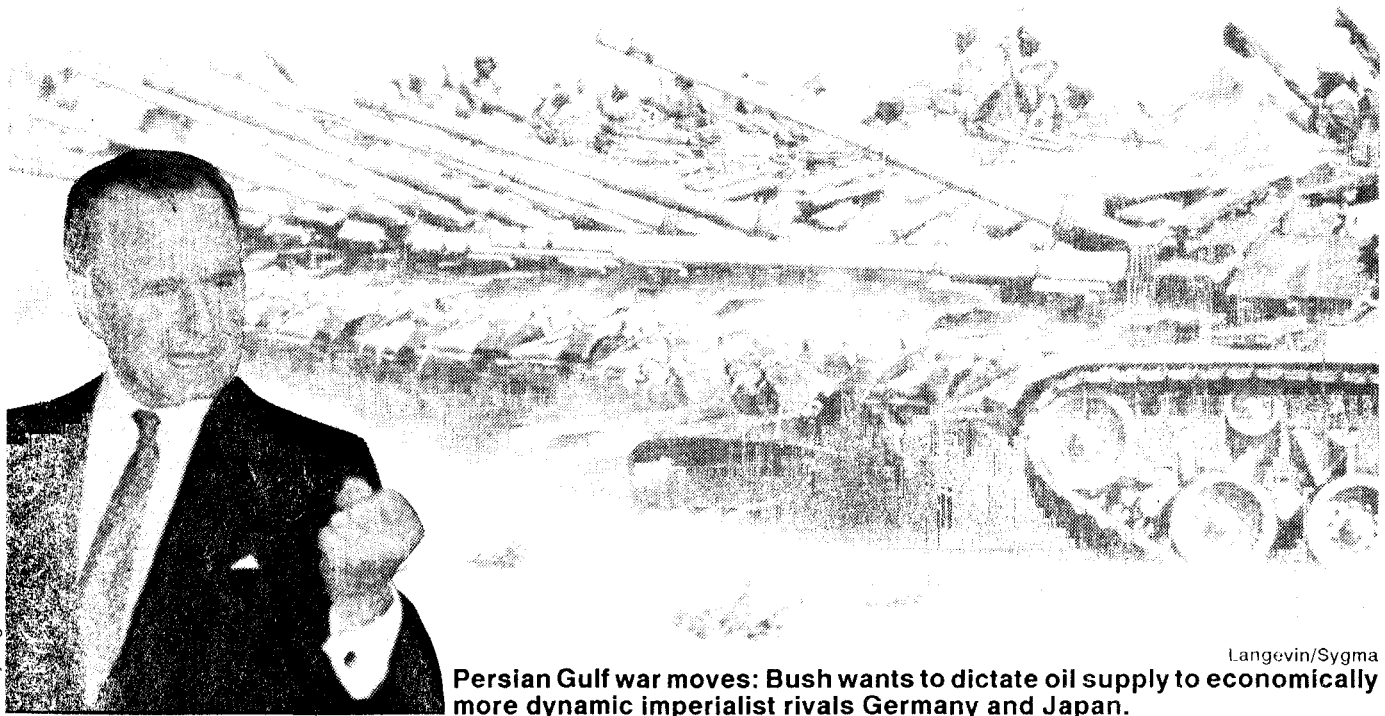


SPARTACIST

CANADA

Jan./Feb. 1991 No. 82 25¢

Bankrupt U.S. Empire Goes for War



Marcy Nightswander-AP

Langevin/Sygma

Persian Gulf war moves: Bush wants to dictate oil supply to economically more dynamic imperialist rivals Germany and Japan.

For the new year world capitalism openly promises war and depression. As the imperialists trumpet the "death of Communism," the U.S. and Canadian economy is heading into another of the kind of tailspins foreseen by Karl Marx and others over a century ago. And while Gorbachev & Co. rush to join the Western bourgeoisie in stomping on the grave of Lenin, Bush's White House is calling forth a major imperialist military adventure in a desperate attempt to rescue the American empire from the dustbin of history, confirming Lenin's insistence that imperialism continually produces war. In the place of Jimmy

Carter's nemesis Khomeini and Reagan's fixation on Qaddafi, Bush's former ally Saddam Hussein of Iraq is now the bugaboo, and you are supposed to shudder at the idea of Saddam getting control of the world's oil. But the real worry is: what will happen to humanity when *George Bush & Co.* tighten their grip on the world's oil?

The war drums get louder: the heavy U.S. tank battalions from the NATO/German theater are now arriving and getting a sand-color paint job; the second wave of aircraft carriers
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Defend Iraq!

Defeat U.S./Canadian Imperialism!

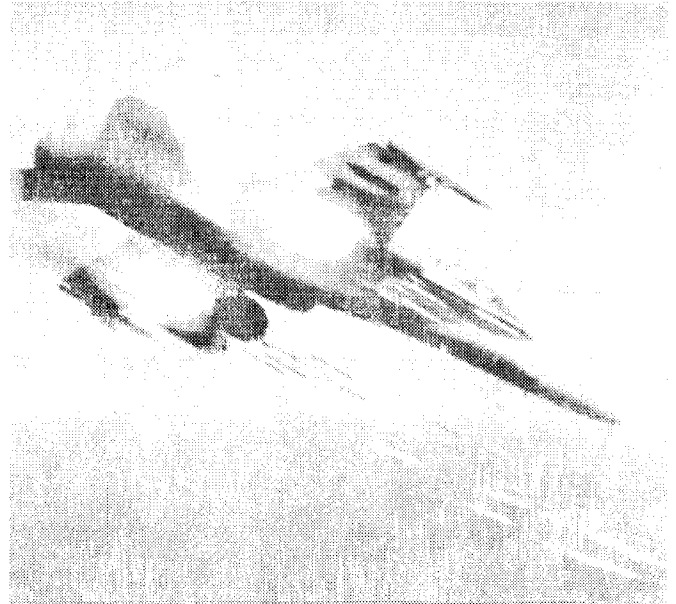
Canada in the Gulf: U.S. Imperialism's Junior Partner

At least 1,700 Canadian troops with warships and CF-18 jets are in the Gulf region, ready to join in the U.S.-led, UN-endorsed massacre of the Iraqi people. Opinion polls show that most of the population (and 71 percent in Quebec) opposes this insane drive to war. The Trotskyist League stands unambiguously for the *defeat* of U.S. imperialism and its allies, including Canada. In contrast, various other organizations who claim to oppose war in the Gulf *appeal* to Canada's capitalist rulers, beseeching them to pull back and act as some sort of "peacekeepers." Thus a recent leaflet by the Toronto Disarmament Network pleads:

"Canada must not be a party to this war for oil. Canada must return to its traditional role of peacekeeping and promote UN efforts towards a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East."

The idea that the Canadian ruling class has a "traditional role of peacekeeping" as opposed to the warmongers in Washington is a myth—and a very dangerous one. It is usually accompanied by claims that the NDP and even the Liberals represent some kind of "peace-loving" alternative to Mulroney's Tories, who have supposedly sold Canada's soul to U.S. imperialism. But Canada is *itself* an imperialist power (seventh strongest in the world). Its rich industrial magnates and bankers gouge superprofits through vicious exploitation of Third World peoples, especially in the Caribbean. For decades, under Tory and Liberal governments alike (and with NDP support), Canadian so-called "peacekeeping" troops have helped to *uphold the bloody imperialist status quo* against social struggle for liberation from oppression, from Korea to the Near East, the Congo and Vietnam.

Far from being counterposed to Washington, Canada's "peacekeeping" façade has been exceedingly *useful* to U.S. imperialism, helping provide a "neutral" and "democratic" cover for anti-Communist adventures and neocolonial plunder. As a much weaker imperial power relative to the U.S., Canada's role is that of a subordinate ally—a junior partner—of Washington. No less than Wall Street and the Pentagon, the Bay Street money men and the rulers on Parliament Hill are



D.N.D. photo

Canadian jet fighter over the Persian Gulf, ready to help enforce imperialist "order."

enemies of the world's workers and oppressed.

Let's look at the reality behind the Canadian bourgeoisie's carefully cultivated "peacekeeper" myth:

- **Soviet Union:** Back in 1918, when it was still effectively a British colony, Canadian troops occupied Murmansk as part of a 14-country imperialist offensive aimed at crushing the fledgling Soviet workers state. They failed—but, ever since, all the imperialist powers have had as a central aim the reconquest for capitalism of the USSR (and, after World War II, of the newly created deformed workers states).

- **Korea:** From 1950 to 1953, more than 20,000 Canadian troops served alongside hundreds of thousands of Americans and others to try and crush the "red menace" in Korea and "take back" China from the Communists. Waging war under the UN flag, Canadian troops served under the direct command of U.S. General Douglas MacArthur. No less than *three million* Koreans were killed, and to this day American military bases remain there, ready to blow the North Korean deformed workers state off the map.

- **Near East:** Canada first won its "peacekeeping" spurs for its role in the 1956 Suez Canal crisis. The U.S. arranged for Canadian troops to be sent in to supervise an orderly and face-saving withdrawal of French, British and Israeli forces, which sought to overthrow the Nasser regime in Egypt after it nationalized the Canal. After organizing massive arms sales to both sides (Israel getting the most and the best), Prime Minister Lester Pearson was given the Nobel Peace Prize. Later, following the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, Canadian troops under the UN flag began serving as border guards for the Zionist expansionist terrorists in Sinai and the Golan Heights.

- **Congo:** In the early 1960s the UN sent troops, including

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SPARTACIST CANADA

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The Left and the Gulf War

At an October 27 Toronto demonstration called to protest U.S. and Canadian intervention in the Persian Gulf, a Trotskyist League contingent marched with placards and chants saying: "Defeat U.S. and Canadian imperialism!" and "Defend Iraq against imperialist war!" But the liberal/pacifist protest organizers complained about our slogans and split their own demo, moving down the street with various other left groups in tow. The last thing these "antiwar activists" wanted was to be associated with the Marxists who defend Iraq against U.S. attack, and who say that putting an end to war requires mobilizing against the capitalist system which breeds it.

What they want to do instead is build a *popular front*, a class-collaborationist coalition that betrays the interests of the working people in the name of unity with a section of the ruling class who they hope to convince to come out for "peace." While the fake-lefts search for these non-existent "peace-loving" capitalists, we Trotskyists seek to build *anti-imperialist* opposition to the war. That means mobilizing the working class and oppressed—ground down at home and used as cannon fodder abroad—in class struggle. We fight for labor boycotts of military cargo and political strikes against the U.S. and Canadian intervention. We say, openly and clearly, that a defeat for imperialism in the Persian Gulf would be a victory for the working people of the world.

Throughout the U.S. and also in Toronto on December 1, rallies organized by various "antiwar coalitions" have featured greetings from Ramsey Clark, a Democratic Party "dove" and former member of the Vietnam War cabinet of Lyndon Johnson. In Canada, organizers of these coalitions are courting the thoroughly pro-capitalist NDP social democrats and sections of the Liberal Party. There's just one problem: in their overwhelming majority the NDP and Liberals (like the U.S. Democrats) support Bush/Mulroney's war aims. They too want to "punish Saddam," though they'd rather allow more time for sanctions to strangle Iraq economically and certainly want Canadian ships out of the way when the shooting starts. Determined that nothing scare off their hoped-for bloc partners, the various coalitions and most of the left cannot and will not take a stand against imperialist capitalism.

Communist Party in the Camp of Imperialism

Some organizations, like the Communist Party, go so far as to support U.S. sanctions against Iraq. The CP-backed Canadian Peace Alliance's leaflet for the January 12 "National Action Day" begins by denouncing, not American imperialism, but the Iraqis! Last summer the CP published an editorial demanding that "world pressure must mount on Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait" (*Canadian Tribune*, 13 August 1990). As if it makes the slightest difference to the working class whether Kuwait—that oil well turned into a state by British colonialism—is controlled by Saddam Hussein or the filthy rich Kuwaiti monarchs. But, even worse, the CP insisted that "all economic measures [be] taken to condemn such aggression." Enforcing economic sanctions against Iraq requires a blockade, and a blockade *is an act of war*. Every time the U.S. storms aboard a ship to enforce the blockade, the CP has been there in spirit.

The CP says Saddam Hussein is a bloody dictator. And he is: Hussein has slaughtered leftists and waged war against the Kurdish national minority. We stand with the working people

and oppressed of Iraq against Saddam and his Ba'ath Party. *But we also stand with them against imperialist aggression.* As Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin argued in 1915:

"If tomorrow, Morocco were to declare war on France, or India on Britain, or Persia or China on Russia, and so on, these would be 'just,' and 'defensive' wars, *irrespective* of who would be the first to attack; any socialist would wish the oppressed, dependent and unequal states victory over the oppressor, slaveholding and predatory 'Great' Powers."

—*Socialism and War*

When Lenin wrote this, Morocco was ruled by a corrupt sultan, Persia by a military dictator and China by a warlord—rulers



SC photo

TL contingent on antiwar protest in Toronto calls for defense of Iraq, defeat of imperialism.

just as bloody and reactionary as the Iraqi strongman. Lenin had a term for groups who, like the CP today, refuse to oppose their "own" bourgeoisie in war: social-imperialists—socialist in words, pro-imperialist in deeds.

For years the CP has backed the Gorbachev leadership in the USSR in a seemingly endless series of betrayals—from abandoning Afghanistan to the CIA's sadistic "freedom fighters" to handing East Germany over to Helmut Kohl's Fourth Reich. They claimed these heralded an "end of Cold War"—and the result has been hot war barely 700 miles from Soviet borders. Now the Kremlin is openly backing George Bush, so the CP is caught between a rock and a hard place: how can they recruit would-be antiwar activists, unless they finally criticize Gorbachev?

So a recent *Tribune* editorial (3 December) criticizes the Soviets' UN vote authorizing a U.S. military attack...in the name of solidarity with former CIA directors and Pentagon chiefs!:

"No less personalities than the chair of the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee, Sam Nunn, former Secretary of Defence and CIA chief, James Schlesinger, and former head of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Crowe, publicly urged last week that sanctions be given proper

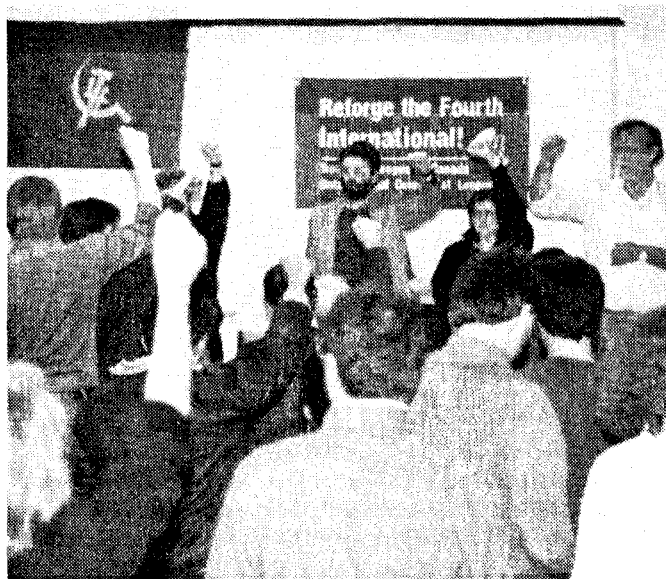
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Trotskyist League/Revolutionary Marxist Tendency Fusion

For Leninist Regroupment!

The last *Spartacist Canada* reprinted statements and documents of groups of militants in Canada, Poland, Mexico and Ireland recently won to the Trotskyist program of the International Communist League. In mid-November, after a period of joint work, the Revolutionary Marxist Tendency (RMT)—formerly of Socialist Challenge/Gauche Socialiste (SC/GS)—and the Trotskyist League of Canada fused their forces into a single organization.

As part of the political collaboration between the TL and the RMT, joint forums were organized to celebrate the 73rd anniversary of the Russian Revolution entitled: "Soviet Workers: Smash Gorbachev's Sellouts to Imperialism!—For the



SC photo

Singing the "Internationale" at TL/RMT forum in Toronto, 10 November 1990.

Communism of Lenin and Trotsky!" The meetings, held in Edmonton on November 3, Vancouver November 9, and Toronto November 10, were attended by over 120 people. In Vancouver when it was announced that the ICL had participated with Trotskyist banners in anniversary celebrations of the October Revolution in the Soviet Union (see opposite), the audience applauded enthusiastically, and generous contributions totalling more than \$600 were made to assist our work.

Not surprisingly, members of SC/GS refused to attend to debate their ex-comrades. In Edmonton, however, a local self-styled sympathizer of the United Secretariat (SC/GS's international co-thinkers, led by Ernest Mandel) came out in the company of a small group of hardened anti-communist East European social democrats. The anointed spokesman of this clot argued that there is nothing to defend in the Soviet Union, and went on to praise the superiority of North American capitalism! Such are the bedfellows of an international organization that has spent the last decade lining up with Cold War social democrats, and who are now hailing every counter-revolutionary nationalist movement against the Soviet Union.

RMT spokesman Andrew Rodomar said at the Vancouver forum: "As we in the Revolutionary Marxist Tendency started to study Lenin and Trotsky, we had to reject its caricature, the anti-working class and anti-Soviet positions of the United Secretariat." Fundamental to their break from Mandelism to communism "was the evolution of our views on the Russian Question..., the central class contradiction of our era, the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917." Comrade Rodomar concluded that in seeking fusion with the ICL, "we offer the best tribute we can to the Bolshevik leadership of October 1917, the tribute of following to the best of our abilities in their footsteps on the road to human liberation."

In Toronto Yossi Schwartz, formerly a member of the Communist Parties in Israel and Canada was a featured co-speaker. Before resigning in solidarity with and subsequently joining the TL, he had become prominent in the Canadian CP for sharply opposing Gorbachev's pro-capitalist "market reforms" and appeasement of imperialism. Several members of the CP, which is now undergoing rapid disintegration, attended the forum.

The local branch of the Bolshevik Tendency also attended. The BT is a collection of embittered ex-members who trickled out of our organization under the early pressures of Cold War II. Claiming political agreement with us, they needed an excuse to alibi their cowardly departure. So they retail lurid stories about being "purged" and the ICL's supposed "degeneration" into a "cult." BT honcho Tom Riley chose to use his time in the discussion period to repeat their shopworn slanders, inviting the RMT "to have discussions with us before they finalize their fusion with the ICL."

RMT spokesman Asha Jugdutt responded by noting how the BT's slanders against the ICL and its American section the Spartacist League/U.S. are utilized by the United Secretariat tops as a club against would-be leftists in their ranks. She continued: "The Spartacist League has a program. The fact that it's publicly, consistently, historically prepared to defend certain principles *requires* a certain kind of internal life, and I saw that when I went to the New York [Central Committee] plenum. I saw it from the inside." She concluded, "Anti-communists of every little variation love to repeat these kind of lies against us. I tell you, I don't buy it."

In Vancouver, TL spokesman Miriam McDonald emphasized the importance of the recent fusions:

"In Canada and internationally groups and individuals are finding in the International Communist League the program to struggle against capitalist exploitation and oppression. So yes, it's true we are very small, and it's true that the stakes are very large. As we noted when we founded the International Communist League, 'Revolutionary regroupments on the program of Leninist internationalism are the means to resolve the disproportion between our small forces and our task.' Without a party there'll be no victory."

A highlight of the forum was the presentations by Bill and Lillian Whitney, veteran Trotskyists in B.C. Bill, a member of the International Left Opposition and a founding member of

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U.S. Empire...

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(America and Roosevelt) just left the East Coast and will reportedly be on station by January 12. Britain and France have filled out their expeditionary corps. Canada's own small contingent stands by in the Gulf of Oman. To add more tension to the war atmosphere, the Pentagon announced it will begin vaccinating (some of) its troops against germ warfare (though there's no evidence that Iraq has biological weapons, and no one has ever used them). Meanwhile, Christmas and Hanukkah celebrations had to be carried out clandestinely under camouflage tents for fear of "offending" the Muslim state-religious authorities of the Saudi monarchy which U.S. troops are supposed to die for. Bob Hope's showgirls couldn't even get into the country, and his jokes were censored out of the media.

The bottom line is that *Bush wants war* for reasons that have little to do with Saddam Hussein and of course nothing to do with high moral principle. As columnist James McCartney



Der Spiegel

Battle-hardened Iraqi troops won't be easily beaten.

notes (*Miami Herald*, 12 November 1990), "some Middle East experts believe that the U.S. Government has had a secret agenda in the Persian Gulf—a long-term master plan to establish American military control over the world's richest oil fields," and "Saddam Hussein handed them a golden opportunity." The accelerating slide of the U.S. economy into a bottomless pit has only led to a more frenzied escalation of the military mobilization despite the mounting costs. (War as a "solution" to economic crises...Karl Marx right again!) But the burnt-out Stalinists in Moscow, liberal Democrats in the U.S. and NDP types at home are still pipe-dreaming of a "peace dividend" and want to believe that Bush's war is just an anomaly that will go away, perhaps through some kind of deal.

On November 29, the U.S. rammed its war resolution No. 678 through the UN Security Council, twisting arms, crassly buying votes and summoning all the foreign ministers to New York to sign on. Yet when Bush announced a "peace" sop the next day, namely that he would send Secretary of State Baker to Baghdad to meet with Hussein "at a mutually convenient time between December 15 and January 15," oil prices started

dropping and everyone saw doves flying. Hussein released all the hostages as a good will gesture, and even floated dates for the meeting. But when he put out feelers suggesting Iraq might withdraw from almost all of Kuwait, suddenly Bush changed the terms—January 12 was now too late (only three days before his D-Day for Armageddon). Since the White House is determined that *the war over Kuwait must take place*, they can't have their *casus belli* reduced to such a ridiculous issue as sovereignty over a couple of uninhabited islands.

It's not as if the Iraqi strongman is unwilling to deal. As his information minister, Naji Al-Hadithi, pointedly told a journalist for the *Village Voice* (1 January):

"So we do control 20 per cent of the world's oil. Until August 2 we were exporting one-third of it to the U.S., even though we knew you had a hostile policy toward us. You know we cannot irrigate the desert with our oil. We cannot drink it. All we can do is sell it."

Al-Hadithi pointed out how the U.S. uses its control of the grain market and technology as a club with which to beat foes and allies over the head—"you are always using food and know-how as political weapons in the Third World"—and added: "As far as Kuwait is concerned, it seems that all the Emir is interested in is his 70 wives. He still has all his money, even without Kuwait. You want to make the Kuwaitis happy? Then why not have the U.S. rent him another 70 rooms over at the Taif Sheraton where he's staying."

Establishment "foreign policy experts" have mooted terms for a deal, in which Hussein withdraws from Kuwait, and then after a "decent interval" the restored emir of Kuwait grants Hussein a lease on the islands he needs to give Iraq an outlet to the sea beyond artillery range from Iran, and perhaps more control over the disputed Rumaila oil field. So that Hussein can save face, and Bush can show he's got *cojones*, perhaps they would start off with some heavy U.S. air strikes on Iraqi forces (without risking heavy U.S. casualties). And Washington would have an excuse to keep a large "peacekeeping" force permanently stationed in the region, one of its goals from the outset. Nobody can claim this is beneath the scruples of the White House. But Bush seems to have upped the ante to such a level that he is committed to driving out Hussein's forces with a large-scale ground attack. This could be bloody indeed for the U.S.

The Iraqi information minister noted that despite U.S. air superiority, "we know a conflict like this will be settled on the ground":

"We are the defenders. In military terms, an invader needs a three-to-one advantage. We have over a million men in arms. I don't think the entire U.S. army is that big. And here we accept sacrifice. Do you know that during the war with Iran we lost 53,000 men just to regain one small city.... Fifty-three thousand men is what you lost during the entire Vietnam War. Do you think Mr. Bush can afford to lose 53,000 men to defend some hole in the Saudi desert?"

With their battle-hardened million-man army, some pretty sophisticated Western weapons systems (bought from France or seized from Kuwait) plus the superior MIG-29 fighters, as well as tank traps filled with drums of napalm and, of course, their chemical weapons, Iraq's rulers are set to make a ground assault as costly as they can for the imperialist invaders.

The Pentagon knows all this and so every month they keep saying they need a few more weeks, a lot more tanks, more planes, more ships, more everything. So when Lt. Gen. Calvin A.H. Waller, the deputy U.S. commander in the Gulf, said that

U.S. forces wouldn't be combat ready on January 15, the brickbats started flying. Even the staid *New York Times* (27 December 1990) started talking about "McClellanism," referring to Civil War general George B. McClellan, whose penchant for delay so frustrated Lincoln that he finally fired him and installed Grant. Ironically, if it were up to the Vietnam-shell-shocked Pentagon there might not be a war, but thanks to a spineless Congress it's all been left to the warmonger in the Oval Office.

As the *Los Angeles Times* (28 December 1990) reports, the word from "senior government officials" is that Bush has decided to "move quickly to launch a massive military attack" soon after the January 15 deadline. Having assembled the largest armada since World War II (with six aircraft carrier battle groups) and a troop buildup that was not reached until halfway through that imperialist war, the Americans can "prevail" militarily. The Pentagon wants to try out all of their high-tech weapons, from cruise missiles and the M1 tank to "stealth" fighters, and even if most of them miss their targets (as in Panama), with such a concentration of firepower they will eventually hit something. The Iraqis have no sources of resupply, so it's only a matter of time until they run out of tanks.

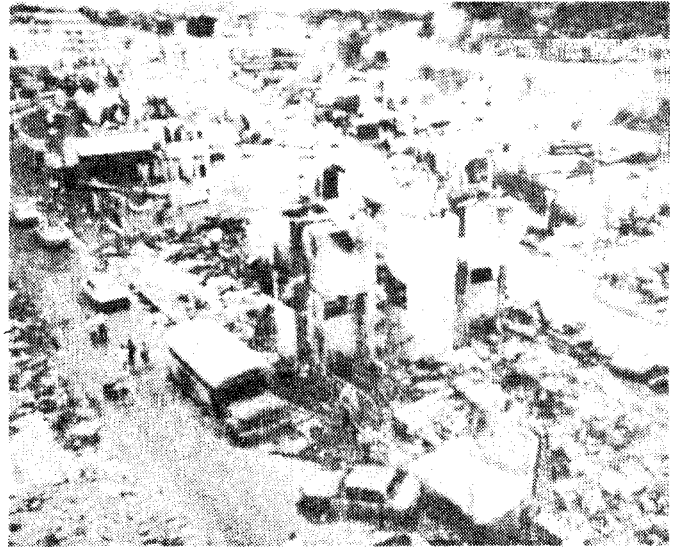
But the U.S. doesn't have unlimited time—they have to get it over with in a hurry if they want to keep their international "coalition" from breaking up, and to avoid serious turmoil at home, where opinion polls continue to show a majority opposed to military action in the Gulf. Above all, the big question will be: What has Washington won if it "wins" on the battlefield? In addition to the prospect of a bloody slog on to Baghdad, unless they get rid of Hussein (the way Reagan tried to assassinate Qaddafi with the air strike against Libya), they will have succeeded in rousing tens of millions throughout the Arab world against the imperialist crusaders who will cold-bloodedly slaughter hundreds of thousands of men, women and children, after first trying to starve them out. The fury could lead to the toppling of the narrowly based pro-Western regimes which have acted as front men for Bush, including in such key states as Egypt.

From the outset, the Trotskyist League of Canada and the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) have sharply opposed the U.S.-led invasion of the Persian Gulf. Between the bloody Iraqi strongman and the autocratic ruling family of Kuwait per se, the world working class has no side. We take the side of the Arab masses, calling to bring down the sheiks, the colonels, the Zionist butchers—for workers revolution throughout the Near East! While various liberals and reformists have lined up behind Bush's "United Nations" cover, supporting the UN "sanctions" which are an embargo, an act of war enforced by the U.S.-NATO fleet, we proclaimed "Break the Blockade of Iraq!" While Bush attempts to assert U.S. global hegemony at gunpoint, this time with the treacherous complicity and support of the sellout Kremlin bureaucracy, the Trotskyists call to "Defend Iraq! Defeat U.S. Imperialism!"

War-Depression

So now war is coming to the Near East, one of the few wars whose approximate starting date is known by all parties beforehand. Despite Bush's feeble talk of opposition to aggression (what about bloody U.S. aggression against Panama, Grenada, Libya, Nicaragua...?) and cynical references to the two-bit tyrant Saddam Hussein as another "Hitler," the

American invasion is a crass grab for control of a resource which has been at the center of imperialist aggrandizement—oil. The immediate U.S. target is Iraq, but ultimately its aim is to bring its economically more dynamic imperialist arch-rivals Germany and Japan to heel. (No wonder that those two "allies" have hung back from sending any troops to the "international" coalition force in Saudi Arabia, and have dropped only a few pfennigs and yen into the American tin



Der Spiegel

Bush's "New World Order": Panama City after 1989 U.S. attack.

cup.) In fact, with his rhetoric of a U.S.-dominated "New World Order" and his string of ultimatums, it is war criminal Bush who is acting as a Hitler.

Dispatching "rapid deployment" forces to Saudi Arabia last summer even as Secretary of State Baker was squeezing the requisite "request" from King Fahd, the American president claimed U.S. troops were being sent in to defend "our way of life." Around the world, the Hollywood pitchman Reagan managed to sell the "American way of life" to the gullible as the road to instant prosperity. But after the Marines landed in Panama a year ago, installing a puppet president sworn in on a U.S. air base, instead of the \$1 billion in aid promised by Bush only a pittance has arrived and thousands are still homeless, living in sweltering hangars. And when U.S.-backed Solidarność took office in Poland in 1989, instead of being showered with dollars, the Polish population was subjected to brutal capitalist austerity that has meant unemployment and hunger.

For while the Reaganite music of unbridled capitalism was at the top of the charts, the American empire was economically and socially rotting from within. The rich have gotten much richer while the poor became poorer, median real wages have fallen from \$8.52 in 1973 to \$7.46 today, and now even combined family incomes are below the '73 level, while an estimated three million homeless are on the streets and there were over twelve million unemployed last Christmas. And the economy has been brought to the brink of disaster. From being the world's leading creditor, the U.S. during the Reagan years became the world's largest debtor nation. A colossal \$14 trillion in foreign and domestic debt (private, corporate and government) threatens to turn the long-awaited recession

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(now well under way) into a deep depression as bankruptcies feed upon each other.

The potential economic collapse is the result not only of a decaying productive plant, due to long-term lack of investment by capitalists seeking to maximize profits by moving production to low-wage countries and various forms of speculation, but also of direct government policy. The "leveraged" buyouts and takeovers, financed by looting the corporations being seized (through high-yield "junk bonds"), was facilitated by the deregulation of savings and loan institutions. As the entire S&L industry collapses under the weight of bad debts, and as the collapse of property values spreads from the Northeast and Texas to the rest of the country, now insurance companies and banks are in danger, with *almost all* of the



Diana Walker for Time

Imperial president exhorting the troops. Military adventures can't reverse economic decline.

leading banks skating on the edge of bankruptcy. And as *Time* magazine (15 October 1990) commented:

"The problem is that the U.S. Government stands behind these institutions like a pillar of Jell-O, since it is already committed to an S&L bailout that could cost \$1 trillion and owes a national debt of \$3 trillion. If more bailouts are needed, the U.S. would have to borrow so much money from the credit markets that interest rates would be pushed upward in the midst of a recession, which would make conditions even worse."

Moreover, unlike the aftermath of the "Black Monday" October 1987 stock market crash, when infusions of Japanese yen shored up a tottering Wall Street, today Tokyo can't bail out the debt-addicted U.S. As a result of a stock market crash at home, in which the Nikkei index has fallen by close to 50 percent in the last year, wiping out more than \$3 trillion in paper value, Japan is cutting back on foreign investment.

While Japanese investors bought \$26 billion in U.S. bonds in 1989, they unloaded \$9 billion in the first half of 1990. Germany, meanwhile, is facing a trillion-mark bill for the cost of annexing East Germany. Since Chancellor Kohl, like Bush, has resisted raising taxes, Bonn has borrowed instead, sending interest rates up and pulling D-marks back from New York to Frankfurt.

With two stock market crashes in three years, and now the entire financial system in jeopardy, American capitalism is in deep trouble. And as it became evident that the Reaganite Roaring '80s were not about to be followed by the Golden '90s, that recession/depression could no longer be held off, it certainly was convenient to the White House if the scapegoat for the economic crisis could be personified by Saddam Hussein rather than Neil Bush. The Gulf war is also convenient to the "military-industrial complex," which was facing big cutbacks and is now getting new orders. But this time around, with the U.S. budget deficit already soaring before the Persian Gulf invasion, war could really sink American capitalism instead of saving it.

Decline of the U.S. Empire

So today history repeats itself, with variations. The U.S. is no longer undisputed master of the capitalist world, and in fact its vanquished World War II enemies have now emerged with more modern and productive economic engines. Rivalries are already breaking out, such as at the trade talks in Brussels, which collapsed at the beginning of December. The U.S.' big advantage is that it still retains a war machine built in the Cold War and aimed at the Soviet Union. Now that the latter appears to be disintegrating, Bush has decided to seize the window of imperialist opportunity: before its war machine collapses on the empty shell of the American economy, he will hurl it into the Near East, seize the world's oil, and blackmail his would-be creditor-masters back into submission by threatening to turn off the spigot.

The evidence of U.S. imperialist decline is so widespread it has become the subject of heated controversy among bourgeois scholars, triggered by Paul Kennedy's 1987 book, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*. Kennedy's suggestion that the evident decay has all the earmarks of classical imperial decline à la "Spain around 1600 or the British Empire around 1900" ignited a hue and cry from the bought-and-paid-for intelligentsia trying to deny reality. As he wrote, the U.S.:

"...is the inheritor of a vast array of strategical commitments which had been made decades earlier, when the nation's political, economic, and military capacity to influence world affairs seemed so much more assured. In consequence, the United States now runs the risk, so familiar to historians of the rise and fall of previous Great Powers, of what might roughly be called 'imperial overstretch'; that is to say, decision-makers in Washington must face the awkward and enduring fact that the sum total of the United States' global interests and obligations is nowadays far larger than the country's power to defend them all simultaneously."

And while he is no Marxist, Kennedy felt compelled to quote Engels—"nothing is more dependent on economic conditions than precisely the army and the navy"—a fact which does not augur well for America's future imperial adventures.

In an interview with the German news magazine *Der Spiegel* (3 September 1990), Kennedy drew a historical parallel

to the Gulf war:

"America is in danger of suffering a national blindness which has previously afflicted many great powers, when they sent their armed forces halfway around the globe.

"Great Britain was capable of a similar display of power in 1899-1900, when it got involved in its bitter conflict with South Africa's Boers, 10,000 kilometers from home. London mobilized more than 300,000 soldiers from all parts of the world. The Royal Navy ruled the waves, no other power was capable of such an effort. That seemed to give the lie to the pessimists of the late Victorian era: England was, so it seemed, still Number One in the world."

Yet even though Britain "won" the battles, the Boer War exposed the advanced corrosion of the decaying Empire, which had been living a parasitic existence off the spoils of colonial plunder: "...the declining competitiveness of industry, the falling investments and growing trade deficit. And yet it was these weaknesses, not defeats on the battlefield, which later led to the collapse of its power." It might also be noted that in launching its attack on the Boers, "perfidious Albion" proclaimed aims of exalted moral purpose. That they could thereby grab the fabulously wealthy gold mines in the Transvaal, and that the British Army could try out its new Maxim machine gun, was just, well, "convenient." Sound familiar?

Today, Germany and Japan are feeling their increased imperialist muscle. Despite Bush/Baker's attempts to strong-arm them into paying for the military buildup in the Gulf, neither has come up with more than a measly billion dollars or so. Both governments, however, have shown great interest in eliminating the "peace" provisions of their U.S.-imposed constitutions which prohibit foreign military interventions. (In Japan this has run up against widespread pacifist sentiment in the population.) When the U.S. demanded that Tokyo cough up more, the Japanese parliament instead shaved its war ("self-defense") budget.

In Europe, Kohl's Fourth Reich, having swallowed up the former DDR (East German) deformed workers state into an imperialist Greater Germany, is no longer the "economic giant and political pygmy" that Social Democratic former chancellor Helmut Schmidt called it, but the proverbial 800-pound gorilla which can sit anywhere it wants. Following the collapse of Hitler's Reich in 1945, novelist Thomas Mann called for "a European Germany, not a German Europe." What we now have is indeed a German-dominated Europe, in which the Yugoslav, Danish, Austrian and Benelux currencies are formally tied to the D-mark, which is also the common currency for trade with East Europe, and Bonn has the final say in the Common Market.

For example, angered over British opposition to German reunification, epitomized by the "Ridley affair" in which one of Margaret Thatcher's cabinet ministers likened Kohl to Hitler, the new German Europe engineered the downfall of the Iron Lady. It is also noteworthy that the Persian Gulf crisis is the first international crisis since World War II where money didn't flee to the U.S. dollar. Instead the German mark and Japanese yen have become the currencies of refuge. Significantly, the Belgian, British, Danish, Dutch, French, Italian and Spanish ships in the Gulf are under the command of the "West European Union," an obscure committee in London which doesn't even have secure phone lines to the Continent but was resuscitated in order that European forces *not* be placed under American (NATO) control.

In the 1970s, Jimmy Carter and various of his cohorts

pushed the theme of "Trilateralism," in which the future would be dominated by cooperation of the three power centers of Japan, West Europe and the United States. The current power configuration is indeed triangular, but it is hardly marked by all-sided cooperation. Rather, the world is being redivided into a Pacific area dominated by the Japanese yen, a Europe dominated by the deutschmark, and the Western hemisphere controlled by the U.S. dollar. Hence Bush's push to expand the U.S.-Canada free trade agreement to include Mexico, and then the rest of Latin America. But simultaneously Washington wants to teach its obstreperous imperialist allies that this is now a "one superpower world."

Oil and Empire

Washington wants to gain total control of Persian Gulf oil in order to once again be able to squeeze its Japanese and German rivals and be master of the capitalist world again. And in the imperialist world there is only one way to do this—war. In the 20th century, oil is what fuels an empire—tanks cannot move without it, not to mention planes and industry. This is even more true today now that armies have been completely mechanized: the Nazi army which invaded Russia in 1941 was still dependent on 650,000 horses, more than the number of motorized vehicles at its disposal, but it was the Panzer (tank) corps which made the difference, and they consumed vast quantities of fuel.

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Trotskyist League Events

Vancouver

Forum:

Defend Iraq! Defeat U.S./Canadian Imperialism!

Monday, January 21
12:30 p.m.
Room 1020
SCARFE
UBC

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Community Centre,
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For further information call: (604) 255-0636

Toronto

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**Lessons of the 60s/70s Antiwar Movement—
Vietnam Was a Victory!** Wed., Jan. 23

All classes at 7:30 p.m.
International Student Centre, 33 St. George St.
University of Toronto
For further information call (416) 593-4138

U.S. Empire...

(continued from page 9)

Hitler said he wanted *Lebensraum* when he invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941, but more to the point, he was desperate to get Russian oil for his tanks. Japan's Rising Sun empire was even more desperate for oil since it had to import it all—in 1937, for instance, Japan got 80 percent of its oil from California. So Japan sent its army and navy into Southeast Asia in June 1941 to grab the oil. American president Franklin D. Roosevelt imposed a freeze on Japanese assets in the United States, which led to a de facto embargo on oil exports to Japan. The Japanese war machine would now have to deplete its oil stocks and would eventually grind to a halt. Thus it was widely expected in U.S. government circles in 1941 that Roosevelt's embargo would force Japanese imperialism to attack.

Likewise, control over oil supplies was a major issue in the first imperialist world war. The conflict was preceded by a battle over redivision of world oil between the U.S. Rockefellers (Standard Oil), together with the Rothschild-Nobel trust which controlled Russia's Baku oil fields, and the Germans who controlled Romanian fields. At the outbreak of the war the British moved to seize the Persian Gulf oil fields around Basra. Four years later, they moved on Mosul in northern Mesopotamia in order to grab the oil reserves there. Subsequently, the Foreign Office in London drew up the artificial borders between Saudi Arabia, the British-installed monarchy of Iraq and its protectorate of Kuwait in order to secure its domination of the area.

As Lenin noted in his pamphlet *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, written in 1916, "The more capitalism is developed, the more strongly the shortage of raw materials is felt, the more intense the competition and the hunt for sources of raw materials throughout the whole world, the more desperate the struggle for the acquisition of colonies." All the more so today, though the colonies may be disguised as neocolonies and oil sheikdoms.

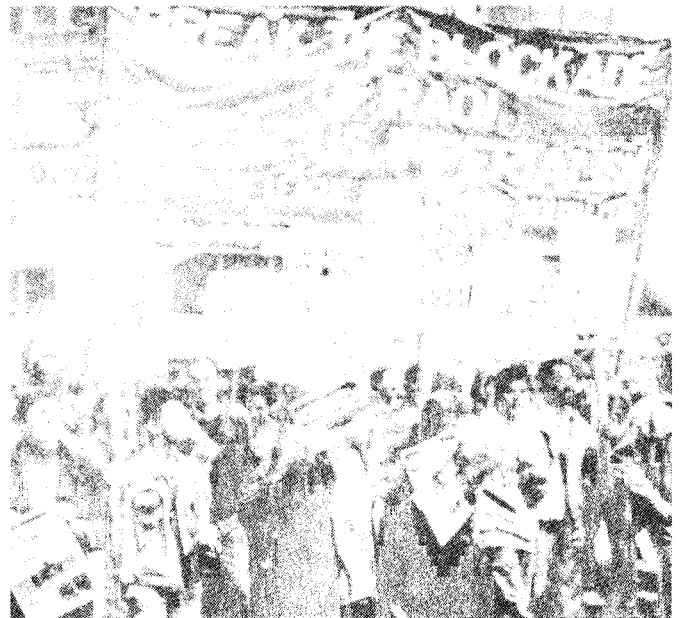
For Class Struggle Against Imperialist War!

In the whole Gulf crisis, one of the biggest concerns of the White House and the Pentagon has been the "home front." After an initial wave of enthusiasm for Bush's "tough" stance of immediately sending in the 82nd Airborne, it has dawned on the American population that "their" president actually intends to go to war. And they're not crazy about it. One poll after another shows three-fifths to two-thirds of the population against attacking Iraq. The Catholic Pope decried the coming war, and the Protestant National Council of Churches has called for a day of prayer and fasting against the war. But George Bush is operating on the proposition that if you hold state power, it doesn't matter a hell of a lot what the population thinks. Or, as one Hollywood executive remarked, you can fool all of the people, all of the time, "if the budget is big enough and the advertising is right."

Certainly when it comes to the vaunted "democracy" of American capitalism, he has a point. Despite popular opposition to a war, the Persian Gulf was hardly an issue in the November Congressional elections, where the Democrats kept their lips zipped on the big issue. (Two days after the vote, Bush announced the second wave of troop deployments, whose only purpose was an offensive attack on Iraq.) There has been

ample discussion of the fact that the U.S. Constitution delegates the power to declare war explicitly and exclusively to Congress, *not* to the executive, which was reaffirmed by the toothless War Powers Act which was supposedly designed to prevent a repeat of the Vietnam War. Yet the spineless Democratic-led Congress refuses to invoke its theoretical powers out of fear of sending the wrong "signal" to Saddam. Meanwhile north of the border, the Liberals and NDP have made clear their own support for a "UN" war against Iraq, so long as Mulroney keeps Canadian troops away from the firing line.

The ruling oligarchy of American capitalism, the Republicans or what Gore Vidal calls the party of property, would dearly like to overcome popular opposition to another dirty



Workers Vanguard

Spartacist League/U.S. marches in October 20 New York demo against U.S. invasion of Persian Gulf.

(and losing) imperialist military adventure. No real opposition to the Gulf war will come from the bourgeois politicians: at most they have tactical differences over what they can get away with. But among the working people, the poor and particularly black and Hispanic minorities, who are disproportionately represented among the soldiers (including many women) who will die in Bush's war, the "Vietnam syndrome" is alive and well. Many among the troops have cried out to reporters that "this isn't our war." What's needed is a class-struggle leadership, independent of and fighting against the "bipartisan" parties of U.S. imperialism, to mobilize opposition in the streets, calling for political strikes against the war.

From the Near East to Europe and North America, the key is to build a revolutionary, internationalist workers party fighting against the imperialist system of war and brutal exploitation. As Lenin wrote on the fourth anniversary of the Russian October Revolution, "the millions who are thinking about the causes of the recent war and of the approaching future war are more and more clearly realising the grim and inexorable truth that it is impossible to escape imperialist war, and imperialist peace...which inevitably engenders imperialist war, that it is impossible to escape that inferno, *except by a Bolshevik struggle and a Bolshevik revolution.*"

—Adapted from Workers Vanguard No. 517, 4 January

Left and the Gulf...

(continued from page 3)

time to work; that war, once started, will be a catastrophe for everyone involved. Would it have been too much to expect the same from the two socialist states on the UN Security Council?"

For decades, seeking peace with the imperialists in order to build "socialism in one country," Stalin and his successors sold out other people's revolutions and thus undermined defense of the USSR. Thoroughly Moscow-loyal, the CP gave all this their fulsome approval. Today their difference with Gorby isn't *whether* to subordinate the working class to imperialism, which they have done for decades, but to which *wing* of imperialism.

Meanwhile the party remains in internal turmoil. The York-Oakwood Club wrote to alibi the USSR's UN vote as part of "a peaceful solution to the crisis," while the Sudbury Charlie McClure Club was "distressed and angry" at the party's failure to campaign against the war moves (24 December). In contrast to all wings of the crisis-racked CP, prominent Toronto member Yossi Schwartz wrote in his document "A Call to All Communists" distributed at the party convention in October:

"Real communists look to rallying the working class against their 'own' imperialist rulers who send working people to die for the imperialists' interests. We say: U.S., Canada out of the Persian Gulf! Break the blockade of Iraq!

"...A truly communist government in the Soviet Union would right now be giving *military support* to Iraq to help defeat Washington's war plans."

Comrade Schwartz has since resigned from the CP and joined the Trotskyist League.

I.S. Chases Pro-Imperialist NDP

With the CP out for sanctions, the International Socialists (I.S.) sought to broker their own version of a popular front. Hoping to appeal to leftist minded youth, last September the I.S.' *Socialist Worker* wrote: "Socialists and all who oppose imperialism must therefore support a military victory for Iraq against American imperialism and its Western allies including Canada." But on testing the prevailing wind of "public opinion," these consummate opportunists adopted a more suitable posture for sharing the sheets with the NDP in various coalitions.

The I.S. is fond of endlessly repeating that they're for "revolutionary socialism" and will expound at great length on their criticisms of the NDP. Of course, they always call to vote for the social democrats anyway—and now *Socialist Worker* (December 1990-January 1991) is having veritable wet dreams over the "fantastic" possibilities of the NDP opposing the war:

"Think of Audrey McLaughlin standing up in the House...calling for the troops to get out immediately.

"Think of Bob Rae...standing up and announcing that the left and the workers' movement will have nothing to do with sending young men and women to die in the Gulf..."

And all this *after* the NDP has clearly come out *for* the imperialist campaign against Iraq.

For the I.S., McLaughlin & Co's pro-imperialist saber-rattling appears as some kind of crime against nature. How could the NDP "at the critical moment collapse...[and] abandon the anti-war movement," they moan. Collapse? Abandon? As early as August, the NDP in Alberta was calling for jailing Arab-Canadians who side with Iraq. They are, and have always been, social-democratic frontmen for imperialism.

With its anti-Marxist theory that the Soviet Union is "state

capitalist," the I.S. is incapable of advancing the interests of the working class. They believe there's no difference between bloody U.S. imperialism—the A-bombers of Japan and the mass murderers of Vietnam—and the USSR. So they've marched together with the Cold Warriors of the NDP to back counterrevolutionary anti-Soviet movements like Polish Solidarność and the *mujahedin* cutthroats in Afghanistan who skin schoolteachers alive for teaching girls to read. Along with Ronald Reagan and Ed Broadbent, the I.S. lusted for the blood of Soviet soldiers at the hands of the barbaric Afghan feudal reactionaries. Their British parent group wrote: "Mohjahedin victory will encourage the opponents of Russian rule everywhere in the USSR and Eastern Europe" (*Socialist Worker* [Britain], 4 February 1989). Yeah, like the anti-Semites and fascists now flowering in the Soviet Union and East Europe.

In an article opposing UN intervention in the Gulf (*Socialist Worker*, October 1990) the I.S. complains that its NDP friends "conveniently forget to mention that the Korean War, a war which devastated the Korean peninsula and cost thousands of lives, was conducted under the auspices of the United Nations." What shameless hypocrisy! Their British parent organization, led by Tony Cliff, split from the Trotskyist movement in the early 1950s *because Cliff refused to defend North Korea against the imperialist onslaught*. Motivated above all by Cold War anti-Sovietism, the Cliffites opposed a North Korean victory, even though in their own words it would "mean the elimination of the landlords and capitalists" ("Origins of the International Socialists" [1971]).

By any test of logic or political honesty they should have had the same position on Vietnam. But by the late 1960s Cold War "socialism" was becoming passé, tens of thousands were marching in support of the Vietnamese NLF against American imperialism, and so the Cliffites, again testing the wind, belatedly came out for defense of the NLF against imperialism in order to become part of the "movement." Today the I.S. proclaims "Let our slogan be: No more Vietnams!" George Bush could agree with that; he too promises "no more Vietnams," i.e. no more *losing* wars for U.S. imperialism. In contrast, we say Vietnam was a *victory* for the world's working people—two, three, many defeats for imperialism!

Trying to get in on the I.S.' coalition-building in Toronto
(continued on page 12)

Contact the Trotskyist League

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Left and the Gulf...

(continued from page 11)

has been the Bolshevik Tendency. The BT, a small group led by individuals who quit our organization more than a decade ago in the face of Cold War II, nevertheless claims to be the sole continuators of revolutionary Trotskyism, "once" embodied in our organization. Their leaflets and paper, *1917*, contain essentially carbon copies of our slogans to "Defend Iraq" and "Break the Blockade." Yet simultaneously, the BTs run around denouncing us as "sectarian" for insisting on these very demands as a principled basis for united action against the war threat.

To get a glimpse of this outfit's real appetites, take a look at the program published by a leading BT supporter in San Francisco, Fred Ferguson, in his "Militant Printer" newsletter (23 September 1990). Uttering not one word in defense of Iraq or opposition to the blockade, Ferguson instead complains: "It is our sons and daughters who will die in Saudi Arabia—No to Bush's war for Big Oil!" *Our* sons and daughters? What about the hundreds of thousands of Iraqis Bush threatens to massacre? Here the BT is pushing the worst social patriotism, light years away from any anti-imperialist program against the war. This rat pack of Cold War dropouts is more than willing to drop their "copycat Spartacism" in order to hop on the bandwagon of a popular-frontist "antiwar movement."

Shortly after the BT first emerged as the self-proclaimed "External Tendency" in 1983, we noted that these characters would logically fit right in with the pseudo-leftists who hang in and around the social democracy. Now they've got the perfect opportunity to find a niche as house "leftists," dropping the class line in order to fit into the "classless" framework

of the popular front. Their anti-Spartacist lies and slanders serve the popular-frontists well as they seek to seal off would-be anti-imperialist militants from the revolutionary Marxists.

From Protest to Power

A shooting war in the Middle East will lead almost instantly to an outbreak of mass protest in the U.S. and in this country. The fake-lefts say they want to recreate the Vietnam antiwar movement of the 1960s. They push the liberal myth that it was pro-Democratic Party peace crawls which forced the U.S. out of Indochina. The right wing puts a sinister twist on this by rehashing Hitler's "stab in the back" myth, claiming the Vietnam War was lost on the home front. This lie is designed to cover up a simple fact: the U.S. was militarily defeated on the battlefield by an armed people fighting for social revolution.

Tens, even hundreds, of thousands of youth wanted to stand with the Vietnamese. But the opportunist leftists of the day worked overtime to tie opponents of U.S. imperialism to capitalist Democrats who, after launching the war, came to see it as a "tragic mistake"—because they were losing. Countless radicalizing youth were taught to look to this wing of the imperialists, instead of class struggle against capitalism.

Now, for the first time in a generation, many young people are again questioning the character of this system. They must be won to taking a side against their "own" ruling class, to opposing war by opposing the whole international capitalist system which needs wars, racism, poverty and unemployment to preserve its "right" to seize the wealth that all the world's working people have created. That is the program fought for by the Trotskyist League of Canada and the International Communist League. Join us! ■

Leninist Regroupment...

(continued from page 4)

the Canadian section of the Fourth International in the 1930s, stressed the need to defend the gains of the October Revolution, despite Stalin's political counterrevolution. And he expressed "my solidarity with the Trotskyist League of Canada and its international tendency of the Fourth International. I'm proud to associate myself with their group."

Lillian Whitney, a member of the Canadian Trotskyist youth organization in the 1930s and a founding National Committee member of the League for Socialist Action three decades later, added, "I am very proud and honored to be asked here to speak with you tonight, as a link between the work of the old Trotskyists of a different era and the work of today."

She described "the humiliation of the relief lines" in Vancouver following the crash of 1929 but also "the tremendous intellectual ferment." "There were organizations forming, debates, arguments," she continued, and "in this swirling current of thought and debate, and with the world events, I came into contact with the current of Trotskyism. I joined the Young Spartacus League."

The events of World War II had a tremendous impact on the small Vancouver group: "We saw young people we had known go off to war and be killed on the beaches of Dieppe and other theaters of war. A Japanese youth organization that existed here in Vancouver was sent into the Interior to detention camps, never to be seen again.... Also, I remember clearly in 1940 the assassination of Leon Trotsky. We felt it like a

physical blow."

Lillian recounted the futility of the years spent buried in the CCF and NDP, trying to "shove" them to the left. Over the years the comrades watched "a spinning-off of so-called Trotskyist tendencies in all sorts of misdirections." But later, as Lillian said, "Our attention was drawn to the Spartacists.... We watched them for some years, very proud of them, very admiring of their work, their heroic efforts, it seems to me, like David against Goliath, to intercede in the problems of the working people and the oppressed generally, and to bring the idea of the workers taking power into their own hands as the only alternative to them."

Infused with a sense of revolutionary optimism after more than 50 years of left-wing activity, Comrade Whitney concluded:

"There is a fine juncture of opportunities at this point. There is the fact that we are on the verge of war, and with all the anger it arouses in the population, and the distrust of the leadership. There is the fact that we are entering into a depression, which will take its toll on all the workers, and they will be in the same situation as they were in the crash of 1929, looking for answers.... The task that awaits us is to make a party that can reach out quickly to such people. "So I would like to salute the Spartacists at this time, and to say that they have a much better opportunity than we ever had right on their doorstep now. I hope and wish them every success.

"And who knows? Perhaps even we old Trotskyists may yet live to see the day of a second great and glorious socialist revolution." ■

Junior Partners...

(continued from page 2)

Canadians, into the Congo where they helped overthrow the government of Patrice Lumumba, a prominent fighter against Belgian colonialism. A corrupt puppet government was installed, and Lumumba was assassinated by the CIA.

● **Vietnam:** During the long, bloody imperialist war against the workers and peasants of Vietnam, Canada played its "peaceful" image to the hilt, for example by allowing American draft dodgers into the country. But in truth Canada directly assisted in the attempts to crush the Vietnamese Revolution—first by sending weapons to the French, then by spying for and purveying military materiel to the Americans. All this was done from privileged seats in various international "commissions" on Indochina.

By 1954 the Vietnamese people who fought tooth and nail against French colonialism were *winning*. The imperialists wanted to buy time, so an International Control Commission (ICC) was created following a conference in Geneva. Canada was an ICC representative for the West; its mandate was to assure "freedom of circulation" and the release of war prisoners (mainly landlords and collaborators with the French).

The Canadian representatives didn't even pretend to be impartial; one stated baldly that "Canada's main concern in Vietnam is not the fulfillment of the Geneva Agreements *per se*, but the maintenance of peace in Southeast Asia as a method of thwarting Communist ascendancy in the area" (quoted in Levant, *Quiet Complicity: Canadian Involvement in the Vietnam War*, 1986). When the time came, Canada openly assisted the U.S. in its armed intervention, providing all the information they had obtained serving as American imperialism's agent on the ICC.

By 1972, Canada was shipping \$1 million a day in arms supplies to the U.S. for the massacre of Vietnamese workers and peasants. At the end of that year another commission—the

International Commission of Control and Supervision—was formed to cover the U.S. withdrawal. Canada again played the major Western role, trying to disguise U.S. defeat as "peace with honor." About 300 Canadian troops (again described as "peacekeepers") were dispatched to Indochina—only to leave after six months before they could be swamped in the final revolutionary offensive of the Vietnamese NLF. It is noteworthy that this was done by the *Liberal* government under Trudeau. And it was Trudeau who ordered the army into Quebec in 1970 to round up unionists, leftists and others under the War Measures Act. From the racist Mackenzie King, who threw Japanese Canadians into concentration camps in World War II, to Pearson's and Trudeau's dirty work in Vietnam, the Liberals are the party of imperialist war and domestic oppression, no less than the Tories.

Two years ago, after the Red Army withdrew from Afghanistan, Canadian troops were sent to aid the CIA-backed *mujahedin* guerrillas as part of a "mine disposal experts" team. Canada never stopped supporting these anti-Communist "holy warriors" in their fight to enslave Afghan women and return the country to the seventh century. And leading the charge against the "Russian invaders" from his post as Canadian ambassador to the UN was prominent NDPer Stephen Lewis, who raved like a Reaganaut about the Soviets' so-called "butchery," "sickness" and "depravity."

If the U.S. can't win on the battlefield, it calls in its Canadian junior partners to police the oppressive and unjust status quo. Reaping massive profits through arms sales, then showing up as squeaky-clean "peacekeepers"—that's Canada's real "traditional role." Today's adventure in the Persian Gulf is no aberration for the rulers of this country, who seek "peace" only in order to carry out unbridled superexploitation of Third World peoples. It is the duty of the North American working class to free the world from the bloody warmongers in Washington and Ottawa, through socialist revolution. Sink U.S. and Canadian imperialism in the Persian Gulf! ■

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Ont. NDP...

(continued from page 16)

Indeed as the economy collapses, the country itself is fracturing along national lines. Meech Lake was buried in an avalanche of Anglo reaction. A whole cabal of far-right outfits, from anti-abortionists to outright fascists, has tried to capitalize on the storm of anti-French chauvinism sweeping the country. The Confederation of Regions Party's campaign against French language rights brought it 15 percent of the vote in Sudbury, traditionally a center of working-class militancy, and 21 percent in Sault Ste. Marie. Both cities have large French-speaking populations.

On the eve of the Ontario elections, Conrad Black, multi-millionaire head of Power Corporation, hosted Preston Manning, leader of the ultraright, racist and anti-French Reform Party, at a dinner for 50 of the country's top moneymen. Noting that "Perhaps all the accumulated chaos will rouse Canadians out of their lassitudes, as they realize that everything's falling apart" (*Maclean's*, 24 September 1990), Black is worried this will benefit the likes of Bob Rae who he describes as being "well to the left." Instead, Black wants to ensure discontent is channeled behind the likes of the "sensible" and "intelligent" Reform Party leader, who he thinks can serve the interests of his class given the population's deep hatred for Mulroney and the Tories.

The NDP and labor bureaucrats have themselves fanned the flames of Anglo-chauvinist reaction in English Canada through their arrogant refusal to defend Quebec's national rights. Rae recently reaffirmed the NDP's chauvinist line, threatening Quebec that the unity of Canada is "not negotiable." Leaders of the large Steelworkers local in the Sault did absolutely nothing to combat the rise of "English only" bigotry there. And the flag-waving Maple Leaf nationalism and protectionist calls of the labor tops, social democrats and most of the "left"—in opposition to the free-trade agreement—fuels racist xenophobia and national hostility. Meanwhile in Quebec, the labor fakers line up the combative French-speaking proletariat behind the bourgeois nationalist labor-haters of the Parti Québécois and Bloc Québécois.

With national antagonisms escalating, minorities everywhere—Native Indians, Francophones in English Canada, non-French speakers in Quebec, immigrants—are being targeted by reaction. On the streets of Toronto and Montreal the cops have been judge, jury and executioner, shooting down black people in cold blood and imposing a reign of terror in the name of "fighting drugs." State-backed racism has encouraged the skinheads, other neo-Nazis and all manner of right-wing terrorists. There have been desecrations of Jewish cemeteries in Montreal, Quebec City and Ottawa, and of synagogues in Vancouver.

When the Mohawks set up their barricades at Oka last summer to defend their historic burial grounds, they were attacked by the Quebec police and then the army. Scores were beaten and arrested. In Châteauguay, howling white mobs of up to 5,000 people—organized by an ex-provincial cop—burned Native Indians in effigy and hurled rocks at old people, women and children. But the Mohawks' defiant stand evoked widespread sympathy among English-Canadian labor. More than half of the 20,000 marchers in last September's Labour Day demonstration in Toronto wore red armbands—the symbol of solidarity with the Mohawks. The power of labor must be unleashed in defense of all the victims of the Canadian

state: Free the Mohawk prisoners! Drop all the charges! For labor/minority mobilizations to stop racist terror!

When the Ontario NDP got elected the *Globe and Mail* (7 September) headlined: "Business nightmare becomes reality." But the NDP wasted no time in assuring Bay Street a pleasant night's sleep. Under the headline "Suddenly Rae looks Liberal," *Toronto Star* (29 November) columnist Thomas Walkom summed up the government's plans:

"Like Liberal and Conservative regimes before it, the NDP government has signalled it wants to leave the economic and political structure of the province pretty much as is.

"Tax reform, pension reform and welfare reform are being postponed. Rae's pre-election talk of economic democracy—of giving workers more rights in the management of their firms—has disappeared....

"So perhaps it should be no surprise that Rae's Throne Speech, his agenda for the coming legislative session, was so warmly—if cautiously—received by business....

"For under the Other Liberals, the powerless seem destined to remain that way—just as they always have."

The Canadian Manufacturers Association praised the NDP for putting off its pledge to tax big corporations which now pay no tax. The chairman of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce congratulated Rae, saying "if there were those who were afraid of the reds being in the door, he's done a fair amount to dispel that kind of concern" (*Globe and Mail*, 21 November). In contrast Richard Yampolsky, executive director of the anti-hunger group Foodshare, said bitterly: "This speech could have been written by either of the other two parties in the House because it sounded just like them.... I came here expecting little and got less."

NDP in the Service of Capitalism

At his first post-election press conference, Rae went out of his way to stress his government would be "fiscally responsible." Pointing to other "socialist" governments around the world, like François Mitterrand's Cold War austerity government in France, he argued: "The social democratic movement has been a reality in the world...we are people who believe in effective economies where freedom is respected and where property rights are respected" (*Globe and Mail*, 8 September).

The NDP is one of the most right-wing social-democratic parties in the world. Although organizationally based in large measure on the trade unions, it is thoroughly pro-capitalist in its program and in its leaders, who hunger for the yuppie vote. In power they are loyal administrators of the capitalist state and enemies of workers, the poor, minorities. In times of social upheaval, when the class struggle heats up, the NDP can be relied upon to protect the bosses' profits and ensure class "peace," as they did with a vengeance in B.C. in 1975 when they imposed the most massive strikebreaking law in the province's history, ordering 60,000 pulp, paper and other workers back to work.

Poverty, unemployment and destitution are the inevitable products of the capitalist system where the vast wealth created by the working people goes to enrich a tiny minority. Only when those who labor rule, when the working class becomes the ruling class, can the riches of this world benefit the peoples of the world. But the NDP and the labor bureaucrats serve and protect the capitalists. The fight for socialist revolution necessarily involves an irreconcilable struggle against these "labor lieutenants of capital."

Take for example Bob White, president of the Canadian

Vancouver Cops Assault Squatters

On November 27 more than 100 heavily-armed Vancouver cops laid siege to six houses on Francis St. in the city's east end. Snipers prowled nearby rooftops, an RCMP helicopter cruised overhead. Armed with Uzis, their faces masked with black balaclavas, cops from the Emergency Response Team stormed in to "evict" a small number of peaceful squatters from their homes. Later the same day, Vancouver City Council ordered the houses demolished. Thirty people now face criminal charges. We demand these charges be dropped immediately!

The police justified their jackboot raid by inventing a supposed "stockpile" of guns and Molotov cocktails, and smearing the squatters as an "armed criminal element" who had "expressed a desire to kill a policeman." This was a deadly slander, designed to turn the squatters—homeless people, some anarchists and pacifists—into terrorists to whom anything could be done. One cop reportedly said: "We have 130 men, automatic weapons, and if they so much as light a cigarette we will put a slug in their guts."

The brutality of the Francis St. assault underscores the contempt in which the poor and working people are held by the arrogant profiteers who run this country. In Vancouver, housing prices have skyrocketed alongside unemployment and poverty driven by deepening recession. Real estate speculators have raked in billions. While thousands have nowhere to live, available units like the Francis St. houses are kept empty while developers await permission to tear them down and put up condos.

Across this very rich country, the inhuman system of capitalist oppression condemns hundreds of thousands of people to begging for food and sleeping in the streets. And the cops are

there to enforce bourgeois "order" at the first sign of resistance. To make life even remotely livable for the homeless, the poor, minorities, all the oppressed, will take nothing short of a North American socialist revolution. ■



Rick Loughran/Vancouver Province

November 27: Capitalist state's war on homeless.

Auto Workers (CAW) and a federal NDP vice president. White split Canadian auto workers away from the U.S.-based UAW in the early 1980s, weakening the fighting power of auto workers throughout the continent. For this and other services to the bosses the Queen's Governor-General recently made him an officer of the Order of Canada, "in recognition of building a Canadian union" and "fighting for an independent Canada."

For the last decade this labor traitor has engineered sellout contracts which have seen thousands of auto workers' jobs lost. Last fall the CAW briefly struck Ford, setting a pattern settlement for the other Big Three auto companies. The eventual CAW deal got the auto barons to increase SUB benefits for those laid off, in exchange for a green light for factory closures. The CAW tops boasted this was the best auto contract ever negotiated in Canada. But one of 2,400 workers at GM's Scarborough van plant, targeted for closure, thought very differently. "We've spent thousands of hours trying to keep the plant open," he said. "It's sad because, in essence, this deal says that this is the end" (*Globe and Mail*, 14 October).

The labor fakers are signing away thousands of jobs, sentencing countless more people to the UI lines and welfare rolls. There's plenty of anger and will to fight among the union ranks, who are fed up with taking it on the chin. What's needed is some good, old-fashioned class struggle—*plant occupations* and *sit-down strikes* backed up by the power of the entire labor

movement—to *stop* mass layoffs and closures. A new, class-struggle labor leadership must be forged to lead resistance to the capitalists' assault.

That's a leadership that will stand up for immigrant workers and their families, for the rights of Native people, for Quebec's right to self-determination and the language rights of French speakers in the rest of the country, for the rights of all working people against the capitalist exploiters. Rae and Audrey McLaughlin's NDP and their cohorts in the union bureaucracy are *obstacles*, not allies, in the fight against capitalist oppression. As we wrote last fall:

"The rulers, abetted by the labor tops and the NDP, preserve *their* power by setting whites against blacks, Asians, Native Indians and other minorities, English against Québécois workers, Canadian against American workers, *ad nauseam*.

"What is desperately needed is an internationalist, class-struggle leadership of the labor movement, one that can unite all of the working people, the exploited and oppressed in common battle against their common enemies. It is the urgent task of class-conscious workers to construct the revolutionary workers party that can wrest the productive wealth of North America out of the hands of the greedy, rapacious capitalists and place in the hands of the working people the power to build a planned, socialist economy that will ensure equality and abundance for all."

—*Spartacist Canada* No. 80, Fall 1990 ■

SPARTACIST CANADA

Ont. NDP Pledges to Rule for Bay Street

The Ontario New Democratic Party was swept to power last September on a wave of populist opposition to the Peterson Liberal government and the ruling Tories in Ottawa. The NDP made all kinds of promises in its "Agenda for the People," and more than 40 percent of its newly elected MPPs came directly from the trade union movement. So a lot of working and poor people thought Bob Rae's government would reflect their interests. But within hours of victory, the NDP was underlining its pledge of allegiance to the interests of Bay Street, the bosses and the financiers.

New NDP Labour Minister Bob Mackenzie, himself a former United Steelworkers organizer, emphasized that the unions won't have an "inside track." Rather, the government "will be every bit as accessible, and probably more so to the business community than to labor" (*Toronto Star*, 6 October). "It's a very difficult situation," added Ontario Federation of Labour President Gord Wilson. "Bob Rae can't just pander to a special-interest group." Already the union tops are warning the workers that they'll have to make "sacrifices." Any serious fight against growing unemployment, homelessness and poverty in Canada's industrial heartland will necessarily require a fight *against* the pro-capitalist NDP government.

Working people, the poor and their allies are rightly fearful about the future in the face of deep economic recession and impending war. The Tories have finally slammed through their GST, adding 7 percent to the cost of virtually everything except rent and the most basic foodstuffs. Government "sin" taxes have already boosted the price of a pack of smokes to \$5 in Ontario and beer in bars to \$4 a bottle; interest rates make it impossible for working people to buy a shack let alone a house. Facing hunger and homelessness, 1.4 million people turned to food banks in 1989, well before the recession had even begun. In Metro Toronto, one out of every ten children relies on these food banks for basic subsistence. Last year nearly two million people across the country struggled to survive on the government's meager welfare payments, which are set at barely half the official poverty line.

Unemployment is soaring; latest statistics put it just under 10 percent nationally and far higher in the Maritimes and Quebec. The Canadian Labour Congress estimates that 226,000 jobs have disappeared in the last two years as compa-



Chris Schwarz/Mackenzie's

Globe and Mail
Homelessness in Toronto; Bob Rae's social democrats will now administer capitalism's poverty, unemployment, cop terror.

nies use the free-trade agreement to shift operations to cheap labor areas in the U.S. and Mexico. In Windsor, a city of less than 200,000 people, plants have been shutting down at the rate of one every *nine days* since 1989.

There's a lot of social discontent in this country. Canadians are becoming downright cynical about established political leaders and parties for the obvious reason that their lives are getting worse, and the future holds no promise of improvement. But populist anger finds expression in a variety of ways. On the one hand the federal NDP under Audrey McLaughlin now leads the polls in every region west of Quebec. On the other, there has been a sharp right-wing backlash as yuppies and prairie rednecks rail against "capitulation" to Quebec.

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