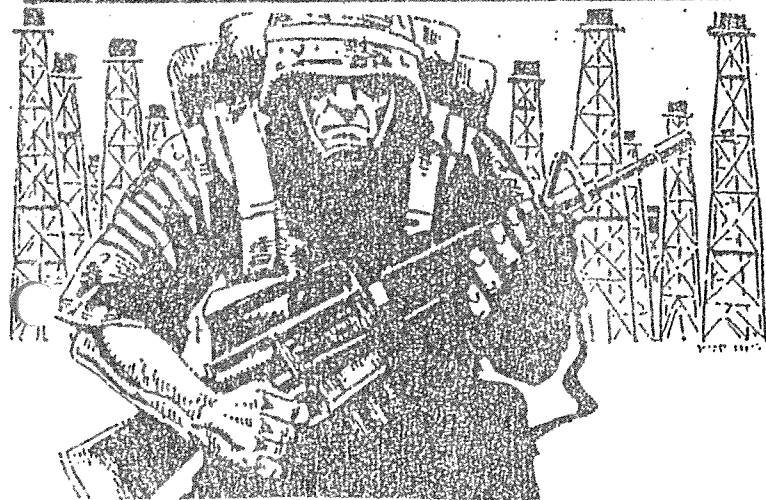


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NO WAR

As each day goes by the crisis in the Gulf gets worse. As each day goes by the language used gets stronger. Talk becomes action. Sanctions and blockades are enforced. Thousands starve in desert camps. Hostages are taken. Resisters are hanged. Children die.

Each side is stirring up feelings. They are preparing their populations for the shooting war that is to come. For us, one thing is clear: Whatever either side says, This war is not worth one drop of workers' blood. It is a bosses' war - being prepared to fight for bosses' interests.

WHY WAR?

Iraq is broke. The Iran war left it \$80 billion+ in debt. The population is prone to strikes, the army mutinies. Iraq owed Kuwait billions. What better way to solve its problems than to invade its major creditor? Even better to gain control of 20% of the world's oil!

The U.S. and the West depend on imported oil. They are on the edge of an economic recession and are terrified of another oil crisis. This war gives them the chance to gain long sought after bases in the Gulf.

The interests of both sides are the same - safeguarding profits, defending capital. These are the bosses' interests.

SO WHO LOSES?

Who will die if there is war? Thousands of Kuwaiti workers and poor immigrant workers caught in the crossfire. Thousands of Iraqi and Saudi workers in their homes. Thousands of young workers either conscripted into armies or forced in to find a job. Saddam, Bush, Thatcher, the Emirs will all be safe and well.

Workers will lose here and in the Gulf. Our interests are the same here as in Iraq. Higher wages, better living conditions, the end of oppression.

We say, down with both sides. Intensify the class struggle here and in Iraq. Push forward with pay claims, fight the Poll Tax, sabotage the war drive.

BUT CLASS WAR



'our arthur'

2

or 'ourselves'?

Faced with a barrage of attacks on Arthur Scargill by the government, coal bosses and the media, the left has been rallying to his defence. Everyone from the Labour Party left through the S.W.P. to 'Class War' has been furiously campaigning on his behalf. So why are we less than enthusiastic about joining in on either side?

UNION BOSSES

There is no doubt that Scargill is a thorn in the side of the bosses' attempts to re-structure the coal industry along with the Unions and the Labour Party. He is an "old style" Union boss but a Union boss none-the-less!

ILLUSIONS

It is an illusion that Scargill represents militant, class conscious self-organisation, but an illusion held by many bosses and workers alike.

Defence of the Unions is NOT the same any more as defence of working class interests. In fact as the economic crisis gets worse, the Unions' role in dividing workers, containing class struggle and generally managing wage-labour on behalf of the bosses and the state becomes more prominent.

All the current debates are about how best they can do this, and what degree of independence the Unions should have in carrying out this role.

RHETORIC AND REALITY

We must not be fooled by the rhetoric of Union bosses.

There are many situations where they need to sound very militant in order to contain struggles.

The present disputes on the North Sea oil rigs is an example of this and the last big miners' strike was exactly the same.

FOLLOWING SCARGILL TO DEFEAT

Scargill didn't start the strikes then, but he sought to put himself at the head and to maintain himself as the 'man in charge', best able to mediate with the bosses and the state.

The need at the time was to deepen and EXTEND the struggle beyond the mines, on the basis of common demands, to other workers. In



addition miners needed to take full control of the struggle themselves. Scargill did much to stop this happening in practice.

Firstly, he presented the strike as in defence of the 'Plan for Coal', itself a recipe for job losses and productivity hikes. He insisted throughout the early part of the strike at least, that miners could "go it alone". Solidarity was to be limited to financial assistance and token strikes and demonstrations.

All his clever manipulation of accounts to avoid sequestration may have stopped money going to the state, but it also stopped it getting into the hands of local pickets and solidarity groups.

Much is made of Scargill's support (through the I.M.O.) of international class struggle but this ignores his support for the state capitalist regimes of Eastern Europe against the workers there.

SCARGILL'S OBJECTIVES AND OURS

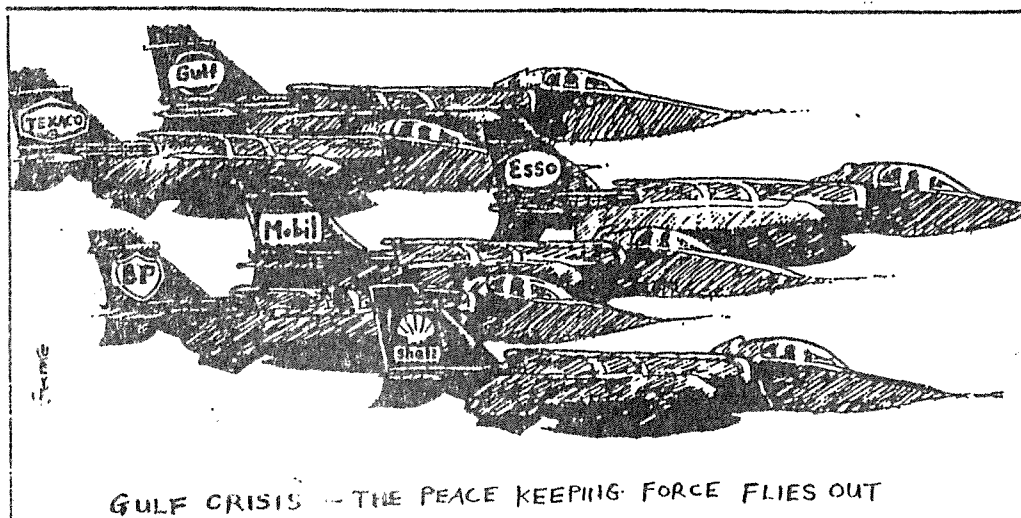
Scargill may be against the Tories, but he is for a state capitalist system in which the Unions would play an even bigger role in managing industry and the exploitation of our class.

There is no reason why we cannot refute the lies of the media about the N.U.M. and their underlying attacks on working class solidarity, without getting sucked into support for left wing Union bosses and their false solutions to our problems!

FOR OURSELVES NOT FOR ARTHUR!

Gang Warfare in the Gulf

OIL WARS



GULF CRISIS — THE PEACE KEEPING FORCE FLIES OUT

THERE ARE TWO GULFS currently looming before the working class. One is the geographical gulf which threatens to be the centre of an immense killing ground, whose dry sands will drink the blood of vast numbers of working class people sent, as ever, to die in the name of an illusion. The other is the great gulf between reality and the aforementioned illusion, or illusions, for the gangsters who rule the world, and fight among themselves like vampires vying over our blood, our sweat, our life-energy present us with a choice.

Firstly, there is the view which emanates from America and its allies, which requires us to believe that the forces they have sent to the Gulf are the upholders of civilization and righteousness against one who has suddenly revealed himself as a shameless outlaw, a new Hitler who must be stopped in the name of all that is right and proper.

Secondly, the view which keeps its siren song into the ears of many Arab workers, to the effect that Saddam Hussein is leading a glorious war of resurgence of the Arab Nation against Western Imperialism, after whose defeat everything will be just fine.

And thirdly, the Leftist echo of the previous view, which holds that Imperialism is far more iniquitous than plain ordinary capitalism and anyone who, in the hallucinations of the Leftists, is fighting against it

should be supported, and anyway, all "nations" have a "right" to "self-determination". The above views all have variations, adding to the richness of our choice.

GANGSTERS FALL OUT

The reality is that ALL the participants in this conflict are a vile bunch of thieves and gangsters who have fallen out over the spoils of their exploitation of us, the working class. The notion that we who are the victims of these Al Capones, these Legs Diamonds, these Corleones writ large who are the rulers of the nations of the world should take sides with any of them is the very pinnacle of idiocy.

These gangsters, however, as we have already intimated, are skilled in the construction of fantastic tapestries of illusion which they substitute for reality in the minds of all of us who have not yet learned to see them for what they are. But the ghostly fingers that tugged at us in a darkened room stand revealed as filthy cobwebs once the light is switched on.

THE REALITY BEHIND THE SPECTACLE

Let us look in more detail at these lies. It is not, perhaps, necessary to spend too much time on the Western view (shared also by what was the Eastern Bloc, now). The foul hypocrisy of those who staunchly

supported Saddam Hussein and his regime for years and scarcely blinked at the latter's genocide in Halabja, for instance, only "discovering" Hitlerian tendencies when the growing world economic crisis threw former friends at each other's throats in the scramble for a dwindling "take", will be starkly obvious to those who have seen through right-wing capitalist lies. But capitalism has more than one string to its bow - the left-wing of capitalism even pretends not to be capitalism.

We will discuss the lies of the nationalist third-world bourgeoisie and those of the Leftists together for, as we have said, the latter are merely the junior partners of the former in most things.

IMPERIALISM OR CAPITALISM?

A whole plethora of governments, movements and grouplets, from the Iraqi government to the most radical of the Trotskyist sects, implores us to "oppose Imperialism" and support Iraq, (although some of them are more coy about that latter part). What then is Imperialism? This is a word which has been defined in many ways, but its main use, for the champions of the Third World, is simply this: If you don't want to oppose capitalism as a whole, if you want to distinguish between "good" capitalists and "bad" capitalists and only oppose the latter, you need some other term under which to group together the people you are opposing. Hence, the larger, dominant powers who are the major block to the aggrandizement of the weaker capitalist powers, are called "Imperialists" and the said weaker capitalist powers are alleged to be "fighting Imperialism" when conflict occurs.

This "anti-Imperialism" will usually incorporate an economic analysis of the world as it was nearly a hundred years ago, as though nothing has changed. It was at that time that the Leftists created this "theory of anti-Imperialism" which survives even today.

THE OPPORTUNIST THEORY OF ANTI-IMPERIALISM

These Leftists were groups such as the Bolsheviks, whose political programs, despite any radical phraseology they might contain,



consisted in constructing State-Capitalism. Their target areas were the relatively advanced industrial countries, and the adversaries which stood in their path were the existing rulers of those countries, rulers who also had other enemies. One such enemy was the emerging nationalisms which were starting to flex their muscles in what were then mainly colonies. Thus, the Leftist concept of "anti-Imperialism" arose as an opportunist attempt at alliance between various weak capitalist forces against a stronger one.

THE "RIGHT" OF "NATIONS" TO "SELF-DETERMINATION"

This is a concept the Leftists always take refuge in if all else fails. But what does it really mean? A "nation" is an involuntary union of antagonistic classes - the capitalist class and the working class - the former exploiting and oppressing the latter. The idea that they are single unit with a single will, a single interest, the idea that they are a single "self" which can have "self-determination", is surely the cleverest fraud that the capitalists have ever devised to make workers forget their own class interests and support the class which oppresses them.

Some Leftists will even admit that nationalism doesn't benefit workers but say they have a "right" even if you don't agree with it. Perhaps we should then spend time and energy advocating the "right" of workers to demand longer hours and lower wages? We can treat this "brilliant concept" with the contempt it deserves.



The face of capitalism's future...

A REVOLUTIONARY ANTI-IMPERIALISM

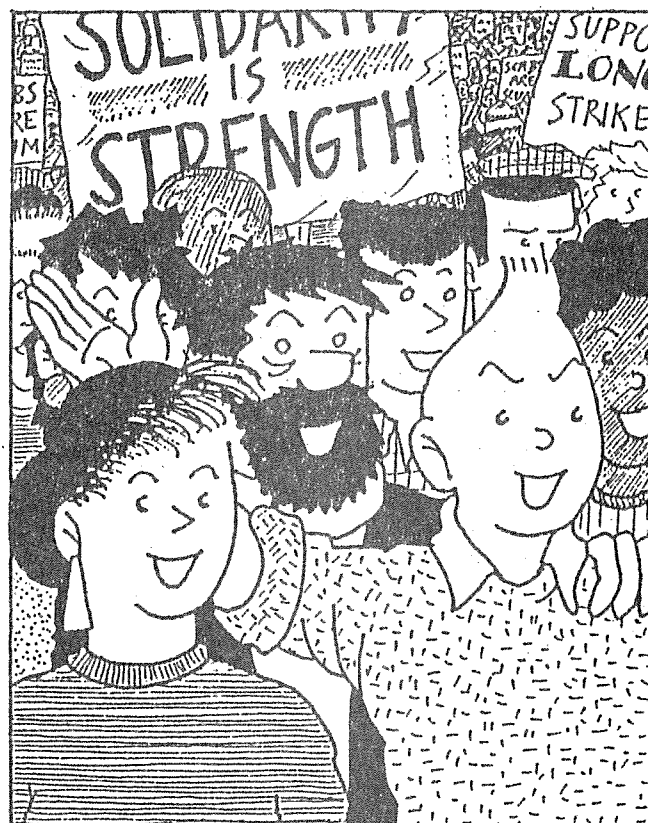
Is there, then, such a thing as Imperialism? Can the working class make use of such a term? This is a very moot point, but we can say that Imperialism, if it means anything real, is simply the inevitable conflict for resources and markets that capitalist powers must engage in when the world has reached a certain stage of historical development. The weaker powers' attempts to resist domination by the stronger ones is aimed at replacing them as dominant powers, not in "defeating Imperialism". The weaker powers are part of what today is an integrated capitalist world - they do thus not stand outside

Imperialism but are part of it. Their conflict with the major powers is no more "anti-Imperialist" than the challenge which a young stag mounts against the leader of the herd is aimed at eliminating the system of hierarchy which the nature of such animals entails. Thus all countries in the world are Imperialist. The term anti-Imperialism is therefore meaningless if used for anything but anti-capitalism

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST CAPITALISM

The working class has no interest whatsoever in aiding any of the factions within the class that is its enemy. Our class must resolutely oppose all the world's states, all the parties, movements and groups which represent one form or other of

capitalism. For all the squabbling that takes place between them, they are all heads of the same hydra. The interest of workers throughout the world lies in overthrowing capitalism and creating a classless society without national boundaries, without wage labour, markets and money, where Humanity produces for its own needs, based on free and equal access for all. Such a society is possible. The struggle to achieve it starts now. Oppose war, in the Gulf or anywhere, intensify class struggle, no war but the class war.



Sale of the century Cul-de-sac economy



SHATALIN

Why Perestroika will FAIL

Last year, a wave of popular revolutions swept across Eastern Europe, consigning bankrupt communism to the dustbin of history, and ushering in a new age of liberal democracy and free market economics. Or so the ruling class would have us believe...

In fact, communism has not failed in Eastern Europe - it was never established there (or anywhere else). As revolutionaries have long argued, the type of society which developed in the Soviet Union after 1917, and which was then imposed militarily on the rest of Eastern Europe at the end of the Second World War, was not communism but state capitalism. **

The idea that the changes taking place in Eastern Europe have been instigated by 'popular revolutions' is also a myth. It's true that mass demonstrations did play a role in giving the final push to the most fossilised Stalinist regimes. But the initiative for political and economic reform originated with the rulers of Eastern Europe, who have also (until now) kept a firm grip on the pace and direction of these reforms.

PERESTROIKA

The economic restructuring ("perestroika") which the rulers in Eastern Europe are seeking to carry out aims to devolve a large degree of responsibility for economic decision-making, away from the central state planning ministries, to the level of the individual enterprises, which are to be transferred to private ownership.

Under the "500 Days" plan drawn up by Stanislav Shatalin for economic reform in the Soviet Union, the state will continue to supply enterprises and place orders for

their products. However, the price of these raw materials and finished products will no longer be determined by bureaucratic decree, but through negotiation between the enterprises and the state. Moreover, if the enterprise managers can strike a better deal with alternative suppliers and customers, they will be free to do so.

By loosening the straitjacket of centralised planning and introducing such elements of market choice and competition, the reformers in Eastern Europe hope to provoke a more efficient - in other words, profitable - use of resources. Not least amongst these resources is labour power: economic reform is a means to an end, and this end is ultimately to screw more surplus value out of the working class.

So what are their chances of success? Here the golden future which ruling class commentators say lies ahead for Eastern Europeans begins to look more than a little tarnished.

POPULAR CAPITALISM?

An obvious problem lies in finding investors to buy the enterprises which the

Another day and another queue for bread in Moscow



** For a fuller explanation of this view, see the Subversion discussion paper Capitalism and Class Struggle in the USSR, available from our group address for

THE WAY WE LIVE

11

'If anyone attempts to hoard tobacco they will be torn to bits'

Fag-end economy leads to near-riots

FLASHBACK: To issue no. 12 of Moscow News.

18 months of misery face Soviet smokers

SEVENTY MILLION Soviets are in a race because they can't have a smoke and the right rumour might just cause an explosion. But the country's cigarette crisis was seen coming two years ago and will not be ended until the middle of next month when cigarette factory workers return from their long summer holidays. Meanwhile the smoke has spread far and wide.

That's the gloomy prediction of factory

various states plan to sell off.

The ideology of 'popular capitalism' which has featured in the sale of nationalised industries in Britain is unlikely to catch on in Eastern Europe. In the Soviet Union 45 million people (16% of the population) subsist on or below the official poverty-level income of 80 roubles/month. They won't be rushing out to buy shares when they can barely afford to buy bread.

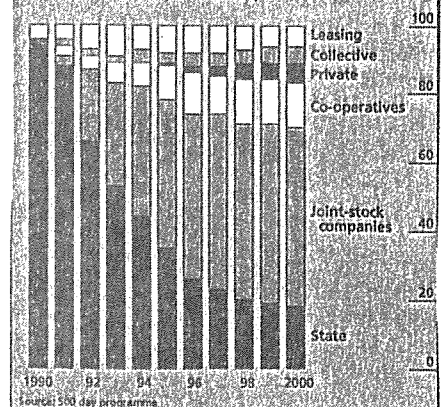
The value of the state assets to be sold off under the Shatalin Plan amounts to something like 2000 billion roubles. If all wage-earners in the Soviet Union were to purchase equal shares in these enterprises they would have to invest on average 1400 roubles each. As the average monthly wage is 230 roubles, this amounts to six months' pay. Clearly, 'popular capitalism', Soviet-style, won't come cheap.

The large amounts of savings which workers in Eastern Europe are reputed to have stashed away (because there has never been enough consumer goods for them to spend their wages on) are seen by some reformers as a potential source of funds for investment in the privatisation of state-owned enterprises. But Eastern European workers are far more likely to hang on to their savings, as security against an uncertain future. This is what happened in East Germany, where justified fears of unemployment upset the widespread predictions of a spending spree after German monetary union on 1st July.

It seems probable, therefore, that ownership of state enterprises will pass either into the hands of wealthy state bureaucrats (who will become the formal owners of capital which to all intents and purposes they already own anyway); or else into the hands of foreign capitalist investors. But many obstacles stand in the way of the latter possibility.

The Shatalin manifesto

Forecast of industry ownership, %



FOREIGN INVESTMENT

When the Berlin Wall was breached in November 1989, the West German stock markets boomed at the prospect of the profits to be reaped from investment in East Germany. But the closer West German capitalists have looked at what's actually on offer, the faster this initial enthusiasm has waned.

An agency called the Treuhandanstalt is in charge of drawing up balance sheets and valuing the assets of East Germany's 8000 state enterprises, before deciding which can be sold and which will have to be shut down. So far the Treuhandanstalt has found it very hard to attract any buyers.

West German chemicals firms researching the potential for investment in what was reputed to be one of the most successful sectors of the East German economy discovered low productivity rates, decrepit factories using



Off to the market

pre-1930s technology, and massive problems with pollution. The only firm offer received by the Treuhandanstalt was from the West German company BASF, which offered to take over a polyurethane plant - but only if it was handed over free and guarantees were issued against any costs arising from past pollution.

Few Western companies seem keen to act as pioneers in the field of East European investment. Until the necessary capitalist infrastructure is set up - tax regimes, contract law, capital markets, environmental and safety regulations, employment law, property rights and so on - investment in Eastern Europe presents a far more risky prospect for the capitalists than investment in southern Europe, S.E. Asia or Latin America.

Significantly, Japanese capital, with its reputation for keeping one jump ahead of its rivals by investing today in areas which will be hugely profitable in 10 or 20 years' time, has so far promised no large-scale investment in Eastern Europe.

In any case, any foreign capital which is invested is more likely to have a destructive effect than an invigorating one on the domestic enterprises of Eastern Europe. A third or more of all East German enterprises are likely to be forced out of business by their inability to sell their products in competition with the better quality and more prestigious goods pouring in from the West.

A similar swathe is likely to be cut through other East European economies the moment they open themselves up to the full blast of foreign competition. One bureaucrat in the Soviet Union has predicted that "about half of Soviet enterprises could not survive in a market economy" (Vladimir Scherbakov, chairman of the State Committee for Labour and Social Affairs, in the Guardian 29.8.1990).

THE COST TO THE WEST

The cost of economic restructuring in Eastern Europe is likely to place a heavy burden on the increasingly shaky economies of Western Europe and the USA.

The West German state is currently pouring billions of DeutschMarks into East Germany to pay for unemployment and other welfare benefits. It's now thought that this will cost DM 100 billion (= £30 billion) per annum for the next few years. Where this money will come from is far from certain. In September the West German Finance Ministry had to abandon an attempt to raise DM 3 billion by auctioning Unity Bonds when all the bids it received were too low.

By the end of August the Treuhandanstalt had underwritten DM 10.2 billion in loans from West German banks to East German enterprises, which have to carry on buying raw materials, paying wage bills and meeting other overheads until their fate is decided by the Treuhandanstalt. Now the banks have been told they must lend the money at their own risk. They are unlikely to welcome this suggestion, since until an enterprise's assets have been valued its creditors have no guarantee of its ability to repay loans.

There is a strong possibility that the extent of the borrowing swallowed up by East Germany will force a rise in West German interest rates (the cost of borrowing money). This in turn would send shock waves through other West European economies - at a time when economic forecasts are already predicting deepening recession.

Nevertheless, the rulers in Eastern Europe remain desperate for Western economic aid, and will go to almost any lengths to obtain it - witness Gorbachev's concessions to Bush at the Helsinki summit over America's role in the Gulf Crisis, in exchange for promises of U.S. aid for the ailing Soviet economy.

COMECON

Imminent changes within the trading organisation COMECON will present another problem for the economies of Eastern Europe. Until now trade has been centrally planned, involving mainly raw materials from the Soviet Union being bartered for finished goods from the rest of Eastern Europe. From 1st January 1991, however, all trade among East European states will take place on a hard currency basis.

The higher the Gulf Crisis pushes up the price of oil, the worse it becomes for the East European states which from 1st January will have to pay the full world market rate for oil from the Soviet Union. The loss of the guaranteed markets organised by COMECON will also hit East European states which currently send anything from 20 to 65% of their total exports to the Soviet Union. Enterprises in these countries will have to find new customers - or else face going out of business.

What has been described as an "economic civil war" has already started to break out among the COMECON partners. Hungarian enterprises have demanded DM 500 million from East Germany as compensation for the cancellation of contracts for goods which East German enterprises say they will now obtain from West Germany. And West Germany will have to pay anything from DM 3 to 6 billion by the end of this year alone to

guarantee the Soviet Union delivery of goods it usually obtained from East Germany.

This situation is also likely to be mirrored soon within the Soviet Union itself, when it breaks up into a much looser federation of independent Republics, each with control over the economic resources within its own boundaries.

THE CLASS STRUGGLE

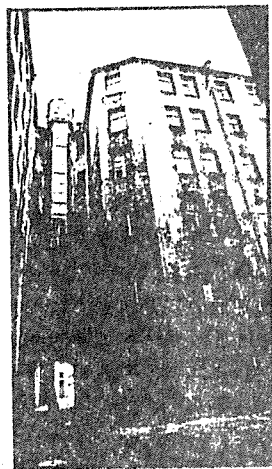
By far the greatest problem facing the ruling class in Eastern Europe, however, is the response of the working class, since the main effects of economic restructuring in the short term are clearly going to be massive increases both in the prices of basic goods and in unemployment.

In Poland the annual inflation rate last year reached 800%. In Czechoslovakia the withdrawal of state subsidies in July immediately doubled the price of food. In East Germany the cost of rents and basic foodstuffs such as milk and bread doubled or tripled after monetary union with West Germany.

to 3 million (1 in 3 of the workforce). Forecasts of the likely impact of economic reform in the Soviet Union range from 35 million to 50 million unemployed.

Already some sections of the Eastern European working class have shown a willingness to struggle against these effects of economic reform. In Subversion no.3 we wrote about the East German workers' strikes in July against lay-offs and for higher wages. Since then, price rises and the threat of redundancies have provoked further strikes and demonstrations in East Germany.

Class struggle of this sort throws yet another spanner in the works of the ruling class's plans for reform. A working class on strike for higher wages, shorter working hours and assurances of no job losses does not present an attractive prospect for foreign capitalists, whose expectations of profits were based on keeping wages low and shedding 'unproductive' labour.



GRIM: The Leningrad tenements.

THE WAY WE LIVE

Riots in the streets of Leningrad

NIET CITY

NO vodka NO tobacco
NO petrol NO bread
NO new housing



HUNGER-STRIKE: Young journals want independence from Komsomol.

RIISING FAST: PREDICTIONS OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE SOVIET UNION

The chairman of the state committee for labour and social issues, Vladimir Shcherbakov, calculates that 35 million could be unemployed if the government adopts the shock therapy applied in Poland.

Earlier this year it was reported that eight million were unemployed, and Vladimir Shcherbakov, chairman of the State Committee for Labour and Social Affairs, has warned that introduction of a market economy could lift the total to 40 million.

THE GUARDIAN
29 August 1990

THE GUARDIAN
14 September 1990

THE SUNDAY CORRESPONDENT
16 September 1990

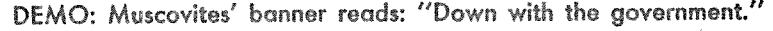
In Czechoslovakia, where there is supposed to be full employment at present, the start of the privatisation programme is expected to result in 5% unemployment just by the end of this year. In Poland an eventual total of 1.7 million unemployed (14% of the workforce) has been forecast. In East Germany, where unemployment totalled 140,000 at the end of June, initial predictions of the number of workers who will be made redundant have now been revised upwards from 2 million

conservative economist Alexei Sergeyev, a member of the Communist Party Central Committee, predicts up to 50 million unemployed, inflation of Latin American proportions - and eventually rioting by a frustrated working class.

THE FUTURE

Time is running out for the rulers in Eastern Europe. So far, there is nothing to show for all the talk about perestroika. Meanwhile, the economic crisis had gone from bad to worse. The more critical the economic situation becomes, the more likely it is that the ruling class will be panicked into taking drastic and ill-considered measures

continued on page 10



Massive class confrontations lie ahead in Eastern Europe. Although many pitfalls lie in the path of the class struggle there - such as nationalism, democracy and section- alism - it's highly unlikely that ruling class commentators in the West will be able to depict 1991 in quite the glowing terms they used to describe 1989.

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WHAT WE STAND FOR

'Subversion' is a small group of revolutionaries based in the north of England. We meet regularly for political discussion and to organise our activities, which include public meetings and the publication of this bulletin and other leaflets. The following is a brief summary of our basic political principles:

- We are against all forms of capitalism; private, state and self-managed.
- We are for communism, which is a classless society in which all goods are distributed according to needs and desires.
- We are actively opposed to all ideologies which divide the working class, such as religion, sexism and racism.
- We are against all expressions of nationalism, including "national liberation" movements such as the IRA.
- The working class (wage labourers, the unemployed, housewives, etc), is the revolutionary class; only its struggle can liberate humanity from scarcity, war and economic crisis.
- Trade unions are part of the capitalist system, selling our labour power to the bosses, and sabotaging our struggles. We support independent working class struggle, in all areas of life under capitalism, outside the control of the trade unions and all political parties.
- We totally oppose all capitalist parties, including the Labour Party and other organisations of the capitalist left. We are against participation in fronts with these organisations.
- We are against participation in parliamentary elections; we are for the smashing of the capitalist state by the working class and the establishment of organisations of working class power.
- We are against sectarianism, and support principled co-operation among revolutionaries.
- We exist to actively participate in escalating the class war towards communism.



The 'Subversion' group is currently participating in monthly discussion meetings organised under the auspices of the "Manchester Solidarity Group", along with members of Class War, the Anarchist-Communist Federation, the Anarchist Workers Group, and the Manchester Anarchists. The

topic at the next meeting, in November, will be the North Sea oil workers' disputes and the role of the Trade Unions. If you are interested in coming to these meetings, or want more information about 'Subversion', please write to us at our group address:

P.O. BOX 145
OLDHAM
OL4 4WW



PUBLICATIONS

CLASS WAR ON THE HOME FRONT

A pamphlet originally published by the now defunct Wildcat group. It details revolutionary working class opposition to the second world war. It takes the form of reprints from Solidarity, the journal of the Anti-Parliamentary Communist Federation, one of the few groups in Britain to consistently advocate and report class struggle against the war effort. Price £1.50 (inc p&p)

BEATING THE POLL TAX

Published by the Anarchist-Communist Federation. Price 70p (inc p&p)

NOTES ON THE CLASS STRUGGLE IN THE USSR

Published by Subversion. Details working class struggle against Soviet State Capitalism. Price 70p (inc p&p)

THE STATE AND CAPITAL IN JAPAN

Published by Subversion. Explains why Japanese capitalism isn't the triumph of free competition Thatcher claims it to be. Price £1.20 (inc p&p)

subversion!

po box 145
oldham
ol4 4ww

poll tax ~ class justice

The Phoney War is over. Throughout England and Wales councils are switching into top gear. Every week thousands of working class people are being taken to court to make them pay their Poll Tax.

Despite their claims, the Anti-Poll Tax Unions have notably failed to stop the courts from dealing with these cases. Why is this? It is because the courts are dealing with a class law and a class justice. It is the law and justice of our rulers. Class justice is being seen to be done.

CAN'T PAY? HARD LUCK.

The law is very clear. There is no defence against a summons to pay the Poll Tax. It doesn't matter if you can't afford it. It doesn't matter if you or your children will have to go without. It says that if you are over eighteen you have to pay.

NEW RULES FOR OLD

The Poll Tax Unions had hoped to clog up the courts. This hasn't happened. Whenever we have looked like coming anywhere near success, then they've changed the rules. Non-payers have been tried in groups, instead of individually. Defendants have been refused the right to have a MacKenzie's Friend (a helper in court). In Oldham they've held courts in reserve and then moved defendants if things looked like taking a long time. Magistrates routinely issue Liability Orders against people who've received incorrect summonses.

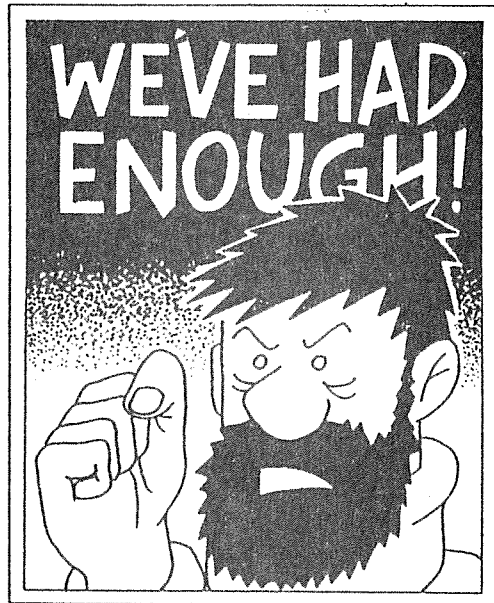
None of this should be surprising.

TIGHTEN YOUR BELTS

For years the ruling class has been telling us to tighten our belts. For years they've been trying to cut the services we get from local government. For years they've been trying to make us pay for their economic crisis. The Poll Tax does just this.

The Poll Tax means councils will have to close down services, run them on an even tighter shoestring or privatise them. For most of us it means a wage cut of hundreds of pounds a year. Instead of the bosses paying for services out of their profits we have to do so out of our wages.

For an economy as shaky as that of British capitalism a move like the Poll Tax is vital. Working people today 'pay' more of their income in taxation than they did eleven years ago - and were doing so before the Poll Tax came in. They want to stop us 'spending too much'. The Poll Tax is one way of doing this.



GOING TO COURT

It is important to go to court. Putting on a good show gives others encouragement. Going to court can be very intimidating, so attending can be a basic act of solidarity. The real battle is going to come afterwards. BAILIFFS INTIMIDATE NON-PAYERS

Already English councils are sending in bailiffs. In England, bailiffs have no

continued on page 10