

The Socialist

PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST ORGANISATION
Printed by Spotpress, 105 Victoria Rd, Marrickville, NSW

ISSN 0818-8955

Registered by Australia Post-Publication No VBF 0522

No 246, 1 FEBRUARY 1991

60 CENTS

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BUSH THE BUTCHER HAS...



BLOOD ON HIS HANDS

BEHIND all the talk of "surgical bombing" and "pinpoint accuracy", the grim reality of the US war against Iraq is starting to come out.

Reports from Kurds in Germany, as well as Iranians and Turks tell of tens of thousands dead. "It was hell. There was fire all over Baghdad," one refugee told journalists.

The scale of the bombing is so enormous that by mid-February, the US will have flown more bombing missions than it did in ten years in Vietnam.

While the first aim might have been to take out key military installations, the strategy now is to so thoroughly pound Iraq's troops that they become incapable of fighting.

In other words, it is a deliberate policy of mass slaughter and maiming to ensure a US victory. "Our strategy to go after this army is very, very simple," said the US's top General, Colin Powell. "First we're going to cut it off, and then we're going to kill it."

Spanish journalist Alfonso

By
Phil Griffiths

Rojo saw what Powell's comments really meant when he visited the Iraqi city of Najaf, a major religious centre, 150 km from Baghdad.

He saw one building reduced to rubble with a 10 metre crater in the middle. Beyond it there were 13 more, zig zagging for 300 metres, perfectly symmetrical. One local told him:

"In that house were two families who had arrived from Baghdad seeking protection. There were 14 of them. Only one girl is still alive.

"This neighbourhood is called Khai El Emire and there are no military installations or chemical plants, only houses. Why have they done this to us?"

Rojo comments, "There are

not even reserve military barracks. Here was not a case of a missile off course or deflected by anti-aircraft fire...the only explanation left is that someone got the wrong city."

Another "hit" the US boasted about was the so-called chemical weapons factory in Baghdad, disguised as a factory producing infant formula. Except that it really was a baby food factory. CNN had done a story on it showing how Iraq was coping with sanctions.

We can only guess at the

number of other "wrong towns", "wrong factories" that have been hit and the number of ordinary people blown apart or maimed.

We can only guess at the number who have died because Baghdad is without electricity, water or food deliveries.

But we do not have to guess who is responsible.

In their drive to guarantee the uninterrupted flow of profits from oil, George Bush and his allies, like Bob Hawke, have covered themselves in blood.

We have to stop them.

DEMONSTRATE

Sydney, Sun 10 Feb
Assemble Belmore Park, 1pm; Domain 3pm

Brisbane Fri 1 Feb
Assemble King George Square, 4pm

ISO PUBLIC MEETINGS

Melbourne Mon 4 Feb
7.30pm at Bookmarks, 328 Flinders St, City

Sydney Tues 12 Feb
7.00pm at Trades Hall, 4 Goulburn St, City
Full details of all meetings page 11

Why Arabs hate Israel

IRAQ'S missile attacks on Israel have been greeted with outrage in the West.

But not in the Arab world. In Jordan, huge demonstrations have called on Saddam to attack Israel.

In Algeria, 100,000 copies have been sold of a record "Go, Saddam, Go".

While Bob Hawke denounces the inhumanity of raining missiles down on civilians, Arabs remember what happened when Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982.

The Israeli air force bombed civilian areas of Beirut with cluster and phosphorous bombs. The result was an almost unimaginable horror.

Journalist Robert Fisk, now reporting for Britain's *Independent*, told how in one hospital, "there was blood everywhere."

"I ran across to the mortuary. Someone had been trying to piece bodies together. They had a leg, a torso, but three arms lay next to the torso. The place... reeked of people's stomachs."

Dr Amal Sharma from Beirut's Barbir hospital described the effects of phosphorous bombs on children.

"I had to take the babies and put them in buckets of water to put out the flames. When I took them out, their heads were swollen, they were still burning."

Hospitals were blasted to rubble and eight out of Beirut's nine orphanages destroyed. But worse was to come.

On 16 September 1982, truckloads of extreme right-wing Lebanese militia, backed by the fascist Phalange party, surrounded two of the main Palestinian refugee camps, Sabra and Shatilla.

They had been armed to the teeth by the Israelis and the camps sealed off by the Israeli army. No-one could leave.

Noam Chomsky described how, "Throughout Thursday night Israeli flares lighted the camps while the militias went about their work, methodically slaughtering the inhabitants."

"On Friday afternoon, [Israeli] Chief of Staff Eitan and Generals Drori and Yaron... congratulated them on having earned out good work."

When the slaughter finished, 2000 unarmed civilians were dead. Saddam Hussein, whatever his rhetoric today, has never been any friend of the Palestinians.

Along with the other Arab rulers, he has always turned his back on their struggle against Israel. Launching missile attacks on Tel Aviv is not the way to help the Palestinian struggle.

But the brutality and barbarism meted out by the Israelis mean such actions can find a popular echo among millions of Palestinians and their fellow Arabs.



THE daily brutality of Israeli occupation of the Arab land of Palestine.

WATCHDOG FOR THE WEST

FROM the early part of this century, Zionism has been an integral part of the West's strategy for exercising control over the Middle East and plundering its oil wealth.

The existing borders were drawn by the British and French following the collapse of the Ottoman empire at the end of the First World War, with little regard to historical tradition.

In 1920 they broke Greater Syria up into Syria, Lebanon and Palestine and created Transjordan.

In 1922 the British drew the borders of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Iraq to make sure that the oil rich areas were as much as possible separated into areas like Kuwait and the other emirates.

They also installed a series of pliable rulers to run many of these "countries".

Britain had promised independence to Arabs during the war in return for their support, but afterwards, it found its strategic interests better served by the Zionist project.

The Balfour Declaration, promising a Jewish homeland in Palestine, would, as Winston Churchill said, "be especially in harmony with the truest interests of the British Empire".

This tie between Zionism and imperialist interests was not just an accident. The founder of Zionism, Theodore Herzl, from the very beginning looked for an imperialist patron for his project.

He considered the Russian Tsar, the German Kaiser, and the Turkish Sultan before settling on Britain.

"Here in England", he said, "the idea of Zionism, which is a colonial idea, should be quickly understood".

The Zionists convinced the British that they could provide an "effective guard for the Suez Canal".

The process of imperial domination backed up by Zionist settlement was consistently at the expense of the Arabs.

As Balfour said in 1919, "In

Palestine we do not propose to even go through the form of consulting the wishes of the present inhabitants. The Four Powers are committed to Zionism".

The initial establishment of Israel made 750,000 Palestinians homeless, and a similar number lost everything when Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza in 1967.

In the Occupied Territories, the people have suffered expropriation of land and water, denial of virtually all political rights, suppression of local economic activity and constant violations of human rights.

Thousands have been interned without trial in concentration camps and many deported. The Israeli military regularly demolishes the houses of relatives of people suspected of illegal political activity.

CURFEW

During the three years of the *Intifada*, hundreds of people have been killed, tens of thousands have lived for prolonged periods under 24 hour curfew and schools and universities have been closed.

Prime minister Begin described his policies for dealing with the *intifada* as "Force, Power, Blows".

Bush's response has not been one of outraged determination to oppose injustice. Instead the US has consistently opposed UN resolutions and continued to give Israel billions in aid.

The ties to the US aren't an optional extra for Israel—they are essential for its continued existence.

It's not surprising then that the Palestinian issue is a central one for all Arabs.

They see the treatment of Palestinians and their expropriation as part of a larger oppression which can't be separated from the other actions of the US in the area.

—by Janey Stone

THE 'NEW' AUSTRALIAN IMPERIALISM

WHY IS Australia really involved in the Gulf?

Bob Hawke dropped some hints in his 21 January speech to parliament.

The hypocritical rhetoric about achieving "peace and stability" in the Middle East need not concern us here.

More significant is the frank admission that the immediate goal is western control of oil supplies. This is so widely understood that he couldn't deny it, so he preferred to brazenly justify it.

But most important is Hawke's emphasis on the "new international order" and Australia's place within it.

In this "new global environment", he said, "the possibility of effective United Nations response to conflict or aggression has been growing ever stronger."

Within this framework Australia had a "special responsibility". If we failed to grasp it, "the consequences for our medium and long-term security...are deeply disturbing".

This is not just pious blarney. Hawke was hinting at new plans for Australia's military, and for the imperialist interests they

represent. On 10 January, the *Financial Review* reported sweeping changes in the government's military thinking. The previous doctrine of "mainland defence" is giving way to a new era of "forward defence". That is a code word for a greater capability to intervene in Asia and the Pacific.

According to the paper, the government thinks that in the new order heralded by the Gulf war, "Australia's most likely military engagements will almost certainly take place offshore."

MUSCLE

This would be part of United Nations forces raised to "confront aggression", for which the UN "must have the muscle".

The most immediate role for Australia would probably be in "peace-keeping" forces for Cambodia. In reality, such forces seldom keep the peace. When Australian troops joined an exercise of this type in the Sinai nearly ten years ago, it simply secured Israel's southern borders, freeing the Israeli

army to invade Lebanon. Even if an Australian military presence in Cambodia didn't lead directly to new wars, it would give our rulers a new armed presence in Asia.

The *Financial Review* says the generals are already looking towards acquiring "at least one helicopter carrier that will allow the army to deploy up to 1000 troops". This is because they were embarrassed by "grave shortcomings in the Navy's ability to deploy helicopters during the Fiji coup in 1987."

Another issue in their minds is the unrest in Bougainville. During the last crisis, Australian military leaders pushed for direct RAAF backing for PNG forces. This became clear from secret documents released last July, which also revealed the Defence Department fully endorsed the PNG army's brutal tactics on the island.

As part of the "new order" that George Bush is trying to build through his invasion of the Gulf, Hawke hopes this country can deepen its own imperialist influence near to home. That is the main reason for Australia's involvement in the Gulf war:

'Mainland defence' is giving way to a new era of 'forward defence'

to establish its credentials and ensure for itself US backing in this region at some future time.

Australia's most important contribution to the war is through the US communications bases at places like Nurrungar. The anti-nuclear movements of earlier years demanded the removal of these bases, only to be assured by politicians that they would serve peaceful purposes.

It is ironic that in the past, some on the left like Tom Uren opposed the demand to dismantle the bases, arguing instead that they could play a role as part of United Nations attempts to "keep the peace".

Now that is what they are

doing!—guiding bombers on their UN-approved sorties over Iraq.

By comparison, the Australian frigates are a trivial addition to the war, a token gesture to keep Canberra's hand in. But here too, there are voices calling on the government to move beyond tokenism.

In another *Financial Review* article, analyst Gregory Hywood warns that three ships in the Gulf is too few, that "from an American perspective, Australia appears self-indulgent... If this is a truly an historic time and a new world order is at stake, surely it is time to go beyond these tight constraints." He continues:

"If the new order under the UN is to become a reality, nations like Australia may need to increase their defence spending... Such heightened defence spending may be the new reality of multi-lateralism."

Thus the new order, if Bush and Hawke succeed, will resemble nothing so much as the old order: exploitation, imperialism, and war; with Australia's rulers determined to get their share of the action.

—by Tom O'Lincoln

As the anti-war movement grows...

Here's how to stop the war

ALREADY the anti-war movement has become enormous.

In a body blow to racist stereotypes about Germans and Japanese as militarists, 250,000 demonstrated in Bonn and 15,000 in Tokyo against the war.

In the US 75,000 marched on Washington and 70,000 protested in San Francisco.

50,000 came out in Melbourne and 30,000 in Sydney within days of the US attack.

Hawke's majority support for the war is very fragile. There is a large minority who oppose him and a smaller minority—11% according to the polls—who strongly oppose the war.

The challenge is to turn that angry minority into an active movement that can win. To do that we must realize that the normal methods of building up political opposition have changed very fundamentally.

The protests must be frequent. It is no longer necessary to have months of preparation for a demonstration—hundreds of thousands of people are angry and are looking for an opportunity to demonstrate.

The big demonstrations have made the people participating in them feel stronger in their opposition to the war—they see that they are not as isolated as they might have thought. Three weeks without a demonstration in the current climate is like six months at other times. The big demonstrations can also become a focus for local and workplace groups.

The demonstrations must be used as organising centres. Many

TO GET INVOLVED

Contact either the ISO in your city, or the coalitions listed below.

MELBOURNE
ISO meets every Monday, 7.30pm, at 328 Flinders St. City. Phone 629 3144.
Network for Peace in the Middle East, PO Box 812, Parkville, 3052, or phone 481 1507.

SYDNEY
ISO meets every Tuesday, 7.00pm, at Trades Hall, 4 Goulburn St, City. Phone 261 4862.
Coalition to Bring the Frigates Home meets every Thursday, 8.00pm, University of Technology Sydney, Phone 281 8390 (Dana), 690 1977 (Sally), 212 6855 (Hannah) or 281 5100 (Diana).

CANBERRA
ISO meets every Monday, 7.00pm, in the Blair Room at the Canberra Workers Club, Chisholm St, Civic. Bring the Ships Home Coalition meets at the Peace Centre, Kingsley St, Civic. Phone John (249 4217), Tanya (297 8047), Sue (251 2174) or Bobbie (247 7811).

BRISBANE
ISO meets every Tuesday, 7.00pm at Bookmarks, 99 Elizabeth St, City. Phone 229 8832.
Gulf Action Coalition meets Mondays, 8.00pm, Albion Peace Centre, 102 MacDonnell Rd, Albion, phone 275 1806 or 266 4261.

HOBART
ISO writes to GPO Box 1898, Hobart, 7001. Bring the Frigates Home Coalition meets at the Environment Centre, phone 34 3556.

PERTH
ISO writes to PO Box 521, Wanneroo 6065. Alliance for Peace in the Gulf—Phone 481 1244.

The Socialist GULF WAR FUND

Campaigning against the US war in the Gulf is not as expensive as waging it, but still costs a lot.

To make sure that socialist arguments are heard, *The Socialist* is coming out fortnightly instead of monthly. Will you help us?

In our first two weeks we raised \$1700. Thanks to Public meeting collections—Sydney \$140, Melbourne \$170, CA \$35, LM \$25, SG \$25, AD \$1000, PM \$105, NG \$200.

By John Minns

movement activists are used to organising in little committees of a dozen or two. Now the situation is very different. The opportunity exists to turn this strongly opposed 11% into builders of the movement.

The movement must collect names on the demonstrations of those who want to continue to organise when they go home or go back to work.

The demonstrations must become a focus for organising for the next big action—with posters and leaflets on hand for people to take and distribute later.

For the movement to win we have to involve organised workers and the great potential power that workers have to take action and cripple the war machine. The Vietnam moratorium was not just a mass demonstration but a strike against the war.

We are still a long way from making that happen but we can begin to organise now. Already Building Unions have put out posters against the war, 1,000 wharfies walked off the job in Sydney in protest and 150 in both Port Kembla and Brisbane did the same.

It is important to approach union officials and put pressure on them to commit themselves against the war. But that isn't enough. We must start serious organising in every sizeable workplace, amongst the rank and file of the trade union movement.

Workplace groups can be built against the war. At the University of NSW the first meeting of university staff against the war attracted 130, at the Australian National University, 160 turned out.

Journalists in Sydney have set up *Journalists against the War* and library workers, public servants and many others have begun to organise.

Mostly these groups have been set up on the initiative of ISO members. Now we need every activist in the campaign who is in a workplace of more than 15 or 20 to do the same.

So far the experience is that they are quite easy to form. All that's necessary is to put up a few handwritten notices in lunchrooms, outside lifts or on notice boards advertising a meeting at lunchtime to form a group against the war.

Call the meeting in the lunchroom or the pub or coffee shop near work. Even one other person with you means that you can begin to do things—advertise the next demo to workmates, perhaps organise to get an anti-war speaker to your job, draw others into the movement.

From organisation like this we can start to build, to create a gigantic movement, to wipe the smile off George Bush's face.



WHARFIES in Sydney joined the big rallies against the war. Workers can be organised into the movement.

LABOR: THE PARTY OF WAR

NOW THERE can be no doubt.

The Labor Party is a party led by warmongers. The parliamentary debate on the Gulf war proves it.

Hawke succeeded in getting all but ten Labor parliamentarians behind him to support the war. It isn't surprising—after all Labor voted unanimously to send the frigates to the Gulf in the first place.

Hawke was at his self-righteous worst, repeating the tired and transparent argument that the war was morally valid because the big imperialists of the UN Security Council had given it their blessing.

Labor prosecuted the First and Second World Wars and supported

that other "UN war"—Korea. It even supported the war in Vietnam until 1966 and even then, Labor leaders like Gough Whitlam supported sending Australian troops.

Today there is not a single Labor parliamentarian who has so far recorded a vote against the war. Take the leaders of the left in parliament. Brian Howe explained how he had been in peace organisations before he was in the Labor Party, and then went on to support Hawke's motion. Gerry Hand gave the most hypocritical performance—breaking down in tears—but still backing the war.

Nick Bolksus even tried to theorise the pro-war position from the left. He argued that the left had never been pacifist—supporting "armed struggle" in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Vietnam and elsewhere. According to Bolksus, the US military are now in an analogous position to the Sandinistas.

What twisted logic! In El Salvador, Vietnam and Nicaragua, workers and peasants were fighting against US imperialism. Bolksus has now put himself firmly on side with it.

Ten Labor parliamentarians did abstain. That's certainly better than voting for it. But it is pathetic that not even one of them had the political courage to stand clearly against it. It was left to Ted Mack and the Democrats, who are far from left-wing, to be counted against the war.

Those who abstained showed a very limited opposition to the war. Stewart West, wrote in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 23 January, "I do not call for the return of the

three ships as that is clearly irresponsible once we have made this specific commitment to the United Nations. The parliamentary speeches against the war, such as they were, relied heavily on giving sanctions time to work." Of course, the Labor left all supported sanctions and therefore the sending of the frigates. But sanctions were not an alternative to war—they were part of the build-up to it.

Sanctions were another means of using force against Iraq—starving Iraqis rather than incinerating them by bombing. Sanctions were the political cover by which Bush got massive military forces into the Gulf.

To build a huge movement against the war we have to draw those parliamentarians who abstained onto platforms to speak against the war. Doing that will help to draw new people into the movement. But that doesn't mean that we shouldn't continue to be critical of their half-hearted and weak stand so far.

The Labor Party is and always has been a party devoted to the capitalist system. When the powerful imperialist elements of that system move towards war, the Labor Party moves with them.

The attitude of even the best of the Labor leaders is to tinker with the system and reform it in small and slow ways. They do not want to see it ended. That's why Labor Party politics are especially foul in times of war. It is why a socialist and revolutionary alternative to them must be built.

Join the International Socialist Organisation

Please send me more information about how socialists are organising to stop the Gulf war.

I want to join the International Socialist Organisation

Name

Address:

Phone

Clip and post to ISO GPO Box 1473N Melbourne, 3001

Is aggression 'male'?

MANY comparisons are being drawn between this anti-war movement and the anti-Vietnam campaign.

By Sandra Bloodworth

An important one is the advanced stage of awareness about such questions as women's oppression this time round, the result of many years of campaigning.

At the week-long vigil in Melbourne, one day was set aside as Women's Day. As it happened, this day was the beginning of the amazing burst of energy which took the movement forward in leaps and bounds.

On the day of the deadline, hundreds of women set out to march on the Victoria Barracks. The plan was for a "scream-out". It became a march which lasted for several hours, growing as men from the vigil, and then another hundred joined us as we marched around the city.

The scream-out was a huge success, and was repeated by the larger rally a few days later. But it raised some controversy in the vigil which is worth considering.

Some women opposed the screaming because they felt it was too aggressive.

Apart from the influence of pacifism, this position expressed a widely-held view that women are naturally the peace-makers, and we should not allow ourselves to be drawn into "male" violence.

This is a profoundly mistaken view.

Firstly, if the violence we are witnessing in this war is reduced to the nature of men, it simply lets the brutal system of competition off the hook.

The mad military rivalry which has characterised capitalism is a class question.

FOUGHT

Just as many working class men as women fought in the revolutions which stopped the First World War. Thousands of working class men stopped work, demonstrated and organised against the Vietnam war.

On the other side, ruling class women defended the wars their class unleashed on humanity.

The Suffragette movement in Britain early this century split along class lines over the First World War.

Sylvia Pankhurst, the leading Suffragette who organised amongst working class women, stood out against the war.

Her mother and other middle and upper-class women of the movement campaigned in favour of it, handing white feathers to young men who refused to enlist as a sign of contempt for their "cowardice".

This time round, positions on the war are determined by politics, not gender. Ted Mack is the only politician to demand his opposition be registered in the vote in the House of Representatives.

The other side of the question is the stereotyping of women. There is a popular idea around that women can appropriate the images of ourselves that used to oppress us and change their meaning. This would raise the status of women.

But these stereotypes of women as retiring, emotional, passive, loving and caring are used as the justification for women being expected to be the child-carers in the family. This then leads to fewer job opportunities, lower pay, and the idea that women are unable to fight to defend themselves.

Women's oppression is not

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ability to fight, to be aggressive and assert ourselves.

This is not "male". It is simply what anyone who wants to fight the power of those in control in our society, the men and women of the ruling class, has to do. Those with power in our society never give any concessions if they think they can oppress the mass of the population with impunity.

This was clearly not the orientation of some women involved in organising Women's Day. Other than the march to the Barracks the emphasis was on poetry readings and meditation.

Socialists are not opposed to poetry readings—we are not philistines. But it was significant that it was only on Women's Day that it was planned.

This indicates that the stereotypes of women being less aggressive, less interested in politics and more introspective, penetrate into even the movements which want to fight women's oppression.

On the day, the women themselves shattered these stereotypes. The scream-out was a great way of showing women's ability to completely reject the stereotypes which are part of our oppression. No silent mourning for us!

The women were militant, strong, made political speeches, and created the catalyst for a leap forward to stop the war. This was a great achievement which would have been missed if the arguments against aggression had won out.

PENSIONERS TO PAY MORE

THE FEDERAL government has hurried through legislation which could mean that fourteen thousand pensioners will have to pay an extra \$928 a year to stay in retirement homes.

The legislation withdrew a subsidy which used to be paid to all residents in aged care hostels. The only exemptions are those on a full pension who did not own their house for two years before going into the home.

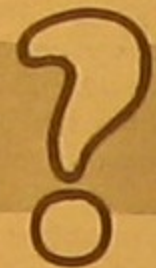
The executive director of the association of retirement home owners said that "it means you have to either been on the streets or living with relatives for a long time before you entered the retirement home".

PAID

Before the law was passed, all people living in non-profit nursing homes paid \$120 a week, with about \$18 left over as "pocket money". But if you were silly enough to have to have sold your house three years ago to enter the home, you will now lose even that pitiful sum.

It's obvious what the Labor Party's priorities are—tens of millions of dollars to keep frigates in the Gulf paid for by cut backs to services for the most defenceless in society.

what do we mean by...



Imperialism

FOR most people coming into the anti-war movement their starting point is a straightforward horror of war.

But to stop the war, and more importantly to avoid its repetition, we have to understand what causes it. Is it an excess of testosterone? Is it "loony fundamentalists"?

Socialists argue that imperialism is to blame. But what do we mean by "imperialism"?

The foundations of our understanding come from Lenin's analysis of the First World War—an unprecedented bloodbath and the first great confrontation between rival imperialist powers.

Lenin began by drawing on Marx's discovery, that as the capitalist system progressed, its wealth became concentrated in larger and larger concentrations of capital—trusts, monopolies, and giant corporations.

Eventually the drive to continually make a profit and to continually expand meant that these companies could no longer confine their operations to a single country.

And so, what Lenin called the "export of capital" began as investment surged out of Europe and capitalism began its conquest of the world, slowly at first but then at a frenzied pace in the second half of the 19th Century.

But of course this triumph of capitalism wasn't a triumph for some sort of pure idealised "free" market. Wherever there's a market there are heaves with guns trying to use force to get an edge on the competition.

As British, French, and later German and American companies looked for profits overseas, gunboats, troops and colonial administrators followed.

So imperialism represented a whole new stage in the development of capitalism, one in which state power—the government and military—became closely merged with capital and, moreover, a weapon of competition.

And the competition was fierce—all the more fierce as the world was rapidly carved up. Not only the profitable regions but also the un-



VIETNAM, 1968. The war cost many times more than total US investment in the country. Its real aims were to prevent the expansion of Russian influence, and to discourage further rebellions in its own empire.

profitable were colonised as economic motives mingled with strategic and military concerns.

Queensland even colonised Papua in 1890 to prevent the Germans, who had seized the northern coast of New Guinea, from gaining a foothold—despite the fact that it was considered of negligible interest economically.

This intense economic and military rivalry has exploded twice into world war.

COLONIES

In the First World War, dynamic German capitalism found that the British and French (and their allies) had got control of most of the colonies, including all the richest.

The Germans had a choice between fighting to push the old powers out, or accepting second rank status in the world.

In the Depression of the 1930s, as trade barriers rose around the

world, German and Japanese capitalism saw that conquest was the only alternative to decline. But conquering Poland and China not only threatened traditional British and American interests, but meant that new superpowers were in the making—itsself a threat to the traditional dominance of "our" side.

Conversely, the most competitive economies find themselves held to ransom by the military powers, especially the US which now demands Japan and Germany help pay for its war in the Gulf.

Far from a new era of peace, the intensification of imperialist rivalry offers the prospect of much greater instability, made worse by the reliance of both Russia and the US on their armed might.

By fighting to get the US out of the Gulf, we are fighting to weaken the ability of America's bosses to use force to get their way.

Those who at the moment look to Yeltsin as an alternative to Gorbachev will not find any consistent lead.

Many comparisons have been made between the situation of 1956 when Russia invaded Hungary, while Britain and France were at the same time

occupied in the Middle East with a troublesome Arab nationalist, Abdul Nasser.

The comparison however is not that Russian leaders use the distraction of the West's troubles to get away with murder but that then as now, Western leaders didn't lift a finger to help those struggling against a Russian dictator.

Gorbachev has been assured of continued aid from the United States and while the black beretted troops of the Interior Ministry go about their murderous work in the Baltic States, George Bush's harshest words are that he is "increasingly concerned."

Nothing epitomises the reality of George Bush's new world order better perhaps than the response of the finance ministers of the seven leading industrialised nations, United States, Britain, France, Italy and Canada, Germany and Japan.

There would not be an outright condemnation of the Soviet Union said a British official. Rather, the ministers would put off any decision on whether to increase or cut assistance to Moscow until the next meeting of finance ministers in May.

—by Ian Rintoul

I hammer the Baltics, you hammer Iraq...

FOUR MORE dead in Latvia have been added to the seventy-plus dead or missing since Gorbachev's January crackdown in Lithuania.

Mikhail Gorbachev, it is reported, "deeply regrets" the killings and military actions of the black beret special forces in Latvia and Lithuania. However, he also insists that the independent-minded governments have brought it on themselves.

In Lithuania, Russian troops have seized control of the central press building, the offices of the Lithuanian defence council, and the television tower in the capital, Vilnius.

Barricades surround the building of the Supreme Soviet while sandbags fill the windows and doors to protect the symbol of Lithuanian independence from the attack that seems only a matter of time.

Latvia saw what was almost certainly an execution by the special forces, Robert Murnieks, a well known activist in the independence movement, was shot in the back of the head near a military base.

Barricades surround the republic's parliament and the Supreme Soviet has called for the formation of "Special Units of the Forces of State Self-Defence". It is this measure that prompted Gorbachev to threaten the introduction of presidential rule for Latvia.

Perversely, Gorbachev has used the promise of controlling the special forces to coerce the republican governments to accept presidential rule. Either they give up what independence they currently have, or else he will let the black beret forces continue their bloody campaign.

These special forces are directly responsible to the newly appointed Interior Minister, Boris Pugo, who just happens to be the previous head of the KGB in Latvia.

Anxiety has grown too about Gorbachev's creeping authoritarianism at home.

In the face of press criticism of the crackdown in Lithuania, Gorbachev suggested that curbs on press freedom should be re-introduced. Although, forced to retreat on the specific proposal, it was an ominous sign of the drift of events.

Gorbachev's clampdown in the Baltics has however had the effect of bringing hundreds of thousands onto the streets again in protest, for the first time in a year.

Both the leaders of the Baltic States and the mass of demonstrators see Boris Yeltsin as possible alternative to Gorbachev.

In the aftermath of the killings in Lithuania, Yeltsin was heavy with the rhetoric—"The danger of dictatorship... has become a reality," read part of Yeltsin's message to the demonstrators.

But Yeltsin has been an ambiguous supporter of independence for the republics at best and at an emergency meeting of the Russian parliament Yeltsin urged caution, and even more tellingly called for a dialogue with Moscow. He has consistently advocated maintaining the "integrity" of the Soviet Union.

Those who at the moment look to Yeltsin as an alternative to Gorbachev will not find any consistent lead.

Many comparisons have been made between the situation of 1956 when Russia invaded Hungary, while Britain and France were at the same time

GORBACHEV'S DEAL WITH THE WEST



IN GO the tanks in Latvia as Gorbachev sets out to crush the national movements.

Green debacle in Germany

ONE OF THE biggest surprises in the December German elections was the collapse of the Greens. In the West, they got less than 4% of the vote and were wiped out; in the East, running with Alliance '90, they managed 5.9%, which gives the coalition eight seats.

The main reason for the Greens' poor performance was their demonstrated failure to live up to their promises. In recent years, they have entered governing coalitions with the SPD in a number of states, consistently disappointing their voting base.

In order to maintain their agreements with the SPD, they have backtracked on their radical policies, abandoning their commitment to fight for the abolition of nuclear power stations and joining the SPD's attacks on squatters (the housing shortage is one of Germany's most acute social problems).

All the major parties stressed green issues, and

with little to distinguish the Greens from the SPD, many German voters who wanted to get rid of Kohl opted to vote for the SPD.

A further, though minor, factor was that the Greens were even more hostile to reunification than the SPD.

It is possible that the Greens will see a revival in their fortunes, however, because they are the only mainstream party which is strongly opposing the Gulf War.

ANTI-WAR

Anti-war sentiment in Germany is enormously strong, with some polls showing as many as 80% opposed. There have been huge demonstrations in all the major cities and round the clock protests at US military bases. There have been short strikes at the Opel and Volkswagen plants and many other smaller factories around the country.

Although the SPD, unlike

other European social democratic parties, voted against the war they now support a US victory. They are therefore playing no role in the anti-war movement.

The movement itself is polarised. The dominant union leaderships have a conservative, pacifist position. The Greens are attempting to give it a more left-wing, anti-US direction, arguing that Bush is the aggressor and calling on troops to desert. For the moment, this is a minority position, but it appeals to the radicalised young people who are flocking into the movement.

The former East German Stalinists of the PDS are also attempting to relate to the anti-war mood. PDS leader Gregor Gysi was the only one to strongly attack Kohl as the "Chancellor of War" in the German parliament.

The combination of the election results and the polarisation within the anti-war movement may lead to a realignment of forces.

WORLD WIDE REVOLT AGAINST GULF WAR

ACROSS THE world hundreds of thousands of people are protesting against the US-led war in the Gulf—but you wouldn't know it from the Australian media.

■ 500,000 marched in Iran against the US and Israel.

■ In Bangladesh a half-day strike against the US presence in the Gulf and the participation of 2,300 Bangladeshi troops in the coalition forces.

■ In New Delhi the size of the anti-US movement has led police to announce a 30 day ban on demonstrations outside US diplomatic missions.

■ Anti-US protests have also been banned in Morocco after trade unions and opposition parties called demonstrations. Now a general strike is planned.

■ Thousands of demonstrators have been tear-gassed by police in Turkey. One man was killed in the eastern city of Tatvan after police fired more than a thousand rounds to disperse 10,000 anti-US demonstrators.

■ In Algeria 400,000 marched against the war in the capital Algiers.

■ Business was totally stopped in Pakistan by protest strikes against the war.

■ Up to two million Spanish workers took industrial action after the US attack. Up to 90 percent of high school students and 70 percent of university students struck a few days after the war had begun.

The reaction of the right-wing Greens, the Realos, to the election defeat was to blame the radicals and move further to the right in a quest for mainstream respectability. There is now some talk of a split which may see the radicals form a new party with the PDS.

While German revolutionaries have to work with the more left-wing forces in the movement, they also have to argue that neither the Greens nor the PDS (nor a combination of the two) offer a road forward.

The Greens have already demonstrated in practice the bankruptcy of working "within the system"; and the "reformed" Stalinists of the PDS, whose policies are now virtually indistinguishable from the SPD's, are not to be trusted.

The growth of the anti-war movement and working class action against the war means there are opportunities to build a revolutionary alternative.

—by Tess Lee Ack

WHY WE SAY

US out of the Gulf

Isn't this a war to stop aggression?

NOT at all. The war was started by the world's most aggressive power, the US.

When America invaded Panama to keep control of the Panama Canal, the United Nations did nothing. Bob Hawke applauded it.

Australia and the US supported the Indonesian invasion of East Timor. The UN did nothing to stop the genocide of the Timorese.

What about South Africa's repeated invasions of Angola and Mozambique, and its illegal occupation of Namibia? What about America's invasion of Grenada and its bombing of Libya?

Bush says aggression should not be rewarded. Yet in 1980, stung by the loss of their ally the Shah, the US encouraged Saddam to invade Iran. His aggression was rewarded with huge economic and military aid and a US fleet was sent to the Gulf to prevent an Iranian victory.

And the most aggressive state in the Middle East is not Iraq, but Israel. Its very founding was an act of aggression as 750,000 Palestinians were driven from their homeland. For that, Israel was rewarded with half of America's foreign aid.

The real and most important aggression in the Middle East today is the US led invasion of the Gulf.

Iraq is threatening to take over the world. It has a population the size of Australia's, and an economy smaller and less industrialised.

How many bases does Saddam have in the Pacific? How many spy satellites or ICBMs? How many of the world's top 100 banks or multinationals are based in Iraq?

No matter what victories Saddam Hussein is "allowed", he has no hope of building a new imperialist empire.

Compare Iraq with Germany in 1938 when it was one of the world's superpowers—the strongest power in Europe.

Today ranged against Iraq are the world's great imperialists. That why we call for the US to get out of the Gulf.

we despise his domination of Iraq—but if the US was to reinstate its domination, through the disgusting al-Sabah family, this would be a massive step backwards.

To condemn Saddam's invasion, to demonstrate against the Iraqi consulate as some have proposed, would be to endorse almost all George Bush's arguments—that Iraq's invasion is the central issue, that Iraq, not US imperialism, is the main problem in the region.

shore up its world supremacy. That's the reason that the US is constantly reaching for its guns. If it wins easily in the Gulf, then the US ruling class will be far more confident to intervene militarily elsewhere in the region, in Central and Latin America and anywhere else it chooses.

Is Israel an innocent bystander?

WHEN Iraq finally landed a few Scud missiles on Tel Aviv, the press went positively hysterical at the idea of Iraq attacking a country that supposedly "isn't involved" in the UN war.

What incredible hypocrisy. A few houses were destroyed in Tel Aviv but Israel had just finished demolishing 150 Palestinian houses in retaliation for protests on the West Bank.

Israel has gone to war with all its neighbours. In 1967 it seized Gaza and the West Bank. In 1982 it invaded Lebanon and organised the massacre of thousands of helpless Palestinian refugees.

For all its forty years, Israel has been the US watchdog in the Middle East, one of the most militarized societies in the world guaranteeing Western plunder of Arab oil. The Israeli paper, Ha'aretz, spelled it out in 1951:

Israel is to become the watchdog...if for any reasons the western powers should sometimes prefer to close their eyes, Israel could be relied upon to punish one or several neighbouring states whose discourtesy to the west went beyond the bounds of the permissible.

So what is the war really about?

OIL—modern capitalism's most strategic commodity. Stung by the size and power of the protest movement, Bob Hawke proved our point in the parliamentary debate.

Let me nail that easy but mindless catch-cry—"No blood for oil"—as though we could somehow wish away the strategic, the utterly vital nature of oil to our daily lives.

US State Department official, Robert Kimmitt said the US invasion was to secure the "free, uninterrupted flow of oil from the Gulf". The US magazine Business Week applauded saying "Oil is worth fighting for".

All the rhetoric about defending the sovereignty and ending the pillage of Kuwait is sheer hypocrisy. This is a war about oil profits.

Isn't a New World Order worth it?

BUSH's New World Order is not the paradise of peace and prosperity he promotes.

The end of the Cold War has not led to the end of superpower confrontation, but a whole new, dangerous system of rivalry.

The US is a declining power. Drained by decades of high arms spending, its industries are falling in the competitive race against Germany, Japan and other advanced countries.

The US is faced with recession and declining economic strength. In this context, Henry Kissinger, in an article published in August, 1990, made it clear that the best hope for US imperialism lay in using the one great advantage it still had—its absolute military power—to



defend the taking of hostages. Such acts do nothing to build opposition to US imperialism. But we do not join the chorus of hypocrites: if Iraq is spilling oil, it is in response to one of the most brutal bombing campaigns in history.

Arab terrorism?

THE media is beserk with tales of Iraqi "terrorism". Meanwhile they ignore the routine "terror" of weeks of continuous bombing of Baghdad, Basra and Mosul with tens of thousands killed; they ignore the routine terror of Israel as it continues to kill Palestinians, forcing them to stay indoors 24 hours a day.

The papers tell us Australia is now a target for Iraqi terrorism—none of which has actually happened—while thousands of Muslim women are being terrorised every day on the streets by young louts who

swallow media lies about Arabs. The world will be a much more terrible and terrorised place if the US wins this war.

The press is beating up the plight of US and allied pilots to justify continuing the war into Iraq. But who are the real war criminals here?—the Iraq regime which mistreats a few pilots or these heroes who have been dropping 2,000 pound bombs on the people of Baghdad.

Besides, the US hardly has the best record when it comes to POW's. In Vietnam they held enemy prisoners in "tiger cages", tortured thousands and routinely threw Vietnamese prisoners out of helicopters.

first place. The UN has gone along with every US proposal on the Gulf. The UN began with defending Saudi Arabia, then it said it wanted to "liberate" Kuwait.

Even the Secretary General of the United Nations, Javier Perez de Cuellar, has openly said that the war against Iraq is no longer about enforcing the UN resolutions, but about destroying the Iraqi regime.

Calling for negotiations undercuts our central argument: that the US is the main problem, that they must get out of the Gulf.

What can we do?

THERE is a huge pool of anger about the war and anti-war demos have been enormous. We need to keep them going.

Workplace groups against the war should be formed—even two or three people meeting together at your workplace can make a difference in convincing others to get involved.

Groups like this can then be used to push our unions into opposition to the war.

Can we get the US out of the Gulf?—yes, if we organise and fight now against our rulers' determination to shed blood.

Isn't there a danger if we appease Saddam?

THE real danger is if we appease George Bush.

The comparison continually drawn by Bob Hawke is Munich, 1938, when Britain's Neville Chamberlain accepted the annexation of Czechoslovakia by Hitler. It is argued that this appeasement "encouraged" Hitler to invade Poland, and hence led to the Second World War.

The war itself was caused by the clash of rival imperialists—an expanding Germany pushing its way into countries like Poland, which were dominated by Britain and France. It was a war to see which group of imperialist thugs would dominate the world.

That is not at issue here. There is absolutely no sense in which



HOW the US treated its prisoners in Vietnam.

Shouldn't we condemn Iraq's invasion too?

SOCIALISTS do not support Saddam's invasion of Kuwait.

But Saddam's invasion of Kuwait is no longer the issue. The issue is the West's attempt to strengthen its grip on the world's oil resources at the expense of ordinary Arab people who live in the region.

To guarantee his control, Bush wants to crush an upstart regime that challenged him in the region.

We may not like Saddam's domination of Kuwait—indeed

What about the oil spill?

For a start, we have to be careful not to automatically accept what the media says—all their reports are censored by the US military. Iraq's claim that the spill is the result of US bombing may prove to be true.

The West's hysteria is pure hypocrisy. Who turned whole sections of Vietnam and Cambodia into a wasteland? Who nuked Hiroshima? Who has spent two weeks destroying Iraq's cities, killing thousands? If Saddam has ordered the spilling of oil, we would not defend that—just as we did not



International Socialist Organisation

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Is there an alternative to Stalinism?

THE MURDEROUS imperialist war in the Gulf has demolished the myth of a post-Cold War era of peace and prosperity.

At the same time, Paul Keating is dragging us into "the recession we had to have".

There has never been a greater need for a vision which enables ordinary working people to fight for a better world.

The tragedy is that sixty years of Stalinism have succeeded in discrediting the ideas of Marxism which alone offer such a vision of human freedom.

Socialism has come to be seen as a system in which industry is nationalised and run by a bunch of dull, grey bureaucrats—a system in which an all-powerful state dominates the lives of ordinary people.

This popular view of socialism is a huge asset for the ruling classes of the West. It enables them to present their violent, decaying system as the best on offer.

Yet the truth is that Stalinism is not Marxism, but its opposite. Indeed, the opposition to Stalinism began amongst the Bolsheviks of Russia—supporters of Lenin and Trotsky.

For decades, these genuine Marxists were tremendously isolated as the mass of workers looked either to Labor or the Stalinist parties for direction. Now all that has changed. Stalinism has collapsed and Labor is deeply unpopular after a decade cutting wages and welfare.

The movement against war in the Gulf is throwing up thousands of young people who are searching for an alternative to the brutalities of this system.

FOR Marxists the working class is the central agency for human emancipation.

This is not because workers are morally superior to other people, but because their location at the centre of capitalist production gives them the unique ability to organise collectively to overthrow it.

Marx argued that human history had been dominated by a struggle between classes—one of which took control of the wealth and used it to exploit the others.

But people at the bottom always dreamed of a world without oppression or exploitation, a world of freedom and plenty.

Most of these utopias were in heaven. But once capitalism developed it became possible to turn these dreams into reality.

Capitalism completely changed the economic and social environment. It brought men and women together to co-operate with one another in production.

The wealth which was produced under the new system was so enormous that there could be enough to go around. For the first time it was possible for people to imagine a society where everyone could live in relative equality.

Workers were already cooperating to produce, why should they not extend that cooperation and decide what they produced, and how it was distributed?

It followed that in socialist society, there would be no need for anyone to fight anyone else. There would be more than enough for everyone, and it would be distributed not on the basis of who had the strongest army but on the basis of who needed it.

It was Karl Marx who first systematised these ideas into a materialist world view. As his great collaborator Frederick Engels put it, Marx discovered

the simple fact, hitherto concealed



The real Marxist tradition

by an overgrowth of ideology, that humanity must first of all eat and drink, have shelter and clothing, before it can pursue politics, science, religion and art, and that therefore the production of the immediate material means of life and consequently the degree of economic development, form the foundation upon which the forms of government, the legal conceptions, the art and even the religious ideas of the people concerned have been evolved.

ENGELS' comment explodes the myth that Marxism has nothing to say about women's oppression, the environment, personal life, culture and so on.

By starting from the economic foundations of society, only Marxism is able to explain the rich totality of human existence and offer a strategy for full human liberation.

Lenin took the argument a step further, pointing out the potential for change if all the grievances of the oppressed were linked with the struggle of the working class. In *What is to be done?* he argued that revolutionaries had to be "tribunes of the people", championing the interests of all the oppressed, pointing to the common source of their oppression in the existing capitalist system.

But how could society be changed? Exploiters who amassed their power and wealth by robbing workers were not sentimental or nabby-pabby about it. They would hold on to their wealth and power, if they had to, by force. It was up to the exploited class—the working class—to seize the means of production in a revolution.

The first pre-condition for

socialism was that the wealth of society be taken over by the workers.

MARX faced up squarely to an argument which is common enough 150 years later.

How, he was asked, can you expect the workers to change society? Are they not the most damaged victims of class rule? Are they not religious, racist, nationalist, sexist and violent?

Marx knew that there were, among the workers, people of outstanding courage and self-sacrifice, and that workers' attitudes could quickly change when they took part in collective struggle such as a strike.

But he also realised that an exploiting society corrupts everyone in it: the exploited as well as the exploiters. Not to put too fine a point on it, capitalist society covered everything in shit. And that was the best argument of all for a workers' revolution. He wrote:

This revolution is necessary not only because the ruling class cannot be overthrown in any other way, but also because the class overturning it can only in a revolution succeed in ridding itself of all the muck of ages and become fitted to found society anew.

This is a totally counterposed view to all shades of reformism, Stalinism and third world nationalism which look to small elites whether they be parliamentarians, guerrilla bands, "great" leaders or Stalinised communist parties to act on behalf of the masses.

Far from inventing impossible utopias, Marx rooted his theories in

the real world.

"The theoretical conclusions of the Communists," he wrote in the *Communist Manifesto*,

...are in no way based on ideas or principles that have been invented or discovered, by this or that would-be universal reformer. They merely express, in general terms, action relations springing from an existing class struggle, from an historical movement going on under our very eyes.

Thus Marx's economics revealed how everyday exploitation is hidden. They explained the dynamics of the system, the direction of its change over time and the contradictions that lead it into more and more profound crises.

Marx was not just an economist or theorist. He began the task of outlining how revolutionaries could most successfully wage the class struggle.

But it was Lenin who raised socialist strategy to its highest point. Contrary to the popular myth, Lenin was neither a dictator nor a tyrant, but one who set out to clarify the road forward. While tyrants rely on guns, Lenin's chief weapon was the political newspaper and his party was alive with debate and discussion.

Marxism is thus the sum total of the theories, strategies and the lessons learned from the workers' struggle for emancipation.

IN DOZENS of revolutions, upheavals and mass strikes, we have had a glimpse of this potential for self-emancipation.

In Spain in 1936, the workers ran Barcelona. Crime disappeared and women felt safe on the streets for the first time. In May 1968, ten million

workers took over the factories and workplaces of France, demanding an end to capitalist alienation. In Poland, the rise of Solidarnosc saw workers taking control, in some cases running their local city, opening up the media and closing down dirty, polluting factories.

But there has been no point higher in the struggle for socialism than the Russian revolution of 1917. The revolution ended the carnage of the First World War—at first on the Eastern front where millions of Russian peasants and German workers had been sacrificed to the imperial demands of their rulers.

For a short period, workers' committees ran the factories and workers' councils ran the government. The peasants threw out the landlords and aristocrats and seized the land.

The persecution of religious sects and Jews was ended. Even today, no "advanced democracy" has equalled the revolution's achievements in women's liberation as it introduced the automatic right to divorce, abortion, child care, communal eating facilities that lifted the burden of cooking from women, and ended the persecution of gay men and lesbians.

How, then, could such a liberating vision have been turned into the horrors of the Gulag?

It wasn't Leninism—the popular scapegoat—but the failure of the international revolutionary upheaval that followed Russia in 1919-23. The isolation of the revolution in a country devastated by war, civil war, imperialist invasion and famine opened the way for the bureaucrats to assert control.

They weren't interested in "nonsense" such as world revolution; they were sitting on top of Russian society and they wanted to make it work in their own interests. That meant defending their patch against Western imperialism, which in turn meant driving forward the development of heavy industry. Thus military competition with world capitalism provided the dynamic to the Russian economy which was transformed into a bureaucratic, state-controlled form of capitalism.

Far from being "Marxists", the Stalinists had to systematically corrupt and deny many of the central tenets of Marxism. Socialism was defined as state control of industry, rather than workers' control of the state. Rather than depending on an international revolution, Stalin argued that socialism could be built in one country—ignoring the completely interconnected nature of the world economy.

Stalinism thus developed as the ideology of the new, state-capitalist ruling class.

TODAY, we can argue for these ideas only because in decades past there were people willing to stand up and be counted, to defend the tradition of socialism from below in the face of horrific abuse and isolation.

Today, as popular anger at the war develops, we will have the opportunity to connect Lenin's analysis of imperialism to a real movement that strives to obstruct the "normal" workings of the system.

But while we can draw on the past achievements of generations of great socialists, in the end there is no substitute for the skill, the intelligence and the commitment of people today being prepared to take up the struggle against the system and the ideas that justify it.

Active commitment to the struggle by joining a revolutionary organisation has always been at the heart of the real Marxist tradition.

REVOLUTION in Paris, May 1968: students linked up with workers in a struggle that shook the foundations of capitalist society.

workers took over the factories and workplaces of France, demanding an end to capitalist alienation. In Poland, the rise of Solidarnosc saw workers taking control, in some cases running their local city, opening up the media and closing down dirty, polluting factories.

REVIEWS

The elitist logic of monkeywrenching

SURROUNDED on an environmentalist bookstall by coffee table books about rainforests and how to make your own soap, *Ecodefence: a Field Guide to Monkeywrenching (2nd Edition)* looked pretty radical.

It's a book that calls for sabotage and destruction to prevent any further pillage of the environment "before it's too late". Produced by members of Earth First!, an American ecological group whose slogan is "No compromise in the defence of Mother Earth", it takes for granted that neither the US government nor "the industrial megamachine" can be trusted to act in the interest of the environment.

Unfortunately, they don't believe ordinary people ever will either.

ARGUMENT

The usual right wing argument, that violent acts by "extremists" give the government a propaganda advantage, doesn't rate here.

For Earth First!, the mass of the population are hopelessly bound to the system anyway. The task of saving the environment has to be left to tiny groups of dedicated, anonymous "ecowarriors".

The book goes into enormous detail about the techniques ecowarriors have acquired. The simplicity of "tree spiking", once a matter of sinking a few long nails into trees to prevent loggers using chainsaws on them has apparently fallen victim to the superior resources of the state, in the shape of the US Forest Service.

The rookie tree spiker is now advised to make ceramic or quartz spikes and to put them in

Jello Biafra

IT IS NOT OFTEN that this paper reviews Punk records, but with the release of "The Last Scream of the Missing Neighbors" by Jello Biafra with American punk group D.O.A. there's a chance to remedy that.

Biafra is best known as the former lead singer of the Dead Kennedys. In the mid-1980s he was tried for obscenity after a campaign by the Moral Majority.

This record (as with the Dead Kennedys) shows a different side to America—a society divided between rich and poor, black and white, where kids turn to drugs in despair, or join the army to escape the poverty of the ghettos. But also a society where it is possible to fight back.

For Biafra the enemy is the ruling class; the multi-nationals, the government and religious power groups who are eating away at civil rights, the right to strike and increasing police powers to crush dissent.

They using the "Drug Problem" as a smoke screen to attack blacks and the poor; the military gets all the money it needs while children go hungry. And because they control the media, they can cover this stench with sweet smelling lies.

There are however problems with Biafra's politics. Because of his liberalism he supports the right of groups like the Klu Klux Klan to have their radio station, saying that even racists have democratic rights.

He is patriotic, seeing the right wing as destroying the "true America", and his criticism of the power structure comes across as a conspiracy theory.

Nevertheless, the album is an excellent critique of what Biafra calls "the dark shattered underbelly of the American dream".

—by Jamie Byrne

hand drilled holes above head height, taking care to glue bark over the spikes and hide the wood shavings.

Materials are best bought under assumed names. Back-packer disguises and ex-US Army night vision equipment are recommended—and to be really effective, thousands of trees may have to be spiked.

The potential injury to workers from this sort of sabotage is addressed often in *Ecodefence*. Tree spikes are to be placed above head height so the actual chainsaw wielder won't be injured.

Brakes on earth moving equipment must never be touched, aircraft must be tampered with so obviously that there is no risk of anyone flying in them...so innocent people don't get hurt.

This is just hypocrisy. Throughout the book there is a real contempt for people.

The majority of the population, who don't get involved in ecodefence, are "blobs". Trail bike riders and off-road drivers are "scum", "dildoheads", and "slavering morons".

The ecodefence magazine *Earth First!*, from which the information in this book is culled, supports removal of humanity from huge areas of the US, and in its letters page people merrily talk about how nice it would be if most of humanity was wiped out.

Earth First! have no intention of joining in any mass struggle against the ruling class, even if that class is responsible for the destruction of the environment.

"Monkeywrenching is not Revolutionary," the authors declare. "It does not aim to overthrow any social, political or economic system...even Republicans monkeywrench".

And in the chapter on "Security" it's suggested that "if you are engaged in serious monkeywrenching, avoid overt political activism, rallies, demonstrations and the like".

Doesn't that say it all?

—by Gerard Morel

A very British frame-up

By Mike Waterman

AT A TIME when Tim Anderson is languishing in jail in Australia as a result of a frame up, Paul Foot's new book, *Who Framed Colin Wallace?* is a timely reminder that it doesn't just happen here.

This is a gripping account of a very British frame-up, involving the secret services and the army. Unlike Tim Anderson, Colin Wallace was not a political activist but on the contrary, a loyal servant of the British state, indeed a Public Relations officer for the Army in Northern Ireland.

This involved putting out misinformation. Wallace was happy to discredit the so-called men of violence of the IRA and the ultra-right UDA, but increasingly he began to see that these were not the only targets.

UNREST

The backdrop for this case is unrest and revolt, not just by the Catholics in Ulster but by the workers in Britain. In 1974 a Labour government was elected and the establishment were very worried.

They were concerned that the Labour Party could not be relied on to discipline the workers, nor to take a hard stand on the IRA. A section of the secret service talked seriously about a coup to get rid of Harold Wilson's new Labour government.

Colin Wallace saw them attempt to smear these politicians by manufacturing sex or financial scandals. The code name for this operation was



COLIN WALLACE: the man who knew too much

"Clockwork Orange". He also saw something else. He received information that staff in a boy's home were sexually assaulting the inmates. He passed this on and nothing happened. It became obvious that these men were being protected.

It was later revealed that one of them, William McGrath, was an informant. He was a member of a Loyalist paramilitary group, and had been working for MI5 since the 50s. What comes through clearly in

this book is Wallace's indignation when justice is not being done. For us cynics it is starting to see the effect on people who have spent their whole lives accepting the lies about the justice system.

When he tries to point out that the secret service should not be smearing innocent politicians and that sex offenders should be stopped, the frame-up begins.

He is moved from Northern Ireland to Britain, and then sacked from the army for

leaking a document to a journalist (a regular part of his job).

Wallace fights to clear his name. He has to be shut up or at least totally discredited. The husband of a colleague of dies. Wallace is framed for murder.

As the case unfolds it becomes obvious to the reader that this was a meticulously planned murder and cover-up involving access to official information.

Wallace is convicted of manslaughter, and serves 6 years in prison.

When released he immediately continued his fight to reopen his case. He found that initial enthusiasm by the media changed when they sought approval for their stories.

He spoke to Yorkshire TV who prepared a documentary and then dropped it at the last minute. Another BBC programme spoke to Wallace but on the instructions of the Director General never showed the film.

The cover-up continued. In the six years to January 1990 four Junior Ministers, a secretary of state and Thatcher all denied in parliament the existence of "Clockwork Orange" and the nature of Colin Wallace's job. Finally in September last year he was paid 30,000 pounds compensation for unfair dismissal 15 years before.

However the truth about the frame-up of Colin Wallace has not been admitted. To do that would show up the true nature of the establishment. That is exactly what this book does so well.

The 'dinosaur' that refuses to die

THE MEDIA and a plethora of academic commentators have highlighted declining union membership to "prove" that the working class is disappearing and that unions are anachronistic in today's "post-industrial" society.

However even a cursory examination of the latest Australian Bureau of Statistics figures for union membership reveals that these arguments are nonsense.

While union coverage did decline significantly for much of the 80s, it has tended to stabilise over the last two years at 40.5% of the labour force, which by international standards is still quite high.

Furthermore the number of unionists has actually increased slightly—from 2,567,600 in 1982 to 2,659,600 in 1990.

This is not to deny that the decline in the rate of unionisation is a serious problem. But after eight years of union officials policing the wage cutting policies of the Hawke government it is a wonder that things are not even worse!

Union membership was knocked about badly by the recession of 1982-83 which disproportionately hit better organised areas such as manufacturing and mining.

In the recovery a large proportion of the new jobs were created in traditionally less well organised areas like the wholesale and retail trade, and finance, property and business services. This was compounded by the relative rundown of the heavily unionised public sector.

The union bureaucracy, bound as they were to the Accord, were slow to organise the growth areas of the economy.

Even worse, in one key growth area, finance, property and business services, the right wing officials of unions like the Clerks, the Bank and Insurance workers, allowed membership numbers to drop. Only over the last two years has union coverage in this sector edged back upwards to 29% down from 42% in 1982.

One reason advanced for declining membership is the "irrelevance" of unions to the growing number of women and young people in the workforce.

However, women are nowhere near as poorly organised as is widely portrayed—35% of women are unionised compared to 45% of men. And even these figures are misleading, for when we look at fulltime workers the gap

narrows—40% for women compared to 47% for men.

The number of women unionists actually rose from 861,000 in 1982 to 976,000 in 1990, while the number of male unionists declined 23,000.

Mick Armstrong demolishes some myths about union organisation

In some areas women are better unionised than men—30% of women salespeople and personal service workers compared to 19% of men, while among professionals 50% of women are unionised compared to 37% of men. Women part-timers are 26% unionised compared to 21.5% of men.

Furthermore, despite the failure of union officials to seriously fight for equal pay, for better child care facilities and to involve women in the day-to-day life of the union, it still definitely pays to belong. Unionised female full-time employees had median

weekly earnings of \$426 compared to \$394 for non-unionists, while for part-timers the gap was even greater.

Another issue played up in the press is the low membership of young people (25% of workers aged 15-19).

While at times officials almost seem to go out of their way to prevent young people getting involved, this is not new.

Even in 1982 only 31% of 15-19 year olds were unionised. One reason it is harder for young people to join is the much higher percentage of them in part-time jobs (41% of those aged 15-19 compared to only 16% of those aged 25-34).

Definitely there is no evidence that young workers are inherently anti-union; the proportion of young part-timers unionised is not significantly lower than older part-timers.

Nor are part-timers themselves impossible to organise, as can be seen from the fact that 46% of part-timers in workplaces of over 100 are unionised and 34% of those in workplaces of 20-99.

However in tiny workplaces of less than 10, which employ 485,300 part-timers, union

coverage is a dismal 9%. In the decisive sector of the economy, larger workplaces of 100 or more that employ almost a third of the workforce, 60.2% of all fulltime workers are unionised while for workplaces of 20-99, it is 49.2%.

In powerful sections like electricity, gas and water, union density has actually risen slightly from 78% in 1982 to 78.4%. In communications it is still 76% while in transport and storage it is 58% despite a serious 14% decline.

In mining, where the workforce has declined by 14%, unionisation has only fallen one percent to 63%, and the massively increased productivity of the remaining workers gives them enormous power.

This explains why even with the deepening recession the decisive sections of the ruling class fear outright confrontation.

The underlying strength of union coverage shows there is a strong base from which the movement can go forward and challenge the bosses—if it revives its fighting spirit—but that means confronting the class collaborationist politics of the Accord.



Contradictions over culture
 CAROLE FERRIER'S article
Marxism and Culture (The

the clear meaning that the writer intended. Artistic production can't control the meanings produced from it in the same way."
 What she says is correct in this important sense: it acts as a caution to the typical cultural reviews in *The Socialist*. In the same issue as *Marxism and Culture*, is Rob McCarthy's review of the band Roaring Jack. Rob forgives Jack's love songs on the grounds that other songs seem to clearly express some good political ideas. Hence, he

writes, Jack makes art which, unlike philosophy, can change the world. Even the review by Diane Fields, which Ferrier cites positively, criticises *The Cook, the Thief, etc* for not portraying the means of ending the social evils it deals with.
 One of ISO's trumpcards is its ability to rescue revolutionary Marxism from past errors, especially from Stalinism. Yet the similarity between the reviews in *The Socialist* and those in old-style Stalinist papers is striking.
 Allan Gardner, Brisbane

CLASS STRUGGLE IN THE LUCKY COUNTRY...

CES: HALT TO ACTION LEADS TO DEFEAT

MILITANTS in the unions have long made sick jokes about union officials "snatching defeat from the jaws of victory".

That's exactly what has happened with the CES dispute in Victoria.
 Management of the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) have been trying to push a restructure through the CES. Workers were asked to fill in surveys, giving their preference where they would like to work.
 At the same time over half of them were involved in promotion exercises, so they didn't know where they would like to work, because they didn't know what classification their jobs were.

After refusing to fill in surveys or to move offices on the day management chose, and striking in defence of members disciplined for refusing to move, public domain union members had the day pulled out from under them.
 Union officials have accepted a deal giving a tiny minority the chance to say where they want to work. The majority of members who stuck by the union and refused to take part in the restructure have been abandoned.
 A smaller-than-normal mass meeting in Melbourne voted narrowly to ditch this rotten deal, but was outvoted by country members, who are hardly affected by the reorganisation.
 The meeting was important because it played some role in holding together the fragile links formed across workplaces during the walkouts in early January.

By voting not to accept the PSU officials' deal, militants now have an example to point to when arguing that members aren't apathetic, that they will fight if they have to.
 It also showed quite clearly that it was the officials who weren't prepared to fight. They were afraid of the action getting out of their control, so they moved to stop it.
 At this stage, the PSU membership isn't well-organised enough to defeat the officials and keep the fight going. But many militants looked at the mass meeting as something of a moral victory.
 We proved to the officials that they couldn't always get their way. And we proved to ourselves that some of our newly built organisation still existed.
 The coming year is going to give us other opportunities to develop that organisation. The government is planning to cut CES staff by 600 in the next few months.
 We still have to argue to union members against the demoralisation that showed itself in the small size of the last mass meeting.
 We have to be clear that it was the cutting-off of strike action which led to the defeat of

by Bernadette Fallon (Northcote CES)

Sales of *The Socialist* went up to 30 from our usual 12. We handed out posters for people to put up in their offices, and collected signatures on a petition demanding the union officials take a stand against the war.
 People were also urged to come to the various demonstrations against the war and march with the union.

'Whose victory?' ask Hoechst workers

ASK ANY ex-Hoechst worker how they feel now their 13-week long dispute is over.
 I guarantee they won't see the result as "a victory for the union movement," as John Hallymore put it.
 For the workers at the centre of the dispute, it's been quite the opposite.
 Before the maintenance crews could return to work, they had to participate in a week-long "re-education" (brain washing) course.
 Management never intended to change anybody's attitude. Psychological pressure to drive as many as possible, if not all, of the "trouble makers" from the plant, was absolutely necessary for them.
 Of the 74 sacked maintenance workers, only 38 remain. These

were the people eventually allowed to return to work.
 Believing they had been vindicated by the investigations into the handling of dangerous chemicals, the workers refused to work alongside contract labour (scabs) brought in during the strike.
 The company promptly sacked them (later reinstating them) for this stand.
 There were three main demands in the original dispute: reinstatement of the sacked shop steward, Helmut Gries; a review of health and safety procedures; and the re-employment of the 74 sacked maintenance workers.
 The officials successfully played one demand against the other, effectively isolating the question of reinstating Helmut Gries.
 It's now unlikely the maintenance workers will be

BOOKMARKS

Class struggle and Women's Liberation
 by Tony Cliff. Looks at the long struggle for women's liberation from the present. \$12.00 plus \$1.50 postage.
State Capitalism in Russia
 by Tony Cliff. Pathbreaking analysis of how the laws of capitalism work in Russia. \$14.00 plus 1.50 postage.
The revolutionary ideas of Karl Marx
 Presents his basic ideas in a straightforward way. \$10.00 plus \$1.50 postage.
Israel, the Hijack State
 Israel's history is based on the dispossession and oppression of the Palestinians. \$3.50 plus \$1.50 postage.
TO get your books by mail, send your order plus cheque to: Bookmarks, GPO Box 1473N, Melbourne 3001. Please include your phone number in case we need to contact you.

Lesbians, gay men 'take back the streets'

ON 20 JANUARY, over 1500 gays, lesbians and homosexual rights activists took to the streets of Sydney to protest against the recent bashings and abuse encountered by the lesbian and gay community.
 The march was one of the recent positive moves towards mobilising the people who suffer this violence. Lesbians and gay men are also organising their own patrols to protect one another on the streets.
 Unfortunately, speakers at the start of the rally once again emphasized actions from above—especially education in schools and police liaison.
 The speakers urged victims to report bashings to the police. We should demand the cops take reports of bashings seriously, but little or no action has been taken to aid the victims.
 —by Miriam Rothermel and Sandra Cordova
 Some people seem to have forgotten that the cops have not been on our side, as shown by the savage arrests of protestors and numerous anti-Fred Nile rally, and the arrest of 7 ACT UP demonstrators in front of the US Consulate last April.
 But ISO members at the rally were pleasantly surprised by the heckling of speakers pushing the pro-police line, and the spontaneous hissing from part of the crowd when Police Gay/Lesbian Liaison Officer Sue Thompson's name was mentioned. And everyone enjoyed the feeling of power as we marched into Oxford St shouting "Out of the bars and into the streets" amid a din of whistles. Rallies like this one show us the start of the positive alternative to relying on the police.

Fight for ACT schools

CANBERRA unions and community groups have linked up to fight school closures.
 The Liberal-led ACT Government wants to "save" money by closing or amalgamating a number of community based schools. The community has resisted these moves. Save Our Schools groups have now set up pickets at some sites the Government wants closed or refurbished.
 These community groups approached the ACT Trades and Labour Council and building unions for support. The TLC imposed bans on a number of the sites and decided not to cross any community picket lines.
 As the new school year approaches, the Government's education plans are now in chaos. In desperation the Government approached the Industrial Relations Commission, which recommended that the unions lift their bans. However if the community pickets continue and the unions respect them (both of which are likely) there will be no work done on the sites.
 By linking up with trade unions the community groups have a good chance of beating the closures.
 —by John Passant

Home on the range

DON Chipp, the man who left the Liberal Party because it was too conservative, was ropable after seeing Arabs demonstrating in Australia. "Arrest the bastards and ship them off to their homeland" he said.
 Wonder if the former Navy Minister thinks the same about American pilots killing Arabs in the Gulf?

Gulf Man in Panama

ADMIRAL Stanfield, President Carter's CIA chief, recently revealed that the agency was paying General Noriega \$110,000 a year until 1977.
 When the presidency changed in 1981, Noriega was rehired by Reagan's CIA boss, one George Bush.

Loco-motives

APPARENTLY BBC radio officials have listed 76 songs "unsuitable" for playing during the Gulf war. They include John



CHEAP SHOTS

Lennon's anti-war *Give Peace a Chance* and *Imagine*. Also on the list are Eric Clapton's *I Shot the Sheriff* and Biondie's *Atomic*.
 If Aussie radio stations follow suit they might not play anything by Kylie Minogue. She joined the tens of thousands of marchers on the first Melbourne rally against the war. Station bosses might worry that Kylie would inform Americans they shouldn't *Step Back in*

Reward for incentive

HARRY Murdie worked for British Gas. He reckoned he could design a better machine for detecting leaks, and he did—using 100 hours of his own time and supplying all the parts himself. It saved his employers £60,000 in the first year.
 They then sacked him. So, if you have an idea that could save your boss time and money—keep it to yourself.

Don't legislate

SO QUEENSLAND is following the rest of the world and introducing a Freedom of Information Act.
 This sort of legislation has, of course, little to do with giving the public access to government documents.
 According to Victorian Attorney-General Jim Kennan, it's really all about improved record keeping, streamlined decision making and tighter report writing.
 It has also led to increased sales of the little yellow stick-on note paper. They can easily be removed, when the *FoI* request comes in.

What's up Doc?

SHONKY nursing homes have been getting lots of bad press lately. We thought it a bit much though when the Catholic Bishops complained about new Federal rules insisting that nursing home residents be able to choose their doctors.
 The Bishops were horrified. They said they were worried that the doctors could be into immoral practices like euthanasia.

May we quote you?

"We will take this right to the wire and wreck the stability of the Government."
 —Paper tiger Stewart West, threatening to split from the Hawke government if it sends more forces to the Gulf to attack Iraq
 "ACTUALLY, I'm going around in circles."
 —Mikhail Gorbachev
 "POLICEMEN were far less likely to perform themselves in court if they knew it would lead to a life being taken."
 —A British Tory MP justifying hanging
 "UNFORTUNATELY the people of Louisiana are not racists."
 —US Vice President Dan Quayle, after a former Ku Klux Klan leader nearly won office
 "I HAVE a strong suspicion we're going to fight for the interests of the United States."
 —Yevgeny Kobay, perceptive Estonian delegate to the USSR parliament, on the Gulf

Taste of their own medicine

IN BRITAIN as in Australia, police continue to stake out public toilets to entrap gay men while doing little to protect the victims of gay bashing.
 But sometimes the two trends combine in a way the police cannot have expected.
 Last year an English judge in Derby jailed two young men for beating up two undercover cops in a toilet. Seems their pose as gay men was a little too convincing.

Our challenge is to grow

By Phil Griffiths

Socialist meetings & ISO branches

MELBOURNE
 Phone (03) 629 3148.
 Write to: GPO Box 1473N, Melbourne, 3001.
 Meets every Monday night, 7.30pm, at Bookmarks, 1st floor, 328 Flinders St. City.
 Mon 4 Feb: PUBLIC MEETING —Stop US imperialism
 Mon 11 Feb: Israel, Zionism and the Palestinians
 Marxism for beginners: informal discussion group every Sat, 2pm.

SYDNEY
 Phone (02) 261 4862.
 Write to: PO Box 4338, Sydney South, 2000.
 Meets every Tuesday night, 7.00pm, Trades Hall, 4 Goulburn St. City.
 Tues 5 Feb: What is the real Marxist tradition?
 Tues 12 Feb: PUBLIC MEETING—Vietnam: How we won last time

BRISBANE
 Phone (07) 229 8832
 Write to: PO Box 328, Woolloongabba, 4102.
 Meets every Tuesday night, 7.00pm, Jamison Centre, ACT 2614.
 Tues 5 Feb: The real Marxist tradition
 Tues 12 Feb: Industrial Democracy

CANBERRA
 Write to: PO Box 2, Canberra Centre, ACT 2614.
 Meets every Monday night, 7.00pm, Blair Room, Canberra Workers' Club, Childers St. Civic.
 Mon 4 Feb: US imperialism from Vietnam to the Gulf
 Mon 11 Feb: Israel's role in the Middle East

HOBART
 We hold regular Marxist study groups. Details: PO Box 1886, Hobart 7001.

PERTH
 We hold regular Marxist study groups. Details: PO Box 521, Wanneroo 6065.

THE WAR in the Gulf has led to a profound and extremely rapid change in the political situation in Australia and opened up enormous opportunities for socialists.

It's fifteen years since we've seen such a wave of activity against the government—large, noisy demos organised at a moment's notice; 24 hour vigils that have now lasted three weeks; demos in the middle of the night, marches around the city twice a day at times, a vast number of informal groups organising against the war, including a growing number of workplace groups.
 Not only are the demos amongst the largest we have seen, but there are lots of young people very open to socialist ideas.
 At the Melbourne demo of 50,000, we sold 1000 copies of *The Socialist* in Sydney we sold 600 to the demo of 30,000 and 200 papers in Brisbane to a rally of 5000. In Perth, where we have never had a branch, four people sold 103 papers at the major demo.
 But again, the demo sales are not the most impressive. Sydney sold 400 papers in a week at its vigils and Melbourne XXX, and dozens of people have put themselves on our contact lists.

THE CHALLENGE facing us is to start to turn some of the people being radicalised into revolutionary socialists.

Our recent public meetings were large. More importantly our arguments about the war convinced seven people to join the ISO in Melbourne, six in Sydney, three in Brisbane and one in Canberra.
 This war did not come out of

The case for socialism

Haven't the people of Eastern Europe rejected socialism?
 Paul Foots marvellous new pamphlet sets out to rescue Marxism from the caricature of Stalinism.
 \$5.50 plus \$1.00 postage from Bookmarks, GPO Box 1473N, Melbourne, 3001. Please include a phone no. so we can contact you.

SOCIALIST DAY SCHOOL
The relevance of Marxism today
 Melbourne, Sunday 17 Feb
 Melbourne Uni students union from 11am
 Sessions: Marxism and Humanism
 Gorbachev—the new dictator
 Can capitalism save the environment?
 Further details (03) 629 3148

What we stand for

- SOCIALISM**
 Capitalism is a system of crisis, exploitation and war in which production is for profit, not human need.
 Although workers create society's wealth they have no control over production or distribution.
 We stand for socialism, the creation of a society in which the workers will make the decisions about the economy, social life and the environment.
 Countries like Russia, China and Cuba are not socialist. Workers under these state capitalist regimes also face the task of building their own revolutionary movement to smash the system and take control into their own hands.
- WORKERS' POWER**
 Only the working class has the power to create a society free from exploitation, oppression and war.
 We oppose imperialism, East and West, and support all national liberation struggles against imperialist domination.
 Australia is not an oppressed
- REVOLUTION, NOT REFORMISM**
 Socialism cannot be created by gradual reforms as some in the Labor Party believe. The capitalist state—parliament, the military, the law—is a weapon of class rule and must be smashed. There is no parliamentary road to socialism.
- INTERNATIONALISM**
 The working class exists in all countries and the struggle for socialism knows no national boundaries. We are for building an international movement organising to overcome national divisions between workers.
 Socialism cannot be built in a single country; socialist revolutions must be spread if they are to survive.
 We oppose imperialism, East and West, and support all national liberation struggles against imperialist domination.
 Australia is not an oppressed
- LIBERATION**
 The threat of nuclear annihilation is a product of capitalism and only socialism can end it.
 We fight for democratic rights and liberation. We are against the oppression of women, blacks, migrants and lesbians and gay men. All these forms of oppression are used to divide the working class. Combatting them is an essential part of building a united revolutionary struggle, that can create a socialist society free from oppression.
- REVOLUTIONARY ORGANISATION**
 Crucial to a workers' movement smashing the capitalist state is a revolutionary workers' party built out of the day to day struggles around economic and political issues. We are taking



A demonstration in Melbourne

thin air, but out of a system of brutal competition with great economic and military powers at the top.
 It is the same system that has produced "the recession we had to have", not to mention the hospital queues, run-down public transport and the crisis in the schools.
 It is by continually connecting the war to the system that socialists can show how it can be ended—by working class action both on the streets and in the workplaces.
 Our arguments about the war are important for building the movement. Right at the beginning, last August, we were almost alone in arguing against attempts to write condemnation of Iraq and appeals to the UN into the platforms of the coalitions we were active in—and we had some success.
 We also opposed the idea that sanctions "should have had time to work", since they were an integral part of Bush's drive to war.
 Activists who understand these issues are less likely to be disoriented by the various manoeuvres of Saddam Hussein, not to mention the hysterical frenzy in some of the media.
 Just as importantly, in terms of drawing new activists towards socialism, our politics enable us to oppose Gorbachev's invasions of Lithuania and Latvia whilst others on the left are either silent or equivocal.
 Socialists do not stand outside the movement, but are in the thick of things, arguing against all illusions in the system and trying to pose a way forward for the struggle.
 At this stage the movement is dominated by activists who have been campaigning for "peace" for years, if not decades. They

HOW, then, are we responding to the opportunities?

To relate to the radical change, we have—for the time being—shifted publication of *The Socialist* to a fortnightly schedule and changed the balance of the paper.
 It has to be a campaigning paper, answering the media distortions and the right wing arguments, and arguing for the way forward for the movement.
 It has to introduce the fundamentals of Marxism to a whole new audience never before involved in politics.
 Moreover, the movement has arisen out of a downturn in struggle that saw all kinds of right wing ideas become widely accepted—that men benefit from women's oppression, that people consume too much, that the working class is disappearing, that socialist organisation is oppressive.
 We have to answer these ideas as well, and this often involves longer, more complicated arguments drawing on the Marxist tradition.
 The fortnightly paper will need money. Not only will it cost more, but we are spending a lot more on leaflets, meeting rooms and placards. We are raising the price of the paper to 60 cents to help contain our losses; and asking both our members and supporters to contribute.
 All the key routines we emphasised in the past are now more critical than ever—selling the paper, using our sales to talk to people, getting their names so we can stay in touch with them; getting sympathisers to our regular meetings and involving them in activities such as selling our paper.

IN TERMS of activity around the Gulf, we need to emphasise three things.

These are: continuing with frequent, large demonstrations, building the movement amongst workers, and orienting to the campuses.
 Many activists want to get workers involved, but approaching the trade union office is not enough. Our organisation has to be at the forefront of setting up anti-war groups in our workplaces to give this activity a different emphasis—one that tries to organise amongst the rank and file and to get individual workers involved in campaigning against the war.
 Building workplace groups challenges socialists to be leaders in a whole new way; it allows us to show a way forward for the movement that points to the power of the organised working class and the depth of anti-war feeling means that this is an activity we can recruit from.
 Many will feel their workplace is too right wing to set up a group. In most cases, this will be mistaken. A group can be a success if it begins with just one other person. By standing up and being counted as the anti-war activist, you create the possibility of attracting people who now are soft opponents of the war or waverers.
 The campuses are no less important.
 Whilst workers ultimately have the power to stop the war, the atmosphere at the universities is likely to be extremely charged and very politically sharp when they resume in the next few weeks. We have every reason to expect that students will become a major source of energy and radicalism for the anti-war movement.
 Where the vigils continue, they will attract young people. Our role should be to politicise them. Comrades in Melbourne found no difficulty in organising workshops to discuss the issues through up—even very late at night.
 We also need to get accounts of this activity into the paper; to share our experiences with others who may want to do something, but feel it isn't possible.
 Every so often the ruling class goes too far and provokes a wave of anger at its brutality. At such times, socialists can break out of their isolation, grow rapidly and prepare to inflict a defeat on our rulers.
 This is one of those times.



I am interested in these ideas.

I want more information about the ISO

I want to join the ISO

Name

Address

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Clip and post to GPO Box 1473N, Melbourne, 3001 or your local branch

The Socialist

PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST ORGANISATION

No 246, 1 FEBRUARY 1991

60 CENTS

PROPAGANDA RULES IN...

MEDIA'S WAR OF LIES

EVERY OPPONENT of the Gulf War must have been sickened by the media's coverage.

It has one central purpose—to beat up support for every atrocity committed by the US-led forces in their drive to control the Middle East.

The reason for this is simple. The control of all major media outlets is in the hands of individuals and organisations that support this war.

Murdoch's papers, with their front page stories of "Iraqi atrocities", are an obvious example. Despite Hawke and Ray's rantings about a "paradise of prejudice", the pro-war ABC has not been a counterbalance to this.

Sydney's *Telegraph Mirror's* "No mercy for victims of war" is not about the tens of thousands of Iraqi civilians who have been killed. For them there is no mercy, and no responsibility for outrage.

The story turns out to be about a few captured US pilots—the very people who are rain-

By
Diane Fields

ing death and destruction on the civilian population of Iraq.

While much play is made of the West's commitment to "civilised warfare" via the Geneva Convention, none of the press gave more than a paragraph to the fact that Israel's refusal to provide gas masks to Palestinians in the Occupied Territories contravenes the Geneva Convention.

Over the forty years that Israel has occupied the land of the Palestinians, it has committed every war crime imaginable—from mass murder at the village of Deir Yassin in 1948 to torture and detention without trial for tens of thousands in the three years of the *intifada*.

SILENCE

While every media outlet from the ABC to the *Financial Review* to *Truth* ran extensive coverage of the Scud missile attacks on Israel, there was a deafening silence on what Israel's current 24 hour curfew in the Occupied Territories has meant.

After seven days of house arrest, during which Israeli troops have broken into houses, beaten, gassed, tortured and arrested Palestinians, 145 had been wounded, 68 arrested and 150 homes destroyed.

A young woman was killed by ten bullets to the face and chest as she sat on a balcony

feeding her baby.

But these unpalatable facts do not make up part of the Gulf War coverage—because they make "our side" look like the bunch of cut-throats they are.

If treatment of "the enemy" is the issue, why have we heard so little about the rounding up of Iraqis in Britain?

Some of the 65 held in Pentonville Prison are Iraqi opponents of Saddam Hussein. They face death if the British government manages to return them to Iraq.

Then there are the hostages that we haven't been told about. Britain, the US and Saudi Arabia are holding thousands of civilian hostages around military sites in the Gulf.

They are the migrant workers who do the real work in Saudi Arabia. Unlike Western media correspondents most of the migrant workers are not issued with gas masks.

The press and the electronic media have taken great delight in explaining in minute detail the specifications of the weapons of mass destruction that "we" have deployed in the Gulf.

But efforts to oppose this barbarism are at best trivialised and at worst ridiculed. Sydney's *Sunday Telegraph* on 27 January ran a large photo of a pro-war "rally" of 20 people (they said there were 100) and a slightly smaller photo of an anti-war rally of 10,000 (they said there were 5,000).

All of this is to bolster the line that it is right to support the war effort.



ABOVE: Some of the more "respectable" press. LEFT: The "gutter press" in the form of *Truth*. Small wonder that anti-Arab racism is increasing.



Press terror promotes racism

GLORIFYING the US-led war effort is only half of the media's campaign. The other side of the coin is to present "the enemy" as sub-human fanatics.

No human compassion is allowed to pollute the coverage of what happens to the Iraqis.

But the main form this offensive has taken is an enormous emphasis on supposed Iraqi terrorism.

The *Financial Review* ran a full page article on 25 January called "Australia takes on terror threat". While the bulk of the article was full of horror stories of what might happen, one paragraph mentioned that none of this was very likely at all.

The tabloids have run the same jingoism to whip up hatred of "the enemy", such as their witch-hunting of Arabs who "might" pose a terrorist threat. The Sydney *Sunday Telegraph's* reporting of the arrest of a Lebanese man in Sydney on 26 January highlights this.

Despite no evidence that Hamid

Taoube did anything more than talk to an undercover cop, he has been tried and convicted on the front page of the *Telegraph*.

The headline says it all: "Aussie Arab planned to hijack jet". The fact that the story is a complete beat-up is buried at the bottom of page two.

At a time when the authorities are making a great show of increasing security at airports, navy bases and the like, the media's emphasis on "Arab terrorism" encourages the real terrorists and thugs—anti-Muslim and anti-Arab racists.

In the second incident of its kind since the Gulf crisis began, a petrol bomb was thrown into a Sydney mosque in January. In Melbourne an active racist was arrested for attacking a Jewish target to make it look like the work of Arab Australians.

Arab women have been spat upon, beaten, and had lighted cigarette butts thrown into their cars since the Gulf crisis began.

People with Arabic names have begun to get abusive and threatening phone calls. For those unfortunate enough to

have the surname Hussein, the harassment has been virtually non-stop.

Sanctimonious editorials decrying these racist attacks as "un-Australian" simply won't wash. The attacks are a logical consequence of their hysterical "terrorism" campaign.

If the media can convince people that ordinary Arabs are the real danger, rather than the US-led war machine, they will have served their purpose well.

Journalists Against War

WHILE the media is a weapon in this war, journalists can take a stand against the war.

Journalists in Sydney are starting a group to participate actively in the anti-war movement.

If you want to be part of this activity, contact Martin Hirst on (02)261 4862.

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