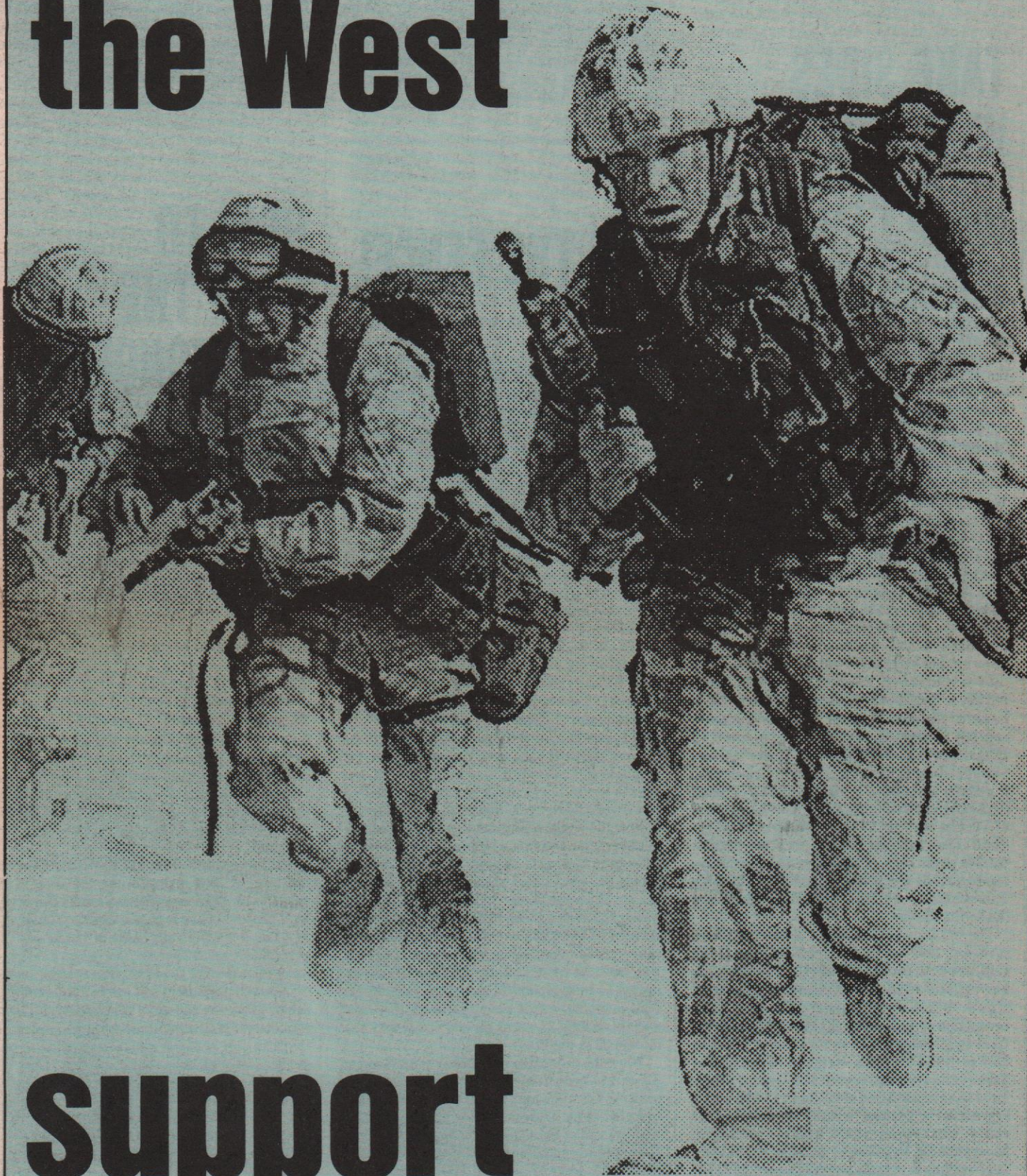


# the next step

Revolutionary Communist Party Weekly • 18 January 1991 • 50p

**GULF WAR SPECIAL ISSUE**

## Take sides against the West



## support the Iraqi people

The Western onslaught on Iraq is an act of barbarism. America, Britain and the other Western allies have launched a premeditated assault on the people of Iraq, using the most awesome military machine ever assembled to try to crush any resistance through sheer terror.

According to president George Bush Operation Desert Storm is necessary to 'stand up to aggression', to 'defend democracy' and to 'liberate Kuwait'. This is the same George Bush who authorised the bloody invasion of Panama, who backed the Contra rebels in Nicaragua, who has given aid to Pol Pot, who has fomented bloody wars in Mozambique and Angola, and who supports Israel's bloody suppression of the Palestinian people. George Bush is about as

committed to defending democracy and fighting for liberation as Margaret Thatcher is to fighting for European unity.

The real reason US and British forces are bombing Baghdad to rubble is to impose Western control over the region. Throughout the past century the West has dealt savagely with any action by the Arab people which conflicted with the interests of the imperialists. The Western attack on Iraq is the first shot in a new struggle between the imperialist powers and the people of the Middle East.

The Revolutionary Communist Party condemns the Western onslaught on the Middle East. We support the people of Iraq in their struggle against imperialist aggression.

18 January 1991

## TAKE SIDES WITH THE IRAQI PEOPLE

THE MILITARY ATTACK on Iraq is a barbarous assault by the Western superpowers on a country and a people long dominated by Western imperialism. We condemn Western militarism and demand the immediate withdrawal of Western forces from the Gulf. The governments of Britain, the USA, France and the rest have no right to dictate to the peoples of the Arab world. The West's attempt to impose its will by military might can only intensify the prolonged sufferings of the Middle East at the hands of Western imperialists. Our sympathies go to the Iraqi people and our solidarity goes to all the forces of resistance against Western militarism in the Middle East.

We repudiate the specious propaganda with which George Bush and James Baker, John Major and Douglas Hurd attempt to justify their military savagery. They claim a mission to save the world from the cruel despotism of Saddam Hussein. But Saddam Hussein is a routine third world dictator, with all the qualities that made the Shah of Iran, Ferdinand Marcos, the Somoza dynasty, General Pinochet and many more ruthless autocrats long-time favourites in Washington and London. Indeed a decade ago Saddam Hussein was a favoured ally when the West needed his repressive regime to wage a war against Ayatollah Khomeini's Iran. What is the difference between Saddam Hussein, now set up as the evil demon, and Hafez al-Assad of Syria, King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, Hosni Mubarak of Egypt or Turgut Ozal of Turkey, who are all now staunch allies of the West? Like Saddam Hussein they are ruthless despots at the head of repressive and reactionary regimes. All have terrorised opponents within their own countries. All have suppressed ethnic and religious minorities.

The Western propagandists claim that Iraq's invasion and occupation of Kuwait is an unprecedented act of aggrandisement in international relations that cannot be allowed to stand. What about Israel's invasion and occupation of the West Bank of the Jordan and the Gaza strip? What about its invasion of Lebanon and of Syria's Golan Heights? What about Turkey's invasion and partition of Cyprus, Syria's more recent occupation of Lebanon, or Morocco's aggression in western Sahara? Looking further afield, what about South Africa's prolonged annexation of Namibia, or its repeated military interventions in Angola and Mozambique? What about the USA's interference in Nicaragua, its invasions of Grenada and Panama, or its terror raids on Libya—to name but the most recent examples of its savage foreign policy? What about, to come closer to home, Britain's occupation of Ireland and its denial of national self-determination to the Irish people? The Western powers' concern about small nations is evidently highly selective and its commitment to national rights restricted to those cases where proclaiming these rights corresponds to the pursuit of imperialist interests.

We take no sides in the conflict between Iraq and Kuwait. The Iraqi invasion last August was a cynical gamble by Saddam in his campaign to enhance Iraq's status as a regional power. On the other hand, Kuwait's claim to be a nation is an absurdity. It is a peculiar product of imperial intrigue, in which the large majority of the population are immigrant workers. It is an oilfield with a flag, sustained by Western patronage and with no coherent national identity. The Iraq-Kuwait conflict is a squabble between two reactionary elites, neither of which offers any prospect of progress for the peoples of the region. But this is a matter for the Arab people themselves to resolve in the process of deciding what form of government they want. It is not a matter that can or should be resolved by Western interference, in any form.

The USA seized on the issue of Kuwait, not because of any peculiarities of Saddam Hussein or any objections to aggression in principle, but because it offered an opportunity to reassert America's status in the world at a time when the end of the Cold War had threatened American hegemony (see page 3). The USA may be a declining economic power but it remains the world's most powerful military force. Hence Washington militarised the Gulf crisis as a means of maintaining its leadership in world affairs.

The Gulf war is a straightforward conflict between Western imperialism and Arab nationalism. We take sides unequivocally with the Iraqi people. Imperialism is a force for barbarism and backwardness in the Middle East. It is only through the struggle against Western domination that there can be any hope of progress for the people of the Arab world.

## OFF THE FENCE!

THROUGHOUT THE WEST there has been a chorus of demands for the continuation of economic sanctions, for the pursuit of diplomatic initiatives, even for the damming of the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers as an alternative to all-out war. Such demands are popular among retired prime ministers in Europe, aspiring presidential candidates in the USA, and among liberals, radicals, clergymen and Labour politicians in Britain. From the perspective of the US and British establishments, this strategy has been ruled out as likely to prove ineffectual against Iraq and as leading to delays which would inevitably produce more divisions within the anti-Saddam coalition. However, this approach is also ineffectual from the perspective of those who want to build an anti-war movement in solidarity with the Arab people.

The central weakness of the 'war by other means' position is that it concedes the key arguments to the propagandists of Western militarism. It accepts that the main problems to be addressed in the Middle East are Saddam Hussein and Iraqi expansionism and that the only question is how Iraq is expelled from Kuwait—by military or by non-military methods. In other words it accepts the principle of Western intervention in the Gulf, but questions the tactics deployed by the Western powers to achieve their objectives. It assumes the right of the Western nations to act as a police force in the region, deciding who is a legitimate ruler, what is a legitimate regime, where its borders should be, what sort of weapons can be tolerated, etc, etc. Once you accept the right of the USA and Britain to interfere in the Middle East, then you are reduced to quibbling over the means. This is the slippery slope that begins with revulsion against war, but ends by supporting one form of warfare instead of another; limited air strikes versus large-scale bombing, conventional warfare rather than nuclear warfare. It means the end of any anti-war movement in the West.

When the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament places the slogan 'Iraq out of Kuwait' on its posters it displays its willingness to take sides in an internal squabble in the Middle East. At the same time, it refuses to raise the slogan 'US/Britain out of the Gulf'—or any variation on this theme. This desire to sit on the fence over the crucial issue in the Gulf war can only paralyse the growing anti-war movement in the West. CND reinforces the message of Western propaganda about Saddam Hussein and Iraq while equivocating over the real force for militarism in the region. It is ironic that CND should feel the need to take such a staunch stand in defence of Kuwaiti national sovereignty when for 20 years it has failed to uphold the national rights of the Irish people in their conflict with Britain. The common theme is a refusal to identify the enemy at home—British imperialism.

In a similar way CND's emphasis on the dangers of Iraq acquiring nuclear weapons has played into the hands of Western militarism. In Bush's first statement on the bombing of Iraq on Thursday morning he claimed that the first objective of the US military was to destroy Iraq's nuclear potential. Bush might well tell his CND critics that 'if you're serious about stopping Saddam Hussein from getting nuclear weapons, then the only way to guarantee this is to bomb his bases—as Israel did in 1982'. While getting embroiled in this sort of debate, CND seems to have lost sight of the vast stockpile of conventional (and nuclear weapons) being directed by the USA and Britain against Iraq.

The main problems of the Middle East are not Saddam Hussein and Iraq, but Western imperialism in all its forms, including its imposition of the state of Israel as a Western

garrison in the region and the oppression of the Palestinian people. The internal problems of the Middle East are matters for the peoples of the region themselves, not for the Western powers. Our responsibility is to oppose all forms of Western interference in the region, not to quibble about what form it should take. We say to CND, and to all those who oppose the Gulf war in favour of war by other means, that it is time to get off the fence and take on the enemy at home. Britain cannot play a progressive role in the Middle East. Let the people of Iraq deal with Saddam Hussein; our task is to deal with John Major and George Bush and all the other Western rulers. Indeed, if we can turn the existing anti-war sentiment in the West into an anti-imperialist movement that weakens Western militarism from within, we can make a major contribution to the liberation of the Arab world.

## HOW TO STOP THE WARMONGERS

THE KEY TO PREVENTING British war-mongering abroad lies in winning the propaganda war at home. We need to challenge the establishment's case for war in the Gulf and promote the arguments for the need to build solidarity with the Arab people.

The propaganda war is key to the task of building an effective anti-war movement for two reasons. First, the Tories need a domestic consensus in favour of war to pursue successfully their Gulf strategy. Second, it is clear that they are finding it difficult to create such a consensus. The huge demonstrations in London and elsewhere following the Western assault on Iraq show the polarisation of public opinion over the Gulf war and the depth of public opposition to it. This provides the basis for the creation of a new kind of anti-war movement. By taking on the government's propaganda machine, we can expose the arguments of the warmongers, break the domestic consensus and win a substantial number of people to the side of anti-imperialism. We would then be in a position realistically to challenge the war drive.

The nervousness of the Tory government about the lack of backing at home for their Gulf adventure is clear. Over the past month the Tories have gone all-out to militarise British politics and to create a much greater sense of war fever. The government has deliberately played up a series of issues related to the war in an effort to swing public opinion and put Britain on a war footing. From the debate about the call-up of reservists to the panic about terrorist attacks, from the suggestion that all Iraqis in this country could be interned to the publication of plans to censor the news, from the preparation of hospitals to receive the wounded to the talk of possible conscription, the Tory strategy has been to organise a high-profile political campaign to bring war fever into every home—as well as laying the ground for a more repressive society.

The Tory campaign demonstrates that the government recognises both the need to win domestic support and the difficulty it faces in doing so. It has been forced to militarise British society in an effort to create a domestic consensus. But this strategy is a double-edged sword. In politicising the war, the government has ensured a greater polarisation around the issue and provided an opportunity for anti-war campaigners to seize the initiative. To do that we need to engage in the battle of ideas ourselves and to launch our own propaganda offensive.

The key political argument we have to win, as we stress throughout this special issue of *the next step*, is the need to take sides against Western imperialism. By polarising public opinion around the issue of imperialism we can lay the basis for a real anti-war movement. Once people in Britain begin to take action in solidarity with the peoples of the third world—that is when we can begin to challenge the Western war drive.

It is important to recognise that the Gulf war represents but the first assault in a new era of militarism. As the old order crumbles and the world moves into a new period of uncertainty and instability we can expect many more Western military adventures in the third world. Through establishing an anti-imperialist anti-war movement now we can lay the basis for preventing the much bloodier wars of the future.

## AMERICA'S PROBLEMS HAVE JUST BEGUN

AS WE GO TO PRESS the impact of the first wave of the Western assault remains unclear. However, given the overwhelming economic and technological superiority of the Western forces over those of Iraq a speedy military victory seems likely. Indeed it is clear that the USA would not hesitate to use nuclear weapons against Iraq if there were any prospect of a drawn-out conflict. However, military victory over Iraq would only mark the beginning of a new phase of much more profound long-term difficulties for the West. The scale of the Western assault will inevitably provoke a wave of anti-Western sentiment throughout the Middle East and beyond that will, in the long term, accelerate the decline of US (and British) influence and destabilise pro-Western regimes. Military victory over Iraq is likely to prove a political disaster for the West.

While the USA and its stooges may succeed in destroying Iraq's military resistance, occupying Iraq and reconstituting its regime is likely to prove a more difficult task. There is likely to be continuing internal opposition, particularly as America will have to maintain a permanent military presence in the region. There are likely to be rival claims on Iraqi territory from Syria, Iran, Turkey and the Kurds all of which will create new tensions. The rulers of Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Syria, already unpopular at home, are likely to face growing hostility for their shameful role in helping the Western powers to destroy an Arab country and brutalise its people. The position of Israel will be thrown into question as it becomes increasingly superfluous to American needs and Palestinian resentments intensify.

The Western allies have grudgingly gone along with the USA in its adventure in the Gulf. Only Britain, America's most loyal poodle, has thrown its full weight into the onslaught against Iraq. Britain too is a declining imperial power, desperate to compensate for its economic and political weaknesses by flexing its military muscle. The other major capitalist powers have all indicated that they are not likely to continue to indulge the old war horses in future conflicts. Even before the war started it was clear that the USA's allies were pursuing their own interests rather than simply rubber-stamping US policy. France has taken the lead in proposing diplomatic resolutions, more to place itself as power-broker in a post-war settlement than in any serious attempt to forestall war. Germany has taken advantage of the conflict to send its air force to Turkey, to establish the legitimacy of its military activities outside the European area for the first time since the defeat of Adolf Hitler. Japan too has discreetly stepped up its military profile, making clear that, while this time it is prepared to finance the USA's initiative, in any future conflict it will insist on a greater say in the formation and execution of policy.

The USA's victory over Iraq is certain to intensify conflicts both within the Middle East and within the Western alliance. Hence the Gulf war is not going to be the 'war to end all wars'—in the same way that neither the first nor the second world wars fulfilled that promise. The first hot war of the post-Cold War period indicates the opening of a new phase of inter-imperialist rivalry and third world instability. This is not the end, but the beginning of the conflicts required to reconstruct a new world order. For as long as the capitalist system exists, it has no other way of organising and reorganising its pattern of world domination.

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# MADE IN THE WEST

**T**he Western powers have blamed Saddam Hussein for the Gulf war. George Bush and John Major have both claimed that the conflict started when Iraq invaded Kuwait last August. In reality it is the West that is responsible for the bloodshed.

The cause of the Gulf war is the attempt by the USA to assert its role as global policeman. America is intent on using its massive military arsenal to remind the world that it is still the number one power in the world. From Washington's point of view, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait merely provided a convenient pretext for the USA to flex its military muscles.

The Western attack on Iraq is the result of the tensions unleashed by the break-up of the old world order over the past 18 months. The collapse of Stalinism and the end of the Cold War have thrown into disarray the framework through which the major powers organised their affairs, created

tensions among the imperialist powers and have called into question America's leadership of world affairs. This is the background to the Western invasion of the Gulf.

The collapse of the Eastern bloc just over a year ago was initially greeted with glee by the Western powers. Politicians and pundits used every available opportunity to hammer home the message about the 'failure of communism' and the 'triumph of capitalism'. At the time the West appeared to have won a resounding victory. Many in the West confidently expected to see a peace dividend, arguing that the end of the Soviet threat would allow Western nations to transfer resources from military to welfare and social projects.

**Both the West's triumphalism and the hopes of peace have proved remarkably short-lived.**

The end of the Cold War not only signalled the demise of Stalinism, it also made manifest America's difficulties in asserting its global

hegemony. America's relations with the main Western powers were premised on the need jointly to combat the supposed Soviet threat. The presence of the 'Red Menace' allowed America to rally the other Western powers behind its leadership. Anti-communism had provided the world with its ideological moorings in the period following the Second World War. The Cold War was the glue that held the Western Alliance together and allowed America to institutionalise its hegemony of world affairs. It gave America the leeway to suppress rivalries among the major imperialist powers and to establish a period of remarkable harmony in the Western Alliance. Today neither the glue nor the harmony exists.

Even before the Cold War had ended it was clear that there were growing tensions among the imperialist powers, and in particular between America, Germany and Japan. Over the past two decades America has been outpaced by the more

dynamic economies of Germany and Japan. Today Japan, for example, has a gross national product equivalent to 60 per cent of that of the USA. In key areas of industrial production, such as automobiles and microchips, Japan is far ahead of America. As America began to lose its economic supremacy it was increasingly forced to use its military prowess to assert its leadership.

Despite America's economic decline it remains the pre-eminent military power in the world. The Cold War had provided a military framework for the USA to organise its leadership of world affairs. Deprived of the Soviet Union as the 'evil empire' against which America could rally the West, Washington has looked around for another suitable threat. Iraq's invasion of Kuwait provided a convenient alternative bogey—Saddam Hussein as the 'new Adolf Hitler'. The militarisation of the Gulf crisis was the result.

**George Bush seized on the issue of the invasion of Kuwait, not because he objected in principle to Saddam's actions, but because it offered an opportunity to reassert America's status in the world.**

Hence from the start the Bush regime went all-out to internationalise its offensive against Iraq, to ensure that the United Nations endorsed its actions, to keep the European allies on its side and to keep loyal Arab regimes in the Western camp.

The withdrawal of Soviet support from its client states in the Middle East ensured that America had a free hand in dictating the terms in the Gulf. In the past few years Moscow has dropped its support for liberation struggles and client states around the world in an attempt to foster better relations with the West and persuade it to bail out the bankrupt Soviet economy. When the Gulf crisis broke, president Mikhail Gorbachev dumped Moscow's longstanding policy of support for Iraq, which had received considerable military assistance from the Soviet Union. Instead the Soviet Union lined up with the West.

## Barbaric

The logic of militarisation has inevitably forced America to continue to escalate the Gulf crisis. America militarised the crisis to reassert its global supremacy. To maintain its leadership, Washington has been forced over the past five months to pour more and more troops into the region and continually to raise the stakes. The process culminated in Thursday's barbaric assault on Baghdad.

The Gulf war is not a product of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. It is the result of the Western invasion of the Gulf which itself is a product of the tensions unleashed by the break-up of the old world order. The Gulf war was planned and executed from the corridors of power of Washington and Whitehall.

Today's war in the Gulf is the result of the new tensions unleashed by the changing world order. But there has never been a time this century when the West has not intervened in the region. Every one of the conflicts and wars that now bedevil the region is the result of Western manipulations, intrigues or direct intervention.

**Western intervention has been the key factor which has shaped both the geography and the politics of the Middle East.**

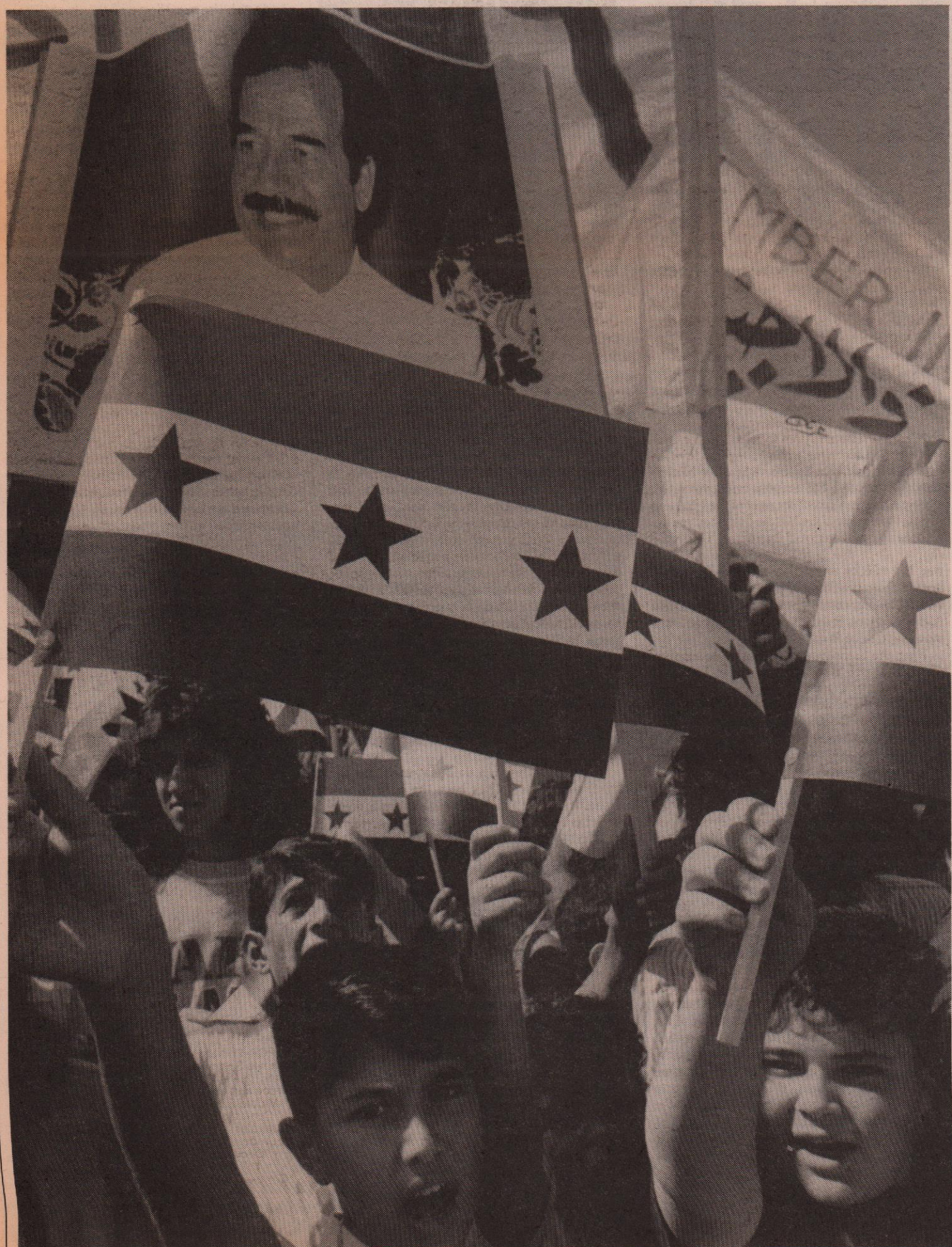
After the First World War the Western powers, and in particular Britain and France, carved up the Middle East, redrawing boundaries, establishing new states and imposing stooge rulers and regimes. Both Iraq and Kuwait are products of imperialist domination. Neither existed as a separate country prior to the British occupation of the area.

## Subservient

The modern Kuwaiti state is a totally artificial creation. Before granting independence to Iraq, Britain carved out the oil-rich region of Kuwait as a separate 'nation'. By creating such a super-rich statelet Britain could bolster conservative rule in the country and insulate it from radical developments in neighbouring Iraq. At the same time Britain hoped to weaken Iraq by depriving it of substantial oil wealth and restricting its access to the sea. Through this scheme Britain created two weak states rather than a single more balanced one. And just to make sure of its control over Kuwait, Britain picked out the al-Sabah family as the local leaders who would be most subservient to British interests and granted them royal status.

Such manoeuvres have taken place throughout the Middle East. The Kurds were deprived of the right to self-determination as their homeland was carved up between present-day Iran, Iraq and Turkey. Britain backed the first waves of mass Zionist colonisation of Palestine that were to lead to the creation of the Israeli state. Since the Second World War, the imperialist powers have bankrolled Israel to act as the Western policeman in the region, underwriting its bloody suppression of the Palestinians and backing its wars against Arab states.

Every conflict in the Middle East has 'Made in the West' written all over it. Until the West is forced out of the region, the bloodshed will continue.



For the people of the Middle East, Saddam Hussein has become a symbol of resistance to Western aggression

# the next step

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## HANDS OFF THE MIDDLE EAST

# TAKE SIDES WITH THE IRAQI PEOPLE

There has been widespread revulsion in the West over the military assault on Iraq. Even before George Bush launched Operation Desert Storm on Thursday, hundreds of thousands of people had taken to the streets of Britain, Europe and America in opposition to war. In Britain, opinion polls have shown that some 40 per cent of the population are opposed to military conflict. In Europe anti-war sentiment is even stronger. In America both public opinion and the establishment have been bitterly divided.

The onset of war has forced the establishment to close ranks on both sides of the Atlantic. But the huge protests throughout Britain, Europe and America on Thursday showed the continuing groundswell of popular anti-war feeling.

The depth of opposition to the Gulf war is positive. It shows the difficulties the ruling class throughout the West is having in establishing a culture of militarism. It also provides the raw material from which we can fashion an effective opposition to the war drive.

However, to create a determined anti-war movement we need to do more than just say 'no' to war. We need to win the argument that people must take sides in the conflict. From the start of the Gulf crisis the Revolutionary Communist Party has argued that the conflict is not one between Saddam Hussein and the 'world community' but between the Arab people and Western imperialism. It is a conflict in which the West is trying to secure its domination of the region. Our interests are not the same as those of George Bush or John Major, but lie with the people of the Middle East. The only way to stop the warmongers is by supporting the struggle of the Arab people against Western intervention. Unfortunately this is an argument the anti-war movement has failed to win—or even to address.

In an effort to win as much support as possible the anti-war movement has tried to find a middle ground between backing

the gung-ho chauvinism of the warmongers and organising total opposition to Western intervention. Most peace campaigners accept that the principal problem in the Gulf is Saddam Hussein and that Iraq must be forced out of Kuwait. However, they argue, war is not the best way to achieve such an aim. The *New Statesman*, for example, argued that 'war against Saddam Hussein and Iraq would be justified' but thought it would not be 'wise'. Similarly, the Labour left weekly *Tribune* argued that 'a war in the Gulf is not necessary' to evict Iraq from Kuwait. It is an attempt to oppose war without taking sides against the West.

Such an approach can never tackle the drive towards war because it accepts the basic argument of the warmongers: that there is a need for Western intervention in the Gulf to stop Saddam. As a consequence anti-war campaigners have been drawn into a debate not about how to stop an attack on Iraq, but about what form that attack should take. Thus Labour leader Neil Kinnock argued that it was too early to launch a military attack. Tony Benn wants to carry on with sanctions and starve the Iraqis into submission rather than bomb them to surrender. CND is opposed to the

use of nuclear, chemical or biological weapons in the Gulf. Others argue for tactics such as damming up the Euphrates and Tigris rivers rather than organising a full-frontal assault on Iraq.

None of these arguments is an alternative to war. Each is simply an alternative war plan. Once it is accepted that the West has the right to evict Iraq from Kuwait, the initiative inevitably passes to the politicians and the generals who will organise that eviction. By accepting the need for Western intervention in the first place, such arguments in fact pave the way to war.

So long as anti-war protesters agree that Saddam Hussein is the key problem they will never be able to challenge the war drive. In fact there is nothing particularly bad, mad or evil about Saddam or his activities that should single him out for special treatment. He is certainly a brutal dictator—but no more so than many other third world leaders. The Iraqi regime is certainly repressive—but no more so than countries such as Saudi Arabia or Syria, both of which are in the Western camp in the Gulf conflict.

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait was not

particularly notable either. Britain originally carved Kuwait out of Iraq and established it as an artificial state to deprive Iraq of its oil wealth and its access to the sea. Iraq's forced annexation of Kuwait is no less legitimate than was the original forced separation of the two states. In any case, in a region where the imperialist powers drew state boundaries to suit their convenience, border disputes, incursions and invasions are commonplace.

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait was not the cause of the Gulf conflict. It was simply the pretext for the Western invasion of the Gulf. The Gulf war is not about the 'liberation of Kuwait' or the 'defence of democracy', but about the maintenance of Western power in the region. It is a conflict between Western imperialism on the one hand and the aspirations of the Arab people on the other. However brutal Saddam Hussein may be, and however repressive his regime, Western imperialism is a far greater obstacle to the Arab people in their struggle to achieve their freedom.

For more than a hundred years the West has interfered in the affairs of the Arab people, creating states, fomenting divisions and imposing stooge regimes. A century of humiliation at the hands of the imperialists has imbued the people of the Middle East with a burning hatred of the West. That is why there is such popular support for Saddam Hussein—not because most people support Saddam's repressive policies but because they regard the Iraqi president as a champion of Arab dignity against Western domination.

The needs of Western imperialism and the aspirations of the Arab people are mutually exclusive. That is why there is no middle ground in the Gulf conflict. We can either support the West or we can support the people of the Middle East. If we want to stop the war drive we need to stop the warmongers. That means taking sides with the Arab people against the Western aggressors. When it comes to fighting against war there can be no compromise.

Taking sides against Western imperialism means opposing not just the act of war, but any means by which the Western powers try to secure their objectives—whether they are economic, diplomatic or military. Economic sanctions, political pressure or the damming of rivers are just different ways for the West to force the peoples of the third world to submit to its dictates. Such action should be no more acceptable than is an air-strike on Baghdad.

There is one further reason why it is important to take an uncompromising stand against imperialism. The Gulf war is only the first shot in a new period of turmoil and conflict in which the Western powers are gearing up to secure their interests against both each other and against the third world. If the Western powers can intervene in the Gulf today, what is to stop them doing the same to other parts of the world tomorrow? If we do not challenge the right of the West to force Iraq to submit to its dictates—whether by economic sanctions or by military attack—then we will be giving new legitimacy to Western militarism. That is why it is essential that we take sides in the Gulf war, against the West and with the Iraqi people.

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