

## KURDISTAN



## WEST WON'T STOP THE SUFFERING

FULL STORY ON BACK PAGE OF THIS ISSUE

There have been appalling reports of the suffering of the Kurds. The sheer, callous, indifference of the imperialist government's response resulted in the scenes that were watched by shocked people on British television. After Baker's ten minute visit to a Kurdish refugee camp, suffering and dying Kurds waited in vain for the "massive" relief they were promised. The leaders in the Gulf War who boasted about their destructive technology with an accuracy that could hit a shirt button on the ground with an explosive charge, continued to kill civilians by dropping their few aid pallettes on top of them.

They had put half a million men and an enormous amount of equipment and logistic back-up into Saudi Arabia in a continuous stream, but they could not put in helicopters enough, or mount an operation to make the roads safe and passable in the Kurdistan mountains.

Reporting from the Turkish border, on April 16th, Phil Reeves of the Independent declared that the "rescue operation is a disaster of massive proportions". In the camp Cukurka, where 80,000 refugees were suffering and dying of hunger and disease, US planes dropped useless supplies, sometimes in Iraqi minefields. At a military base nearby, hundreds of bags of bread were on a helicopter pad, but no helicopters came to take it to the mountainside. A British plane came, then took off again, empty. "These days" he wrote, "few people in Cukurka are surprised by a fresh example of the incompetence, confusion and delay surrounding international effort to help hundreds of thousands of refugees stranded on the Iraq-Turkey border." Reluctantly and inadequately more aid began to move.

Despite their hypocritical, crocodile tears of sympathy, the British and American governments connived at the massacre of the

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# THE VOICE SAYS LABOUR CHALLENGE KINNOCK

The British Government continues to be weak and in crisis since Thatcher was forced to go. The recession deepens, manufacturing production is falling at 9% a year. In April unemployment rose by over 100,000.

The homeless charity "Shelter" said there are more than three million people homeless in Britain. This means families in temporary hostels and "bed and breakfast", people sleeping on the streets and the re-appearance of beggars in the cities. This is because the government has deliberate cut cheap rented housing to increase the speculative boom and profits in house sales. Youth unemployment, cuts in state benefits and the Thatcherite "community care" by which the mentally ill have been removed from hospitals into the community, are other causes.

People know the rich have got richer. Just two weeks before polling day, Sir Ian MacLaurin, Tesco's chairman, was awarded, a 400% pay rise, taking it to £1.5million per annum.

Days before the election, redundancies at Guy's Teaching Hospital and at a Bradford hospital were announced. Such opting out from the full NHS will mean services getting worse. The Guardian reported:

*"The Treasury has warned the health, education and other Whitehall departments that the recession means they must make real cuts in their spending programme next year."*

The council elections showed a great feeling against the Tory Government. People are expecting a "hung" parliament. It is an indictment of the Labour Party leaders that this is a likely outcome. It shows there is no real enthusiasm for them as an alternative to the Tory Government.

The turn out in the elections was very low. The discontented middle class are going to the liberal democrats, while a large number of workers and youth abstained. Others gave their votes to independent labour candidates

In Blackpool, where Labour took the council from the conservatives, the Tory council leaders was asked why he thought

there was a defeat. He answered in two words: "Poll Tax". This issue has concentrated all the anger against the Tories. But the Labour leadership's record is at best, anti-socialist and cowardly. Far from fighting the Poll Tax, they have fought those who campaigned against it and expelled Party activists.

An increase of candidates to the left of the official Labour party candidates stood in the local elections, who had fought against the Poll Tax and against the cuts. In Liverpool, 27 expelled councillors have formed an independent labour councillors group which is almost as big as the Labour group. Five of them were elected as independent Broad Left Labour councillors. Kilfoyle, who was appointed by Labour Party headquarters to rule in Liverpool over Labour Party members, has threatened more expulsions. The rebel councillors can only answer these attacks by developing some political organisation that is tied to the struggle of workers.

In places like Liverpool and Lambeth it is likely that Labour and trade union bureaucrats will pressure council workers to end their dispute. **The council workers must extend their struggle or suffer a set-back.**

Kinnock and the right wing leaders aim for a Labour Party which is an electoral machine, run on business lines, with less democracy than the Tory party. A Labour Government would woo the leaders of capitalist business and rule with the help of Liberal Democrats adjusting their policy to suit. They will go on purging the party of all fighting forces such as rebel councillors and Party activists and doing all they can to ensure councils make the cuts and obey the law.

Millions of council workers and users need a programme of struggle which is not just defensive, but which would mean gains for workers, the unwaged, youth, the old and the sick. A programme by council workers and the communities which will force the government to give back the money needed to run the services needed, would get a great response.

# THE VOICE SAYS

# THE COST OF CUTS

## POLL TAX CUTS HIT SOCIAL SERVICES AND THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR-BUT WORKERS FIGHT BACK



### RESIDENTIAL WORKERS STRIKE

ROSE MARTIN

After striking for five weeks, workers at Ross Place Day Centre and Dickenson Road Residential Unit in Manchester recently went back to work. Both are run by Social Services and care for young adults with learning difficulties.

The dispute was over agreed staffing levels never being reached, even though people with increasingly difficult disabilities were being placed in their care. While staff had suffered serious injuries, management had ignored their concerns, saying that because of Poll Tax cuts and reduced central government support, there wasn't enough money for more staff.

Dickenson Road is about to be closed by the city council and its residents moved into the community as part of "community care". Without adequate back-up, this could have terrible results.

The strike was the first to fight for increased staffing levels to care for the disabled. It was not a strike over money, but over proper levels of care for the disabled. Because of this, the council, social services management and union officials tried to frustrate it.

Local union officers, forced to support a call for a one day strike at all mental health workplaces, reduced this to a half day lobby of the council, which around 200 people attended. The strikers tried to speak from the public gallery and were evicted by police.

Then, over 100 Social Services workers

attended a meeting which forced the union to support the dispute, issue strike pay and ballot all members in the mental health service for all out strike action.

Within a week, NALGO scrapped the ballot and so the strike ended without an agreement on staffing levels.

The strikers and their supporters agreed with the idea of community care, but recognised that with the resources earmarked, it was just a way of cutting costs, which put staff and disabled people in the community at risk.

There's a need for members of the public service unions to push for an alternative community care plan and oppose any attempt by central or local Government to use community care as a way of cost cutting that puts vulnerable people in the community at risk.

Soon, there will be more disputes and cuts in Social Services. All council workers and members of the public must support them and make sure that union officers are not allowed to sell disputes short.

Care is an emotive subject, workers and communities are not aware of the horrifying effect these cuts are having on the disabled, old and the infirm and their families. It's important that information and calls for support go out to all unions and community groups as soon as disputes start and contact kept up.

### PETERLOO STRIKE

DAVID DUNNICO

On 12th April, 50 hostel workers (organised by the TGWU) went on strike against the use of casual labour. They work at a Housing Association in Manchester helping homeless people, many with drink and drug addiction or mental health problems.

Overtime had become almost compulsory at PHA's five hostels, but management brought in casuals to avoid having to pay extra for it.

As one striker explained: "Untrained, inexperienced and uncommitted casuals couldn't do the job. Our residents are vulnerable, sometimes difficult people... you have to know them individually and gain their trust". He concluded; "casuals can't provide the service that's needed or deserved".

At the Union Street hostel in Ardwick, residents who had joined the picket line agreed: "If we want to know something, we come out here" said one. "There's only a manager and a few contract security guards in the hostel. They can't even advise you where the clean bedding is".

As well as advice, the strikers feed residents, management only give them just £2.65 a day for meals. Workers at 'Mr Kipling' donated cakes, students at the city's polytechnic sent pizzas. Other food is bought for residents from the strike fund.

Donations and support have come from other voluntary sector groups and from other strikers at council-run hostels. Peterloo bosses blame Manchester City Council's poll tax cuts for their action, even though the three directors awarded themselves a £3000 payrise each. The strikers themselves make the point that they are fighting not just for themselves, but for the homeless and against poll tax cuts.

**JOINT RESIDENTS/STRIKE FUND  
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# ABDUL RASHID IN OLDHAM STAND AGAINST

Socialist Voice talked to Abdul Rashid, who stood in the recent elections in the Werneth and Coppice Ward of Oldham as the Werneth Against the Poll Tax candidate. He has had his membership of the Labour Party suspended. He is a well known Anti-Poll Tax activist who has been campaigning since November 1989. He can be contacted at 41 Edward Street, Oldham.

SV: "Why did so many people vote for you?"

AR: "They believed what I was saying, I am a do'er. The other day for example, my election agent David Bailey saw an 80 year old lady who was worried about the bailiffs. I went to see her, I told her "they cannot touch you" because they cannot touch her pension or use the bailiffs against her. Many people know that I was the first person in Oldham who fought for the Anti-Poll Tax Federation. Wherever there were protests I organised; people have seen me petitioning in the town and in many other places.

"We held public meetings; we gave people a lot of information on claiming rebates etc. We organised demonstrations which gave people strength.

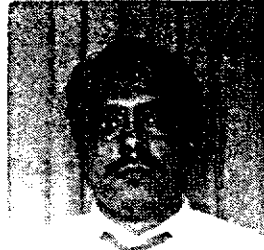
"I have also become known over the struggle in the courts. One day, as I tried to go into court I was arrested. I was the only one to be arrested and the others were allowed into court. I believe they did this to test me out because I was one of the leaders. If they could intimidate me, it would have been a blow against the movement.

"The police arrested me, but after two hours the police said I could go. I said, 'No!, charge me, put me in jail or fine me'. My friends came and said I should leave the prison so that I could help in court the following day

"When I went to court the usher of the court told me that a mistake had been made and that I was welcome to go into the court rooms. He shook hands with me and introduced me to all the court staff as Mr Rashid."

SV: "What was the attitude of the official Labour Party?"

AR: "During the run up to the election the leader of the Council asked me to withdraw my nomination. I said I would if the Councillors agreed to be always with the people, outside in the street or wherever people wanted them. Secondly if they agreed to stop summoning people to court and stop using the bailiffs. If they agreed on this then I



would withdraw. They did not agree to do this.

"I also told them the that Labour Party had lost three general elections and if they do not change their policies they could easily lose the fourth. But if they change their policies, within two months the Labour Party would definitely win."

SV: "What do you think of the five independent Labour Councillors in Liverpool winning seats on the council?"

AR: "The same thing is happening there as in Oldham; people will vote for those who are active. I think that workers should not get scared; if they want to fight and if they have the support they should stand independently in local or general elections.

"Do not let the Labour Party dictatorship scare you with threats of expulsions. You cannot defeat the problems you face without fighting."

SV: "Were there any struggles during the elections?"

AR: "Women workers from the Oldham Royal Infirmary were sacked after they came out on strike against the cuts in the hospital. Every Wednesday I go down to their picket lines to support them in their fight for their rights.

"Last Saturday they had a demonstration of 400 people and many of them were interested in my election leaflet."

"I want to tell people that the Anti-Poll Tax struggle is not over yet. We have to keep the pressure on. The government wants to keep the Poll Tax for the next two or three years. This Poll Tax should go at the end of this year. It is the government that is scared. There is no Iron Lady any more. We should be more confident."

SV: "The other great struggle in Britain was against the Gulf war, what was your attitude to that?"

AR: "The war was a war of Bush and Thatcher, the US airforce was dropping forty ton bombs; 2000 planes a day were bombing Iraq. They have destroyed Iraq completely. It took more than 40 years to build Iraq into a modern state and they have to start from the beginning again. They sent in developers from the West, then they bombarded Iraq and now they will send developers again.

"They do not care about all the people that died in the bombardment. Women, children and men died in a terrible way; so many had hands, legs and heads blown off.

"It was a terrible and we should all have been against it."

## NW RESULTS

We reprint some of the results below:

### Liverpool

Anfield	Broad Left	1,624
	Labour	1,432
Everton	Broad Left	964
	Labour	836
Gill Moss	Broad Left	2,127
	Labour	1,207
Valley	Broad Left	1,173
	Labour	1,222
Dingle	Broad Left	1,548
	Labour	1,459
Netherley	Broad Left	1,199
	labour	1,014

### Newcastle-Under-Lyme

Silverdale	Labour	600
	APT	162

### Oldham

Werneth	Labour	1,408
	APT	528
St. James	Labour	947
	Ind. (APT)	273

### Bolton

Blackrod	Labour	2,129
	APT	220
Deane-cum-Heaton	Con	3431
	Lab	1962
	APT	75

### Salford

Barton	Lab	2,100
	APT	93
Winton	Lab	2,224
	Ind(APT)	98

# TOM WALMSLEY IN SALFORD

# THE POLL TAX

Tom Walmsley stood in the local election in May as an independent anti-poll tax candidate for the Barton Ward in Eccles, Salford.

Tom, who is 64, has been active in the Labour and Trade Union movement all his life. As a member of the A.E.U. he served as a Convenor of Shop Stewards, Eccles Branch Secretary, Manchester District President and finally as National Organiser for the union.

Socialist Voice interviewed Tom about his election campaign.

SV: "Why did you decide to stand in the election?"

TW: "I decided to stand because of my revulsion at the continuing attacks on working class living standards during the period of this Tory government, the most pernicious of which has been the introduction of the Poll Tax and its spin off effects relating to the slashing of social services by councils of whatever political persuasion.

I would like to say that I felt it a great honour to be invited by the Eccles Anti-Poll Tax Union to be their standard bearer during the elections. Such an organisation of ordinary people combining together to fight against the tremendous power of the state and its institutions is surely in the finest traditions of the British Labour Movement. Their struggle in the face of such power and the spectacle of collaborationist policies being pursued by the official labour movement have made the achievements of the national anti-poll tax organisation all the more spectacular and proves again what history has taught us, that a mass movement of people can change the course of events.

Labour candidates extolled the virtues of their recent policy statements regarding a return to the property rating system. This will, of course, be subject to the possible return of a Labour Government in 1992. We can be forgiven for believing that, with the vagaries of the British electoral system, such statements can only be placed in the context of **PIE IN THE SKY WHEN YOU DIE**. In the meantime, it will be business as usual, more cuts in services to meet govern-



*March against the Poll Tax and cuts in Manchester in February*

cede the total release of those funds derived from the sale of council owned property, thus enabling the building of new housing where possible or the refurbishment and repair of existing stock.

There should be no further cuts in social services. We need to protect the old and infirm from Tory policy. There must be no closures of old

peoples homes.

On education efforts need to be made to develop a successful national campaign against Government plans to hive of education from local authorities, by transfer to central control or by the creation of self-governing schools. Additionally, irresistible pressure needs to be applied in order to obtain the necessary funding from national level to overcome the disrepair and dereliction of our existing school premises. Also I am against the new school test. Testing children at seven years old is a load of nonsense. It is a retrograde step back to the days of the 11 plus. I anticipate the introduction will lead to streaming and the majority of children will not get the required attention and therefore frequently not achieve their full potential. The more fundamental point is that it is being developed to fit the requirements of the system. Those in the higher stream will have more money spent on them.

Another important issue regarding children is that of health care. A recent report from the Community Health Council claims that children most in need are not receiving the service they require.

Similarly I think we must oppose any further cuts in public transport, the effects of which will be felt mostly by those with the greatest need, with increased fares reduced services and inevitable unemployment.

The problems I have mentioned are just a sample of what local people are facing and will face in the future. Increasing unemployment is likely to become a major issue."



ment spending targets. More harassing and expulsions of Labour stalwarts involved in the struggle against the Poll Tax and its effects, more rent increases and more attempts to criminalise working people through the courts, using bailiffs and eventual jailings."

SV: "AS well as the Poll Tax what other issues do you think were important in Eccles?"

TW: "First of all I think there is the question of the environment. For example, we need continued vigilance to be exercised in order to prevent business developments leading to a worsening of environmental conditions within the district, such as plans for waste disposal which are not dead and buried.

On the question of housing we must, in conjunction with other local authorities, place greater pressure on the government to con-

# LIVERPOOL VOTES FOR ACTION

FRANK FITZMAURICE

There were six candidates in Liverpool standing as Independent Labour candidates against Labour candidates imposed by the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party. Five of them won.

Liverpool City Labour Party has been dissolved by the NEC who, in the past year, have expelled twenty nine Labour councillors for either opposing the Poll Tax or opposing council rent rises.

One of the Independent Labour councillors is Mick Alderson who stood in the Gill Moss ward, in the north of Liverpool. Gill Moss ward consists of vast housing estates, including the Croxteth estate.

There, for several years in the eighties, a historic Liverpool battle was fought to keep open the Croxteth Comprehensive school which was closed by the Liberal Liverpool Council in the early 1980's. The parents in the estate occupied the school and ran it with volunteer teachers for two years. This struggle gained widespread support among Liverpool trade unions and the rank and file of the Labour movement nationally.

The left Labour Council which followed, gave a grant to the school, which consolidated a victory for the parents. As a result of this struggle, the Gill Moss ward Labour Party is one of the biggest in Liverpool.

This year, a well known Liverpool right winger - Eddie Roderick - was imposed as a candidate on the ward by the Labour Party national leadership.

It was the second time this had happened. This time the ward rejected the candidature and elected Mick Alderson, by 56 votes to one, with one spoilt ballot paper.

The ward was then suspended and Mick Alderson expelled. Undeterred, the ward continued with his candidature and carried out a lively election campaign.

Mick believes that the issue of standing independent Labour against imposed candidates will grow in importance as the national bureaucracy clamps down on any opposition to its right wing policies.

The Labour MP for the constituency - West Derby - is Bob Wareing, a "soft" left, former supporter of "Tribune". He issued a letter accusing the ward activists who carried out an anti-poll tax campaign, of being "mindless extremists", supported by the "Stalinist-Militant Tendency". This clearly shows the philosophy of the "soft" left, that any opposition to the Tories must be confined to words and not deeds.

# NOT JUST LIVERPOOL

Socialist Voice has talked to a number of the Anti-Poll Tax candidates. When asked what they thought of the results all of them were proud to have stood.

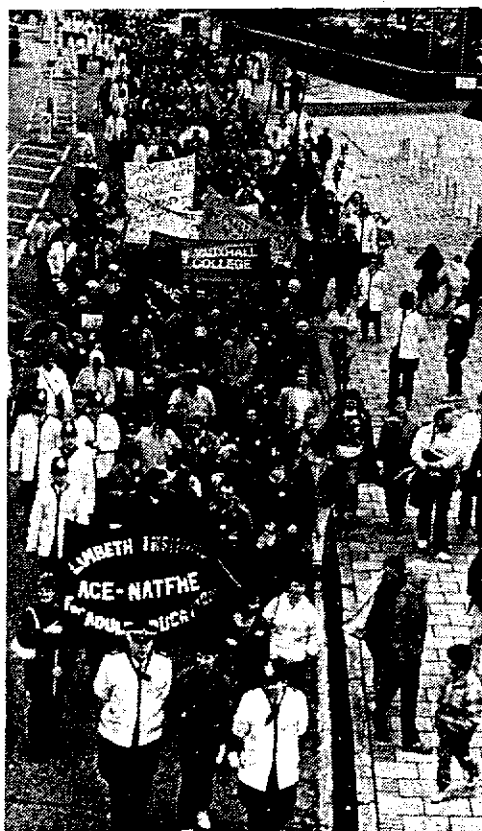
John Whitehouse from Silverdale and Paul Griffin from Eccles said they would stand again next year, reflecting the feeling amongst all the candidates that we asked.

One of the campaigners from Bolton, Joe, was asked, during the election, if they were standing anti-Poll Tax candidates in more than the two wards. He replied: "no, but next year we will stand in all the wards."

Taken together with the remarkable results in Liverpool the tendency towards unofficial struggles which showed most strongly in the Poll Tax and against the Gulf war are finding an overtly political expression.

# LAMBETH LABOUR COUNCIL TORY CUTS

ED BARBOUR ON THE CUTS THE TORIES DON'T HAVE  
TO MAKE



"Lecturers from Lambeth's three colleges in Brixton, Vauxhall and Norwood and teachers from the borough's 80 primary, 10 secondary and six special schools took part in the day of action, along with Natfhe members from all over London." South London Press May 3rd.

The strikers marched from Kennington Park to a lobby of parliament.

At the same time twenty council workers supported by users have occupied two consumer advice centres, which are to close. The council has cut off their telephones and their water supply.

Dozens of community groups are protesting about the cuts.

To list all the jobs and all the services to be lost would be impossible, the details below gives an idea of what Joan Twelves (the leader of the council) calls a "class budget". With six Directors, already being paid £47,000 per year being given 20% bonuses (ie about £9,000) we should ask 'comrade' Twelves *which class is she supporting?*

The details of some of the cuts are as follows:

\*Lambeth Playbus (the only childcare facility for 8 estates) is to close

\*Lambeth Homeworkers (which provides support for the many women who do piece-work at home - often paid as little as 60p an hour) is to close.

\*There is to be an across the board cut of 20% in the three colleges in Lambeth resulting in 51 job losses (of 100 full time posts) and rising fees (meaning fewer students and more cuts next year).

Lambeth Council is now really at crisis point with cuts volunteered by the Labour Group of £25.5 million and another £8.3 million imposed from central government, 100,000 non-payers and only 1.5% of these as yet taken to court.

In order to try to implement these cuts Lambeth intends to make 600 redundancies. This enormous attack from the biggest employer in the borough has resulted in strike action of NATFE, NALGO and NUT union branches in the area on May 1st.



# A FIGHTING PROGRAMME FOR SPANISH WORKERS



The ten measures, which we report here, were the demands of the candidates of our sister organisation in Spain, the PST (Socialist Workers' Party), in the regional and district elections in April. We think that they are relevant to workers in Britain who are facing similar struggles in Britain.

While some demands, in form, may not be wholly applicable in Britain, their content is certainly worth serious thought by the advance guard of British workers. And certainly the spirit of positive offensive should be grasped.

- For a municipal plan of public and social works.

- In all the big cities, the constitution of a public enterprise to unify and coordinate transport (buses underground and suburban lines). Control by enterprise committees with which the councils would establish a plan for the development of transport, increase the frequencies as well as extend the railways and underground in the outskirts. Fares to be frozen and free transport for

unemployed, the aged and students.

- Municipal plan of schooling with construction of buildings guaranteeing classes of no more than twenty five pupils.

- Reorganisation of the health system. The establishment of hospitals and health centres in the neighbourhoods. A doctor for each 650 people. Opening of family planning centres in the neighbourhoods.

- Protection and economic support of cultural, sporting and recreational youth associations. Municipal plans to prevent drug addiction; establishment of rehabilitation centres in all small towns and neighbourhoods. The plans of social rehabilitation to be worked out with the participation of families and the popular organisations which are struggling against drug abuse.

- Prohibition of dangerous enterprises (nuclear etc) in urban zones, and municipal control of factories which produce contaminated material.

- Those who have most to pay most. Creation of a special tax on the banks and big businesses. The extension of tax to the church.

- Peoples' Assemblies to control the council; making suggestions and exercising a veto over municipal decisions.

The councils, together with the peoples' and trade union neighbourhood organisations, to establish a statute to regulate these assemblies and their coordination throughout their areas.

The municipal positions to be revocable on a petition of the simple majority of the assemblies.

- There is no guarantee of taking forward a programme like this, except with the support of the struggle of the people. For this the elected councillors must put their positions at the service of the people, to be at the head of the demands of the people, to develop the Popular Assemblies, informing and consulting at every step.

# MINERS AGAINST



The working class in the Soviet union is now responding to the huge increase in prices, low wages and food shortages with an increase in strikes. Since the beginning of their strike the miners have been contacting other workers. Miners' strike leaders were reported to be in Minsk, Byelorussia, cooperating with the local strike committee when 200,000 workers came out demanding the resignation of the Byelorussian Government and Gorbachov and the removal of the Communist Party from state institutions, the Minsk Strike Committee co-ordinated strikes in more than 100 factories. They ended their strike on April 12th when the Republic's leaders agreed to negotiations which they had previously refused. Metal workers held rallies throughout the country in the first week of April supporting the miners. The Soviet Union's independent unions called a one-day stoppage on April 26th in support of the miners. The official figures are that 1,169,000 working days were lost in March and the situation was growing worse in April.

The miners refused to end their strike on the promise of a wage increase. With enormous increases in prices, shortages and chaos, their appalling working conditions, it is the

political questions which are the central ones for them. Who is going to run their lives?

At the beginning, it appeared that it is a replacement of Gorbachev by Yeltsin and the "radicals" that was being demanded. But the miners must be chewing over whether the "reformers" and the "radicals" are really an alternative. Both Yeltsin and Gorbachov see solutions in terms of introducing market relationships, changing property forms and dismantling planning and they agreed on ending the miners strike. Yeltsin claims he will take the Soviet Union to market or capitalist relations, quicker than Gorbachov, by increasing privatisation and stabilising the rouble. That means the masses will suffer even more with unemployment and worsened living conditions *as well as political oppression*. Capitalist restoration cannot be attempted without imposing acute suffering on the working class masses. That is the lesson of Poland, and Eastern Germany.

The Gorbachov and the Yeltsin wings are for authoritarian moves in order to "protect democracy" or "openness". In other words they say to the Soviet people: "better to be suppressed by us than by the top bureaucracy in the party, the KGB and the army."

A Financial Times interview on 2nd April with Gorbachev's leading adviser concluded the following about fears in the Gorbachev camp: "First, there exists a deep fear in the highest circles of a coup; second that there also exists a firm intention to avoid it, by using at least some authoritarian methods."

Gorbachov has already got his emergency powers and now is pushing a strike ban. Yeltsin takes the same course. At the beginning of April, he demanded and got from the Russian Congress of Peoples Deputies, emergency powers to "*lead society out of the crisis and suspend the miners' strike*".

Yeltsin, and leading radicals, Gorbachov, his advisers and the "conservatives" all look upon the mass of the population who are suffering, and will suffer the most in the future, in the same way. They view the problems of the economy through the eyes of people who have privileged positions and are the manipulators of labour power. "*Even now most of those who call themselves radicals are ex-communists who thrived in the old system.*" Jonathan Steele, the Moscow Correspondent of the "Guardian" wrote on March 30.

The Soviet workers are moving through



# THE BUREAUCRACY

JIM STEAD EXPLAINS YELTSIN MUST ALSO BE CONFRONTED

experiences which will compel them to realise that no Gorbachevs or populists like Yeltsin are going to deliver them. They and the rest of the working population must grasp the power for themselves. They have to repeat what their grandfathers and great-grandfathers did in 1917. Neither Gorbachev nor Yeltsin have any intention of unveiling the real history of that time - the revolution which brought a Government of Soviets of workers and poor farmers; of Soviets with intimate and continuous connection with the mass of the population; with the workers representatives paid working men's wages and subject to recall at any time by the majority of those who elected them.

At this stage there may be a coalition between Gorbachev and Yeltsin - a "round table" arrangement at the top to head off a further development of the working masses and impose a "shock" programme as in Poland. Yeltsin has proposed bringing miners' leaders into the coalition and he may very well succeed in doing so. There are reports that miners' leaders support this proposition. As in Poland, however, such a "round table" government means a government in which leaders of a mass movement are used to hold it down while the "shock" treatment is administered.

The working class is compelled to learn through struggle and the testing out of lead-

**In a television poll in Nizhnevartavsk, western Siberia in the heart of the oil industry, Gorbachev was given a rating of just 0.8 per cent in the beginning of April.**

ers. The Russian working class comes out of decades and decades of stalinist repression in which the opportunity of experience of organised struggle as a class, was suppressed. So that, it is forced to re-learn old lessons, while tearing down the distortions of stalinist ideology. In this it can go through a process of testing out several layers of leaders, like the radicals and others who come to the top of its new organisations. But its experience will hammer out a class independence and confidence.

It is in the movement of the working class that the future of the Soviet Union lies. Events are now forcing that class to begin grasping for leadership. The fact is that the consciousness created by the conquests of the Russian Revolution in the property relations has not been eradicated despite all the capitalist propaganda and the capitulation of the radical intellectuals. The workers react to the speculation they are already experiencing which they know is the essential part of a future market economy.

For Oleg Ozherelev, Gorbachev's adviser, the great problem, "to which he returned again and again", according to his interviewers in the Financial Times recently 2nd April was "the deep inner contempt for the market, inculcated into the population".

Privileged members of the "Nomenklatura" and the intelligentsia, have prospects of finding a niche in the market relations. Some managers would become owners. Intellectuals and academics, many who had been privileged under the old regime extend their privileges as advisers economists etc. Meanwhile, while the masses suffer, all these continue outside of the increasing suffering and hardship of the mass of the population. They live as well and in many cases better than before. What is characteristic of all the reformers, the radicals and the conservatives, the supporters of Gorbachev in the bureaucracy, as well as those who want a military solution and an attempt to return to stalinist centralisation: is that they fear an explosion in the masses. The question they are concerned with is not how to help the mass of the population to really democratically govern and better their lives but how they can *control the masses*. It is a question of how to carry out the creation of market relations "without social upheavals," said Oleg Ozherelev to the FT interviewer.

It was reported that Soviet citizens were saying: "We have neo-Kerensky, we are likely to get neo-Bolshevism". That is the only real opening for struggling Soviet workers. The country now goes towards greater unity of workers struggle. But "neo-Bolshevism" can only be successful if it is based on the old Bolshevism. And the central pillars of the old Bolshevism, destroyed by Stalin, were: confidence in the masses and internationalism. The Bolsheviks began as an insignificant number in 1917 and won the majority in the Soviets because as Trotsky wrote: "All their attention was directed to the masses, and, moreover, not to their top layer, but to the deepest, to the most oppressed millions, and tens of millions whom the parliamentary babblers usually forget." It is that sort of leadership, not a leadership of "parliamentary babblers", that has now to be built.

Trotsky wrote of the Bolsheviks: "All their attention was directed to the masses, and, more over, not to their top layer, but to the deepest, to the most oppressed millions, and tens of millions whom the parliamentary babblers usually forget."



# MILLIONS STARVE

The plight of twenty seven million Africans who face starvation, has suddenly burst on to television screens and into the press. Most of these twenty seven million are women and children and this figure only covers seven countries in Africa- Sudan, Ethiopia, Liberia, Somalia, Angola, Malawi and Mozambique. However, in all African countries and throughout the "Third World", poverty and hunger is rapidly growing worse.

We will be told that the cause of these recurring famines lies with the undeveloped countries themselves, who are responsible, either in the way they produce or because they cannot stabilise their countries.

These famines, and the growing starvation in the world, are a product of the capitalist relations which the Western Governments, the radical democrats and intellectuals in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union have been saying will give a better future to the people there.

"Adjustment with a human face" a Unicef study by Dr. Richard Jolly Giovanni Cornia and Frances Stewart, said, in 1987, that malnutrition increased during the 1980s, not only in ten African countries, but in Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Jamaica, Uruguay, in parts of the Philippines and Sri Lanka. In some countries infant mortality was rising after years of decline. The "developing" countries have been in the worst recession since the nineteen thirties..

The "adjustment packages" imposed by the world bankers meant that "expenditure per head on health at constant prices decreased in nearly half the African continent for which data exists and in 60 per cent of the countries in Latin America. Education expenditure per head declined in a third of African countries and 59 per cent of Latin American countries." The Unicef report went on to say: "Many children will die, and many of the survivors suffer permanent damage, because of failure to act now." Of course, the situation only got worse, punctuated by yearly famines.

Half of Africa's debt is owed by countries south of the Sahara and a World Bank report in 1989 said the repayments on the debt were equal to their Gross National Product and three and a half times their export earnings.

In demanding the dismantling of state property, the world bankers declare that "central planning" can never be successful. But "in reality" production of the undeveloped countries is not bedevilled by a national

command economy but by the international commands of the IMF, the imperialist governments and the multi-nationals.

A Moroccan economist summed up what happens in a country which carries out IMF and World Bank instructions: "The country ends up producing too much of what it doesn't consume, and consuming too much of what it doesn't produce." (Najib Akesbi) He was quoted by Susan George in her book "A fate worse than debt" Pelican 1989. The countries economies are tied to the international market, their products changed. Susan George, commenting on the riots in Morocco when the price of flour, sugar, cooking oil and milk went up 133%, writes: "Morocco, once a North African granary and a major supplier for France, is today reduced to importing over 3 million tons of wheat annually - while its unwanted oranges and tomatoes rot in the fields or in the docks." It was the IMF who "planned" the concentration of production on exports of T-shirts and trousers, cotton, oranges and tomatoes, which suddenly nobody wanted.

Now, with the acutely sharpening competition in the world market, the most powerful capitalist countries have been using their power to sustain the profits of their own capitalists in industry and agriculture at the expense of the undeveloped countries, whose economies and agriculture they devastate.

The big capitalist nations have been meet-



ing in their rounds of international trade talks under GATT (General Agreement for Tariffs and Trade), set up forty three years ago and known in the semi-colonial countries as "the rich man's club". The GATT discussions have become an arena where the most powerful capitalist nations fight over how to squeeze more plunder from the "Third World" and how to divide it up, with US Imperialism using its domination to push through the defence of profits and of its own powerful industrial and agricultural businesses.

Despite the hypocritical talk of "aid" and the protection of the environment, the business of exploiting these starvation-ridden areas is ruthless. On January 11th, the Guardian ran two articles under the headline: "Profits without honour in other lands". They dealt with ecological disaster and food insecurity and were written by Kevin Watkins, Stephanie d'Orey and Dieneke Ferguson.

One article showed how the mighty capitalist agro-business can use genetic engineering which could help countries of the "Third World" where the vast majority of the world's plants grow, to destroy the variety of plant life in these countries, and impoverish them. Western agro-businesses "turn to the developing nations of the South for wild plants that supply the genetic 'raw materials' of modern biotechnology - without paying for the privilege." They create new crop plants, characterised by their uniformity.

## PETER MONEY ON WHY THERE'S A FAMINE IN AFRICA

but with higher yields. The poorer nations are compelled to buy the new seeds with a dangerous erosion of plant species. *"Uniformity leaves crops vulnerable to disease and failure, with fewer wild varieties available that could hold the genetic key to survival. In South East Asia, two-thirds of agricultural land is planted with only one variety of rice, where there were once 30,000."*

Science is used to create the framework for famine. Yet the Guardian article declares: *"Biotechnology has the potential to solve major global problems, particularly in the South, through better productivity and medicines and low-cost application for small farmers."*

Further, one of these articles reports how, in 1985, Indonesia banned the export of raw logs to encourage value-added manufacturing thus generating more foreign exchange for less raw material. According to the World Wide Fund for Nature this has reduced pressure on the Indonesian rainforest. Other countries have recently followed the Indonesian example.

*"However, under pressure from logging companies angered at the disruption of cheap raw materials supplies, industrialised countries are using GATT to outlaw export controls... Indonesia, already facing EC trade sanctions over its logging export ban, will be faced with a choice between ecologically devastating free trade in raw timber, or comprehensive GATT backed trade sanctions."*

The famines are a social problem not a natural one. The French Revolution with its overthrow of feudal land ownership ended famines in France. The terrible famines in Ireland were the result of oppression. The famines of today come from class oppression and the plunder of imperialism. In parts of Africa wars have devastated crops, with the multi-nationals, the CIA and imperialist governments backing armies in order to protect their spheres of influence and profit or to destabilise a national liberation movement.

The reasons for the famines lie in imperialist exploitation. Those in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union who have been carried away with stories of prosperity which capitalist relations and assistance from imperialism can bring, should have turned into their consciousness what has happened to those men, women and children who have suffered under the "aid" of the world's bankers and multi-nationals.

## DEREK MOORE FROM KENYA

IN 1963 the people of Kenya won Independence from British colonialism after years of violent and bitter struggles.

At the height of the guerilla fighting, led by the Mau Mau between 1952 and 1956, British troops and police killed some 10,000 Africans, imprisoned a further 90,000 in concentration camps and forced 1,077,501 Kikuyu and Embu into 'designated villages' under security guards.

Kenyans might have thought they were finished with oppression and the British ruling class after 1963, but that was not to be. Today the killing, imprisonment and torture continue, this time under an African dictator, President Daniel Arap Moi, while Britain maintains investments of over \$2 billion, the biggest of any Western country, and is involved in a military alliance which includes the US.

Kenya is dependent on Western "aid" and receives the highest amount in Africa, receiving US\$7 billion last year from the US alone.

Until recently the country was viewed as economically prosperous and politically stable. It is still seen by many as one of the 'success' stories of African independence.

The two biggest earners of foreign currency are tourism and coffee. They accounted for \$634 million of a total export income of \$1,150 million in 1989. But both industries have slumped badly.

Most Kenyans are ground down by poverty and oppression. As under colonialism, the best land is used for growing export crops for the benefit of multinational companies and a tiny Kenyan elite, while the majority of people are landless and suffer growing unemployment and hunger.

Nearly 30 years after independence, the Kenyan people are fighting for freedom once more, this time against the oppression of a new, and African ruling class under the leadership of President Moi and his rubber stamp Kenya African National Union (KANU), the only political party allowed.

Hundreds of political prisoners have been murdered by the regime, among them Bishop Alexander Kipsang Muge, who was assassinated on 14th August this year, and the former Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr Robert Ouko. Thousands are illegally imprisoned, tens of thousands have been tortured and hundreds more are in exile. Independent trade unions and student bodies are crushed.

*"In Kenya more than five people cannot meet without a police licence. If a family of*

*more than five wants to meet for a tea party or for a funeral or something they still have to get a police licence. The police may or may not allow them to meet or they may send a government representative". Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, a former academic and one of Kenya's best known writers.*

In the biggest show of public defiance in nearly three decades, thousands turned out on 7th July last year for a protest rally at Kamukunji grounds in the capital Nairobi. They were attacked by police using guns, batons and tear gas in a scene reminiscent of the apartheid South African state.

Rioting soon spread throughout the city, particularly to the poor working class areas of Dandora, Kariobangi, Kawangware and Kangemi. Road blocks were set up and buses and cars stoned and burned. Rioting spread throughout the country the following day and the headquarters of KANU was raised to the ground.

By the time fighting was over 30 people had been shot dead by police, including a primary schoolboy, killed by paramilitary police while on his way home from school.

The magazine, *Africa Events* reported *"In Kenya the last time such an open and public opposition to the establishment was seen was in the 1960s, during the days of the Kenya People's Union (KPU). In 1966, just three years after Kenya attained its independence, some of the prominent personalities in Kenya's struggle against the British were of the opinion that the party they had founded to steer the country to true independence, KANU, had diverted from the previously agreed path, and, in the words of one of its founders, "had started to let in neo-colonialism through the back door."*

In the same year Kenya's first vice-President, Oginga Odinga—and other prominent political figures—resigned from both KANU and the government to lead the newly formed KPU, which within a short period attracted a large following throughout the country.

Although the party was legally registered, the government under the first president Jomo Kenyatta, never allowed the KPU to operate freely for fear of it becoming a powerful alternative force. In 1969, only six years after the winning of independence, the KPU was banned. Its entire leadership as well as some of its activists, were arrested and detained.

The British had gone, but their methods, their work, and their investments live on.

# CHOLERA HITS PERU

## THE DISEASE OF POVERTY AND DEPRIVATION



This picture was taken over five years ago of a shanty town in Lima. There was no water or sanitation, the dwellings of the shanty town gave little protection from the intense heat or chilling fog - even then it was a "fine breeding place for disease". The source of the photograph? One of the United Nations organisations.

Cholera, the killer disease of poverty and deprivation, has broken out in what the United Nations describe as a pandemic, an epidemic of epidemics, in South America. It has already reached the United States and is predicted to reach Europe. In the US and Europe, they say, it will be isolated and contained but in Latin America more than two million people are expected to catch the disease.

The following is an article from *Solidaridad Socialista*, the paper of our sister organisation in the Argentine, the Movement Towards Socialism.

"While imperialist bombs were falling on Baghdad and slaughtering women and children another more silent genocide threatened Latin America.

The cholera epidemic that broke out, in January, in Peru has already killed hundreds, infected thousands and spread over the

country's borders.

Everyone, including the authorities, recognises that this disease - never before known in Peru - is "because of the extreme poverty of our population" (*La Nación*, 2nd February). \*

The epidemic began in the coastal city of Chimbote. People who have been there reported an unpleasant smell covering an area of several kilometres and a population sunk in poverty made worse in recent years by the decline of fishing, the main industry.

The disease spread like cluster bombs into Lima's shanty towns, into the peasant communities in the highlands and the other fishing communities on the Peruvian coast, reaching Chile in the south and Ecuador in the north.

Whenever the epidemic arrives it kills with the speed and efficiency of a bomb.

Thousands of infected people fill the already overcrowded hospitals or remain in the

streets without medical attention.

Cholera begins with terrible dehydration, vomiting and diarrhoea. The Health Department predicted that "the epidemic may kill 8,000 people within two months and infect 190,000". (*La Nación*)

Can it be stopped? According to the World Health Organisation the treatment is simple and cheap: serum, anti-biotics and healthy living conditions. But the water drunk by 60% of Lima's 8 million inhabitants is contaminated daily by 25 tonnes of industrial, domestic and sewer waste.

Peru is unable to stop the epidemic because of the country's poverty and other Latin American countries are on the alert because they know they are in the same situation: "It was never possible to stop the infection from spreading to other countries". (*El Cronista Commercial*, 12th February)

This is not only because there are no hospitals, beds, medicines, drinkable water and minimum conditions of health, but fundamentally because the best conditions for the epidemic are starvation and poverty.

This epidemic "illustrates precisely the profound economic and social crisis that developed in Peru in the past five years. Cholera is a disease that emerges after a natural or artificial disaster". (*La Nación*, 7th February)

Peru has the third highest rate of infant mortality in Latin America in children under five: 119 die for every 1000 (123 in rural areas). Almost half the children in Peru suffer from malnutrition and 60% of the population live in extreme poverty. The situation has worsened since 1987.

Lima, historically a city full of gold and silver, today is the home of millions of poor street traders, beggars and homeless people. Two-thirds of its population unemployed or under-employed.

This disaster is not natural but artificial. The responsibility lies with the imperialist-capitalist system with its austerity plans and the complicity of our government.

This is what is taking "the gold" from the semi-colonial countries, killing our children and our people with cholera, bombs and the growing poverty which strikes the workers and peoples of the world."

\* Some British newspapers say that the last cholera epidemic was in 1888.

# AFTER THE GULF WAR

From the USA, Carol Williams writes:

"During most of the Vietnam War, this country was in a period of economic growth. Unemployment was low, and unions were able to win concessions from the bosses. They were swept up in the patriotic fever of the time. Today's workers are not content; they have seen continual inroads on their living standards, while the rich have grown richer..

... "The whole working class is beginning to realise that they have nothing to gain and everything to lose in a war in the Middle East. The antiwar movement is beginning to include labor representation, including many regional union leaders."

From the Soviet Union we reproduce a statement from "Revolutionary Proletarian cells";

"The bureaucracy is not capable of bringing the country and itself out of the mess. The economic problems and even the depression lead to a deficit and a fall in living standards. This in itself brings about massive discontent in all the countries of the region and promises to appear in the USSR in enormous amounts. Trotsky, in his book "Revolution Betrayed" pointed out: "the bureaucracy continues maintaining state property only in the degree to which she is frightened of the proletariat."

From Poland we reproduce a statement from the Group of Workers' Self-management:

"in regard to bureaucracy and other forces responding to capitalist reconstruction and reprivatisation, the main condition for the working class to be successful is the independence of the movement, whether it is legal or illegal. The defense, building and strengthening of the workers' organisations in the factories, independently from every organisation or institution alien to the working class is the main task of the working class movement."

From Berlin, Germany Ferdinand Muller writes:

"The first wave of agreements signed in the ex-GDR under the terms fixed by the currency unification came in the summer. Starting with the metallurgy agreement, the only one in which it was necessary to resort to a massive strike to win, essentially two achievements have been made: a substantial salary increase and on the other hand, a clause of protection for one year. This implies that most of the 1,800,000 workers that are on reduced shifts today get an almost full salary and are benefited by the raises achieved."



## INTERNATIONAL COURIER

The causes of defeat, a new issue of International Courier analyses the international developments from four continents, starting with the victory of the US in the Gulf.

Many of the articles are written by comrades who are active in the struggles in their countries and include pieces written during and after the Gulf War.

From Panama, Estaban Barra writes:

"Half a year after the invasion, this committee called a mobilisation in which 25,000 people participated, according to foreign journalists. From then on this committee has become the organiser of the anti-imperialist fighters who mobilise against the occupation. On the 20th day of every month they reject the occupation."

**International Courier costs  
£1.50 plus 26p for postage  
available from:**

**ISL  
PO BOX 9,  
ECCLES SO,  
SALFORD  
M30 7FX**

Bill Hunter writes on the Soviet Union:

"The truth is, that the first period of the Russian revolution was the greatest period of democracy for workers, soldiers and peasants that had ever been seen... There was a proletarian democracy, in which workers participated directly in administration and whose delegates to the soviets were subject to immediate recall and the payment of a worker's wage. There was a stream of delegates gaining experience in the Soviets and in the first year of the Russian revolution it was developing on the guide lines of Lenin in his pamphlet "State and Revolution". There, he foresaw "every cook" would have the opportunity to learn to administer the state. Out of a total of 1,500-1,800 delegates in the Moscow Soviet, for example, 423 were directly recalled and replaced by their electors in 1918."

From Istanbul, Turkey, Pinar Selinay writes:

"Then, came 1991, defiantly crashing in on the crest of the indomitable wave of worker mobilisations headed by 48,000 coalminers of the Zonguldak region of the Black Sea coast, along with their families and virtually the entire local population in the area marching alongside them. And it is Zonguldak, previously one of the areas of stricter police surveillance and repression, where no more than two people could comfortably come together for discussion in the coffee houses without being harassed, which has proved to the rest of Turkey that, in fact: Freedom comes with the workers."

# THEY WOULD SELL

## THE TORIES MANIA FOR PRIVATISATION HAS GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH EFFICIENCY-IT'S A MULTI £BILLION RIP-OFF ARGUES PETER WINDELER

The rule of the Tories has been marked by an attempt to cut public housing and other essential services. Further, they have sold off public utilities and publicly owned companies. The result has been to endow vast profits on banks and stockbrokers in underwriting fees and dealing commissions. This is what they called "share ownership among ordinary people" or "popular capitalism".

A lie can be nailed straight away. Privatisation does not improve efficiency nor productivity. Take the case of British Steel. Prior to privatisation in 1983 its productivity had risen by 60%. Since 1983, when it was privatised, productivity has only risen by 12.4%.

Age Concern, the charity, has now joined the campaign against privatisation because of the detrimental effect that it has on the elderly and infirmed patients. As well as paying much more the consumer gets a far inferior service. As an illustration since the privatising of BT complaints have increased substantially.

What is perhaps not surprising is that those who have tried to uncover the sordid facts of privatisation have come up against a wall of silence. According to Colin Chapman who wrote *Selling The Family Silver - Has Privatization Worked?*: "...many of those whose bank balances have been enriched by the great privatisation process in train throughout Mrs Margaret Thatcher's first decade in office have been reluctant to detail their roles. Such is the fear of the Official Secrets Act, originally designed to protect our defences, but now used to spare official embarrassment."

The government created the rules when they decided upon privatisation and broke many existing laws in their rush to raise cash and reward their friends. For instance it is illegal to "push shares" - make claims that those who to invest will reap substantial benefits. Yet this is exactly what the Tories did. Journalists, merchant bankers and stockbroking analysts were wined and dined with canapes and the best French champagne. The barefaced way the British government has acted prompted the chairman of the national French electricity company, Electricite de France, Pierre Delaporte to say, "As privatisations go, this one (the electricity

companies) looks like a chain saw massacre. Even liberals are beginning to be inhibited by what is happening in the United Kingdom".

### BAD DEALS

Recently light has been thrown upon the hidden incentives, like the £48 million granted to British Aerospace to purchase Austin Rover. But what needs to be constantly born in mind is that the proceeds of privatisations bear no relation to the amounts invested by the public over the years. As an example: the water companies have cost the tax-payer £7.7 billion but the government only received £500 million as the first payment under privatisation. In addition the government is pouring £5 billion into water authorities to allow them to meet higher water standards, £4.4 billion is being paid over to write off debts to the Treasury and a further £1 billion is to be given for further developments.

An interesting factor in the case of the water industry is that public expenditure cuts started by the Labour government in the 1970's and continued by the Conservatives have made it impossible to maintain standards.

Industries such as the railways and steel were bought by the tax payers from their previous owners for the nation's benefit. If not directly purchased out of government resources then "gilts" were issued to raise the necessary finance.

Tens of millions of pounds in fees have been paid to intermediaries in the City of London for the proceeds to be squandered in tax cuts.

Apart from the abortive BP issue, which failed due to the collapse of share prices after "Black Monday" in 1987, privatisations have guaranteed a quick profit for those that were able to get on the gravy train. The London securities house County Natwest WoodMackenzie in a survey of privatisation issues has shown that only Rolls Royce did not out perform the market in the first six months, directly after privatisation. In fact BT exceeded the market by 22% and British Gas by 10.5%.

When 50% of BT was sold in November 1984 it created the biggest company on the London Stock Exchange and introduced the public to "staggering". Within 24 hours the

share price rose by 90% and around one billion shares had changed hands. Peat Marwick who policed the issue discovered 6,000 forms completed by people who had already applied, including two Conservative MP's. Although in each case the law had been broken only 10 prosecutions resulted. Privatisations now represent 9% of the value of shares on the stock exchange and as a sector out-performs the FT All Share Index.

### TORIES REWARD FOLLOWERS

The largesse bestowed upon their friends by the Tories extends to the heads of those companies privatized. In the year prior to privatisation chief executive salaries increased by 78% and since 1979 have increased by 250% in real terms. The fox-hunting Lord King of Wartnaby, the head of BA, had his salary increased by 116.6% to £385,791 whilst the salary of the head of British Gas, Sir Dennis Rooke, increased from £49,000 to £184,000. As an average, the salaries of chief executives double every ten years; in the case of those in charge of newly privatized industries they see their salaries tripled or quadrupled in that time. Average salaries for chief executives of privatized companies have increased from £47,400 to £164,300 and directors have seen their average annual remuneration increase from £33,000 to £90,000.

Although the government now admits it has been taken for a ride by City institutions in both fees charged and the advice it received, in setting share prices, no one should give it any sympathy. Those rewarded were its own supporters. Some of the fees earned, bear no relation to normal commissions. For example the City fees relating to the privatisation of British Gas amounted to £159 million which was 3% of the total raised. This is twice the percentage paid, on average, to estate agents. After 10 years the government has spent £120 million on advertising - all of which according to Colin Chapman in his book was "cynical and slanted".

### INTERNATIONAL SCENE

Privatization is now a billion dollar industry. British merchant banks, accountancy and law firms stand to make the biggest killing from their doubtful skills. The ac-



# THE WORLD



accountancy firm Price Waterhouse has formed a separate department of privatisation services to market itself world-wide.

Although Britain leads the field having raised almost £27 billion from privatisation, by the end of 1990, there is no continent which is not undergoing privatisation programmes.

Germany under Helmut Kohl is ready to begin its own programme. Carlos Menem in Argentina plans to sell-off 350 state companies whilst Australia, New Zealand and several South-East Asian countries are considering the sell-off of state assets. In Togo, recently the scene of bloody repression by the military government, ownership of 22 of its 72 state enterprises has been reduced. There have been privatisations in Thailand and Bangladesh. Japan recently sold off its national airline. Other countries caught by the bug are Turkey, Nigeria, Mexico, Pakistan, India, Malaysia, Tanzania, Angola, Benin, Congo, Mozambique and Cuba where Fidel Castro is now selling off council houses.

One sinister note is that the IMF and World Bank often insist on the implementation of such programmes before considering aid.

## SELLING THE FAMILY SILVER

Privatisation means that ordinary people are more at the mercy of the hyenas of the City of London, Tokyo and New York - the trusts and multinationals - who own our electricity companies and water works. These new owners are only interested in maximising their profits. Instead of the profits of British Telecom contributing to maintain our health service and schools its profits are lining the pockets of its international shareholders. One elderly Tory statesman described it as selling off the family silver but

a more accurate analogy would be putting the population of Britain in the work house.

The government has now squandered the money it received from the sales; something which has alarmed economic forecasters in the City who realise that the British government will have to go cap in hand to raise money to finance itself. In his budget speech Norman Lamont forecast that the public sector will go into deficit by £8 billion this coming year and then by £12 billion the year after.

The Tories have further plans to sell off part of the government's remaining stake in BT, from which they expect to raise £4 billion, and also British Coal, British Rail and the Post Office. In addition Major has asked Whitehall to draw up plans to privatise all local authority assets meanwhile services like school dinners and refuse collection are put out to tender on an increasing scale resulting in pay cuts and a constant decline in working conditions.

An offensive plan of struggle is needed to combat privatisation, the Labour leadership is not committed to reverse the trend.

Workers will have to demand re-nationalisation without compensation the money that the new owners would ask no government could afford and the sales of the century were in reality theft.

To stop all the shady dealing re-nationalisation will have to be carried out under the supervision of workers committees which have full access to business plans and the financial books.

**Donations to WOFPP can be made to  
WOFPP, Account 260643  
Bank Hapoalim, Branch 532  
3 Daniel Frisch St., Tel-Aviv.**

# THE WORLD IGNORES

The following details were taken from the March Newsletter of the Women's Organisation for Political Prisoners (WOFPP) in Tel Aviv which campaigns for the rights of political prisoners being held in Israeli jails and detention centres.

March 7th, Palestinian women demonstrated in Jerusalem to mark International Women's Day. Tear gas was thrown into a girls' school yard. Following the demonstration nine women were detained. Seven of them were minors, the youngest was 14 years old. All were released after six days.

Doah Kasham, sixteen, was beaten on her head with a club by the Border Police while she was in the transport van.

On March 17th Rana Mansour, from Acre, was arrested because her home was decorated with Palestinian symbols and on March 25th Raoufi Shawish, from Tamra in the Galilee, was arrested for wearing a pendant with the design of the map of Palestine.

In Ashkelton Detention Centre political prisoners were being held with drug addicts suffering from withdrawal. This was stopped after a campaign initiated by WOFPP. In Hasharon Prison most political prisoners Prisonare have not seen their families since the beginning of the Gulf War because travel restrictions on Palestinians means that those whose families live in the West Bank or Gaza cannot visit and thus have no means of knowing what has happened to their relatives living there. Minors are kept separated from adults which means that not only do they not see their parents regularly but they are also denied the restricted counsel and support of the older women. Nadia Mahamid whose thyroid gland has been removed is still denied the dosage of medication prescribed.

Faiza el-Aasi is suspected of stabbing and injuring a settler on March 11th. While escaping she was shot by soldiers. Upon being arrested she was beaten. After interrogation she was returned to hospital because of the severity of her wounds. On March 13th the military sealed her family's house and ordered its demolition.

Amal Qadbna, a released prisoner, was attacked by an officer on February 23rd. He called out her out of her home and knocked her down with his jeep. Later when she and her mother tried to stop the officer from attacking Amal's 14 year old brother (who had just been released from hospital) the tear gas grenades were thrown at them. The officer kicked Amal's head and baged the ground. Amal was taken to hospital.

(continued from front page)

Kurds by Hussein troops in 1991, as they  
conquered at the destruction of 4,000 Kurdish  
villages and the killing of 5,000 Kurds.

19... certain stages of the war, Bush could  
encourage a Kurdish revolt against Saddam  
Hussein. It was a propaganda gesture. The  
war was the product, of American imperial-  
ism. It could never have a stable foundation  
in the Arab world. Saddam Hussein was  
more prepared than a Kurdish success.  
Victory for the Kurds could have had the  
result of inspiring the Kurdish struggle in  
Turkey and Syria and undermining Ameri-  
ca's authoritarian Turkish ally. The New  
York Times of April 12th summed it all up in  
an editorial:

*"The allied campaign against Mr. Hussein  
brought the United States and its Arab coa-  
lition partners to a strikingly unanimous  
view: Whatever the sins of the Iraqi leader,  
he offered the West and the region a better  
hope for his country's stability than did those  
who have suffered his repression."*

Douglas Hurd expressed Britain's posi-  
tion on 8th March in a letter to Sir Thomas  
Arnold MP: *"The frontier between Turkey  
and Iraq was laid down by the 5th June 1926  
treaty between the UK, Iraq and Turkey.  
There can be no question of our pursuing or  
seeking support for the establishment of an  
independent Kurdish state within these fron-  
tiers."* (Briefing May 1991). Briefing also  
reported that units of the Turkish army, pro-  
tected by helicopters, crossed the Iraqi bor-  
der at Uludere and attacked the camps of the  
PKP (Kurdish Workers Party).

A great number of television viewers have  
realised in the past few weeks, that the mas-  
sive destruction of "Desert Storm" was not

# WAIT IN VAIN FOR PROMISED SOCIAL CAD!

reluctantly unleashed to protect freedom and  
the rights of small nations. With its murder-  
ous and ecological consequences it was a war  
for oil, and business profits, foreign domina-  
tion of the Middle East and - as a bonus, for  
the military planners - a test of modern means  
of obliteration. Further, it was meant to be a  
warning to the countries of the world, includ-  
ing the Soviet Union, of what powers Ameri-  
can imperialism could assemble.

The labour movements and the great anti-  
war movement which was developing in the  
Gulf War, must rally to the aid of the Kurds.

All those who want to assist the Kurds,  
must demand *the opening of all frontiers!  
Take the suffering Kurds into Europe and  
the USA! Give their children, their wounded  
and sick, hospitalisation and treatment.*  
There were organisations set up for the  
wounded that were expected in the Gulf war.  
Transport was arranged, hospitals were to be  
opened. Those facilities should now be placed  
at the disposal of treatment of the thou-  
sands of Kurdish men women and children  
who are suffering and dying from wounds  
and starvation.

The British labour leaders, instead of  
mouthing general sympathy should demand  
practical help for the Kurdish victims of this  
war. (We have no doubt that the same resist-  
ance will have to be overcome, as was met by  
those who demanded that Britain and America

opened their doors to Jewish victims of the  
Nazis before the Second World War).

Any real assistance which the Kurds re-  
ceive will only come if it is forced out of the  
imperialist governments and even then these  
governments will seek to pursue their own  
aims which will keep the Kurds shackled.  
We are, therefore, opposed to any enclave set  
up in Iraq and policed by imperialist troops.  
For Major and Thatcher this proposition had  
more to do with the Tory Government's  
election prospects than any genuine desire to  
aid the Kurds. The Kurdish people have not  
wanted such enclaves, those who accept them  
do so because the alternative is to die on the  
mountains, but are fearful that these enclaves  
will become like the Palestinian camps, or  
that the imperialist governments will later  
leave the people in them to the mercy of  
Hussein.

We have no confidence whatsoever in the  
imperialist governments to defend the rights  
of small nations. Quite the contrary, every  
advance to national freedom has been made  
in struggle against them. All real supporters  
of the rights of small nations and particu-  
larly, the rights of Kurds and Palestinians to  
have their homeland, must fight for the with-  
drawal of all Coalition troops from the Mid-  
dle East. Any enclave would be a trap for the  
Kurds.

And the greatest humanitarian task is to  
assist the Kurdish people to obtain freedom  
to develop their own culture and nationhood.  
Their struggle continues in Iraq. Kurdish  
fighters have brought their people to the  
borders and gone back into the mountains to  
continue the struggle. We must find all  
means to assist with arms, equipment and  
political support in our country to develop  
working class support internationally for this  
struggle for national freedom.

## BRAZIL OUT ON BAIL DROP ALL CHARGES NOW

The State authorities in Sao Paulo,  
shaken by the national and international  
campaign, have released, on bail, the two  
councillors who are still facing trial which  
could lead to a long prison sentence.

There is a wide campaign in Latin America  
and in Europe against the vicious police and  
State attack on these two councillors. They  
are innocent and as many fighters against  
legal injustice in Britain know, through their  
own experience, that until the charges against  
the accused are dropped unconditionally they  
remain in great danger.

Romildo Raposo and Manuel Boni, two  
city councillors for Diadema (an industrial  
district of Sao Paulo) were arrested last De-

cember for helping the homeless of Sao Paulo.  
They have been charged with inciting vio-  
lence against the police when police forceably  
ejected 300 previously homeless families  
from an empty piece of land on which they  
had made homes. The police's action was so  
violent that two people were killed, more  
than 100 were injured and, the last news we  
had was that 8 were missing

Councillors, anti-Poll Tax activists and  
union branches in Britain have condemned  
the action of the state in Sao Paulo.

In Spain solidarity messages have been  
sent from the trade unions of the CGT, UGT,  
the students union, the assembly of women  
of Bilbao and parliamentary representatives

of the political wing of ETA (Basque)

In Latin America, support has come from  
Colombia, Venezuela, Paraguay, Panama.  
A huge list of supporters includes parliamen-  
tary figures, many trade unions of workers  
and peasants and human rights organisa-  
tions.

The campaign should now be intensified in  
Britain to force the State to drop all charges  
against the councillors and we ask all mes-  
sages of support be sent to:

Forum de Comarca de Diadema  
Juiz 1a. Vara Criminal  
Avenida 7 de Setembro 2740  
Diadema - Sao Paulo  
Brazil