

NO BLOOD FOR OIL

The case against the war



Militant

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Answers to workers' questions

(compiled by Rob Sewell)

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Why we oppose the Gulf War – answers to workers' questions

1. Surely this is a war to help small nations, to get Iraq out of Kuwait?

No, this war is about oil. Despite all the Tory propaganda the Western powers have never been bothered about the fate of little nations. Their wealth and power is based on centuries of seizing colonies with the utmost savagery.

For example, last year United States forces invaded Panama, killing 7,000 people, to replace one drug-running dictator with another 'loyal' dictator. The US financed and trained the right-wing Contra mercenaries to carry on a guerilla war against the left-wing Nicaraguan government. They invaded Grenada and bombed Libya.

Turkey seized and colonised half of Cyprus in 1974. The United Nations (UN) called upon them to withdraw, but the West has done absolutely nothing. Now US planes are taking off from Turkey to bomb Iraq.

A year later Indonesia marched into East Timor and with US weapons butchered 100,000 people, according to the Red Cross. The UN called for withdrawal but got no response. Today Western governments continue to arm the Indonesian dictatorship.

Again, Israel, the regional superpower, continues to receive more US military and economic aid than any other country, despite forcibly occupying the West Bank and Gaza for the last 24 years. The UN has demanded they withdraw but Washington and London have never suggested military action or even sanctions to force them out. Recently the United States gave Israel an extra \$13 billion in aid.

Meanwhile Israel won't give the Palestinian population of the occupied territories democratic rights. They won't even give them gas masks. On 8 October 21 Palestinians were killed and 150 badly injured by police at the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. After five days of debate at the UN, there was a decision to send three officials to investigate! There was no talk of task forces to implement UN resolution 242.

2. Well isn't it a war for democracy against dictatorship then?

No, the policy of the Western powers has been to prop up dictatorships.

The Panamanian dictator, Noriega, was originally a friend and tool of the CIA and US imperialism. The CIA even helped him in his drug-running to the US! He was a reliable stooge. Only when he adopted an independent policy, just like Saddam, did they charge him with drug-running, invaded, overthrew him and put in a more reliable agent.

The US imperialists conspired with General Pinochet in Chile to overthrow Allende in 1973 and set up his dictatorship because they feared Allende's Popular Unity government would go too far in the direction of socialism.

They have supported every reactionary dictatorship throughout the world, as they do the feudal sheikdoms in the Middle East, but never demand democratic elections in Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf states.

They talk of Saddam Hussein as a new Hitler — but in the 1930s they armed, organised and supported Hitler as a barrier against 'Bolshevism' when he destroyed the workers' movement. They only turned against him when he threatened their economic interests and the balance of power.

All these big-business governments represent the interests of their class. Workers can only rely on their own organisations and their own strength to defend their interests. That means the struggle against capitalism and the fight for socialism nationally and internationally.

Bush and Major say they are fighting to "restore the legitimate government of Kuwait". But how legitimate is the government of a country where only 60,000 men and no women out of a total Kuwaiti population of 750,000 had the right to vote?

There were many more foreign nationals than Kuwaitis in the country, some of whom had lived there all their lives. They had been denied any democratic rights, including the right to vote. Many thousands were literally slaves. But just to be on the safe side the Emir of Kuwait abolished the national parliament in 1986.

In Saudi Arabia, King Fahd rules by absolute decree. There are no parliament, elections, trade unions or political parties. They are all banned. Most of the government ministers are members of the King's family. Executions take place regularly. Stoning is the sentence for adultery and the sentence for theft is amputation of a limb. This is the regime that British troops have been sent to defend.

The ruling Saud family in Saudi Arabia and the al-Sabah family of the Emir of Kuwait are among the richest people in the world. They rely on the West to defend them while they sit on their multi-million dollar oil profits that should be used for the benefit of the poor peoples of the Middle East.

That's why there isn't much sympathy for the plight of the Kuwaiti royal family among the masses of the Arab world. In fact they are detested by the masses in these countries.

Our other new allies include Syria. This vicious dictatorship murdered 20,000 Muslims in the village of Hama in 1982. Executions are carried out regularly. It has repeatedly invaded and colonised Lebanon. The Syrian President Assad was promised a billion dollars worth of US arms and the 'go ahead' to extinguish all those who opposed his control in Beirut if Syria joined the Allies.

The Emir of Qatar is an absolute monarch. He is also prime minister. Parliament and political parties are all abolished. The Sultan of Oman is head of state and has absolute powers. Again they hold regular executions. They don't allow political parties. Bahrain has an absolute monarch. Its last national assembly was abolished in 1975.

In Egypt only a sham democracy exists under President Mubarak, where only state registered parties are allowed. He was promised that his \$14 billion foreign debt would be wiped out if he joined the Allies. "The war in the Gulf", as Douglas Hurd recently reminded us, "is about principle".

3. But isn't Saddam a monster who has to be stopped at all costs?

Yes, he is a monster. Saddam Hussein heads one of the most savage dictatorships in the world. His immediate circle of advisers are drawn largely from family and friends — most others have been purged.

Every form of opposition is repressed. Trade unions have been banned. Opposition politicians, Communist Party members, rival army officers and Shi'ite dissidents have been murdered or imprisoned. A genocidal war has been waged against the Kurdish minority struggling for their national rights. Unspeakable atrocities have been committed against men, women and children taken to remote desert prisons. Entire Kurdish communities were wiped out in poison gas bombardments. In 1988 at least 10,000 men women and children were gassed to death in Halbja. Last year Saddam slaughtered 10,000 Shia Arabs in villages north of Basra for aiding his opponents.

According to Amnesty International, "such abuses have been the norm for people in Iraq for more than a decade." But what did the West do? They said nothing. They turned a blind eye to these atrocities.

In fact the Western governments helped him build up his military might in the Iran-Iraq war. As was shown on *Panorama* earlier this year, they helped him develop his chemical and biological weapons.

His war machine was created with Western money. British servicemen will be attacked with arms purchased in the West and financed by the West.

The US backed Saddam and encouraged him in his eight-year war against Iran. They were frightened that the unstable regime in Iran, emerging after the Iranian revolution, would become the dominant force in this important oil-rich region.

During the 70s and 80s, France supplied \$25,000 million-worth of arms to Iraq, including Exocet missiles. America gave free satellite intelligence, \$5 billion of food subsidies and \$2.5 billion of export guarantees.

The British government provided £1.3 billion in export guarantees to help companies export equipment that was used for conventional weapons in Iraq.

Two years ago Labour MPs put a motion to parliament complaining about government aid to British firms trying to win Iraqi export orders at the Baghdad arms fair. Not one Tory MP signed it.

Major, Hurd and King were quite happy about Western arms going to Saddam. Now those arms are trained on British soldiers.

Perhaps the Republican Guards division is feared because its officers were trained

at Sandhurst. Iraqi pilots were trained in Britain. Western capitalist governments can't be trusted to oppose dictatorships. Unlike big business when it suited them, we have no time for the Iraqi regime. But we don't hand over the task of tackling it to those who created it in the first place.

If Western tanks roll into Baghdad, they will not bring democracy with them but a new dictatorship that would co-operate with imperialist interests.

Every vicious dictatorship in Africa, Central America and Asia has been backed by the United States.

The task of freeing Iraq and the rest of the Middle East from dictators and establishing democratic rights rests with the masses of the area. We give our support to them in that battle and in the struggle against capitalism and imperialism, for a socialist Middle East.

4. *Mustn't we support the war as he is trying to seize the West's oil?*

Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait because of the economic catastrophe facing Iraq after its eight-year war with Iran. He wanted to distract the attention of the discontented Iraqi masses away from the domestic problems and at the same time push up the price of oil to boost his flagging finances.

The reason why the Allies went to war has nothing to do with the well-being of ordinary people — be it in the West, Kuwait or Iraq. It is a war to protect the supply of cheap oil and the profits of the billionaire oil companies like Texaco, Gulf, BP and Shell. The only people to benefit will be these oil companies and the Kings and Sheiks of the Gulf.

The West sees the region as their domain. Imperialist powers have always fought to dominate the countries that produce their vital raw materials and keep them cheap.

Looking only for short-term profits, the capitalists have exploited cheap oil rather than use it more economically or look for other forms of energy, as they will eventually have to do anyway as oil supplies run down.

Workers in the advanced countries have no interest in keeping the peoples of the Third World in poverty.

Above all the price of war will not be paid by politicians and businessmen, but in the blood and cartilage of teenage soldiers. We are not prepared to sacrifice the lives of thousands of working-class youth for the profits and interests of big business. As the former US assistant defence secretary Lawrence Korb said recently: "What it boils down to is the great powers defending their interests. If Kuwait grew carrots, we wouldn't give a damn."

According to the *New York Times*, America is interested in "cheap oil and stable monarchies".

The Allies want to keep their clutches on the oil reserves. As long as Saddam tortures, murders and arrests within the borders of Iraq, then that's alright by them. If he's overthrown by another military dictator, that's fine, as long as he recognises the West's interests. It's pure hypocrisy.

5. If you don't back the allies does it mean you are backing Saddam?

No, we don't support the war for oil profits and the subjugation of the Middle East by the imperialist powers. They have no right to be there hiding behind the smoke-screen of a war for democracy and justice.

But we do not support the actions of Saddam either. We do not support his dictatorship that has tortured and brutally murdered any opposition.

True, Saddam is a dictator — but he isn't the only one in the Middle East. Bush talks hypocritically of 'liberating' Kuwait and of democracy. But Kuwait was a feudal dictatorship.

Again, all the Arab regimes supporting the allies are dictatorships. Assad of Syria, Mubarak of Egypt, Hassan of Morocco and Fahd of Saudi Arabia are dictators with Bush's blessing.

Israel has democratic rights for Israelis but enslaves the Palestinians. 1,000 have died in two years of Intifada, a quarter of them children.

We stand for the overthrow of all the dictatorships in the Middle East and the establishment of a Socialist Federation as the only solution to the problems of the region's peoples.

6. Even if you don't support the war, shouldn't we be backing our troops? Let's get the job done quickly and get out.

Bush and Major promised a quick, painless war. But that was simply false propaganda to win public support. The best way to support British troops is to get them out immediately and prevent the massive loss of life and disfigurement that a land war brings. The Pentagon is sending 100,000 body bags along with 800 gallons of blood a day to the Gulf. It is a tragedy that working-class youth in the forces, many of them economic conscripts, should be sent to the Gulf to do the dirty work for Bush, Major and the oil companies.

What does Major care how many of these young working class soldiers don't return home? They packed them off with only enough ammunition for two weeks of war. Extra ammunition had to be donated by Germany and Holland.

They are prepared for one in two British services personnel to be casualties. 7,500 NHS beds have been commandeered, plus 11,000 in military hospitals, for casualties from an assumed five days land war.

There is not enough vaccine to protect soldiers in a biological attack from anthrax, cholera, typhoid or yellow fever. British casualties with infectious diseases will be treated in Cyprus.

The Health Department has censored its document on treating the war wounded. It has deleted reference to mustard and nerve gas victims having to be flown back for urgent care in Britain and to their suffering further 'problems' due to the travel.

Special steps are being taken to deal with the deep psychological scars of returning soldiers. 59,000 US servicemen died in the Vietnam war. 60,000 have committed suicide since it ended.

We say: "bring back the troops now!"

7. Why are there always wars in the Middle East? They seem to be always fighting amongst themselves.

The wars in the region have been a consequence of the imperialist powers' division of the Middle East. The borders of all the oil states were artificially drawn in the 1920s by the Western powers. In the First World War, Turkey made the mistake of being on the losing side and its crumbling empire was divided up between the victors.

Britain was given responsibility for what is now Iraq (including Kuwait), Jordan and Palestine (upon which the Jewish state of Israel was imposed 30 years later). In particular the imperialists fostered the reactionary sheikdoms of the Arabian peninsula. These semi-feudal autocracies would not have been able to maintain themselves without imperialist backing, just as the princes in India disappeared once the British were compelled to withdraw.

The establishment of the state of Israel was a completely artificial creation of imperialism. Billions of dollars are pumped in every year to prop it up. It would collapse without it.

Israel was used by the Western powers as a block against the Arab revolution, the struggle for national unity, democracy and socialism.

The expulsion of the Palestinians from their land and the later occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip by Israel provides the fuel for continual conflict and war.

The government and the right-wing Jewish organisations wish to colonise the West Bank and Gaza with new immigrants, thus driving the Palestinians out. And already 46,000 Palestinians have crossed over from the West Bank to Jordan this year.

The colossal immigration of one million Russian Jews over the next five years will even further squeeze the Palestinian masses. Even for Jews, Israel, far from providing peace and security, has become a bloody trap.

Only a socialist federation of the Middle East could guarantee the solution to these national problems, with a viable state for the Israelis together with one for the Palestinians. This would also provide for full autonomy to all oppressed peoples and minorities such as the Kurds.

8. Surely this is a just war – everyone is backing it through the United Nations. Even the Arabs have got troops there.

Just for whom? The UN is not a neutral body standing above conflicts. It acts as a figleaf for the interests of the imperialist powers and the Stalinist bureaucracies of Russia and China.

The UN has had a sorry record in preventing war. There have been wars every year since 1945, including the 13-year war in Vietnam, in which the UN was impotent to intervene.

How can the UN ever be more than the sum of its component parts – the different capitalist nations and the bureaucracies of the East, all with their own national vested interests?

The five permanent members of the Security Council – the US, USSR, France, Britain and China – all have a veto over UN policy. Are the US capitalists, now dis-

playing their ruthless pursuit of their own interests in the Gulf, going to change their spots just because they are sitting in an international forum and allow the UN to usher in a 'new world economic order', fair to the poor and weak? It's only by exploiting them that the US is strong.

The temporary UN alliance over the Gulf has only been because the Soviet Union, heading for a market economy, wants to ingratiate itself with the West to win aid. They were bought off for \$4 billion, to be paid by the sheikhs.

Bush could have acted on his own in the Gulf — he has all the military power necessary. He could act regardless of UN approval but he wanted the Security Council to give him 'legitimacy'. So he set about buying the support of this body which even some on the left still imagine can act as a world peace-keeper.

The Soviet Union was given \$2 billion in aid and loans from Saudi Arabia, \$3 billion-worth of Egyptian loans were written off and China was offered two high-level visits to the US if it abstained. Colombia was granted greater access to the US market for its sugar and flowers, many of which will no doubt end up adorning GIs' coffins.

So the Allies bought the support of certain Arab regimes. They are there — not representing the wishes of their peoples as they are all dictatorships — but to provide legitimacy to the Western powers.

As for the UN, just as workers at home would not refer a dispute with an individual employer to the CBI to settle, the workers of the world cannot allow their problems to be settled in such a forum like the UN.

—The only force that can expel imperialism from the Middle East is the working class of Britain and the US and the working class and peasants of the Middle East.

9. Are United Nations sanctions better than war?

American imperialism and the British Tories imposed sanctions to defend their oil and profits behind the figleaf of the UN. The UN has shown once again it is not an international force for peace but a thieves' kitchen.

The aim of sanctions — which is a weapon of imperialism — is to starve into submission the young, old and poor of Iraq — to get them to change their leaders. Saddam and his elite won't suffer; the brunt will be felt by ordinary Iraqi people. Just to call them UN sanctions doesn't alter their deadly impact. Sanctions mean a blockade which inevitably leads to armed force at a certain stage.

Sanctions are simply the continuation of war by other means. If the West has no right to interfere with military might it has no more right to try to strangle Iraq slowly with sanctions.

10. How can you get Iraq's troops out of Kuwait and free the country?

There are only two ways that Iraqi troops can be withdrawn or forced out of Kuwait.

Either it will be as a result of the present military intervention by imperialist forces or a socialist revolution in Iraq. A democratic and socialist Iraq would give all the peoples of the area the right to decide their own future. That right would not be confined to the inhabitants of Kuwait; it would be extended to the minorities in Iraq

– the Kurds, Turkomen and others.

The regime that would arise out of an allied victory would guarantee neither democracy nor freedom for the peoples of Kuwait. Bush has made it abundantly clear that he stands for the restoration of the 'legitimate government of Kuwait'. That means re-establishing the rule of the billionaire al-Sabah family.

Even the tame Kuwaiti opposition in exile have broken with the Emir, declaring they have been "behaving more like sheiks than ever and monopolising everything as if they are more interested in preserving their own rule than the existence of Kuwait itself".

The al-Sabahs have declared that once liberation takes place they will govern on the basis of the 1962 constitution. This provides that they will rule as a hereditary sheikdom in perpetuity.

They are even prepared to accept a flattening of Kuwait, if this is the price to be paid for their restoration.

Moreover the Kuwaiti security forces plan to arrest all Palestinians they can find and impose martial law for two years after the Emirate is liberated. Only Kuwaitis and those with residence permits will be allowed back in. The Palestinians will be kept in internment camps – one of the first construction projects planned.

The alternative of a socialist and democratic Iraq, as part of a socialist federation of the Middle East, is the only means whereby the social, economic, democratic and national rights of all the peoples of the region can be satisfied.

A new socialist society could not be built on the basis of the slightest compulsion or denial of national and democratic rights of any people.

Socialism would guarantee the maximum autonomy down to the smallest group of people. A socialist and democratic Iraq would allow the Kuwaiti people themselves to decide their own fate. A democratic referendum could be organised in which not just Kuwaitis but the Egyptians, Palestinians and others who have made their lives in Kuwait would be allowed to participate with full democratic rights. They may choose to join with Iraq, forming an autonomous part of the new socialist state.

On the other hand it is possible that Kuwait could decide to constitute itself as a separate nation. A democratic and socialist state would accept this, resulting in the complete withdrawal of Iraqi troops.

11. How can you stop this war?

We must learn the lessons of the past. The American anti-war movement did not wait until the bodies started to pile up to demand the withdrawal of imperialist troops. From the outset the call was made.

From a minority cause, it became the rallying cry for millions in America and throughout the world. Millions of Americans went on strike and participated in demonstrations in opposition to US intervention.

A Gulf war could see a similar development, not in years as with Vietnam, but in weeks or months. There will be lightning changes in people's outlook.

Once hostilities began in the Gulf public opinion at home swung round in favour of the war. But suspicions of the motives of Bush and Major didn't evaporate. There is still a widespread feeling that they only really went to war for oil. And, depending on

the length of the war and the costs, the mood could swing rapidly to opposition.

There is no war fervour. This isn't 1914 when workers lined the streets to cheer the troops off, unaware of the horrors of the trenches that awaited them. But there is a natural initial response of: "Now its started and our soldiers are risking their lives we have to back them up", or even "my friend, my relative is out there".

Most people don't believe the war can be stopped, so think it's better to get it over with as quickly as possible.

Even now 58 per cent of people agree this war is motivated entirely by oil and money rather than human rights. That's no basis to sustain support if the war drags on. And it confirms there is no war fervour that could over-ride all other political questions.

We must organise against the Tories and the war. The same government that is attacking us with the poll tax and rising unemployment now wants us to sacrifice for their oil war. We don't support them in war or peace — they only ever defend the interests of the rich and powerful against the rest of us. Already there have been world-wide mass protests against the war — in Australia, the US, Britain, Germany, Italy, France, Spain, Greece, Belgium, Pakistan, India, North Africa and the Middle East itself. This is just the beginning.

We must wage a mass campaign against the war and for the withdrawal of the troops of the US/British coalition forces.

We must organise the young people against the war, to make it impossible for the government to even consider conscription. We will not allow our young people to be dragged off to die for oil profits and Arab dictatorships.

We believe it is a tragedy that those working class youth who signed up to the forces, many because they couldn't get a job back home, should be out in the Gulf doing the Tories' dirty work.

They should have trade union rights. There should be an emergency input of millions of pounds into the NHS to ensure military casualties are properly cared for and that civilian treatment is not affected.

If the government say they cannot afford it, then our answer is — nationalise the oil companies and arms manufacturers that are making money from the slaughter and use their profits for the NHS.

25 years ago the US was involved in an imperialist war against Vietnam. They flew 350,000 bombing raids, dropping more bombs on Vietnam than they dropped in the whole of the Second World War. They killed two million Vietnamese. But the US had to withdraw, defeated.

Along with the resistance of the Vietnamese, the protest at home was so great they just couldn't carry on.

We must build such opposition in the workplaces, schools and colleges and in protests on the streets so that the Tories cannot carry on with the war in the Gulf.

12. Are you just allowing Kuwait to stew while waiting for a socialist Iraq?

It is not a question of leaving the problem to linger indefinitely but of how a real solution can be achieved to the benefit of the masses in the region. The allies' 'solutions' will merely lay the basis for future crisis and wars. Their 'liberation' on the back

of US bayonets will mean a new dictatorship. Only a socialist federation can answer the underlying problems of the region and usher in genuine democracy and freedom.

13. If the allies defeat Saddam won't it bring peace and democracy – the new world order of George Bush?

If imperialism were to succeed in overthrowing Saddam – the most likely outcome in a war, although over a protracted time and at terrible cost – the regime that such a defeat would usher in would be a new dictatorship utterly dependent on the imperialist powers.

At the same time the Turkish ruling class is greedily looking towards reclaiming parts of Iraq, particularly the Kirkuk and Mosul oilfields, which it held under the Ottoman empire.

A broken Iraq, with parts of its territory claimed by its neighbours, would only lay the seeds for inevitable future bloody conflicts.

An imperialist victory would also reinforce the hold of the reactionary feudal sheiks in the Gulf states. They are hated by the Arab masses for squandering the oil resources, justifiably seen as belonging to the Arab nation as a whole.

Victory for imperialism in the Gulf would tighten its deathgrip over the lives and livelihoods of workers and peasants throughout the world.

It would be a victory for the oil moguls, the industrialists seeking cheap energy, the bankers who strangle the debtor nations, the arms manufacturers who profit from war and compel debtor nations to increase arms purchases whilst slashing social expenditure to meet the demands of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

It would be a blow against the struggle of the peoples of these areas to throw off the shackles of landlordism and capitalism and establish a democratic socialist society. And, if only temporarily, it could strengthen Bush and Major at home.

Therefore for the working class in Britain and throughout the advanced industrial countries there should be implacable opposition to imperialist intervention.

14. Then why don't the Labour leaders oppose the war?

Even Liberal-Democrat leader Paddy Ashdown found Gerald Kaufman's "gunboat huffing and puffing...extremely odd for a potential Labour foreign secretary".

It is horribly ironic that Labour Party leaders seem keenest to adopt a 'bipartisan' – ie. Tory – approach on foreign policy, especially when war is in the offing and this policy can cost thousands of working-class lives. In reality they have formed an unofficial coalition with the Tories.

Of course they should oppose Saddam's brutal dictatorship. But the task of dealing with it is the task of the Iraqi working class. The Labour leaders, if they were worth their salt, would give moral and material support to the Iraqi workers fighting for democracy and socialism.

As *Militant* has explained, British, US and other armed forces are in the Middle East to defend imperialism – the exploitation of the whole world by a handful of

capitalist powers. It is disgraceful that Labour leaders should support such a policy.

This war has only been possible because Labour's leaders, Corporal Kinnock and Flight-Lieutenant Martin O'Neill, back it so disgracefully. Even Harold Wilson never committed troops to the US war in Vietnam.

But cracks have begun to appear. When 40 Labour MPs voted for a motion opposing the Tories at the end of the Commons debate on the Gulf war, the impression was given that most of the Labour Party had voted with the government.

In fact a further 80 Labour MPs abstained and all but 24 of those who voted with the Tories were frontbench spokespersons. Despite arm-twisting by the whips, Labour backbenchers voted by a margin of five to three to oppose the Tory line.

The Labour leaders should stop trailing after Bush and Major and start condemning imperialist interference and demand the withdrawal of the troops now.

15. I'm against violence and war – surely that is why we must oppose this one?

Without any doubt we hate the scourge of war, particularly the horrors of this one. It is our class who pay in blood and sacrifice every time. If there is one thing that impelled us to join the socialist movement it is the hatred and violence that exists in society – the violence that condemns children and old people to hunger because of poverty, the violence that breaks up families and throws people on to the streets. It is our hatred of this violence that drives us into a socialist movement which has as its aim the creation of a world free from violence, where human beings will cooperate in the production of goods to satisfy their needs, where peace and security will prevail.

But we are not opposed to war in and of itself. British workers would fight, arms in hand, to defend their democratic rights and freedoms. In the past ordinary British workers volunteered to fight on the Republican side in the Spanish civil war of the 30s, collections were organised in workplaces and around the streets to back the Spanish workers' war effort against Franco.

The British Tory government proclaimed the principle of non-interference, although really they backed Franco's fascist coup. What did they care if the democratic government of Spain was overthrown. At least capitalist ownership of industry would be maintained!

For in the act of arming themselves to defeat fascism, the Spanish workers instinctively tried to carry through the socialist revolution, taking over industry and the land.

Even right back to the American civil war of the 1860s, the workers of Britain expressed their backing for the modern, industrial progressive North against the slave-owners of the Confederacy.

Every worker-activist around the world backed the infant Soviet workers' state in the war against 21 armies of intervention and the Western-armed and financed White armies of counter-revolution.

The workers of Britain disrupted the war effort of capitalist reaction. London dockers refused to load the *Jolly George* when it was about to set sail with a cargo of arms for the British troops sent to the Soviet Union.

In 1920 a general strike was threatened, paralysing prime minister Lloyd George's

attempt to use British forces to support Poland in its armed conflict with the Soviet Union.

The labour movement internationally gave its support to the Nicaraguan people after the revolution of 1979 against the US-backed Contra insurgency.

At home *Militant*, like every genuine socialist, wants peacefully to transfer ownership of industry and the economy out of the hands of the minority for the democratic use of all. But we saw in Spain in the 30s or Chile in the 70s the violent lengths to which the ruling classes will go to preserve their monopoly of wealth.

We warned the Chilean workers of the terrible revenge being prepared by the generals and the capitalist class. We called for them to be armed to defend their democratic rights and their trade union and political organisations.

But their leaders were blind to the plotting of the military. The left-wing Popular Unity government was violently overthrown and 50,000 Chilean workers paid with their lives.

16. Isn't the socialist solution pie in the sky? It just won't work.

What is crystal clear is that the Bush/Major war is no solution to the problems of the masses in the Middle East. Their bombing campaign — apart from the deaths and injuries — has nearly flattened Kuwait and destroyed Iraq's infra-structure. Their 'solution' is to drive the Iraqis from Kuwait, restore the feudal Emirate and reaffirm imperialism's grip on the oil reserves of the region. It is part of their plan to further subjugate the colonial and semi-colonial peoples.

For us imperialism has no right to interfere in the Middle East. Let the peoples of the region, including the Iraqis, decide their own fate. Democracy will not be established in Iraq or Kuwait with imperialist bayonets.

Those Arab regimes who have sided with imperialism, from Mubarak of Egypt and Assad of Syria to the sheikdoms, have in the long run signed their own death warrant. They will never be forgiven by the Arab masses for siding with American imperialism which is seen as the oppressor of the Arab people.

Iraqis consider Kuwait to be historically part of Iraq, but a socialist federation of the Middle East would give the Kuwaiti people the right to determine their fate in a democratic referendum. They could decide whether they remained separate or linked with Iraq, possibly with some form of autonomy.

The labour movement in Britain must oppose the imperialist intervention in the Gulf. It should give its support to all those forces in Iraq and throughout the Middle East fighting for the socialist and democratic transformation of Iraq and the region as a whole.

This is not pie in the sky or unrealistic, but a burning necessity. On the basis of capitalism there is no way forward for the masses of the Middle East, including Israel. It will not mean peace and stability but, on the basis of the new imperialism of the Western powers, increased upheavals and further bloody wars.

Only the socialist federation of the region can rid society of the dictators, feudal monarchies and sheikdoms and unite the area democratically, using its colossal rich resources to transform the lifestyles of the masses and banish the scourge of national aggression and imperialist oppression once and for all.

We appeal to you to join us in this fight for a socialist future. Don't delay; as a first step fill in the form today.

19 February 1991

Where we stand

- ★ **No to imperialist intervention, let the people of the Middle East decide their own fate.**
- ★ **End the slaughter: US and British troops out of the Gulf.**
- ★ **Support the workers and youth of the Middle East in their fight to rid themselves of the dictatorships.**
- ★ **For a democratic, socialist Iraq, which would give self-determination to all national minorities and allow the population of Kuwait the right, through a referendum, to decide their own future.**
- ★ **For a socialist Federation of the Middle East.**
- ★ **No to conscription: the young people of Britain and the US should not be used as cannon fodder in the defence of big business oil profits.**
- ★ **Support for workers and youth who decide to fight conscription.**
- ★ **Support for soldiers and reservists who oppose the war.**
- ★ **No to sanctions!**
- ★ **Kick out the Tories**
- ★ **Defend workers' living standards: cut defence spending and use the money on health, education and housing.**
- ★ **For a Labour government on a socialist programme.**

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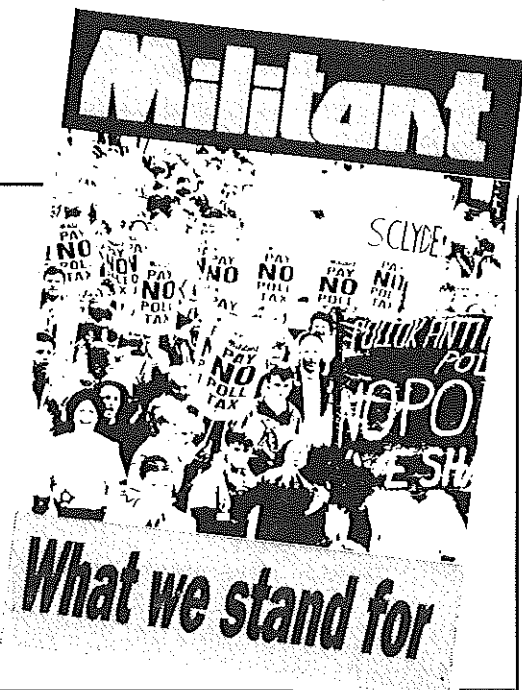
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Gerry Maguire,
British Army
Reservist

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ISSUE 2226 2 February 1991

End the war for oil profits

STOP THE WAR DEMO
2 February
Assembled 12 noon, TRAFALGAR SQUARE, LONDON. Organised by the Socialist Workers Party, Communist Party, and other anti-war groups.

The world has been shocked by the news that the British and American forces have invaded Kuwait. The invasion is being justified as a necessary step to free Kuwait from the grip of the Iraqi dictator, Saddam Hussein. But the real reason for the invasion is the oil profits of the oil companies. The oil companies are the main beneficiaries of the invasion. They will be able to continue to pump oil from Kuwait to the West. The invasion is a classic example of imperialist intervention. It is a war for the oil profits of the oil companies. The oil companies are the main beneficiaries of the invasion. They will be able to continue to pump oil from Kuwait to the West. The invasion is a classic example of imperialist intervention. It is a war for the oil profits of the oil companies.

US/British troops out of the Gulf.
No war profiteering - nationalise the oil companies and arms manufacturers.
No to conscription.
No to imperialist interference: let the peoples of Iraq and the Middle East decide the fates of their own countries.
A socialist federation of the Middle East.
Kick out the Tory war-mongers.

I WISH TO BECOME A MILITANT SUPPORTER

YOUR NEXT STEP... OUR FIGHT IS YOUR FIGHT... JOIN IT!

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