

# WORKERS HAMMER

No 121

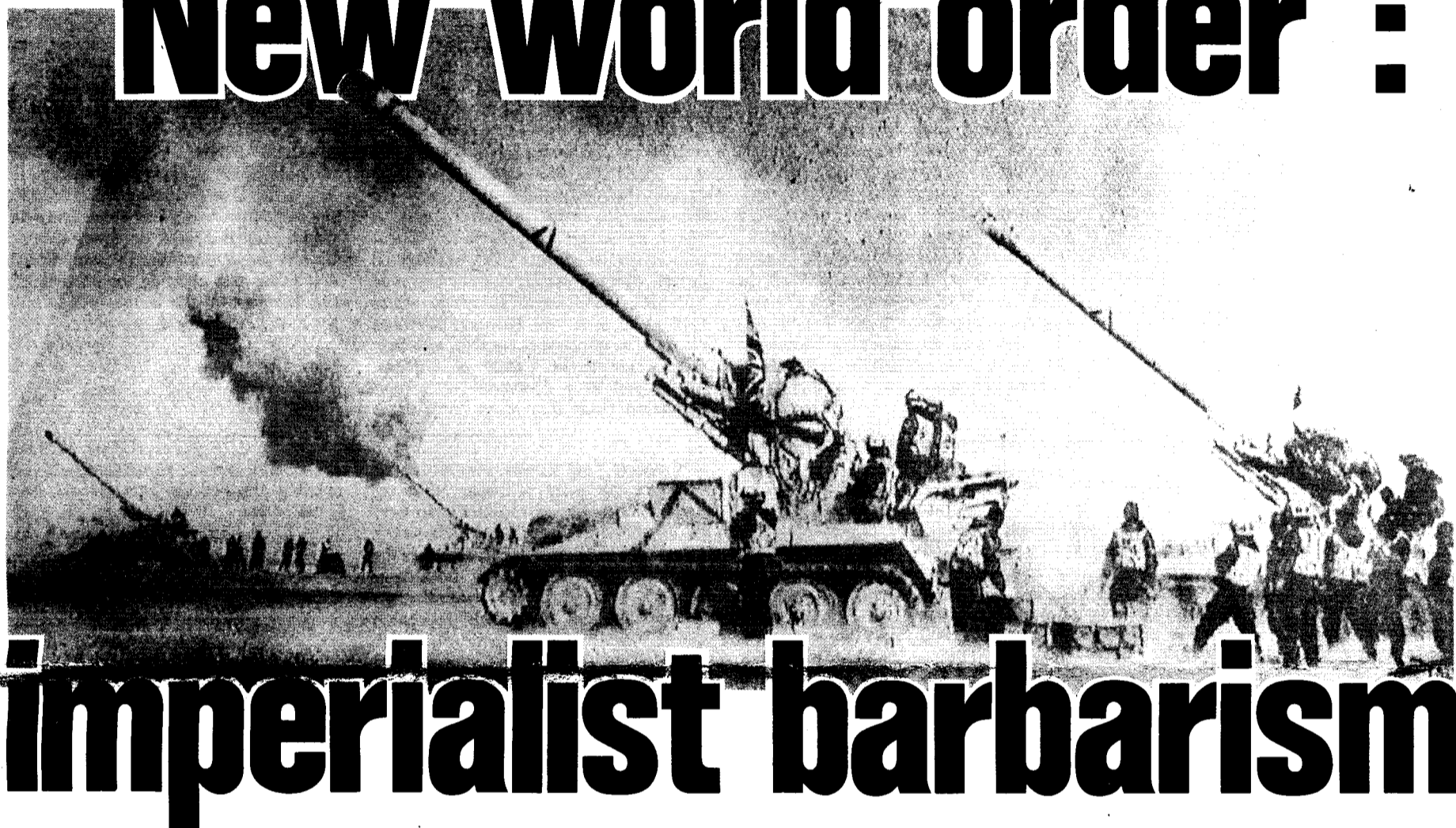
March 1991

30p

Newspaper of the Spartacist League

## Jingo Labour Party supported Gulf carnage

# “New world order”:



# imperialist barbarism

4 MARCH—After five weeks of terrorising the civilian population from the air, the US and British imperialists and their “allies” launched their invasion of Iraq, billed as a “lightning strike” like Hitler’s Blitzkrieg against Poland. Like Hitler, George Bush gloried in the use of overwhelming military force against a vastly outclassed opponent to impose the American Reich’s “new world order” on the region and the globe.

From the outset, Washington and London cynically spurned every offer of negotiations with Iraqi strongman Saddam Hussein. The aim of the imperialists was never simply to drive Iraq out of Kuwait—Iraq offered to withdraw even before the ground war began. And then when the Iraqis unilaterally sought to withdraw their forces, the retreating and largely defenceless soldiers were slaughtered in the tens of thousands. The kill-crazed butchers *wanted* this massive bloodletting.

One officer of the Royal Irish Hussars, describing the devastation on the road where Iraqi troops retreating from Kuwait City to Basra were cut off and bombed to oblivion said: “I find it impossible to think of words to describe this. Dead, mutilated and charred bodies were everywhere” (*Guardian*, 2 March). US pilots bragged that this gratuitous slaughter—a *Belgrano* writ large—was a “turkey shoot” or “like shooting fish in a barrel”.

Now, disgustingly racist military videotapes show Arab POW’s kissing the hands of their white captors. Meanwhile a US spokesman in Saudi Arabia acknowledged that mass burials of Iraqis—many killed by carpet-bombing B-52s—were taking

place well away from reporters. One correspondent noted that the same routine was followed in Panama, where “bulldozers pushed the sickly smelling corpses of civilians into large graves while the cameras dwelt on the Panamanian people’s welcome for US troops” (*Independent on Sunday*, 3 March). While the imperialists are anxious to cover up the

true horrors of their mass butchery, countless thousands of Iraqi people have been slaughtered.

The imperialists are crowing about their victory—they call it the “new world order”. But it stinks of an old-fashioned colonial war in which dark-skinned peoples are slaughtered wholesale by invading imperialists. As Mary Caldor put it in



Cable News Network

Baghdad shelter dead, February 13. A premeditated imperialist atrocity.

the *Times* (2 March): “The closest parallel to this war is the ‘scramble for colonies’ that took place in the late 19th century, when Zulus, Matabeles or dervishes were mown down by machine-gun fire.” And those Iraqis who made it back from the front have often discovered that their family members have been among the tens of thousands of civilian victims of the bombings. One Iraqi soldier was shown on television mourning the loss of his baby daughter; a subsequent version, censored by the compliant bourgeois media, deleted his denunciation of the Western forces who murdered her.

From the beginning the propaganda machines of the US and its allies spread the lie that this would be a “clean war” in which civilians would largely be spared. In fact, after 40 days of war, with 100,000 sorties flown, “allied” bombers had dropped on Iraq almost a quarter of the total tonnage dropped by all the belligerent powers in World War II! The orgy of destruction levelled power plants, factories, warehouses, bridges, roads, phone installations. In Baghdad where the water system has been bombed out, residents face plagues of cholera and typhoid; scores of babies die every day from “cold injury” brought about because of the lack of electricity and heating.

On the night of 13 February two laser-guided “smart” bombs tore into an air raid shelter in Baghdad’s Amiriya district, packed with hundreds of women and children. The military authorities lyingly tried to claim it was a “command and control centre”. Standing outside the shelter, ITN correspondent Brent Sadler

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# Letter from a Leninist supporter

Jan 27th 1991

The Editor  
Workers Hammer

Dear Cde,

Reading your latest paper, I see that you accuse the Leninists of refusing to fight imperialism;—"The Leninist's refusal to struggle against imperialist aggression in the gulf..." And again; "Leninist's current idiot capitulation to British Imperialism and Social Democracy over the Gulf..." As with your allegations of Leninist's defend Russian Fascists, you produce no solid evidence, instead you place your interpretation upon statements in the Leninist, all of which are erroneous. The very fact that the Leninist calls for Revolutionary Defeatism against our "own" bourgeoisie, of initiating the picket outside the American Embassy, of calling for and organising anti-imperialist demonstrations and meetings etc., is answer enough to these infantile allegations.

Regarding your own position, not only do you not call for revolutionary defeatism against the Iraqi CAPITALIST STATE, but you fail to raise this impor-

tant Leninist slogan regarding the imperialist nations. Instead you call for the "...military defeat of Imperialism..." which places the onus for fighting imperialism, not on the workers in the imperialist countries, through class struggle culminating in the overthrow of capitalism, which is the only sure way of defending the Iraqi masses, but upon the army of Saddam Hussein, the butcher of the Iraqi and Kurdish masses.

"Defend Iraq" is your slogan in common with all the other Trotskyist groups—if you were honest in your sloganising, you would as Marxism teaches us define the class nature of this "Iraq"; it is in actual fact a "Defence of Capitalist Iraq". To openly declare so would of course be embarrassing, to say the least. However, with prolific quotes from Lenin you attempt the task of proving that Lenin was a defender of the small oppressed capitalist nations, when in conflict with the big imperialist powers. Under the sub-title, "Lenin v The Leninist" you quote Lenin's 1915 pamphlet "Socialism and War" in which Lenin declared in support of a war waged by Morocco, India, Persia and China against their respective imperialist oppressors, France, Britain and Russia. To draw the analogy with Saddam Hus-

sein and Iraq, you write, "When Lenin wrote this, Morocco was ruled by the Sultan Mulai Yusuf, Persia by the military dictator Ephraim Khan and China by the war lord Yuan Shih-kai—rulers just as bloody and reactionary as Iraq's Saddam Hussein". Again the criterion for you so-called Marxists, is not one of CLASS, but the superficial question as to being "bloody and Reactionary". Such a criterion, may be Trotskyist, but is definitely not Marxist Leninist. If you read Lenin in HISTORICAL context you would read in the same "Socialism and War" "...Socialists always recognised the justice of a 'defensive' war, ...namely, a revolution against medievalism and serf labour," and by so doing, enable the development of capitalism and a proletariat, the precondition for the struggle for socialism. How did support for Morocco etc., in a war against their imperialist oppressors aid this historical and social progress? It would do so precisely because the so-called rulers of Morocco etc., were feudal lackeys of imperialism, and not capitalist rulers of independent sovereign states such as Iraq. A war between Morocco etc. and the imperialist masters, who kept these countries in a state of serfdom, would lead to a democratic bourgeois revolution once they were freed from

Imperialist oppression. To quote Lenin again, in his justification for supporting Morocco etc., in such a war; "Before the overthrow of feudalism, absolutism, and foreign oppression, there could be no thought of developing the proletarian struggle for Socialism". To compare a dependent, non-sovereign, absolutist, feudalistic Morocco etc., with an independent, sovereign capitalist Iraq State today is to distort the writings of Lenin and make a caricature out of Marxist historical concept.

To finish with a quote from Lenin's "Socialism and War" which comes immediately after your above quote, which you have obviously ignored as it undermines your argument and confirms the Leninist policy of defeatism on both sides; "But imagine that a slave-holder possessing 100 slaves" (poor little Iraqi Capitalists for instance) "wages war against a slave-holder possessing 200 slaves for a more 'equitable' redistribution of slaves. It is evident that to apply to such a case the term 'defensive' war or 'defence of the fatherland' would be an historical lie; in practice it would mean that the crafty slaveholders were plainly deceiving the unenlightened masses, the lower strata of the city population." And you my friends are aiding and abetting the Husseins in the deception of the unenlightened masses in the Arab world.

Comradely,

Tom Cowan



TROTSKY

## Hail International Women's Day

On 8 March 1917, International Women's Day, a massive strike begun by women textile workers was the spark that ignited the Russian Revolution. The Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917 brought gains for women in all areas of public and private life—gains unheard of in the "advanced" countries under capitalist rule. Today in Eastern Europe, from the destruction of the social gains in former East Germany to Polish Solidar-



LENIN

ność's attacks on abortion rights, the drive for capitalist restoration brings savage attacks on the rights of women. For us now, as for Lenin's Bolsheviks, the fight for women's liberation is an integral part of the fight for proletarian revolution.

The Soviet government is the first and only government in the world to have completely abolished all the old, despicable bourgeois laws which placed women in a position of inferiority to men, which placed men in a privileged position, for example, in respect of marital rights and of children. The Soviet government, the government of the working people, is the first and only government in the world to have abolished all the privileges of men in property questions, privileges which the laws on marriage and the family in all bourgeois republics, even the most democratic, still preserve.

Wherever there are landowners, capitalists and merchants, women cannot be the equal of men even before the law.

Where there are no landowners, capitalists or merchants, and where the government of the working people is building a new life without these exploiters, men and women are equal before the law.

But that is not enough.

Equality before the law is not necessarily equality in fact.

We want the working woman to be the equal of the working man not only before the law but in actual fact. For this working women must take an increasing part in the administration of socialised enterprises and in the administration of the state...

The proletariat cannot achieve complete liberty until it has won complete liberty for women.

—VI Lenin, "To the Working Women" (February 1920)

WH replies: Tom Cowan asserts that we "produce no solid evidence" that the Leninist organisation capitulates to British imperialism and social democracy. Okay, here *once again* is the evidence: the Leninist's line of "pox on both your houses" boils down to two slogans: "Imperialism out of the Gulf" and "Iraq out of Kuwait". On this political basis it sought to organise joint demonstrations with other left groups. As we have made repeatedly clear, it doesn't matter a rat's arse from the proletarian standpoint whether Saddam Hussein or Emir al-Sabah lords it over Kuwait—that oil well turned into a state by British colonialism. Leninist's slogan of "Iraq out of Kuwait" just happens to be the pretext used by Bush and Major for the greatest war of imperialist slaughter since Vietnam. The same slogan is employed by social democrats—Benn as well as Kinnock—to demobilise serious anti-imperialist struggle.

Yes, we do side militarily with Iraq against imperialism—and that is integrally linked with the prospects for proletarian revolution at home. Although it was hardly likely that Iraq would win a victory, the stronger the resistance against the US-led forces, the more it would facilitate the possibility of a political mobilisation of the working class against the real source of imperialist militarism: the capitalist system itself. The British state, its cops and their "left" frontmen in the CND know exactly where the real political threat comes from, which is why they have launched a campaign of repression and censorship against those who defend Iraq. Leninist, for its part, has simply engaged in *liberal* antics, setting up an around-the-clock moral vigil at the US embassy. This was motivated by the call: "Members of the Labour Party, CNDers, muslims, Christians, communists—all who want to see a just peace—must support and build the non-stop picket" (Leninist, 15 January). That has nothing to do with defeating imperialism; it is a straightforward call for a class-collaborationist popular front. These are exactly the same politics as Tony Benn's—the only difference is that Leninist calls its own infinitesimal demos at separate locations, the better to disguise the embarrassing political convergence.

Lenin's *Socialism and War* was in part

a polemic against those incapable of drawing distinctions between different kinds of wars. In the context of World War I, an *interimperialist* war, Lenin wrote: "It is not the business of socialists to help the younger and stronger robber (Germany) to plunder the older and overgorged robbers," ie, genuine socialists are revolutionary defeatist on all sides in a conflict between a "slave-holder who owns 100 slaves" and "another who owns 200 slaves". But Lenin is careful to distinguish between that situation and a war between the oppressor capitalist powers and the oppressed colonies or semi-colonies, in which revolutionaries do take a side. That is the situation in the Gulf today.

In an earlier polemic we quoted Lenin in *Socialism and War* as follows: "If tomorrow, Morocco were to declare war on France, or India on Britain, or Persia or China on Russia, and so on, these would be 'just', 'defensive' wars, *irrespective* of who would be the first to attack; any socialist would wish the oppressed, dependent and unequal states victory over the oppressor, slave-holding and predatory 'Great' Powers." We then noted that at the time "Morocco was ruled by the sultan Mulai Yusuf, Persia by the military dictator Ephraim Khan and China by the warlord Yuan Shih-kai—rulers just as bloody and reactionary as Iraq's Saddam Hussein". Comrade Cowan argues that this is not relevant to the situation today "because the so-called rulers of Morocco etc., were feudal lackeys of imperialism, and not capitalist rulers of independent sovereign states such as Iraq". He has got it exactly backwards—the reason why we spelled out the rulers of Morocco, Persia and China was that these were already formally independent states.

The Bolsheviks did not envision, as Cowan implies, that somehow the former subjugated colonies, once gaining independence, could then develop into "equal" capitalist competitors with the US, Britain, Germany, etc. This is what lies behind Leninist's idiot characterisation of Iraq—a country whose greatest export after oil used to be dates—as "proto-imperialist". In fact, Lenin made the opposite point, that in the epoch of imperialism national inequality is sharply

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For a Socialist United States of Europe!

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# British and American imperialists devastate Iraq

## Comrades of the SWP: which side are you on?

Workers Hammer reprints below an edited version of the leaflet distributed at the Socialist Worker Student Society event on 23 February in London.

As you meet this weekend, the Anglo-American colossus hurls tens and hundreds of thousands of tons of high explosive at the semi-colonial country of Iraq. The land war has begun—after Dresden and Tokyo: the Somme. In this war we have a side. Our aim as revolutionaries is to destroy the capitalist-imperialist system, and therefore we must defend Iraq against the US/British-led “alliance” of robbers and murderers.

Back in August last year, the SWP said something similar. John Molyneux’s “Teach yourself Marxism” column in *Socialist Worker* quoted Lenin’s pamphlet *Socialism and War*:

“If tomorrow Morocco were to declare war on France, India on England, Persia or China on [Tsarist] Russia and so forth...every socialist would sympathise with the victory of the oppressed, dependent, unequal states against the oppressing, slave-owning, predatory ‘great’ powers.”

He went on to say (*SW*, 25 August 1990), quite rightly:

“This is not because we support the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation. We are for their overthrow by their own working class.

“What we are supporting is the right of the peoples of these nations not to be oppressed, bullied and exploited by imperialism.”

Molyneux finished his article as follows:

“We call for the withdrawal of Western forces from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf.



Workers Hammer

London: SWP contingent on 15 September 1990 demo (left); *Socialist Worker* (16 February) echoes “jobs not war” pacifist claptrap. Cliff’s SWP refused in practice to take a side in defence of Iraq against imperialist mass murder.

in its interventions, on its banners or placards, in its chants on demonstrations, in its motions in the unions—nowhere, for the last five months has this correct line been heard in public. Maybe in the pub of a Friday night, or in an internal bulletin some comrades have comforted themselves that they take a side. But Marxism judges an organisation not by its words but its deeds. Completely consciously, cynically, the SWP leadership has buried this policy alive.

As long ago as the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels stated: “The

that will tell the truth, however unpopular that may be with the Marjorie Thompsons, the Bernie Grants and the Tony Benns. A party that does not have the aristocratic, contemptuous attitude that thinking workers will be frightened away by a hard argument. A party that will try to lead class-struggle action against the capitalist state and its war, through political strikes and blacking of the war effort.

At present the SWP and other organisations face a witch hunt by the CND leaders in the Committee to Stop War in the Gulf. Simultaneously, against those of us who have openly raised the call for the defeat of the US/British imperialists and the defence of Iraq, the CND has eagerly assisted the police in threatening, harassing and arresting leftists at anti-war protests. There is a sharp division here: the bourgeois pacifists and Labour Party social chauvinists want to silence those who take a side against the imperialist “allies” in this war.

These attacks demand a forthright, fighting reply. But from the SWP’s leaders, who must be among the most consummate opportunists in history, there has been and will be no such fight. It is worth examining what has happened so far. You will surely not have found out about it from *Socialist Worker*. The latest issue devotes one column inch to an attack on *Tribune* for trying “to force CND to break with those elements, above all the Socialist Workers Party, which are opposing the war for the imperialist butchery that it is”. The previous week’s issue said nothing at all. *Tribune* had quoted John Molyneux’s article, uncovering the SWP’s guilty secret, as it were. On cue the CND and the Greens tried to lay down 15 points intended to exclude the left. The ones that mattered call for Iraq out of Kuwait (the public war aim of the imperialists) and for sanctions against Iraq (otherwise known as starve the Iraqi people to death, the children and the sick first). The only public comment by the

SWP was Alex Callinicos’ opinion expressed in the 12 February *Guardian* that “he believed that an agreement could be reached to include everybody who was against the war”.

Apparently the SWP leadership was bracing itself to go along with the CND’s demands that its bloc partners endorse outright the politics of liberal capitalism. The remonstrations of the Campaign Group MPs, some of whom do not favour sanctions (although they all favour the United Nations), led the CND leaders to make things “clearer”. Now there are only four points. They are, in full:

- Immediate ceasefire and convening of a Middle East peace conference
- The withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait and the withdrawal of allied forces
- A rejection of any call for victory to either side, Iraq or America
- Israel’s withdrawal from the territories it occupies, and self-determination for all the peoples of the region.

The first three are flatly opposed to a Leninist programme and even to what the SWP claimed its own position was not long ago. (Those who may be deceived by the fourth should remember that great US “democrat” Woodrow Wilson’s fondness for “self-determination” when it came to weakening his imperialist rivals.) The real point of all the “points” is this: there are already people on the demonstrations who have taken a side. And that’s one thing that the Labour Party can never stomach—being for the defeat of their own bourgeoisie. Whatever “platform” the Committee has (including the SWP’s “Stop the War Now!”), there will be only one kind of socialist inside it—house trained ones.

Thoughtful members of the SWP may well ask themselves: why are we not saying that we have a side in this war?

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US Archives

US troops retreat from Lake Changjin in Korea in late 1950. Tony Cliff broke with Trotskyism, refused to defend North Korea against imperialism.

And if war breaks out nonetheless we are for the defeat of America and the victory of Iraq.”

Revolutionaries should be very careful about the slogan of “Victory to Iraq”, with its overtones of support for Saddam Hussein and Arab nationalism: nevertheless we would agree with the thrust of Molyneux’s article—no political support for Hussein, military support for Iraq, fight for the defeat of imperialism.

Comrades: nowhere in the SWP’s press,

Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims.” There is no shortage of people who hate this war, understand its predatory character, and who loathe the arrant capitalist politicians and Labour Party leaders who wish death upon hundreds and thousands of Arabs and tens of thousands of working-class and minority youth in the “allied” armies. What these people need is leadership. We seek to politically organise the widespread anger in a revolutionary workers party. A party



# CND witch hunters aid the warmongers

## Defeat US/British imperialism: fight for proletarian revolution!

Workers Hammer prints below a leaflet distributed by the Spartacist League at the 2 March CND-organised demonstration in London.

The US imperialists, their British and other "allies" launched the blitzkrieg invasion of Iraq after five weeks of terrorising the civilian population from the air. It is not possible to know the numbers of Iraqi people slaughtered to date—already French sources have estimated up to 150,000 dead. More than the tonnage of explosive firepower of the A-bomb which levelled Hiroshima has been rained down on Iraq every day during the air war in which napalm, white phosphorous and fuel-air bombs were used. Like Hitler, George Bush glories in the use of overwhelming military force against an outclassed opponent to impose the "new world order".

The canting hypocrisy of the US/British imperialists about "poor little Kuwait"—that oil well turned into a statelet—is all the more clearly a sick joke. This was an old-fashioned war for imperialist plunder, eagerly supported here by Her Majesty's loyal opposition in the Labour Party, propped up by other relics of empire: the Queen's speech to the nation, the Church with its ready-for-prime-time prayer services, the servile gentlemen of the bourgeois press.

From the outset, we communists took a side in this war: for the defeat of the imperialist forces and the defence of Iraq. We take our stand as fighters for the interests of the world working class—the women and men who slave for the capitalists' profit from the North Sea oil fields to the Persian Gulf. A defeat for the US-led "allies" would have strengthened the ability of the world's working people to fight against capitalist-imperialism as well as spark revolutionary struggle throughout the Middle East, toppling all the despots of the region—not just those out of favour with London and Washington today such as Saddam Hussein.

Today it is starkly clear that this was a war for US domination of the oil-rich Gulf, a war of racist mass destruction against the people of Iraq and a war of revenge and rearmament by the economically crippled US imperialists in a thrust against their German and Japanese rivals as well as to recover from their humiliating defeat at the hands of the heroic Vietnamese workers and peasants. Bush & Co told the "reasonable" "peace-makers" to drop dead, attacking even defenceless withdrawing units of the Iraqi army.

A cocksure imperialist colossus on the loose, with a fresh taste of blood and its pumped-up war machine is a deadly danger to all humanity. It remains urgently necessary to mobilise working-class action within the imperialist centres. As part of the domestic reflection of the war drive, the British state has been prosecuting a witch hunt against leftists and minorities, while rounding up, detaining and deporting many Iraqi, Palestinian and Arab people. These attacks can and must

be stopped by militant workers action!

It is because of our open call for the defeat of imperialism, for the defence of Iraq and for the working class to take action against this war that we and other leftists seeking to struggle against the imperialist war have been targeted for repression by the British state. In this, the police have been eagerly assisted by the so-called "pacifists" of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND). The CND's attempts to witch hunt leftists out of their Committee are a matter of public

insult to Irish people and opponents of the British imperialist occupation. On 2 February, police arrested and attacked a Spartacist supporter at the CND-organised demonstration in London because he refused to stop chanting our slogans. The comrade, Alastair Green, was hauled into a police van and hit with a helmet, sustaining a nasty injury to his mouth. At the same demonstration, police threatened supporters of the Hands Off the Middle East Committee with arrest if they did not pull down a banner calling for

Downing Street. They "evenhandedly" condemned Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and the monstrous war being waged against Iraq and its people. The CND and Tony Benn supported the United Nations sanctions—the prelude to war designed to starve the Iraqis before bombing them—and legitimised the presence of "allied" forces in their call for a "ceasefire". Now they pathetically appeal to the blood-drenched imperialists and their UN puppets for a "just peace". Whatever settlement is arrived at will be for the benefit of the imperialists, will further victimise the Palestinians, and will lay the basis for new imperialist wars. Genuine justice for the workers and oppressed will only come through proletarian revolution.

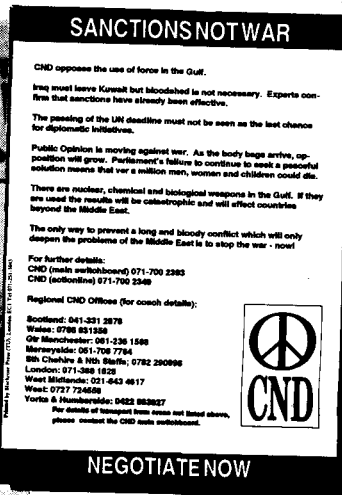
Those groups—notably the Socialist Workers Party—who gagged themselves over their supposed opposition to sanctions and the UN, as well as over their earlier statements in defence of Iraq in order to be granted admission to the CND-led Committee have played a shameful role and have got little in return for their opportunism. In doing the donkey work for the CND witch hunters the SWP helped to sow illusions in the class-collaborationist "anti-war" movement of the Thompsons, Bruce Kents and Tony Benns, in the pacifist ideology which is meant to obscure the class nature of the war and prevent the cohering of a politically independent revolutionary struggle against the Labour Party traitors.

At the 2 February London demonstration the Spartacist League marched with its banner along with the Hands Off the Middle East (HOME) contingent. Their slogan "victory to Iraq" has overtones of support for Saddam Hussein and Arab nationalism. Nonetheless, the war in the Gulf posed the decisive question: "which side are you on?" In the face of the efforts of the state and its CND frontmen to repress and censor militant opponents of the war, we looked to coordinating actions with those groups who publicly raised slogans whose basic thrust were for the defeat of imperialism and defence of Iraq.

The Spartacist League has uniquely refused to make political concessions to the CND and the Labour Party tops. For its part, the RCP—the largest component of HOME—marched not long ago with a sea of placards demanding "Peace in the Gulf/Western Forces Out", echoing the then-official slogan of Benn and the CND. Meanwhile, the Labourite components of HOME simultaneously sought to build anti-war lash-ups that clearly do not take a side for the defeat of imperialism. Thus, Workers Power, WIL and RIL were also affiliated to the Campaign Against War in the Gulf (CAWG) whose founding was endorsed by Tony Benn and which has unsuccessfully sought to affiliate to the CND committee. The CAWG "congratulate[d] the 37 Labour MPs who voted against the government's 'war policy', ie, endorsing Benn's 'war under UN auspices' line.

In principle, WP, WIL and RIL were open to operating within the popular frontist CND-dominated Committee as

Workers Hammer



SL supporter Alastair Green arrested (left). CND "pacifists" also wanted reds off demos. Below: Dublin Spartacist contingent, 19 January.



Dublin Spartacist

record. But its activities to silence those who took a side in the Gulf War have been more ominous than dispute within meeting halls.

On 12 January, Spartacist demonstrators in Glasgow were surrounded, sealed off and threatened with arrest at the behest of the CND and Labourite Militant tendency. On 23 January the *Independent* quoted CND leader Marjorie Thompson baiting those who call for Iraq's victory as "agents provocateurs", and "bacteriologically unsavoury", expressing the wish that they be off the demonstrations. On 26 January, the CND, by prior arrangement with the police, rerouted its demonstration to avoid joining up with the annual Bloody Sunday protest commemorating those protesters killed in Derry in 1972 in a calculated

"Victory to Iraq"; CND stewards cheered on the police. The arrest and the threats to demonstrators were carried out under instructions to the police from the Crown Prosecution Service. On 20 February eleven people were arrested when police stormed a picket of the Home Office organised by Black People Against War in the Gulf called to protest the anti-Arab witch hunt and demanding an end to the war; they were arrested for chanting "US murderers" and charged, as was comrade Green, under the Public Order Act.

The CND-dominated "Committee to Stop War in the Gulf" wanted to pressure John Major to be less warmongering. They wanted to pressure Labour leader Neil Kinnock—as bloody an advocate of this war as can be found—to pressure

# Government escalates attacks on homosexuals

## Smash Clause 25 and Paragraph 16!

On 16 February, 10,000 demonstrators marched through the streets of London to protest the government's proposed new round of draconian anti-homosexual laws. Through Clause 25 (1) of the Criminal Justice Bill currently before parliament, the government is targeting many aspects of consensual homosexual activity as "seriously threatening public safety" and therefore subject to harsh prison sentences. Paragraph 16 of the new guidelines for the Children's Act is designed to effectively ban homosexual couples as not "suitable" for fostering children. These new attacks represent an ominous escalation of the government campaign to further victimise lesbians and gays. Britain already has the harshest anti-homosexual laws in Western Europe aside from Ireland.

It was the government-inflamed AIDS-related hysteria of the mid-1980s that fuelled the recent increase in anti-homosexual attacks on the streets and in the courts. In this climate, the sinister Section 28 of the Local Government law was passed three years ago. Section 28 bans the "promotion" of homosexuality. This has meant that many teachers feel they have to watch everything they say about homosexuality, plays have been barred from local council-owned theatres and books have been disappeared from library shelves. Murderous assaults on gays are escalating; the past year has witnessed over 12 murders of gay men in London alone. There has also been a 51 per cent increase in numbers of men convicted of minor homosexual "offences" in the last four years. And most recently, 16 men were outrageously framed up and convicted for engaging in consensual sado-masochistic sexual activity in a classic case of "crimes" without victims — eight of whom were sentenced to prison terms totalling 25 years (see "Down with anti-gay, anti-sex witch hunt!" *Workers Hammer* no 119, January 1991).

Paragraph 16 is designed to end lesbian and gay men fostering children as they have done for years in many local authorities of all political persuasions. Echoing the speeches of Junior Health Minister Virginia Bottomley whose campaign to preserve "the family" was the spearhead for the new "guidelines", they read: "No one has a 'right' to be a foster

parent. 'Equal rights' and 'gay rights' have no place in fostering services". Within the last few days, the *Independent on Sunday* (3 March) reports that the above sentence is to be deleted and replaced with a so-called "neutral" pronouncement. Of course a ban on fostering makes adoption almost impossible. Only last month even before the "new guidelines", a High Court judge in Newcastle ruled that a lesbian couple could not adopt the two-year-old boy who had been placed in their care. On a related front, the government is also pursuing legislation to force single mothers to name the fathers of their children so that the government can hunt them down to pay "maintenance". Mothers who do not comply will face cuts in already meagre state benefits.

As for Clause 25, Keith Alcorn—media spokesman for the lesbian and gay organisation OutRage—describes the Clause as "being seen as the greatest threat to gay life since the witch hunts against homosexuals in the 1950s" (*Guardian*, 6 February). In its original wording, it targets three types of consenting homosexual behaviour: so-called "soliciting", "procuring" and "indecent". These so-called "offences" are already illegal under either the 1956 Sexual Offences Act or the 1967 Sexual Offences Act. What the new law entails is stiffer fines and/or longer prison sentences.

part of a "broad" "united" "anti-war" movement. As *Workers Power* wrote in its February leaflet ("SWP: CND's foot-soldiers?"): "To build a united campaign compromises are of course necessary. The Labour left and the CND do not have to agree with the socialist position on war or victory to Iraq before effective common action is possible." But it's not easy to "unite" with people who call the cops on you! This Committee, with its assorted "fifteen point" and "four point" loyalty oaths, made it crystal clear that the only "socialists" it tolerates are the totally house-trained ones. And while there might be a couple of MPs who are prepared to do business with spineless leftists like the SWP, the one thing that none of the Labour Party tops—"lefts" as well as "rights"—would fight for is the defeat of imperialism. Whether it be the attempt to smash the Soviet Union and the other states where capitalism has been overthrown or the prosecution of

imperialist wars against oppressed peoples, the Labour Party has backed the bourgeoisie to the hilt: the plundering of the Middle East, Asia and Africa in the period of the Empire; the Korean War, Vietnam, dispatching troops to Northern Ireland.

The imperialist onslaught in the Gulf not only threatens holocaust against the Arab peoples but also poses a deadly danger to the USSR. Gorbachev & Co have criminally acquiesced to Washington, while the imperialists are exploiting the crisis of the Kremlin to tighten their military encirclement of the world's first workers state. ("The war is waged first of all to satisfy the ambitions of the U.S. to achieve sole leadership of the world" writes *Pravda*; it dawn on the thick-skulled Stalinist bureaucrats in the Kremlin a little late.)

Integrally linked to their Labourism, Workers Power and WIL have given aid and comfort to the imperialists in their

Protests against the Clause have won some concessions of a very cosmetic sort, thus the government is now removing three categories of those earmarked for tougher sentences from the Clause; these include living on the earnings of male prostitution, procuring others to commit homosexual acts and homosexual acts between crew members of merchant ships. However, "indecent between men" and "solicitation by men" are to remain as "sexual offences" in order to "protect the public from serious harm". Home Office minister John Patten has further defined "harm" as danger of "death or serious personal injury, whether physical or psychological". And given Judge Rant's decision in the sado-masochism trial, such a definition gives the judiciary nearly infinite personal latitude to interpret the law as they see fit. Two gay men smiling across the room at each other or patting each other on the back, let alone kissing might be construed by the Rants and the Mary Whitehouses as causing "serious" "psychological" injury.

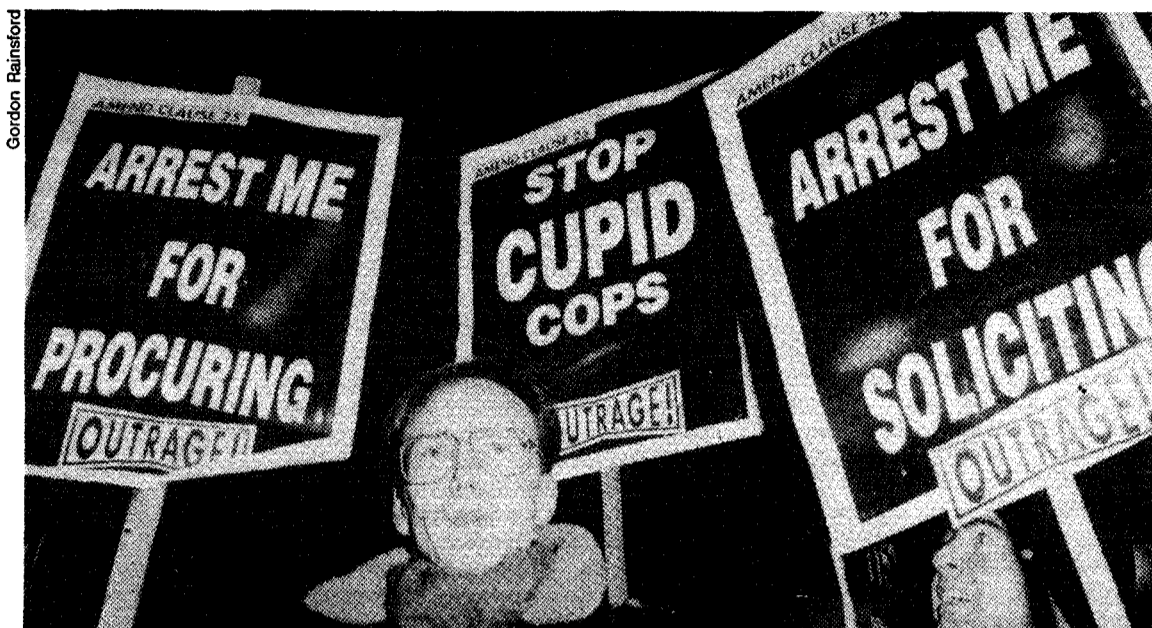
Nicholas de Jongh in the *Guardian* (6 February) describes the implications of this draconian Clause:

"As a result of these newly specified categories of consensual gay sex acts and behaviour, Clause 25 is being interpreted in gay communities as a further sign, after Section 28, that the Government is

set upon a gradual recriminalisation of homosexuality while insisting that it intends no such thing."

The Labour Party is not only letting them get away with it, it has aided and abetted the Tory Government in every step along the way. Neil "I am reactionary" Kinnock with his own in-house anti-gay witch hunt set the pace for many Labour MPs to support the passage of Section 28. De Jongh comments: "The Labour Party's response to Clause 25 has been more cautious than it was to Section 28: there may not be votes in attempting to make a stand, as there was for the liberalising legislation in the late 1960s."

The government's escalation of attacks on lesbians and gay men must be fought and stopped! Marxists understand that democratic rights are indivisible; the working class has the social power and interest to defend all the oppressed and vulnerable sections of society. Only through building a revolutionary party, acting as a tribune of the people, can the power of the working class be unleashed in the struggle for the rights of all the oppressed and for the only solution: workers revolution against the decaying capitalist system. Smash Clause 25, Paragraph 16 and the government's whole arsenal of anti-homosexual laws! Full democratic rights for homosexuals! ■



London, 6 February: protest outside Bow Street police station against draconian Clause 25.

Gordon Rainsford

# Report from Dublin Spartacists

## Irish fake-left in shadow of pro-imperialist de Rossa

DUBLIN, 25 February—The criminal, bloody slaughter of the Iraqi people being carried out by the US, British and “allied” forces has been backed by the Irish bourgeoisie. The sham neutrality of the Irish state crumbled at the first request of the US warmongers to refuel their planes at Shannon (in the west of Ireland) on their way to the Gulf. The Irish parliament voted overwhelmingly in favour of military action to oust Iraq from Kuwait. And now the army is recruiting officers as volunteers to keep the imperialist “peace” in the Middle East. The token opposition offered by the Labour and Workers Parties only amounted to a plea for more time for sanctions to take effect, ie for the Iraqis to be starved into submission.

Against such servile pro-imperialism and social chauvinism, the Dublin Spartacist Youth Group (DSYG) has raised the internationalist call for defeat of the imperialist enemies of the world’s working people and for the defence of Iraq. It is the duty of communists to link the fight against imperialist wars to the need to overthrow the capitalist system that breeds them. It is also necessary to resist the pressures of “national unity”, promoted by the bourgeoisie and their agents in the labour movement by struggling for a proletarian internationalist perspective.

In Ireland there is bitter experience with British imperialism, and the war is not popular. However, anti-war sentiment is being channelled into forms that do not challenge this rotten capitalist system. In fact, the anti-war movement in Ireland has been led by social democrats like the Labour and Workers Parties that support the maintenance of British imperialism in the North. And the fake left follows in their shadow. Instead of attempting, as the Bolsheviks did in Russia in 1917, to turn war into revolution by exposing this

inhuman system and its apologists, the forces behind the main anti-war groups here are determined to maintain a working peace with them.

While newly elected President Mary Robinson favours explicitly pro-NATO policy as part of seeking a *modus vivendi* with the Unionist politicians, others resort to the sham of neutrality traditionally fostered by the Irish bourgeoisie. They refuse to take sides for the defeat of imperialism and appeal to the Irish state to keep its “hands clean” by not engaging in military action. This is true of the largest anti-war coalition, the Gulf Peace Campaign (GPC), set up by forces from the Labour and Workers Parties, the Greens, Irish CND and various church groups. The GPC has been unambiguously pro-UN and has consistently called for an Iraqi pullout from Kuwait.

Then there is the No to War in the Gulf Campaign (NTWGC), initiated by the Socialist Workers Movement (SWM) and some “independent” Greens. The NTWGC, recently unceremoniously bounced out of GPC, is built on a pacifist basis, limiting itself to demanding “stop the war; troops out of the Gulf; stop the refuelling at Shannon”. While leading SWM spokesman Eamonn McCann has on occasion sounded a left note by stating that socialists should seek the defeat of the “allied” forces, the SWM has fundamentally pursued the same line as its co-thinkers in the British SWP who have said that it would be “sectarian” to agitate under the slogan “victory to Iraq”. Thus, the SWM sought unsuccessfully to delete the demands “break the blockade of Iraq” and “no to UN sanctions” from a united-front demonstration initiated by the DSYG at Trinity College last November.

Since the outbreak of war the SWM/NTWGC have bent over back-

wards to keep their platforms “clean” for advocates of sanctions. At the 19 January demonstration, both Sinn Fein and the Militant tendency were denied speakers. As the muckraking journal *Phoenix* (25 January) reported:

“But when it came to Provo speaker, Micheal O’Muireagain’s turn to speak, he was politely informed by the SWM that his presence was not welcome on the platform. The fact that Sinn Fein had provided the speaking equipment and the lorry for the speakers’ platform...did not appear to embarrass the organisers but it incensed the Provos no end.”

The simple fact is that if the SWM had allowed Sinn Fein to speak, Eamonn Gilmore TD (member of the Dail) for the Workers Party would have walked out. So Sinn Fein was excluded, to placate the representative of a party which long ago made its peace with British imperialism in the north. Workers Party leader Proinsias de Rossa went so far as to call in 1988 for uniting “the community behind the police in maintaining the rule of law” (*Irish People*, 7 October 1988). And this is hardly surprising coming from the SWM, whose British co-thinkers declared in 1969 that the arrival of British troops in Derry and Belfast would provide a “breathing space” for the Catholic community!

It was also at the 19 January demo that the chairman of the NTWGC (and SWM member) Kevin Wingfield delivered a letter to the cops outside Dail Eireann addressed to the Taoiseach (prime minister) Charles Haughey, begging him “to respond to the overwhelming desire of the Irish people not to be part of a war by the developed world against the Third World” (*Irish Times*, 21 January). Such pathetic appeals to the capitalist state are counterposed to mobilising the working

class in political strike action against the war. Imperialist war cannot be fought hand in hand with defenders of the capitalist system.

While claiming to oppose imperialism, the nationalists of Sinn Fein have in fact prattled on about the UN being “discredited” over the Gulf crisis and have supported those like the PLO who call for Iraq to leave Kuwait. Meanwhile the IRA launched a spectacular mortar attack which narrowly missed blowing away the British war cabinet in Downing Street. While Marxists are not advocates of individual terror, we certainly would not shed any tears over the demise of the war criminals who are slaughtering tens of thousands of Arabs. Far different has been the IRA bombing of railway stations in London, which indiscriminately targets the British civilian population. Even the Northern chairman of Sinn Fein publicly expressed qualms over the bombing of the Victoria station.

Last November the Irish Militant group declared that “a defeat for the US would encourage the Arab working class to struggle against all their oppressors in the area. Marxists cannot sit on the fence in this situation. We must support the Iraqi masses in this war against the US if there is a US attack.” But this line, at variance with that of British Militant, has remained on paper—and of late it’s not even to be found in the paper! The Irish Militant is organising its “Youth Against War” around the pacifist slogan “no blood for oil”, while its paper concentrates on appealing to the chauvinist leadership of the unions and Labour Party “to lead a mass anti-war campaign linking up with the labour movement internationally to stop the war” (*Militant*, 9-22 February). And these characters whom Militant wants to “lead” the anti-war movement are the same bureaucrats who have just sealed a new three-year no-strike pact with the employers and government. The only lead these traitors will give is to assist the bourgeoisie by soaping the rope around the neck of the working class!

The anti-war popular frontist alliance is not without its left, “critical” tail which calls itself the Irish Workers Group (co-thinkers of British Workers Power). The IWG joined the NTWGC late last year and stayed in even while the latter was affiliated to the Gulf Peace Campaign, which the IWG itself classes as a popular front. Of course, the IWG is capable of

*continued on page 10*

## Now free the Tottenham Three!

# Frame-up against Birmingham Six collapses

Sixteen years ago, a Labour government framed, convicted and condemned six innocent men to life sentences. Today, even the very bourgeois *Economist* (2 March) admits that this “may be one of the century’s great miscarriages of justice”. As we go to press, the government’s frame-up case has completely collapsed, the release of the Birmingham Six is imminent and British injustice has been exposed, again, as a grotesque racist travesty. Millions of pounds would not give the Six their lost years, nor will jailing the criminals—very highly placed Lords and cops among them—who perpetrated this criminal frame-up, who beat their confessions out of them, suppressed evidence to keep them behind bars and refused appeals to reopen the case. But elementary justice demands at least that.

On 21 November 1974, Patrick Hill, Gerry Hunter, Richard McIlkenny, Billy Power and Johnny Walker were ar-

rested while on their way to the funeral of an IRA friend in Belfast. Their drinking companion from earlier that evening, Hugh Callaghan, was arrested at his home in Birmingham. Five hours earlier, the IRA had criminally bombed Birmingham’s “Mulberry Tree” and “Tavern in the Town” pubs, killing 21 and injuring 162. On the way to and inside Birmingham’s Winson Green prison, the arrested men were badly beaten and tortured. Four of them signed subsequently retracted “confessions”. That summer, their trials and convictions were rammed through during an orgy of anti-Irish chauvinism. Then Labour Home Secretary Roy Jenkins slammed the notorious Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) through parliament.

In dismissing the allegations of torture and forced confessions, the presiding judge at the time, Justice Bridge, remarked that “To believe this...one would have to suppose the

existence of a ‘conspiracy...unprecedented in the annals of British criminal history’ among the officers involved” (*Economist*, 2 March). Now, after years of exposés and appeals, the state has been forced to admit that their case has more holes in it than a piece of rotten Swiss cheese. On 7 February this year, the Director of Public Prosecutions, Allan Green, announced that the prosecution could no longer rely on the lying testimony of the discredited forensic scientist Frank Skuse. And on 25 February, he admitted that the state would no longer try to support the convictions of the Six as “safe and satisfactory”. As the formality of their new appeal opened on 4 March, the Birmingham Six looked set to walk free at last.

In the courts, the Birmingham Six are aiming for the fullest exposure of what was meted out to them and by whom. As the solicitor for five of the men, Gareth Peirce, said: “The men want the compelling evidence which

demonstrates their innocence to be known publicly. We don’t want any situation in future where anyone can suggest that these appellants won on a technicality. What has happened to them is a national disgrace and it must never, never happen to anyone again” (*Guardian*, 26 February). But it has already happened again—and as long as the system of capitalism exists it will continue to happen. Today, the victims of a similar racist frame-up—the Tottenham Three—still languish in prison. And only in October of 1989 were the Guildford Four released after fifteen years in prison for a crime they did not commit.

True vengeance for all victims of British “justice” will be exacted only when victorious workers revolution sweeps this rotten, racist capitalist system away, along with its Labourite flotsam and jetsam. Free the Birmingham Six! Free the Tottenham Three and all victims of racist frame-ups now!



# Defend victims of wartime state repression!

Impressive support from left organisations, trade unionists, black, Turkish and Kurdish groups and students has been received for the campaign in defence of Spartacist supporter Alastair Green. Comrade Green was arrested on 2 February at the CND-organised demonstration in London protesting the Gulf War. At a New Scotland Yard briefing the day before the demonstration instructions were issued to arrest those raising slogans the police deemed to be "grossly offensive". Thus, the police threatened arrest against those who chanted or carried signs and placards with slogans in defence of Iraq against the imperialist war in the Persian Gulf.

Demonstrators in the Spartacist and other contingents were told that anyone chanting "Victory to Iraq" was liable to arrest under the Public Order Act. We refused to be gagged and continued chanting; Green was dragged away from the march as outraged protesters demanded "Let him go!" He was thrown into a police van and once inside hit on the face with a helmet by one of the arresting officers, sustaining a nasty injury to his mouth. On 19 February Green pleaded not guilty to charges of "obstructing a police officer" and "threatening behaviour", the latter charge being a Public Order Act offence. The trial date has been set for 23 April.

The Partisan Defence Committee, a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defence organisation which champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people and whose purpose is in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League, has undertaken a publicity and fund-raising campaign to mobilise support for Green's defence. Recognising that an injury to one is an injury to all, the PDC has also protested the arrest of eleven protesters at a picket called by Black People Against War in the Gulf (see below) and the racist round-up, detentions, internment and deportations of Iraqi, Palestinian and other Arab people in Britain. It is in the interests of the workers movement that all of those victimised in the repressive war-time crackdown on elementary civil liberties be vigorously defended and all the charges against them dropped!

We print below a partial list of endorsements for the PDC defence effort in Alastair Green's case based on the slogans "Drop the charges! No to government censorship and repression of the left!" Prominent academics and authors such as Raymond Challinor and Gilles Perrault, MPs Ken Livingstone and Bob Parry, well-known leftists such as Paul Foot and Peter Fryer as well as a gratifying number of left organisations from England, Scotland and Ireland, and the student unions at both London School of Economics and Trinity College Dublin have lent their support to the case. From the trade union movement, we have received the endorsement of Tower Hamlets College NATFHE as well as the endorsements of a Branch Chairman and Assistant Branch Secretary of the NURMT. Both the *Socialist Organiser* and *Workers Press* covered the case. The 1 March issue of *New Statesman & Society* also highlighted the case as well as the banning by police of a *Newsline* WRP march in Tottenham.

Notable by their absence among the endorsers are the Labour "lefts" such as Bernie Grant and Jeremy Corbyn who claimed to be opponents of the war in the Gulf but have not yet been able to bring themselves to defend a communist victimised precisely for his opposition to that war. And while to their credit SWP leader Paul Foot and SWP members at LSE

came out in support of the defence effort, the SWP leadership at the London Socialist Worker Student Society (SWSS) conference on 23 February refused to grant speaking time for the PDC on behalf of the case.

The state repression against opponents of the Gulf War, its racist witch hunt against Arab people and all the related gross abrogations of elementary civil liberties that have attended the bourgeoisie's war effort must be fought! As we point out elsewhere in this issue, the government has been able to count on the eager complicity of the CND in its crackdown. Through its bellicose support to the imperialists in the war, the Labour Party also aided the climate of domestic repression. *Workers Hammer* urges our readers to give financial and other support to the campaign to defend Alastair Green. Please send your statements of support and cheques, marked "Green case" on the face of the cheque and made payable to: Partisan Defence Committee, BCM Box 4986, London WC1N 3XX. For more information, phone: 071-485 1396.

*We print below a statement by the Partisan Defence Committee of 1 March to the Director of Public Prosecutions:*

The Partisan Defence Committee is writing to demand that all charges against the eleven demonstrators arrested outside the Home Office on 20 February be dropped. The eleven were part of a 50-strong picket called by Black People Against War in the Gulf to protest the obscene racist round-up of more than 170 Iraqi, Palestinian and other Arab nationals since the Gulf War began. Guilty only of being Arab, these people are dragged before Home Secretary Baker's *in camera* panel of "Three Wise Men", where they are denied the right to present witnesses of their choice and even the elementary right to have a legal adviser present. To date, almost half of those detained have been either summarily deported or driven out of the country.

On 20 February those protesting this outrageous abrogation of civil liberties became themselves the victims of government attempts to censor the left and gag those who would defend basic democratic rights in Britain today. Citing the Public

Order Act, the police decreed that the protestors' chanting "US murderers" was an "offence" even as US and British bombers were raining death down on innocent Iraqi civilians in Baghdad! Despite the protestors having abandoned the slogan, twenty minutes later the police waded into the demonstration, began arresting protestors indiscriminately and eventually banned the picket outright. Nearly a quarter of those present were arrested and charged either under the Public Order Act or the draconian Metropolitan Police Act of 1839. Among those arrested was well-known Asian writer Amrit Wilson.

Similarly Spartacist League supporter Alastair Green was arrested on the 2 February anti-war demonstration in London, where the Spartacists were marching under their slogans of "Defeat US/British Imperialism! Defend Iraq!". There, the police threatened demonstrators with arrest if they dared to chant the slogan "Victory to Iraq!". When the Spartacist contingent refused to stop chanting their slogans, Green was seized and later injured by one of the arresting officers. Now he too faces charges under the Public Order Act.

The sinister attempt at censoring opponents of the government's war must cease. We demand: Drop all charges against Alastair Green and the eleven supporters of Black People Against War in the Gulf! Release the detainees! Stop the deportations! No to government censorship and repression of the left!

**5 MARCH**—In the aftermath of the Gulf War, the racist British state continues to pursue its "detainment, deportation" policy with determined vigour. Since last August, the Home Office has issued more than 170 deportation notices to Iraqis, Palestinians and other Arabs—over 80 of whom have already been deported or otherwise driven out of the country. Of the 65 remaining "suspects", Home Secretary Kenneth Baker has declared: "So long as the individuals are considered to present a risk to national security, they will be liable to deportation" (*Guardian*, 1 March). Of all the Western countries lined up behind Bush's campaign of imperialist slaughter, only Britain has interned Arab civilians resident in the country.

According to a report in the *Observer*

(3 March), those who have applications for visa renewals are having them refused outright. This applies not just to students three months from finishing their courses or businessmen, but also for example to an 82-year-old Kurdish woman and her 53-year-old mentally retarded son. Both are considered "threats to national security". Even Iraqis with "permanent residence" status are targets—if they leave the country, they will not be let back in. As the *Observer's* Julie Flint writes, "The ban is a blanket one, without parallel anywhere else in the world and without precedent in Britain." Amnesty International has placed Britain alongside Turkey, Israel and Egypt as those countries "guilty of arbitrary arrests since the start of the war" (*Independent*, 21 February).

Of those held as POWs (detained by Royal Prerogative) at Rolleston camp in Salisbury Plain, all but two are students. While two students have managed to successfully appeal to the Ministry of Defence for their release; the rest risk either deportation to Iraq or being sent to join 33 other Arabs still languishing in civil prisons awaiting the outcome of their appeals to "Three Wise Men".

Under this so-called appeal system, "detainees" must appear before a panel of three men without legal representation and whom they must convince they are not guilty of what they do not know they are charged with. The panel then makes a "recommendation" to the Home Secretary. So far Baker has quashed 19 deportation orders and upheld 14; others continue to rot in jails (some locked in their cells for up to 20 hours a day) awaiting the outcome. For those who have spoken out against Hussein's regime—many of whom have simultaneously condemned the imperialists' mass murder—resisting deportation may be a matter of life or death.

This British "system of justice" is mirrored by the Zionist government in Israel which uses a similar police-state measure inherited from the British mandate to imprison Sari Nusseibeh and other outspoken prominent Palestinians. The targeting and terrorising of Arab peoples in Britain is part and parcel of the government's drive through the denial of civil liberties to intimidate and regiment the whole population. We call on the trade union movement and all defenders of democratic rights to smash this campaign of racist terror against the Arab people in this country! *Government hands off Iraqis living in Britain! Smash the anti-Arab witch hunt! Free the detainees now! No deportations! No internments!* ■

## Partial list of endorsers of PDC campaign in defence of Alastair Green: "Drop the charges! No to government censorship and repression of the left!"

Roger Bunn, Musicians Emergency Committee\*  
Dr Raymond Challinor  
ER Crawford, deputy editor, *Revolutionary History*\*  
Unmesh Desai, Black People Against War in the Gulf\*  
Paul Foot  
Peter Fryer  
Dick Hall  
Hands Off Iraq Committee  
Hands Off the Middle East Committee  
JD Hillier, Anti-Fascist Action\*  
Irish Freedom Movement  
Jeunesses communistes révolutionnaires (JCR)  
Murtaza Koxsal, Chairman, Union of Turkish Workers\*  
Komitee für soziale Verteidigung  
Kürdistan Communist Movement  
Georges Labica, professor, Nanterre University  
Ken Livingstone MP  
London School of Economics Students' Union  
Pascal Marechal, CGT member\*  
Mark Metcalf, Red Action\*  
NATFHE, Tower Hamlets College  
Bob Parry MP  
Partisan Defence Committee  
AR Patel, NURMT Assistant Branch Secretary\*

Gilles Perrault  
Provisional Central Committee,  
Communist Party of Great Britain  
Charles Pottins, Jewish Socialists' Group\*  
Revolutionary Communist Group  
Revolutionary Communist Party  
*Revolutionary History*  
Revolutionary Internationalist League  
Scottish Republican Socialist Party  
Carvel Smith, NURMT Branch Chairman\*  
Spartacist League/Britain  
The Reform Society, Ireland  
Mark Thompson, North London Hunt Saboteurs\*  
Trinity College Dublin (TCD) Labour Society  
TCD Republican Society  
TCD Socialist Society  
TCD Students Union  
Workers International League  
Workers Party of Scotland  
Workers Power  
Workers Revolutionary Party (*Workers Press*)  
Workers Solidarity Movement, Dublin

\* endorsement in a personal capacity

(Continued from page 3)

Surely a Marxist party's job is not meant to be confined to tacking the word "imperialist" onto the slogans and platitudes of the CND? Surely we should be pushing in the unions for some old-fashioned class struggle—strikes against the war for example, that would be worth a thousand peace crawls—to oppose the old-fashioned imperial plunder of the government? And what's wrong with a blunt statement of the facts: that you will never end the threat and actuality of ghastly wars of mass destruction until the capitalist system itself is overthrown? And that this requires a sharp break with the Labour traitors, right and "left" and the fight to build a Leninist vanguard party.

The SWP thinks it has a better idea. Let's not frighten people away for the moment: better to act like liberals and then drop the mask when we've determined that "the mass of pacifists" are ready for a bit of talk about revolution. But in reality the SWP's mask is the face.

Since September the SWP has been giving its best efforts to build the popular-iron Stop War in the Gulf coalition, arguing that to "campaign and agitate under the slogan 'Victory to Iraq'... would also be a sectarian error erecting a barrier between ourselves and many of those who are genuinely opposed to the war drive...." The barrier that already exists—and the CND knows this full well—is between those who would act as the left face of imperialism in this war and those fighting for imperialism's defeat. The SWP has taken a side with the former.

And to bolster this rotten practice, the SWP leadership promotes the myth that people will automatically be radicalised in the course of a bourgeois pacifist movement. If this were true, who needs Leninists? The principal effect of pacifist ideology is to obscure the class nature of war and to prevent the cohering of a politically independent revolutionary struggle against the Labour Party traitors who stand foursquare behind this racist, colonialist war. You can recruit as many people as you want who have become dissatisfied by Kinnock-style strike-breaking and Bennite pieties. But to what end if all you do is take them straight back under the influence of the Supper Club and the Campaign Group, to provide the foot soldiers for a campaign whose real aim has a lot to do with electing a Labour government to run imperialism, and nothing to do with fighting for the revolutionary workers government this terribly decayed country so badly needs.

Remember the Anti Nazi League in the late '70s? In those days the SWP claimed that the way to defeat the fascists was to get the "broadest possible unity" of all those opposed to fascism. Among the many famous sponsors of the ANL you could find a Liberal Party peer, and one... Neil Kinnock. With friends like that it turned out the ANL was no enemy of the fascists when it counted. In 1978, not long before Margaret Thatcher captured the fascist vote with her hard-line anti-immigrant policies, the National Front held a demonstration of 2000 near Brick Lane, in the middle of a heavily minority area. Where was the ANL on the day with its 80,000 supporters? In Brockwell Park, South London, miles away! That's exactly what the popular front means: unity with the luminaries and speech-makers, and *demobilisation* of the class struggle.

The problem is that if the "movement" is everything, and screw the politics, you end up crossing the class line when it counts. It would be true to say that the SWP has been built, from its earliest days, as an organisation that takes its lead on the key questions of the class struggle far more from the teachings of Sidney

Webb and Ernest Bevin than from those of Lenin and Trotsky. How is this true?

**From Korea to Ravenscraig: crossing the class line**

The first group led by Tony Cliff was the Socialist Review Group. It was formed as a split from the Trotskyist movement after the outbreak of the Korean war in 1950. The North Korean deformed workers state fought to evict the US imperialists from the former Japanese colony, provoking an uprising of revolutionary proportions in the imperialist-occupied south, which threatened to take over the land and the factories. At the height of the Cold War the Labour government swung in behind the US, sending troops to fight the Koreans and later



Vietnam News Agency

**NLF seizing presidential palace in Saigon at end of Vietnam War. Vietnam was a victory against imperialism!**

the Chinese also. *Three million* Koreans were slaughtered in that war, conducted under United Nations auspices, yet Cliff's group openly *refused to defend* North Korea. For this they were justly expelled from the Fourth International.

The Socialist Review Group's position on the Korean war was a direct echo of the Labour Party's bitter anti-communism. Ernest Bevin, Labour's foreign secretary, was instrumental in the formation of NATO as an imperialist alliance directed at destroying the Soviet Union. When the Cold War turned hot in Korea, Tony Cliff's ridiculous theory that the USSR is "state capitalist" provided the rationale for straightforward capitulation to the British Empire.

Since 1917, when the Russian workers and peasants under the leadership of the Bolsheviks smashed the power of the capitalist class and instituted a workers state for the first time in history, the "Russian question" has been the litmus test for any organisation that lays claim to Marxism. Although the gains of the revolution have been corroded by decades of Stalinist bureaucratic misrule, the imperialists have not given up on their drive to reconquer that lost market for capitalist exploitation. Who can doubt what a catastrophe that would be when they look at what has ensued on the capitalist reunification of Germany?

We Trotskyists fight to defend the Soviet Union against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution while struggling to oust the bureaucracy and restore workers democracy. As Trotsky wrote:

"The workers' state must be taken as it has emerged from the merciless laboratory of history and not as it is imagined by a 'socialist' professor, reflectively exploring his nose with his finger. It is the duty of revolutionists to defend every conquest of the working class even though it may be distorted by the pressure of hostile forces. Those who cannot defend old positions will never conquer new ones."

—In *Defense of Marxism*

In the US they have a term for cold-warriors in leftist clothes: State Department "socialists". Tony Cliff qualified a

long time ago as a Foreign Office socialist. Ironically the "we have nothing to do with bloody Russia" line hasn't stopped the SWP aping every despicable practice Stalinism imported into the workers' movement: from excluding Trotskyists from so-called public meetings, to building illusions in "democratic" capitalism and building popular fronts while duplicitously "boring from within". In fact, you could do a lot worse than remember the fate of the Communist Party of Great Britain, which made a profession of popular frontism in its role as an (active, trade-union oriented) third-division Labour Party.

Ever since abandoning the defence of the USSR the SWP hasn't known which way is up. Marxism is supposed to be a

forget—like supporting the Ayatollah Khomeini's "Islamic Revolution" in Iran. In February 1979 the ISO's paper told us "Iranian women are on the threshold of a freedom denied them for years". The weakness for Islamic reactionaries also extended to Afghanistan when the SWP joined the imperialist uproar over the manifestly progressive Soviet Red Army intervention. In 1988 when the Soviets criminally pulled out of Afghanistan, leaving the PDPA government to fight on alone, *Socialist Worker* said "we welcome the defeat of the Russians in Afghanistan". So did the CIA, MI6, the Pakistani and Iranian governments. The victory of the *mujahedin* would have meant extinguishing every element of social progress in Afghanistan, starting with the right of women to learn to read and write, be treated by doctors or walk free of the veil.

In 1969 when the British troops went into Northern Ireland the International Socialists refused to call for their withdrawal, arguing that their presence gave a "breathing space" to the persecuted Catholic minority. During the most critical class battle in decades in Britain—the 1984-85 miners strike, the SWP came out with the amazing statement that: "The miners' strike is an extreme example of what we in the Socialist Workers Party have called the 'downturn' in the movement". And with the logical outcome of such defeatism: the boast by Tony Cliff at an SWP public meeting in London on 23 August 1984: "We have steelworkers in Redcar who cross picket lines. We have three steelworkers in Scunthorpe, they cross picket lines. We have a steelworker in Ravenscraig who crosses picket lines. We have a steelworker in Llanwern who crosses picket lines."

science. It is a pretty weird kind of "science" that fails to defend North Korea...but opposes the US war in Vietnam. The pressure of petty-bourgeois public opinion is the key to explaining that gyration: after all the British never sent any troops to Vietnam, so it was cheap to oppose that war. This was especially true after a good chunk of the US bourgeoisie figured out they weren't going to win, and decided to cut their losses. Under those circumstances the isolated demand for US troops out dovetailed neatly with the liberal Democrats' desire to "Bring our boys home".

Today the International Socialist Organization (ISO) in the United States, which is the SWP's offshoot, has banners reading "No more Vietnams". Where have you heard that before? George Bush says "no more Vietnams"; Richard Nixon titled his memoirs *No More Vietnams*—because the American bourgeoisie is determined to see no more victories for the working people of the world like the triumph of North Vietnam and the NLF over the US' losing dirty colonial war. Che Guevara coined the slogan "Two, three, many Vietnams!"—that spirit has nothing in common with the SWP's snuggling up to the "liberal" bourgeois and their friends in the Labour Party's left wing.

The SWP leaders have a wildly twisting weathervane where communists need a good backbone formed from a Marxist programme which you stick to, popular or unpopular. If you lack that backbone then you end up with positions you'd rather

Militant comrades of the SWP: struggle for a principled line. Your leadership today is prepared to prostitute itself before the wretched witch hunters of CND. It's time to break from the popular front which tries to gag the voice of Marxism. Look at the way the CND leaders have egged on the police actions against those who *do* take a side in this war. Threats, harassment and arrest have been the weapons on the street of the state against the left. To their credit, Paul Foot and student members of the SWP at LSE have gone on record in defence of a Spartacist comrade, Alastair Green, arrested on 2 February for refusing to silence chants for the defence of Iraq and defeat of imperialism.

We don't intend to be gagged by the likes of Bruce Kent. The Spartacists march at anti-war protests with the calls: *Defeat US/British imperialism! Defend Iraq! Trade unions must organise strikes against the war! Boycott the British war effort! Stop the deportations, no to internment: free the detainees! Down with the sheiks, down with the colonels: for workers revolution throughout the Middle East! For a socialist republic of united Kurdistan! Anti-imperialism abroad means class struggle at home! No UN solutions, no to sanctions! Break with the Labour traitors, "left" and right: build a revolutionary workers party! Not Kinnock or Benn but a workers government!*

Comrades of the SWP: which side are you on? ■

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# Soviet Union...

(Continued from page 12)

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 reorganisation of the Soviet Union and for the right of any nationality with a leadership that opposes counterrevolution to withdraw to any extent it sees fit. 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 towards the non-Baltic Soviet peoples living in 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 immiserisation of the working class. A Sajudis supporter, Leonid Mlechin, summed up its economic programme in the Moscow journal *New Times* (23 October 1990):

"Lithuania honours the right to private property and is prepared to give land to people, privatisation 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 programme could have been, and perhaps was, dictated by the *Wall Street Journal* or *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



Nogues/Sygma



Avakian/Woodfin Camp

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

there is no democracy. It is a real fascist dictatorship."

The Western bourgeois media depicts the internal opponents of Baltic secession, now organised around "National Salvation Committees", as simply agents or stooges manipulated by Moscow. Yet 20 per cent of Lithuania, 40 per cent of Latvia and almost half of Estonia consist of Russians, Ukrainians, Byelorussians and other nationalities. Heavily concentrated in the working class, these people will be the main immediate victims of the drive towards capitalist exploitation. If the Baltic nationalists secede

*Guardian* (11 January) commented acidly: "This old Marxist-Leninist term is one not heard from Mr. 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 break-up of the USSR along national

and strong Union". Translating this programme 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 programme worked out by Gorbachev's economic advisers, notably Stanislav Shatalin, for transforming the USSR into a full-fledged market economy. Housing would be privatised, agricultural land sold to peasant smallholders and at least 70 per cent of industrial enterprises denationalised—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!" *Workers Vanguard* no 510, 21 September 1990).

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 programme which had the same goals as the Shatalin plan but without the forced-march timetable. It called for "denationalisation and privatisation" 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

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Gorbachev with Bush in Malta, December 1989: "New thinking" means appeasement of imperialism, from abandonment of Afghanistan to support of US war against Iraq.



Der Spiegel

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 and also ethnic Lithuanians against the Sajudis regime's plans to raise prices between 200 and 800 per cent! 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

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 programme, 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

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# "New world order" ...

(Continued from page 1)

described the "grotesque procession of incinerated people being brought to the surface" as "powerful supporting evidence" for Iraq's claims that the US was targeting civilians, including leading officials and their families. This heinous atrocity is reminiscent of the Nazi "new order". The city of Basra in southern Iraq, singled out for special devastation, was simply declared a "military town". The RAF has acknowledged hitting civilian areas; in one incident in Fallujah, hundreds were killed and wounded.

During World War II Hitler adopted a policy of *Schrecklichkeit*, deliberate terrorising of the "enemy" population. But the Allies outdid even the Nazis in this department: Hamburg, Dresden, Tokyo, Hiroshima and Nagasaki were among the many cities which were transformed into fiery crematoriums for their working populations. In fact, the "democratic" imperialists, today as well, have had a preference for mass slaughter of civilians and soldiers through air power, which kept the horrendous casualties at a distance.

## "New world order"

If George Bush has acted true to form as an imperialist warmonger, along with his junior partners in Britain, first prize for perfidy must go to Mikhail Gorbachev, who turned his back on the Soviets' Iraqi client and wheedled and cajoled Hussein to agree to each and every humiliating ultimatum from Washington. When Baghdad agreed to the latest Soviet plan and Washington declared this unacceptable, Moscow turned around and denounced the Iraqis. And after this treachery, they now have a triumphalist military juggernaut strutting its stuff a few hundred miles from the Soviet southern border.

It is not lost on the Soviet general staff that the Pentagon is now carrying out its AirLand Battle military strategy designed for an offensive strike against the Soviet Union. A worried *Pravda* wrote, "The war is waged first of all to satisfy the ambitions of the US to achieve sole leadership of the world." It dawns on the thick-skulled Stalinist bureaucrats in the Kremlin a little late. We Trotskyists have been saying for months that the US was intent on war to impose its imperialist hegemony.

The International Communist League took a clear stand from the outset for the defeat of imperialism and defence of Iraq. We have no truck with the *rais* (chief) of



Iraqi prisoners of war in Kuwait. Many thousands of fleeing defenceless Iraqis were slaughtered on the road to Basra.

Baghdad, Saddam Hussein, the butcher of Kurds, Communists and oil workers. In contrast to the Vietnamese workers and peasants who saw in their struggle against the barbaric US imperialists the promise of a genuine social revolution, the Iraqi people were mobilised for war by the type of repugnant thug with whom the CIA normally enjoys working relations. This former imperialist ally is getting the same treatment Washington metes out to all its lackeys who step out of line, from Trujillo to Diem to Panama's Noriega. And the US-led forces—ceasefire or no ceasefire—are pursuing the removal of Hussein with a vengeance, making it clear that unless a pliant puppet ruler is installed in Baghdad the war-ravaged Iraqi people face renewed sanctions backed up by a substantial military garrison.

In struggling for the defeat of imperialism, we made it clear that a cocksure imperialist colossus on the loose presented a deadly danger to all humanity. Reagan and Bush set their sights on overcoming the "Vietnam syndrome"—in the process they could set off a chain of events leading to a nuclear World War III. Hitler was also emboldened by his first Blitzkrieg successes but soon found himself overextended, and ultimately crushed. The American military colossus rests on foundations that cannot sustain it. Even a Henry Kissinger warns that "U.S. pre-eminence cannot last.... Nor can the U.S. economy indefinitely sustain a policy of essentially unilateral global interventionism" (*Los Angeles Times*, 24 February). As Gore Vidal put it in an interview with *Scotland on Sunday* (3 March): "Essentially, the war will prove to be a brief diversion from the ongoing collapse of the economy.... The next American war will be that of the government of the United States against the people of the United States."

Indirect targets of the chiefly Anglo-American Gulf War are the US' chief imperialist rivals (and World War II enemies), Germany and Japan. Washing-

ton wants to counter their more modern and productive economic apparatus by militarily controlling the flow of oil from the Middle East. The German business magazine *WirtschaftsWoche* (8 February) headlined "Gulf War: Germany the Loser." But Germany has its own options. Having hooked up to Soviet pipeline terminals as a result of its annexation of East Germany last year, the German Reich is already looking to the USSR for oil supplies. And with Moscow increasingly on the outs with Washington over the Gulf war, Bonn and Tokyo may be dreaming of an alliance with the resource- and population-rich Soviet Union.

Among the first victims of the Anglo-American war are the Palestinian people. In the West Bank and Gaza they have been under house arrest for five weeks while their jobs are given to the 200,000 Soviet Jewish immigrants who have arrived in Israel in the last year. The Zionist rulers are pushing for a "final solution" to the Palestinian "problem", preparing for bloody mass expulsions from the Occupied Territories.

And "free Kuwait"? Scarcely had Iraqi troops left Kuwait City, than the Kuwaiti "resistance" was organising lynch-mob terror on the streets. Palestinians are being rounded up *en masse* for slaughter and deportations. Kuwaiti forces drove 12 armoured vehicles into the Palestinian Hawali district, beating civilians who fell into their hands. American Special Forces troops accompanying the Kuwaitis shouted obscenities at journalists who asked why they did not intervene (*Independent*, 4 March). In another incident, a Sudanese woman was raped and her husband executed in front of a British journalist.

On the hunt for "atrocities", newsmen invaded the al-Sabah maternity hospital, where Iraqi soldiers had allegedly thrown newborn babies from incubators. Rubbishing that lie, which had been retailed by George Bush himself, a woman gynaecologist pointed out that the only baby she had personally lost to the war died when a bomb destroyed the local power station, cutting off the suction machine needed to clear the child's breathing. The vast majority of civilians murdered in this city were the victims of B-52 bombings. While rich Kuwaitis sat out the war in their summer homes in France, Spain and Egypt, the Indian, Bangladeshi, Lankan and Arab workers who produce the oil wealth and serve as personal retainers to the sheiks were prevented from leaving the region. The "liberation of Kuwait" offers nothing for these people who toil for as little as £15 a month with no more rights than indentured slaves.

## Smash imperialism through proletarian revolution!

On the eve of the second world war, the great Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky wrote:

"So long, however, as the main productive forces of society are held by trusts, i.e., isolated capitalist cliques, and so long as the national state remains a pliant tool in the hands of these cliques, the struggle for markets, for sources of raw

materials, for domination of the world, must inevitably assume a more and more destructive character. State power and domination of the economy can be torn from the hands of these rapacious imperialist cliques only by the revolutionary working class. That is the meaning of Lenin's warning that without 'a series of successful revolutions' a new imperialist war would inevitably follow."

—"Manifesto of the Fourth International on the Imperialist War and the Proletarian World Revolution", May 1940

The Spartacist League fought for the only way to bring down the imperialist warmongers: proletarian revolution. The idea that the predatory capitalists can be pressured into taking the road to "peace" proved a sick joke. CND and assorted Labour "lefts" dressed themselves in the same social patriotic clothing as Kinnock, pleading for UN sanctions to bring Iraq to its knees. They differed from the open chauvinists only in that they begged the capitalists to adopt more "peaceful" methods. The British and American governments paid not one whit of attention to the pleadings of Tony Benn and his ilk.

The murderous imperialist victory in the Persian Gulf has made the world a far more dangerous place. It has paved the way for new imperialist wars, for increased attacks on the working people throughout the world, including within the imperialist centres. Here the British bourgeoisie prepares with a vengeance to "bring the war home" to the workers and minorities. It is hardly news to any class-conscious worker that there is not a dime's worth of difference between the pro-war, pro-austerity policies of Major's Tories and the pro-war, pro-austerity policies of Labour. A few years ago class struggle gripped this country, as the miners shut down the pits and virtual civil war raged in the coalfields. The Labour and trade union "lefts", then as now, proved themselves worthless class traitors. In all the major questions of social revolution and war, the Labour "lefts" have proved as bankrupt as the "rights".

We can be certain that the likes of the Socialist Workers Party and Workers Power will soon be calling for a vote to the odious Kinnock; this declaration of loyalty to the Labour Party which has backed imperialist slaughter to the hilt and is preparing to smash the struggle of the working class and oppressed at home is all the more criminal in the aftermath of the Gulf War. Unlike these reformists and centrists, we do not speak out of one side of our mouth about "class struggle" or "anti-imperialism", while simultaneously seeking to con workers into believing that the Kinnocks and Benns can be pressured to the left.

The critical question is *leadership*. A revolutionary party must be built, by splitting the working masses from the pro-capitalist Labour Party tops. The Spartacist League fights for a such a perspective, as part of the struggle to reforge the Fourth International as the decisive tool for world proletarian revolution. The alternatives posed today point-blank for humanity are socialism or barbarism. ■

## Ireland...

(Continued from page 6)

talking out of both sides of its mouth. At one point last autumn it issued a leaflet declaring that taking a side should be the basis of an anti-war movement: "A solidarity campaign needs urgently to be built in Ireland on an anti-imperialist basis: *Break the blockade*, and *US/British/French Troops Out of the Gulf Now!*" But when the reformist groups put together their pop front coalitions, the IWG's appetite to be with the "mass movement" predictably triumphed over programmatic considerations. Today it claims that the SWM's "troops out" line is "objectively anti-imperialist", and confines itself to lending a left cover to the reformists. Hilariously, for example, the IWG has been unsuccessfully waging a "struggle" for the NTWGC to change its slogan from "stop the war" to "stop the

war against Iraq!"

The IWG's perspective is to nudge the popular frontist coalitions step by little step to the left so that they in turn can "pressure" the bourgeois workers parties whose allegiance to imperialism in Northern Ireland and everywhere else is as clear as day. As centrists, they seek a halfway house between social democracy and revolutionary politics. They cheer on the Lithuanian Sajudis movement, which fights for bourgeois counterrevolution and appeals to the very imperialists who seek to annihilate Iraq and put an armed encampment a few hundred miles from the Soviet border. We communists say more than ever: Defend and regenerate the gains of the October Revolution! Return to the road of Lenin and Trotsky! We seek, alongside our comrades of the International Communist League, to build not "the movement as it is" but an internationalist revolutionary vanguard party of the proletariat, part of the reformed Fourth International. ■

## Letter...

(Continued from page 2)

increased: "The characteristic feature of imperialism consists in the whole world, as we now see, being divided into a large number of oppressed nations and an insignificant number of oppressor nations, the latter possessing colossal wealth and powerful armed forces" (Lenin, *Report of the Commission on the National and the Colonial Questions*, July 1920). Thus in *Socialism and War* Lenin talks about six Great Powers or "lords of capital" that had divided up the world, "either in the form of colonies, or by entangling other countries in thousands of threads of financial exploitation".

In equating Iraq with the US, Cowan is in effect asserting that the Ba'athists are capable of throwing off the chains of imperialist subordination, ie, he accords a progressive character to the national bourgeoisie! But bourgeois and petty bourgeois nationalists of all stripes, whatever their "anti-imperialist" rhetoric, end up doing dirty deals with imperialism. This is clear from Saddam's own career: until recently seen by the US ruling class as a prime candidate for "regional policeman of the Gulf", Hussein took money and arms from all the major capitalist powers, while butchering the Kurds and using CIA hit lists to exterminate communists. That is why Marxists give no political support to nationalists, whether they be Saddam Hussein or Gerry Adams. The only way the chains of imperialist exploitation and inequality can be smashed is through proletarian revolution, ultimately extending to the most advanced capitalist countries.

Far from drawing a sharp political line against petty bourgeois nationalism, Cowan in fact does the opposite. He erects a stages theory: according to this schema, first you have a democratic revolution against feudalism and foreign oppression led by the "progressive" bourgeoisie; then one can talk about socialism.

In reality this is the old Menshevik/Stalinist two-stage theory of class betrayal. Trotsky counterposed to this the theory of permanent revolution, which asserts that in the less advanced countries the dictatorship of the proletariat would inevitably place on the order of the day not only the democratic but the socialist tasks as well.

Lenin in practice came over to Trotsky's position in 1917. The October Revolution—which the Leninist organisation absurdly terms a "bourgeois revolution"—swept away both the feudal remnants of the tsarist autocracy and the bourgeois Kerensky government. It demonstrated that the revolutionary proletariat was the only force capable of fulfilling even minimal bourgeois-democratic tasks, while simultaneously ushering in the era of world socialist revolution.

Actual social reality is a lot more contradictory than the schema laid out by Cowan, which neatly divides exploiting societies into two categories: (1) feudal colonial societies run by foreign imperialism and (2) "independent sovereign states" with fully developed capitalism. Tsarist Russia had some of the largest and most modern factories in Europe, often owned by British and French capital. The Russian working class, the most politically advanced in Europe, represented a small numerical minority in a sea of backward peasantry, often exploited through the most barbaric semi-serfdom methods. In much of what is now Soviet Central Asia people lived at economic levels similar to Afghanistan today, women were forced into the veil, etc.

Drawing on the lessons of the October Revolution, the early Communist International pointed to a proletarian solution to the multi-faceted oppression endemic to less advanced societies. Thus Lenin in a report to the Second Congress of the CI noted: "...the Communist International should advance and theoretically substantiate the proposition that these backward countries can, with the aid of the proletariat of the advanced countries, pass over to the Soviet system and, through definite stages of development, to communism,

without having to go through the capitalist stage" (Lenin, *On Britain*, p536).

Only a few short years after the October Revolution, proletarian revolution was on the agenda in China. This in itself makes mincemeat of Cowan's view that China required a separate bourgeois revolution and years of capitalist development. However, despite the struggle of Trotsky and the Left Opposition, the Chinese workers and peasants were betrayed by the Stalin/Bukharin leadership of the CI. Applying the "stages theory", the CI ordered the young Chinese CP to liquidate politically into Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang (which the CI claimed "took the place of" soviets). Chiang was even made an honorary member of the CI's Executive Committee! This capitulation to the "patriotic" bourgeoisie led to the Shanghai massacre in 1927, in which tens of thousands of Communists and militant workers who had laid down their arms at Stalin's orders were slaughtered.

A few years later, when Japan seized large areas of China, Trotsky—who hardly had any illusions in Chiang Kai-shek—wrote:

"Chiang Kai-shek is the executioner of the Chinese workers and peasants. But today he is forced, despite himself, to struggle against Japan for the remainder of the independence of China. Tomorrow he may again betray. It is possible. It is probable. It is even inevitable. But today he is struggling. Only cowards, scoundrels, or complete imbeciles can refuse to participate in that struggle."

— "On the Sino-Japanese War", in *Trotsky on China*, p568

Here Trotsky is drawing a distinction between military and political support. Rejecting this correct methodology, the Leninist today finds itself in the camp of the imperialists and their social democratic lackeys over the Gulf. In other circumstances, this same organisation is perfectly capable of simultaneously enthusing over the "armed struggle" and its petty bourgeois leaders, as it does in Ireland and as it did in Afghanistan when it hailed a wing of the PDPA as a com-

munist vanguard. Indeed, a few years ago its Turkish allies of the TKP, praising in the same breath the left nationalist Amin and the bloody reactionary Khomeini, wrote: "Just as in Iran the revolution found its subjective factor in the mullahs, it may also find it among revolutionary officers in the [Afghan] army" (*The Revolution in Afghanistan*).

Trained in the bad school of Stalinism, the Leninist similarly cannot see the distinction between military defence of the deformed workers states and political support to the bureaucracy. Having discovered that these were not workers paradises at all, it then either looked to reforming the bureaucracies or outright supporting bourgeois democracy. Hence, a couple of years ago it grotesquely demanded that the anti-Semitic, Great Russian chauvinist fascists of Pamyat be allowed to organise on the grounds of "the fullest democracy under socialism" (*Leninist*, 23 May 1988). While Trotskyists seek to mobilise the independent strength of the workers movement to crush these fascists, the *Leninist* then wrote: "...in the main we would seek out Pamyat members in order to argue with them. Many people who voted for the National Front in Britain did not understand its true nature, they were fooled. The same will be true of those who have joined Pamyat" (*Leninist*, 3 September 1988). And today, similarly citing reasons of "democracy", Leninist ends up in the camp of the Baltic counterrevolutionaries in the Soviet Union.

The Communist Party of Great Britain (Leninist) apparently consider themselves to be the first "Leninists" since Lenin. Some of them have even read Trotsky and borrow from him when convenient. Yet on all the most important questions their inability to defend the programme of Leninism and Trotskyism has led them in ever weirder directions. If there are members of Leninist who want to be genuine communists and not end up driving themselves into political oblivion, then they should struggle to find the way to revolutionary Trotskyism. ■

## Soviet Union...

(Continued from page 9)

towards "free markets", private property and the decentralisation 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 programme. 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 prominent 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 privatisation of state-owned property. Shortly thereafter, Yeltsin attempted his own economic "shock treatment" by threatening to cut back by 90 per cent 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 socialised economy is continuing at an accelerated pace. In October a presidential decree allowed foreign multinationals to own 100 per cent 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 notes 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 unsuppressed inflation. Official consumer prices are scheduled to rise 50 to 70 per cent 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 US war against

Iraq. A few weeks ago, Shevardnadze's protégé and successor as foreign minister, Aleksandr Bessmertnykh, issued a joint statement with US secretary of state James Baker maintaining that: "The military actions authorised 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 US 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 defence and regeneration of the collectivised economy, the restoration of workers democracy, to the struggle against imperialist militarism on a world scale.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

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# WORKERS HAMMER

Pro-imperialist “democrats”, hardliners and Gorbachev

## Where is the Soviet Union going?

“The West’s Gorbachev honeymoon ends,” proclaims the *Guardian*. The *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 cancelled a scheduled summit in Moscow to show their displeasure at Gorbachev’s crackdown against the Lithuanian secessionists who want to join

### PART ONE

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



Gamma

**SHOWDOWN IN VILNIUS: Soviet troops outside Lithuanian parliament. Crisis of Stalinism paves the way for capitalist restorationists, reactionary secessionists.**

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” programme and is he now seeking to restore strict Stalinist order? Is this even possible in any event? What are

the 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 tend-

ing to polarise. 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 proceeds. 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 consciousness of the masses, working people take for granted the tangible gains of October: the right to a job, cheap food, subsidised 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 defence 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 polarisation 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, socialised property must be maintained and revitalised 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 break-up of the

*continued on page 9*



Der Spiegel

Gorbachev’s perestroika has produced economic chaos. Left: Empty shelves in Moscow bread store. Right: Homeless erect tents behind Red Square.



Spartacist

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