

# Workers' Scud

## No Patriot can catch us!

June 1991

40p

This collection of articles was produced as a *post hoc* analysis of the war and some of its ramifications, by a couple of communists who participated in a "united front" of communists, english anarchists, and others to oppose the war in the Gulf. Looking back, we regret that the enormity of the tragedy dulled our critical senses. The group, *No War But The Class War* never got to grips with itself, let alone mounting effective opposition to the war. Issues were fudged and debate shunned. A call for general class struggle opposition to the war became an emotional cushion. No clear priorities or strategies were developed. It was a bit like a jellyfish!

There is a need for self-criticism, relating the immediate political issues to the long term strategic needs of the class struggle. This will cut through the wishy-washiness of English political culture. Anglo-american culture has gone hand in hand with the integration of world capitalism. This liberalism in the more concentrated areas of capitalism finds its antithesis in the parochialist ideologies of 'third worldism'. As proletarians in London, one of the epicentres of this structure, we feel the need to transcend both.

Hopefully these articles will stimulate discussion and activity. We welcome your criticisms.

- ✧ We hate the bosses — we hate their wars.
- ✧ The bosses' crisis triggered the war in the Gulf.
- ✧ Capitalism is being restructured across the world.
- ✧ The war in the Gulf was a moment in the realisation of this restructuring. It was not just about oil.
- ✧ Iraqi plans for expansion and diversification fell foul of the intensification of the international division of labour.
- ✧ The *New World Order* has three centres — North America, Europe, and the Far East. "The West" has lost its coherence.
- ✧ Against the imposition of capitalist war, we stand for the revolutionary destruction of capitalist social relations — the class war.
- ✧ Arab/Kurdish nationalism, Islamic Fundamentalism, as *all* other forms of patriotism, are tools to divide and discipline the proletariat.
- ✧ The *United Nations* is being regearred as a more efficient weapon of class oppression.
- ✧ The united proletariat of the world will emerge to meet this threat.
- ✧ The communist movement arises out of the autonomous self-activity of the proletariat. It negates wage-slavery, the money system, the state, races, nations and the family. Its realisation is the classless world human community.

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# OIL WAR OR THE FETISHIZATION OF A COMMODITY?

The crisis of capital is a social crisis which manifests itself simultaneously on the economic, political and military terrains. Underlying capital's predicament are great conflicting subterranean movements amongst the deep structure of society. The war in the Gulf expressed these in various ways, yet these deeper conflicts cannot be resolved through war which is a phenomenon conjured up by capital's inherent contradictions in the first place.

The present malaise of capital has arisen at precisely the point where capital hoped to realise itself through a more integrated world market. The internationalisation of industrial capital was to augment the unification of financial institutions. This consolidated economic system could then be cocooned inside a greatly enhanced US dominated United Nations to provide it with a cemented political foundation and aided by mechanisms such as GATT to regulate its trading.

This metamorphosis ushers in a new period of instability during which the dialectics of competition and monopoly, expansionism and protectionism, nationalism and super-nationalism seek to achieve a harmonious synthesis. The world capitalist system is looking towards a top-down self-transformation as the only way of counteracting the falling tendency of the rate of profit and maintaining social 'peace'. In Russia, this is Perestroika. Bush calls it a New World Order. It is global restructuring.

It is a truism that the regulation of the price of oil and the control of this most precious of commodities is vital for world capitalism. Yet, oil was only one aspect of this war and in our view of secondary importance compared to the totality of the current capital crisis initiated by the disintegration of the Eastern block, and the operational necessity of establishing a new hierarchical pecking order within the world's major capitalist powers. Also, the consequent decline of the USSR as a major imperialist entity created the need for an artificially erected external foe to justify the existence of the military complex. To fetishize oil would amongst other things, blind us to the inter-capitalist rivalries whose belated consequences will present themselves in the re-division of spheres of influence both in the Middle East and the rest of the globe.

Before embarking on an analysis of the wider issues concerning the war in the Gulf let us delve further into the role of oil in order to bring forth some of the schisms within the world bourgeoisie.

## BLACK GOLD

Three main categories of nation-states have emerged with conflicting policies on the price of oil. The first group, headed by Japan and Germany and including most 'third world' and East European countries, rely heavily on imported oil. Whereas higher prices merely slow down growth in Japan and Germany, the tragic consequences will be far more severe in the poorer countries. Most of Africa has already been 'written-off' as bad investment areas by finance capital, which incidentally is the main reason for the media going conspicuously silent on the famine ravaging that continent, or the Bangladeshi cyclone. This group has, therefore, been far from cavalier about getting involved in the conflict, unless there is the inducement of a financial nature on offer (eg. Egypt's £9 billion debt to

the US is being written off for services rendered during the war).

The second group consists of the oil producing countries whose main source of revenue is oil. Russia must also be included here for she is as the largest oil producer in the world (10.5 mb/d of which 1.5 mb/d is sold on the external market) and as a potential OPEC member (USSR has observer status in OPEC) a major beneficiary of higher oil prices. Another form of 'nation-state' deserves attention here - the multi-national oil companies- whose interests lie in ever increasing oil prices.

Two factors, however, create constraints on the multi-nationals desire for higher prices. These are:

(i) The general capitalist crisis of overproduction which has resulted in an oil glut coupled with the current recession have acted to dampen demand. There is also the more specific threat posed by other capitalists who own alternative (and in some cases cheaper) sources of energy or depend on oil for manufacturing commodities. To counteract this source of competition oil companies have been trying to monopolise coal and uranium production for decades.

(ii) The state as the overseer of national capital tries constantly to tax oil companies in order to syphon-off huge capitals for their administrative functions. The US based oil companies have neatly, albeit temporarily, surmounted this problem by 'electing' a Texan oil-millionaire to the presidency of the United State. Oil companies of non-American origin have not been blessed with such good fortune.

This brings us to the third category of nation states, those, like US and UK, which are massive producers and consumers of oil. This latter group preferred a short term rise in oil

prices (for a few months after the invasion of Kuwait) followed by a period of stabilisation, and an average price for oil (around the present \$18 level). The reasons are manifold: a short term rise in oil prices brought windfalls to their embattled economies; stimulated production and investment in the North Sea and US oilfields, making many abandoned oil wells economically viable again; acts as a source of profit once the massive surplus of 'petrodollars' from OPEC countries is deposited in US/UK banks; and catalyses research into alternative sources of energy (eg. wind and water) as a long term project to diminish dependency on M.E. oil.

Another factor might have entered the calculations of the US bourgeoisie. As oil is priced in US dollars and as at times of crisis, dollar usually gains in value relative to its major European competitors, the US would have been justified in assuming that oil becomes much dearer for Japanese and German buyers compared to their American rivals. A discrete form of protectionism intended to boost growth. Unfortunately, for the US, the \$ continuously lost value during the war despite massive interventions. Since the war, however, the value of \$ has risen by 10%, but this has created additional problems (see below).

In the context of rising oil prices, middle class environmentalists demanding a cut in consumption as a way of restricting pollution, have recently had their status enhanced by the visible (and at times genuine) support from certain 'progressive' factions of the bourgeoisie, who comprehend fully the debilitating long term effects of pollution on capital's ability to maintain its global superiority. Environmental pressure groups will be encouraged by the state in order to increase competition within industrial capital, at least for the duration of the recession, when demands for oil is at its lowest. Middle class environmentalists can also be used to justify the increasing commodification of natural resources like air and water.

## DIVERSIFICATION vs. DIVISION OF LABOUR

The war placed oil companies in a somewhat unique position of regaining the grounds lost over decades to Arab bosses, once the reconstruction of devastated oil facilities begins. For years the Middle East bourgeoisie had been gradually strengthening its position vis-a-vis the 'western' bourgeoisie. Nationalist movements in countries such as Algeria, Libya, Iraq and Iran have ousted the 'colonial' powers and initiated a whole host of nationalisation programmes. The extraction, production, refinery and in many cases the distribution of oil have come under the control of the 'native' bosses. Faced with this unpalatable situation of diminishing returns, war and the physical destruction of the infrastructure becomes the only way for the western oil companies to move in. That is one reason Basra, an oil refining city, had to be raised to the ground during the war. This is not to underestimate the bosses' need to punish and discipline the oil producing proletariat of the region. The success of their plans depends on a defeated proletariat.

The incessant efforts of oil producing countries to diversify their oil-based economy, usually through an import-substitution policy, fell foul of US's plans for the further intensification of the *international division of labour*. By controlling the volume and price of oil, through Saudi Arabia's sabotage of OPEC strategy, the US can predetermine the rate of growth and GNP of such countries. Similarly the 'dismantling' of the Iraqi communication and transportation systems is a golden opportunity for other sectors of the western economy. War, as any two-bit general would tell you, is good for business.

## WHAT IS THE 'WEST'?

To underscore exactly which faction of the bosses class intend to reap the rewards of this war, we must stop talking of the 'west' as a

homogeneous entity and further examine the internal divisions within the world bourgeoisie.

The rift between oil producing (US/UK) and oil importing (Japan/Germany) 'western' countries has already been alluded to. By controlling the Middle Eastern oilfields the US/UK axis can potentially dictate terms to its 'allies' and determine how, where and to what extent Japan and German surplus capital will be invested in the future.

The position of Japan and Germany is paradoxical. On the one hand, they desire stability in the Middle East in order to maintain the free flow of oil to their industries, and on the other, this stability can only be won through a pax-Americana which will in the long term prove a handicap. Hardly surprising, therefore, that both have been reluctant to directly involve themselves on the military terrain, citing post W/W II constitutional constraints. Chancellor Kohl made frantic efforts to co-ordinate a peace plan with Iran and USSR. Ironically the economic weaknesses of the old 'imperial' powers (UK/US) and its contrast with the vibrant dynamic of the emerging play-makers (Japan/Germany) is reminiscent of the prelude to the second world war. They all have to "expand or die"!

A further grouping will complete its crystallisation in 1992 with the official advent of the European 'Community'. One bone of contention between it and the US will be Palestine. The EC recognised the "cadillac revolutionaries" of PLO as the representatives of the Palestinian people in 1980 and has pushed for the establishment of a Palestinian state ever since, as a way of reducing the influence of the US/Israel axis. Already economic ties between EC and the nascent 'Palestinian' bourgeoisie are solidifying. We witnessed an aspect of this conflict during the smooth removal of Thatcher. The final straw forcing her ignominious departure from Whitehall might have been the unpopularity of the poll-tax but the coup-de-grace was delivered by finance capital (which had hitherto

been a loyal and unerring supporter of Thatcher and the 'special Anglo-American relationship'), when it joined with industrial capital (for years suffering under Thatcherism from a lack of investment and an over valued sterling), in calling for the Lady to make a permanent U-turn.

A "prudent" cut in interest rates and sympathy towards the pro-European wing of the British bourgeoisie secured John Major the premiership. For a while the process of integrating fully within Europe seemed to parallel America's choice of Germany as her new 'special' European partner.

The 'Gulf War', however, temporarily delayed the inevitable. It is in this context that Edward Heath's (a pro-European) visit to Baghdad before the war and his subsequent criticisms of a 'new imperialism' (meaning US imperialism) have to be understood. Heath's visit to Baghdad (and Willie Brandt's similar excursions) were not the charitable acts of dying swans.

The whole spectacle was part of a tentative yet reasonably orchestrated emerging European foreign policy. In short the European bourgeoisie, with the exception of an anachronistic faction of the British bourgeoisie, wanted 'peace'. But when the war broke out they used the occasion to stifle the class struggle at home and ensure social 'peace', as in the case of France where last year's student unrest, minorities revolts, and the accompanying solidarity strikes brought back too many nasty memories for the bosses.

The media's gloating over the special relationship may have momentarily concealed the real conflicts of interest between them. The Foreign Office's long term strategists, sensitive to the complex web of relations in the Middle East are fully aware of the possibilities of social upheavals in countries like Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait once the dust has settled.

Special efforts are being made to court the nascent merchant classes

of both countries in case the Royal families' unpopularity with the inhabitants becomes too burdensome. Furthermore the hawks within the Foreign Office would dearly love to return the back-handed compliment they received from the US during the Suez crisis in 1956. Already a divergence of opinion is surfacing over the future of Iraq. The European bourgeoisie seems to be in favour of a Kurdish state, whereas the US (plus states with a sizable Kurdish minority like Iran, Turkey, and Syria) prefers the maintenance of the status quo.

The 'west' is losing its coherence, although as a descriptive term it still has some analytic utility.

## IF THE CAP FITS WEAR IT

GATT already provides capitalism with a regulated system in manufactures trading. But with the declining rate of profit in this sector, capital is increasingly dependent on the service industries. Hence, GATT's recent attempts at regulating "... telecommunications, television, advertising, publishing, banking and insurance", and move towards establishing a legal superstructure to facilitate East Europe's economic integration. Britain, having been regulated to a second-rate industrial power during the Ice-maiden's reign of terror, stands to gain from agreement on service industries.

But despite the British state's efforts the talks did not get anywhere, allegedly due to an agricultural dispute between US and the EC. The Americans want the Europeans to stop subsidising their farmers, but CAP (Common Agricultural Policy) prevents the latter from obliging. CAP is a political compromise for addressing European capital's inherent contradictions.

The uneven development of capital in the rural areas has created a powerful block of small-scale farmers in France and Germany,

whose incomes have to be protected even though its productivity is falling. Over-production accentuates these difficulties.

But, it is argued by capital's technocrats, if only Britain could be persuaded to embrace ERM, then the French will be more inclined to allow CAP reforms (ie. profitable, large-scale production), thus removing the agricultural obstacle between US and EC and stimulating global growth. But is it that simple?

To complicate matters, a split within the G7 group is slowly developing into a wide schism. The US, Italy and France (against each other at GATT) share the common aim of lower interests, principally to stimulate growth and lower unemployment. Japan, and Germany on the other hand denounce this policy as inflationary. The British bourgeoisie is as usual vacillating between the two poles. Where the European bourgeoisie does agree is in the belief that the 10% rise in the value of \$ has been 'overdone'.

There is one more change that must be taken into account. Until recently it would have been reasonably valid to assume that institutions like the World Bank and IMF are controlled exclusively by the US (as the largest shareholder). Japan, however, is beginning to flex its monetary muscles and in the process giving certain autonomy to such organisations. I think with the passage of time we can gradually identify the policies of these organisations with the long-term interests of the world bourgeoisie.

For example, the Institute of International Finance's (IIF) analysis of capital's current crisis differs from the US. IIF warns of a capital shortage and puts the blame on the budget deficits of G7 countries and the new claimants on world savings (East Europe, 'developing' countries, etc). Special dispensation may momentarily take care of most of Brazil and Poland's debts but the rest will have to

further tighten the squeeze on their proletariat before receiving cash.

The World Bank has another 'cure' in store for the proletariat of 'developing' countries - euphemistically referred to as 'Urban Regeneration'. Infra-structural deficiencies and restrictive regulations reduce investment, and hit profit. To reverse the trend, capital is needed, which is where Japan comes in. Apprehensive of US's intentions to distribute Japanese surplus capital as the White House sees fit, Japan has resuscitated the notion of SDRs - Special Drawing Rights (IMF's currency). IMF is 'delighted' with Japan's idea. The US furious.

All the splits referred to thus far suggest that the 'west' is indeed losing coherence. When economic interests diverge, military alliances follow suit. The recent row between the EC and NATO about who is responsible for restructuring western Europe's security strategy confirms this. Most EC governments want military control over Europe and an independent European foreign policy. This has annoyed the US no end!

## WARS and CARROTS

Oil was *not* the primary reason for the war. The fluctuations in the oil market were remarkably uneventful following military intervention. The massive price rises predicted never materialised. Saudi Arabia, Iran and Venezuela all raised production. Moreover, the US had record oil reserves. So if oil is not the most important issue involved would the Americans have gone to war if "Kuwait produced carrot"? Probably not, but then another pretext would have been found (or contrived) in order to preempt the process of global re-division.

A more intense and explicitly economic struggle will probably follow the war in the Gulf, with three protagonists arrayed against each other: The American block (US, Canada, Mexico) which will attempt to reverse its declining

economic prowess using its explicit military superiority; the far eastern empire based on Japan but also including the developing pacific countries, and perhaps even China, which as a nuclear power will act as its military bulwark and provide Japan and the 'Paper Tigers' with cheap labour; and the emerging European empire (including USSR, EFTA, and some East European countries).

Already oases of protectionism are being formed in other parts of the world as a response to the encroaching expansionism of the above mentioned blocks. Four Latin American countries have created a new economic block. The Islamic market which before the war was considered a considerable financial power has taken a set back, and must reorganise its banking network and coordinate the mobility of its proletariat, if it is not to be completely dominated by external forces. Lastly, if President Havel of Czechoslovakia has his way a central European grouping may be formed in order to ease the integration of the old COMECON into the west.

Finally, the war in the Gulf was a moment in the realisation of

capital's attempts towards transformation and regulation. Notwithstanding all the economic and political considerations discussed hitherto, the war occurred in order to discipline the proletariat. It is true that we were too weak to prevent the war. The Iraqi proletariat were weakened because of the Iran-Iraq war. Most of the east European working class have been temporarily mesmerised by the lures of western style consumerism, including multi-party democracy.

As for the west European proletariat, the bourgeoisie wanted to make its move before the recession really gets going. They did not try for mass active support, but massaged 'public opinion' for a level of passive support. If we are really entering an era of 'mini-wars', this strategy may continue. But, what is even more significant is that the war also occurred because the proletariat was showing signs of fighting back. Kuwaiti and Iranian oil-workers strikes, Russian miners continuing strikes, 'east' German demonstrations, and a restless west European proletariat are signs of an intensification of the class struggle.

Ravages of War, Disasters of War No.30, Goya 1808



# SAATCHI & SAATCHI VS. GOEBBELS

I think for most of us the invasion of our living rooms during the last few months by the extra terrestrials of the hi-tech media world, with their "precision broadcasting" and self-righteous pomposity, has been a debilitating experience. What I intend to do below is piece together some aspects of our bosses' propaganda campaign and perhaps point out some of the changes taking place within the media, in order to grasp more fully the nature of the current frontal assault on our intelligence.

All states lie. It is part of their function. After all, "the ruling ideas in each epoch are the ideas of the ruling class". In times of crisis, Marx's old adage becomes even more concretely verifiable. What the warring factions' propaganda had in common was a disdain for the proletariat coupled with a perverse reverence for capitalist "law and order", suitably attired in nationalistic or religious mysticism depending on the priorities of our bosses.

Yet the differences were also all too real. Although the Iraqi regime's mode of seizing power and its economic base could best be analysed by drawing comparisons with the Chilean/Spanish military juntas of the past, and its administrative superstructure is perhaps more akin to a Stalinist version of democratic centralism, the ideological aspects of its superstructure (ie, our concern in this article) is more closely arrayed with Nazism<sup>(1)</sup>. The propaganda machinery of the 'Allies', however, was based on the more solid and sophisticated grounds of an often

brilliantly regulated liberal *false consciousness*. In short, Saddam's propagandists are still wearing flares - they are relics of a bygone age! That's why the Iraqi spokesmen seemed crude and antiquated for our refined 'western' tastes. Iraq lost the propaganda battle well before it lost the war!

In the age of information technology the two crude tools of fascist propaganda, namely the *denial of reality* and the *outrageous fabrication*, are unsustainable. Even the technique of constant repetition, which might have influenced public opinion during Goebbels' time, is no longer a defence against 'the truth'<sup>(2)</sup>.

The 'Allies' qualitative superiority over their enemy at sea and in the air was supplemented by their mastery of the outer space - satellite technology. Beside its intelligence gathering potential, the ownership of satellites provided the 'Allies' with a virtual monopoly over the means of communication. The Iraqi spokesmen had to fight on a terrain pre-structured by their

enemies.

The basic method of falsification employed by liberal propaganda is the initiation of *competing pseudo-debates*. For instance, during the bombardments, the media attempted to create an artificial perceptual boundary between soldiers and civilians, obscuring the fact that both categories are part of the proletariat<sup>(3)</sup>. False debates followed suit: "Should we endanger civilian lives?"; "Why are army HQs near civilian areas?"; "How can we kill more soldiers without injuring women and children?"

The saturation bombardment of our senses with images of war and destruction was calculated to desensitise us to the horrors of war and create a sense of helplessness in the face of our bosses' overwhelming power. Did the tactics work? Probably. The result of a prolonged series of random electric shocks administered to a laboratory animal is the induction of a status known as *learned helplessness*. No matter what the animal does, it is

(1) The Ba'ath Party came to power through a military coup d'état, unlike both Mussolini and Hitler, who gained power thanks to parliamentary democracy and with the connivance of Social Democracy. The Ba'aths lack the most-basic characteristic of either a classic Fascist (Germany or Italian) or populist (Peronist Argentina) regime — a mass popular movement. The regime's economic programme for the last fifteen years has consisted of increasing privatisations, and deals with the multi-nationals. The movement of workers, commodity prices including wages are determined mostly by 'market' forces, not the state. I think I am justified in making the distinction between the administrative and ideological aspects of Iraqi superstructure for the purpose of analysis, due to the relegation of the Michel 'Aflaq inspired ideology of the 1940s/50s to the periphery through the domination of pragmatic administration. eg During the 1970's there was a virtual removal of all restrictions on party recruitment. Administrative policies therefore became progressively eclectic. Nevertheless the rhetoric of this outmoded ideology still served to obscure the system's real needs from its own managers. Ideology's principal rôle in recent years has, therefore, been the organisation of political society.

(2) We would not suggest that liberalism has abandoned such gross techniques as constant repetition and outright fabrication. But liberalism is all too aware of their limitations; they are to be used sparingly, and usually only in an emergency. Thus, an autopsy on the war can concentrate on mis-reporting rather than allowing the exposure of the real nature and causes of the war. In general liberalism prefers to create doubt through a quagmire of implications, whereas Fascism relies on blind faith.

(3) Much of the Iraqi Army is little more than conscripted labour. Those suspected of resuming Ba'athist activities were amongst the first to be conscripted.

punished. The animal *learns* that neither fight nor flight prevent retribution. The recognition of the uselessness of resistance (and this applies to both us and Iraqis) leads to submission and inactivity. The only redeeming fact being that compared to laboratory guinea-pigs, humans have a greater capacity to adapt to new circumstances and, when the opportunity arises, to fight back.

Perhaps the most subtle of liberalism's tactics is the *fragmentation of reality*. Linkage between events are severed and issues are reported and analysed in a quarantine, in case contact between isolated news items should question the totality of capital. Thus US's intervention in the Gulf is kept separate from its conflicting interest with Japan and Germany in the G7 conference. Temporal and historical linkage must also be severed in order to hide intentions. Britain's chemical shelling of Euphrates' rebels may be alluded to briefly but never in the context of Saddam's perpetrated genocide at Halabja.

Once the fragmentation of reality is guaranteed by the media, certain consequences follow:

1) We can have access to as much information as we desire. Yet the more we learn, the less we comprehend. Fragmentation has taken away our ability to view life through a coherent perspective.

2) Not only can we drown ourselves in a sea of conflicting stimuli, but we are also entitled to 'immediacy' - a contradiction in terms as *immediacy* (meaning no mediation) is exactly what the media (as a mediator between us and reality) is intended to prohibit. But the *illusion* of immediacy is safe. Thanks to satellite broadcasting we can witness 'live' the ghastly spectacle of a trident missile negotiating its route via the deserted streets of Baghdad to its appointed target. Immediate death spectacularised. The constant conflict between speed and accuracy thus manifests itself for the necessary charade that it is. Concentrating on the

former provides an excuse for the idiosyncrasies of the latter. By the time the dust settles and a broadcasting 'mistake' is rectified, the damage has been done. For example, the Iraqi soldiers may for ever be ingrained on the minds of some people as the barbarians who "killed premature babies by switching off their incubators".

3) Fragmentation allows a bottom-up approach to the re-telling of old tales. As the initial information loses its novelty, it is reduced into ever smaller bits - a complex phenomenon is simplified for easier digestion. The repetition of over-simplifications creates deliberate ambiguity and leaves a mythical residue in the mind.

This method coupled with the emphasis on visual as oppose to written news imagery, allows the "hows" of an event to overshadow the "whys". The reporting of IRA bombings employs this tactic, amongst others, to avoid discussing the role of British imperialism in Ireland. Details overwhelm the picture. We remember the "hows" regarding the missile attack on 10 Downing Street, but what about the "whys"?

4) Fragmentation predetermines the structure of political discourse, thus making an overt censoring of the content less necessary. Isolated frameworks for discussion are created. This way 'taboo' subjects can be debated and criticism aired. The illusion of participation in decision making is created. This is

"... 'Critique' must be understood in the comprehensive and yet precise sense in which it was used in the pre-revolutionary forties of the last century by all left Hegelians, including Marx and Engels<sup>(4)</sup>. It must not be confused with the connotation of the contemporary term 'criticism'. 'Critique' is to be understood not in a merely idealistic sense, but as a materialistic critique."

— Karl Korsch,

"Three Essays on Marxism"

one of the most enduring sophistries of Democracy, and is manifested in all its inglorious Machiavellianism by opinion polls. Thus you can participate in a live phone-in one day and vote either for or against abortion, and the next you may find yourself a studio guest at BBC TV's Question Time debating the 'liberation of women'. Once the two issue are treated separately, you can dissent all you like. Aspects of capitalism can be criticised but the totality of capital cannot be critiqued (radically demystified). In general, 'criticism' strengthens capital, whereas 'critique' subverts it.

The illusion of participation has a further rôle. Once the bombing began, it produced a sense of collective *guilt* and ordained inevitability which subdued opposition. This in turn was presented as a sense of relief as the anglo-american war machine "got its rocks off" — but to take such a Freudian metaphor *as* reality is to deny the substance of capital.

## CHANGES IN THE MEDIA

The invention of printing more than any other industry was responsible for the advent of unified language, upon which the facade of the 'false community' of nationhood has been erected. Censorship in Britain has been a concomitant aspect of printing from the very beginning. The emergent bourgeoisie realised the need for centralisation of culture around the state even in the days of Oliver Cromwell. With the development of the real domination of capital, this centralisation is no longer formal i.e. in modern Britain, a 'tolerant' pluralism can incorporate and 'understand' the concern of the Muslim 'Community' during the war, just as it tolerates racist attacks on Asians and Arabs by more traditional patriots.

The media, like any other separate sphere of human activity, has been subjected to two forms of division of labour — the *social* and the *technical*. Socially, we have

(4) Of course, Marx transcended Left Hegelianism, even if only at a theoretical level. Engels, however, remained in the quagmire of Left Hegelianism for the whole of his life. This paved the way for Kautskyism and its updated version, Leninism.



witnessed a rapid specialisation in the 'art of news-reporting' which has all but ended the era of the independent journalist/ printer/ writer. Today the monopolisation of the media has reached new dimensions, having as its corollary the intensification of competition. For example, French journalists were denied access to the war zone and physically threatened not only by the US Military Police but also by their American 'colleagues'. Periodic monopolisation leads inevitably to a certain degree of uniformity of opinion, accentuated at times of war. The concept of 'News Pool' introduced so crudely during the 'Gulf' war was a vulgar manifestation of this homogeneous greyness. John Major's accent may still be English, but his vocabulary is being increasingly borrowed from the CNN. Increasingly the same faceless bureaucrats are using the same language to justify the same kinds of attacks on the proletariat. Poll Tax rebels were dismissed as hooligans and trouble makers as were the Tiananmen Square rioters. This will lead to a more rapid universalisation of alienation.

The media's double-speak helped to sanitise murder, legitimise genocide and make poor mathematicians out of many people. If George Orwell's character in "1984" could be

persuaded to believe that  $2+2=5$ , only after the most brutal physical torture was inflicted on him, how can so many spectators of the Allies' atrocities be prepared to accept the ludicrously low estimates of Iraqi casualties? Some people, either consciously or unconsciously, participate in their own mystification. It would be a mistake to underestimate their yearning for gullibility.

## NEW LIES FOR OLD

The introduction of new machinery in printing has increased the technical division of labour. Taylorism afflicts more media workers, breeding dissatisfaction. Lack of control over their product of labour and lower wages creates alienation and a natural hostility towards bosses, which in recent years has found its most violent expression at Wapping. In the context of the recent war, it was essential to recuperate alienated media workers by forming groups like "Media Workers Against the War" (see below).

Information is fast becoming a commodity exclusive to those who can afford it. Different sorts of information, just like washing powder or any other commodity, are priced at different levels. We seem to be moving towards a 3-

tier system based on our bosses' desire to limit the flow of this precious commodity to the bare minimum necessary for the smooth functioning of capital.

The lumpenproletariat and a small body of the proletariat are denied almost any information. For example, there are about 30 million illiterate adults in America<sup>(5)</sup>. The main body of the proletariat and some sections of the middle class are provided with fragmented news. For the benefit of this group a wholly false dichotomy has been erected, namely a pseudo-choice between *Grand* and *Petty* press. The main function of both varieties of falsification is the same — the misrepresentation of the class struggle and the perpetuation of bourgeois hegemony. They may operate at different levels of sophistication, but that is beside the point.

Lastly there is media for the bourgeoisie, who need a complete and efficient version of events for the purpose of individual and collective decision making. The quality of the information is not necessarily enhanced but thanks to the *reality technicians* employed by the bosses, their version of events is more precise and therefore more useful in practical terms. Also, with the demise of Parliament as the historical arena of bourgeois discourse, the media has become one of the few places where contending theories of bourgeois dictatorship can be analysed.

War is rapidly becoming a minority 'sport' conducted by professional technicians. The army tried to sell us the image of a new kind of warrior, the *thinking mercenary samaritan*. The media during the war in the Gulf was part of the war effort in more ways than one. Some journalists are now admitting that the military deceptions of the 'Allies' would have been unrealisable without their connivance. The military has paid more attention to psychological warfare in recent

(5) We would be careful of making too much of literacy. No doubt many of these 30 million can decode Televisual information better than us. The fluidity arising from the interweaving of text, monologue and imagery creates complex structures not covered by the logical process of the text. In producing this text we cannot deal with these structures.

first practiced in Ireland, to the use of ear-splitting rock-and-roll against general Noriega, or leaflets showering Iraqi troops with a mixture of threats and bribes. Military planners rely on the media to maximise the sought after effects of such psychological warfare.

Since TV war reportage came of age during the Vietnam War, its rôle has been developed. In Vietnam an unrestrained TV undermined the military in the overall interest of US capital. During the Falklands war, the British military had complete control of the 'troopie groupies': journalists who were little more than Ministry of Defence mouthpieces. The political necessities of the war in the Gulf meant that *both* the military and the media were completely subordinated to strategic political goals. Such a partnership means that media self-censorship is more efficient than military interference. Also when army bosses require deliberate subterfuge, the media bosses are only too pleased to display their patriotism.

During the aftermath of the 'Battle of Trafalgar' the media worked hand in glove with the state. This was like a bumper issue of *Police 5* or *Crimestoppers* — TV programmes where journalists tout for information from the public. The French proletariat beat up journalists on demos habitually and mercilessly. It has almost become an accepted fact of life. This is an attitude which is rapidly spreading here.

All this is not to deny the genuine differences of interest

between the media and the military complex. Now that the media have set themselves the task of arbitrating between various factions of the bourgeoisie, they will demand: a) a certain degree of independence, which will bring them into conflict with the Official Secrets Act, and b) a more profitable capitalism, which will require the limitation of military spending (wasted capital).

1992 will bring the British media face to face with its European counterparts. Once the initial shock of the relative intellectual backwardness of the British media sinks in, we could expect frantic attempts by the system to modernise its output. The situation is paradoxical in the sense that this relative backwardness means that the British bourgeoisie has more cards up its sleeves than the French, Italian or German bourgeoisie. There, the leftist influenced media has to a large extent exhausted its potential for mystifying the proletariat whereas here leftism can maintain its position as the last refuge of the bourgeoisie for years to come (at least on the propaganda front). To put it another way, British media possesses a great capacity to recuperate future struggles — which brings us back to the "Media Workers Against the War" group.

The group was set up in anticipation of a spontaneous reaction against the role of the media in fuelling the fires of war, and the sense of alienation alluded to above. Lacking a clear strategy for opposing the war it soon

degenerated into a leftist show-piece, where the levers of power were manipulated by a handful of media 'celebrities'. A semi-intelligent division of labour was established amongst these celebrities. Paul Foot and his coterie of zombie paper-sellers from the SWP constituted the group's link with the left, whilst *Bafta* Pilger threw the group a lifeline of liberal credibility. Once the leftists hold on power became complete the usual methods of working class struggle like wildcat strikes, pickets and sabotage were bypassed in favour of John Lennon ballads (I kid you not) and pre-planned interventions (a euphemism for Lenin's attempt to introduce consciousness into the working class from the outside)! Consequently its numbers which at the outset stood at 800, whittled down to a few dozen within a month.

The overt monopolisation of the means of communication by our bosses during the war, once again made us painfully aware of the need for alternative modes of communicating with our class. The proliferation of graffiti, as an uncensored and uninstitutionalised form of expression, was a crude reflection of this. Its scope, however, is and will remain limited.

In the last analysis, our anti-war propaganda failed to have an impact because there was no substantial anti-war movement in Britain. The bosses' victory was overwhelming.

**Below: Algerian insurgent blinded by government tear gas and Islamic Fundamentalism, June 1991.**



# The Class Struggle in Iraq

## —an interview with a veteran

**Q: Can you briefly tell us about the class struggle in Iraq before the overthrow of the monarchy in 1958?**

A: In the 1940's and early 1950's the class struggle was mainly situated in the rural areas. Peasant uprisings (eg. in *Aali-azarchi* which lasted about 3 years before being violently suppressed) were a constant headache for the semi-feudal landowners and the state. Urban struggles intensified with the nine-day strike of Kirkuk oil workers in 1946 (put down with loss of 10 lives). Unemployment and homelessness were rampant. There were thousands of *sarifas* (shacks made of palm branches) around and inside Baghdad.

1956 (Suez Crisis) had a massive impact on Iraq, with demonstrations against the Iraqi regime who were seen as British stooges. The Palestinian issue also helped radicalisation. I still wonder why there wasn't a revolution in 1956! These internal and external events led to the formation of the *Free Officers* (nationalist/Nasserist) who had links with the Iraqi 'Communist' Party (I'C'P) but not so much with the Ba'ths.

**Q: The way I see it there were two main contradictions in the Iraqi society at this time(1946-58). One between the emerging proletarian movement and capitalism and one, left over from the past, between capitalism and the feudalist landlords. Do you agree?**

A: No, I don't agree with this neat and simple text book analysis, because even prior to '58 the feudals owned not only the rural areas but also a huge portion of the urban areas. Hotels, factories, and residential areas belonged to them as well as the 'village'. The majority of 'peasants' were therefore

proletarians, but with a far worse living standard than their urban counterparts.

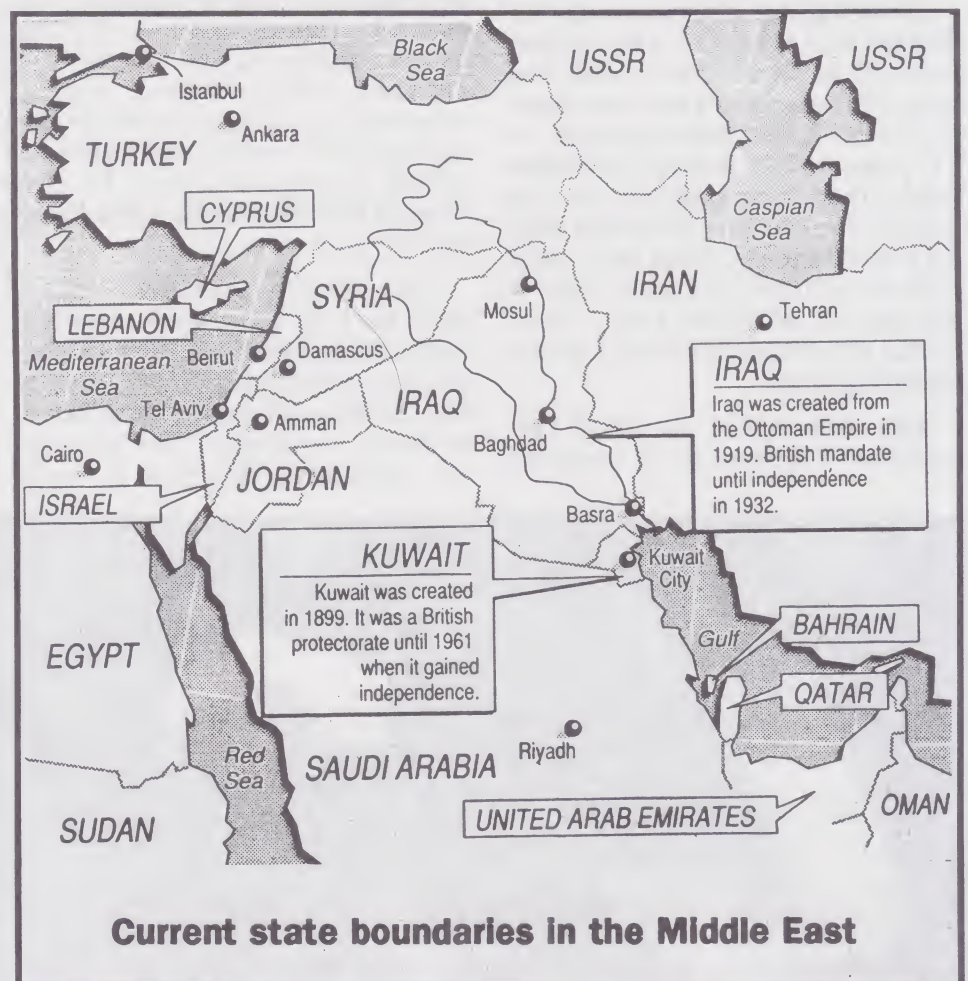
**Q : In 1958 Qasim and the Free Officers seized power and ousted the Monarchy, but some of the gains were recuperated.**

A : That's true but the significant thing was the level of class struggle. The Monarch and some of his ministers were killed by those they called prostitutes. For one year or so no one could control the workers. Even the I'C'P which unfortunately had a massive base within the population (despite its attacks on the working class) could not control the angry proletariat, basically because workers were armed. People took food from the shops without paying for them. For them money was obsolete.

**Q : I hear that even the Koran was desecrated by the workers.**

A : Yes that's absolutely right. They understood the reactionary nature of Islam. Also in Kirkuk about 90 generals, capitalists and landlords were taken to the road, had a rope put round their necks and dragged around by car until they were killed. I'C'P denounced the actions and tried to distance themselves from workers' "excesses".

But gradually with land reforms, the rising price of oil and loans from USSR, the government managed to stabilise the situation in the South. Kurdistan was more resistant. Armed peasants groups (eg. in Halabja) were not intimidated by either the state or the I'C'P and took over the land that the escapee owners had left(mostly fleeing to



neighbouring Iran). The absentee landowners would send assassins to Iraq and with the connivance of the military kill a revolutionary and then flee to the safety of Iran.

**Q: Why was there so much support for the I'C'P and Kurdish nationalists despite their reactionary policies ?**

A: That is a difficult question. The people were not happy with either group and especially felt let down by the I'C'P, but there was no real revolutionary alternative so people tended to give the I'C'P the benefit of the doubt and apologise for their 'shortcomings'. They would say naively: "The Iraqi Communist Party is young and is bound to make mistakes, but soon they would mature like their Russian and Chinese counterparts" (II) I suppose there just wasn't the necessary consciousness to see these parties for what they are.

In 1963 Qasim was overthrown by the Ba'thists and a period of intense violence resulted in the death of thousands of activists. The Ba'ths were supplied a list of known 'trouble makers' probably by the CIA. During Qasim's last days the people demanded weapons from him for protection against the National Guards, but he refused to arm them. Even then the military were so unpopular that they had to trick the people in order to get into the cities. They put photographs of Qasim at the front of their tanks, the people thought they intended to defend them from the Ba'thists, so they were not opposed, until it was too late.

**Q: The Ba'ths first experiment in dictatorship was unsuccessful but they got into power again in 1968. Can you tell us about Saddam Hussein's personal path towards power?**

A: Saddam was a cut throat petty gangster, which is probably why no one took him too seriously at first. His role in the attempted assassination of Qasim was

exaggerated later. Gradually he made himself a power base with the help of his *Takriti* tribe and important landlords.

During the '60s there was a critical re-assessment of the I'C'P policies of United Front with the Iraqi bosses which eventually led to a split by 'Aziz al-Hajj who was influenced by Mao and Che Guevara. His guerrilla actions were unsuccessful and the group was defeated, but his ideas remained very popular. He is now Ba'thist ambassador to France !

**Q: Unlike neighbouring Iran where guerrilla activity by leftists never threatened the regime.**

A: Yes, in Iraq armed struggle was far more widespread. Assassinations of individual capitalists led to wide-scale armed confrontations, and it must be said these actions were extremely popular amongst the population. But the truth is that our security measures were inadequate. We temporarily controlled the streets because we had guns but when the '68 coup d' etat succeeded, we became very exposed. Even our leaders made horrendous mistakes, and a lot of comrades were arrested and executed.

I don't want to give the impression that the regime only used repression in dealing with the class struggle. No, they used the usual carrot and stick tactics and it worked. Between 1968 and 1974 the state became far more powerful. Again in 1972 the I'C'P entered into a pact with Ba'ths. It is incredible how completely degenerate these Stalinists are. In 1975 the Algiers Agreement between Saddam and the Shah, meant that both leaders could turn their attention towards their internal problems. The Kurdish uprising collapsed very fast and Saddam became even more powerful.

**Q: Can you now talk about your own break first from Stalinism and then from Leninism in general?**

## CHRONOLOGY

1912 — Turkish Petroleum Company is formed with British, Dutch and German participation, acquiring concessions to prospect for oil in the Ottoman provinces of Baghdad and Mosul.

1914 — British troops land at Shatt al-'Arab and seize Basra.

1920 — "League of Nations" awards Britain the Mandate for Iraq. Turkey accepts the Treaty of Sèvres, promising an independent Kurdistan.

Revolt in Iraq against British.

1921 — King Faisal installed as puppet monarch. Over next ten years British use RAF to consolidate regime and ensure most of Kurdistan is part of Iraq.

1932 — Iraq joins the "League of Nations".

1933 — King Faisal dies. Several years of instability involving several military coups.

1941 — British seize military control.

1944-7 — Trade Unions formed, increase in democracy. A wave of strikes against British run concerns (railways, ports, oilfields)

1948 — al Wathbah (the leap) a nationalist uprising results in a rejection of a renewal of the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty. Strikes then suppressed. US imperialism starts to move in.

1951 — Ba'thist Party founded. It had no influence.

1952 — 50/50 deal struck with American oil companies.

A: We knew some comrades in Baghdad, Basra and Kurdistan who were also dissatisfied with the prevalent ideologies. At that time, we thought armed guerrilla struggle was the be all and end all of the revolution, but gradually and under the influence of the Iranian revolution we became very critical of guerrilla activity.

I made two visits to Iran during the revolution and brought back new ideas. We became acquainted with Trotsky's critique of Stalin and later on we were introduced to anarchist ideas by comrades from Baghdad. There was a Lebanese journal, called *Darasat al-arabie*, which was critical of both Leninism and Marxism. We didn't always agree with them, but they influenced us greatly.

**Q: Did these revolutionaries develop their own independent critique of Leninism or did they borrow it from the west?**

A: Unfortunately us 'eastern' communists have always been awe-struck by our 'western' comrades, and looked in their direction for divine inspiration as muslims look at *Kiblah* (Direction towards which muslims turn in

praying). Consequently we have always relied on them for an understanding of capitalism.

But gradually we came to realise that the previous parties we were involved in were like cages for our minds, stifling our independence. Consequently we rejected 'Third worldism' and 'Socialist' revolution and understood that the only worthwhile path is a *Communist* revolution (the abolition of wage slavery, money and the state). We began criticising Lenin here and there but a complete critique of Leninism came later.

At this stage we decided to form a new organisation called *Fasileh* (later renamed *Kar*). Our programme was very eclectic. It contained good and also bad things. With the help of some Anarchists we started publishing a magazine in Arabic and Kurdish. The level of class struggle inside Iraq was very low, but the regime's repression was fierce.

The state tried very hard to find us but we were careful. *Mokhaberat* (security service) would offer reward for our arrest, and finally they raided us.

I got away but a comrade was later arrested, and most probably executed. We decided to send some comrades abroad to learn

from the experience of the world proletariat and establish internationalist contacts.

But when we got here, we found the level of class struggle was even lower! This coupled with the usual refugee problems led to petty personal quibblings which made us forget the purpose of coming abroad. But now that things are beginning to pickup again, we have once again started to organise ourselves and meet regularly.

**Q: The media here is explicitly giving encouragement to Kurdish nationalism. Can you tell us a little about the origins of Kurdish nationalism?**

A: In the mid 50's there was no such thing as a Kurdish nationalist movement in Iraq. Sometimes at times of crisis, capitalism would financially induce a Kurdish feudal landlord to organise something, that they would name a 'nationalist movement'. In order to give these leaders credibility, the central government would move 'against' them.

At these times, there was no real Kurdish patriotic identity, it had to be artificially fostered. Arabs and Kurds viewed their struggle as one. Kurdish nationalist leaders who shared power with the central government, broke with them once they received support from the west and the Shah. But they lacked a popular base and had to escape to the mountains. They organised a militia but were defeated severely at first because their soldiers were *not* volunteers. Learning from their mistakes, they organised the Peshmerga - a guerrilla outfit - and looked for better weapons. They began to engage in sectarian murder. For example, they would get hold of an Arab driver and execute him for *being* an Arab.

**Q: Sounds a bit like Irish nationalists over here?**

A: Yes, very similar. Innocent



**Why? Disasters of War No.32, Goya 1808**

## BRITISH WARSHIPS FOR KUWAIT

Ready to act if Sheikh asks  
for aid

## KASSEM UNPREDICTABLE



## IRAQ PROMISES NOT TO USE FORCE

British troops continue to  
pour into Kuwait

## UN COUNCIL ADJOURNS



Arab workers and students were murdered, and the government in turn would make capital out of this by publicising 'Kurdish' atrocities, whipping up anti-Kurdish sentiments. Iraqi generals would deliberately send young, inexperienced soldiers into Kurdish areas, knowing full well they were cannon-fodder for the peshmerga. The next day, a Kurdish village would be destroyed by the regular Iraqi army in revenge. All these tactics helped to divide the proletariat.

But despite everything, nationalism hasn't managed to create unbridgeable obstacles. Proof of this is the latest uprising. When Iraqis in the south rose up against Saddam after the war, their efforts were supported by northerners. Arab soldiers in the north, voluntarily gave up their arms to the Kurds.

**Q: Finally let us talk about the future of the class struggle in Iraq. I think the Americans are still banking on a Rumanian scenario. ie, a popular uprising from below followed by a preplanned coup de' etat from above to oust Saddam. Do you agree?**

**A :** Yes, probably. But the Iraqi situation is more complicated than Rumania, and the divisions

between Kurds and Arabs, Arab and Turks, and Sunni and Shi'ite muslims could easily lead to a prolonged civil war situation. And the next regime will probably be more religiously orientated. So there are differences with Rumania.

The strongest party seems to be the *Al-Dawa* (Shi'ite) which receives backing from Iran. The *Radical Ba'ths* are not very popular and has connections with Syria. The I'C'P hasn't got the power it once used to have but mustn't be underestimated. Its base, however, seems to be amongst the elder generations and not the young.

As for the *Patriotic Union of Kurds* (PUK) and the *Democratic Party of Kurdistan* (DPK), they used to have about 5000 armed peshmergas before the recent events and not as significant a force as the media makes out. The Kurdish towns are being taken not by the political parties but the people. *Akhvan al-muslimin* is the last powerful Sunni organisation being supported by both Egypt and at times US.

All in all it must be said that the future of autonomous proletarian activity in Iraq are not very bright.

## CHRONOLOGY

1958 — Qasim comes to power in a coup. Monarchy overthrown. Land reforms introduced.

1960 — Qasim makes territorial claim on Kuwait. Reduction in oil companies concessions. Intermittent war with Kurdish nationalists.

1961 — British troops sent to Kuwait on Iraqi border.

1963 — Ba'th-nationalist coup. 10,000 killed in one week. By November Ba'thists ousted. Various nationalist-nasserist governments.

1968 — Military coup returns Ba'thist Party to power.

1972 — Nationalisation of the Iraqi Petroleum Company.

1975 — Algiers Treaty between Iran and Iraq. Collapse of Kurdish nationalists, yet again.

1979 — Iranian revolution. Saddam Hussein becomes president, executing any rivals who doubted his claim.

1980 — Treaty of Algiers abrogated. The capitalist war between Iran and Iraq interrupted.

1985 — Large scale anti-war demonstrations in Iraqi Kurdistan.

1986 — New austerity measures introduced.

1988 — Halabja massacre. American intervention against Iran, destroying the Irani navy re-establishing a balance of terror. End of Iran-Iraq war.

# WHERE THE *HELL* IS BABYLON?



"Where the hell is Babylon?  
Does such a place exist?  
Is it real? Is it a dream?  
Or is it right there in our midst?"

Cockney Rejects

German soldiers tossing babies in the air and catching them on their bayonets — these were the stories put about when the newspapers wanted to mobilise British Workers for the War effort in 1914. Likewise Iraqi and coalition propaganda machines have been churning out stories — milking each real or supposed tragedy for more support to keep the war going while dismissing any suggestion that their own forces carry things out in other than a clean "surgical" way.

Just as the foot soldiers slug out the slaughter and destruction, the intellectuals are wheeled out to back up claims for moral authority. Iraqi women are pictured in bombed out buildings crying — "You call this civilisation?" But what is civilisation other than the organisation of oppression and exploitation. — And at the heart of this there is always such violence. Thus when the Western media gloated over lies that Iraqi soldiers unplugged incubators keeping Kuwaiti children alive, they were

plumbing the sickening depths of the Bible. Psalm 137 starts with the familiar:

*"By the rivers of Babylon  
There we wept  
When we remember Zion."*

It ends:

*"Destructive Daughter of Babel  
A blessing on the man who treats  
you,  
as you have treated us,  
a blessing on him who takes and  
dashes  
your babies against the rock!"*

Civilised values are always revealed to be shadows to justify the continuing propping of an elite through exploitation. During this war, as during the crusades they have been used to justify mass murder and destruction. Islamic cultures look at the stupid Christians, who have only been able to keep abreast of the times by borrowing wholesale from the intellectual heritage of their Muslim *brothers*. Christian cultures stare blanking at their Islamic brothers, expecting the chintzy success of consumerism to dazzle them. Jewish culture claims a longer heritage, rejecting the universalism of both its progeny, and regardless of its many different strands, maintains a distinction from the *Goyim*.

This culture, this monotheism, in *all* these forms is part of that which must be *overcome*. Such a development will not be the project of intellectuals, some new Nietzscheans doing time in the universal mind. It will stem from communist revolution when these nightmares will no longer be brought to life by the organisation of the disembodied labour of

bygone generations. It will stem from the suppression of the alienation of human activity from humanity.<sup>(1)</sup>

Ten years ago, even five, I would have defended the opinion that religion was a spent force, that secular capitalism would continue to roll it up just as contemporary liberalism has in Britain. Now I feel that the deep cynicism of the boss class shows an ability to use all manner of contradictory ideologies to keep power. Religion, using deeply rooted psychic forces is particularly revolting — and powerful.

The forces of revolution and counter-revolution do not merely grapple with each other in the clear light of the rationalist high noon. In those murky regions of the unconscious where strange subterranean forces are set in motion, there too the class struggle is present. Unlike the bourgeois revolution, communist revolution is not rationalist, it is not at the level of rationalising exploitation, but of abolishing it.

## Potted History of Monotheism

- 1) God the Father.  
Judaism, a single universal God who protects his chosen people
- 2) God the Son  
Christianity, A semi-human God dies to save the world.
- 3) God the Holy Ghost  
Islam, God loses all sentimentality and becomes the governor of a mercantile society. The cockcrow of positivism!

(1) The alienation of human activity from humanity was described by Marx as having four elements: the alienation of "man" from nature, of "man" from the means of production, "man" from the product of his labour, and "man" from "man". These insights are useful even though they do not adequately deal with the alienation of man from woman — an event mythologised by the story of Adam and Eve leaving the garden of Eden in the discovery of paternity.

"It is permissible to represent the Holy Trinity as three separate beings since no other representation is possible. But the impotence of the imagination is no argument against the truth of the rational idea, which is clearly and distinctly recognised by pure thought. In truth there is only one indivisible God realising Himself eternally in the three hypostatic phases of absolute existence, and each one of these phases constantly finds itself internally completed by the two others, contains and represents the entire Godhead, is true God through unity and in unity, not through exclusion or in separation."

(Solovev: Russia and the Universal Church)

Through the permeability of form and content, each constantly reappears within the others: Thus Islam declares Abraham as the father of the Arabs through his Egyptian slave, Hagar, bearing a son, Ishmael. In this way Islam functions as a paternal religion for the Arabs. This exists side by side an insistence on universalism. Similarly, the position of the Prophet within Islam is analogous but very different to the position of Christ within Christianity. Christianity had to reconcile Christ's divinity with his humanity. Pre-Islamic Arabic Christianity was generally Monophysite — decreed a heresy in Europe in that it asserted that Christ had one form both human and divine, and that the divine spirit of Christ died on the cross.<sup>(2)</sup> Islam asserts the humanity of the prophet, who is in no way divine, but bears the message of God i.e. is the medium of God. Such theological questions would be of no interest were it not for the fact that they are used to *prescribe* the relation of *man* (this word is to be understood precisely in its gender-specific term throughout this article) to society.

Mediaeval European History amounts to a continual attempt to reassert the power of the Roman Empire, in its Christianised form. Despite the chaotic invasions of Huns, Franks, Goths and Visigoths, the preservation of Latin as ecclesiastic language kept together a common culture throughout Western Europe. As Mohammad set Islam in motion, missionaries were sent by Gregory the Great to the corners of the world (Angleterre) not merely to spread Christianity (There

had been Romano-British communities in Britain hundreds of years before) but to draw the Celtic church back towards Rome. This "resurrection" of the empire of God was at once mystical and messianic, as it was political and pragmatic. Crucial to its programme was the subjugation of Germanic Law to Roman Law. This manifested itself in Britain as the conflict between Church and State which underscored English history from the Norman conquest of 1066 to the "Glorious Revolution" of 1688.

This was the final emergence of Anglo-Catholicism as the state religion, tempered first with tolerance of the Protestant sects and by the end of the eighteenth century with toleration of Romish Catholicism. This crock of shit has served the British state well for three hundred years — now however the drive to European unity puts it in crisis. But before continuing with this narrative we must step side ways with an understanding of Protestantism — what it is and how it arose.

## THE ORIGINS OF PROTESTANTISM

The classic "Marxist" analysis of Capitalism breaking through the limitations of feudal society, and developing its own ideology in its wake is hardly adequate to explain the real developments that were occurring. In fact they remain tied up in the fantasy world of nineteenth century Europe. We can hardly present a full analysis here, but wish to sketch out some crucial factors:

a) Christianity organised into a

church succeeded in gaining converts across Europe through the introduction of writing. Pre-literate forms such as Ogham script, or even the clumsy runes<sup>(3)</sup> were inadequate for the new power writing gave to the state. Through Christianity, the King could consolidate his power and differentiate himself from his people. New ceremonies were introduced, such as the anointment of the new King. This drew a direct parallel with Christ — this word meaning the anointed one (referring to John the Baptist's discovery of Jesus.) Thus the King asserted himself as both a spiritual and temporal power, the church helping in this process.

b) Traditional communalism was further broken up with the substitution of money for feudal dues. Thus the obligation to bear arms to defend the community under the auspices of the King, were replaced with cash payments which in turn were used to hire mercenaries. Private confession instead of public confession adopted by Roman Church from Celtic Church. The state separates itself from society. Writing and accountancy essential for this purpose.

c) As the state develops, so does a conflict between the King and the church. In England this takes the form of the introduction of Roman Law in ecclesiastic courts. Meanwhile the King *fosters* Jews, as a source of income. They were forced to live in Jewries under the protection of the King. Usury banned for Christians, but reserved for Jews as a pariah occupation.

(2) Islam claims that Jesus was not crucified but that the Romans mistakenly executed a look-a-like who was a bad man.

(3) Ogham script was a series of notches cut in stone. The runic *thaorc* (like an alphabet) remained distinct from the Judaic tradition in that it does not start Aleph-Beth/Alpha-Beta/Aleph-Beh as with Hebrew, Greek and Farsi for instance.

By periodic taxes and even pogroms, the capital accumulated was seized by the state. Thus the monarch could reap the benefits of usury while Jews, always marginal in mediaeval society, could reap the calumny. Their high standard of education, understanding Hebrew and the Old Testament was also a useful source of expertise in developing the state. Neither was the church homogeneous as papal supremacy had yet to be achieved. Even the terms of Papal supremacy were in question in that such Kings as Frederick the Great sought to place their own Pope on the Cathedra at Rome. Thus power was organised *across* specific organisations rather than through them.

- D) Further development of trade, of the cities and growth of the bourgeoisie is bound up in the development of the state. In particular, Venice develops as the first *capitalist* power, breaking papal injunctions through trade with Islamic countries. The Templars, drawing on what they had learnt from Moslems in the Holy Land, set up the first European bank, function as a power within the church.
- E) Development of the printing — first mass produced commodities — books. New distribution of information. Breakdown of monopoly of information in the hands of the clerics. Completely tied up with expansion of trade. Introduction of navigational science from middle east (e.g. Astrolabes and other sailing jargon such as Arabic words like admiral.). In essence conditions by which Moorish and Jewish learning erupted from Conv.

Christians<sup>(4)</sup> in Spain. Following the Spanish Inquisition, refugees fled across Europe. New communities were set up in the Spanish Netherlands — and the communities, whether New Christian or Jewish, were involved in the first National liberation struggle as Holland emerged. Thus protestantism is rooted in influences exterior to Christianity, as much as internal developments. The Iconoclasm of the puritans is directly related to the prohibition of divine representation in Islam. Puritans displayed many attitudes similar to those found in early Islam, and reflected in contemporary Islamic Fundamentalism eg: pure faith and rejection of epicureanism in favour of power.

- F) Protestantism develops different strands:
- (i) Reformation of church to cope with social change.
  - (ii) Millenarianism — From the Communism of the Taborite<sup>(5)</sup> cults, to the Nazism of *The Book of a Hundred Chapters*. The quest for a return to community involved in both.
  - (iii) Pietism — God becomes intrinsic, no priests, personal relation to God. Religious toleration. Separation of State from Church. Individual conscience. Church internalised.
- G) Emergence of *Philosophy* as distinct from Theology; Emergence of *critique*; Eighteenth century rationalism; Emergence of proletariat as a distinct power from bourgeoisie — shedding off of religious framework in the class struggle by way of blasphemous chapels (Religious meetings only tolerated form of proletarian

meetings.) State counter this with Victorian morality. England emancipates Roman Catholics. Across Europe, the emancipation of the Jews. Dogma of Papal infallibility promulgated in 1870.

## ONE EUROPE, ONE DESTINY, ONE HEAP OF SHIT

The modern tasks of European unity means welding a series of national mythologies into a single cult of the state — of the new Euro-state. Even though both the attempts of Napoleon and Hitler failed, the convulsions of the ensuing wars led to the undermining of pre-capitalist relations.

There are of course problems: National mythologies have largely developed from antagonisms between European states. To a large extent, politics has lost its power to oil the wheels of the state. The collapse of the Kremlin's empire has emptied much of European politics of its dynamism. The classic techniques of state planning, so beloved by the Stalinists are now clearly *outdated* in light of modern information technology. The Kremlin's over-centralised bureaucracy completely failed to keep pace with the flexibility of capital. Only the discovery of the Siberian oil fields enabled them to survive so long. (A similarity to Britain here).

In Western Europe, the *Left* always consisted of an attitude to Moscow, a sense of opening up a new era of peace and alliance. The US was always strong enough to prevent this. But the hallmark of the nineties has been the emergence of Germany and Japan as world powers again. Now the question of European

(4) There were conversos all over Europe, for instance the Domus Conversus in Aldwych London; were converted Jews enjoyed the protection of the crown. But following the Reconquest of Spain by the Christians, there followed a process of christianisation of Jews (who became Marranos) and Moors (who became moriscos). Attempts were made to expel both Jews and Moors from Spain and Portugal, some times involving selling those who wouldn't convert into slavery, sometimes using forced baptisms. These conversos were also known as "New Christians". The Spanish Inquisition was used to terrorise them in particular. Thomas Torquemada (himself of Jewish descent) led this persecution which had the effect of stifling Spanish social development as independent commodity production was sacrificed to fill the coffers of state and church.

(5) The Taborites were a peasant movement in Bohemia who set about suppressing private property and the family. They renamed one of their city fortresses "Mount Tabor" from the bible. At one time they allied themselves with the proto-bourgeois Hussites of Prague to defeat the Catholic army. However as soon as the Catholic menace receded, the Hussite scum attacked the Taborites and eventually exterminated them. Such positive sides to millenarianism can be countered by the series of pogroms inspired by such books as *The Book of a Hundred Chapters*, which was a forerunner of *Mein Kampf*. Even now, at a superficial level, the National Socialist ideology of the supercession of class can be seen as similar to the communist project. However, the communist movement arises from the class struggle itself (Being determines consciousness), whereas with National Socialism (whether Hitlerite or Stalinist) an ideological search for community is used as a weapon to extract more surplus value from the proletariat.

Unity is not confined to the "European Community" and 1992. It revolves around the central rôle of central Europe i.e. Germany. The new Continental politics revolves around the *management* of society — i.e. overseeing exploitation.

The displacement of politics in British culture has been tied up with the new *Identity Politics*. In the social laboratories of counter-culture, there have been experiments in gay-identity, in Women-identified-women, and a patchwork of Black Identities. Operating in sections of the population capital has regarded as marginal and sometimes disposable, dissident members of the intelligentsia have served capital through developing techniques of subjective identification with alienated fragments of oppression. As with fashion, as with music, these sub-cultures provide viable models which are then marketed throughout society. In the elite hip world, consumerism is despised, and those too closely associated with mass-culture are despised as sell-outs. Yet these scum are forever revitalising consumerism with their injections of meaning.

But like the Jews of the middle ages, perched on the edge of society, the state can dispose of the marginals when it wishes to renew itself. Thus when King Richard was crowned, the entrance of a Jew to St. Paul's Cathedral led to the massacre of hundreds of Jews. Since the war we have seen the Labour Party add the Union Jack to the English Rose which they flaunt in their publicity. At the very moment when the Nation State is being dissolved, a national identity is being strengthened amongst workers in Britain. Elsewhere, in Yugoslavia, Nationalism is more clearly tied up with religion as Orthodox Serbs do battle with Roman Catholic Croatians. In the end British nationalism revolves around a religious outlook. In the end this is as true of the British as it

is of Jews. (Secular Jews, such as the Jewish Socialist Group and Return, have been trying to grasp the meaning of a non-zionist Jewish identity in secular terms. Without dealing with secularism as an ideology and seeing the religious underpinnings of British and other culture, this project is bound to fail.) In essence the problem is one of identity not Jewishness, Englishness, British-ness etc.

European unity, and the development of a *European* identity has lead some to foresee a restatement of racism. This is only partially true. In essence a strictly racist approach has always made much more sense amongst european emigrant communities in the Americas, Australia, Africa etc. Here settler culture has amounted to a blending of distinct national cultures into a "White Race". The Nazi project of European unity under German Racial supremacy put this viewpoint into operation with a particularly virulent *anti-slav* racism (The mass gassing of Russian POW's was introduced before being extended to Jews). Whilst in British culture, with its history of managing a maritime empire, race has been structured in terms of colour. This is not true for central and eastern Europe. Here Pan-Germanism has confronted Pan-Slavism. We may now witness a resumption of Pan Turkism.

But in the end these ethnic divisions will only be useful in the mobilisation of society around local conflicts. In fact they contribute to the fragmentation of society in central and eastern Europe. Concentrated Capitalist power is at present standing back from this. Slaughter is being permitted to diffuse local tension, and to yield a new class of ethnic leader. These new *hardmen* will get to power through the unscrupulous use of brutality. The fragmentation is being allowed to proceed as it weakens local capital in the face of a new

concentration of capital when the Euro-state decides to go for re-integration. Then communities ravaged by maybe years of communal strife will welcome the discipline of the New Order.

Eurocentric ideologies of development have always seen Europe as a model to which the third world is progressing. We must look on this the other way round. The social forms that capital develops in its periphery are then taken up in the metropolitan states. Thus Islamic Fundamentalism — a modern child of capitalist social relations — is an indication of the re-valorisation of religion as part of the social structure. The New Order in Europe will in essence be religious rather than political — it will be Christian. Although the church will be given a specific rôle, religion will be used to permeate all society. In particular, religious notions will be used to delineate the relationship between the individual and society.<sup>(6)</sup> Not only will religion be a mediator between leaders and led, but also it will permeate our interactions with each other. This is a lesson Christianity has learnt from Islam.

Such a Christian revival, which has already taken some effect in the USA, will sharpen attitudes in the Middle East. Islamic Fundamentalism has moved in to areas previously dominated by secular national liberation struggles. Thus, following the Palestinian Intifada, and even more so after the defeat of Iraq, the fundamentalists have made major inroads into the Palestinian body-politic. Meanwhile in Israel, the religious parties have exercised a pivotal rôle in promoting national unity when the gulf between the two main parties hinted at civil war.

But no matter how secular Zionism has been, Israel has always been a religious, if heretical, conception. Thus Herzl, the founder of modern Zionism,

(6) The recent developments as regards the privatisation Health and Education services will mean that the Church will play a larger rôle as the local councils are squeezed. Already the Irish government will give no funds to Irish organisations in the UK unless they have a priest on the management committee.

quoted from Psalm 137 "Jerusalem! If I should forget you, may my right arm wither!" at the Zionist conference in 1898. Jerusalem has for two millennia been the centre of international intrigue, war and religious slaughter.

During the war, Saddam Hussein's call for Jihad amounted to firing scud missiles at Jerusalem. In this *controlled* war, no chemical or biological warheads were used. Not from any squeamishness — but through fear of nuclear retaliation. US/Allied victory was assured from the start. The pathetic attacks on Israel had no military value. Even their diplomatic value was nullified when Syria refused to break with the allies. The PLO soon realised they were backing a loser and refused to mount any covert operations. The sole rôle of the scuds was to pacify internal opposition.

Despite this *workers in* both Kurdistan and southern Iraq mounted revolts against the Ba'athist regime. As to be expected, the allies stopped the war to allow the Iraqi army to continue the work their bombers had already been doing — massacring the Iraqi working class. At the same time reactionaries from the Shi'ite clergy and Kurdish nationalists (generally landlords) stepped in to control the workers movement. As yet we only have sketchy information about the proletarian uprisings in Iraq. The "peace time" censorship is probably even more thorough than the that of war.

The result of the war has been the strengthening of Islam against secular nationalism throughout the Middle East. Thus the three branches of monotheism confront each other in a political sense. The holy trinity re-unites these three aspects in one: all three are united in the division and destruction of the middle east, all are united against the unbelievers, the infidels, the Goyim, the kaffirs the communists. All the "peoples of the Book", place their arid rationalism above the warm and

wild interplay of human diversity.

In modern pluralist Britain, some Muslim's and their leftist allies have tried to hitch their wagon to popular outrage against racism to demand a tolerance for this obscene religion. Yet in many ways it is the religious mobilisation of the faithful during the crusades which is the bedrock of modern racism.

When Peter the Hermit agitated for a conquest of the Holy Land, the hordes of Pilgrims were in the habit of massacring Jewish communities they found on their way to Jerusalem — that is unless they paid these greedy mercenaries sufficient money. Others such as Emich offered Jews baptism or death as they slouched their way to Bethlehem. The crusades arose from the goal of religious unity in the face of a superior culture threatening Europe. It was resolved then through the fall of Constantinople, cutting off Spain from the slav(e) markets of Eastern Europe.

The substitution of Africa as a source of slaves and the development of American colonies reversed the relation of domination. But still European Christianity absorbed many lessons from Islam, many which lead to the secularism characteristic of Western European liberalism. Here religious persecution is replaced by racial persecution. There is no salvation to be offered to the subjected people. They are doomed to be "sub-human", to be "child-like" with some possibility of redemption in some undated future when they have reached the level of the Europeans — presumably by the very slavish imitation which is used to deny any indigenous culture.

As the South African police open fire on White nationalists, a move away from this classically determined racism is indicated. The economic significance of Japan has already undermined this classic racism in terms of capitalist hegemony. But this decline of racism is no cause to celebrate in that it is not so much an end to racism, but a

regeneration of bigotry, butchery and bloodletting in a new guise. Traditional *colour* racism will increasingly take second place to cultural differentiation. The religious divide used in Ireland gives an indication as to how such bigotry can be used to neutralise the class struggle.

At the same time that workers are being corralled in their respective identities, the historic collapse of Babylon where humanity split into the babble of different linguistic groups is being overcome. The new language is that of commodity exchange. In a word — money. The unification of the world market around the Tokyo, New York and London stock exchanges will achieve this. Operating 24 hours a day, 8 hours centred in each location, the world market will have achieved a unity of both time and space. It will have conquered the world. But this is not a solution to the problems of world capital, but points to its confrontation with its greatest enemy — us.

We are facing an era when the class struggle will become more and more open on a world scale; Where the UN is being set up as an organisation to directly police the working class, more than settle inter-capitalist rivalries; where the internationalisation of the class struggle is not so much an ideological nicety as a practical necessity; where the modernist ideologies set in motion by capital are more and more vicious, but also more and more paper thin. The war in the gulf was above all an escalation in the class war.



# "All Our Saturdays"

—an excuse of an antiwar movement

Despite being provided with ample time to develop an anti-war campaign in Britain, such a movement never really came into existence. This was not due to a moral weakness in the British people, but stems from class relations.

## War without Tears

The pro-european "peace-lobby" was simply wrapping its own imperialist agenda in Ghandi's loincloth. They supported the goal of re-asserting an integrated world economy against Saddam\_Hussein's antiquated Ba'thist ideology. They saw victory as certain — but throughout they kept their eyes on the deeper seated conflict between European and US capital.

This is what became as clear as day when the former peaceniks started criticising the hawks for not extending the war, following the risings in Kurdistan and southern Iraq. Meanwhile the US was happy to lift sanctions. The immediate effect of this was that the Iraqi army was properly fed when they set about slaughtering Kurds and other dissidents.

As an ideology, pacifism has a tiny hardcore base amongst liberal middle class life-stylists. The *political* bankruptcy of such people was revealed when they so readily backed the manoeuvres of the pro-european bourgeoisie. *Keep it legal, keep it safe* was their motto, with any "Non-Violent Direct Action" being carefully orchestrated to remain within easily policed boundaries. They wanted no repeat of 1956, when demonstrations against the British intervention in Suez lead to street battles in Whitehall till the early hours of the morning — but then a different class was involved. CND was wary that the same force which took charge during the Battle of Trafalgar Square, might irrupt, sweeping them aside.

From the outset scum like Tony Benn and Bruce Kent centred their opposition to the war on legal arguments within the United Nations — as if this body hadn't given the OK for the Korean War. In the end these arguments are used to side track the struggle into the dead ends of constitutionalism — but then we must ask "what struggle?" We must face the fact that there was very little working class resistance to the war. Moralists dismiss the working class as beer-swilling, chip-buttie-eating ignoramuses too stupid to appreciate the refined sensibilities of their middle class "betters".

## A Brave New World

It was good that the "peace-lobby" completely failed to mobilise the working class around its reactionary politics. It was good that workers ignored their pathetic bleating. But it was not good that the "new internationalism" has not broken down chauvinism amongst the working class in Britain. The old "inter-nationalism" of Social Democracy is being realised as a unified Europe. At a time when capitalist development was so centred in Europe, a euro-centric "inter-nationalism" hid its regional bias. The development of capital in "Soviet" Union, under the management of the bolsheviks, shook that arrogance. With the demise of the "Soviet" Union both the Kautskyist and Leninist *inter-nationalist* projects have come to an end.

The "new internationalism" stems precisely from set ups like Kuwait, Aberdeen or the South Pole. Here, proletarians from Europe, Africa and Asia are drawn together by the most international of all industries, oil. This new internationalism is marked by labour mobility which undermines all nationalisms. Instead of an amalgamation of different nationalisms, this movement is a negation of nationalism. In this sense *internationalism* is a useless word. It is the drawing together of the world proletariat as a coherent force. It is a fore-runner of the world human community where our relations will not

be governed by value.

This movement's development is going to be uneven. It is not centred in Europe. As capital unifies itself on a world basis, so the proletariat is forced to. This takes the form of workers learning from each others struggles. The fact that an explicitly *political* consciousness of this necessity has gained coherence amongst a minority of revolutionaries in Western Europe has blinded them to the dialectical nature of this process. They remain within the cultural structures of the European enlightenment. This imposed a false universalism, which offered assimilation into the dominant European culture as the goal of *scientific socialism*. This essentially racist outlook was integrated into the structure of racism from the middle of the nineteenth century to the present. Resting on biology and science, it concentrated on physical traits such as skin colour or nose and brain size.

Contemporary *racism* is now being reconstructed along social lines, just as the human sciences of psychology and social engineering take precedence over natural science. Modern psychology is married with archaic myths to synthesise new oppressive structures : religion takes on a new form.

Thus the confusion of *Black People Against the Gulf War* started out with the call for an Arab solution and an end to "anti-muslim racism". They then attacked "anti-arab racism" without mentioning "anti-jewish racism". Racism was their starting point not class analysis. Using a methodology that is peculiarly *British* (ie emphasising colour), they were unable to deal with the complexities of the Middle East. Turkish workers resident in this country manifested the same problem in different ways. It was heartening to see the extension of the General Strike in Turkey to Turkish sweat shops in East London. The Turkish workers struck against Turkish bosses. This broke with the false national community which their politicians sought to maintain. The bosses called in the cops. Workers



21st Jan 1991 — German demonstrators block the entrance to the Frankfurt Stockmarket. This action against the winners of the war also involved pelting the brokers with eggs and paint bombs. Even though this seems advanced compared to England, what is a ruined suit compared to mass murder?

skirmished with the filth into the night. This was a small step towards breaking down the ethnic divisions which keep us divided. But it remained an extension of a Turkish strike amongst Turkish workers. Although that strike was caught up with anti-war activity in Turkey, we failed to extend that struggle beyond this.

It is essential that the ethnic isolation promoted by the Race industry, the left (both British and Turkish etc.) and the state, is broken down. As a practical proposal, communists of different ethnic backgrounds must organise together to deal with the concrete problems in the Middle East.

## A Healthy Response?

Aside from workers with direct connections to the war zone, workers here developed opposition to the extent that their interests were directly challenged by the war. Amongst health workers, there was a realisation that the war would mean a dramatic increase in the work load and that civilian resources would be hijacked by the military. Suddenly more money was conjured up to throw into the health service. This at a time when patients at King's Hospital, South London were dying in the corridors simply because the annual budget was all used up. Health workers at the London Hospital (in the East End) demonstrated against the war. Had the evolution of the war been different,

substantial opposition might have arisen. As it was the British Army suffered more casualties from the American armed forces than the Iraqi.

## A National Disgrace

To a large extent, the war, its preamble and final outcome was a media event pretty much indistinguishable from the World Cup. Whilst the mainstream media whipped up support for "our boys", sections of the left backed Saddam Hussein and his "hand of God". CND soon realised that they did not have to police a mass working class movement. Much has changed since the anti-Vietnam War movement of the sixties. By the eighties CND had drifted to the right, becoming recruiting officers for the Labour Party. They knew they could dispense with the anti-imperialist rhetoric which characterised the recuperation of the anti-Vietnam war movement.

Meanwhile the "Socialist" "Workers" Party watered down their leftist politics to remain in the Committee to Stop the War in the Gulf.

Others like the "Revolutionary" "Communist" Party set up the rival *Hands Off the Gulf Committee* which proceeded to churn out reactionary propaganda supporting the Iraqi war effort. Of course they never took their propaganda seriously, opening up a second front in the UK — but then such leftist hypocrites are happy to

encourage Iraqi soldiers to die while they sport radical poses! Everyone enjoyed the spectacle of the war cabinet cowering under the tables following the IRA mortar attack, but then most of the left have been cheer-leading the IRA for years, watching volunteers dying at the hands of the British state without ever taking up arms itself. Such posturing relates the left selling itself as a moral and emotional prop in the face of the mounting horrors of war. There is only one way to stop the slaughter, and that is the revolutionary destruction of capitalism — root and branch — all this crap about national liberation and self determination is just an excuse to keep the wheels of capitalism turning. All the hopes of emancipation that went with the victory of the FLN in Algeria have been dashed. Now instead of French cops surrounding the Casbah, the nationalist cops play that rôle. A new breed of opportunism is being developed amongst the Islamic Fundamentalist who hope to ride to power on the backs of the proletarian struggle. The defeat of Saddam Hussein has strengthened the hand of Islamic Fundamentalists in Iraq and Palestine — at the expense of Arab nationalism.

Kurdish nationalism has only been thrust into prominence through the backing of Western Europe. Likewise, that strange commodity, Kuwaiti nationalism is a transparent attempt to prop up a pro-american bastion in the gulf. These ideologies will be used to manage labour mobility during the reconstruction following the war. The left has ended up complaining that US imperialism is not aggressive enough in support of Kurdish landlords — whoops — nationalists. Meanwhile, former Tory Chairman, Jeffrey Archer, ventured into leftist populism by organising a "Live-Aid" style benefit for the Kurds. In this way Left and Right unite to complete a nationalist consensus. This is not new, it has just been reorganised around a new realism. It is still a broad church where traditional monarchists, labourite industrial capitalists, and tory finance capitalists can compete for the grace of God (i.e. capitalist accumulation). Patriotism has become a commodity.

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