

# VOICES OF SOCIALISTS



# HANDS OFF THE MIDDLE EAST

The imperialists are prepared and assembling their armies and weapons to destroy large areas of the Middle East. The US and British warships and land forces have over 1,000 nuclear weapons. These can be launched from ships, or fired from planes or by artillery. In the event of an Iraqi attack, according to "Basic", an independent research charity, hitting a target containing a nuclear weapon there is a much greater chance that it would explode than previously thought. The result of the war, that is, within a few days away, will be the death of hundreds of thousands, maybe millions, of Muslims civilian and army and the destruction of many of the world's major cities and the destruction of the ecology. The world's economy will also be thrown into major eruptions. But it is the people of the world, first in the Middle East, who will suffer the most.



The opposition to war is possibly greater than at any time in history and the centre of opposition is in the centre of imperialism. "My gut feeling is that the American public is not committed to war and it wants President Bush to pursue every avenue (before resorting to force)" so said Senator Dole, a close ally of President Bush. The first part of the sentence is the reality in the USA and we can believe Dole when he says that the attitude of the American masses has given him problems with his gut! (See page 3)

The domestic opposition has created great problems for all Governments supporting the drive to war. Bush is only able to hold the war agreement together by massive bribery to some of the key Governments supporting

his UN resolution for war in the Persian Gulf. According to the Guardian, December 29th, Bush ordered that the \$997m debt for arms purchases owed by Egypt be waived.

The British government is facing deep problems. They have started forcing people to go to the Gulf. The opposition to war is spreading in many directions, it includes Lords like Lord Hatch of Lusby (John Hatch), an increasing number of the MPs, and, more importantly, increasing involvement against the war by Labour organisations.

Each day new information appears as to the horrors and expense of the war. According to the Guardian of 5th January, Local Au-

thorities and Health Authorities have been told that war could start at any time after the 6th January. Twenty plane loads of casualties per day will be flown to Britain and "patients to be discharged from hospital even though they may still be ill" in order to free beds for military casualty. The Ministry of Defence have already sequestered blood stocks. War will mean an even greater deterioration of health services to workers in this country and may well result in people dying from lack of blood supplies.

£480 million has already been spent on this war and as a result the Government is already threatening to cut back on public services

# EDITORIAL

and increase the Poll Tax.

Even the warmongers on the front benches of the Labour Party are finding it difficult to continue giving unconditional support. Not noted for their independent thought, Shadow Cabinet members such as Robin Cook, Bryan Gould, Ann Clwyd and Jo Richardson are pressing Kinnoch to distance themselves from the idea of a rapid strike. Their preference, as with Denis Healey, is to starve the Arabs into submission rather than kill them with the weapons of war.

Why does Bush persist with the drive to war that endangers the whole planet? The first reason is that the United States does not want the Arab masses to have any say in the running of the Middle East and the oil fields. If they did, the historic blow against imperialism would be at least as great as the great revolutions of 1989 and 1990. America has entered into the greatest financial crisis in its history and the economy is now in actual recession. Congress has been forced to raise its debt ceiling from \$3 trillion to \$5 trillion. But American imperialism can only respond to this by increasing its military expenditure; it has to keep control of the Earth, to stay number one. War is the continuation of politics by other means. The politics of the USA is the politics of world domination; economically and militarily. They have to dominate to survive.

The USA has bases in Panama, South Korea, and now a presence in the Malvinas (Falklands). As workers turn towards revolutionary solutions to solve their prob-

lems of misery such as in Latin America, the Workers' States, in the Far East and throughout the world, imperialism needs an answer and their answer will be the same as said after the second world war: "We dropped the nuclear bomb in Japan and we will do it to you."

Only when we build the international movement against war that threatens the politicians and threatens the very system of capitalism that creates war will Bush and his followers and their war plans be defeated.

The signs are already there. It may be that already some realise that the Governments that go into this war will not be the Governments at the end.

Outside of the economic and political questions Imperialism is in trouble militarily. Some of the US Generals are saying that the troops will not be ready before mid-February



and Bush is pushing for a January intervention. From the 15th January there are only six to eight weeks before the weather changes, either there is war in January or February or the logistical problems will be very great.

The creation of the Zionist State of Israel has failed to destroy the Palestinian and the Arab nationalist movements who have fought for decades against the carve up of their countries by imperialism and their agents. Many have been brought to the point of starvation. The Arab masses are not like the image of the Arabs shown on the TV going into the gaming houses and expensive night clubs - these are the Emirs.

*All the media and politician comments about chemical capability has concentrated on Saddam Hussein but Iraq is not the only owner of Chemical weapons. The truth about British and US chemical weapons has been hidden by the propaganda war.*

*There have been reports of the US continuing to stockpile chemical weapons. The decision was taken after the so called global treaty ban in 1989. "The secret decision was taken by the President after several options had been presented to him by the Pentagon and the state Department." Independent 16th October 1989.*

Many are forced to work away from home, their homes have been destroyed in Palestine, they have been robbed by imperialism of the wealth of their county and they suffer enormous problems.

The killing of Palestinians has increased since the Americans went into the Gulf but so has the anger of the Arab masses. If war starts, either the most horrific barbarity will be forced on to the region or Israel will be destroyed together with many of the despotic regimes which the US and Europe support, such as Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

The worldwide opposition is shaking the alliance that the USA dictated. Even pro-Zionist figures like Kaufman, of the British Labour Party, and Kennedy of the US Democrats are stalling over the naked drive to war. They want the cover of more negotiations and a longer time span for sanctions.

But negotiations and sanctions are part of the same drive to war. Negotiations may be forced on the US but they would seek to get through negotiations what they had been prevented getting by open warfare.

The anti-war movements should be as bold as possible against the war and build in the working class. Major wants to send ordinary workers to war and to their deaths. But we can prevent war and continue to push the imperialists back.

The threat of war remains until the last of the imperialists troops have been removed from the Middle East.

**What would people be defending even in terms of the Kuwaiti regime?**

*"Like everyone else returning from Kuwait, Rita Mathabatan has horrific tales to tell - of cramped conditions, harsh treatment and constant fear. But her stories are not about the Iraqi invaders; they are about her stern Kuwaiti employers, for whom she worked as a maid." Observer 30th December. Indians went to Kuwait because in Kerala, where she lived, a wage might be £2 per week.*

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Signed articles do not necessarily reflect the views of the ISL

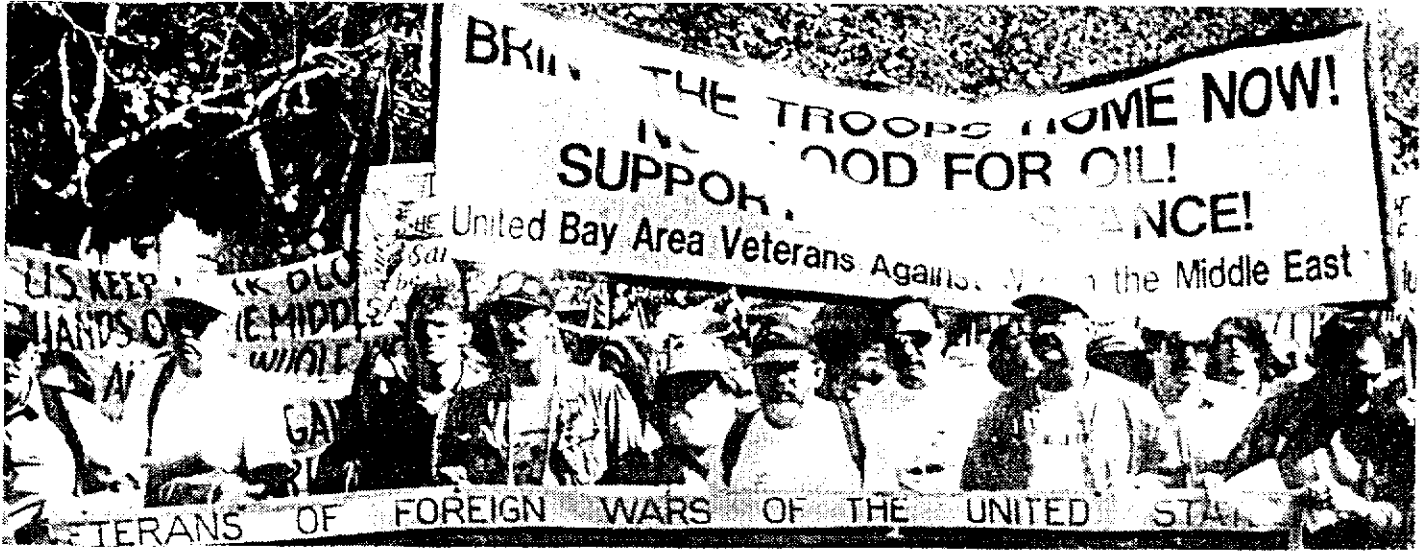
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# OPPOSITION TO WAR GROWS



Vietnam War veterans lead the October 20th anti-war demonstration in San Francisco, California, USA.

## NEWS FROM THE STATES

THE ANTI-WAR movement in the USA is nationwide and embracing all sectors of the community. It is particularly strong amongst the black and Muslim community and amongst students. "Socialist Action", a left paper published in the USA, in its November addition, reported the following:

*800 turned up for a teach-in at the University of California-Santa Cruz on October 25th organised at only a few days notice.*

*Almost 700 attended a four hour teach-in at San Francisco State University to hear panels of Vietnam veterans denounce war in the Gulf.*

*In the University of California-Berkeley, 2,000 attended the first National Middle East Teach-in which was sponsored by the Committee Against a Vietnam War in the Middle East and in New York over 500 crowded into Columbia University's second major teach-in on the Gulf crisis.*

*In Boston 200 people, including local black leaders and Vietnam veterans, filled Arlington Street Church to hear, amongst others, U.S. Marine Corps (Reserve) Lance Corporal Eric Larsen, who has refused to serve in Saudi Arabia. In Cleveland, an estimated 600 Kent State University students, chanting "Money for Tuition - Not Ammunition", held the first major Northeast Ohio campus protest on 16th October.*

## UK OPPOSITION FROM UNEXPECTED QUARTERS

*"...I began to imagine how I would feel if I were 18 or 20 and serving with the colours in the UK. I am certain I would not be aching to have a crack at wicked Saddam Hussein. I would be lying on my bed at Catterick, or wherever, tormented by the prospect of dying slowly and painfully from nerve gas under a hellhot sun, without as much as a bottle of beer or a woman to comfort me. I would be certainly regretting having put my life at the disposal of armchair warriors in Washington and Whitehall who insisted on picking a homicidal quarrel with a lunatic in Baghdad, knowing that they themselves would not have to swallow mustard gas. I suspect I would be looking through the telephone directory for the number of that Quaker outfit and wondering if, in the absence of rescue by Quakers, a disabling, self-inflicted bullet through a foot would hurt all that much.*

*There are wars and wars. I hope I would defend my country to the death if it were invaded - or threatened with invasion. But risk my life in an Arab quarrel, against an Arab despot whose friendship was courted by my country's rulers barely 12 months ago - and who would be trying to kill me with weapons sold to him by my government's licensed arms salesmen in Baghdad? I fear I would have to advise Driver Major and his American friends to apply for a hero elsewhere."*

Whose pen? 'Loony left-wing anti-war campaigner'? No - Andrew Grimes - columnist for the 'not so left' Manchester Evening News - not known for his sympathy to working class causes. So what really is the state of the opposition to this war? It would be nice if we had a free enough media to allow the truth to pervade the dross!

## SATURDAY 12th JANUARY

### International Day of Action Against War in the Gulf

**London:** Assemble: 12.00pm Hyde Park

**Manchester:** Assemble: 12.30pm All Saints, Oxford Road  
Rally: 2.30pm Albert Square

**Glasgow:** Assemble: 10.00am Ministry Of Defence

# NO POLL TAX - NO CUTS

## Comment

NOT TO BE out done by the jailing of the first non-payer in Lincolnshire, Council leader Sylvester, from Crewe and Nantwich Council, has asked the Government to give him the powers to withdraw all services from non-payers, charge interest on the debt owed and place the names of non-payers in all public places.

Workers facing these attacks, among whom are some of the poorest and most courageous fighters against injustice, will not be intimidated. The widespread feeling is that what we did to Thatcher we can do to any politician - to any Party. The anti-Poll Tax movement will receive greater support because of these attacks - not less.

Since Thatcher's downfall the economy is in greater crisis; we are closer to war and unemployment has risen sharply but Thatcher's end does not mean the imminent end of the Poll Tax. The Government Treasury is resisting plans from the Department of the Environment to cushion the effect of next year's Poll Tax bills.

The Guardian (December 31st) stated that some ministers were in favour of a lump sum that would reduce bills by £20 per head. This would leave the Poll Tax around the £400

mark. It seems that ministers have no ears or eyes when it comes to understanding what force is creating their crisis- what caused the downfall of Thatcher. For Heseltine, the solution is to give more money to certain areas, which have been particularly hit this year. But what area, outside certain Tory ones, have not been badly hit?

In the Government favoured areas, such as Wandsworth, the Poll Tax may have been low but at the expense of Council services.

For the vast majority of the people there will be no change. The Treasury is set to pay out more in unemployment benefits and if Britain goes to war it will be involved in costs it will not be able to meet, forcing the Government to take more from the working class not less. The Chancellor, Norman Lamont, has revealed [Guardian 2nd January] that the cost of the Gulf War preparations has already reached £480 million and continued high costs "could affect tax revenues and public spending, implying there will be no funds for tax cuts or a reduced Poll Tax."

The Tax is set to continue until we bring this Government down and we compel any future Government to repeal the Poll Tax.

## LETTER FROM STOCKPORT

WE PRINT below a letter sent to the Manchester Evening News' "Famous Postbag" by Joe Darlington, a member of the Stockport Anti Poll Tax Union. Needless to say the MEN did not publish the letter.

Joe was brought before Stockport Magistrates Court in December for non-payment of his Poll Tax and managed to fight his corner in the court for a full two and a half hours:

...In reply to Miss G. Dobson, "Do Non Poll Tax Payers Have No Pride Or Self Esteem?", I answer thus:

"Pride and self esteem", I have plenty. This stems from my working class upbringing, ie: pride in one's Country, Community, and Self, in that order!, "Pay for what you receive", is obviously included in this.

As regards paying the Poll Tax, I fail to see what we will "receive", in the light of incessant reports of closures, cutbacks etc. in community services, plus the unemployment and misery inherent in these deplorable policies.

Therefore my stand is: I can afford to pay, but refuse to do so, because, it will strengthen an immoral system which attacks those least capable of paying, most of whom will be below the "Official" Poverty Line, namely, the "Working Class".

I will be appearing at Stockport Magistrates Court on Friday 14th December (1990), at 10.30 am, having been summoned, along with the first batch of non-payers, in this (present), proud and esteemed town. I doubt if I will be allowed the democratic right to repeat what I have written here, having been instructed, along with everybody else, in the "Guidance Notes" accompanying my summons from the "Justices Clerk".

Anybody, including those with opposing views, who wish to take note of the proceedings, and find others of a like mind, in defeating this unfair tax, in what could be the second time in our history, is more than welcome to attend the "Public Gallery" of the court on the stated date & time.

### National Solidarity Conference

Against police attacks on our protests, our movement and our communities...and to defend the right to demonstrate.

Saturday February 9th

11.00am-5.00pm

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square,  
LONDON

Called by Trafalgar Square Defendants' Campaign

Speakers include: Hatfield Main National Union of Mineworkers

Hackney Community Defence Association

Trafalgar Square Defendants' Campaign

Representatives of Irish and Black community organisations

# UNITY THROUGH DEMOCRACY TO FIGHT THE POLL TAX

ED BARBOR - COMMENTS ON THE TYPE OF MOVEMENT NEEDED TO DEFEAT THE POLL TAX

IN THE PAST few months in the anti-Poll Tax movement there has been some disagreement over the tactics, and even the long term strategy, that should be adopted to defeat the Poll Tax.

The Trafalgar Square Defendants Campaign (TSDC), for instance, disagree with the All Britain Anti Poll Tax Federation (ABAPTF) over the question of real support for the defendants of the March 31st demonstration in Trafalgar Square, the Brixton Prison Picket (October 20th) and all other victimised anti Poll Tax activists. The ABAPTF has consistently refused to aid activities in support of victimised anti-Poll Tax activists, such as the Picket of Brixton Prison, though the TSDC invited the All London Anti Poll Tax Federation (ALAPTF) to participate in the organisation and stewarding of the picket.

Another question which is being ignored by the ABAPTF is the turn to council workers struggling to defend jobs and services in local government. Not just calls for them to form Anti Poll Tax Unions (APTU's) but real support from APTU's on lobbies and picket lines to prevent all cuts from the local council services that working people need.

Many sections of the movement are also raising the question of taking our struggle against the Poll Tax into the council chambers and into parliament. This means firstly, giving support to those councillors who have been suspended from the Labour Party for their opposition to the Poll Tax and secondly, challenging those Labour Party Councillors who will not oppose the Poll Tax. In many areas this may mean putting up our own independent candidates to oppose right-wing Labour candidates, in others we will not have the strength to do this and will be forced to support right wing Labour Candidates. Our

major enemy is the Tories but we must also oppose conservative policies where they are part of a Labour manifesto.

From these few demands; defence of the activists and members of the movement, defence of council workers and the services they provide and the expansion of the fight into the electoral arena, we can begin to formulate a programme for the struggle for

*of the will of the struggling masses ... Every group of the population really participating in the struggle at a given stage and ready to submit to common discipline must have the equal right to exert influence on the leadership of the Peoples Front."*

This was written, not from the isolation of some ivory tower, but in the heat of a struggle led by the Peoples' Front against the fascist government of Doumergue imposed on France by armed gangs from 1934 to 1936.

Like the struggle we are in today, this was important not because one group or another could score debating points but because the outcome of a struggle of working class people depended on the outcome of a debate within the leadership of that struggle. With the resignation of Thatcher the struggle today is not just a defensive battle but a fight to the death with the Tory Government. They are at their weakest when we fight on all fronts, so we must remember that all those who are fighting the Poll Tax or it's effects on the living conditions of the working class are comrades in struggle.

**We are, of course, all in favour of unity but following the discussion necessary to give all comrades confidence that decisions on what slogans should be adopted etc. are the decisions of the entire active membership of the movement. We cannot, therefore, be confused by calls for 'unity' which precludes disagreement with the leadership.**

In our battle against the tactics of slanders whispered behind peoples backs, calls for a false unity and bureaucratic methods we must adopt a programme and fight on that programme against the specific policies which we disagree with, not against personalities or membership of a particular Party.



*Riot police standing by after breaking up the picket of Brixton Prison (October 20th), where anti-Poll Tax activists arrested on the Trafalgar Square demonstration are still held.*

the leadership of the movement and the defeat of the Poll Tax. However it is also important to discuss how we fight out our differences of opinion. Obviously the movement as a whole must continue to present a united face to our enemies, the Tory Government, and to those councils willing to do their dirty work, but within the movement we must be confident that our leadership accurately reflects the will of the membership.

Although this movement, indeed this struggle, is a new one, the struggle for democratic representation within the workers' movement is far from new. Trotsky wrote in "Whither France?" in 1936:

*"... the leadership of the Peoples' Front must be the direct and immediate reflection*

# ECONOMIC MIRACLE

PETER WINDELER

THE US IS now in a severe recession. One million workers have lost their jobs in the last six months alone. The past year has seen the living standards of US workers decline along with social security benefits. Regulations relating to social security payments have been tightened up resulting in only one third of the unemployed receiving any benefit. Despite this eight states are running out of money to pay any benefit at all.

In the business world, major US companies are now seeking out top rated foreign banks because of worries over US banks. Only a few days ago all the savings banks on Rhode Island (the smallest US state) were closed by the state governor as the bank insurance corporation had insufficient funds to guarantee customers' deposits.

The prospect of a Gulf War will make matters worse and banks will stop lending to some companies altogether, forcing them to shut down. On the commodity exchanges the price of metals will slump with any outbreak of war as the markets expect world industrial production to be severely reduced. Banks are not alone in suffering as there has been persistent reports that insurance companies on both sides of the Atlantic are struggling to survive.

With the slump in the world economy protectionism is now rearing its head. This phenomena is not a new one. Trade wars developed before the first and second world wars. The Second World War was a continuation of the First; the basic causes not having been resolved. These were imperialist wars, a war for the division of the world, to establish spheres of control and decide upon who could plunder most of the world's resources. The 'peace' established after the wars was a peace that allowed imperialism to get on with the business of exploitation.

Today America seeks to maintain and strengthen its hold on the world against the threat of the European and Far Eastern blocks through the use of war in the Gulf. The crisis in the Middle East is not a limited regional conflict, the policy of the USA is the same throughout the world.

With the recent failure of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) talks the world is heading to the formation of three trading blocks; North America, which includes the US, Canada and Mexico; Japan and other Pacific basin countries and finally Europe. All three blocks will compete fiercely

amongst themselves with the threat that any resulting trade war could develop into a military one.

The US has threatened to impose 200% import duties on European Community food imports - due to come into effect on 31st December. Further retaliatory targets are

**Only a few days ago all the savings banks on Rhode Island (the smallest US state) were closed by the state governor as the bank insurance corporation had insufficient funds to guarantee customers' deposits.**

cordials, liqueurs, mineral water, vermouth and other spirits, artichokes, cheese, beef and pork. The EC has offered to cut farm subsidies by 30% but the US is still not satisfied. Even a cut of subsidies of 30% will mean that 2 to 3 million of the EC's 11 million farmers would be forced off their farms. The US also demands that subsidies by EC members for European Airbus should be withdrawn which would make the programme unviable.

In capitalist countries the economy is only geared to produce goods at a profit. But profits as a rule diminish the longer an economic expansion continues. We are now at the end of an economic expansion, profits cannot be made and the ones who will suffer are the only people who create value and something that is worth selling - workers. The stock market crash in 1987, which became known as Black Monday, was the prelude to what is now happening.

## BRITAIN'S "ECONOMIC MIRACLE" EXPOSED

The Tories' economic miracle has been shown to be merely an illusion. Today's reality is that of factory closures, lay-offs and bankruptcies. Even the well known 'socialite' Norman Lamont, who happens to be the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was forced to say; *"Business, I know, is really rough."*

The Government is set on a course to create a huge pool of unemployed to drive down wages and conditions as happened in

France when it joined the ERM in 1983. No wonder the ERM is also known as *"enforced recession mechanism"* in the city.

The Financial Times on 15th December stated that; *"The inflation rate must be pushed down to the German level as fast as possible. A long and deep recession is almost certainly the way this will be done.....Prime Ministers may change; realities do not."*

The major clearing banks are estimated to have to make provisions of £3 billion against bad debts with the result that, amongst other things, lending by banks to local authorities has led to a two tier market. Some authorities who are not considered credit worthy having to pay more interest than others.

There is now a very serious threat of a "credit crunch" due to the parlous state of financial system. This means that banks, due to weakness caused by bad debts, are unable to assist companies in trouble by lending them more money in the hope things will get better. The great depression of the 1930's was characterised by such a credit crunch. In Britain major companies have recently gone under who a few years ago would have kept going.

Not so many months ago economic pundits were talking in veiled terms of a "soft" or "hard" landing for the economy but recent talk of the "credit crunch" reveals the absolute dire state of the British as well as the global economies.

The Bank of England Quarterly Review has urged an increase in unemployment in Britain to cut back wage demands and to this end it is forcing commercial banks to borrow money at the full 14% although the market indicators show that a lower rate should be used. One market participant described this tactic by the Bank of England as; *"a big shock - approaching Force 7 on the Richter scale."*

In Britain there has been the highest rise in unemployment for 4 years; the 57,600 rise in November taking the official figure to 1.76 million. The CBI says that unemployment will rise above 2 million by 1992. David Kern, chief economist of National Westminster Bank believes that unemployment could rise by about 700,000 to around 2.4 million over the next 18 months.

Britain's relative unit wage costs are 47% higher than they were in the 1970's and employers see their only option to slash wages or go out of business. During Thatcher's years the country experienced its worst

# GOES SOUR

recession since the war; unemployment rising from 1.04 million in November 1979 to a peak of 3.12 million in July 1986. Now it is expected that any recession will outstrip in severity both that of the early 1980's and that of the mid-1970's. There has also been the biggest sales slump in ten years with stores so

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*"The inflation rate must be pushed down to the German level as fast as possible. A long and deep recession is almost certainly the way this will be done... Prime Ministers may change; realities do not.."*

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desperate that they are breaking the Sunday trading laws en-mass to shift unsold stock.

The situation today is similar to that of the period immediately prior to the depression of the 1930's. At that time sterling was linked to the gold standard and the depression only ended when we left the gold standard. In Britain, now sterling has entered the ERM, it is predicted that wages will have to be forced down by 10 to 20% just to become competitive with the rest of the industrialised world.

The Tories are losing control of the economy and it is highly improbable that they will be able to engineer any sort of pre-election boom. The Labour Party may take over the job of running the parliamentary strings of British Capitalism.

Such a prospect sections of the ruling class, no matter how loyal Kinnock is to the multinationals, will find unpalatable. One can be sure that extra-parliamentary contingencies will be made. As John Le Carre, the famous author and ex-member of both MI5 and MI6, said in an interview in the Independent newspaper on 3rd January 1990:

*"For those of us who know the backgrounds of a number of influential Tory MP's and members of the Cabinet, the natural intimacy between the secret services and the Conservative Party is remarkable. If a Labour government were elected, the secret services would be cuddling up with the Conservative Party in exile day and*

*night, you may be sure of it."*

The State will be worried not because of Kinnock but because the election of the Labour Party would give workers great aspirations to put a complete end to the misery of life that developed under Thatcher's Britain.

With so much bad news on the state of the economy both in Britain and throughout the world it is easy to sound apocalyptic. What

placed a few days later by an even worse one. There will be slumps but at the same time enormous mobilisations of workers in opposition to attempts to enforce reductions in living standards.

There are now unprecedented opportunities to build sections of the 4th International in every continent and country. When Trotsky formed the International it was because he



is happening must be correctly interpreted but it is unavoidable not to come to the conclusion that the world economy has reached a calamitous conjuncture - with the world's largest bank, Dai-ichi Kango, predicting that the US is entering a 1930's type recession. Imperialism is entering a crisis throughout the world. Each report and forecast in the bourgeois press is quickly re-

knew that it was in the vital interests of the working class.

In Latin America it has been proved that Trotskyist leaderships can be built that will lead workers in struggle. Now it is the turn of the developed nations and remaining continents to follow the Latin lead.

# IMPERIALISM PLANS FOR

In 1921, at the time of the New Economic Policy, Lenin posed the question: "Which will prevail, Capitalism or Socialism?" That question, hanging over the Soviet Union throughout its history, is rapidly demanding a final answer.

The bureaucracy have been caught by a maelstrom of events they cannot control. The capitalist press have talked of Gorbachov's strategy and programme - of what tactics he is planning. In fact, the man's only programme has been the preservation of his caste. His twists of policy, his indecisiveness and failures, are a reflection of the insoluble situation that this bureaucracy faces in preserving itself. Gorbachov admitted to journalists in the corridors, during the Congress of Peoples' Deputies, that he was "going round in circles." Even with the great new powers Congress voted him he has still to make the masses somehow obey his new directives.

The resignation of Shevardnadze has been held up as a sombre defeat for democratic values and peaceful international relations. Imperialist governments are concerned because the American preparations for war in the Gulf could now be disrupted by further divisions in the front against Iraq.

Shevardnadze was given the label of "Washington's poodle" by some of his critics in the bureaucracy and accused of wanting to send troops to the Gulf.

In the "Independent on Sunday" (December 9, 1990), in an article on the Soviet food shortage, Tony Barber and Michael Fathers commented quite bluntly:

*"The West's real fear is that popular anger at shortages, corruption and crime will explode and bring Mr Gorbachov down. The issue for Western governments is not the rescue of the Soviet people, but the rescue of the Soviet leader."*



Prime minister, Nikolai Ryzhkov, at the Congress of Peoples' Deputies, said that national income had fallen this year by 3% and labour productivity by 2% while the printing of new money had doubled over what had been planned, adding to inflation. He added: "Western creditors refuse to extend credits to us on commercial terms. Not so much because of the rise in debt but because of state and political instability", he said, calling for a committee of national salvation, rather than stronger one-man rule. He said that nothing effective had been created to replace those institutions which perestroika removed.

This stalinist bureaucracy has taken the Soviet Union to the brink of destruction. As a parasitic caste on a workers' state it is caught in an insoluble crisis. Although it transmitted and transmits capitalist policies and capitalist ideology into the Soviet Union and the international working class movement, it has run into insuperable difficulties in dismantling state property and transforming itself into a capitalist class. It treads the capitalist road but is unable to arrive.

Even Poland, foremost of the Eastern

countries courting capitalism and the ideology of 'free market' economics, has only been able to privatise 10% of state owned enterprises. These economic reforms force deep recession - in Poland putting 1.2 million people out of work and cutting the average wage by nearly a third. When the 'medicine' of capitalism is administered it is bitter to swallow.

Bureaucrats, as individuals or as groups, have become entrepreneurs and speculate with capital from party or state assets, or from corruption and illegal activities, but capitalism has not conquered and it is an illusion that it can conquer by evolutionary non-violent means. That was the illusion of the radical petty bourgeois opposition and ex-stalinist demagogues with their worship of abstract democracy and their belief in a new Marshall Plan or a Swedish model of mixed economy. Trotsky was correct on this; that there was no peaceful way of resolving the great question of 'which would prevail?'

The big multinationals and the banks have been unable to find the road to the control of the Soviet economy. The real imperialist dilemma is how to create a capitalist class with which to extend a semi-colonial relationship. Such a development comes up against, not only the working class, but the major sections of the bureaucracy; in the army, KGB and the military industrial complexes as well as the Party bureaucracy. Their privileges are bound up with state property.

3,000 directors of big military and industrial enterprises met at the beginning of December and called for "extreme care" in privatising industry. They also called for a three year ban on strikes. Ryzhkov, who was present, told them that state run enterprises

## LENIN

Lenin and the October revolution has the support of the Soviet people. A survey taken in various cities showed that 76.1% viewed the life of Lenin favourably and 52.2% agreed that the revolution was a "correct step in our historical development". In Voronezh a southern Russian city the latter figure was 68%.

These are remarkable figures considering how Lenin's work was corrupted and betrayed by generations of stalinists and vilified by capitalism and its media.



# PROFIT AND HUNGER

would remain a key element in Soviet economy.

At the beginning of 1991, it has become clearer than ever - through the activities of imperialist intervention in the light of attempting to bring about capitalist restoration - that the fate of the Soviet Union will be determined on the world plane. The International Monetary Fund, the new European Bank for Reconstruction and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development issued a report on the Soviet Union in the first week of the Congress of Soviet Deputies. They had been asked to draw up conclusions on aid for the Soviet Union by the leading capitalist nations in the OECD. Obviously the publication of the report was timed to provoke the biggest effect on the Soviet bureaucracy.

The report declared that it was up to the Soviet people to transform their economy and opposed large scale aid. It declared that the Soviet Union *"must make an irreversible break with the past and move rapidly to underline its commitment to a market economy"* and said that *"the specific measures that have been adopted do not yet constitute the coherent and comprehensive programme which in our view is necessary if the transition is to be successful."*

Under the headline; "West says Moscow

must Embrace Capitalism", Mary Brazer of the Guardian summarised the demands of the report:

*"Sweeping economic changes to free prices, promote competition between businesses, clarify property rights and lay down a Western style legal framework and judicial system are among the criteria the report says are necessary."*

An article by Mary Dejevsky from Moscow, in "The Times" of December 10th, declared that Western charity props up the system... *"If the Soviet Union is serious about rebuilding its economy on market principles, the state monopoly has to be dismantled, or be allowed to collapse."*

*"The fact that shop shelves are so empty and that people are patently not starving may be a heartening sign that the state system is on its last legs."*

For her, the solution was that the Soviet people accept the dictates of the capitalist market...

*"So long as people resist even modest price rises and insist on their right to buy all and everything at prices far below cost, their road to a market economy is blocked",* she wrote.

The democratic rights were not given by Gorbachov but were taken by the people

in struggle and sometimes in bloodshed. The breaking of the monopoly of the Communist Party and the elections were won and not given and certainly the right of workers to organise and strike has solely depended on workers' struggle.

The great advances in political freedom and rights have been gained with the shattering of stalinism. This was not achieved by individual or partial action but by the movement of masses.

One thing is certain, while these sections of the bureaucracy must attempt to impose forceful repressive solutions, there is no way that they can return to the old type of stalinist dictatorship. The army reflects within its own ranks the situation in the country; the discontent of the nationalities and of the youth.

What is opening up is a whole period of tumultuous struggles in which it will be impossible to see them clearly in all their forms. It was the great "chaos" of mass movements which tumbled stalinist dictatorships and brought the end of the Berlin Wall and it is in this way that the great problems of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union will be resolved.

The future of the Soviet Union depends on a struggle of living forces and above all upon the development of the working class and its consciousness. Central to this is the development of internationalist revolutionary working class leadership.

At this time, because of the overheads of stalinist repression, vast numbers of the inhabitants of these areas see no road but partial and immediate solutions. The great shocks they have undergone, the results of the first wave of their revolutions, the accelerating exposure of the demagogy and opportunism of the forces that came to the top of this first upsurge: all these bring a period of quickly changing alliances; of apparent confusion. Sharp experience, however, brings the reality of the nature of the great problems to the fore and poses the learning again of the greatest lesson of the "Communist Manifesto" - that working men and women, in their overwhelming majority, cannot find an individual but only a class way out. And that class struggle is not just national but international.

The great task of the Soviet working class is to develop another revolution seventy years after the last.



# THE "IRON FIST" OF APARTHEID

# DEFEND SOUTH

PETE MONEY reports on the increase in state violence against the black workers of South Africa

The South African Government has imposed what it calls the 'Iron Fist' to bring "peace" to the townships. The army and police have set up road blocks and razor wire fences and sent in armoured vehicles. According to many reports, these same police have been seen assisting Buthelezi's Inkatha forces in the violence.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN State has re-imposed many aspects of the state of emergency without declaring it.

The principal instigators of the violence

the "homelands" based on influx controls, jobs and accommodation divided on racial and "ethnic", social and economic bases. Low wages, unemployment and lack of control over even the basic means of existence, together with overcrowded houses, lack of privacy, separated families and insanitary conditions have created an explosive situation. It is these conditions that are being exploited by all those who have a vested interest in the continuation of apartheid.

The violence that has been sweeping through the townships in South Africa has brought to the fore, in all its urgency, the question of what is the way forward in South Africa.

Many people support the proposal for

leaders of COSATU are stressing the need for "peaceful negotiations" at the expense of the independent mobilisation of workers and the townships. This has brought confusion into one of the most advanced workers' movements in the world.

As "Vukani Basebenzi" of October 1990 (newspaper of the Workers Organisation For Socialist Action in South Africa) put it:

"After the Pretoria Minute, when the ANC laid down its arms, we were told that a 'new terrain of struggle' had opened up. This would peacefully win the demand for a constituent assembly. The constituent assembly would write a new constitution putting an end to apartheid."

Even after the state's 'Iron Fist' policy was imposed Mandela and the ANC have not withdrawn from negotiations.

The plan of de Klerk is to bring the ANC/SACP into structures of the state as a minor partner. They have given the movement three million Rand and have brought those involved into negotiations on education and on to joint technical committees over land, rents and housing.

They have also done a deal over the Labour Relations Act. Such an agreement had to make concessions because of the tremendous mobilisations of workers including the General Strike in



Workers and youth marching for jobs and against the Labour Relations Act.

are the Inkatha leaders, who, since the start of the negotiations between de Klerk and the ANC, want to maintain their hold over their "homelands" and help impose a system that benefits them.

The horrific violence that has broken out in the townships has destroyed the illusions that many people had that following the concessions of de Klerk and the release of Nelson Mandela we were going to see a peaceful dismantling of apartheid in South Africa.

The root cause of the violence is the apartheid system. At the heart of this barbaric doctrine lies the hostel migrant labour system;

Mandela to meet Buthelezi and have welcomed joint calls for an end to the violence. A cessation of the violence would be welcome but even if this happens it will at best only provide a temporary solution and leave the initiative in the hands of the right wing. The only real, long term answer to the violence in the townships lies in the independent democratic organisation and self defence of the people of the townships and the abolition of the "bantustan"/migrant labour system.

The leadership of the ANC, the South African Communist Party and some of the

June 1988 and the stayaway in September 1989. The Government did not want a struggle in the factories against the LRA while conducting the attacks on the townships.

They have agreed that restrictions on organising unions and on taking strike action would be removed. The National Manpower Commission is investigating, together with COSATU and NACTU, how to make changes to industrial relations. The agreement they reach will be put to Parliament in February 1991! Meanwhile all action against the LRA was called off,

# AFRICAN WORKERS



*Tembisa residents left homeless by the violence being herded by the police.*

including the stayaway planned for October 8th.

**Negotiations that are not based on the struggle of the South African working class and the base of the labour organisations cannot solve the problems of the vast majority of black people in South Africa.**

De Klerk is not talking about the complete abolition of the hostel migrant worker system; the provision of decent housing for all, no forced separation of families, an end to the "bantustan" system with job opportunities for all and no more ethnically based jobs, accommodation or the complete removal of restrictions on workers.

De Klerk and his backers, the big South African capitalists and the Imperialists are not interested in providing decent jobs, wages and houses for the majority of the South African people. Their aim is to see South Africa integrated completely into the world economy so that its people and its resources can be exploited all the more by the multinationals and to promote the domination of South Africa over the other countries of the continent.

They are only too happy to see an end to so-called petty apartheid, for black people to be

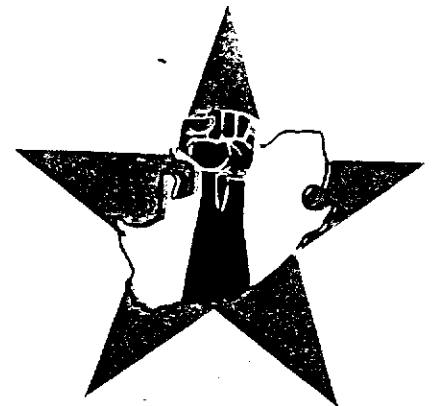
admitted to posts in the civil service, but the real heart of apartheid would remain: the super exploitation of the mass of the people with all the repression and violence that goes with it.

The strike wave of the past year, which was part of the mass militant upsurge which led to the release of Nelson Mandela and the beginning of the negotiation process, has continued and continues to push the Government back.

But the ANC leadership has made it very clear that the future South Africa they have in mind is a capitalist South Africa. They say they want a South Africa where the whiteman will feel safe. What this means, is not that white people who have aided and supported the liberation struggle will not be rejected, but that South Africa will be a friendly and profitable place for the white capitalist to invest in. In taking this line the ANC has had the support of the South African Communist Party who have been arguing that revolutions can go too far, that the problems of the Soviet Union stem not from the attacks of Imperialism, the growth of the bureaucracy and the temporary halt of the international revolution, of which the Russian Revolution

was a part, but that it went too far too fast.

Imperialism and capitalism has brought the human race to mass starvation in middle Africa and to the brink of mass destruction in the North East of the continent. A new stage of capitalist South Africa can be part of that barbarity. There is no solution other than developing the struggles of the South African workers on the basis of workers' democracy linking these workers with real fighters worldwide.



# FRIENDS OF BUSH AND DICTATORS

AS BUSH prepares carnage in the Middle East protests and mass demonstrations are taking place against attempts to free the murderers and torturers of previous military regimes.

The announcement by the Greek Prime Minister, Constantine Mitsotakis, on 28th December, that he would begin the process for granting clemency to 13 military officers who seized power in the military coup of 1967 was, according to the Guardian; *"met with a storm of protest against the government from political friends and foes; all pointing out that the military junta had been notorious for torturing, jailing and exiling thousands of Greek citizens...even members of the ruling conservative party strongly denounced the decision."*

On the 30th December the Government said that it had reversed its decision.

In Argentina, on the other hand, President Menem released a number of army officers convicted of human rights crimes despite the opposition of two thirds of the population announcing:

*"They can have all the marches they want ... That doesn't bother me. I believe it was the best for my country. Period."*

Despite this pretence at indifference Menem was careful not to announce in advance the date or time of the releases. He also authorised the use of a helicopter to whisk away, as quietly as possible, the two most notorious leaders of Argentina's 'Dirty War': General Videla & Admiral Massera, both of whom were sentenced to life for their part in the disappearance of 9,000 people.

His caution was justified by the appearance of a protest of 40,000 outside his office the very next day.

Other people released were Mario Eduardo Firmenich, the leader of a guerilla group sentenced to 30 years in prison in 1974 and General Suarez Mason who was extradited

# PANAMA - OCCUPIED TERRITORY



**THE ANNIVERSARY** of the US invasion of Panama was marked by a General Strike on the 5th December. 68 factories and public companies stopped work in protest at the political and economic attacks of the US installed Endara Government.

According to Hector Aleman, leader of Panama's public sector union, FENASEP, quoted in the NALGO union paper; "Public Service":

*"In the first three months of this year, 12,000 workers have been fired by the Government for political reasons."*

Union leaders have been arrested by the US army and their homes entered and searched. Five of the nine leaders of FENASEP have been sacked.

**Unemployment has jumped from 22% to 35% following a decision of the Government to give themselves the legal right**

to sack anyone who opposed the military invasion. The Government is now threatening to cut public spending by 10% and axe 15,000 more jobs.

Since 20,000 American troops went into the country to "save" it from the dictator and drugs dealer, Noriega and replace the old regime with a "democratic" one crime has soared.

As the Guardian said in December: *"US troops have become the most visible force, propping up an unpopular administration, and intentionally or not, seem to have become involved in what could prove to be a prolonged colonial commitment."*

In a recent coup attempt which seized control of the national police headquarters it was the US troops in combat gear who rounded up Panamanian police.

from the US in 1988 on 39 counts of murder but was never tried for fear of what he might give away at a public trial.

As a result of the pardons, Argentina's ambassador to the United Nations' human rights commission announced that he would resign. The generals were far from repentant. General Videla, freed on Saturday 29th December, claimed on Monday 31st December, in an open letter to the head of the army, that the armed forces were owed an apology

because their actions had been carried out to *"defend the nation from subversive aggression."*

Both of these governments, which are willing to forgive torturers and murderers in their own countries, use as justification for unleashing the military violence of the USA in the Middle East, Saddam Hussein's genocidal attacks on the Kurds in Iraq. What hypocrisy!

# 10,000 OPPOSE BUSH IN ARGENTINA

## ZAMORA THROWN OUT OF CONGRESS

PRESIDENT BUSH'S visit to Argentina, on Wednesday December 5th, was met by a demonstration of 10,000 people led by the Trotskyist 'Movement Towards Socialism', the Communist Party and other left forces. As Bush was due to speak inside the Argentine Congress they were burning the Stars and Stripes outside.

Luis Zamora, MAS Deputy (MP), asked for his right to speak from the floor immediately Duhalde, Assembly Speaker and Vice President, opened the proceedings.

Legislators from the Democratic Centre Union (UCeDe) shouted for Zamora to "shut up" and "get out". Duhalde, according to the Buenos Aires Herald - (December 6th), was "visibly unsettled by Zamora's interruptions" and had to stop his speech to tell Zamora he could not take the floor.

The paper reported: "By then UCeDe Deputy Albamonte had moved over to Zamora shouting 'son of a b...! I'm going to beat the s... out of you!' while another UCeDe Deputy, Federico Zamora (no relation), pushed Zamora from behind."

Zamora... was finally bounced out of the chamber by Radicals...

*'I'm leaving, but not without repudiating the visit of the President of the United States to Argentina and to this House of Congress, where the representatives of a people who are starving because of this government's policies are gathered.'* Zamora shouted as he was being bundled away."

Those who opposed Bush outside included



*Zamora being thrown out of the Argentine Congress*

groups of Malvinas (Falklands) war veterans and the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo, carrying out their tenth resistance march against the disappearances and human rights violations.

The demonstration was not only against Bush and his war plans in the Middle East but against the Government's economic policies which have led to unemployment, hunger and the destruction of services.

Menem, the Argentine President, who is applying Thatcherite policies in Argentina, is leading the Latin American continent in support for the United States war aggression. He is the only President in Latin America to contribute to the US-led force in the Gulf.

By standing with Bush he continues the friendship that flourished under the dictatorship. In the past ten years 67,000 million dollars has been taken from Argentina ("Solidaridad Socialista" - paper of the MAS - December 6), while hospitals collapse and children go hungry. There is a resurgence of tuberculosis and other diseases.

To the question: How far are pro-American governments prepared to go in their support for aggression in the Middle East? Menem gives the answer - they will go to any length to serve their masters in Washington. Major or Menem both lead to misery, different continents - same policies.



*The Anti-Bush Demonstration Against War and Government Policies*

# TURKISH WORKERS CONFRONT THE MILITARY WITH GENERAL STRIKE

The following urgent message was received just before Christmas concerning the current strike by Turkish coal miners. There have been few reports printed in British newspapers of this very important action which is taking place against the most repressive regime in the European Common Market. We call on the trade unions in Britain to give all the support possible to the Turkish miners.

MELT  
YAYINCILIK VE DAGITIM AND SOCIALISM NEWSPAPER  
NAKILBENT Sk. 49/4 SULTANAHMET - ISTANBUL  
TEL 516 84 54  
URGENT URGENT URGENT  
ISTANBUL 18/12/1990

Dear comrades,

50,000 miners are on strike in the city of ZONGULDAK, in Turkey. In the last 20 days these workers have been occupying the streets of Zonguldak by standing up against all the bans and restrictions which were imposed by the military dictatorship. A process of very fast politisation is under way. Economic demands were soon replaced by demands such as "General Strike!", "The Government Out of Office!", "The Parliament Out of Office!". The police and army cannot intervene. Workers in other parts of the country have started giving support to the miners movement. The 'Thatcherite Government' wants to close down the state-owned mines and import coal from other countries. Up until now, only the South African Mine workers' Union and Australian and German trade unions have accorded their support to the GENEL MADEN-IS (General Mining Union). We urge you to call the unions in your country to give their support to this strike by sending, in the first instance, solidarity messages. We would be grateful if you could send these messages to the union center and our newspaper simultaneously.

GENEL MADEN-IS SENDIKAEK GENEL MERKEZI (The union Central Office) FAX NUMBER 90-381-14120

SOSYALIZM GAZETESI MERKEZI (The Office of Socialism) FAX NUMBER 90-15161258 C/O UMIT FIRAT

p.s. We would be very grateful if you could send the messages by December 24th at the latest.

Since receiving this fax there has been a general strike involving 105,000 engineering workers and over a million more Turkish workers. This was set to coincide with a 150 mile march to Ankara, the capital, involving nearly 50,000 striking miners.

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## *French School Children Win a Victory*

FOR TWO months French school students have been striking and demonstrating for improvements in conditions, reductions in class size, improvements in security - for the Government to spend more money on education.

On one day, November 12th, over 300,000 joined the demonstrations. One of the main slogans of the marches was "Money for schools - not war in the Gulf" (the French Government of Mitterand has



committed more troops to the Gulf than any European country other than Britain).

The French Government has agreed to

release an extra 4.5 billion francs (approx £450m) of funds for schools. They have also increased by 100 the number of supervisors and the number of administrative and maintenance staff by 1,000.

The scale of the victory achieved by the pupils can be seen when it is compared to

what the French farmers won after their very militant demonstrations. The French farmers got 500 million francs - only one ninth of that of the pupils.

# A LION WITH NO CLAWS

MARTIN RALPH

IN 1991 nobody seems to want to talk about Thatcher the invincible any more. We had years of the economic "miracle", of the Government of "law and order", of the Government that would beat inflation, a Government spending more on education and the health service than any previous Government, a Government that had tamed the unions and privatised everything that existed. Now they are at the end of their historic lives they try to bury their history.

To get rid of the our parasitic ruling class will not be as easy as getting rid of Thatcher, but it is a step in that direction. A leader who had not failed the yuppies, the money speculators, who was the mouth piece for the multinationals - while pretending to speak for small businesses, who had won three elections for them, the Parliamentary Tory party dismissed. The blue rinse women and their male counter parts of the south coast and elsewhere were outraged. "How could this happen?", they all asked, and probably still are asking: they had got rid of their strongest politician and replaced her with a non-descript.

Thatcher, while roaring like a lion, impressed the likes of Neil Kinnock more than the multinationals and the imperialist nations. Doubtless she thought she had invented privatisation, that Britain had given it to the world, like it gave them cricket. She was used as a figurehead throughout the world. Imperialist governments and others used the programme of the Tory Party to attack the working classes. Many Labour and nationalist governments also tried the same policies of privatisation. But it was not her private property. Capitalism throughout the world has the same disease - developing at different rates - it applies the same solutions.

The upsurge of the masses, which overthrew leaders and politicians throughout the

world and made 1989 and 1990 two of the greatest years of history, has brought the world to a watershed. The world working class now have the possibility of real proletarian revolutions. Revolutions of the type led by Lenin and Trotsky, which will place the working class and the most oppressed in power so that the problems of misery, starvation, unemployment, wages and all the social and economic problems that we face, can begin to be solved.

The revolutions, the first phase of the political revolutions, were made by the masses demanding democratic control over their lives. They brought down the bureaucracies but were unable to establish a government under their control based on their needs and aspirations. The new bureaucratic and pro-capitalist governments which came to power marked the end of the first phase.

Workers in east Germany and throughout

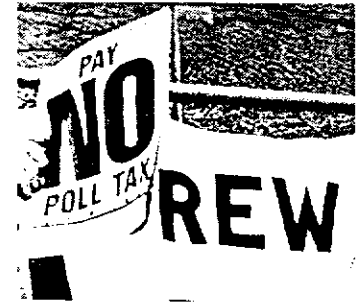


the Eastern block are resisting the plans of the new governments which are becoming increasingly unpopular. The pace of events in those countries has a bearing on how fast the struggle moves in Britain. Revolutionary movements in the east of Germany for example will penetrate west Germany and affect the whole of Europe.

The developments towards the masses taking the initiative, leading struggles and building new leaderships and new parties found direct expression in Britain. The most volatile of which is the Anti-Poll Tax movement and it was that movement which played the central role in bringing Thatcher down.

The anti-Poll Tax movement has no assistance from the Labour or Trade Union leadership at a national level and has met hostility in the majority of cases even from local Trade Union and Labour leaders.

Many in the anti-Poll Tax movement are now seeking a political expression to take the fight into the councils and in this way develop



the struggle against the Tories. The question is to deal with the right wing of the labour movement and force many of 'lefts', who have done nothing to support the fight against Kinnock and Willis (who? - you can almost hear people ask) to fight of fall. In the words of one anti-Poll Tax activist "all we get from the trade union leaders if faffle and fuffle."

Now is the time to go on the offensive. A movement that brought down Thatcher can bring down the Government. But it requires a leadership that is based on the broadest possible democracy and is prepared to listen and to act on the best suggestions

Thatcher left a legacy of inflation, recession, unemployment. In the first week of 1991 we learnt that businesses were collapsing at a rate of 450 per week and that if war breaks out the attacks on public expenditure will be considerably sharpened.

Getting rid of Thatcher has solved nothing for the Tory Party or for British capitalism. To discuss her reign in the media would only raise the memories of what she did to the steel workers, the miners, the health service and to the trade unions and what should have been done.

We said time and again in the Socialist Voice that Thatcher had no real historic strength. The Tories confidence came from the weakness, or rather the black hole, in the leadership of the labour and trade union movement. They seem only to appear to stop strikes and mobilisations - or appear after everything is over.

After the 250,000 march against the Poll Tax last year, Thatcher and the government could have been brought down by increasing the mobilisations and uniting all sections against the government. The movement is ready to respond. Within five days notice over 1000 people marched in Grantham in December opposed to the jailing of a non payer of the Poll Tax. That march forced the release of Bryan Wright.

It is that determination and willingness to mobilise that can defeat the government. It is not going to back just because millions are opposed to it after all it is prepared to help launch a possible nuclear war. The leaderships that are developing in all the struggles must seek to build a fighting unity and put a stop to divisions that the trade union bureaucracy has forced onto the movement.



# WHAT HAPPENED TO THATCHER CAN HAPPEN TO ANY COUNCILLOR"

## FROM THE SILVERDALE ANTI-POLL TAX UNION

Councillor,

We from the Silverdale Anti-Poll Tax Union, demand that you and your associates stop the court proceedings and also withdraw the liability orders served. We also demand the removal of the threat of Bailiffs against the people of the Borough of Newcastle-Under-Lyme over the 'Poll Tax' fiasco.

In view of the recent upheavals within the Government, we suggest you sit down and reconsider your position. With the anger and disgust amongst the people of this Borough, what can happen to the Prime Minister can most certainly happen to Local Councillors. After all, what have they done to warrant such treatment as:-

1. Being dragged through the courts (20 people at a time in some sessions)
2. Being herded into court like animals and football hooligans etc.
3. Being given a liability order without the chance to defend themselves
4. Living in fear of Bailiffs knocking down their doors
5. Having their wages interfered with

THEIR ONLY CRIME IS NOT BEING ABLE TO AFFORD OR MORALLY ACCEPT THE COMMUNITY CHARGE

The Government has finally admitted it was a mistake to introduce the Community Charge. They are now setting up a fundamental review of the Community Charge in the hope of saving their necks at the next General Election. We suggest that certain people within the Council Chamber do the same before it is too late for them.

We from Silverdale A.P.T.U. and other union's within the Borough have the intentions, the organisation, the knowledge, the will and most importantly the support to challenge certain wards within the Borough of Newcastle-Under-Lyme at the May 1991 Local Elections.

J. Whitehouse

Secretary, Silverdale Anti-Poll Tax Union

## THE VOICE COMMENTS

THE LETTER we publish on this page was sent to Councillors in the Newcastle-Under-Lyme area. It challenges the Councillors to stop implementing the hated Poll Tax.

There is a wide spread discussion in the anti-Poll Tax movement on how to go on the offensive against the Tory Government and the Councils. The movement must demand of all Labour Councillors that they stop aiding and abetting the Tories. Where Councillors refuse to support this movement then anti-Poll Tax unions should consider standing their own candidates as the Silverdale Anti-Poll Union and other groups are doing.

Socialist Voice thinks that the anti-Poll Tax movement should build an alliance with all those fighting the cuts in Council Services and be ready to support all those defending services such as the National Health Service.

We call for a vote for Labour candidates against the Tories except where anti-Poll Tax candidates are standing.

But more than this, where Labour councillors are fighting the Poll Tax they must be supported, but they must also seek connections with the anti-Poll Tax movement and build a joint struggle inside and outside of the council.

The Labour councillors who have been suspended by Kinnock and the right wing should seek to build support by fighting all cuts in services and helping to bring together all those workers defending jobs and services with the anti-Poll Tax movement. Councillors have little or no power unless they are connected with the campaigns in the community and the council workers who are fighting to defend jobs and services.

Where Anti-Poll Tax candidates are standing we think that where possible they should stand on a common platform and seek to link all such initiatives nationally. A good way of preparing this would be to circulate the Silverdale letter around the country.

Let those in the Labour Party who stand with the Tories know that we will not tolerate their attacks on the working class.

- \* Do not implement the Poll Tax
- \* Stop all cuts in services
- \* Don't Pay
- \* Stop using the courts
- \* Stop using the bailiffs
- \* Stop using wage arrestments
- \* Repeal the Poll Tax. For the method of financing council services based on ability to pay.

NO POLL TAX NO CUTS

ANTI-POLL TAX MARCH  
MANCHESTER, 23rd FEB

FEEDER MARCH   
FROM SALFORD

NO POLL TAX NO CUTS!

DONT PAY!

NO COURTS NO BAILIFFS!

NO WAGE ARRESTMENT!

NO POLL TAX NO CUTS