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NO WAR BUT CLASS WAR, BM 8884, LONDON WC1N 3XX

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As this bulletin shows, there is opposition to the Gulf War all around the world. With so many countries directly involved, the building of an internationalist anti-war movement is both necessary and possible. If such a movement is going to be effective however it needs to be built on a different basis to most of the existing "anti-war" groupings.

The largest demonstration in Britain so far was called by the "Committee against war in the Gulf" (several thousand marched through London on September 15th). This body is supported by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the Labour Party left, and favours peace through the United Nations—a contradiction in terms since the UN has fully backed the build up of military forces in the Gulf. The UN is in any case run by the same gangsters who control the rest of the world, and in the past its forces have directly participated in the slaughter in such conflicts as the Korean War.

The main opposition to the pro-UN tendency in this country has come from trotskyist groups. The "ad hoc hands off the middle east committee" (supported by the Revolutionary Communist Party, Workers Power, etc.) has organised two demonstrations in London, while the Socialist Workers Party called a march on September 1st. In the name of anti-imperialism, these groups support a military victory for Iraq. We too want to see Western troops withdrawn from the Gulf. But while trots would be happy to see them sent home in coffins, we want them forced home through internationalist working class action.

Trotskyists say that we must take sides. They are right, but the real sides in this conflict are the generals and other rulers of all countries on the one hand and the working class on the other. The working class in the Gulf has no interest in dying to defend Iraq, anymore than we have an interest in dying for Thatcher and Bush.

We cannot look to the UN or the Iraqi army to stop the war. Instead we have to look to what we ourselves can do. By escalating the class war through strikes, mutinies and other forms of struggle we can not only sabotage the war machine but also start to sweep away all the warring states and build a classless world human community based around our needs, not money.

international anti-war news

BANGLADESH: At least 50 people were injured in Dhaka on 3 September when police used steel-tipped batons against demonstrators protesting against the despatch of an estimated 1200 Bangladeshi troops to the Gulf. The clash occurred during an eight-hour general strike. (a few days earlier women factory workers on strike for more pay fought with police in Chittagong).

PALESTINE: "They are shit, all the leaders, including the Arabs, I just pity the children who are going to suffer in this war. I don't care about Kuwait or about that madman, Saddam. And Bush and his friends are no better either" (a Palestinian taxi driver)

FRANCE: The departure of French ground forces for Saudi Arabia was delayed when seafarers on a car-ferry requisitioned from Corsica to carry troops demanded danger money before agreeing to sail. The ferry left Corsica after this dispute was resolved, but it was held up for another 12 hours on 21 September on the dockside at Toulon, by workers opposed to the war. 2000 marched in Paris on 18 September with the slogans "French, English and American troops out of the Gulf" and "No to the union for war and austerity".

USA: The Guardian reported on 24 September that there had been over 200 local actions against the war in the US, including demonstrations outside naval bases. 2000 people came to an anti-war meeting in New York, 1700 in Berkeley, California. An opinion poll in the US showed that more black people opposed the sending of US troops to the Gulf than supported

it. Even amongst the wider population, the majority opposed a first strike against Iraq.

US Marine Jeff Patterson is facing court martial in Hawaii for refusing to go to the Gulf and fight for "American profits and cheap oil". Some reservists facing mobilisation have also announced that they will refuse to fight. (**Committee to defend Jeff Patterson**, c/o Eric Seitz, 820 Miliani, Suite 714, Honolulu, HI USA)

"now you have ordered my son to the Middle East. For what? Cheap gas?... Now that we face the prospect of war I intend to support my son and his fellow soldiers by doing everything I can to oppose any offensive American military action in the Persian Gulf" (from an open letter to George Bush published in the New York times, 23 August, written by a marine's parent)

"I'd like some of those Congressmen to come out here, with all that patriotism, to feel the heat in the desert. It doesn't seem right to me, I'd rather folks paid more for their oil, than pay for their oil with my life." (US soldier in Saudi Arabia)

AUSTRALIA: Terry Jones, an Australian sailor, is on trial for going absent without leave from HMAS Adelaide— a warship destined for the Gulf. He said that he was not prepared to die "to protect US oil lines".

IRAQ: Kurdish sources have stated that 50 people were killed or wounded in food riots in the town of Mosul in Northern Iraq/Kurdistan. Security forces opened fire on a mass demonstration on 9 September against food shortages. There have also been various reports of Iraqi soldiers deserting the army. In August for instance twelve soldiers drove over the border to Saudi Arabia in their tanks.

GREECE: There have been two demonstrations against Greek military involvement, one with 3-4000 people, one with 1500. At the send off for the one Greek warship being sent to the Gulf, relatives of Greek citizens in Iraq and Kuwait also staged their own demonstration to voice their opposition.

September also saw a virtual general strike (lasting three weeks) over plans to abolish public sector pensions- strikers were threatened with being drafted into the army. The country's only weapons factory was occupied by nearly 3000 armaments workers.

Even before the Gulf crisis blew up, there were violent demonstrations on the island of Crete against plans to concentrate Greece's US military presence there. On 23 July thousands of people fought with police for 18 hours in the town of Hania, close to a US naval base. Police used CS gas as demonstrators set up barricades and threw petrol bombs- two policemen were shot and injured.

TURKEY: Early in August 4000 Turkish maintenance workers on US- run bases (including 1600 at Incirlik, the main US air base) were on strike over pay. This threatened to hamper any plans for an air strike against Iraq- a military source stated "It is difficult to see how any major operation could be launched in current circumstances". The strikers were ordered back to work by the government who declared that the strike was "harmful to national security". Also in Turkey, 72% of people taking part in a poll were opposed to Turkish military involvement in the conflict.

BRITAIN: At Great Ormond Street childrens hospital in London, wards are being closed because fewer private patients are coming from the middle east (the hospital relies on private sector income to help finance free health care on the site). In other words once again working class patients and staff are being asked to pay for the effects of the Gulf crisis. On 10 October hospital workers staged their second demonstration against the cuts, demanding that the government provide funds to prevent them. A leaflet put out by G.O.S. Healthworkers Group says: "This war must end. It threatens the lives of millions in the middle east and it is now endangering our health and our jobs".

No War but Class War picketed the London headquarters of the oil company BP on 21 September. The leaflet we gave out declared "We won't die for oil profits- Class War not Oil War", and supported strikers on the North Sea oil rigs as well as opposing war in the oilfields of the middle east.

On 9 September a group called **Gulf War Resisters** staged a protest at the Farnborough Air Show, the UK's main annual public display of military aircraft and weapons systems. Slogans were painted on a British Aerospace Tornado jet, and two people climbed on top of the jet with a "No War in the Gulf" banner.

On 6 October 350 people marched against the war in Edinburgh, and a similar number in Manchester. The week before about 150 demonstrated in Norwich.

SPAIN: About 2000 people marched through Madrid in mid-September to protest against the deployment of Spanish warships to the Gulf. In Barcelona 3000 took part in a demonstration called by the parents of conscripts being sent to the Gulf.

NORWAY: Operation Sand in the Machinery is an international anti-war initiative launched from Tromso in Norway, with such slogans as "war against war" and "soldiers of the world- don't obey your officers" (write to: **Asfaltindianerne**, PO Box 1218, N- 9001 TROMSO, NORWAY).

They have informed us of demonstrations in Tromso and Oslo (Norway), Aarhus and Copenhagen (Denmark), and San Francisco. We have also heard of demonstrations in Vienna and Frankfurt in September.

JAPAN: The shipment of supplies to US troops was delayed on 5 September when Japanese seafarers refused to leave port without an additional 30% on base salaries to compensate for the military nature of the voyage.

NO WAR BUT CLASS WAR was set up in September at a meeting called by Hackney Solidarity Group, and attended by people from the Anarchist Communist Federation, Class War, Wildcat, the Direct Action Movement, and various individual class struggle anarchists, anti-state communists and others.

We have intervened in demonstrations with our banner- No War but Class War, neither Washington nor Baghdad- and leaflets (send a stamped addressed envelope for copies). We also organised a picket of BP (see report in this bulletin).

We hold regular meetings in London and are trying to organise meetings elsewhere. We can provide speakers if you are holding a meeting.

We would encourage people to set up similar groups around the country, and indeed around the world.

We want to produce this bulletin for as long as the Gulf crisis lasts. By spreading information about opposition to the war, we hope to encourage further resistance. Please send us news of any actions, leaflets, press cuttings, etc.

In english or arabic, our message is the same:

THE WORKING CLASS HAS NO COUNTRY

الطبقة العاملة ليست
لها وطن

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