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# AURORA

Broadsheet of the Internationalists

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# This War is a Class War!

The imminent invasion of Iraq is not just a war on the people there. Like all wars in capitalism's imperialist epoch this war is part of the way the system reproduces itself. The imperialist powers in 1914 started the modern epoch by going to war not only to solve their own economic problems but also to try to prevent the rising working class from ending the system of class privilege and exploitation. The situation is no different today. The US and UK ruling class hope to drag us behind their war banner and to abandon all our attempts to fight for a decent existence. War creates a sense of powerlessness. If we cannot stop them (and pacifist demonstrations and candlelit vigils won't be enough to do that) then what is the point of struggling for better wages or working conditions? This is precisely what they want us to think.

This is why we salute those workers who have fought against the war by fighting for their own interests. The firefighters have refused to be cowed by the poisonous press campaign against them. The simple fact is that the state which is prepared to spend £3.2 billions (and that's just for starters) to invade Iraq is not prepared to give firefighters £8 an hour. The unions unsurprising cancellation of the firefighters strikes "to allow for negotiations" is a climbdown which betrays the firefighters and gives the green light for war. The British state would have had to think twice (as the Chief of Defence Staff General Boyce admitted) about using troops to cover the strikes whilst a quarter of its armed forces were in the Middle East.

We also salute the two Glasgow train drivers who refused to transport ammunition to the Glen Douglas military base, the largest NATO weapons store in Europe. Nor should we forget the US dockers who cost the US \$2 billions a day with their strike last September. They too had to put up with the "unpatriotic" jibes which were

will be just the first of many, as first revenge attacks spring up from all around the Middle East, and then the divisions amongst the leading imperialist powers will deepen (see accompanying article).

Human society is at a cross roads. Either the capitalist gangsters destroy

us barbarism or, as they fight to control the planet, we fight for a world without frontiers, without money and without classes or standing armies. This is not a utopian vision. Workers throughout history have put an end to war. The Vietnam War ended in the killing of officers ("fragging") and the social disintegration of the "Great Society". The First World War came to an end once the working class could stand it no more. Whilst strikes and mutinies occurred in the British and French armies in 1917, it was the workers' revolution in Russia which spread to Germany and Austria by November 1918, that finally ended the slaughter.

The lesson is clear. Only by putting an end to capitalism and its rapacious drive for profit will we be able to put an end to war. We have a world to lose - if we leave the ruling class to decide our fate...

*Demonstrations against war in the USA have been as strong as anywhere*

much stronger in the US around the anniversary of September 11th. Bush forced them back to work by using the full power of the state claiming that they were "endangering American security". In fact he put our case for us:

*These ports load the ships that carry supplies to our men and women in uniform. These ports also receive parts and materials used by our defence contractors to complete projects and maintain military equipment.*

In other words, we have the capacity in our own hands to stop the war machine. We make the commodities, and the weapons, and we transport them. If we collectively strike against war production we can sabotage their efforts to destroy humanity. For make no mistake, that is what their greed will bring us to. This war will not end with the collapse of the Baghdad regime. It

## Iraq Oil, Blood and Class

Humanity is once again about to experience one of its defining moments. The spectre of war is looming upon us. U.S. imperialism is about to unleash its fury upon the people of Iraq. Every day, the U.S. State apparatus is waging a preparatory propaganda war on the world scale to prepare public opinion for its bloody onslaught. This war is once more presented to us as a fight for freedom and world security against the dastardly regime of Saddam Hussein and his weapons of mass destruction.

We have absolutely no sympathy for Saddam and his henchmen. During the Gulf Crisis of 1990 we wrote:

*Saddam is an imperialist (albeit on a smaller scale) who has put to death thousands of Iraqi workers (not to mention the half million who died fighting on behalf of Western and Soviet imperialism on the Iranian front).*

However, if Saddam is certainly an enduring threat to his own population (which capitalist leader isn't?), it is highly doubtful that he now represents much of a menace outside the borders of Iraq. Iraq suffered tremendously during the Gulf War and is economically and militarily drained by the ordeal of nearly 12 years of a very harsh embargo and continuous bombardments. Iraqi society has been reduced to the state it was in many decades ago. It is estimated that one million people have died, half of them children. The economic infrastructure has been shattered and the military arsenal has disintegrated. Whatever Saddam may have left in terms of germ

and chemical warfare capabilities was given to him by the U.S. between 1985 and 1989. During this period, we know by Congressional testimony from 1994, that the U.S. military sent him quantities of the West Nile Virus, E. coli, anthrax, botulism and a nerve gas rated a million times more lethal than sarin! All this was to be used against his and the U.S.'s rivals. Who then's use of weapons of mass destruction constitute a threat to humanity?

Why then is Bush so hell-bent on war? It is obvious that the arms issue also invoked by his pal Blair is no more than a pretext for an assault that has much more devious objectives. Saddam's purported weaponry is not what is at stake. The Daily Mirror dubbed Blair's first dossier as 'being full of soggy facts'. Downing St's latest "new proof" of Iraqi transgressions was drawn from a variety of publicly accessible (and old) academic sources (including *Jane's Defence Weekly*).

The title of a September 15<sup>th</sup> article in the Washington Post gives us a better clue: 'In Iraqi War Scenario, Oil is Key Issue'. Indeed, oil production and its control is of the utmost importance. World oil production is expected to reach a peak between 2008 and 2010 and then begin an irreversible decline. In a context where the U.S. is ever more unsure of its great Saudi Arabian supplier, the old Oklahoma and Texas oilfields are becoming exhausted and even the Alaskan ones are running out. The different imperialist powers are competing to

*continued on other side*

### For contact

with the Communist Workers Organisation either write to:  
PO Box 338  
SHEFFIELD S3 9YX

or visit our web site:

[www.ibrp.org](http://www.ibrp.org)

E-mail:

[cwo@ibrp.org](mailto:cwo@ibrp.org)

Read our journals:

Revolutionary Perspectives and  
Internationalist Communist

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## Iraq Oil, Blood and Class

assure a steady and secure supply of oil in a steadily more explosive economic situation. France, Russia and other imperialist powers have been investing heavily in and around Iraq for this reason. The same edition of the *Washington Post* goes on to write:

*A U.S. ouster of Iraq President Saddam Hussein could open a bonanza for American oil companies long banished from Iraq, scuttling oil deals between Baghdad and Russia, France and other countries, and reshuffling world petroleum markets, according to industry officials and leaders of the Iraqi opposition.*

But there is another issue. The US wants to defend the primacy of the dollar on the oil market, because this is a perfect source of parasitic revenue for the US, estimated at around 500 billion of dollars annually. This is the material condition for the survival of an American economy which is seriously in crisis. In the meantime the other imperialistic (great or small) powers are getting impatient with these conditions where they have to pay dollars for oil and thus pay tax to the US, which is why they are operating in both Iraq and Iran, which are both ghettoized by the embargos imposed by the US.

### The Thieves Fall Out

This is why even as it expands, the NATO alliance is at breaking point. There is no diplomatic polite language between the French and Germans and the US Governments. Saddam Hussein's recent decision to swap Iraqi dollar reserves for Euros has not only led to a short-term financial gain but has also alerted others (such as Putin in Russia) to the possibility of breaking the US stranglehold on the control of the world's oil supplies.

Iraq's oil reserves are the second biggest in the world in a region that contains 2/3 of global petroleum reserves. The economic and geo-strategic importance of control over it is obvious. That is why France, Germany, Russia and China, among others are less than enthused by U.S. plans. The basis of their present resistance to war with Iraq is based on their own imperialist appetites. The U.S. is able to do what it is doing because its competitors do not have comparable strength. It's for this reason that, despite the tensions, if the U.S. and the U.K. do go forward with military intervention, some of these countries might support it at the last minute in an effort to maintain their interests in post-Saddam Iraq. Italy is already planning this manoeuvre and with the same imperialistic aims, is sending a thousand of its alpine troops to Afghanistan.

This rivalry amongst the so-called civilised powers is thus the real reason tens of thousands of human beings are probably about to be slaughtered.

### Internationalism and War

In this war we offer support to neither side. We will not fall into the frequent

## How to Fight for Peace

Mounting demonstrations against war have shown that there is massive public resistance and we have to salute all those who are taking part in the movement against it. However we have also to warn against false friends. Those who are campaigning (like the *Daily Mirror*) for war to take place only after a United Nations resolution are actually preparing us for war. Even if the USA goes back to the UN (and Blair has already backtracked from his pro-UN position) the

leftist trap of giving 'critical' support to Iraq because it is the weaker of the two belligerents and is not the aggressor. We reject any nationalist and patriotic mobilisations whether in the Arab or the Western world. For workers everywhere our greatest enemy is in our 'own' state. This means that we demand the immediate recall of all Western forces about to be sent to or already in the Gulf area. This also means participating in all anti-war activities on an internationalist 'No War but the Class War' basis. This requires fighting the bourgeois propaganda war machine by exposing its lies and undoing its traps at every turn. Finally and above all it means supporting every form of a workers upsurge. No more cuts in programmes and services in the name of 'national interests'. We must fight austerity, fight the cuts, fight the lies and ignore all nationalist and militarist hysteria.

We are often asked: is there to be no end to this horror? Is the future of humanity reduced to the constant pursuit of blood-soaked horizons? The internationalists of the International Bureau for the Revolutionary Party see their duty as 'saying what is'. We think that there is a way out of this quagmire if we know what direction to take and who is blocking the way forward. That is why we accuse the capitalist system itself of warmongering and crimes against humanity. We proclaim that the international working class is the only social force that has the potential to put an end to this barbarism (for example the possible work stoppage by the U.K. firefighters alone would impede the war efforts of the British state as it would require 19,000 troops to cover the strike). We consider that the class struggle waged to its finality, the great social upheaval of proletarian revolution, is the only way out of the nightmarish cycle of war-reconstruction-crisis-war. Whatever the present state of class consciousness, we are convinced that imperialist wars will not be stopped by debates in Parliaments, Senates no more than in the United Nations. The first steps towards a real opposition lie in the realisation of the fact that the destiny of war and peace will only be decided in our factories, our workplaces and in our streets. Until then, in the ongoing chain of conflicts and wars, imperialism will always emerge as the real victor and the international proletariat and indeed humanity itself, the great vanquished. Imperialism or socialism, war or revolution, there is no other alternative!

**The only way to guarantee peace is to get rid of capitalism.**

**Workers, comrades, our only war is the class war!**

**The above is based on a statement of the International Bureau for the Revolutionary Party**

The IBRP has sympathising and affiliated groups in Canada, USA, UK, Ukraine, Italy, France, and Colombia. In the UK the Communist Workers' Organisation is also a supporter of **No War But the Class War** which was set up in opposition to any popular front with religious or pacifist groups and includes revolutionaries from a number of traditions.

USA has easily enough clout, both economically and militarily, to eventually get what it wants. If Syria can be bribed and coerced into an anti-Iraq resolution then any state can. The UN is not a peacekeeping body but a catpaw of the imperialist powers. If it ignores the US it becomes irrelevant. If it wants to be relevant it will do as the US wishes.

The way that Blair and Bush have ignored public opinion against the war also

## Palestine - Israel

# Neither One State nor Two but Workers' Internationalism

Deportations, destruction, massacres of innocent and defenceless citizens: the bloody cycle which recommenced more than a year ago with the Nazi-style provocation of Sharon has tragically accelerated. Yet Israeli mini-imperialism has always had a free hand. Thanks to the US veto in the UN Israel has been allowed the luxury of invading territory which no international law could possibly permit and of rampantly inflicting cruelty on the Palestinian population by means of repression and ethnic cleansing. All this was — and is — part of the logic of American imperialism. In fact Israel remains the precious bridge-head for US interests in the Middle East. Despite any passing and superficial disagreements between the two, this role is even more indispensable today, when the conflicting interests of imperialism are sharpening under the pressure of capitalism's world economic crisis. But for now all the Arab, Russian, and above all, the bourgeoisie of the European Union can do against the arrogance of the United States and its Israeli policemen is appeal for peace, calls which are as hypocritical as they are impotent.

Beyond the daily victims of military aggression, the situation in both the occupied territories and in that controlled by the PLO is becoming disastrous: unemployment, under-employment, under-payment, bestial working conditions, massive emigration, are the norm. Employed and unemployed live in shanty towns and refugee camps without services or drinking water. Where they exist, the drains are open to the sky and illness is the order of the day.

In such circumstances the enrolment of the proletariat and sub-proletariat to the nationalist cause is almost automatic and, **given the absence of a working**

**class political alternative**, the illusion of fighting for a better life under an indigenous bourgeoisie is inevitable. For the same reason, it's inevitable that a good part of the Israeli proletariat which is threatened — if in a less dramatic way — with layoffs, cuts in wages and the 'social state', turns a blind eye to the bellicose and racist nationalism of their own bourgeoisie.

But the hypothetical Palestinian state, whether in the PLO version or that of Hamas, would only strengthen the bourgeoisie in question while the Palestinian proletariat would still be subject to unemployment and obliged to emigrate either to Israel or elsewhere in order to counter the same super-exploitation and miserable wages as before. Today no state can escape from the 'globalisation' of markets, and it certainly will not be the Palestinian bourgeoisie to reverse the course of capitalism.

Thus, the strikingly urgent problem is how to extract the Palestinian proletariat — and also the Israeli working class — from the humiliation and ferocious repression of the Israeli state on the one hand, and on the other, from the nationalistic/religious calls of their own bourgeoisie. This is not with a view to an immediate and improbable revolutionary solution — too many elements are missing for this, from the party to a minimum level of class consciousness — but so that the yearning for liberation which exists in Palestine, the suffering, the outrage at the abuse of power and the blood that is being spilt daily is not exhausted in one of the most tragic episodes of nationalism, without even throwing a seed of revival of the revolutionary class struggle.

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## Our Basic Positions

- 1. We aim to become part of the future world working class party which will guide the class struggle towards the establishment of a stateless, classless, moneyless society without exploitation, national frontiers or standing armies and in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all (Marx): Communism.*
- 2. Such a society will need a revolutionary state for its introduction. This state will be run by workers' councils, consisting of instantly recallable delegates from every section of the working class. Their rule is called the dictatorship of the proletariat because it cannot exist without the forcible overthrow and keeping down of the capitalist class worldwide.*
- 3. The first stage in this is the political organisation of class-conscious workers and their eventual union into an international political party for the promotion of world revolution.*
- 4. The Russian October Revolution of 1917 remains a brilliant inspiration for us. It showed that workers could overthrow the capitalist class. Only the isolation and decimation of the Russian working class destroyed their revolutionary vision of 1917. What was set up in Russia in the 1920's and after was not communism but centrally planned state capitalism. There have as yet been no communist societies anywhere in the world.*
- 5. The International Bureau for the Revolutionary Party was founded by the heirs of the Italian Left who tried to fight the political degeneration of the Russian Revolution and the Comintern in the 1920's. We are continuing the task which the Russian Revolution promised but failed to achieve — the freeing of the workers of the world and the establishment of communism. Join us!*

shows what democracy is really worth in these capitalist states. The "national interest" is to increase the wealth of those that own the nation's means of production. The rest of us don't count. And yet the *Stop the War* campaign made up as it is of the SWP, pacifists, Christians, Greens etc still pretends that a legal campaign is the answer to end war.

As we have said often, all the usual reformist channels will not stop the war drive. Prayers, vigils (with or without candles), letters to Bush, Blair or the papers mean nothing. What does mean something is the massive and concerted

refusal of the working class to do capitalism's dirty work. But this won't come about overnight and won't come about through the forming of this or that ad hoc committee in the style of the "anti-capitalists". The consciousness of the need to overthrow this system will inevitably give birth to an international political organisation which will be different from all previous parties in that it will be the leadership of the revolution but not the leadership of any government. That will be the task of the whole of the working class after capitalism's road to hell has been totally blocked.