

SOCIALIST OUTLOOK

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Special
Broadsheet

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War in the Gulf

Genocide!

While the Western media concentrated on the return of the tiny number of 'allied' POWs, the cameras were kept well away as the bulldozers dug the mass graves in the desert. They have decided that the public should not know. No one should film or photograph the horrific aftermath as the countless legions of corpses are shovelled into the sand. They have decreed there will be no record to compare with the photos of Auschwitz, or Dresden after allied bombing.

But in the end, after the parades and the other nauseous celebrations of 'victory', more and more people will begin to know. That a war crime, a crime against humanity, a crime to compare with Hiroshima and Nagasaki has been committed against the people of Iraq.

Saddam Hussein, for his own reasons, colluded for much of the war in keeping quiet about the number of civilian casualties. The sickening finale – the attack on a fleeing, defeated and defenceless army with B-52s, with cluster bombs, with fuel air bombs, with napalm – was only the endgame of a crescendo of slaughter vented on soldiers and civilians alike. How many Iraqis died in this war? A hundred thousand? A quarter of a million? No one can, or will, say.

In the first week of the war the pretence was kept up that precision bombing minimised civilian casualties. The 13 February massacre of hundreds of civilians in a Baghdad bomb shelter broke through the myth. But no one can disguise that the slaughter of the army retreating from Kuwait was

a deliberate act of mass murder which served no military purpose.

Much of the slaughter was done with cluster bombs. These weapons showered plastic-covered ballbearing sized fragments into their victims. Plastic covered so that in the unlikely event of any of the victims making it to hospital, X-rays could not detect the fragments. Tens of thousands were murdered in this fashion in the 17-mile convoy caught by allied planes at the Mutlah gap.

When the ground war began, the US-led offensive ran into an army already retreating. In response to the Gorbachev peace initiative the Iraqis were already withdrawing from Kuwait. To 'liberate' Kuwait the ground attack was unnecessary. But it *was* necessary to complete George Bush's final goal - to smash up the Iraqi army, to complete Iraq's humiliation, to give the dreadful warning to anyone who stands up to US power that they will be crushed. Probably fifty or sixty thousand died in this final criminal act.

Now George Bush proclaims that 'aggression has been defeated'. He insists that those guilty of 'war crimes' must be held to account. A War Crimes Tribunal is indeed needed. One which will point the finger at those responsible for bombing a poor country into ruins and killing more than one per cent of its population – an extraordinary figure for any war. A War Crimes Tribunal is needed which will tell the truth about those countless young conscripts - students, farmers, workers - whose bodies lie piled in the sands of the southern Iraqi desert. George Bush and his allies will be the accused, not the accusers.

Ribble Valley – the writing on the wall

The collapse of the Labour vote in the Ribble Valley by-election and the opinion polls showing a strong Tory lead must have set the alarm bells ringing in the Kinnock camp.

Before the Tory leadership battle the Tories were well behind in the polls. Now there is actually the possibility of a fourth election victory, without Mrs T. How could this happen?

Let's look first at Ribble Valley. Here you had a Tory rural seat which Labour could never win. Obviously there was massive tactical voting to defeat the Tory candidate. This was on the simple basis of protesting against the poll tax. If the poll tax is scrapped then Ribble Valley will be in Tory hands at the next general election. Tactical voting has been massively accelerated in by-elections by opinions polls which give the voters a clear signal of which is the candidate who stands a chance of beating the incumbent. Since the seat is usually held by the Tories or Labour, then this more or less automatically favours the Liberal Democrats – especially in the political situation today.

Sunday's newspaper polls showed very clearly that the Ribble Valley result

was not an indication of certain defeat in a general election for the Tories – far from it. The result was a short term, quite specific protest.

The polls showing a Tory lead of up to 8 per cent reveal one thing very clearly. If John Major gets rid of the poll tax he has a good chance of winning the general election.

If the political turnaround since last autumn is dramatic then it is a product of quite dramatic political events. Thatcher has gone and we have had the biggest war since Korea. Major is getting rid of the hated poll tax. His policy on the Gulf got near 100% support from Labour and the Liberals. Labour's two biggest electoral assets, Thatcher and the tax, have gone. The Tories are succeeding, temporarily, in pushing inflation and interest rates down, which will help Tory-voting home owners – at the expense of unemployment moving towards 3 million again. Now electoral confidence in the Labour Party, and crucially its alternative policies, will be tested.

It's true that the Tories have big problems. The economy is going down the pan. They are still utterly divided on what replaces the poll tax and on Europe. But none of this will necessarily

prove decisive. What is clear is that Kinnock's policy of re-centering Labour, embracing the market, NATO, nuclear weapons and the Gulf war, is no guarantee of electoral victory. Most voters don't have a clue what Labour's economic alternative is, and are deeply suspicious of whether Labour will 'manage' the economy better than the Tories.

A further problem is the limited resurgence of the Liberal Democrats. The more far-sighted Tories will understand that building the Liberal Democrats up will help to split the anti-Tory vote, and they could win again with as little as 40 per cent of the vote.

Now the possibility of Labour winning the election by default, in a huge vote against Thatcher, is gone, the underlying picture is being revealed. The truth is that attempting to move further and further to the right, narrowing the policy gap with the Tories, and hoping for a default victory, was a gamble vulnerable to the very events that have undermined it.

Labour's alternative political profile is not a question just of what stand it took on the Gulf war, or recent policy issues. It is a question of the whole Kin-

nock project since 1983. The search for electoral victory by moving every further rightwards was deeply flawed in its very conception. It has, together with 'new realism' in the unions, gravely undermined the resources for resistance to the Tories and their reactionary offensive – in struggle and ideologically.

The general election will be a test of the relationship of forces crystallised by a decade of anti-Tory struggle, and the many defeats in that struggle. It will test out the decision to betray the miners. It will test out the decision by almost every Labour council to simply accept cuts and the poll tax. It will test out Labour support in the Gulf war.

Of course, the election has not yet taken place. There are still huge reserves of hatred of the Conservatives – with or without Thatcher. A fourth Tory victory is not at all certain. But either way, Kinnockism faces its final test – either in the form of a totally right wing Labour government or a new Tory victory. In the latter variant, Kinnock will be replaced, most likely by John Smith. In any case, the whole Kinnock project is about to unravel.

Chris Taylor

'Pax Americana' in

Throughout the Gulf war Bush and Major insisted that in its wake the problems of the Middle East would have to be addressed, and in particular the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. So what kind of 'peace' is George Bush cooking up for the region?

In fact negotiations over the Palestinian issue are not the centre of what the US has in mind. It has for many

years been a tenet of US foreign policy to maintain constant initiatives on the Palestinian question without giving anything away. Keeping up the appearance of the search for a solution is crucial to the US system of alliances with the reactionary Arab governments.

At the heart of the US proposals is a new 'security framework', under US domination. No formal pact will be signed. But the crucial proposals are:

- A joint Syrian-Egyptian 'peace keeping' force stationed permanently in the Gulf, consisting of at least 100,000 soldiers.

- The permanent stationing of off-shore US forces in the Gulf. This will include a carrier task force and probably thousands of US marines. US military equipment will be left permanently in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia ready for instant use.

The Syrian-Egyptian force will be hired out to the

Gulf states in return for huge oil revenues. This is a massive financial coup for the reactionary regimes in Egypt and Syria. It also cements them firmly into the US-backed security arrangement.

The peace-keeping force is not just a guarantee against a resurgent Iraq. Iraq is not a problem in the short or medium term. Initially it is a counter-weight against any attempts by Iran to dominate the Gulf. By

Fight the Lambeth witch-hunt

The Labour party NEC has declared war on socialists in Lambeth. Anyone who has fought against Kinnock's policies on any issue is at risk. The democratic rights of party members to express and fight for views contrary to that of the NEC is under threat.

In the last decade local government has been smashed by the Tories with the acquiescence of the Labour leadership. However there are still some pockets of resistance to mop up. Liverpool face the imposition of candidates for their May elections, councillors face expulsion in Tower Hamlets, Brighton and now the Lambeth inquiry.

Walworth Road will carry out an investigation into the 'activities' of the Lambeth Labour Group. The allegations specifically relate to two recent council meetings called to debate the Gulf War and the use of bailiffs to enforce payment of the poll tax. Allegations seek to blame the current crisis in Lambeth on Labour councillors, not Tory attacks on local government. The Kinnockites can no longer tolerate Lambeth's left or even Joan Twelves's

left variant of the 'dented shield'.

Imposed MP Kate Hoey has said the aim is to remove six left Councillors who have consistently voted against cuts and poll tax, plus possibly Joan Twelves and Greg Tucker, thereby creating an LCC leadership by expulsion.

The enquiry is shrouded in unspecified allegations of 'intimidation'. Two probationary councillors allege they had 'scab' painted on their front doors and that one has had her car tyres slashed. The Group condemns these events but it is slander to link them with Councillors or Lambeth Against the Poll Tax. The LCC's record on violence is not one to be proud of. I was assaulted in the previous Labour Group by an LCCer and once by a Labour councillor's brother. The Leader at the time Dick Sorabji took no action.

The truth is that their 'investigation' is a witch-hunt. They fear that socialists in the party who speak out against the slaughter in the Gulf and the intimidation of working class people by bailiffs will damage Labour's electoral chances.

The witch-hunt will not stop at Socialists in Labour

Group. It is already clear from stories planted in the press that party members, especially *Labour Briefing* supporters, are under threat. Activists in the Anti-Poll Tax movement have been singled out as likely targets.

In classic witch-hunt style accusations have been 'leaked' to and printed by the press, along with denunciations of the Labour administration from imposed Vauxhall MP Kate Hoey and Streatham parliamentary candidate Keith Hill. Every national paper has now launched an attack, with the Sun 'door-stepping' councillors. The party apparatus have been complicit in this.

Will *Briefing* be witch-hunted too? The LCC use it as a convenient label to link their opponents. The Sunday Telegraph links PPC John Wilton with *Briefing* and reported '*Labour Briefing* has created the atmosphere which has allowed the intimidation to take place.' Vauxhall member Steve Nally has also been fingered in the press.

Joan Twelves and others within the Leadership of the current administration are also under attack. The Twelves' leadership has alienated many of those who must be mobilised against

the witch-hunt by cutting jobs and services. They are making the workforce and local community pay for Tory policies. And now following pressure from Brian Gould, they have paid their poll tax.

However the administration must be defended against this attack which seeks to replace Twelves with a right-winger determined to inflict even greater attacks on Lambeth workers and the community.

Thirty members of the Labour Group oppose the enquiry. Norwood CLP unanimously opposed the witch-hunt and Vauxhall is bound to when it is allowed to meet. The LGC cannot take a view. It has been suspended for over a year.

Although in dispute with the Council over cuts, NALGO has taken the principled decision to oppose the witch-hunt, by roughly 700-3.

We need the biggest and broadest possible campaign. Please pass resolutions in your Labour Party or Trade Union. Socialists must argue that those who have fought the poll tax and cuts and actively opposed the war were right to do so.

Drop the enquiry!

Cllr. Steve French

the Middle East?

default, the defeat of Iraq makes Iran the strongest power in the region. For the reactionary sheiks who run the Gulf this is unacceptable.

The Syrian-Egyptian force is given credibility by US backing. What the US has achieved through this war is a gigantic increase in its influence in the region against Japanese and European imperialism. For two decades US trade with the region had declined

compared with its economic competitors. US dominance does not mean that Kuwait's unique relationship with the City of London will be altered. But it does mean that Saudi Arabia and the tiny Gulf sheikdoms will look to the US.

The Palestinian issue will not be 'solved' in any new US initiative. It cannot be, because the basis of the initiative is 'land for peace' - land for the Palestinians in exchange for peace with Is-

rael. Such a solution has been on offer from the PLO since 1975 at least. It is utterly unacceptable to the Israelis.

On the contrary all the pressure in Israel is towards the consolidation of Israeli settlements on the West Bank, especially as the number of immigrants from the Soviet Union increases. The Israelis will not part with the occupied territories, nor any part of them.

The new US-sponsored

security set-up for the Gulf stems directly from the chain of events unleashed by the fall of the Shah of Iran in 1978. The Shah's Iran was the guarantor of US interests. His fall made Islamic Iran a danger to those interests, a danger thrown back by Iran-Iraq war. Now Iraq has in turn been defeated. Only US power itself can now guarantee Pax Americana in the gulf.

Frank Clarke

Why this terrible defeat?

The outcome of the Gulf war is the worst possible conclusion to the crisis. In effect, the Iraqi army went down without a fight. The military victory of imperialism was total, and achieved at negligible cost. Not since ancient times has there been a war in which the 'kill ratio' was 1000 to 1, as it was in the Gulf.

The United States had been planning to fight a war in the Gulf since the 1981 creation of the 'Rapid Deployment Force'. Its original planners could hardly have dreamed of such a devastating outcome.

Now the war has been fought and won in the way it has, the door is opened for a carnival of reaction in the Middle East. Indeed it will have negative effects on world politics as a whole. Socialists must analyse the reasons for this defeat, and the prospects it opens up.

The reasons for the West's spectacular victory can be analysed at two levels. First the mistakes made by Saddam Hussein and the Ba'ath Party leadership. Second, at the deeper level of what it reveals about the Ba'athist regime and the war waged by the Americans.

What were the miscalculations by Saddam? The first, obviously, was invading Kuwait in the first place. The signals from the US, probably intentionally, were that it would not intervene in an Iraqi-Kuwaiti conflict. Deliberate or not, these were the signals that Saddam acted on.

The Ba'ath leadership played a game of brinkmanship over the start of the war

by Paul
Lawson

and lost. Possibly they calculated that the US would back down before the start of war. The West's 'nightmare scenario' – that Iraq would withdraw to the Rumela oilfield and the islands, which would have made US intervention much more difficult – was not utilised.

It is possible that Saddam miscalculated opposition to the war in the West. A very short war, with minimum Western casualties, did not give the anti-war movement the chance to build giant mobilisations and break up the pro-war consensus. During the Vietnam war it took several years and

hundreds of US casualties to build a big movement.

Most of all Saddam, like everyone else, miscalculated the kind of war that the US was preparing to fight. The devastating, sustained and unopposed use of airpower to smash up the infrastructure of the country and pulverise the army before a land war was totally underestimated. Iraq's air defences, despite the loss of more than 50 Western planes, were useless against this onslaught.

Whether Saddam's airforce defected or was put out of harm's way is beside the point. Had it fought it would have been totally destroyed. Partly this was because of the sheer number of 'allied' planes. But also because even the most modern Soviet MiG 29s

proved far inferior to the Stealth fighters and F-16s of the US airforce.

In the first couple of weeks of the war, the decision of the Iraqis to play down the number of civilian casualties was a big political mistake on their part. It made it more difficult to mobilise the anti-war movement.

The foregoing points to two major reasons for the scale of the military defeat. First, Iraq could not match the sophistication of the Western military equipment. The gap between US and Soviet military equipment has widened drastically since the Vietnam war. The Soviet Union has been outdistanced in its military technology, as in other spheres of industry.

Second, and this is much

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more decisive than military technology, was the morale and willingness of the Iraqi army to fight. This is an eminently political question. The Iraqi army was pounded with devastating weapons of destruction, including fuel-air bombs and napalm, in the days before the land war. But the North Vietnamese army and the NLF also suffered devastating attacks of this kind, without ever having such a collapse.

Whole Iraqi units surrendered without a fight, even those which were larger and better equipped than the American units they faced. The terror of a militarily superior enemy can only be faced by armies which are ideologically motivated, politically led, and by troops who are in the end prepared to die for what they believe in.

This was not the case with the Iraqi conscripts. Their performance had much more in common with the Egyptian forces in the 1967 war with Israel than with the Vietnamese.

A conventional war in the desert is of course an ideal ground for US high-tech weaponry. But the Iraqi army was a conventional army with a conventional discipline based on fear, and with no great political attachment to their leaders. It lacked the capacity for initiative and improvisation at lower levels. Military superiority alone can never explain a casualty ratio of 1000 to 1.

Saddam's final military tactics proved fatal. To turn and run in face of the onslaught opened his army to dreadful destruction. But it takes elements of political morale to understand that it is better, and probably safer, to stand and fight rather than run. The degenerate form of Arab nationalism which runs Iraq could not inspire this political loyalty and discipline among troops who Saddam was only too ready to abandon to their fate.

This outcome is the worst possible because the Iraqis

went down without a fight and, to be blunt, because Western casualties were so light. It gives a terrible message to the Arab masses – that imperialism is all-powerful and cannot be fought.

If the war had been fought and won by the US at the cost of tens of thousands of casualties the outcome would have been completely different. Anti-war sentiment in the West would have grown dramatically. The wisdom and justice of this mass slaughter would have been questioned everywhere. But with this overwhelming victory, the West has 'got away with it'.

Hundreds of thousands of Arabs may have been slaughtered – but then so were they in the Iran-Iraq war. Without the war being 'brought home', the message will go out that the US can intervene anywhere, anytime, with almost no cost – except to Arabs and 'commies'. It will embolden imperialism and go some way towards overcoming the 'Vietnam syndrome'.

Of course there is a downside for the US. It has problems extricating itself from Iraq. It has ensured a generation of young Arabs whose loathing and hatred of imperialism will stay with them for ever. In the West a section of the anti-war movement will draw radical anti-imperialist conclusions. But this downside is for the moment little compared with imperialism's victory.

Imperialist militarism, of course, often goes with economic crisis. The capitalist world is going into a tremendous economic



US soldier: the desert was ideal for the US high-tech weaponry

recession. The Japanese and German economic challenge to the US cannot be shaken off by defeating the Iraqi army. But none of this should blind socialists to the negative consequences of this victory for the US.

The outcome will be first and foremost a defeat for the Palestinians. Despite cosmetic moves on the diplomatic front, the Palestinians will probably be the victims of deepening repression and even moves towards expelling them from the occupied territories. Israel has been strengthened by this war by massive financial aid from the US plus a range of the most sophisticated weaponry.

Maybe Saddam's defeat will give the Kurds the opportunity to deepen their struggle. But they face also Turkey, Iran and Syria, all of whom have benefitted politically and militarily from the war. For the Arab masses, coming after three defeats in wars with Israel, this conflict will have the most profoundly demoralising effect. Any resurgence of Arab nationalism will be curtailed. It is likely to be the Islamic fundamentalists who benefit.

Imperialist militarism will get a big boost in the third world. The US is likely to see itself as having a much freer hand in seeking a military solution in El Salvador. US support for the

ex-contra ultras in Nicaragua is likely to become much more explicit. The big prize for the US, now definitely in its gun-sights, is Cuba. In the next few years the US will be straining at the leash to find a way of dealing with the tiny country which has been a thorn in its side for 30 years.

The Soviet Union, at present, could not stand idly by and see Cuba attacked. But in the next few years who knows what kind of government will emerge in the USSR? One of the clear consequences of this war was the marginalisation and humiliation of the Soviet Union as Gorbachev's peace initiative was swept aside.

For the Left, for the anti-war movement, the Gulf war has stark lessons. It has to turn now around anti-imperialist objectives, in particular solidarity with the Palestinians and against US military presence in the Gulf. It has to take up the campaign against the Third World debt. This summer George Bush and the other war-mongering leaders of the 'allies' will all be in London for the 'G7' summit. This is an opportunity, in the activities organised to coincide with their visit, to maximise the campaign in solidarity with the victims of imperialism.

Why Fred Halliday is wrong

'If it comes to a choice between fascism and imperialism, then I choose imperialism'. So says Fred Halliday.

Professor Halliday of the London School of Economics has become a familiar figure on our TV screens - as an expert on the Middle East and Afghanistan. In the late '60s he was a leading figure in the Revolutionary Socialist Students Federation (RSSF), and subsequently a long-time member of the New Left Review editorial board, before departing a few years ago, with Anthony Barnett, in unexplained circumstances.

During the Gulf crisis he became an increasingly open supporter of the USA's war.

By Phil Hearse

Last week, laying out his pro-war views explicitly in the *New Statesman*, he attacked the bulk of the left for its 'disastrous' decision to oppose the war.

At the centre of his case are two arguments. First that Saddam's regime is 'fascist' and thus in imperialism's war he backed the lesser evil. Second, Kuwait, like other nations had the right to self-determination which was violated by Iraq.

He starts on a personal note, claiming he has been the subject of unfair pressures from others on the left.

He has, apparently, had abuse shouted at him by SWP and other 'ultra-left' (a telling phrase) paper sellers in shopping arcades. He cites unfair attacks by the likes of Alexander Cockburn, who are 'safe in their East Coast and Home Counties platitudes'.

Why the eastern seaboard of the USA and the Home Counties are to be considered the home of safe leftist platitudes, rather than Highgate or the LSE, remains a mystery. But we can all agree that shouting at people in shopping arcades is to be deplored. Though compared with what the Iraqi people have had to endure it seems a small thing.

The substance of Halliday's argument is without merit. Iraq is not a fascist regime. It is a brutal dictatorship, a degenerate form of Arab nationalism, based on the military. But the precise character of Saddam's regime is not the point. Socialists should be in favour of the destruction of reactionary regimes, of course.

But it matters how they are destroyed, in whose interests and with what results. There is a world of difference between the Iraqi masses overthrowing Saddam, and an assault by imperialism which strengthens reaction in the Middle East and worldwide, and slaughters more than 100,000 into the bargain. Someone who doesn't see that lacks logic, as well as common humanity.

Halliday's view that we should defend Kuwaiti 'self-determination' is also wide of the mark. The Kuwaiti city-state is an enclave for pumping oil to the West, dominated by super-rich rulers who employed immigrant workers to do the dirty work. *Socialist Outlook* backed the right of the in-

habitants of Kuwait to have the right to decide whether to be integrated with Iraq. The majority of the inhabitants have now left, leaving a simple enclave of imperialism. There is no Kuwaiti nation. Self-determination for Kuwait has the same status as self-determination for Monaco.

Fred Halliday has come into conflict with much of the left once before - over the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union. He backed that intervention on the grounds that the USSR was fighting Islamic reaction. His pro-American stance on the Gulf is not a flip-flop, but the self-same argument, but with the involvement of an imperialist rather than a Stalinist super-power.

This blindness towards reaction, expecting it to do progressive work, stems, as Halliday rightly says from previous debates and more fundamental political positions. Fred Halliday had his original political inspiration in the work of Isaac Deutscher, author of the most famous biography of Trotsky. Halliday edited a collection of Deutscher's writings, published as a Penguin. It was his interpretation of 'Deutscherism' which gave Halliday's mode of thought a distinctly pro-Soviet angle.

But Isaac Deutscher, whatever he got wrong about the Soviet Union, never made the mistake of having any truck with imperialism. His reaction to the 1967 Arab-Israeli war was to unequivocally champion the Arab cause. Deutscher would have seen what was going on. Fred Halliday has moved to the right by giant leaps. Perhaps being shouted at in shopping arcades is an acceptable price for becoming a safe-for-the-establishment TV guru.

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Gorbachev in trouble as Yeltsin attacks

by Patrick Baker



Boris Yeltsin has clearly tapped a rich vein of popular discontent in the Soviet Union. With the failure of Gorbachev's Gulf Peace Plan, 60% price rises causing deepening poverty and an escalating movement for national independence in the republics, the Soviet Premier is in trouble. And Yeltsin is not going to give him time to try to get out of it.

Gorbachev has been trying for some time to address a range of deep-rooted problems that threaten not only his position, but also the future of the USSR itself. Popular rejection of his policies has been expressed in an escalating movement of strikes and demonstrations across the Soviet Union.

The crisis of the Soviet economy has been one of the major objects of Gorbachev's reforms ever since his rise to power. Yet it has become increasingly clear, as in many other countries in Eastern Europe, that marketisation is no magic solution to the problems caused by decades

of bureaucratic mismanagement.

Thus far at least, it has led to neither increased living standards nor significant Western investment. The impending price rises have sparked off a wave of popular discontent. Protests at low living standards have been led by Soviet miners, as occurred in 1989. Hundreds of thousands have taken strike action in support of a 250% pay claim, starting in the Donbass region.

The movement for national independence – concentrated in the Baltic republics, Moldavia, the Ukraine and Azerbaijan – has forced the issue of whether the USSR can survive to the top of the agenda. Gorbachev has responded to massive votes for independence with the March 17 referendum on a 'new, democratic Union'. However, given past experience of Gorbachev's use of troops in Lithuania and Azerbaijan, many see this as a Trojan horse. Certainly, Gorbachev has now amassed more power on paper than any previous Soviet President, Stalin included.

Yeltsin has taken ad-

vantage of Gorbachev's disarray to champion the cause of national independence, and to advance 'radical' alternative economic policies. He is clearly a popular figure, particularly in Russia, where he has played on Russian nationalism. But should socialists support him against Gorbachev?

For all his support for national independence, Boris Yeltsin's politics are dictated more by opportunism than principle. And his answer to the USSR's economic problems are hardly preferable to those of Gorbachev. He has long

been a champion of what has been described as the 'Pinochet approach to liberal economics', marketisation in 500 days. His motives in the current situation are dictated more by a desire to promote himself than the interests of the Soviet working class.

Socialists should instead look to the hundreds of thousands of striking miners to provide a way forward in the current situation. Frequently at the forefront of independent working class action, they are also one of the sectors amongst whom the small trade union movement is strongest. If that movement, and the small organisations of the independent left, can take a role in this struggle, that would be a positive outcome from a generally bleak situation.

Labour Against the War

The Gulf War is over but the Gulf crisis is not. Iraq has been devastated; no-one knows how many have been killed or maimed, how much damage has been done to the environment and to the economies of the region.

The aftermath of the war raises profound questions for Labour. Will its foreign policy be dictated by Washington and the arms trade or will Labour stand up for peace, internationalism and the rights of all oppressed people?

Labour Against the War, launched to oppose the war, is remaining active to take up the urgent issues which are now pressing. We are proposing to put together a pamphlet with articles by Labour MPs and Middle Eastern socialists on the war and what comes after. We are campaigning to organise and finance a labour movement delegation to Iraq. All of this, as well as the more routine work of circulating resolutions and speaking at meetings requires money

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Until now *Socialist Outlook* has been a monthly magazine arguing revolutionary socialist views in the labour movement. Until late in 1990, *Socialist Outlook* supporters were a central part of the support for Labour Briefing. But we parted company with Briefing because we could not get agreement that socialists today need a much broader approach than a narrow Labour Party focus.

Our view is that socialists need to be active in the Labour Party, the unions and the movements for womens, lesbian and gay and black liberation. That broad socialist alliances like the Socialist Movement need to be supported. But that open revolutionary socialist ideas need to be argued and fought for.

Socialist Outlook will be a campaigning paper which insists that world politics today is being completely recast. The labour and socialist movement internationally is also being reorganised and recomposed. Central to that political upheaval are the major events of world politics - the offensive of imperialism, the crisis in the USSR and Eastern Europe and the growing economic crisis of the West. *Socialist Outlook* will put these issues at the centre of its coverage.

British politics is also changing fast. 1992 is likely to be an election year, with the post-Thatcher Tories and Kinnock both put to the test. One way or another the Labour Party is headed for a new crisis - as either Kinnockism goes down to defeat or a right-wing Labour government will come into office.

Socialist Outlook will fight for two things simultaneously. We shall fight to build the broadest possible unity of the socialist left against 'new realism' and the attacks of the Kinnockite right. We shall fight to build the Socialist Movement - Labour Party Socialists, Women for Socialism and the Socialist Movement trade union committee. But we shall also fight to build an organised Marxist current in the labour movement. We think, in the face of all the contrary evidence, that it is possible to have a non-sectarian approach and fight for militant socialist politics. And we think our paper will be one of the best on the left.

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