperialism's onslaught against the Iraqi people can spark revolutionary struggle throughout the Middle East and elsewhere.

Not long ago support for Hawke's union-busting government was down to its lowest level in eight years, and the "people's PM" trailed even yuppie Liberal opposition leader John Hewson in the polls. Now Hawke sees the chance to refurbish his populist image as the nation's war statesman, akin to his hero John Curtin during the Second World War. And the loyal ALP "left" have gone along, albeit with "reservations" and vociferous support to sanctions as a supposed alternative to all-out war. At the 22 January special parliamentary session ten Labor MPs either abstained on the war motion or absented themselves from the chamber. Labor "left" Jeanette McHugh assured everyone that she abstained only because she knew the resolution would pass anyway, and the government wasn't threatened. The subsequent ALP censure of these wimps was a slap on the wrist—Hawke knows he has them on a short leash.

Despite the media footage of a "technology war" where "smart bombs" zero in on Iraqi targets, the imperialists cannot evade the prospect of a bloody, drawn-out ground war. This will send "allied" casualty lists through the roof and puncture the triumphal war hysteria, along with Hawke's temporary boost in the polls. Until now the Australian government's contribution of three warships has been praised as "measured" and "appropriate." But National Party leader Tim Fischer has already demanded the reintroduction of conscription, while Hawke has refused to rule out further contributions. On 27 January the government announced that a naval mine-clearing team of 23 was being despatched and ten RAAF intelligence officers have also reportedly been sent to the Gulf in a "secret" posting (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 February). The pressure to send troops can only increase in a country

where the ruling class has always measured its "security" in the roll call of working class youth sent to die as cannon fodder in endless imperialist wars this century.

### New World Order: Feet of Clay, Hands of Blood!

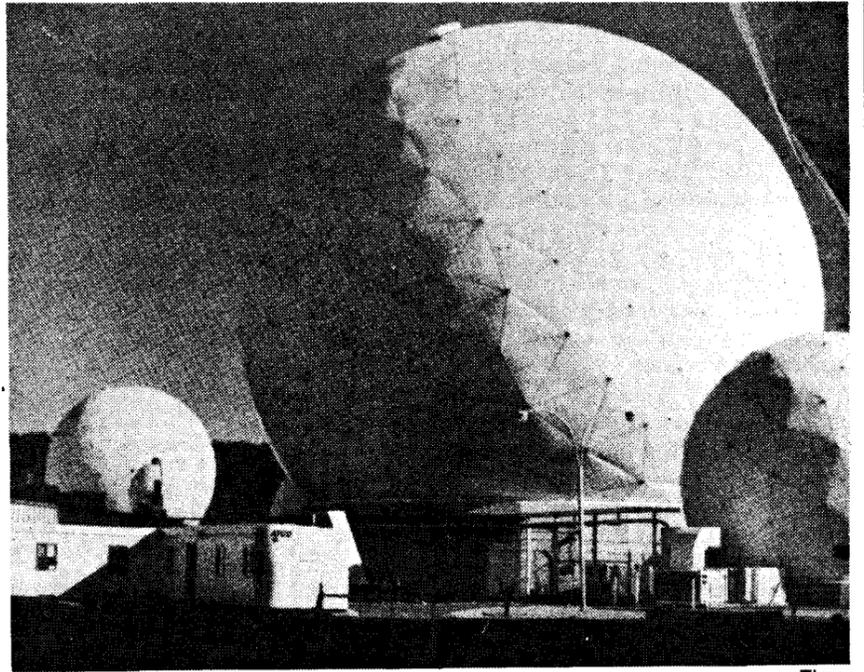
The stage for the Persian Gulf war was set by the collapse of Stalinist rule in East Europe and the escalating crisis in the Soviet Union. But rather than ushering in an era of international harmony, Bush and Hawke's "New World Order" is one in which the U.S. arrogates to itself the role of world policeman to impose its imperial interests, and Australia is assigned the job of deputy sheriff in this region. It is all supposed to be part of the "next American century." The last "American century" which Australia's rulers committed themselves to was buried in the rice paddies of Vietnam, and the attempt to restore it could lead to World War III. U.S. imperialism is no longer the undisputed master of the capitalist world. Germany and Japan are surging forward as economically more dynamic powers and the U.S. is seeking to regain its position of unchallenged imperialist hegemony by throwing around its military weight.

Australia's rulers are caught between Japan, the industrial powerhouse of Asia and their biggest trading partner (which they also deeply fear), and their U.S. military protector. Those attending a recent seminar on "Australian-American relations after the Cold War" were taken aback by what journalist Frank Devine called "an unexpected bucketing of Japan" by U.S. speakers including former Reagan adviser James Kelly. One U.S. official remarked: "You Australians certainly are a lot more tolerant of Japan than we are." Devine worried about Australia "getting caught in the cross-fire" and asked, "might there be a risk in hitching our wagon to a tired superpower, beset with economic problems and, in James Kelly's words, intermittently 'inattentive' to the Pacific region" (*Australian*, 7 February).

With an economy rapidly sliding toward depression and export earnings already severely slashed by a looming agricultural trade war between the U.S. and the EC, the prospects for Australian capitalism look dim indeed. The bosses' vain hopes of economic recovery through "enmeshing" with Asia were jolted when the ASEAN countries recently advocated a trade bloc with Japan excluding Australia.

Various countries of the Asian region have been decidedly unenthusiastic about the "New World Order," including China which sees the Gulf War as a catalyst for a Japanese military resurgence. Recently

## DRIVE OUT U.S. BASES!



Time

**U.S. spy bases in Australia are being used in the imperialist mass murder of Iraqi people. With military bases in Japan, the Philippines and Diego Garcia, Pine Gap (above) and Nurrungar are part of an imperialist military arc across the Pacific preparing nuclear first strike against the Soviet Union and threatening the people of the world.**

the *Far Eastern Economic Review* (24 January) reported that the Gulf crisis has "driven a wedge between the U.S. and a majority of Asian governments from Islamabad to Tokyo." Their Middle East trade has been disrupted, immigrant workers have been sent home from the Gulf, and their economic future is tied up with Japan's "co-prosperity sphere" rather than Bush's "New World Order." While this has angered the U.S. no end, in Australia it fuels racist and nationalist fears of the "Asian threat."

In Malaysia the government's support for sanctions against Iraq has been met with hostility, and truckloads of anti-riot units were deployed to deal with anticipated demonstrations. The Pakistani government has sent troops for the imperialist war effort, but dozens of demonstrations have occurred almost daily sponsored by diverse political groups including some of the ruling Islamic coalition parties. In India the makeshift government of Chandra Shekhar faces collapse as a result of parliamentary opposition to his allowing U.S. military planes to refuel in India on route to the Gulf from the Philippines. Meanwhile in Indonesia, nominally the largest Islamic country in the world, the prospect of mass opposition to the imperialist war

has created unease within ruling circles over a possible resurgence of the anti-American nationalism of the fifties and sixties. While religious and nationalist groups are moving to take advantage of widespread dissent, the prospect of a resurgent working class leading the peasant masses in revolutionary struggle is also real. This scenario horrifies the xenophobic Australian ruling class.

Unlike the petty-bourgeois nationalist left, the ruling class knows that an "independent, non-aligned" Australian imperialism is a pipedream; that their main "national interest" is the U.S. alliance. As David Jenkins of the *Sydney Morning Herald* (22 January), defending the government's Gulf commitment put it, "But times change and threats emerge. If someone did descend on us, it would be nice to have the Americans around. That being the case, we can't afford to get behind on the premiums." So while the debate over "our true interests" drags on, the truth is that both Hawke and the "lefts" share common nationalist and racist fears. For instance, prominent "left" anti-war leader Tom Uren direly warns of the threat of Japanese rearmament and both sides identify Indonesia as a major threat, the "pacifist" left wanting a more aggressive Australian stance over the Indonesian invasion of East Timor.

## Soviet Pilots Refuse to Transport German Rockets

On February 8 a chartered Soviet air freighter arrived at the Bonn-Köln airport to pick up a German "Roland" anti-aircraft defense system and its Bundeswehr crew. But when the Soviet pilots found out that the cargo was to be delivered to southeastern Turkey, for use against Iraq in the present war, they refused to take off. The captain also refused to speak with the Soviet ambassador. Over the weekend there were hourly radio reports as the plane sat on the runway. The Kohl government insisted it had paid good D-marks to lease the giant Antonov freighter, one of the few planes large enough to hold the "Roland." (U.S. Galaxies are booked up for the Gulf War.) But on Saturday, Gorbachev declared that Moscow was unhappy over the U.S. military

operations, and the next day the Soviet news agency TASS officially stated that Soviet planes would henceforth not be allowed to carry weapons to crisis areas.

During the standoff, our comrades of the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany (SpAD) issued a statement (translated below) solidarizing with the action of the Soviet pilots:

"The SpAD hails the refusal of Soviet pilots to carry Roland rockets to the Bundeswehr at Dyabarkir, in Turkish Kurdistan. The NATO-backed and widely hated Özal dictatorship has leaped into the U.S./NATO war of mass murder against the Iraqi people with designs on the oil fields of Kirkuk and Mosul. The Luftwaffe unit there is part of NATO's mobile strike force, a dagger

directed against the Soviet Union. The Kohl government has declared that defense of Turkey is required for reasons of alliance, raising the possibility of direct intervention of the Bundeswehr together with the rest of NATO.

"With the defense of Iraq against murderous imperialism directly posed, the Soviet Union backed first the U.S.-ordered UN blockade to starve Iraq, and then the U.S./NATO mass slaughter. This imperialist adventure to make the Pentagon cops of the world and to plunder and redivide the region's resources endangers the Soviet Union itself and brings the world closer to world war. U.S. war minister Cheney declared the land of October remains Enemy Number One. We say: 'Defeat U.S./NATO imperialism in the Gulf! Defend Iraq!' Your courageous action is a concrete measure in defense both of the Soviet Union and Iraq against imperialism, and is an inspiration to the international working class."

Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 520, 15 February 1991.

Ever the loyal lapdog abroad, Australian imperialism is just as brutal closer to home. For over eight months the Australian government has supported the blockade of the island of Bougainville by its Papua New Guinea neocolony to crush the secessionist Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA). As one Bougainvillian told an SBS reporter: "Papua New Guinea may have pulled the trigger, but Australia gave them the gun" (*Dateline*, 18 February). The blockade of basic food and medical supplies, power and communications has resulted in the deaths of children, mothers and emergency cases denied proper hospital treatment. *Dateline* reported that up to 3000 people have died of preventable diseases in the last twelve months. When the BRA buckled in January and agreed to negotiations, the whole sordid affair was proclaimed a "victory," proof that sanctions can work! The negotiated settlement includes provision for a multinational "peacekeeping" force in which Australian troops will be a major component. Bougainville is a prime example where working class opposition to imperialism at home must mean fighting Australia's imperialist designs for the

region and defending the rights of the oppressed Pacific Islanders. Australia and PNG: *Hands off Bougainville!*

### Hawke's Media Purge

Hawke and his war cabinet have ordered 100 percent commitment from all the media, and anything less is subject to claims of "left-wing bias" and none-too-subtle threats of censorship. While most of the electronic and print media have saluted and fallen in line, the ABC has been spotlighted for its (slightly) less than 100 percent effort, which may explain why its ratings are up of late. The government has threatened the ABC with severe budget cuts and forced an "inquiry" carried out by its management to be followed up by an outside "watch-dog" to monitor the ABC.

The allegations of bias include popular announcers like Geraldine Doogue and Andrew Olle, both accused of asking too many questions! Hawke reserved particular venom for American-born academic Robert Springborg, who he charges with being "loaded, biased and disgraceful." In 1974 Hawke made the notorious statement: "If I were the Israeli Prime Minister I wouldn't give a damn about world morality—I would use the atomic bomb to protect my own" (quoted in Blanche D'Alpuget, *Robert J Hawke, a Biography*). Is it any wonder then that Springborg, who proclaims that he "feels strongly" for stateless people like the Palestinians, has been singled out? If this is what the government intends for timid ABC liberals it doesn't take much imagination to figure out what they may have in store for Marxist and working class opponents of the war.

### Wharfies Walk Off the Job to Protest War

On 18-19 January some 70,000 people joined marches in major Australian cities, including rallies of 20,000 and more in Sydney and Melbourne. Since then rallies have continued to occur on alternate weekends in Sydney and Melbourne. Dominated by young protestors, including students, pacifists, greens, church groups and feminists, the demonstrations have often included contingents from unions such as the Miners and Building Workers as well as Kurdish, Turkish and Arab groups. One striking feature of the opinion polls is that far more women than men oppose the war. In Melbourne and Sydney the Spartacist League (SL) has mobilised with banners and placards, selling our press, leafleting and soap-boxing, standing out for our revolutionary opposition to this heinous war.

It is the massive social power of the working class which can transform anti-war sentiment into a nation-wide class struggle against the imperialist war effort and in the process turn the tide on the years of union-busting and capitalist austerity. As the UN deadline passed and the U.S. bombing began, militant wharfies walked off the job in Brisbane, Sydney and Port Kembla, shutting down the docks to attend anti-war rallies and meetings. The Brisbane Waterside Workers Federation sent a resolution to their federal union and the Queensland Trades and Labour Council calling for a one-day national general strike. During the Vietnam War maritime unions took class action against the war. In 1967, Seamen's Union members refused to man the *Jeparit* because it was headed for South Vietnam carrying weapons and ammunition for the imperialist war effort.

However, the popular front anti-war coalitions, such as the Network for Peace, have sought to divert anti-war sentiment into harmless pro-capitalist channels. Tailoring their "opposition" to the likes of the Labor "lefts" and Democrats, the Network for Peace leadership present their social-patriotic credentials through pleas for a ceasefire and a reversion to economic sanctions on Iraq. But sanctions are an act of war! These peace-niks are deeply hostile to a working class strategy that threatens their pro-

imperialist designs; witness Tom Uren's vicious tirade against the Marxist SL at a Sydney public meeting on 5 February (see statement page three).

### For a Class-Struggle Leadership!

Loyal appeals to the Labor government which has just committed troops to war won't go down well with working people who are fed up with Labor rule. Australian capitalism is in deep economic trouble with a foreign debt well over the \$120 billion mark and rising rapidly. The current recession is already worse than that of 1982-83. The level of unemploy-

workers revolution. *For a workers republic of Australia, part of a socialist Asia!*

### Reforge the Fourth International!

Today, the death agony of Stalinism has led to disarray among the "socialist" and "communist" leftists in the West who are prostrate in the face of this bloody imperialist assault. Communism is supposed to be dead, but that doesn't square very well with what's going on in the Persian Gulf. It was Lenin who noted in his 1916 pamphlet, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, "The more capitalism is developed, the more strongly the shortage of raw materials throughout

Palestinians out of the West Bank and into Jordan, the international workers movement must demand: Defend the Palestinians! Israel out of the Occupied Territories! The only way out of the national and sectarian fratricide which has wracked the region—short of mutual annihilation—lies through the revolutionary destruction of capitalism and the creation of a socialist federation of the Near East. A defeat for U.S. and Australian imperialism will embolden the working people in the Near East to deal with their own despots and butchers, including Hussein in Iraq.

With the onset of the "first post-Cold War war" there has been a wave of anti-



Seamens Union of Australia  
Seamens Union May Day banner, 1967 (above); Vietnam anti-war demonstration in Melbourne (left). Seamens' protest against shipping of weapons to South Vietnam in 1967 is an historic example of the power of union action against capitalist war.

ment measured by CES job-seeker figures is currently 919,000, way above the 8.4 percent claimed by the government. Hardly a day goes by where we don't hear of another industry carrying out mass sackings. The brittle manufacturing sector, in particular the car plants, is being decimated by the recession. Depression may be the "D-word" for politicians but for many working people it is a grim reality.

Hawke's rule has been based on the corporatist Accord. Cemented by the smashing of the militant Builders Labourers Federation in 1986 and the Pilots union in 1989, the Accord has meant successive wage slashing and giveback agreements policed by the Laborite bureaucracy, both "left" and right wings. It has been reinforced by racist protectionism aimed at directing working class resistance into an alliance with the Australian bosses against Asian workers. And the Accord has been a straitjacket on struggle, with strikes like the three-month-long struggle at Hoechst in Melbourne last year, in defence of their shop floor union leadership, isolated, ground down and sold out by the trade union tops.

Since the war began the union bureaucracy has tried to enforce a pro-war line on the shop floor. For example the Tramways Union tops in Melbourne outrageously ordered their members not to discuss the war, while at the Garden Island naval dockyard the supposedly "anti-war" bureaucrats promised to exempt ships for the Gulf from strike action. What's been missing and is urgently needed is a class struggle leadership of the working class, one capable of smashing the Accord/Arbitration straitjacket by leading some hard strikes and occupations with real mass picket lines. The fight against capitalist immiseration and poverty is linked to the fight against imperialist war abroad.

Three times this century the ALP has had deep splits. Each time, from the anti-conscription battles of 1916 to the 1955 Cold War split Labor was patched together again to serve as capitalism's instrument for policing war and depression. Marxists understand that war is the mother of revolution and today with the stakes so high the crucial task is to split the ALP's working class base from its reactionary leadership and forge a mass revolutionary workers party to lead a

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.

As one of the birthplaces of civilisation, the Near East has always been a mosaic of numerous conflicting nationalities and ethnic and religious groupings attempting to carve out living space at each other's expense. Under the domination of imperialism and the imposition of artificial borders, capitalist rule in the Near East has taken a particularly bloody and horrendous form. With the Zionist rulers of Israel intent on driving the

war unrest across the world encompassing sections of the working class. This opens up tremendous possibilities for building an authentic communist vanguard. We of the Spartacist League section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) fight for proletarian opposition to the war in the spirit of Lenin and Trotsky, emphasising that the struggle against this predatory and barbaric war means the struggle to overthrow the imperialist system. The crucial factor is the revolutionary party—reforge the Fourth International as a world party of socialist revolution! ■

### Spartacist Forums

## Sink U.S./Australian Imperialism in the Persian Gulf!

- Defend Iraq! • For Political Strikes Against the War!
- Down with the Sheiks, Colonels, Zionist Butchers — For Workers Revolution!

#### SYDNEY

- Tuesday, 5 March, 1pm  
Isabel Fidler Room  
Manning Building  
Sydney University
- Tuesday, 19 March, 7.30pm  
AMWU Council Room  
136-140 Chalmers Street  
Surry Hills, Sydney

#### MELBOURNE

- Thursday, 21 March, 1pm  
Melbourne University  
(Room to be advised)
- Saturday, 23 March, 3pm  
YWCA Membership Lounge  
489 Elizabeth Street  
Melbourne

For more information phone: Sydney (02) 281 2181 - Melbourne (03) 654 4315

### Sydney Spartacist League Class Series

#### Marxism, War and Revolution

- USSR: Return to the Road of Lenin & Trotsky! 2 March
- For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution! 9 March

Weekly discussions will continue, same time, same venue.  
Topics to be announced.

3pm, Metropolitan Hotel (1st floor), Corner George and Bridge Streets, Sydney (near Wynyard).  
For more information and readings contact the Spartacist League: (02) 281 2181.

# Sink Imperialism...

(continued from page 1)

shelter and refugees fleeing west to Jordan on the "highway of death."

In World War II, Hitler adopted a policy of *Schrecklichkeit*, deliberate terrorizing of the "enemy" population. This was expressed in the bombing of Coventry and the London blitz. The Allies outdid the Nazis in this department with the firebombing of Dresden and Tokyo, turning those cities into huge crematoria. In Vietnam this was called "destroying the country in order to save it." George Bush has set out to terrorize and destroy the Iraqi people to impose a *Pax Americana* on the Near East and the world.

"Our plan is mathematical and it has its schedule," a particularly dimwitted White House official announced last week. But as Count Helmuth von Moltke the Elder, chief of staff of the Prussian army, observed, "no plan survives contact with the enemy." And on January 29, U.S.-led forces got their first contact with Iraqi troops. An armored column of some 2,000 Iraqi troops swept straight into the high-tech teeth of the American war machine, took the town of Khafji six miles inside Saudi territory, held it for two days and then withdrew with the bulk of its forces intact.

While the brass played up the number of Iraqi tanks destroyed and played down the significance of the battle (like they did after the Vietnamese Tet Offensive in 1968), for the American troops on the ground, it was a sobering shock after weeks of glib, racist propaganda about how the Iraqis would simply collapse in the face of superior U.S. firepower. One Marine helicopter pilot who participated in the recapture of Khafji said afterward: "Nobody who is going to go face-to-face with the Iraqis—cold steel to cold steel—believes it will be a cake walk." Another added, "I wouldn't say this war will be quick. Many people will die."

Many people have already died. But once the ground war starts in earnest, it will no longer be just Iraqi civilians—many Americans will also die. Despite the cutesy codenames like "Razzle-Dazzle" and "Bulldozer" the Pentagon has assigned to its various scenarios for a ground assault, Khafji will seem like a cakewalk compared to what the U.S. is in for with the bloody ground offensive they're preparing. With a battle-hardened and well-armored army, Iraqi soldiers will no doubt exact revenge on the ground for the murderous bombing inflicted on their families over the last month.

With Iraqi positions well entrenched behind layer after layer of defensive fortifications, ground fighting in Kuwait will be more like the trench carnage of World War I than any war the U.S. has fought since. In his antiwar classic, *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1928), Erich Maria Remarque described the horrors of that war:

"We see men living with their skulls blown open; we see soldiers run with their two feet cut off, they stagger on their splintered stumps into the next shell-hole; a lance-corporal crawls a mile and a half on his hands dragging his smashed knee after him; another goes to the dressing station and over his clasped hands bulge his intestines; we see men without mouths, without jaws, without faces; we find one man who has held the artery of his arm in his teeth for two hours in order not to bleed to death."

This is what the flag-waving yahoos—financed and organized by Contragate terrorist John Singlaub and right-wing wheeler-dealer Richard Viguerie—are cheering.

Meanwhile, the war is being sold to the American population through the tame media which is "free to report what they're told." *New York Times* correspondent Chris Hedges complained on ABC News (11 February): "You never see any problems, you're never allowed to

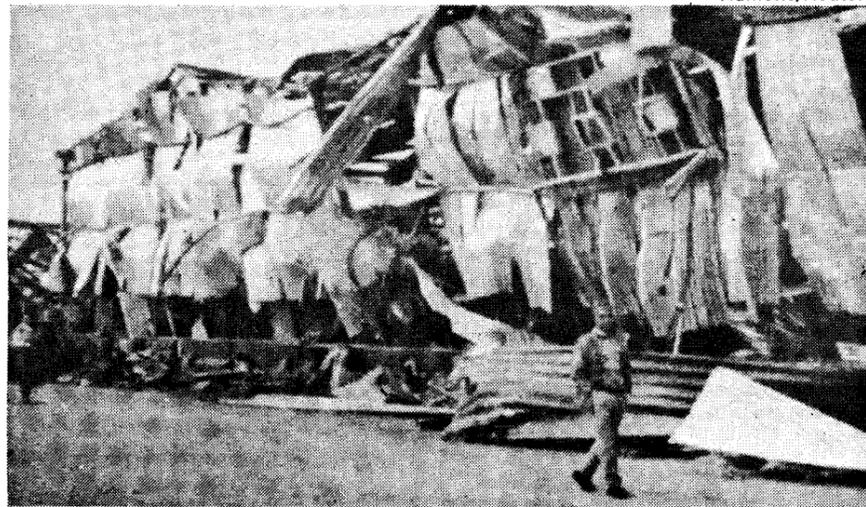
report, nothing's ever wrong. This entire war has become videotapes of planes always hitting their targets like giant Nintendo games and soldiers up front eating turkey and waving flags. And it's a lie." This lie will be exploded as the body bags start coming home by the hundreds and thousands.

## Smart Bombs, Dumb Bombs, War Crimes

"U.S. officials have repeatedly declined to disclose the cumulative tonnage of explosives dropped," notes the *Washington Post* (3 February). Why? Because the astronomical numbers would belie the Pentagon's sanitized picture of the air war as clean, "precision" bombing of strictly "military targets." While media attention has focused on high-tech weapons, Baghdad and especially Basra are being hit by Vietnam-era B-52s. "With B-52s, the emphasis changes from dropping smart bombs worth \$1,000 a pound to \$1-a-pound dumb bombs" reported the *U.S. News & World Report* (11 February), a bottom line which the rising stock market seems to love.

One report quotes a British defense consultant in Saudi Arabia that "the tonnage of high explosive bombs already released has exceeded the combined allied air offensive of World War II" (*London Times*, 5 February). This may be an overestimate, but not by a hell of a lot. Our own estimate (based on the Pentagon's conservative figure of 2,000 sorties a day and taking into account estimated percentages of those which did not drop bombs) is that the U.S. is dropping at least 16,000 tons a day, a total of a half million tons in the first month of war.

This is mass bombing on an unprecedented scale. In four weeks the U.S. has hit Iraq with a quarter of all the bombing tonnage dropped on Germany and German-occupied Europe in all of World War II (2.2 million tons), and in ten days it exceeded the firepower unleashed against Japan (153,000 tons). As Baghdad rightly charged, the U.S. is out to "expel Iraq from the 20th century" (*Washington Post*, 7 February), just as



Remains of baby formula factory in Baghdad destroyed by U.S. bombs.

the Americans tried to bomb Vietnam "back to the Stone Age."

A Vietnamese civil engineer in Basra, who lived through the carpet bombing of Haiphong, said: "I thought I was back in Vietnam." The Pentagon has declared the whole city of Basra a "military target," recalling the "free fire" zones of Vietnam. *Los Angeles Times* reporter Mark Fineman described videotapes of the destruction in Basra showing "limbs protruding from piles of residential rubble, dolls strewn atop twisted furniture in what clearly were once homes; bloodied civilians with shrapnel wounds being rushed into hospital emergency rooms; blanket-covered corpses on sidewalks; crumpled swing sets in battered playgrounds."

When CNN's Peter Arnett revealed that the supposed "biological weapons plant" bombed by the Americans made powdered milk and infant formula, he was denounced as a virtual Iraqi agent by Washington. Now an Australian

clergyman who visited the devastated factory says: "I walked through the rubble of that plant and I was contaminated with milk powder." Nestlé's said they knew all about the state-owned factory, since they keep tabs on their competition. And the *Washington Post* (8 February) quotes the director of the French company which built the plant: "It would have been impossible to transform this...into the making of chemical products."

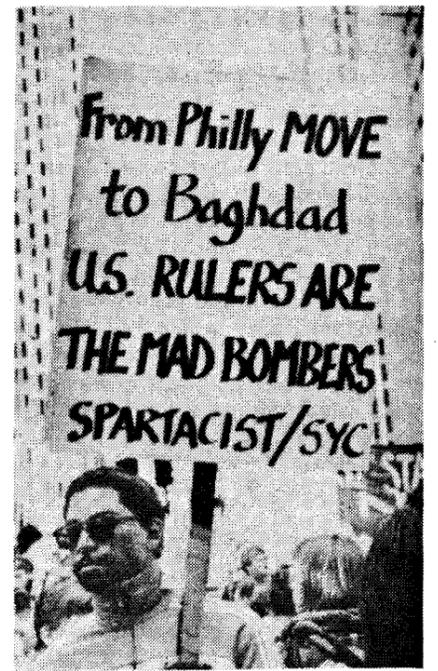
## U.S. Threatens Nuclear Holocaust

The devastating bombardment of Iraq is justified with the line that it will "save American lives" in the coming ground attack, echoing Truman's justification for the nuclear incineration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The arrogant U.S. imperialists claim the right to bomb any country off the face of the planet if they think it will "save American lives" in a criminal invasion.

For the ground offensive, the Pentagon has delivered "fuel-air explosives," which dropped in clusters create a giant fireball with the force and fire of a tactical nuclear explosion. In addition, the U.S. has thousands of actual nuclear weapons in the Gulf. The Tomahawk cruise missiles being launched from carriers in the Gulf were in fact armed with nuclear warheads which were replaced with conventional ones. The nuclear tips can easily be placed back on, and each has a yield of up to 150 kilotons. Naval aircraft can carry "tactical" nuclear bombs of up to a 1,000-kiloton yield.

And American spokesmen have already made clear they would have no qualms about unleashing a nuclear holocaust over Iraq. When Cheney was asked on CNN's *Evans & Novak Report* (2 February), "That means we might use tactical weapons, then?" he coyly replied, "It means that we've got a wide spectrum of capabilities." Cheney also gave the Israelis a green light to use their nukes against Baghdad, warning that if Iraq launched chemical weapons against Israel, "the possibility would then exist, certainly with respect to the Israelis, for

Rumens/Reuters



WV Photo

Spartacists march in SF demonstration, January 26.

ground war, the Zionists gear up for their bloody "Final Solution." Shamir has taken the Moledet party, whose sole program is the mass expulsion of all Palestinians from the Occupied Territories, into the cabinet. This flagrant statement of the Zionist butchers' genocidal intentions angered many even in Shamir's own rightist Likud party.

## Arab World in Turmoil

Massive protests are sweeping through all of North Africa and the Near East. After initially threatening to arrest anyone who tried to organize pro-Iraq demonstrations, Morocco's King Hassan—who has 1,200 troops in the U.S.-led coalition—not only permitted but endorsed a massive one-day general strike. Five hundred thousand people surged onto the streets of Rabat with Iraqi and Palestinian flags and banners reading "We are all Iraqis." In Algeria, Tunisia and Egypt high schools and universities have been shut down to prevent student demonstrations. And Iran remains a wild card.

To a large extent, the outpouring of opposition to U.S. imperialism in the region is influenced, if not dominated, by Islamic fundamentalists. But many of these countries, especially in North Africa, have sizable secular leftist movements. Egypt and Turkey have substantial working classes. The memory of previous colonialist and imperialist atrocities is deeply seared into the consciousness of the masses of the Near East, not least Winston Churchill's use of poison gas to quell an anti-colonial uprising in Iraq in 1921, which he said would "spread a lively terror" among the "uncivilised tribes."

In the struggle to crush the imperialist invaders, a revolutionary leadership could channel the anti-imperialist sentiments of the masses toward proletarian-led uprisings to sweep away all the bloody despots in the region—from Teheran to Baghdad to Tel Aviv and beyond. It is the task of the Iraqi working people—Kurds and Arabs, Sunnis and Shi'ites—to drive out the erstwhile imperialist ally Saddam Hussein and the capitalist class rule he represents. Only workers revolution can ensure the national rights of all the peoples in the region—Palestinians, Kurds and Hebrews alike. For a socialist federation of the Near East!

## Whose War?

In the wake of the battle of Khafji, the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* (10 February) front-page headline read: "The body bags begin to flow." This time, the Pentagon has ordered, there will be no TV cameras waiting when they return, no ceremonies, no flags draped over them.

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# "Lefts" Tie Peace Protests to ALP

Around the world, millions of people have marched in protest against the imperialist war on Iraq, including large demonstrations in Australia. While the media's opinion polls claim 75 percent support for the war, it's clear that the "Vietnam syndrome," the memory of Australian imperialism's defeat alongside the U.S. at the hands of the Vietnamese Revolution, is very much alive and well. Youth in particular, with the prospect of conscription suddenly no longer so remote, are being politicised. The burning question of the day is: what strategy to fight this imperialist grab for oil in the Gulf—appeals to the Hawke government or mobilising the power of the working class?

The Spartacist League has fought to win anti-war militants to our revolutionary internationalist program around the slogans, "Defeat U.S. and Australian Imperialism! Defend Iraq! For Political Strikes Against the War!" In contrast both the Sydney-based Bring the Frigates Home Coalition and the Network for Peace refuse to stand with the people of Iraq against the bloody imperialist onslaught. The Network parrots the imperialists' propaganda pretext for war by demanding that Iraq withdraw from Kuwait. They merely balk at the methods used, preferring sanctions to starve Iraq into submission instead of bombing it.

Both the Coalition and the Network are popular fronts—their demands of "No Gulf War" and "Ceasefire Now" respectively are tailored to attract a wing of the ruling class, represented by politicians from the ALP "left" like Tom Uren and Australian Democrats like Janet Powell. Whether they take the form of governmental power or, as in this case, a protest movement, such popular fronts always mean selling out the working class through class collaboration with supposed progressive capitalists. Under cover of pacifist opposition to war in general, the popular front ties the anti-war movement to the Hawke government and the imperialist ruling class that are waging this war. The bottom line for the "White Australia socialists" of the nationalist left is that Australian capitalism's real enemy is Asia, especially Japan, and that the frigates should be brought home to defend Australia's real "national interests."

## Vietnam Was a Victory! Two, Three, Many Defeats For Imperialism!

Today's popular frontists perpetuate the myth that the war in Vietnam was ended by "responsible" mass anti-war Moratorium marches and not by the heroic Vietnamese working people who under incredible odds defeated U.S. and Australian imperialism on the battlefield. This was a victory for the oppressed of the world, radicalising a generation of youth and giving strength to liberation struggles everywhere. Likewise the defeat of imperialism in the Gulf today would give tremendous impetus to the working masses of the Near East, including Iraq, to topple their rapacious rulers, and would immeasurably strengthen the hand of the proletariat in the advanced capitalist countries, whose task it is to deal the death blow to imperialism. In contrast to the leftist brokers for class collaboration, the Spartacist League follows the line of Lenin, who fought against the empty "peace" slogans of the opportunists during the first imperialist world war, insisting that "a struggle for peace without a revolutionary struggle is a hollow and false phrase, and that a revolutionary struggle for socialism is the only way to put an end to the horror of

war" ("The First Step," October 1915).

The reformists say Whitlam got Australia out of Vietnam. The Labor Party initially supported the imperialist war in Vietnam. In 1966 Labor leader Calwell briefly campaigned for Australian withdrawal, but after their election debacle, the new leader Whitlam in 1967 dropped all opposition to the war, alienating radical youth from the ALP. By early 1968, the stunning blow dealt by the NLF/North Vietnamese Tet offensive jolted decisive sections of the U.S. ruling class into realising that the war was unwinnable, and that it had to cut its losses and get out. The demoralised U.S. army was falling apart with units refusing to fight and widespread "fragging" (killing)



Last August, "Victory to Iraq" (right) made ISO unpopular with popular front, so they dumped it. Just peaceniks now (left), and what about Hawke's hands?

of officers. Only after the emergence of a defeatist wing of the U.S. bourgeoisie did the Whitlam ALP leadership in 1969 come out again for withdrawal of Australian troops. This imperialist alternative became "viable" as a result of the brutal 1965 CIA-abetted anti-communist holocaust in Indonesia which killed over half a million people, making the region "stable" for imperialism. When Labor entered government in 1972 the main Australian forces had already been withdrawn; Whitlam merely removed the remaining "advisers." Once conscription was abolished and the last Australian troops were withdrawn in 1973, the anti-war movement collapsed two years before the final victory. The missing ingredient was a revolutionary Trotskyist party. In its absence, the radicalisation of thousands of youth and workers was channelled back into the ALP and trade union bureaucracy or dissipated in the deadend of New Leftism/Maoism.

## Anti-Imperialism Abroad Means Class Struggle at Home

One solid workers strike against the war would be worth a thousand peacenik street marches. The power of the working class must be mobilised through political strike action against the real enemy, the Australian bosses and the Hawke government, and in defence of Iraq. The work stoppages around the outbreak of war by several branches of the Waterside Workers Federation and the demand raised by the Brisbane WWF for a one-day national general strike, show that militant workers are prepared to strike against this war. The obstacle is the pro-war trade union bureaucracy, whose Accord with the Hawke government has for eight years meant war on the trade unions at home, from SEQEB

to the BLF to the Pilots, alongside preparation for war abroad. Fighting imperialist war means some hard class struggle at home to bust the Accord.

Members of the Socialist Party of Australia play a leading role in the Sydney branch of the WWF, but the SPA cannot provide class-struggle leadership. It has always been a thoroughly reformist party and now it's collapsing in tune with the fragmentation of the Soviet bureaucracy. The SPA supported sanctions from the outset and issued a wretched pacifist leaflet in January moaning that "The governments have failed the people" and "The United Nations has also failed." SPA leader Peter Symon wrote to Gorbachev and Chinese president Yang

tionary call on Iraq to attack Israel. These cowardly opportunists dropped "Victory to Iraq" to get into the Coalition, and when war broke out deleted all pretence to stand for the defeat of imperialism from their newspaper. In the face of a monstrous war, these yellow "socialists" can only muster up enough guts to whisper (stage left) that they are secretly "on the side of Iraq."

The problem with the ISO and its mentors of the British Socialist Workers Party led by Tony Cliff is that they have a wildly twisting weathervane where communists need a good backbone. Criss-crossing the class line is the defining political characteristic and origins of their organisation. They broke decisively with Trotskyism at the height of the anti-Soviet Cold War in 1950 by refusing to defend North Korea against the U.S., which, with Australian support, also fought under the UN flag. The Cliffites abandoned defence of the Soviet Union—putting forward the ridiculous theory that the USSR is "state-capitalist"—and haven't known which way is up since. In every conflict where the imperialists have sought to "roll back Communism"—from Poland to Afghanistan to Eastern Europe and the Baltics today—the ISO has stood firmly in the camp of imperialism.

The 1 February issue of the ISO's *Socialist* attacks U.S. imperialism with a "Bush the Butcher" front page and a centrefold demanding "US out of the Gulf!" These headlines let Australian imperialism right off the hook. An inside article champions independence for the Baltics. Over this issue they side with Hawke and Bush who support the counterrevolutionary secessionist government of Vytautas Landsbergis in Lithuania. We Trotskyists defend the gains of the October Revolution by fighting against capitalist-imperialist dismembering of the USSR and for a *Socialist Soviet Federation*.

Closer to home the ISO's counterrevolutionary politics are just as evident. Last year one of their supporters in the Melbourne tramways union signed a reactionary petition supporting capitalist counterrevolution in Vietnam (see *Australasian Spartacist* No. 138, September/October 1980). A recent ISO meeting in Sydney was first titled "Vietnam: How we won the war last time" then changed to "Vietnam: How we stopped the war last time." They needn't worry—no one is likely to think they defend the Vietnamese Revolution. Since the smashing of capitalism in 1975 and the establishment of a Stalinist-ruled deformed workers state allied to the Soviet Union, the ISO have refused to defend impoverished, war-ravaged Vietnam and its Cambodian allies against the U.S. and Australian imperialists' drive for re-

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ASp photo

Shangkun imploring them to call a special UN Security Council which should "order, repeat order, the immediate cessation of all military, air and naval action in the Gulf" (*Guardian*, 23 January). These demoralised Stalinists pathetically appeal for a "peace-loving" UN, as it demonstrates anew why Lenin called its predecessor an "imperialist den of thieves." Wedded to the Stalinist program of "peaceful coexistence with imperialism," whose logical sequel is Gorbachev's policy of appeasement which has permitted the imperialists to unleash this mass murder, the SPA can only nostalgically hanker for the good old days of Brezhnev and detente.

## ISO—Won't Defend USSR, Won't Defend Iraq

The International Socialist Organisation (ISO) briefly raised the slogan "Victory to Iraq" last August, accompanied by illusions in Arab bourgeois nationalism—they even made a reac-



Demulder/Gamma-Liaison

30 April 1975, fall of Saigon. Imperialists still smarting from military defeat.

# Soviet Union...

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these republics. For example, the parliaments which declared "independence" were elected on voters' rolls which exclude large numbers of Soviet citizens who live in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

The Sajudis regime of Vytautas Landsbergis has demonstrated in the most flagrant way its intent to restore capitalism amid the immiserization of the working class. A Sajudis supporter, Leonid Mlechin, summed up its economic program in the Moscow journal *New Times* (23 October 1990):

"Lithuania honours the right to private property and is prepared to give land to people, privatization schemes are being elaborated together with programmes to attract foreign capital...."

"Former state enterprises will become either private or joint-stock enterprises. It is forbidden to make factories collective property of their work collectives, this practice is viewed in Lithuania as 'a manifestation of socialist, in particular Soviet ideology, which is incompatible with the Lithuanian model of economic reforms.'"

"Prices will be determined on a free market. Losses will never be covered by state subsidies. Goods, currency and securities will be freely exchanged and unemployment offices will appear."

This program could have been, and perhaps was, dictated by the *Wall Street Journal* or *London Economist*.

Just as the Lithuanian nationalists are in the forefront of capitalist counter-revolution, so they are spearheading the imperialist drive to dismember the USSR. In an interview with the *Wall Street Journal* (11 September 1990), Landsbergis called on the NATO powers to launch a new Cold War offensive: "we think that the West is too careful; too careful, not to risk any complications with the Soviets. They could push the Soviets back more strongly, because the Soviets are collapsing and are pulling back from all conquests and this pull-back could include the Baltics."

The Sajudis nationalists have deliberately provoked Soviet soldiers and officers stationed in Lithuania. They are taunted in the streets, their children beaten up in the schools, Red Army monuments commemorating the victory over Nazi Germany are destroyed and defaced. The Landsbergis regime has deprived Soviet soldiers of housing and their children of schools. The commander of a paratroop regiment stationed in Kaunas contrasted the Soviet military intervention in Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968, which he condemned, with the current situation in Lithuania: "There they were putting down democracy. Here there is no democracy. It is a real fascist dictatorship."

The Western bourgeois media depicts the internal opponents of Baltic secession, now organized around "National Salvation Committees," as simply agents or stooges manipulated by Moscow. Yet 20 percent of Lithuania, 40 percent of Latvia and almost half of Estonia consist of Russians, Ukrainians, Byelorussians and other Soviet peoples. Heavily concentrated in the working class, these people will be the main immediate victims of the drive toward capitalist exploitation. If the Baltic nationalists secede and establish independent states, they will drive out those whom they sneeringly call "Soviet peoples."

That is why Moscow has a substantial base of support in the Baltic republics. This is seen even by the *Wall Street Journal* (17 January), which cites Galina Mkhitarian, a Byelorussian assembly-line worker at a Vilnius appliance factory, who describes the Landsbergis regime as "a totalitarian system." Last April Mrs. Mkhitarian and her fellow worker militants formed the Civilian Committee, which became part of the National Salvation Committee in Lithuania.

A week before the crackdown in Vilnius in mid-January, there were large-scale demonstrations by Russians, Poles



Nogues/Sygma



Avakian/Woodfin Camp

**Demagogue Boris Yeltsin, longtime Stalinist hack, former Gorbachev lieutenant, is new hero of forces which openly seek to restore capitalism and dismember the Soviet Union.**

and also ethnic Lithuanians against the Sajudis regime's plans to raise prices between 200 and 800 percent! The price increases were immediately rescinded and the prime minister Kazimiera Prunskiene was forced to resign. She was then replaced by a more extreme nationalist and "free marketeer." These protests point to the possibility of uniting the multinational working class against the forces of bloody counterrevolution from Vilnius to Moscow.

## Behind Gorbachev's "Conservative" Turn

When Gorbachev denounced the Landsbergis regime for seeking to restore "the bourgeois system," the *London Guardian* (11 January) commented acidly: "This old Marxist-Leninist term is one not heard from Mr.

program worked out by Gorbachev's economic advisers, notably Stanislav Shatalin, for transforming the USSR into a full-fledged market economy. Housing would be privatized, agricultural land sold to peasant smallholders and at least 70 percent of industrial enterprises denationalized—all in 500 days. Real power of economic decision-making would be transferred from the central government to the various republics [see "Smash Yeltsin/Gorbachev 500-Day Plan!" *Australasian Spartacist* No. 139, Summer 1990/1991].

The prime minister Nikolai Ryzhkov opposed this, while Gorbachev himself waffled for weeks. Finally, he backed away from the Shatalin plan for fear of triggering a mass explosion. In mid-October Gorbachev offered a new economic program which had the same goals

ment intellectuals like Oleg Bogomolov and Tatyana Zaslavskaya who had been among the main ideologues of perestroika.

In mid-December a special economic commission appointed by the world bankers cartel (International Monetary Fund, World Bank, et al.) "recommended" that the Soviet Union carry out a Polish-style "shock treatment"—a freeze on wages, an end to price controls and subsidies, the closure of unprofitable enterprises and privatization of state-owned property. Shortly thereafter, Yeltsin attempted his own economic "shock treatment" by threatening to cut back by 90 percent the Russian republic's contribution to the central Soviet budget!

Faced with the political offensive and provocations of the Yeltsin-led "democrats," amid mounting nationalist unrest and economic chaos, Gorbachev turned for support to the old-time Stalinist apparatchiks whom he previously downgraded and even abused. He replaced the "liberal" minister of the interior with a hardliner, Boris Pugo. Appointed as Pugo's deputy was Colonel General Boris Gromov, the last Soviet commander in Afghanistan, who as such is especially hated and feared by pro-imperialist forces. Gorbachev pushed through as his new vice president an undistinguished party hack. Likewise, his new prime minister.

However, Gorbachev's "conservative" turn is of a quite limited character. The dismantling of the socialized economy is continuing at an accelerated pace. In October a presidential decree allowed foreign multinationals to own 100 percent of Soviet enterprises and repatriate their profits in hard currency. In January another presidential decree set aside 16,000 square miles of agricultural land to be leased to private farmers. No tumultuous debates on these issues were allowed in the Congress of People's Deputies.

Gorbachev's latest economic "reform" is to make the working people, including the poorest sections, pay for years of gross bureaucratic mismanagement. Ever since the late Brezhnev period, successive Kremlin regimes have pumped billions of rubles into the economy while seeking to freeze the prices of consumer goods sold in state shops. The result is an extreme case of suppressed hyperinflation with empty state shops and extortionate prices in private markets. The mass of unspendable rubles hoarded in savings banks, cupboards and mattresses is at least equal to the annual wage bill.

The Gorbachev regime has now confiscated part of these forced savings by abolishing large 50- and 100-ruble bills while restricting withdrawals from savings accounts. The government claims that in doing so it is only going after the illegal earnings of black marketeers and speculators. But big-time private operators and, of course, well-placed government functionaries have already transformed their surplus rubles into foreign currency or real goods. Everyone in the world knows the Soviet Union is about to experience unspurred



Diana Walker

**All smiles at Malta, 1989. Imperialist attack on Iraqi people tightens noose on USSR.**

Gorbachev for many a long year—though it has been frequently used by his most conservative critics to denounce his attempt to introduce a market economy in the rest of the Soviet Union."

The Western bourgeois media is acting as if Gorbachev has betrayed his promises and even his own principles. But is that in fact so? Imperialist ideologues and their "democratic" Soviet protégés invariably link capitalist restoration to the breakup of the USSR along national lines. However, there is nothing inherent or necessary in such a linkage. Historically, it is possible—although admittedly unlikely—for the Soviet Union to be transformed into a capitalist state while preserving its present boundaries. Insofar as Gorbachev has a coherent program, this is the direction in which he is moving. Thus his new economic policy, announced in mid-October, calls for both "speedy progress on the road to the market economy" and "a renewed federative and strong Union." Translating this program from paper to the real world is altogether another matter.

Gorbachev's current turn is not simply a reaction to the provocations of the Baltic secessionists. It is also a response to the campaign against him by the "democratic" opposition now led by Boris Yeltsin from his power base as president of the Russian republic. At the end of August, Yeltsin spokesmen announced agreement on a "radical" new

as the Shatalin plan but without the forced-march timetable. It called for "denationalization and privatization" through the auctioning of state property, "including the incomplete construction projects, uninstalled equipment, construction materials, means of transportation, enterprises and shops, food and service outlets." It also specified that "Foreign firms can operate on the domestic market on an equal basis."

Had Mr. Perestroika come out with this economic platform a year earlier, it would have been hailed by Wall Street, the City of London and Frankfurt as a bold step toward "free markets," private property and the decentralization of the Soviet state. But now the "500-day" plan was viewed by the imperialist bourgeoisie and its Russian agents as a litmus test of the Soviet president's commitment to capitalist restoration. When Gorbachev rejected this, he came under heavy fire from the pro-Western "democrats" encouraged by their foreign godfathers.

Yeltsin threatened that the Russian republic would issue its own currency and establish its own armed forces, while pushing ahead with its own "free market" economic program. At the same time, Yeltsin demanded that Gorbachev disband the central Soviet government and replace it with a "government of national unity" including himself and other leading anti-Communists. This campaign was taken up by promi-

# Sink Imperialism...

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But the families will know, they will still get the dreaded phone call in the middle of the night, as did one family in the South Bronx last week.

Inside one of those body bags was 27-year-old Ismael Cotto Jr., a Puerto Rican who managed to escape the hellish conditions of his South Bronx barrio by enlisting in the Marines. "I think he died unnecessarily," said his distraught 23-year-old sister Maria as she lashed out at the government that sent him to his death:

"Why are they spending all this money on this stupid war? Why aren't they spending it here? Why aren't they spending it on the children, on the schools, on housing, on factories?..."

"I saw them on television saying they were spending billions on this. I saw them on Wall Street and they were cheering! It was sick. They were cheering, like it was a game. Don't they know it means that people will die? Not them. Not their families. Not their kids. People like my brother. What do they want?"

—New York Post,  
2 February

Describing the home that Ismael managed to buy for his young wife and three-year-old daughter in California, his brother Carlos said: "He achieved the things he dreamed of, the American dream."

All too cruelly, Ismael Cotto Jr. found out in the end what the American dream really means for blacks and Hispanics and all the dispossessed in this disgustingly racist, capitalist society. "What do they want?" asks Maria Cotto, "To be

the best in the world? Well, I don't care if we're the best. I want my brother back. They took him away." If Bush and his class have their way, there will be many, many more Ismael Cottos before this bloody war is over, including hundreds of thousands of Iraqi civilians. This ruling class cares very much whether it's the "best," biggest and bloodiest in the world—that's what its survival depends on.

The dollar declines in value against the D-mark and yen, the U.S. economy is wracked by recession—a "temporary interruption of economic growth" as Bush terms it—while the stock market soars. American capitalism can't produce a decent car, not to mention VCRs, it can't provide education and housing for its population. But it can throw around its military muscle in an attempt to stay top dog of the imperialist pack. "When we win," rants Bush, the world will know "that what we say goes." When "we" win, vows the would-be Führer of the "new world order," Japan and Germany "have got to give us access to markets."

## Class-Struggle Road to Peace

The left-liberal organizers of the anti-war protests seek to outbid the war criminals in patriotic sloganeering with calls to "support our troops" and displays of yellow ribbons and flag-waving. Ironically, Vietnam vets have taken to wearing orange ribbons, a reminder of the cancer-inducing Agent Orange defoliant that was dumped on the Vietnamese people as well as U.S. troops during the imperialist devastation of Vietnam. Now that the U.S. is sending another generation of youth to be slaughtered, Bush has finally signed



Workers at demonstration of 400,000 in Algiers last month for Iraqi victory. Reuters

legislation acknowledging that Vietnam vets were afflicted by Agent Orange.

As the German-Polish Jewish revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg put it during the carnage of World War I, the alternatives are socialism or barbarism. This could not be clearer than it is today. The imperialist system has spawned two world wars and more than 150 "lesser" wars so far in this century. More than three million people have died in wars since 1979, a million of them in the hideous eight-year-long Iran-Iraq border war in which the U.S. alternately (and sometimes simultaneously) supported both sides. While Bush talks of a "new world order," the reality underlines V.I. Lenin's statement that the imperialist epoch is one of wars and revolutions.

The barbarism of this imperialist sys-

tem in its death agony must be swept away through revolutionary working-class struggle if humanity is to be spared ever grislier holocausts. A resounding battlefield defeat for the war criminals of Washington and Wall Street, linked to class struggle by workers and minorities at home, can pave the way for ending the horrors of imperialist war once and for all. The working people of this country have the power to bring down this most dangerous enemy of all humanity, the U.S. ruling class. The key to unchaining this power lies in the forging of an internationalist vanguard party committed to the program of socialist revolution.

For labor strikes against the war! Sink U.S. imperialism in the Persian Gulf! Defend Iraq! ■

# Peace Protests...

(continued from page 9)

venge, including the economic embargo (sanctions) which is aimed at starving Vietnam.

## Fake Trotskyists Guard Labor's Left Flank

The Militant group, a pseudo-Trotskyist group buried in the ALP, calls for a "24 hour Protest Strike Against Oil War" and pledges "full support to the Iraqi people" (*Militant*, February 1991). Their Sydney Labor Against Gulf War group featured Tom Uren at its first public meeting on 12 January, who called for a negotiated solution backed by sanctions! This kind of support the Iraqi people don't need.

Militant is the Australian offspring of the English tendency of the same name in the British Labour Party, led by Ted Grant. They are deeply reformist, believing in the parliamentary road to

socialism through pushing the social imperialist, white racist, union-busting ALP to the left. Their loyalty to the capitalist state extends so far as calling the cops against a Spartacist League contingent in an anti-war rally in Glasgow (see page 2). Where the SL seeks to split the ALP, winning its proletarian base to a revolutionary party, the Militant exists solely to boost the flagging fortunes of Hawke's party of war.

For the Socialist Labour League (SLL) the war exposes yet again their bizarre mixture of crawling to the ALP and cynical pseudo-revolutionary bombast. They demand the ALP "lefts" such as Uren, Stewart West, Bruce Childs and Joan Coxedge "expel the Hawke-Keating right wing and form a workers government." Last year they stridently denounced the Coalition as a petty-bourgeois protest swamp and lied that the SL was part of this coalition because we intervened in the marches with revolutionary slogans. But when the ALP "lefts" hove into view at the head of the protests, these cowards rushed to join

the demonstrations with a leaflet (15 January) which nowhere mentioned their erstwhile slogan "Defend Iraq!" Their paper *Workers News* has buried this slogan ever since. Also, these dubious political bandits are unsurprisingly anxious to suppress their sordid history of publicly supporting Saddam Hussein's murders of members of the Iraqi Communist Party in 1979, and other services to Arab bourgeois regimes, in exchange for money. Corrupt, cowardly liars, the SLL glorified Hussein when he was killing communists in the service of imperialism, and they were being paid for it; now it's a matter of defending the Iraqi people against imperialist attack irrespective of Hussein's regime, they've run for cover.

In Melbourne the Socialist Left trade union leaders have moved to centre stage in the anti-war protests. A sideshow act called the "anti-imperialist contingent" has come out whose slogans are "Defend the Iraqi peoples! Defeat imperialism!" These slogans draw a class line against the war, but consistent anti-imperialists its sponsors are not. One component is the vehemently anti-Soviet gadfly, Paul White and his *Workers Revolution* group-let. In recent years White has been a vociferous supporter of the reactionary *Afghani mujahedin* and refused to defend Iranian leftists against execution in 1989 because some were Stalinists! Not long ago White was frantically building the Melbourne-based popular-frontist Gulf Action Committee, which merged into the Network. Another component, the

Melbourne Freedom Socialist Party, in their *Freedom Socialist Bulletin* No. 6 (September 1990) demanded "Australia out of the Gulf: Iraq out of Kuwait—Now!" This was a concession to the imperialist hue and cry over "poor little Kuwait." For working people it matters not one whit whether Kuwait is controlled by the butcher Saddam Hussein or the filthy rich Kuwaiti merchants or Saudi monarchs. The FSP went on to call for revolutionary defeatism in the Middle East, "a victory for neither Saddam Hussein nor George Bush, but a defeat of them both by the working people of their own countries." Now with the adoption of a position in defence of the Iraqi peoples against imperialism, the accommodating FSP are trying to straddle all wings of the anti-war movement.

While the various social-democratic left groups seek accommodation with the ruling ALP, we stand with Lenin and Trotsky, seeing imperialist war as the mother of socialist revolution. The working class in Australia and in every country need a revolutionary vanguard party to lead all the oppressed in the struggle for a socialist revolution. To those who want to fight imperialist war, we point to the only victorious "anti-war movement" in history, the 1917 October Revolution led by the Bolsheviks which ended the slaughter of World War I for the Russian workers and peasants and opened up the perspective of achieving a world without war through socialist revolution. This is the perspective of the International Communist League today. ■

inflation. Official consumer prices are scheduled to rise 50 to 70 percent this year. The main victims of the currency "reform" are working people, especially old-age pensioners, many of whom do not trust putting their money in savings banks. Perhaps they remember how Stalin confiscated their savings after World War II.

Gorbachev's continuing attacks on Soviet working people internally are coupled with his continuing appeasement of Western imperialism globally. After Shevardnadze's dramatic resignation, Moscow went out of its way to assure Washington there would be no change in the "new thinking" in foreign policy, especially support for the U.S. war against Iraq. A few weeks ago, Shevardnadze's protégé and successor as foreign minister, Aleksandr Bessmertnykh, issued a joint statement with U.S. secretary of state James Baker maintaining that: "The military actions authorized by the United Nations have been provoked by the refusal of the Iraqi

leadership to comply with the clear and lawful demands of the international community for withdrawal from Kuwait."

Restoring the independence of the filthy rich sheikdom of Kuwait is but a pretext for American imperialism to seize the Persian Gulf oil fields and reassert its role as cops of the world. If the U.S. defeats and occupies Iraq after a big, bloody war, Washington will be greatly emboldened in its aim of dismembering the Soviet Union in the name of Bush's "new world order." The Soviet working people must link the defense and regeneration of the collectivized economy, the restoration of workers democracy, to the struggle against imperialist militarism on a world scale.

The above article is part one of a two part series reprinted from *Workers Vanguard*, No. 520, 15 February 1991 (*Marxist working class fortnightly of the Spartacist League/ U.S.*). The concluding article will appear in a future issue of *Workers Vanguard* and can be ordered through *Spartacist ANZ Publishing Co.* (See address in this issue).

## Melbourne Spartacist League Class Series

### Marxism, War and Revolution

- Socialism and War 6 April
- Vietnam Anti-war Movement:  
Class Struggle versus Class Collaboration 20 April
- Australian Imperialism and the ALP 27 April
- USSR: Return to the Road of Lenin & Trotsky! 11 May
- The Fight for Revolutionary Leadership 25 May

Classes start at 2pm at the Sir Robert Peel Hotel (1st floor), 351 Queensberry St, North Melbourne. For more information and readings contact the Spartacist League: (03) 654 4315.



## Pro-Imperialist "Democrats," Hardliners and Gorbachev

# Where is the Soviet Union Going?

"The West's Gorbachev honeymoon ends," proclaims the London *Guardian*. The London *Economist* writes of "The Rise and Fall of Perestroika." "No Aid for a Repressive Moscow," lectures the *New York Times*. The West European Common Market suspended \$1 billion in aid and the Bush White House canceled a scheduled summit in Moscow to show their displeasure at Gorbachev's crackdown against the Lithuanian secessionists who want to join the capitalist "free world" right now. As the *New York Times* complained: "This is where Mikhail S. Gorbachev has drawn the line."

Moscow's actions against the Baltic separatists, which so distress the Western imperialists, come in the context of a turn by the Gorbachev regime to shore up the disintegrating existing system. Mr. Perestroika now increasingly calls for law, order and discipline. The KGB has been instructed to crack down on illegal profiteering and "economic sabotage." Army troops have joined the police in patrolling major Soviet cities. Meanwhile, Gorbachev's once closest cothinkers and fellow "new thinkers" have gone by the wayside and been replaced by old-line Stalinist apparatchiks. In December foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze, described as NATO's best ally in the Kremlin, resigned, darkly prophesying, "A dictatorship is approaching."

Clearly, a turn of some sort has occurred. But how decisive and permanent is it? Has Gorbachev abandoned his "reform" program and is he now seeking to restore strict Stalinist order? Is this even possible in any event? What are the

Peter Turnley/Newsweek



Gorbachev's perestroika has produced economic chaos. Left: Rationing in Moscow. Right: Homeless erect tents behind Red Square.



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Soviet troops outside Lithuanian parliament. Crisis of Stalinism paves the way for capitalist restorationists, reactionary secessionists.

prospects for a military coup, for a civil war? In short, where is the Soviet Union going?

The crackdown against Baltic separatists and the law-and-order turn is but an episode in the terminal crisis of Stalinist rule in the USSR. The Kremlin bureaucratic elite is disintegrating and tending to polarize. On one side are the pampered children of Stalin's apparatchiks who want to live like American or German yuppies. These "free marketeers" want to sell off the factories, mines and oil fields—built by the sweat and blood of the workers—to Wall Street and the Frankfurt banks, and pocket the pro-

ceeds. They call themselves "democrats."

On the other side are conservative Stalinist apparatchiks, military men and KGB operatives who want to return to the days when they gave the orders and everyone kowtowed, when no one questioned their right to a dacha, ZIL limousine and the other privileges of the ruling caste (the *nomenklatura*). They now appeal to Great Russian nationalism and even vile anti-Semitic demagoguery. They call themselves "patriots."

What is missing in the present ideological division is the Soviet working class. While the October Revolution has been eclipsed in the political conscious-

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ness of the masses, working people take for granted the tangible gains of October: the right to a job, cheap food, subsidized housing, free medical care and schools for their children. And these gains are under attack by all wings of the bureaucracy.

Everyone is expecting strikes and mass protests against the impending sharp price increases planned by the Gorbachev regime. Working-class struggles in defense of social equality and the emergence of an authentic Leninist pole of attraction would shatter the present alignments within the bureaucracy and intelligentsia. Some intellectuals who now support the "democratic" opposition and also many Soviet-patriotic military men would come over to the side of the embattled masses. At the same time, some "free marketeers" would bloc with hardline Stalinists in seeking to suppress workers' resistance.

The Soviet working people must cut through the false polarization between the "democrats" and the "patriots," each in their own way heirs of the parasitic and reactionary Stalinist bureaucracy. The forces driving for the restoration of capitalism can and must be defeated, socialized property must be maintained and revitalized by the working class taking political power on the basis of soviet democracy as was established by the 1917 October Revolution.

Today many Soviet working people rightly fear that the breakup of the USSR will ignite bloody nationalist strife (as now in the Caucasus), while the remnants will become semi-colonies of Western imperialism. The multinational Soviet state can be preserved and regenerated on a socialist basis only through genuine equality and justice for all its peoples. This requires returning to the proletarian internationalism of the Bolsheviks, who resolutely combatted all forms of nationalism, including and especially Great Russian chauvinism.

### Lithuanian Sajudis in the Vanguard of Counterrevolution

As Leninists and internationalists, we stand for the democratic reorganization of the Soviet Union and for the right of any nationality with a leadership that opposes counterrevolution to withdraw to any extent it sees fit. However, the Baltic separatists mean to carry out a bloody capitalist counterrevolution. Behind their appeals to "democratic" rights, they have pursued viciously anti-democratic, indeed racist, policies toward the non-Baltic Soviet peoples living in

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## Return to the Road of Lenin and Trotsky! For a Socialist Union of Soviet Republics!