

Socialist Worker

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THE ANTI WAR PAPER—EVERY WEEK €1.00 / £0.70p

inside:

**THE U.S.
AND THE
ARAB
REGIMES**

—PAGES 4&5

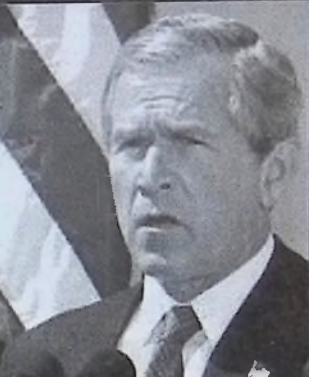
**Mad system
that drives
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IN GAZA**

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Bush and Blair are

WAR



CRIMINALS

CLOSE SHANNON TO U.S. MILITARY!

WEAPONS of mass destruction are raining down on the cities of Iraq.

On one night alone, Friday 21 March, three thousand attacks were made by U.S. and British planes and missile launchers.

By the end of the assault the military chiefs boasted that they had used over one thousand cruise missiles.

Each of these missiles costs over half a million dollars and delivers a massive 1,000lb blast warhead or scatters hundreds of 'bomblets.'

Excited RAF officers boasted of their success in launching a new weapon from their Tornado aircraft, the Storm Shadow.

Each of these bombs costs £750,000.

Hundreds of other deadly weapons are being dropped onto the cities of Iraq including the 'Mother of All Bombs' — the replacement for the 15,000lb 'daisy cutter' that is bigger than a double decker bus and devastates everything within a mile of its impact point.

Inevitably this barrage is causing civilian casualties with every attack.

Decapitated

In Basra the Arabic TV news channel Al-Jazeera reported that the Friday bombings, which included the use of daisy cutters, killed 50 civilians including an eight year old boy who had been decapitated.

British and US military PR men at first denied that Basra had been bombed, but a day later they admitted the attack had taken place.

In Baghdad the civilian casualties are mounting.

They include five-year old Doha Nawaz who is paralysed after two pieces of shrapnel smashed through the kitchen window of her home and imbedded themselves in her back.

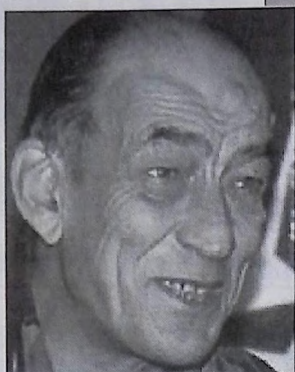
Four-year old Abbas Ali has 85 percent burns after his family's house burst into flames.

Red Cross officials, independent of Saddam's Ministry of Information, put the figure of civilian casualties for the bombing on the night of 21 March to be at 100.

The people of Baghdad are living in terror under skies filled with the sickeningly sophisticated technology of mass murder.

This is not a war against terrorism. This is a war by the world's greatest terrorist.

Bloody Sunday Para leads attack on Iraq



■ (Above) General Mike Jackson and (right) Bloody Sunday, Derry, 1972



GENERAL Mike Jackson, the most senior British officer attacking Iraq, was involved in the Parachute Regiment attack on innocent civilians in Derry's Bloody Sunday.

Jackson was one of a small number of people who worked closely with the Para commander on the ground. Lt Derek Wilford who gave the order to fire on a civil right march.

Fourteen people were murdered on the day.

Within hours of Bloody Sunday the British Army put out a statement claiming that a number of the victims were on the wanted list.

It also claimed that others had been carrying weapons while yet others had nail

'The noise literally drove them out of their minds'.

bombs.

Jackson, the present Commander of British forces in the Gulf, was the Unit Press Officer in Derry that

day.

Before taking part in Derry's Bloody Sunday, Jackson served as an intelligence officer at the notorious Palace Barracks where internees were tortured.

Hooded

The *Sunday Times* described how the internees "were continuously hooded, barefoot, dressed only in an

over large boiler suit, and spread-eagled against a wall-leaning on their fingertips like the hypotenuse of a right-angled triangle.

"The only sound that

filled the room was a high-pitched throb, which the detainees usually likened to an air compressor.

"The noise literally drove them out of their minds..."

In more recent times, Jackson was the most senior British Army officer sitting on the Army Board which ruled that the two soldiers convicted of the murder of 18

year old Peter Mc Bride were fit to continue serving in the British Army.

They also are now serving in the Gulf.

Bush writes blank cheque for war

EACH year Iraq spends under \$1 billion on its military budget. The US budget, by contrast, is \$400 billion.

But on top of this, Bush is writing a blank cheque to finance the attack on Iraq.

Even more astounding, he is doing this while he is introducing a \$1.5 trillion dollar tax-cutting programme, which is mainly aimed at the wealthy.

Recession

From now on, for example, there will be no taxes on share price speculation.

The US is already the

Business with Saddam

U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney was engaged in secret business dealings with Saddam's regime by selling oil production equipment, according to confidential UN documents.

Cheney who was the US defence minister during the first Gulf

War, was named chief executive of Halliburton in 1995.

Originally he promised to maintain a hard line against Saddam Hussein.

Disaster

But when Halliburton was heading for financial disaster in the mid 1990s, he did an about turn.

He first called for an

end to sanctions stating that 'The problem is that the good Lord didn't see fit to always put oil and gas resources where there are democratic governments'.

Then in 1998, Cheney saw the acquisition of Dresser Industries, which sold oil pipeline equipment to Iraq.

These sales helped to push up Iraqi crude oil exports from \$4 billion in 1997 to \$18 in 2000.

baill it out.

Bush's answer is to rely on more and more military thuggery to force other countries to pay for US spiralling debt.

How they plotted to attack Iraq

THE PROJECT for the New American Century, or PNAC, was set up in 1997. It brought together many of the group who surround Bush today.

Vice-president Dick Cheney is a founding member of PNAC, along with defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Defence Policy Board chairman Richard Perle.

Deputy defence secretary Paul Wolfowitz is the group's ideological father.

PNAC has recently given birth to a new group, the Committee for the Liberation of Iraq, which met with national security adviser Condoleezza Rice in order to formulate a plan to "educate" the US populace about the need for war in Iraq.

CLI has funnelled millions of dollars to support the Iraqi National Congress and the Iraqi heir presumptive, Ahmed Chalabi.

Chalabi was sentenced in

his absence by a Jordanian court in 1992 to 22 years in prison for bank fraud after the collapse of a bank he founded in 1977.

His Enron-like business credentials apparently make him a good match for the Bush gang's plans.

Critical

PNAC believes that the central requirements for US forces are to be able to "fight and decisively win multiple, simultaneous major theatre wars", and to "perform the 'constabulary' duties associated with shaping the security environment in critical regions."

When the Twin Towers came down on 11 September, the PNAC group saw, at long last, their chance to turn their ideas into substantive policy.

Briefing

In September 2001 Bush released the National Security Strategy of the USA. It is an ideological match to PNAC's Rebuilding America's Defences report issued a year earlier.

In August last year Defence Policy Board chairman and PNAC member Richard Perle heard a policy briefing from a think tank associated with the Rand Corporation.

According to the *Washington Post* and *The Nation*, the final slide of this presentation described "Iraq as the tactical pivot, Saudi Arabia as the strategic pivot, and Egypt as the prize" in a war that would purportedly be about ridding the world of Iraq's weapons.

world's largest debtor and has relied on the rest of the world to finance its deficits.

This worked while the US economy was booming in the

nineties.

But now as the dollar slides in value and recession stalks the country, other capitalists are more reluctant to

Vultures gather

CORPORATE America is already bidding to re-construct Iraq after its bombers pulverise it.

The *Wall St Journal* has described the post-war operation as 'the largest government re-construction effort' since WW2.

The US Agency for International Development is the US government agency Bush has lined up to oversee "reconstruction". Its plans talk of creating "opportunities for international trade" and "promoting the private sector".

Revenues

The revenues from Iraq's oil, which Blair claims will be held "in trust by the UN", will flow directly to these corporations.

USAID's statutes call for banning abortion in countries it works in—a sop to the right wing Christian fundamentalists around Bush.

Among the companies invited to bid by USAID are Bechtel, an engineering firm which employed the former CIA chief, William Casey. It gave \$ 1.3 million in political contributions between 1999 and 2002.

In 1980s, Bechtel helped Iraq to develop its weapons programme. It also had a \$2.5 million with Saddam Hussein to build a petrochemical plant in Baghdad.

But business is business.

American patriots

IN A letter to George W. Bush, Michael Moore the author of *Stupid White Men*, revealed the real patriotism of the people who govern the United States.

Of the 535 members of Congress, it appears that only ONE—a senator from South Dakota—has a son or daughter enlisted in the armed forces.

War unleashes racist campaign

BUSH'S 'war against terrorism' has unleashed a ferocious racist campaign against Muslim people.

Visitors from 25 predominantly Muslim countries are now photographed and fingerprinted while entering the US.

FBI agents have been given powers to indefinitely detain foreign nationals for alleged immigration violations.

Warrants

Since September 11th, the US justice Department have issued warrants against a staggering 300,000 foreign nationals.

Meanwhile in Spain a judge has just released 14 Muslims who were detained on terrorism charges.

The Spanish government claimed they were part of Al Qaida cell that were manufacturing

chemical weapons. It transpired that the dangerous chemical was washing powder.

WE HAD SHOCK AND AWE

FAMILIES of the Victims of September 11th have condemned Bush's bombing of Baghdad.

Their organisation 'September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows' said they know how it feels to experience 'shock and awe'.

They do not want 'other innocent families to suffer the trauma and grief that we have endured'.

GARDA HELICOPTERS

A GARDA helicopter tried to drown out speeches during the huge March 22nd protest in Dublin.

This is a tactic learnt from the British Army in Northern Ireland.

This time though it was driven away by howls of outrage.

What they say



'What will follow will not be a repeat of any other conflict. It will be of a force and scope and scale that has been beyond what has been seen before'

—Donald Rumsfeld's warning to the people of Baghdad.

'Greater attention to precision guided weapons means we could have a war with zero civilian casualties'

STAY ON THE STREETS! Beat them on the Home Front

BAGHDAD is under siege. Its people are terrorised by Donald Rumsfeld's new conception of war - Shock and Awe.

This is high altitude terrorism with tons of Cruise missiles and cluster bombs dropped on innocent people from relative safety.

But Operation Shock and Awe was also designed to strike fear into anyone else who wants to tangle with the corporate power of America.

The message is - if you dare nationalise US firms; if you cancel your country's debt and fail to pay Western banks; if you insist on cheap generic drugs to fight AIDS - you too could face US firepower.

This is the political content of the nightly display of military pornography on our airwaves.

Journalists who are 'embedded' in military units are acting as propagandists for the psych-ops policy being run by US Central Command.

Each of them have signed a 50 page 'Land Component Ground Rules Agreement' with the military on how to report the war. It bans pictures of dead soldiers, for example. It is a pro-

Despite their massive resources, Bush and Blair are losing the propaganda war. They can pulverise Baghdad - but they will not win the 'hearts and minds' of those at home.

paganda operation that has been crafted by Alastair Campbell, Blair's spin doctor.

Yet it is not working. The imperialist armies of Britain and US are losing on the home front.

Morale

Right across the world, the anti-war demonstrations have stayed at a massive level. On March 22nd, over 15,000 people marched in Dublin; 4,000 marched in Cork; 2,000 marched in Derry and 3,000 marched in Belfast.

Despite their massive resources, Bush and Blair are losing the propaganda war. They can pulverise Baghdad - but they will not win the 'hearts and minds' of those at home.

The morale of every army is affect-

ed by what happens on the home front. Armies are made up of working class people who join for wages and security. They are affected by the ideas of their friends and neighbours.

During the Vietnam War, the US army began to fragment when the mood of opposition in US cities filtered into the barracks.

Muhammad Ali summed up the links between the growing Civil Rights movement and the mood of black soldiers when he said 'No Vietcong ever called me a nigger'.

This time around, as Bush prepares for an era of permanent warfare, the huge displays of global people power can again erode his strength.

This is why we have to stay on the streets. We need to continue the huge demonstrations and mass displays of civil disobedience.

Every government - including Bush's poodle Ahern - must learn that there is a cost to pay for this war. Life will not continue as normal while they have blood on their hands.

To do all this we need a movement that is organised as never before. Anti-war groups need to be set up in every suburb and workplace. New activists need to be at the forefront. Leaflets,



Part of the 20,000 strong protest in Dublin on Saturday

posters must be distributed in vast numbers to counter the media lies.

This week the message must be: **Get to the National Anti-War demonstration in Dublin on April**

29th, starting in Parnell Square at 3pm.

Organise pickets and sit down protests at the clinics of pro-war politicians.

DAY-X: When civil disobedience began

On March 20th, Day-X, thousands of Irish people engaged in civil disobedience to express their outrage at war. But the national media ignored them.

Here is your Socialist Worker guide to the scale of mass action that occurred.

★ **WATERFORD:** Over 500 students and staff at the Waterford Institute of Technology took part in the 10 minute stoppage against the war.

Workers at Waterford Crystal and Waterford Stanley also downed tools the day after war broke out.

Various small shops in the city centre shut their doors and students at several schools ignored threats of suspension to walk out of class to show their opposition to the war.

★ **CARLOW:** Over 300 students, lecturers and staff at the Institute of Technology Carlow took part in the 10 minute solidarity stoppage on Day-X.

★ **CORK:** Workers at the tax office walked out.

evening, 500 people marched against war and blocked off Patrick's St.

★ **DERRY:** Anger brought over 1,500 mainly young people to the lunchtime rally on Day-X.

Hundreds of students left their schools and colleges. Groups of postal workers, firefighters, ancillary workers, from Derry's Tech, shop workers and civil servants walked out.

The main bridge was blocked by a good-humoured sit-down.

★ **LIMERICK:** One thousand students turned out to a rally at University of Limerick.

★ **DUBLIN:** All the main colleges had mass walkout of students and staff.



Workers at Dublin City Council offices in Wood Quay stop war on Day-X

Hundreds of people in Maynooth, UCD, NCAD, DCU, St Pat's either stopped work or study.

In DCU they blocked the road outside college. In all about 1,500 people took part in the colleges.

Many schools also took part in the day of action. Eoin Gillen of St. Benildus, Dublin, for

example reports.

"We had a walkout of just under a 100 people. I had a megaphone and that made the whole thing loud and exciting.

"We got some good chants and we marched around for an hour before 10 of us went into the protest at the Dail.

"The megaphone really

made a difference.

"If we make these things lively we attract a lot more people."

In the Dublin Civic Office, scores of workers walked out and held a banner outside their office. Museum workers, teachers in Pearse College and Marino VEC, civil servants in the Depart-

ment of Trade and Enterprise and Department of Education walked out.

In the north inner city 200 community workers and participants in many community projects stopped and came out.

So did the children at a crèche in Ballsbridge. Their teacher brought them out and interrupted a

television programme being made nearby - to get the anti-war message across.

★ **BELFAST:** "The most radical student demonstrations since the sixties".

This is how one experienced socialist described the school students demonstration. Several hundred came behind the banner of Students against War.

They marched on the US Consulate and tried to break through its barriers.

They blocked some of Belfast's main streets. And they were manhandled by the new PSNI force.

As one student commented, "We have a non-sectarian police force - they give the same rough treatment to Protestants as well as Catholics".

★ **GALWAY:** Staff and students at UCG and college of art came out. A big demonstration followed in the evening.

★ **In all over 10,000 people took part in the mass civil disobedience.**

But RTE did not say a word.

But the message will soon get to our rulers - if they continue to back this war - then life will not go on as normal.

The Eamonn McCann column

Will Sinn Fein endorse the PSNI?

PROVO leaders had an ultra-delicate calculation to make as they headed to Dublin for the Sinn Fein Ardfeis on the last weekend in March.

Pressure was on from a number of sources, including Bertie Ahern and the Bush regime, for them to take their places on the Northern policing boards and for the IRA to make a move on disarmament which would convince Unionists that, this time, they really were going to do the business.

But five minutes talk with a Sinn Fein rank-and-filer would leave no room for doubt that the "grass roots" are far from ready to embrace the PSNI. And IRA members have misgivings, to put it mildly, about a gesture which would signal that they'd accepted defeat.

Balance

The balance between the Republican foot-soldiers and their friends in high places has never been more difficult for the SF leaders to maintain.

Nevertheless, there's a consensus across a wide range of commentators that Gerry Adams and his associates will be able to pull off the manoeuvre now required of them.

The group around Adams has gotten its way so far, it's argued, delivering the ceasefire and entering a Six County assembly in face of repeated assurances that

they'd never do any such thing.

The rank and file may on occasion have groaned with disappointment, but they never rose up to reject the compromise road, much less oust those inviting them along it. It will be a repeat performance this time, many anticipate. Having come this far, where else have they to go?

A return to armed struggle is unthinkable: what would the struggle be for? And anyway, many of the most influential among them really enjoyed the trappings of office at Stormont and can't wait to get back.

This is both a cynical view in itself and ascribes a cynical approach to the SF leadership. And maybe it's right.

Maybe the issue will be resolved in just this way, in time for a May election, even. But maybe not.

Supporting the PSNI and urging young nationalists to join would be a bigger step across a deeper divide than calling a ceasefire or entering Stormont.

In the end, the purpose of any police force is to defend the State, if necessary through the use of violence.

Giving allegiance to the PSNI would involve a willingness physically to defend the Northern State against assault.

It would not be just another shift in position: it would be the shift which finally carried Sinn Fein over to the other side.

The Adams group has earned high praise from US and British officials for luring their followers along a road many didn't want to be on in the first

place.

But this may prove a step too far.

In the meantime, it's worth noting that at this juncture the praise which the Bush administration has showered on the SF leadership could turn out counter-productive.

The efforts of their own leaders in recent months to stay close to Bush have dismayed Sinn Fein supporters to an extent which has scarcely been acknowledged in mainstream coverage.

Abject

Adams' abject presence at the White House even as his hosts finalised preparations for the attack on Iraq was a source of vivid embarrassment to SF members and supporters who hitherto have tended to regard the SF president with something approaching reverence.

Members of Ogra Sinn Fein who tried at anti-war gatherings to portray Adams' role at the St. Patrick's Day event as "confronting US imperialism" have found themselves the objects of derision.

In this situation, SF leaders might feel it wise to postpone endorsement of the PSNI. It would be a nice paradox—that one of the results of their embrace of the US administration was that they found it more difficult to do what the administration had been urging upon them.

But then, politics is full of contradictions, and nowhere more so than in relation to the politics of Sinn Fein.

A BRUTAL FRIENDSHIP

The US and the Arab re

THE US-led war against Iraq has led to an outpouring of anger in the Arab world. But the protests have been met with deadly repression.

Despite Bush and Blair's promise to 'bring democracy to Iraq', their supporters do not issue a word of condemnation.

Instead they imply that it is perfectly reasonable to lock up people who are labelled 'Islamic fundamentalists'.

Demonstrations in Egypt are technically illegal under the country's 22 year long state of emergency.

According to Amnesty International, anyone who is detained by the police faces torture.

Yet despite this, 10,000 people marched in Cairo after the Friday's Muslim prayers.

According to a recent opinion poll in Saudi Arabia, only 3 percent of the population take a favourable view of the US.

Yet demonstrations are banned and protests are confined to people text messaging each other.

The Arab world is run by tyrants who have been cultivated and bribed by the Western powers. None of them have much legitimacy in the eyes of their own people.

They rule by brutal repression, sometimes disguised under a spurious democracy. Hosni Mubarak, for example, scored a 96 percent vote in a recent election in Egypt – just under the popularity rating of Saddam Hussein.

The roots of this tyranny lie in history of colonialism. The two big European colonial powers, Britain and France, moved in on the Middle East as the Ottoman Empire was breaking up.

Under the Sykes-Picot Agreement in 1916 and later mandates granted by the League of Nations they divided the area out between them.

They established artificial states and put on the thrones 'traditional' monarchies who served their interests.

Britain drew Iraq's boundaries so as to deny the oil to France (which took control of Syria), to Turkey or the Kurds who inhabited the region near Mosul.

The border between Kuwait, Iraq and Saudi Arabia was drawn up by Sir Percy Cox, the British High Commissioner in Baghdad.

The monarchies served Western interests well.

Saudi Arabia, for example, has been run since 1932 by the al Saud family – a ruling dynasty of about 4,000 princes.

In 1933, they sold the oil concession for their whole country to Standard Oil of California for a mere £50,000.

The concession was so big that Standard Oil called in Texaco and Mobil Oil and formed the Arabian American Oil Company (ARAMCO) which has robbed the country since.

The Arab monarchs lived a life of unparalleled luxury as long as they served Western interests and crushed



■ Riots in Cairo last week as anti-war protesters battled police

their own people.

In the 1940s, for example, 82 percent of the oil revenues of Kuwait went directly into the pockets of the al Sabah family.

The cost of maintaining garages of Ibn Saud was more than was spent on the entire Saudi Arabia education budget. In these oil rich countries, the mass of people lived in desperate poverty.

The profits from oil was spent on building up armies to terrorise their own people. The rest was re-cycled into the Western banking system.

On average, the Arab regimes devote 9 percent of their national incomes on military spending.

It is one of the harshest in the world – where is directed at the people.

Today, the US has the imperial overlord, influence over Saudi Arabia undermines attempts to end oil.

Under US orders, it regularly increases its

The defeat of a secular opposi

OPPPOSITION to imperialist domination of the Middle East has always been strong. One source of opposition was left wing nationalism.

In 1951, the new Prime Minister of Iran, Mossadeq, nationalised the Anglo Iranian Oil Company.

But he failed to carry through the fight against imperialism and in 1953 he was overthrown by a joint US British operation which restored the brutal dictatorship of the Shah.

In mid 1950s, President Nasser of Egypt became hugely popular throughout the Middle East by calling for 'Arab oil for the Arabs'.

He defeated the older colonial powers of Britain and France during the Suez crisis and then tried to balance between the US and the USSR.

But Nasser was humiliated in 1967, when the Israeli war machine crushed the Egyptians in a six day war.

The other main opposition to imperialism in the Middle East came from the Communist Parties.

The Iraqi Communist Party, for example was one of the biggest CPs in the

world. The Communist Parties, however, pursued a strategy of supporting 'progressive bourgeois forces' in the 'first stage' of the fight against imperialism.

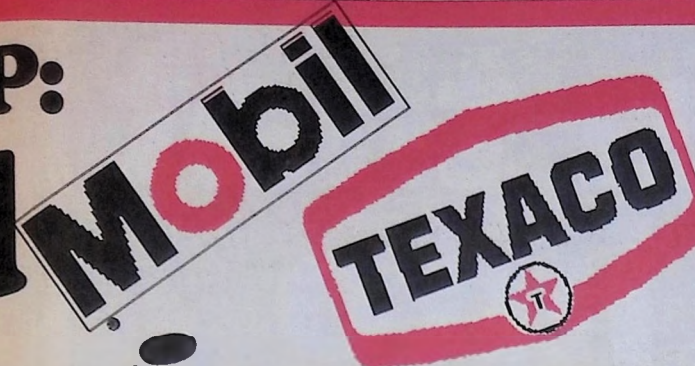
Supported

In many cases these alliances cost them dearly.

In Iraq, the CP once supported the Ba'athist party – but its members were then brutally murdered when Saddam Hussein faction was out.

In Iran, the Tudeh – the local Communist Party – supported the 'progressive'

SHIP: and Mobil regimies




King Saud of Saudi Arabia



New forces rise up

THE repression and the decline of the secular left, has left a vacuum in the politics of the Middle East which has often been filled by Islamic organisations.

These organisations often grow by providing social support for the poor through organised charities. They were able to use the cover of the mosques to organise against the Arab dictatorships.

At their core is often a middle class cadre who hate the underdevelopment of their countries but who have contempt for the organised power of workers.

The European left has often taken a confused position on these developments.

Some, for example, were so horrified of Islamic movements

that they supported the military coup in Algeria which was launched to prevent the electoral victory of the Islamic party, the FIS.

But we should not fall for the demonisation of people who revolt under the banner of Islam.

When the left has been disorganised, revolts against imperialism have often taken place under the banner of religion.

The first major revolt against British rule in India occurred when Indian soldiers mutinied in 1857 when they were ordered to clean their gun with pig grease - an act deeply offensive to the Hindu religion.

Anti-war activists should support all genuine revolts against the present Arab regimes who are little more than puppets of the US.

The anti-war movement should be on the side of people who march out of mosques and insist on their right to protest against their own government's complicity in attacks on Iraq.

We should certainly challenge opposition to women's rights or gay rights from Islamic organisation - but we can do that while being on the same side in opposing imperialism.

The stronger the anti-war movement grows in the West, the harder it is for fundamentalists such as Bin Laden's supporters to present Western secular leftists as 'degenerates'.

Revival

And that in turn helps to create a space for the revival of left wing ideas in the Middle East itself.

There are already signs that this is happening.

Last year, the first major anti-capitalist conference was held in Lebanon and early this year the secular left in Egypt linked up with Western anti-war movements to issue a declaration against war and imperialism.

In the global revolt against US corporate power, new political movements will be forged.



Egypt's nationalist leader, Nasser

It is one of the highest proportions in the world - and the hardware is directed at their own people.

Today, the US has taken over as the imperial overlord. They use their influence over Saudi Arabia to undermine attempts to raise the price of oil.

Under US orders, Saudi Arabia regularly increases its oil exports in

order to undermine arrangements negotiated at OPEC and so reduce oil prices for the US consumer.

The US also ensures that opposition to Israeli aggression is kept on a purely rhetorical level.

The Jordanian king publicly donated his blood to the victims of Israeli terror recently - and then concluded secret deals with Israel to crush militant factions.

of a position

Ayatollah Khomeini in the fight against the Shah and did not look to independent workers councils - Shoras - which had sprung up. Khomeini, however, later turned on the CP and crushed them in a brutal fashion.

The break up of the USSR, only added to the problems of those influenced by CP politics. Yasser Arafat's PLO tried to reach an accommodation with the US and Israel after the collapse of the USSR.

But the PLO's new moderation only discredited the secular left in the eyes of their own people.

supported many cases these cost them dearly. Iraq, the CP once supported the Ba'athist party - members were murdered when Hussein faction was in Iran, the Tudeh - Communist Party - led the 'progressive'

The West's double standards on Kurdistan

Newroz (Kurdish New Year) celebrations were thin on the ground last week as rumours abounded that 1,500 Turkish troops and tanks were thundering across into Northern Iraq.

Plans for an invasion were finalised in February when the US agreed to allow Turkish troops occupy part of the Kurdish self-rule area for "humanitarian reasons".

However, the history of Western involvement in Kurdish affairs is anything but humanitarian.

Estimated at 20 to 25 million strong, the Kurds are the fourth largest ethnic group in the Middle East and the largest stateless people in the world. The Kurds are spread over Syria, Turkey, Iran and Iraq where they face national oppression. As the Kurdish people say they have "no friends but the mountains".

Included

Following WW1, the French and British promised independence but no Kurdish State was included in the post-war map. Since the creation of modern Turkey in 1923, Kurds have faced repression on a daily basis. In 1924, Kurdish culture, language and place names were banned and a state of emergency declared giving police wide-ranging powers of arrest for crimes such as giving your child a Kurdish name.

Fifteen millions Kurds or 20 percent of Turkish population are not recognised as a national minority. Since 1984, over 4 million have been displaced from villages and placed in encampments in areas under government control. An estimated 30,000 people have been killed by Turkish military. Political activists are routinely harassed and imprisoned for "crimes of opinion" including PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan, currently in solitary confinement.

The 'war on terrorism' has provided a perfect cover for an intensification of the bombing of Kurdish villages in Northern Iraq and an increase in arrests and the banning of political organisations and demonstrations within Turkey.

In 1975, Kurds in Iraq were encouraged to rise up by US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger. But when Iran and Iraq came to an agreement, Kissinger pulled back and left the Kurds to be butchered. A period of murderous persecution followed culminating in the killing in March 1988 of 5,000 Kurds in Halabja. Few Western leaders condemned the attack at the time.

Again in 1991, Bush Snr. encouraged the Iraqi people to "take matters into their own hands". But when they almost toppled the regime he changed his mind, frightened that the Kurds might expect to control their own country. "I don't recall asking the Kurds to mount this particular insurrection" was John Major's reaction as Hussein brutally put down the uprising.

Reform

'Progressive' Europe is no different. Despite calls for political reform and basic human rights, the EU has made no specific demand on Turkey to resolve the Kurdish question before entering the EU and no EU state recognises Iraqi Kurdistan.

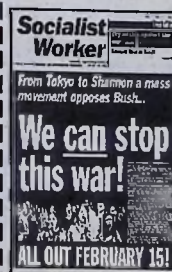
Despite its recent change of name and reiteration of commitment to peaceful means the PKK remains on the EU's list of banned organisations. For those fleeing persecution in Iraq and Turkey there is no refuge - 70 percent of application for refugee status from Kurds are rejected across the EU.

The autonomous zone that was created after the last Gulf War is no safe haven. The Turkish army is regularly allowed to use the 'no-fly zones' to shell villages in Northern Iraq. Turkey wants control of Kirkuk and Mosul where the Turkish Petroleum Company has UN permission to drill two dozen oil wells. It is completely hostile to any idea of an independent Kurdish State as this would encourage similar demands from the oppressed Kurds in Turkey.

Kurdish leaders' reliance on Western powers has failed miserably. Some Kurdish factions in Iraq have even co-operated with Turkey in opposing the left wing PKK. Turkey is a bridge between Europe and the Middle East. It is the third largest recipient of US foreign aid and a key NATO ally. Because of this, Western powers turn a blind eye to the suppression of the Kurds.

The current invasion is only the latest in a long history of betrayals. The Kurds have been the victims of every colonial intervention in the Middle East over the last eighty years. As in 1924, 1975 and 1991, they have nothing to gain from the current imperialist grab.

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Mad system that drives us into economic chaos

IF WAR did not dominate the media headlines something nearly as frightening would-fear of economic slump.

The last two weeks has seen incredible volatility in the world's stock markets-the measure of the market value of the world's great companies.

A fortnight ago they were valued at exactly half the figure they were in March 2000. Then last week they bounced back after hopes grew of a short war in Iraq.

On both sides of the Atlantic, a number of these firms face the threat of outright bankruptcy-and their workers of mass sackings.

This is true of the giant US airline Air America and the steel firm Corus that took over from British Steel just four years ago where 25,000 jobs are now at risk.

More than 500,000 people lost their jobs in the US last month. The Financial Times writes of Europe, "The outlook for the continent's largest manufacturing companies has rarely seemed bleaker."

"Across the continent each country's flagship engineering companies are seeing the same scramble to sell assets and fend off creditors as afflicted BT, France Telecom, Deutsch Telecom and KPN of the Netherlands."

The war is adding to the crisis. But the war is not the main cause of the deepening economic chaos-and it will not come to an end if Iraqi resistance collapses and the multinationals can once again toast each other in cheap oil.

The last US land war against Iraq was over within days and the price of oil rapidly fell back to its previous level.

Economic crisis persisted for another year in the US, for three more years in Britain and never came to an end in Japan.

The origins of the economic crisis lie in the absurdity of capitalism. All through history human beings have had to cooperate with each other to wrest a livelihood out of nature.

Technological advance over the last two or three centuries should have made this task easier than ever.

But the means of making a livelihood-the "means of production"-are in the hands of small minorities of very wealthy people organised as companies, or sometimes as state bureaucracies.

They measure their success by their ability to make profits in competition with each other.

No one is allowed to get more than the minimum livelihood without working for them.

When profits seem easy to make, they behave like pigs at a trough. Each firm tries to get the biggest share of these by investing in the most technologically advanced equipment.

Each devours raw materials. Each urges its workers to raise productivity, while telling them it cannot afford more than the minimal wage increases.

Each promises the rich they can make ever greater sums of money if they invest their money in its latest scheme.

This is the boom. It is always accompanied by speeches by politicians and newspaper articles boasting that capitalism has overcome its old tendency to crisis.

This was the atmosphere in 1929, during Thatcher's government in the late 1980s and the 'new technology' boom in the US in the 1990s.

On each occasion, the boom began turning to bust. The reason was simple

A deep crisis is threatening millions around the world. Chris Harman explains how slumps are a central part of capitalism



enough.

Firms were simultaneously turning out massively more output and curbing workers' wages and the ability of people to buy that output.

Firms could not just pay their workers enough so that they could buy more goods as that would eat into the profits and the competitiveness of the company.

Boom

The only way the boom could keep going was if the firms bought an ever greater share of the output in new plant and equipment.

They were only prepared to do that if they were able to make even bigger profits. The moment any event, however small, put these profits in question, the whole house of cards collapsed.

From at least 1997 onwards, major firms were lying and exaggerating their profits by a third or more.

They would see their share prices rise and the rich pour money into their cof-

fers. Speculation and fraud flourished. Enron and WorldCom are the best known examples of this. But there was scarcely a major firm that did not join in.

Huge amounts of wealth were wasted on supposedly profitable investments that no one would ever need. No less than \$1,000 billion dollars was wasted by firms as they built communications systems which would never be more than 10 percent utilised.

Once a crisis starts, the market has a logic of its own that makes things worse.

Firms try to protect their profits by sacking some workers and making others work harder for the same or lower wages.

This means there is less money to buy the products of other firms, encouraging them in turn to sack their workers. In effect workers are told they have to consume less because "too much" is being produced!

This has been happening for two years already, in the US, Europe and Japan.

It has been happening on a very large scale in manufacturing industry in

Britain.

In Britain and the US the immediate impact of the crisis has been counteracted by people building up greater amounts of personal debt. In Ireland also, rising house prices encouraged many people to do so.

Now fear of the future is causing people to panic over their debts.

Collapse

There are signs that spending in the shops is beginning to fall and there are widespread prophesies of a collapse in house prices.

Faced with a crisis, mainstream economists and politicians pour out messages that can only make the crisis worse.

"Modernisation" is the cry of the political elite, meaning working more with fewer people for less.

"Cut public expenditure" is the other slogan, meaning the state providing less of a market for the output of workers in other industries.

The crisis and war on Iraq

THE ECONOMIC crisis is being made worse by the war. But it is a product of the same system as the war. Each of the giant firms that dominates the world economy is linked to a greater or lesser extent to a major state.

The powerful states like the US, Japan, France, Britain or Germany will do their utmost to open up markets and win contracts for their firms in other countries.

When crises erupt, the state becomes a powerful mechanism for trying to protect its major firms against the impact.

The US state intervened five years ago to stop the huge derivatives speculator Long Term Capital Management collapsing.

Forget

The Japanese state is currently doing its best to stop the country's banks going bust.

There is even talk of nationalising them. The Bush administration in the US has shown that it will forget its own "free market" ideology to protect major US firms.

It has imposed controls on imports of steel from abroad. It can only get away with such things if it can be a dominating influence in world negotiations over trade and finance.

The hardcore group around Bush of Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, Cheney and Richard Perle believe it has one card to play that the other powers do not-overwhelming military might.

They see waging a succession of wars on the weak powers they refer to as "rogue states" and the "axis of evil" as a way of showing who's boss not only to the poorer countries of the world, but also to big capitalists of Europe, Japan, Russia and China.

Chris Harman is the author of *Economics of the Madhouse*, available from SW Books. Phone 01 8722682

HOW WILL THE SLUMP AFFECT WORKERS?

YOU CAN never tell how severe any capitalist crisis will be.

What happens depends in part on the completely irrational hopes and fears of capitalists-what the pro-capitalist economist Keynes called their "herd instincts".

If the war is short, they may think it is possible to make profits by investing again.

That might even lead to a brief period of economic

recovery, before another crisis develops.

But they might panic and withdraw investments so as to speculate in something like gold. In that case the crisis will deepen.

The crisis can also deepen if giant firms or banks are shown to be much deeper in debt than they have been pretending.

This is especially likely because of the huge scale of speculation through the "derivatives" market (a

form of crude gambling), which has more than doubled in the last five years.

The US economy is dependent on massive borrowing from the rest of the world.

Impact

If fear of the impact of war leads to a fall in the value of the dollar, then this money could flood out of the US. This is a possible outcome, but by no means

a certain one.

If you have spent years doling out money for an occupational pension, watch out.

Firms which took a holiday from paying into such funds in the late 1990s bet the money collected from their workers on the stock exchange.

Now it is falling, one after another is trying to welch on their commitment to pay the pensions they owe.

Victimised by the Irish State

"They died of a cold, or so we were told...so we were told".

THE proclamation read out by Pdraig Pearse on the steps of the GPO in April 1916 promised that the future Irish republic would cherish all the children of the nation equally.

But these hopes were destroyed by partition.

The reality in the long post civil war reaction was that tens of thousands of working class children were subjected to the most horrendous forms of systematic abuse—right up to gang rape and murder—at the hands of religious orders in the so-called industrial schools.

The Irish state—in particular the gardai and the departments of justice, education and health colluded in this abuse by giving legal protection to the orders and covering up the abuse.

Mannix Flynn's powerful and intimate one man performance *James X* is the story of one man's journey through hell at the hands of Oblate Fathers, judges, cops, prison wardens—all the myriad personnel the state employs to crimi-

nalise, harass and discipline the children of the poor.

Trial

It is a trial of the Irish state played in a set depict-

ing an Irish courtroom.

The performance is made all the more effective by its obvious autobiographical content. *James X* is of genuine and groundbreaking

cultural and historical importance as Mannix gives cultural expression to the collective experience of the children.

Despite its harrowing

content the final note of *James X* is of triumph.

—DAVE LORDAN

■ *James X* performed by Mannix Flynn at the Project Arts Theatre

FRIDA- PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST

FRIDA is a must see for anyone interested in the relationship between art and society.

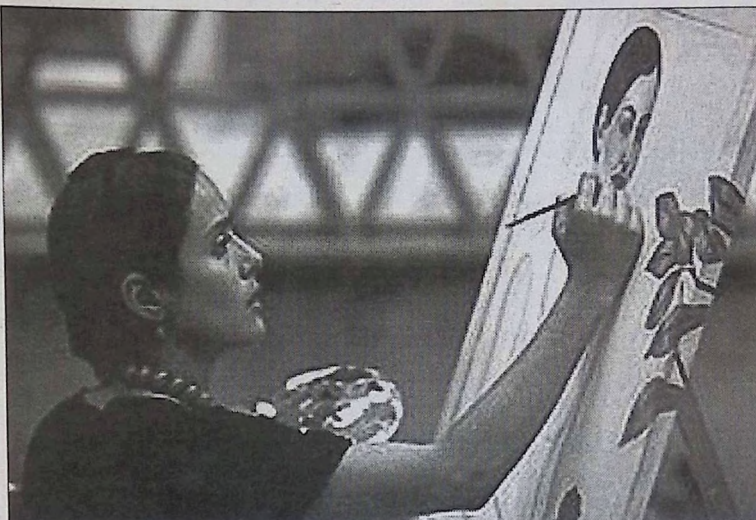
It is an unsentimental portrayal of human relationships, love and sexuality. It has stunningly colourful settings and visual panoramas.

Frida Kahlo led a magical but cursed life, having being struck down by polio in her childhood and at the age of eighteen being broken into pieces in a bus accident.

Consumed

She was consumed by alcoholism in her adult years as she tried to deal with lasting effects of the accident.

The film focuses on her quarter century relationship with the famous muralist Diego Riviera. The movie is made up of a series of vignettes covering the major episodes of Frida Kahlo's



■ *Frida: Film portrayal of a magical but cursed life*

life and some have criticised it for lack of narrative flow.

But I found the films use of stills and dream imagery added a wonderful poetry to it. The striking contrast

between Riviera's huge portrayals of workers struggles on the walls of public buildings and Kahlo's more personalised and pained surrealism is another point of

interest.

Also recommended for the weird and wonderful sight of Trotsky and Kahlo taking to bed!

—DAVE LORDAN

THE MAN WHO GAVE US SPARTACUS

HOWARD FAST, best known today as the author of *Spartacus*, the book that inspired Kirk Douglas to make the film, died aged 88 on Wednesday 12 March 2003.

A New Yorker, he was a member of the American Communist Party and the author of more than 40 novels under his own name, and 20 as EV Cunningham.

He wrote plays, screenplays, television plays, poetry, non-fiction books for children (*Haym Salomon, Son Of Liberty, 1941*), popular political biographies (two books on Yugoslavia's President Tito), a history of the Jews, and two accounts of his political itinerary—*The Naked God: The Writer And The Communist Party* (1957), and *Being Red: A Memoir* (1990).

Refused

Having refused to cooperate with the House un-American activities committee and provide records of the joint anti-fascist refugee committee, he was convicted of contempt of Congress in 1950, and served three months in jail.

It was in prison that he started thinking about Rosa Luxemburg and why she called her organisation the Spartakusbund. He became interested in the slave leader and planned his novel.

But after being in prison his books were unpublishable. He was blacklisted. A friendly publisher advised him to raise the money and publish *Spartacus* himself saying it would be worth the risk. It certainly was. It was translated into many languages and is still in print today.

As he tells us in his highly readable autobiography *Being Red* Fast was self-taught. He read voraciously as soon as he was able and wrote his first novel at 18.

He left the Communist Party after learning of the fate of Soviet Jews but he never became a professional anti-communist. There were too many novels and books to write, and too much to say about freedom.

Some of his work was filmed; most famously in 1960, *Spartacus*, with a screenplay by another blacklisted writer, Dalton Trumbo. In 1979, the 1944 novel, *Freedom Road*, became a TV mini-series, starring Muhammad Ali as a former slave who becomes a senator after the American civil war.

Fast's last novel, *Greenwich*, was published in 2000.

Socialist Worker —now every week!

WHILE THIS war rages anti-war activists and socialists must organise the biggest possible mass movement of resistance.

At this time of crisis and mass movement it is vitally important that the socialist message gets out.

Socialist Worker has established itself as THE anti-war paper. With news of anti-war activities and the arguments necessary to strengthen the opposition it provides an indispensable resource to help build the movement.

From this week, at least during the duration of the war, *Socialist Worker* will be published every week.

Socialist Worker will now be able to provide up-to-date news of the movement and as well as the key arguments to take the movement forward and clear analysis of issues arising.

Every week *Socialist Worker* will provide invaluable background and news on struggles in the unions, on the environment and more generally against capitalism and big business.

Regular readers of *Socialist Worker* will welcome this development and we expect to win many new readers.

We ask you to help us network this important resource for the movement. Take four or five extra copies of the paper to sell on. You only pay for what you sell. Send the coupon below to the Circulation Department of *Socialist Worker* and we will make sure you receive your copies of *Socialist Worker* every week.

Help us make sure the socialist voice is heard in every school, college, workplace and community - network the Anti War Paper!

Socialist Worker Activist School
Sunday 6th April
2.00pm until 5.00pm
Cassidys Hotel, Parnell Square, Dublin

The Socialist Workers Party is organising an activist school.

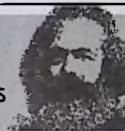
This will be a chance for people to come together to debate how socialists can take forward the anti-war movement and fight for change.

The school will discuss: "From people power to revolution", "What is imperialism?", and "How do we organise for revolution?"

For more information phone (01) 872 2682 or email swp@clubi.ie

Marxist Forums

Big ideas discussed in informal settings



Capitalism is wrecking the lives of millions and endangering the planet. A new society can only be constructed when the workers take control of the wealth and plan its production and distribution for human need and not profit.

REVOLUTION
The present system cannot be patched up or reformed. The courts, the army and police exist to defend the interests of the wealthy. To destroy capitalism, we need to remove the present state structures and create a workers' state based much greater political and economic democracy.

AGAINST IMPERIALISM AND WAR
War is a constant feature of capitalism today as the imperialist powers try to dominate the earth.

Bush's "War on Terrorism" is a crude device to attack any country which threatens US military, strategic or economic dominance.

END RACISM AND OPPRESSION
We oppose all forms of oppression and racism. This divides and weakens the working class. We are for full social, economic and political equality for women. We oppose immigration controls which are always racist.

FOR WORKERS' UNITY IN THE NORTH
We stand for workers unity against the Assembly politicians and Blair government. Like great socialist James Connolly, we believe that partition has brought about a 'carnival of reaction'! We want to see an Irish workers republic where all workers gain. Our flag is neither green nor orange but red!

FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY
To win socialism socialists need to organise in a revolutionary party. This party needs to argue against right-wing ideas and for overthrowing the system. We call for co-operation between left-wing parties and the formation of a strong socialist bloc. We stand for fighting trade unions and for independent rank and file action.

Ballymun:

War and Imperialism: How do we get Regime Change At Home? 7.30pm Thursday April 10th Axis Centre

Blanchardstown:

War and Imperialism: How do we get Regime Change At Home? Wednesday April 2nd 2n

Cabra-Stonybatter:

Can We Defeat the American Empire Tuesday April 1st 8.00pm, Aughrim St Parish Centre

Cork:

Pales time: Road Map to Nowhere Saturday 5th April 3pm An Spailpin Fanach

Galway:

Truth: The First Casualty of War April 10th Java's Cafe, Abbeygate St

Tallaght:

Truth: The First Casualty of War April 10th Tallaght Welfare Society, Tallaght Village 8pm

Waterford:

Title to be Announced. Thursday April 10th: Old Rogue 8pm
■ For details of other Marxist Forums contact (01) 872 2682

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Palestinian Human Rights lawyer Raji Sourani speaks out

TERROR IN GAZA

ISRAEL's Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has unleashed a war of terror on the Palestinian population of the Gaza strip.

On the week that the war against Iraq began, 27 Palestinians were murdered.

Eleven of them died at the Nusseirat refugee camp where Israel is operating a policy of collective punishment.

Houses belonging to families of members who attacked Israel are bulldozed to the ground.

During one of these operations, Rachel Corey a 23 year American volunteer with the International Solidarity Movement was brutally murdered.

Founder

Raji Sourani is Gaza's foremost human rights lawyer, and the founder and director of the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights.

Socialist Worker spoke to him after the Israeli attacks on the al-Boreij Refugee camp in Gaza which left eight people dead and dozens injured.

What is the situation like in Gaza?

It is appalling. Last night they came in with tanks and helicopters. They call it collective punishment for suicide bombing.

They destroyed the mosque and bulldozed homes. They killed many people. There was a woman who was to give birth in ten days time.



■ Israeli soldiers fire on Palestinians

They bulldozed the house around her. She lay bleeding all night. In the morning she was dead, her baby was dead. They are killing innocent people. It will not work.

Why do you say it will not work?

They say that it will end suicide bombings. But it will not. These are innocent people.

The more they kill people, the more angry people get. These actions will create more suicide bombings. If you have no weapons and

they are killing innocent people ... what do they expect?

The world is not hearing what is happening to us.

Media

The media is not reporting the truth. The Israeli Forces can act with impunity.

They are destroying our homes and killing our people and all the time the talk is about Iraq.

What can people here do?

Break the conspiracy

of silence. Tell the world how we suffer.

Don't let them destroy us while the world is watching Iraq.

Break the silence. Tell people what was going on.

On the huge anti-war demonstrations on Feb 15th in Belfast and Dublin and all around the world thousands of people carried placards demanding freedom for Palestine.

Yes it was wonderful. We know that all around the world many people feel solidarity with us.

We know that many

people suffer with us.

Knowing that people around the world understand our suffering is what keeps us strong.

It is why our morale is high.

It is strange to hear that parts of Gaza are in ruins and that the morale of the Palestinian people is high

Of course it is high. We will overcome this. We will be free.

We have suffered a lot but we know that this is true. We know this is true because we know that we are right.

PRESCOTT ATTACKS THE FIREFIGHTERS: All out action can beat Blair

NEW LABOUR are using the cover of war to launch an attack on the firefighters which threatens the freedom of every worker in Britain and Northern Ireland.

The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) called off its planned one day strike on 20th March as John Prescott threatened to use the Tories' 1992 anti-union law to ban the strike and introduce new legislation to impose a pay settlement.

Jim Quinn, Regional Chair of the FBU in Northern Ireland told *Socialist Worker* that FBU members understand they will not win the 40 percent they were looking for when the action started but, he said "the mood among members is angry—angry that government and employers think they can offer a sub-standard deal and then impose it if we reject it"

"It seems the government are happy to let us negotiate with the employers, but if they don't like the outcome they will ignore the negotiations and impose what THEY want", he says.

Reticent

Most firefighters are against the war and the FBU is totally against the war.

However, Jim Quinn says "Some people are understandably reticent about taking action at this time.

"However, we did not start the war, we were against it ever starting and if we have to take action while it's happening, we will.

"What is most important now is to make sure the views of every member are given and votes taken in every station to decide what action we need to take next to win a living wage for firefighters.

"That's what we will be doing over the coming weeks in the run-up to the Recall Conference in Brighton on April 15th."

Many rank and file members of the FBU have concluded that what's needed now is an all-out strike, backed by solidarity action from other unions.

One Derry firefighter told *Socialist Worker* "What we need to do is up the pressure on the employers and the government.

"An all-out strike is the only thing that can push things forward now and win us a decent settlement. Any legal action against us should be met with defiance by our union.

"But that means going flat out to get solidarity from other trade unions—their members are willing to deliver that solidarity, we've been told we only need to ask."

Do you think this war is about oil and US power?

Do you think people should come before profit?

Had enough of Bush, Blair and Aherne's contempt for democracy?

Do you want to fight racism, and the scapegoating of refugees?

YES?

Then you belong in the Socialist Workers Party

To join or for more information: Fill in the form and Send to:

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NI: SWP PO Box 143, Mallusk Road, Mallusk, Phone 0774 2531617

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