

Enforcing Thatcher's poll tax, crawling to the City

Labour Party - the bosses' friend



Trafalgar Square, 31 March: cops rampage against defiant anti-poll tax protesters.

Paul Mattson



Matt Ford

When hundreds of thousands took to the streets in London and Glasgow to express their outrage over Thatcher's hated poll tax, they demonstrated in the face of official Labour Party opposition and condemnation. For several hours in London protesters faced down mounted police charges and baton-swinging riot cops, at times sending the boot boys running for safety. It was an explosion of outrage by overwhelmingly young workers and oppressed after ten years of Thatcherism and of betrayal by Labour and trade union misleaders.

The 3 May local elections, widely seen as a referendum on the poll tax, were a mandate for *nobody*. Rather than a positive expression of enthusiasm for anything, voters expressed their anger by balloting against those they held responsible for the poll tax. Reflecting widespread hatred of Thatcher's government, Labour claimed another 14 councils and a net gain of just over 300 seats. But in London—with a number of Labour-controlled boroughs that have set high poll tax rates—the swing to the Labour Party was only about half of what it was nationally. The Labour-loyal Socialist Workers Party provides part of the explanation in the 12 May issue of its newspaper:

"Anti-poll tax campaigners in Haringey found overwhelming opposition to the poll tax when they went around with petitions, but time and again found they had to argue hard to convince working class people it was worth voting."

With Kinnock & Co acting as the local

Workers need a revolutionary party!

enforcers of the tax and stabbing the struggles of Britain's poor and working people in the back, voting Labour is rightly seen by sections of the working class and militant youth as a dead-end.

Having done not as badly as they feared, the Thatcherites have apparently warded off the immediate extinction of their chief. But Thatcher's crowing is a bit premature: the 31 per cent the Tories received was their lowest share in any nationwide election since the 1920s. In an election wrap-up, the pro-Thatcher *Times* (5 May) noted that "The bleak truth is that...the Conservatives are at the lowest point they have ever been" and concluded: "The poll tax must go."

The British bourgeoisie is deeply dissatisfied with the economic performance of the government. The inflation rate spirals at virtual double figures, while interest rates (and mortgage rates) continue at high levels. With trade deficits at near record levels, this is not likely to change. And behind this lies the irreversible decline of British capitalism: the country that began the industrial revolution has increasingly become an industrial wasteland. All of this has put an enormous squeeze on those with fixed or

marginal incomes—pensioners, single mothers, the unemployed and youth. Income gaps between the rich and poor widen, the numbers of homeless mushroom. It was a section of this permanent underclass of British society that was particularly active in the streetfighting with the cops in Trafalgar Square.

And the fact remains that the collections of the deeply hated poll tax have just begun in England and Wales. Authorities are collecting on average between 20 and 30 per cent less poll tax than they

had expected, while the average "non-collection rate" in the 21 authorities capped for "overspending" is 50 per cent. Hundreds of council workers staged a one-day strike in Greenwich in support of 10 fellow workers suspended on 1 May for refusing to collect the poll tax. In Scotland, large chunks of the populace have not paid. Outpourings of residents have blocked attempts at warrant sales; utilising CB radios and fleets of cars and coaches, the anti-tax unions have now organised effective "scumbuster" units that can move rapidly to the scene of a "pounding".

The Thatcher government today is much weakened. The government—and Kinnock's—attempt to whip up a red-baiting frenzy against poll tax demonstrators largely flopped. Workers beat

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American black journalist
on death row

Save the life of
Mumia Abu-Jamal!

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Polish rail strike challenge to Solidarność "shock treatment"

As we go to press, *Workers Hammer* has learned that the railway strikers have suspended the strike. The article below stands as a powerful exposure of Solidarność—agent of vicious IMF austerity.

SZCZECIN, Poland, 26 May—This is the biggest and busiest port in Poland. But not for the last three days. The normally teeming railyards which take goods to and from the whole of northwestern Poland to the Central Port of Szczecin are shut down tight as a drum, as a wildcat railway strike centred on the town of Slupsk some 200 kilometres from here enters its second week. Now Gdynia, the second largest port, is also shut down.

This is the first serious working-class response to the Mazowiecki government's brutal capitalist austerity policies, which have lowered real wages by 40 per cent and produced mass unemployment in Poland for the first time in four decades. The biggest challenge yet to the Solidarność-led government's "shock treatment" is electrifying the country. And the

reverberations will be felt from the Tyumen oil fields and Kuzbass coal mines in Siberia to East German factories, as well as in the capitalist West.

The rail strike committees are independent of both Solidarność and the former official Stalinist OPZZ union federation. In the last few days, however, the OPZZ has come out in support of the strike. Meanwhile, Lech Walesa has condemned the strike on the radio, accusing "demagogic forces" of leading the country toward "civil war". Negotiations broke down yet again today, as labour minister Jacek Kuron, erstwhile darling of the Western left, hardlines it against any wage increase. Rail strikers stormed out of the meeting with Kuron in anger.

The main passenger station in Szczecin, the cargo yard, the harbour railyard and the two other stations in the city are all in the hands of occupying workers. Outside the entrances are signs reading "Occupation Strike" and pickets standing guard against possible provocations. The main station has been turned into a strike

headquarters for the city. All the doors are fastened shut with nails and wire, and barricaded from within with stacks of benches.

The former administration offices in the train station are now the offices of the strike committee. The internal telephone service has been turned into a communication network connecting the different striking railyards throughout the region. The secretaries and clerical staff continue to work, but now they are working for the strike committee.

Outside the train station there are vanloads of police as well as military trucks. The trucks are being used to transport civilian passengers in a dimly futile attempt to circumvent and break the strike. But the heavy military presence around the rail station serves as an ominous warning by the government of a full-scale military crackdown on the strike.

As a team of *Workers Vanguard* and *Spartakist* correspondents approached the main rail station this morning they were confronted by the sight of a mob of some 100 anti-strike agitators with banners reading "Let's Talk to the Rail Workers! We Support Mazowiecki!" This was the second day of these anti-strike mobilisations. A solid phalanx of 50 strikers with red and white armbands stood behind the bench barricades of the one remaining entrance to the train station patiently but firmly holding off the screaming rabble.

The strikebreakers claimed to be "outraged individual citizens", and the Warsaw government and the Western imperialist press has been clamouring that the strikers are isolated from the population. But as one striker put it in no uncertain terms, these "spontaneous" anti-strike demonstrations are "organised by Solidarność". What appears increasingly clear is that it is the Solidarność-led pro-capitalist government which is isolated from the population.

Solidarność appears to be generally reviled among the strikers, who pass around caricatures of Kuron. Some illusions in the early days of Solidarność still persist, however, and an outfit led by Marian Jurczyk called "Solidarność '80", which deems itself the "true Solidarność," claims to support the strike. Jurczyk was one of the most rabid anti-Communists at the founding congress of Solidarność in 1981. And from that point on the "true face" of Solidarność has been its programme for restoring untrammelled "free market" exploitation, which is today ravaging the Polish people.

The strike began with a hunger strike by some 50 rail workers in Slupsk on 10 May demanding an immediate 110 per cent pay raise to try to keep pace with the

deadly explosion of prices of all basic goods. The austerity programme literally means slow starvation for the mass of the Polish working people. There is food on the shelves of stores—indeed there are imported high-tech VCRs, TVs and stereos in the shop windows. But there are virtually no shoppers in the stores. Today even a kilogram of the cheapest sausage costs the equivalent of about two days' wages.

One 71-year-old woman who supports the strike bitterly explained how her 300,000 zloty (£20) a month old-age pension now barely covers the cost of buying bread and paying for her apartment. "[President] Jaruzelski and Walesa have enough," she said, but "poor old people are starving". With social services devastated by the austerity programme, it cost her more than two million zlotys—eight months of her pension—to bury her husband when he died recently. The imperialist press is trumpeting the nationwide local elections tomorrow as "Poland's first truly free vote since World War II", but virtually half the electorate is expected to stay away. As this woman said, "There is nobody to vote for."

The railway workers insist that theirs is not a political strike. After more than 40 years of Stalinism and the more recent shattering of illusions in Solidarność, politics may well be a dirty word to many Polish workers. But, as we write in a "Letter to Polish Workers" by the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany:

"To win against the forces arrayed against you, Polish workers will have to transcend purely economic demands. That requires not just a determination to fight, but a political understanding of what has happened and a political programme based on the true interests of the international working class...."

"Only the Trotskyists have a programme to combat capitalist counterrevolution and imperialist war, by returning to the authentic communism of Luxemburg and Lenin—the struggle for defence and extension of the gains of the October Revolution through socialist revolutions throughout the capitalist world. Forward to a Trotskyist party in Poland, section of a reborn Fourth International."

The drive toward capitalist restoration throughout Eastern Europe initiated by Solidarność will provoke explosions of working-class resistance. Already in the DDR [East Germany] in the past two weeks there have been protest warning strikes, including by strategically placed railway workers there. It is urgently necessary for workers everywhere, and particularly in the DDR, to support the Polish rail workers in their struggle against the pro-capitalist "shock treatment". Victory to the Polish rail strike! ■



TROTSKY

Trotsky on the bankruptcy of the Labour Party

The following work by Leon Trotsky on the perfidy of the Labour traitors and the necessity to build a revolutionary party to lead the working class of the British Isles, written in 1935, is particularly relevant today. Of Ramsay MacDonald, Trotsky noted: "when the collapse of the capitalist system and the sharpening of the class struggle made the revolutionary fight of the



LENIN

proletariat for power an actual and living question for Britain also, MacDonald left the Labour camp for that of the Conservative bourgeoisie with just as little bother as when a passenger changes from a smoking compartment to a non-smoking." With the possibility of a Labour government being returned to power, Trotsky warned against illusions in these labour lieutenants of capital.

...the Labour Party does not, indeed, aim at full power, for, as represented by its leaders, it has no wish to expropriate the bourgeoisie. Henderson, Lansbury and the others have nothing about them of the great social reformers; they are nothing else than small bourgeois conservatives. We have seen social democracy in power in Austria and Germany. In Britain we have twice beheld a so-called Labour Government.... In all these cases not one hair has fallen from the head of capitalism. A Henderson-Lansbury Government... would not dare to lay a finger on the property of the bourgeoisie, and would be doomed to try paltry reforms, which, while disappointing the workers, would irritate the bourgeoisie....

There is no way to salvation through capitalism. The coming into power of the Labour Party will have only this meaning for progress, that once more it will show—indefinitely clearer even than before—the bankruptcy of the methods and illusions of parliamentarianism amidst the crumbling ruins of the capitalist system. And so the absolute need for a new, a truly revolutionary party will stand forth clear-cut before our eyes. The British proletariat will enter upon a period of political crisis and theoretical criticism.... The teachings of Marx and Lenin for the first time will find the masses as their audience.

—From the Introduction to the Second English Edition of *Terrorism and Communism*, 10 January 1935 (*Trotsky's Writings on Britain*, vol 3)

WORKERS HAMMER



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For a Socialist United States of Europe!

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Noah Wolkenstein



Workers Vanguard

1955-1990

It is with shock and deep grief that we announce the death of our comrade Noah Wolkenstein. Noah served as production manager of *Workers Vanguard* and *Spartacist* and department head of the composition crew up until October 1988. He died on 23 April by his own hand. Noah was 34 years old, a member of the Bay Area Spartacist League and a full member of the SL/US Central Committee at the time of his death.

This tragedy touches every comrade and section of the International Communist League, in particular the comrades in New York who knew him in his painstaking and brilliant political work on the production side of our press, but also many comrades from other SL/US locals and ICL sections. During his years as *WV* comp chief Noah also took responsibility for setting up press production systems and training comrades in Britain, Canada, France and elsewhere. During February and March of this year, comrade Noah was in Germany to establish the basic technical framework for our press there. He accomplished this task with the determination which was characteristic of him.

Noah joined the party in 1975. His older sister Rachel was recruited in 1973, following a fusion between the Spartacist League and the Buffalo Marxist Caucus. Noah's older brother Seth joined the party in 1974.

Noah's parents, Gloria and Ed Wolkenstein, have reached out to us through their own grief to bear witness to the strength of Noah's communist convictions and the satisfaction he drew from his crucial work for our party during these fifteen years. Our hearts go out to his parents, his other sister, Naomi, and the other members of the family.

In deference to Noah's expressed wish that no memorials be held, private informal gatherings have been held for his comrades to remember him. He will be remembered always and best through our determination to carry forward the struggle for the communist ideals to which he devoted all his energy and intelligence during the too brief time we had together.

Poll tax...

(Continued from page 1)

back the attempt of Labour-controlled Hackney Council to fire *Class War* spokesman Andy Murphy. And after the miners strike, as well as such exposures as the Guildford Four frame-up, the cops don't have much credibility. As revealed in recent surveys by the *Independent*, wide sections of the populace despise and fear them. About the only person with a good word for the cops was Roy Hattersley, who after Trafalgar Square extended his "sympathy to all the police officers who have been injured". Hattersley got a warm welcome at the convention of the Police Federation, which had earlier given the cold shoulder to the Home Secretary Waddington.

The organised working class, well aware that the government's authority has been eroded, is not prone to solve the bosses' problems by taking pay cuts. In part, the capitalists are seeking to deal with high wage settlements by lengthening the dole queues. Thus, capitalist politicians have greeted as "good news" projections that unemployment would rise. The Confederation of British Industry has already forecast that 54,000 manufacturing jobs will be lost in the next three months; more than 30,000 miners in Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire, as well as steelworkers at Ravenscraig, face plant closings. Working people grimly remember the devastation wrought by mass joblessness at the beginning of the decade. In fact, most of the "new" jobs created since have been through the exploitation of particularly women workers in low-paying, part-time jobs.

Workers cannot win any substantial, lasting reforms on the basis of a clapped-out, devastated British capitalism. The unions must not only mobilise in strike action against the poll tax, linking up with millions of the oppressed, but now is the time for across-the-board class struggle: from action to maintain jobs and living standards, to the necessity of extending effective union organisation to such deathtraps as construction sites and North Sea oil rigs. Such a working-class offensive requires breaking the stranglehold of

the Labourite trade union bureaucracy, replacing it with a class-struggle leadership which will put on the agenda the only real solution: proletarian revolution and a socialist reconstruction of society.

Kinnock's Labour Party: "wet Tory blue"

The differences between a Kinnock and a Michael Heseltine are essentially trivial—a fact that underscores the right-wing character of the current Labour Party. The latest Labour policy review does not even mention the word "socialism". As even William Rees-Mogg put it: "The party's new policy is that of Conservatism with a human face" (*Independent*, 7 May). Indeed, the Labour Party borrowed its present slogan "Business where appropriate; government where necessary" from formulations devised by the West German Social Democrats in 1959 when they formally abandoned "Marxism". And Labour's framework for industrial law "will be even-handed between employers and trade unions"! An article in the *Sunday Times* (20 May) celebrating this "intellectual revolution", summarised:

"Commitment to the closed shop is abandoned. Secondary picketing, limited in size, will be permitted only where there is 'direct assistance' to the first employer. There will even be (shades of Edward Heath, circa 1971) an 'industrial court' presided over not by some ennobled union boss but—wait for it—by a 'senior High Court judge'."

Labour's shadow chancellor John Smith—fresh from a trip to Washington to win the approval of the Bush administration—has also been perfectly clear on what working people can expect from a Kinnock government. In an interview with the *Independent on Sunday* (6 May), Smith acknowledged that Labour had dropped even its formal commitment to full employment, claiming that unions could "price people out of jobs": "They can cause unemployment... they have to stand by the results of their own decisions." Pointing to the Labour tops' seemingly endless craving to "reassure those worried about the stubborn stains left by Militant and the miners' strike", one commentator noted that the Labour Party's appropriate colours were "wet

Tory blue" (*Guardian*, 25 May).

In the face of Kinnock's "pay the tax" line, even long-standing Labour politicians have bolted from the party: Dick Douglas, who now says he has no fundamental differences with the bourgeois nationalist SNP, resigned the chair of the Scottish group of Labour MPs in February 1988 over the poll tax and was expelled this year for standing in the regional election against the official Labour candidate. Lothian region Labour Councillor Keith Simpson, suspended from the Labour group because of his opposition to the poll tax, arrestments and warrant sales, ran as an Independent Labour-No Poll Tax candidate. Simpson did not break from Militant's perspective of seeking to "recapture the Labour Party for the working class". But these craven Labour loyalists nonetheless felt compelled to denounce the very notion of standing a candidate against Labour: "Militant supporters disagree with his decision to stand as an independent candidate" because "Labour is the force that will replace the Tories." These phoney "Marxists in the Labour Party" happily announced that Simpson "has also asked the Lothian Anti-Poll Tax Federation not to pass any resolutions supporting him" (*Militant*, 13 April), presumably so as not to embarrass Militant.

Shamelessly echoing the violence-baiting of the Kinnockites over Trafalgar Square, the Militant has nonetheless become the target for a renewed witchhunt by Kinnock. The Labour Party's national executive committee has branded the Anti-Poll Tax Federation a "Militant Front organisation" and warned its members "not to support the federation".

Life is hard for the loyal Labourite "left" these days—and not just for Militant. *Labour Briefing* (9-22 May) complains:

"The situation outside the Party is much livelier, with trade union disputes gaining massive public support and hundreds of thousands supporting the non-payment campaign against the Poll Tax... At best Labour fails to lead any fight against the Tories, at worst it acts as the Tories' second eleven, calling for 'exemplary sentences' for those arrested in Trafalgar Square. Faced with such difficult circumstances left activists are haemorrhaging from the Party."

Labour Briefing sums up its thankless task: "stem the flow of left activists out of the Party".

The necessity and opportunity to construct a communist *alternative* by splitting away the ranks from the pro-capitalist tops of the Labour Party is starkly clear. It is obvious that a substantial layer of youth and workers do not look to Kinnock and the Labour Party for leadership. The British fake left, however, is intent on roping militants and channelling social struggle back into the Labour Party fold. In the run-up to the next general election, groups like Militant and the SWP will campaign—even against the stream of their more left-wing supporters—to put Kinnock into No 10 Downing St.

The attitude towards Kinnock's Labour Party is certainly an acid test for those who claim to provide revolutionary leadership. Events in the USSR and Eastern Europe have also thrown the British "left" in disarray. The (congenitally Labour-tailing) Stalinists are discombobulated—the CPGB has announced that *Seven Days* is ceasing publication, the *Morning Star* is in a perpetual funding crisis, and it is certainly not a profitable period for would-be supporters of Stalinist hardliners like Eric Honnecker. At the same time the fake Trotskyist groups who have refused to defend the gains of the October Revolution are today exposed by the treacherous consequences of their positions—including supporting Lech Walesa in Poland and assorted Baltic counter-revolutionaries. Social and political ferment combined with the bankruptcy of the social-democratic, Stalinist and centrist programmes necessitates the forging of the nucleus of a Leninist vanguard party through *revolutionary regroupment*: splits and fusions of political forces that today are primarily outside and to the left of the Labour Party.

From the miners strike to the massive resistance against the poll tax, the working people of these isles have shown their will to fight. It is long overdue to assemble the forces that can lead the inevitable class battles to come, and smash this racist, rotting system through victorious workers revolution. Down with the Labour traitors—forge a Bolshevik party! ■

SWP: Kinnock's loyal opposition

Afghanistan, Poland, Eastern Europe: Cliffites front for counterrevolution

After spending much of the eighties peddling its "downturn" theory rationalising demoralisation and defeat and despairing of the possibility of struggle, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) has reacted to the possibilities and opportunities evident today. *Socialist Worker* has been reporting scores joining the SWP every week. But what sort of organisation are they joining? The SWP offers plenty of platitudes about "revolution not reform", "independent working-class action" and the like, but it's what you do—not just what you say—that counts in politics. Put aside the revolutionary and militant rhetoric and we have an organisation whose programme is steeped in pro-imperialist social democratic reformism and anti-communist hostility to the Soviet Union.

With Thatcher's rule distinctly shaky and the poll tax the focus of widespread unrest, the SWP wants to pose as the militant alternative to the Labour Party. Many people hate Thatcher and a lot of them don't like Ramsay MacKinnock's Labour Party much either. The Labour Party today is so right-wing that you deserve a prize if you can figure out the difference between its policies and, for example, a Tory party under a Michael Heseltine. Some 200,000 people marched in London in defiance of the Labour/TUC tops, while wide layers of working people and oppressed are justly outraged at the enforcement of the poll tax by Labour councils. The present circumstances provide an excellent opportunity to forge a Leninist vanguard party, by splitting the working-class base from the pro-capitalist tops of the Labour Party. But the SWP has no alternative to Labourism. As it advised before the May council elections: "Everyone with a chance to vote on Thursday should vote Labour" (*Socialist Worker*, 28 April).

Similarly in the 1987 general elections, the SWP turned itself into an electoral machine for the wretched Kinnock, whose main claim to fame was his open scabherding against the heroic 1984-85 miners strike. At the Marxism '87 conference Tony Cliff crowed: "this time we were clear, we were unequivocal—vote Labour!" Then as now the SWP vows "we will have to be prepared to fight Labour tomorrow", but in practice "tomorrow" means "never". Voting for the Labour Party today is not any kind of "Leninist tactic" but a loyalty oath to an openly right-wing party out to prove its credentials to the imperialists and City bankers. Years ago the SWP ran candidates against the Labour Party, albeit on a reformist programme. But nowadays its support to Labour is as regular as clockwork—or the Militant tendency. The SWP's grotesque capitulation to Kinnock and its refusal to project any kind of counterposition to Labour represents *de facto* liquidation of the class interests of the proletariat into social democracy, shoring up prevailing illusions that Labour is a "party of the whole class".

The SWP's claim to "oppose the parliamentary road" to socialism is so much hot air. Its interventions into the class struggle never transcend trade union economism. Thus in the 1980 steel strike and the 1984-85 miners strike—not to mention the 1979 "winter of discontent"



Washington, DC, 4 December 1986: SL/US protest against visit by Thatcher's poodle Kinnock.

under Callaghan's Labour government—the Cliffites pointedly refused to call for a general strike. In practice, revolutionary struggle that challenges the capitalist order is *never* on the agenda for the SWP. Alternating between militant reformism and parliamentary cretinism, the SWP mimics the division of labour between the trade union bureaucracy and LP tops.

The Russian question

Touch the "Russian question" and you touch the question of revolution. "State capitalism" is but a flimsy revisionist rationale to flee the duties of defending anti-capitalist revolutions. As Cliff himself said: "And I say no, no, we have nothing to do with bloody Russia, because it is not a source of strength" (*Leveller*, September 1979). There is nothing new about Tony Cliff's state capitalism "theory" either now or in the forties when he "saw the light". Kautsky "discovered" in 1919 that the USSR was "state capitalist" ruled by a "new class of bureaucrats" when he joined the imperialist hue and cry against the October Revolution.

Tony Cliff broke from Trotskyism when faced with the revolutionary obligation to defend the North Korean and Chinese deformed workers states against the imperialist invasion. (Later the SWP came to support the NLF/DRV in Vietnam though there was no qualitative difference in the character of these struggles, only a difference in the state of petty-bourgeois "radical" opinion.) In Poland the SWP embraced the CIA and Vatican's favourite "union" Solidarność *holus bolus* before and after its counter-revolutionary bid for power in 1981. Now the SWP has got what it wanted, a Solidarność government, bent on implementing IMF Pinochet-style shock treatment. Today Polish workers are moving into struggle against this very government for which the likes of the SWP helped pave the way. Similarly the SWP mirrored the imperialist outcry for "Soviet troops out of Afghanistan". Paul Foot even tried to outdo Thatcher with his *Daily Mirror*

"exposés" asking "Are we putting beef into Russia's invasion?" The SWP supported the drug-peddling CIA cut-throats who enslave women and skin teachers alive for teaching little girls how to read and write against the Red Army which had the possibility of bringing social progress and the gains that the people of Soviet Central Asia enjoy. *Socialist Worker* (4 February 1989) enthused that "Mojahedin victory will encourage the opponents of Russian rule everywhere in the USSR and Eastern Europe". George Bush or Margaret Thatcher could not have put it better.

The October Revolution and the revolutionary workers state that issued from it was proletarian internationalist, attracting among others, Jews, Latvian Riflemen, and Central Asian muslim women to its banner. Six decades of Stalinist oppression and parasitism have caused many national minorities to look upon the Soviet Union as a present-day version of the tsarist "prison house of peoples". The imperialists' dream of inciting reactionary

nationalist movements is being given flesh in the form of Ukrainian fascists, Georgian monarchists, Baltic collaborators with Hitler's Nazis and anti-Semitic tsar-loving Great Russian chauvinists like Pamyat.

In dealing with the national question Lenin and Trotsky applied class criteria, for example against the social-democratic prattle over "poor little Georgia". The SWP projects a replay of 1848—against the "Russian empire". To read *Socialist Worker* you would think that there was no aggressive imperialist intervention, no counterrevolutionaries, just a nice "democratic" struggle that needs deepening. Their account of the Red Army's intervention in the Transcaucasus talks only of "bloody massacre" and "open brutality" by the Soviet army as if the communalist bloodletting and pogroms of the various nationalists do not exist. However even Tony Cliff is forced to take note of the "shocking picture of people carrying the banners of the Tsar on the 7 November demonstrations" and the Ukrainian nationalists who "carried the blue and white banners of Petlura, a Ukrainian nationalist who killed 150,000 Jews in 1919" (*Socialist Worker Review*, December 1989). But the SWP have been indiscriminate and enthusiastic supporters of every movement against the Stalinist bureaucracy, no matter how reactionary the banners they have marched under!

In Lithuania the nationalist and anti-communist Sajudis movement is driving the Baltic republic headlong down the road of counterrevolution. It is the conscious vanguard of capitalist restoration, identifying with the reactionary anti-Semitic interwar regime and targeting both the gains of October and the non-Balt minorities. The SWP argues that socialists must support the Lithuanian nationalist movement, and laments the "vacillations" of its leaders. These aspirant capitalist rulers, replete with their own self-proclaimed replica of "Iron Lady" Thatcher, are even told "They should appeal to workers to take over their factories and offices" (*Socialist Worker*, 24 March).

In the thirties, Leon Trotsky analysed

continued on page 8

SWP called for victory of CIA's mujahedin cut-throats in Afghanistan.



Germany right turn, Baltic quick march

Workers Power to Thatcher: hands on Lithuania

Nationalist resurgence in the Baltic states has set the stage for a bloody civil war in which capitalist counterrevolution disguises itself as a struggle for "national liberation and self-determination". Their appetites whetted by Gorbachev's policy of perestroika—encouraging market forces and private enterprise—bourgeois nationalist movements in this relatively prosperous region of the USSR have openly set course for restoring capitalism under the slogan of complete independence from the Soviet Union. The Estonian and Latvian People's Fronts and the Lithuanian Sajudis seek to resurrect the reactionary "independent" bourgeois republics of the interwar years, vassal statelets of German and British imperialism noted for repression of Communists and Jews.

When the Lithuanian parliament, dominated by the pro-capitalist Sajudis nationalists, declared its "independence" from the USSR the Soviets deployed armed forces to the Lithuanian capital and cut off oil supplies. Grown accustomed to Gorbachev's handing over of East Europe on a plate, the Western imperialists were disappointed when the Soviet tanks rumbled into Vilnius. However, Washington and the other NATO powers have not supported Lithuanian "independence" for fear of provoking a harder line in Moscow and perhaps undermining Gorbachev, Western imperialism's favourite Kremlin ruler since Tsar Nicholas II.

Sajudis leader Vytautas Landsbergis accused the Western powers of having "sold us out". With the Soviet blockade in force, the Sajudis dispatched Lithuanian Prime Minister Kazimiera Prunskiene (who boasts that she is "known as the Lithuanian Mrs Thatcher") to the Western capitals. While another Lithuanian minister stayed in North America to argue for emergency oil supplies from the US and Canada, Prunskiene met with Thatcher in London. Thatcher agreed to "intervene personally" and Prunskiene announced that Thatcher would "not be standing on the sidelines" (*Guardian*, 10 May). Shortly thereafter Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd followed suit with threats of sanctions against the Soviet Union.

Workers Power and "Poor little Lithuania"

In the face of this unambiguous threat of counterrevolutionary "rollback" inside the western borders of the Soviet Union, the rightward-turning centrists of Workers Power have not simply embraced the call for Lithuanian independence. The May issue of *Workers Power* carries an article titled "Hands Off Lithuania". They are not talking about Thatcher's hands or those of the other imperialist powers; on the contrary they decry insufficient imperialist support for Lithuania's "struggle" to break the blockade. While writing that: "The Western governments are not allies—they would only use intervention to further their own end of restoring capitalism in the Baltics", Work-



Workers Hammer

Workers Power in the Third Camp: shoulder-to-shoulder with *Socialist Organiser* in anti-communist "picket" calling for "Hands off Baltic States" at Soviet consulate, London, 16 May; (below) of one mind with anti-Soviet Cliffites over Lithuania.



ers Power demands Western intervention! "Hands Off Lithuania" declares: "We should demand that the British government recognises Lithuania and supplies goods requested by Lithuania without conditions. Workers throughout Europe should refuse to handle goods from the USSR which were destined for Lithuania but have been redirected." This is an outright appeal to British imperialism to aid counterrevolution in the Baltics.

Workers Power waxes eloquent over "the right of the Lithuanian people to determine their own destiny". It is difficult to conceive of a more odious call than one directed to British imperialism in the name of anybody's "national self-determination" anywhere. Peoples across the globe—in Africa, in India, in Ireland—oppressed by decades of colonial rule justly do not see in British imperialism the champion of the struggle for national liberation.

After the 1917 Russian Revolution, British imperialism played the pre-eminent role among the imperialist powers in attempting to crush the new-born Soviet workers state in the Wars of Intervention. While the peasant masses flocked to the red banner of Bolshevism, the bourgeois and landlord classes of the region launched themselves on the road of separatism as a means of combating the

revolution. The soviet governments of the Baltic republics were drowned in blood by German and Polish troops. (The Sajudis seldom mention that Vilnius was from 1920 to 1939 known as Wilno and was part of Poland; the Lithuanian land-owning gentry considered themselves part of the Polish aristocracy.) German forces in the East, especially after the 11 November 1918 Armistice, were crucial to "freedom" for the bourgeois and landlord classes of the region. The bourgeois republics set up in place of the soviets were from the outset creatures of German and British imperialism, living under the protecting guns of the British fleet. These are the days of "freedom" invoked by the Baltic nationalists.

Today, the move towards secession in Lithuania has nothing to do with democratic aspirations. Three of the Sajudis members elected to the secessionist parliament were known anti-Soviet terrorists in the late 1940s-early '50s. The "declaration of independence" was pushed through in a mood of nationalist hysteria and the Lithuanian nationalists have gone out of their way to insult other Soviet peoples: for example, destroying monuments commemorating the Red Army's liberation of Lithuania from Nazi German occupation (see "Moscow tries to thwart Lithuanian secessionists", *Workers Hammer* no 113, March/April 1990).

Prior to their treacherous call on British imperialism to liberate the "captive nation" Lithuania, Workers Power had been waffling on the question of secession. In September, *Workers Power* simply asserted "we oppose calls for independence in the sense of secession from the Soviet Union". We noted at the time that in so doing Workers Power mimicked Stalin's opposition to any national secession from the USSR. Simultaneously, Workers Power capitulated to some of the worst nationalist excrescences of the Baltic movements, including supporting the anti-democratic demand for "recognition of non-Russian languages as official languages" (*Workers Power*, September 1989). Since 1944, Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian have been used in their respective republics' governments, schools, media along with Russian. The demand of the nationalists that their languages be made the sole "official" languages of the republics relegates millions of Russian, Byelorussian, Ukrainian, Polish and other inhabitants to second-class citizenship. The largely proletarian Russian-speaking population has resisted this, mainly through the "Internationalist Movement". Workers Power dismissed the mass protest strikes organised by Inter-Movement, slandering them as "KGB-organised".

continued on page 10

American black journalist on death row

Save the life of Mumia Abu-Jamal!



no credit

In solitary confinement in Pennsylvania's Huntingdon state prison, Mumia Abu-Jamal awaits the electric chair. He is a death row political prisoner today because he has defied the racist, capitalist order. A former Black Panther Party spokesman, outspoken MOVE supporter and a journalist called "the voice of the voiceless" for his championing the rights of the oppressed, Jamal has

been in the cross-hairs of Philadelphia's racist killer cops for 21 years. Because he is a militant, still resisting the racist system which is trying to kill him, the state is readying the legal lynch rope for Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Jamal's history reflects that of a generation of black militants from the civil rights movement through the Reagan years. At the age of 13, Jamal was first beaten and arrested for protesting a rally for Alabama governor George "Segregation Forever" Wallace, held in the white racist bastion of Mayor Frank Rizzo's South Philadelphia. At 14, Jamal was co-founder and Minister of Information of the Philadelphia chapter of the Black Panther Party; as he recalled, this experience "charged my pen with a distinctive anti-authoritarian, and anti-establishment character that survives to this day".

A widely acclaimed journalist since 1970, Jamal broadcast on national radio networks, interviewing Julius Erving, Bob Marley, Puerto Rican independence fighters and others, and was elected president of the Philadelphia chapter of the Association of Black Journalists in 1980. Jamal is a well-known supporter of the Philadelphia MOVE organisation, itself

the target of a murderous vendetta unleashed by Rizzo's cops. In 1978 Jamal covered Rizzo's campaign against MOVE, including the siege of the Powelton Village MOVE home by more than 600 heavily armed cops. In 1985 this vendetta culminated in Mayor Wilson Goode's hideous bombing of MOVE—aided and abetted by the federal government—which left eleven, including five children, dead.

On 5 November 1988 in Philadelphia, a labour/black anti-Klan rally triumphantly occupied Independence Mall, site of a threatened skinhead/Klan march. The Partisan Defence Committee's work in building the "Stop the KKK!" mobilisation led to a massive outpouring of opposition to the race-terrorists from trade union members, civil rights activists, community groups and others, which successfully stopped the KKK/skinheads from daring to appear. Mumia Abu-Jamal sent a taped message to the rally in his hometown: "It's time folk de-hood the Klan and take a close look at what's beneath," he said, describing "the Klan's primary role and function: to use racial hatred to divide the many peoples who make up this country so that the few, the ruling class, can more easily exploit the

many". "Around the Klan demonstration no doubt stand the squadron of cops whose sole assignment is to protect the Klan if they were to appear", Jamal continued; "It is fitting that one agency of the state, the cops, are assigned to protect another agent, the Klan. For make no mistake, the KKK serves the interests of the ruling class who must divide to rule.... Far more deadly racists sit in black robes, send blacks, Hispanics and poor into prisons where the state plays slavemaster."

On 9 December 1981 the cops tried to kill Mumia Abu-Jamal in the streets, but failed. He was hospitalised with a bleeding stomach wound, arrested and framed up on charges of killing a cop. At this trial he was denied counsel of his own choice—the court refused Jamal's request to have MOVE leader John Africa as his defence counsel. To get a hanging jury, the court permitted the seating of a white juror who admitted he could not be impartial, while excluding eleven prospective black jurors simply on the prosecution's request. The judge denied Jamal's request to have the arresting cop called as a witness. That cop's report indicated that Jamal had made no statement; this

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United-front protest demands:

Free Ramona Africa, MOVE prisoners and Mumia Abu-Jamal!

LONDON—On Thursday, 10 May, some thirty protesters gathered outside the American Embassy in Grosvenor Square to demand: Free Ramona Africa! Free all MOVE prisoners! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Jamal must not die! The united-front picket was called by the Partisan Defence Committee (PDC) and the Ramona Africa Support Group. Protesters came from a number of political groupings, including supporters of the black nationalist *Black Voice*, the Aboriginal Solidarity Group and the Trotskyists of the Spartacist League.

The demonstration was called to coincide with the fifth anniversary of the massacre of the black MOVE commune in Philadelphia on 13 May 1985. On that day, eleven black people, including five children, died in the fiery inferno and an entire black neighbourhood was turned to smouldering ash. Black Democratic Party mayor Wilson Goode gave the order and Ronald Reagan's FBI supplied the C-4 explosives. It was the signature of the Reagan years.

Ramona Africa, the sole adult survivor of the massacre, remains to this day imprisoned for no other "crime" than that she *did* survive. Mumia Abu-Jamal, former Black Panther Party spokesman

and outspoken MOVE supporter today fights for his life from death row, maliciously framed for the 1981 killing of a Philadelphia cop.

A spokesman for the Ramona Africa Support Group addressed the protest, detailing the cold, calculated murder of MOVE by the Philadelphia city administration: "After announcing that 'Attention MOVE: this is America' they launched an hours-long assault using an incredible arsenal of weapons..." He stressed the importance of continuing to campaign internationally for Ramona Africa's release. The PDC spokesman pointed out that Chuck Africa, Delbert Africa, Phil and Eddie Africa languish in the prisons of racist, capitalist America today, victims of a police siege in 1978. He also noted the case of Geronimo Pratt, America's foremost class-war prisoner. Framed for a murder he could not have committed, former Black Panther leader Pratt has been held in prison for 20 years because he will not yield his political beliefs. And the PDC speaker underlined the urgency of Mumia Abu-Jamal's case:

"Jamal today is in great danger! He sits on death row.... The Supreme Court in Pennsylvania denied his petition to be able to reargue his appeal. We're here



Workers Hammer

today to raise a voice against the man's jailing, against the death penalty that threatens his life. We say: Mumia Abu-Jamal must not die!"

In Britain the death penalty remains on the books for treason. But Margaret Thatcher and prominent government ministers like Nicholas Ridley have made no secret of their desire to bring back the hangman. The working-class movement in this country, in taking up the defence of Jamal, can also resist attempts to restore capital punishment. Who can doubt where victims of racist frame-ups like the Birmingham Six, Guildford Four or Broadwater Farm Three would be today if the death penalty existed? And even without

the provision for "legal" state murder, Cynthia Jarrett, Clinton McCurbin, the three IRA members shot to death in Gibraltar by SAS gunmen are all victims of murderous state repression.

Spartacist chants on the picket also attacked the racist, pro-capitalist policies of the Labour Party, including its preparation of the infamous Nationalities Act. Racist terror, repression and injustice are part and parcel of the capitalist system, which must be smashed through victorious workers revolution. All the protesters on 10 May joined militantly in chanting: "Same enemy, same fight! Workers of the world unite!" ■

Dundee: anti-fascist protest stops race-hate provocation

GLASGOW— More than 500 anti-fascist militants mobilised outside Dundee railway station on Saturday, 12 May to stop the fascist scum of the British National Party from holding a "rally" against the IRA. Trade unionists, students and leftists came from all over Scotland to send these race-hate terrorists packing. While one group of fascists were put straight back on the next train home by waiting cops, others got nearer the reception they deserved. As anti-fascist demonstrators waited for news of the fascists' whereabouts, a minibus full of the BNP scum was spotted, and surrounded by outraged protesters. As the fascists made a hurried getaway, cops moved in and arrested demonstrators, all of whom were later charged. According to the *Observer Scotland* (20 May) police engaged in racist insult and taunting against two black men arrested during the anti-fascist protest. *Drop all charges against anti-fascist militants now!*

When BNP fuhrer Tyndall arrived by taxi at the Jimmy Shand pub outside Dundee, he was met by another smaller group of anti-fascist militants. Staff at the pub, expecting a meeting organised by a bookclub, called the cops. Tyndall, escorted by skinhead bodyguards carrying Union Jack flags on metal-spiked poles, retreated to a car park to spout his race-hate filth.

While the fascists, reportedly engaged in a "recruitment drive" in Scotland, were stopped from marching in Dundee, there is no room for complacency. The myths that Scotland has "no racism", or that fascism is an "English problem" are cruel jokes for the victims of fascist terror in Scotland's towns and cities. Last year a young Somali student, Ahmed Shekh, was knifed to death in a hideous racist murder near Edinburgh's city centre. Self-confessed fascist Terence Reilly was caught on the spot, with a knife in his hand and blood on his shirt. However, Reilly was later cleared of murder and attempted murder, by an all-white jury, in

a courtroom where fascist types openly threatened friends of Ahmed Shekh. As we noted, "This obscene spectacle of racist 'justice' gives the green light for the fascists to carry out their murderous attacks" (*Workers Hammer*, July/August 1989). Racist and fascist provocations have been escalating in Scotland—including a recent Ku Klux Klan cross burning in Edinburgh.

It is only the power of the working class, in alliance with the intended victims of fascist terror, that can stop these murderers in their tracks. The International Communist League has a proud history of fighting against fascist terror. Our American comrades have organised major labour/black mobilisations to stop the KKK and fascist/skinheads in major cities across the United States. More recently in East Berlin, we initiated the call for a mass mobilisation to protest the fascist desecration of the Soviet war memorial at Treptower Park. The call was taken up by the SED-PDS, and 250,000 anti-fascists assembled at Treptower Park to say "No Nazis in East Germany".

Militant and Socialist Workers Party (SWP) supporters were prominent at the Dundee mobilisation. This is certainly an improvement on characteristic recent practice by both these groups. Late last year the Militant tendency was meeting with fascist organisers to try and set up an "open debate". This deadly policy was a response to youth on a Glasgow housing estate, who wanted to run the BNP off the streets. As we said: "It is ABC for Marxists that fascists are not a debating society. Their genocidal programme means terror in action: their stock-in-trade is the firebomb, the knife, the gun, the lynch rope" (*Workers Hammer*, November/December 1989). But polite discussions with fascists fall within the logic of Militant's parliamentary cretinism. Trying to round up votes for Kinnock's Labour Party, as its leadership "violence"-baits anti-poll tax protesters just as



Workers Hammer

Spartacist contingent at combative Dundee anti-fascist rally, 12 May.

it did the miners pickets, does not fit easily with determined action against the fascists.

As for the SWP, it has spent recent years counselling its own members to turn the other cheek to fascist activity. The dire consequences of this policy are not hard to find. In January several members of the SWP were attacked outside their own public meeting in Glasgow. The attack was fought off, but not without one SWP supporter being taken to hospital and requiring 13 stitches. This murderous attack was not publicised and even SWP members in Glasgow were seemingly unaware that it had happened. There was no outcry from the SWP, no attempt to alert and mobilise the working class movement. It was business as usual at subsequent SWP meetings. This kind of passivity in the face of deadly attack can only embolden the fascists to act again!

Neither the *Militant* nor the SWP has any perspective for the mobilisation of the organised workers movement to crush the fascists. Thus spirited demonstrations like that in Dundee could be left as isolated actions by a minority of committed activists. Spartacist supporters at the Dundee action carried placards calling for "Union/Minority mobilisations to stop the fascists!", "Smash Tory/Labour racist immigration laws!", and "Avenge the murder of Ahmed Shekh! Smash fascist terror!" The necessary working class-centred fight to combat the fascist threat is inextricably linked with a political fight against the political stranglehold of the Labour/TUC misleaders. The threat of barbaric reaction will only be decisively defeated when the fascists' capitalist masters, along with their system of wage slavery and racism, are overthrown through victorious workers revolution. ■

was crucial in refuting an alleged confession the other cops claimed Jamal gave while almost bleeding to death from his stomach wound.

Jamal presented a defence of 15 character witnesses. He exposed inconsistencies in the state's case, which he described as: "A parade of street hustlers and whores strutted on the witness stand, one to say she saw a 'short' man, of roughly 200 lbs. shoot the victim (I am 6 ft, 1; and was about 170 lbs. at the time)... a white cab driver described the shooter as a man wearin an 'Afro'; (and I've worn long locks for several years prior to 1981)." To bolster its frame-up against Jamal, the prosecution slandered one of his character witnesses, renowned poet and Temple University professor, Sonia Sanchez, as a "friend of cop killers".

At the 1982 sentencing hearing, the prosecutor argued that Jamal be condemned to death simply for his political history and beliefs, claiming that Abu-Jamal's prior membership in the Black Panther Party and a 12-year-old quotation that "political power grows out of the barrel of a gun" proved he was a committed cop-killer! The prosecution claimed Jamal would get "appeal after appeal after appeal", trying to hoodwink the jury

into thinking that the death sentence would never be carried out. Yet Jamal's petition to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court to reargue his appeal was denied on 1 February—the second time in less than a year that court has turned down his legal challenge to the racist witchhunt which has condemned him to die.

A petition for review to the US Supreme Court has been filed. Last year Pennsylvania State Representative David Richardson declared: "Mumia's trial was a farce.... It was clear to anyone whose eyes are open to racism, that Mumia had been framed for his political beliefs.... An innocent man has been sentenced to die."

The case of Mumia Abu-Jamal is what the death penalty is about. It exposes not only the barbarity and arbitrary cruelty of this ultimate form of state terror, but the inherent racism in its application. As Jamal wrote: "The death penalty in America is a symbol, a ritual, a relic of a time of total dominance, of one people, by another. Therein lies its attractiveness in the U.S., and in the apartheid regime in South Africa" (see *Workers Hammer* no 110, October 1989). In both countries, capital punishment is the legacy of racial subjugation, which denied to whole peo-

ple fundamental human rights, reducing man to a beast of burden and the disposable property of his master.

The Partisan Defense Committee in the US, along with sister organisations internationally, has undertaken a massive campaign to save Jamal's life. The PDC is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defence organisation which champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people. This purpose is in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League.

The urgency of the fight to save the life of Mumia Abu-Jamal, and the over 2,200 prisoners on death row throughout the US, was underlined on 5 March when the US Supreme Court announced new grounds for denying federal appeals in many death row cases. Now the states are gearing up their killing machines again. In California, which has 273 prisoners on death row, protest has (for now) blocked the first execution there since 1967.

Thousands around the world have signed petitions demanding Jamal not be executed. In Britain, the Partisan Defence Committee has been actively building support for Jamal and pointing out that reintroduction of capital punishment here will mean legal murder of blacks, Asians,

Irish republicans and working-class militants. Labour MP for Leith Ron Brown has added his name to those demanding that Jamal not be executed; the *Caribbean Times* has covered the case extensively. On 10 May the PDC joined with the Ramona Africa Support Group in picketing the US embassy in London, demanding freedom for Ramona Africa, the MOVE prisoners and Mumia Abu-Jamal (see accompanying article).

The Partisan Defense Committee in the US has called for an international week of united-front protests during the first week of July to demand: "Save Mumia Abu-Jamal!" "Abolish the Death Penalty!" The PDC seeks to bring the force of the organised working class, minorities, death penalty abolitionists, human rights organisations into the struggle to save Jamal's life. International protest can powerfully aid this struggle and that of all class-war prisoners. The fight to save Jamal is the fight against racist state murder around the world. We urge our readers to give their wholehearted support to building the international week of protest (see ad p 8). Mumia Abu-Jamal must not die!

—Adapted and updated from *Women and Revolution* no 37, Spring 1990

(Continued from page 4)

both the social conditions which led to the rise of Stalinism and the instabilities and contradictions inherent in the rule of this bureaucratic caste which is simultaneously dependent on the collectivised property forms of the workers state and reflects and acts as a transmission mechanism for the pressures of imperialism in undermining the workers state. Trotsky foresaw that this balancing act was inherently unstable and that the contradiction must be resolved either in the direction of capitalist restoration or by proletarian political revolution against the bureaucracy to restore internationalist soviet democracy. Trotsky's last political fight (documented in *In Defense of Marxism*) was against those kindred spirits of Tony Cliff, the Shachtman-Burnham opposition in the American SWP, who sought to attack this position and abandon the duty of defence of the Soviet Union against imperialism and counter-revolution. The crisis in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, with the bureaucratic caste fragmenting and disintegrating in a manner in which no historical class would, confirms Trotsky's analysis. Gorbachev's perestroika, which undermines the centralised planned economy, along with his grotesque appeasement of imperialism, opens the doors to the dangers of capitalist restoration.

The International Communist League and our comrades of the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany (SpAD) have intervened energetically in what began as a political revolution in East Germany. We addressed ourselves to the working masses who hated Stalinism but sought to defend the gains of the planned economy against the growing dangers of imperialist revanchism. We called for the rule of workers councils throughout Germany; for strikes and factory occupations to stop capitalist takeovers of the factories. Placing no confidence in the disintegrating Stalinist bureaucracy to smash fascist terror, we called for the formation of workers militias and demanded full citizenship rights for foreign workers. SpAD members distributed solidarity greetings to Soviet soldiers and officers in an effort to bring Trotskyist politics and the programme of political revolution to these troops in the DDR—370,000 of whom stand as the front line of defence against NATO. The SED/PDS bureaucrats, following Gorbachev's cue, endorsed capitalist reunification. In the March elections only our comrades of the Spartakist Workers Party unambiguously opposed this counterrevolutionary perspective. Today the SpAD continues the struggle to root a Leninist egalitarian party in the working class.

The intervention of the SpAD and the ICL was in marked contrast to that of the fake left, for the most part standing on the sidelines, while politically tailing the reactionary drive of Kohl and the SPD lackeys of German imperialism. Here too the SWP ends up in the camp of counter-



3 January: 250,000 strong anti-fascist mobilisation, Treptow Park, East Berlin. News not fit to print in *Socialist Worker*.

revolution, though not without some confusion in its ranks. The SWP's German cothinkers in the Sozialistische Arbeitergruppe (SAG) saw the East German uprisings as one against "capitalist" exploitation and it is little wonder that it has attracted a number of skinheads, the loathsome SA-type expression of German nationalism and imperialist revanchism. But maybe the SAG is a little more attuned to the reality of what capitalist reunification will mean to the working people of East Germany for they put forward the slogan "No to a Fourth Reich!". Some contributors to *Socialist Worker Review* agonise about unification "on Kohl's terms" and "we are not in favour of a stronger capitalist Germany" (*SWR*, December 1989).

But if there is no class difference between the two states and nothing worth defending in the DDR, what can the objection be to the reunification, except as a reflection of rival imperialist and nationalist fears of a strong Germany? The bottom line for the SWP is that "if the majority of East German workers decide they want unity with West Germany, then socialists should not oppose them" (*Socialist Worker*, 24 February). After the elections, in an echo of Thaelmann's "after Hitler, us", *Socialist Worker* blithely intoned "Nevertheless, Kohl's election victory should not dismay socialists" (*Socialist Worker*, 24 March). The East German elections were a (deformed) referendum for or against capitalist reunification and although ballots are not in themselves decisive, the CDU victory was a real defeat for the working class. Only wilfully blind state capitalists would seek to deny the dangers posed by a deeply nationalist and imperialist Fourth Reich, not to mention the planned devastation of the jobs, living standards and social benefits of millions of workers, immigrants and women.

In late December fascists, desecrated the Soviet war memorial at Treptow. Our comrades initiated a call for a demonstration, which was then taken up by the SED-PDS. One quarter of a million

people turned out to protest this fascist attack and demonstrate their recognition of the contribution played by the Red Army in smashing Hitler's rule and laying the basis for the real gains that have existed in the DDR. Taking its cue from the witchhunting of the bourgeoisie and social democrats, the SWP suppressed any coverage of this militant united-front action, so counterposed to its Stalinophobic and anti-Soviet outlook.

Now *Socialist Workers Review* (May 1990) has the effrontery to lecture the French left that a fight should have been begun while Le Pen's Front Nationale was still small. And what would the SWP build? Its Anti Nazi League in the seventies was built on the basis of a class-collaborationist alliance with the likes of Labour Party chatterers, bishops, rock musicians and football managers. When the fascists mobilised to march in heavily Asian Brick Lane in 1978, the SWP was urging everyone to sit it out at a rock concert in Brixton. Subsequently the SWP line on the fascist threat was for several years that "We are saying, at present, 'organise specifically against the nazis, and we'll build their organisation'... If the nazis start paper sales we should not pay them any special attention. If they attack a SW sale, make a tactical retreat and start again the following week" (*Discussion Bulletin*, August 1984). Time and again, the SWP has sought to suppress the evidence of deadly assaults by the NF and BNP scum, as in Sheffield in 1987, and more recently in Glasgow where one of its supporters received 13 stitches from a fascist attack. As opposed to popular frontism, ignoring the fascists, or occasional forays by small groups of leftists, what is needed are genuine union/minority mobilisations to smash the fascists.

Lately you can find quite a number of articles in *Socialist Worker* asserting in

words the importance of picket lines. But during the great miners strike of 1984-85, SWP supporters not only crossed miners picket lines but Tony Cliff openly boasted about it from the public platform: "On the question of our steelworkers crossing picket lines. We have steelworkers in Redcar who cross picket lines. We have three steelworkers in Scunthorpe, they cross picket lines. We have a steelworker in Ravenscraig who crosses picket lines..." (SWP public meeting, London, 23 August 1984). The *Guardian* (17 May) reports that "Two months ago Mrs Thatcher said on a visit to Scotland that she had a soft spot for Ravenscraig because its workers refused to stop production despite picketing during the miners' strike". She ought to have a "soft spot" for "socialists" like Tony Cliff too.

While the SWP correctly criticises Militant for its servile grovelling to the state over the Trafalgar Square cop riot, its own touching faith in British imperialism is quite evident over Ireland. While the SWP claims to stand by the elementary demand for the immediate unconditional withdrawal of the British army from Northern Ireland, in 1969 when the Labour Party government sent the troops in the SWP supported this on the grounds that it would give a "breathing space" (*Socialist Worker*, 11 September 1969). And today the SWP is engaged in building the liberal pro-imperialist "Time To Go" movement. Some SWP supporters are plainly squeamish about Paul Foot's recent advocacy of a phased withdrawal and that the imperialist government should "at once convene a constitutional conference at international level", but his line is really that of the SWP in practice. And unlike the SWP and sundry fake leftists who tail Sinn Fein and Green nationalism, the SL opposes the forced reunification of Ireland. In a situation of interpenetrated peoples, where under capitalism the self-determination of one people can be carried out only at the expense of the other, only socialist revolution can provide a just and equitable solution.

From the Soviet Union to Ireland the SWP reveals its anti-communist reformism. An organisation which cannot defend the gains of the working class movement and its battle lines will never lead a revolution. Defend the Soviet Union against imperialism and counter-revolution! For a workers political revolution to oust the bureaucracy and reinstate internationalist soviet democracy! For the immediate unconditional withdrawal of the British army from Northern Ireland! Not Orange against Green but class against class! For trade union/minority mobilisations to crush the fascist scum! Picket lines mean don't cross! For a federation of workers republics in the British Isles! Not the Labour Party and its syphilitic chain of "left group" tailists, but a Bolshevik party! ■

Partisan Defence Committee Rally

Save Mumia Abu-Jamal!
American Political Prisoner on Death Row
Abolish the Death Penalty!

Friday 6 July, 7:00pm
Room 119, Lambeth Town Hall
Brixton Hill, London SW2
(nearest tube: Brixton)

For more information write to:
 Partisan Defence Committee, BCM Box 4986, London WC1N 3XX.
 or phone: 071-485 1396

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Stop Racist "Legal" Lynchings!

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Free the Broadwater Farm Three now!

Winston Silcott, Engin Raghupathi and Mark Braithwaite were sent down for life on no evidence whatsoever after the October 1985 police riot in Tottenham. The racist cops invaded the Broadwater Farm estate following protests over the police murder of black woman Cynthia Jarrett. The cops broke into her flat, then let her die of a coronary, refusing to call an ambulance. But at Broadwater Farm the thugs in blue came up one short—they got the “bloody good hiding” they deserved. So the state responded with a vindictive frenzy—rounding up hundreds, extracting “confessions” through terror and intimidation, finally getting its vengeance in the convictions of the three.

As a recent editorial in the *Independent on Sunday* (20 May) noted: “There were no witnesses. There was no physical evidence supporting the ‘confessions’. There were no bloodstains, no weapons, no fingerprints. Not a single photograph taken at the riot in which PC Blakelock died showed any of the defendants....” The cops rounded up 369 “suspects”, some under 10 years of age, and held them incommunicado. One youth, with a mental age of nine, signed an “admission”—since retracted—after being questioned day and night for 54 hours, stripped, denied food and not allowed to wash. The central target of the racist hysteria whipped up by the tabloid press, Winston Silcott, never “confessed” to anything; he was railroaded on the say-so of Det Chief Supt Melvin, head of Scotland Yard’s crime task force, who alleged that Silcott had a “guilty posture”.

Melvin is now the subject of an internal police disciplinary hearing for charges relating to the treatment of Jason Hill. At the time 13 years old, Jason was questioned for nearly 60 hours clad only in his underwear, without seeing a solicitor or member of his family. Even the

trial judge who presided over the kangaroo court proceedings dismissed his “confession” as “fantastical” and “make-believe”, but only after Jason had served a further 13 months in youth custody. Neither Jason nor his lawyers will be allowed to attend the police whitewash travesty, in which evidence will be heard in secret, the case against Melvin will be presented by a cop, the three-man panel determining the outcome will be headed by a cop, the cops will decide what witnesses will be called, and Scotland Yard is under no legal obligation to announce the result!

The *Independent* terms the Broadwater Farm case “a strange miscarriage of English justice”. But who’s kidding who? Police lies, frame-ups and terror directed at blacks, Asians, Irish, gays and workers is standard operating procedure, from Tottenham to the cases of the Guildford Four, Winchester Three and Birmingham Six. And that’s only the tip of the iceberg. Certainly no one has taken seriously the myth of the “friendly British bobby” since the massive onslaught of police strikebreakers against the courageous miners defending their jobs and union. State terror is an integral component of capitalism because it is a society based on the oppression and exploitation of the vast majority for the benefit of a parasitic few. The state cannot be reformed, and no amount of chattering along the lines of making the police “accountable”—as sundry Labour “lefts” advise—will alter that reality.

The only crimes at Broadwater Farm were committed by the police, while their victims rot in jail. But it is not just the Tories and the capitalist media which has sided with the oppressors against the oppressed. Neil Kinnock laid a wreath at a memorial plaque to PC Blakelock,

Angry protest against racist frame-up trial outside Old Bailey, 15 September 1986.



praising his “honour and sacrifice”. This is the same cop-loving rubbish he spewed out when violence-baiting the striking miners and the same treatment the Labour Party tops handed out recently to anti-poll tax protesters in Trafalgar Square. And those who have sold their souls to Kinnock are little better: Bernie Grant retracted his initial outspoken defence of blacks and working people in Tottenham in order to climb into parliament. If they ever get into No 10, the Labour traitors will need the cops for the same reason Thatcher needs them: to keep capitalist “order” against the workers and oppressed. The last Labour government called out the army against

strikers and deployed the murderous cops against Blair Peach and other anti-fascist protesters.

For massive trade union/minority mobilisations to demand freedom for the Broadwater Farm Three, the Birmingham Six and other victims of racist “justice”! For integrated defence guards of responsible union and community men and women to provide protection against the racist boot boys and their allies in the fascist gangs! The genuine avenging of the victims of this system requires socialist revolution, which will smash the capitalist system and its prison hellholes, and mete out proletarian justice to the vile oppressors. ■

Ravenscraig...

(Continued from page 12)

As a first step, occupy the Ravenscraig plant—not some phoney “work-in” but a real sitdown strike. Dispatch flying pickets to bring out the rest of British Steel! And the North Sea oil workers already engaged in work actions against 15-hour shifts, deadly unsafe working conditions and denial of union protection could bring real industrial power to a classwide fightback. Ravenscraig workers could spark solid joint strike action among steelworkers, miners and oil workers. And those fighting the poll tax would welcome linking up their struggle, in the same way as the rent strikes, engineering and munitions strikes of Red Clydeside sustained each other 75 years ago.

The arrogant and venal British ruling class has exploited and sacrificed the Scottish working people for too long, from the mines, yards and mills to the gory hell of its battlefields. Now it wants to blame the victims for their situation. London’s bourgeois press whips up chauvinism against the Scottish people:

“The Scots, who have become subsidy junkies as successive Governments—most notably this one—have tried to bribe them with ever-larger handouts at the expense of the comparatively little-subsidised English taxpayer, will no doubt wail like a trampled bagpipe at the removal of British Steel’s financial support for Ravenscraig” — (*Evening Standard*, quoted in *Glasgow Herald*, 21 May).

Such anti-Scottish diatribes go together with the attacks that have singled Scotland out, as over the imposition of the poll tax, and make Ravenscraig a flash-

point of broad anger in Scotland.

For their part, the Labour and trade union leaders are pedalling protectionist poison, pitting Scottish against English, Welsh and foreign workers. The bourgeois nationalist SNP, which wants an “independent” capitalist Scottish steel company, organised a picket in London which carried placards against “English Steel plc” and last December sent a delegation to Lackenby in Middlesbrough to urge steelworkers to “forego” the prospects of a few more jobs in order to “save” Scottish steel. Meanwhile Welsh Labour MP Paul Flynn said the closure of Ravenscraig was “good news for Wales”.

In 1983 when Ravenscraig’s strip mill was threatened with closing by “Mac the Knife” MacGregor and raw steel was to be shipped to America, the ISTC leadership responded with a protectionist campaign to “Save British steel”. The bureaucracy of the United Steelworkers of America campaigned for “No British steel”, demonstrating that two can play the same game. Pitting workers from different countries against each other in a dog-eat-dog scramble for a shrinking number of jobs is suicidal, and it’s the City financiers and capitalists who will be laughing all the way to the bank.

The government, its poll tax and austerity policies are deeply unpopular. But winning decisive victories requires breaking with the Labour traitors and forging a revolutionary leadership in the unions. The STUC tops, who often talk out of the left side of their mouth, are not qualitatively different from Norman Willis & Co. Their call today for a one-hour general strike won’t even make the bosses bat an eyelid. And over the decades, successive

betrayals by the union tops, including the sell-out of the Upper Clyde “work-in” 20 years ago, have emboldened the bosses to undertake ever more brutal attacks on jobs and working conditions.

The current threat to Ravenscraig is in part the result of the betrayal of the 1980 steel strike by Bill Sirs and the ISTC leadership and their “left” accomplices. At that time we argued that the strike “posed the possibility and necessity of a general strike to crush the Tories’ attacks, break the stalemate in the class struggle and the stranglehold of the Labour and trade union bureaucrats, and point the proletariat on the road to the seizure of power” (*Spartacist Britain* no 21, May 1980). During the miners strike it was the action of Scottish dockers in blacking scab coal to Ravenscraig that triggered a national dock strike. It was the so-called “left” union leaders who played a vital

role in stifling that solidarity. Mrs Thatcher has a “soft spot” for Ravenscraig, because its workers did not honour the miners’ picket lines. Now, like the Nottinghamshire miners of the scab UDM, they are getting a hard lesson that strike breaking and crossing picket lines do not pay.

Within the framework of capitalism, there’s no prospect of reviving the devastated industrial wastelands in Scotland and South Wales, once great port cities like Liverpool or Glasgow, or the decaying inner cities of England. But with a planned centralised economy there would be plenty of jobs for steel and other industrial workers. And some much needed class struggle now could point the way to the only real answer: proletarian revolution and a couple of ambitious five-year plans to make these isles a decent place to live. ■

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Lithuania...

(Continued from page 5)

In January, *Workers Power* ran an article on Lithuania entitled "The right of every nation?" and concluded:

"Against Gorbachev's opposition to independence, Soviet workers must fight for a free and voluntary federation of the Soviet republics with the right to self-determination up to and including secession. But they must fight also against those who see the answer to Lithuania's problems as secession and capitalist restoration."

But *Workers Power* obviously found the mass mobilisations led by open capitalist restorationists, national chauvinists and anti-Communists an irresistible "progressive" force in determining its line. By April *Workers Power* declared:

"The leaders of Sajudis... are in favour of independence to pursue the rapid introduction of the market. They aim to restore capitalism.

"Does this mean that workers should oppose independence? No. The masses have shown, through petitions, through the election, through participating in their thousands in demonstrations that they wish to be independent."

Workers Power just can't say no to a "mass movement", as long as it has numbers they don't care how reactionary the "movement" is. Their cynicism is as boundless as their opportunism. When *Solidarność* threatened counterrevolution in Poland in 1981 *Workers Power* said "Polish nationalism... would send the workers to their deaths clutching emblems of Pilsudski and pictures of the Pope" (*Workers Power*, September 1981). Nonetheless, had the Kremlin Stalinists intervened to stop *Solidarność*' bid for power, *Workers Power* declared that "the call from revolutionaries must be to fight the bureaucracy with a direct struggle for working class power", ie they blocked militarily on the side of Walesa, Pilsudski nationalism, the pope, capitalist restoration and the stationing of NATO troops on the border of the Soviet Union.

Now *Workers Power* says it "would bloc with the nationalists in their confrontation with Moscow, including fighting Soviet troops sent in to crush the independent republic" but then, having put them in power "We would wage a determined struggle against the nationalists if [!] and when they move to dismantle the state owned property relations and restore capitalism. We would not hesitate to demand support from the workers of the entire USSR for such a struggle and unconditional aid from Moscow itself." WP's programme is to bloc militarily with the counterrevolution to crush the Soviet Army (with unconditional aid from Britain), then overthrow the counter-revolutionaries and demand unconditional aid from Moscow!

Having made its shameless appeal to the government of Margaret Thatcher (and naturally to the Labour Party and TUC), *Workers Power* hastens to add: "We oppose the use of force to break the blockade. This would represent an act of hostility against the USSR and a prelude to military intervention against a workers' state." *Workers Power* betrays a touching faith in British imperialism with its suggestion that Thatcher should take the lead, correct the other "democrats" of the west" who "have offered no material aid to Lithuania", break the blockade—but not as a prelude to hostilities against the USSR and not with the use of "force"!

There is historical precedent for such twaddle. The last major political battle Leon Trotsky waged was against the Shachtman/Burnham opposition in the then-Trotskyist American Socialist Workers Party. The signing of the Stalin-Hitler pact together with the Soviet occupation

of eastern Poland and the invasion of Finland led Shachtman to renounce defence of the Soviet Union in adaptation to a frenzied outcry of petty-bourgeois public opinion over the supposed violation of "poor little Finland". In one of Trotsky's polemics against Shachtman he wrote:

"If France, England or the United States sends airplanes and guns to Finland, this has no bearing in the determination of Shachtman's politics. But if British troops land in Finland, then Shachtman will place a thermometer under Chamberlain's tongue and determine Chamberlain's intentions—whether he aims only to save Finland from the Kremlin's imperialistic politics or whether in addition



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Jewish partisan unit following the liberation of Vilnius (Wilno) from Nazi rule. Lithuanian nationalists welcomed Hitlerites as old allies. Jewish fighters joined Communist partisans.

he aims to overthrow the 'last conquest of the October Revolution.'"

—"From a Scratch to the Danger of Gangrene" (*In Defense of Marxism*)

Substitute the word Thatcher for Chamberlain and it's an accurate description of *Workers Power*'s general line on Lithuania.

Defend the USSR!

Stalin's "non-aggression" pact with Hitler did not prevent the Nazis from invading the Soviet Union in 1941, but the Soviet annexation of the region in July 1940 cannot be separated from the exigencies of the German war threat at the time. Trotsky argued that although the territory was strategically important, the Red Army occupation would be seen as an act of violence, not of liberation, and in the long run would do more harm than good. In any case, Stalin's annexation lasted only until Hitler invaded and occupied the Baltics a year later, at which time many bourgeois nationalists enthusiastically joined with the Nazis in hunting down and murdering Communists and Jews. The social revolution which marked the real integration of the Baltic republics into the USSR came following the Red Army's heroic defeat of Nazi fascism.

But, for *Workers Power* the bureaucratically imposed social revolutions in Soviet-occupied East Europe following the war represented the "counterrevolutionary" overthrow of capitalism. As we pointed out last month, applied to East Germany WP's idiotic formulation means that the foundation of the DDR represented the "counterrevolutionary overthrow" of Adolf Hitler's fascist state! There were incidentally those on Shachtman's side who wanted to re-categorise the Soviet Union as a "counterrevolutionary workers state" at the time. Twenty years later Shachtman could be found alibiing the US 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba as "good stout working class fighters" mobilised against Stalinist "totalitarianism".

As for the national question involved here: Trotskyists uphold the right of self-determination of various nations of the USSR—ie, their right to secede and form a separate state—except where it serves as a cover for counterrevolution. The Stalinists are unable to arrive at a democratic solution to this question, which necessarily is connected to an economic programme capable of meeting the needs of the peoples of all the regions of the country. In 1938, in the face of Stalinist repression and an implacably entrenched Kremlin bureaucracy, Trotsky considered the call for an "independent Soviet Ukraine". The failed policies of the bureaucracy generate powerful tendencies for

capitalist counterrevolution under the cover of the fig leaf of national self-determination. Such tendencies must be opposed and exposed as part of the struggle to reforge an authentically communist workers party in the USSR. A proletarian challenge reasserting the principles of Leninist internationalism against all variants of nationalism—and particularly Great Russian chauvinism—could polarise the ethnic Baltic populations.

For decades the imperialists have hoped to bring about the break-up of the Soviet Union by inciting and supporting reactionary nationalist movements. Despite its nominal Soviet "defencism", *Workers Power* has aided and abetted this imperialist campaign over Lithuania. Indeed, on 16 May, *Workers Power* joined with the rabidly anti-Soviet Labourites of *Socialist Organiser*—specialists in denouncing "Russian imperialism"—in a protest picket outside the Soviet consulate in London demanding "Hands off Baltic states" (see photo, p3).

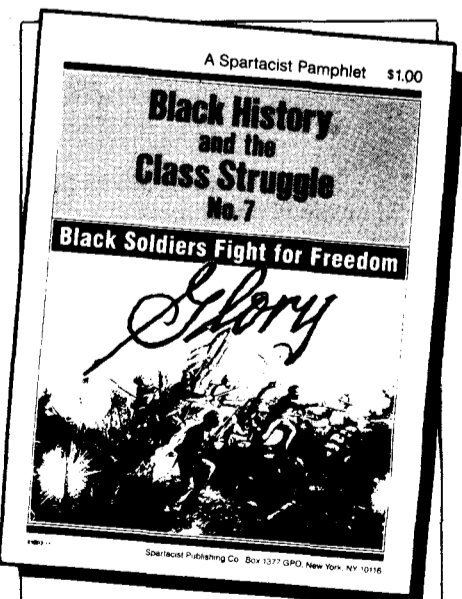
Workers Power members who recoil from the call on the British bourgeoisie against the Soviet bureaucracy may recall the actions of their Irish group last summer in response to the Chinese Stalinists' criminal Tiananmen Square massacre. On 6 June, the Irish Workers Group issued a grotesque statement demanding that the Irish bourgeois state expel the Chinese ambassador. After we exposed this betrayal, the IWG was forced to admit that the call for the expulsion of the Chinese ambassador "was politically wrong—a mistake on the part of the IWG which was not repeated after the day of distribution of the leaflet in question at a demonstration at Dublin's Chinese embassy" ("Sectarianism and Stalinophilia: The Politics of the Spartacists"). In other words, the IWG betrayed only when it counted. Furthermore, the IWG explains: "There was not the slightest possibility that such action would be taken by the Irish bourgeoisie." The expulsion of an ambassador is a measure generally undertaken on the eve of war, so no doubt

Dublin wasn't eager to take the IWG's "advice" on this occasion. Nonetheless, it was offered.

In the last issue of *Workers Hammer* we documented *Workers Power*'s right turn over events in East Germany, where its call to "Smash Capitalist Restoration" was in stark contradiction to the fact that it sided with capitalist counterrevolution at every crucial stage. *Workers Power* demanded the withdrawal of the Red Army from the DDR. Echoing the lies of the social democrats, *Workers Power* sneered at the 250,000-strong Treptow demonstration against the fascist desecration of a Soviet war memorial and in defence of the DDR against capitalist restoration. When a rightist mob—including a hard core of fascist skinhead types—invaded Stasi headquarters in Berlin brandishing the slogan "Germany, One Fatherland" *Workers Power* enthused: "this is the very stuff of revolution." In the face of the imperialist drive to reconquer the East German workers state and destroy the social gains of the DDR which were built up from the rubble of Hitler's Third Reich, *Workers Power* was incapable of trying to straddle the fence between Trotskyism and the Third Camp.

The imperialists seek to extend their system of raw exploitation, poverty and racism to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. When the Soviets announced intentions to withdraw the Red Army from Afghanistan, emboldened US imperialists even started making noises about claiming Wrangel Island, right off the Soviet Arctic coast, because 60 years ago some Americans working for the Lomen Reindeer & Trading Co were trappers on the island. As we said at the time: "next thing you know, they'll be claiming Sakhalin island and the Kurils for Japan, and Kamchatka Peninsula and Vladivostok to seal off Russia in the Far East. And where would this stop? Where did it stop in 1918—nowhere! The Soviet Red Army stopped it" (*Workers Hammer* no 95, February 1988).

With the unravelling and disintegration of the Stalinist bureaucracies, the choices are starkly posed—either workers soviets to replace the corrupt, nationalist Stalinist bureaucracies or the workers' rearguard struggle against a string of imperialist victories and the terrible immiseration of the masses in the workers states and elsewhere. The duty of Trotskyists to defend the Soviet degenerated workers state against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution is upheld by the Spartacist League against the forces of capitalist restoration and their Third Camp running dogs. ■



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South Africa...

(Continued from page 12)

The white ruling class is now deeply divided. Large numbers of whites recoil at the prospect of living in a permanently besieged garrison state and hundreds of young whites have refused induction into the army. The security forces have increasingly come under the spotlight through recent revelations about death squad activities. The death squads are responsible for over 400 attacks and the deaths of nearly 100 prominent anti-apartheid activists including Victoria and Griffith Mxenge, Ruth First, David Webster and Anton Lubowski.

Lenin defined as one of the hallmarks of a prerevolutionary situation that those at the top are unable to rule in the old way. Clearly this is the case with the Nationalists, whose iron grip on power since 1948 is palpably beginning to come unhinged. Dr Gerrit Viljoen, the cabinet minister regarded as the brain truster of de Klerk's "reforms" said early in February that the National Party would surrender power within ten years. Now he is predicting the end will come in five.

Lenin's second criterion was that those at the bottom refuse to be ruled in the old way—something South African blacks have demonstrated time and time again. The key to smashing the chains of apartheid slavery is the powerful and combative black working class. One of the biggest changes over the last decade has been the growth of the black trade union movement, which by virtue of its concentrated social strength emerged as a central force in the anti-apartheid struggle. Since the 1984-86 township revolts, working-class action has brought together blacks, "coloureds" (mixed race), Indians and some white unionists who have allied themselves with the black unions. The 13-week battle of the SATS railway strikers, the bloodiest battle in South African labour history, was concluded in a hard-won victory in January. In February black schoolteachers marched in Johannesburg, demanding an end to apartheid in education and equal pay for black and white teachers. On 5 March, 3000 workers at Rustenburg Platinum, the world's largest platinum mine, in and around Bophuthatswana, staged a one-day strike. They demanded union recognition, declaring that "the 'homelands' were created as reservoirs of cheap black labour to feed the white economy" (*Financial Times*, 8 March).

But the political power of the proletariat has been thwarted as the exploding black union movement has increasingly come under the aegis of the petty-bourgeois ANC. The missing and key component in South Africa is the revolutionary party which can take advantage of the evident disarray of the ruling class to mobilise the working class for the conquest of power. The forging of such an integrated, multiracial Bolshevik party, acting as the vanguard of the workers and tribune of the oppressed—this is the urgent task at hand.

Forge a Bolshevik Party!

In the aftermath of the 1984-86 black rebellion, the government repealed not only a number of "petty apartheid" laws, such as segregation of public accommodations, but also the hated pass laws and "influx control" legislation used to drive blacks from the cities to barren townships. But the vast black majority is still disenfranchised, forcibly segregated and subject to police-state rule, whether through the "state of emergency", "banning" laws, bantustans or the militarised labour compounds where contract labourers in the mines are housed under lock and key.

Citing an article by Eddie Koch in the *Weekly Mail* (13 January 1989), South

African Marxist intellectual Baruch Hirson graphically describes this hell: "Over half a million black workers in these compounds have always been closely guarded and closed to outsiders, but new measures seal them off even more tightly. According to Koch, the hostels are surrounded by high walls and rolls of razor

ing labour. If that is communism, they're for it—and the Stalinists in their terminal crisis will have no easy time "re-educating" them otherwise. South African blacks haven't heard of the "Death of Communism".

While within the black trade union movement there have been debates and

tic proof of the correctness of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution, which was also the programme of the early Communist International, that in the age of imperialism even the most basic democratic tasks can only be accomplished by the victory of proletarian revolution in countries such as South Africa. This has

Red flag at anti-apartheid fighter's funeral. Black masses in South Africa don't buy the "death of Communism".



wire; the areas are patrolled by mounted security men, armoured vehicles and dog squads, and in some mines white miners are active members of the security force" (*Searchlight South Africa*, July 1989). This is life under the so-called "progressive" capitalists—like Gavin Relly of Anglo American, who has taken the lead in "negotiating" with the ANC.

The gulf between black and white wages in South Africa is vast: in 1984 the average black miner made about \$200 a month, about one-sixth the average for white miners. In manufacturing, white workers make about four times as much as blacks. Moreover, millions of black workers have been made foreigners in their own country, forced to travel for hours every day from far-off bantustans where the apartheid state dumped them when it created these phoney "independent homelands". A black child dies of hunger in South Africa every 20 minutes. This is the brutal reality of apartheid, and no "negotiations" can change that.

But militant class struggle can, and such a class-centred fight to smash apartheid would find many allies, not least the militant township youth. As the *Weekly Mail* (25 January) noted: "The 'Young Lions', the radical township youth, are showing deep suspicion of the process of negotiations". It went on:

"The generation which grew up in the townships during the uprisings of 1984-1986 was one nurtured on militancy and radical solutions. 'Slogans like 'Freedom or death!' 'Victory is certain' or 'Long live the spirit of no compromise'...served to rally the masses and to express the revolutionary sentiment sweeping through the townships."

The article quotes ANC leader Walter Sisulu saying, "The problem is many of the youngsters are not really interested in the negotiations. In fact they've become a little bit angry. That's why I say that this chap De Klerk is moving too fast.... We want to educate our people." For this they will rely on the Stalinists like SACP leader Joe Slovo, who says "socialism is not on the immediate agenda". But hundreds of thousands of militant black workers in the mines and mills are demanding the full fruits of their backbreak-

discussion over ANC policies such as divestment and sanctions as well as the content of the explicitly bourgeois "Freedom Charter", the unions are still shackled to the political programme of the nationalists. Cyril Ramaphosa, the president of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) was at Mandela's side in Cape Town and is now a major contender for succession to ANC leadership, after the older generation of Sisulu, Tambo and Mandela retire. Already more than once Ramaphosa has sent striking miners back to work defeated after reluctantly going on strike against the Anglo American bosses whom the ANC look to as future partners in a "democratic" South Africa.

The fight for workers power means a break with the ANC and the South African Communist Party, which is not fighting for communism but for a capitalist "post-apartheid state". For more than six decades, the Stalinists have had a "two-stage" programme: bourgeois democracy now, socialist revolution later, ie never. When this revisionist programme was first presented by Stalin and Bukharin in the late 1920s, some South African Communists objected, such as SP Bunting, who at the Sixth Congress of the Communist International in 1928 argued:

"Native workers and some peasants are pouring into the Party in preference to joining the purely native bodies, whether national or industrial, which have let them down and fallen into the hands of the bourgeoisie. They fully appreciate the 'vulgar Marxist' slogan of 'Workers of the World Unite,' of joint action by black and white labour against the common enemy; and at the same time they see that the CP sincerely and unreservedly espouse their national cause as an oppressed race."

—*Searchlight South Africa*, July 1989

While the Stalinists have consistently pushed their "two-stage" line, under Gorbachev's "new thinking" this has been intensified as the Soviet leader looks for a global deal with the imperialists. The withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola dealt a blow to the struggle against apartheid and the Kremlin has put the financial screws to the ANC to begin "negotiations" with the apartheid butchers.

South Africa today is the most drama-

nothing to do with begging Thatcher to adopt economic "sanctions" in order to pressure her pal de Klerk to "stabilise" South African capitalism. It has nothing to do with tailing TUC scabherder Norman Willis in his efforts to make British investment in a "post-apartheid" South Africa more successful by endorsing the sanctions hoax. The enemies of working class struggle at home will not liberate the hideously oppressed and exploited toilers of South Africa.

Precisely because divestment is good business for corporations but not for the black workers who have to live with the results, last year workers at nine Mobil Oil installations and Goodyear Rubber in South Africa took strike actions to oppose union-busting "divestment" by the multinationals. Except in a period when the revolutionary overthrow of the apartheid system is immediately posed, isolation from the world market is likely to result in massive dislocation and deprivation of black workers, weakening their ability to struggle. The wealth of South Africa must go not to the capitalists—American, European or Afrikaner—but to the workers who created it. The only kind of "divestment" that will benefit the exploited and oppressed will be the expropriation of these riches by a black-centred workers government as part of a socialist federation of southern Africa.

In South Africa, there must be a fight to forge an integrated multiracial Bolshevik party. An internationalist party, it will open its doors to the hundreds of thousands of migrant workers—from Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Botswana, Namibia—who pour into South Africa. A South African workers state will become the motor force for the liberation of the subcontinent. Smash apartheid! For workers revolution! ■

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South Africa: "negotiations" won't end apartheid

Black workers must take power!



Mandela freed...

Forge a racially integrated Bolshevik party!

...police fire on protesters, Sharpeville, 26 March.

On 4 May, after three days of discussions, the African National Congress led by Nelson Mandela and the South African government reached agreement "on a common commitment towards the resolution of the existing climate of violence and intimidation from whatever quarter as well as a commitment to stability and to a peaceful process of negotiations" (*Independent*, 5 May). Hoping to head off the upsurge of mass revolt and the spectre of workers revolution, the apartheid rulers have finally entered into negotiations with the ANC. Even the ANC's minimal demands of lifting the state of emergency and release of anti-apartheid prisoners have not been met, let alone one-man-one-vote.

The National Party under the new "verligte" (enlightened) leadership of de Klerk has adopted the "rationalist imperialist" viewpoint espoused by the likes

of Anglo American Corporation mining mogul Gavin Relly. The economy has taken a battering as many multinationals pull out of direct operations (while keeping licensing agreements). This is partly due to sanctions, but also to the unrest and repression and the lure of super-profits from restoring capitalist exploitation in East Europe. De Klerk & Co would like to present a facade of democracy while leaving intact the existing economic structure. They figure that only Nelson Mandela would have the authority to pull this off.

However, Mandela's release has set off an acute crisis of expectations. The oppressed black masses want liberation from the chains of apartheid slavery now, while their leaders in the ANC want to

negotiate for a mythical "non-racial, democratic state" formed by an alliance with the "liberal" bourgeoisie. But in South Africa, where every aspect of white and black life are "worlds apart" there is no way to eliminate apartheid rule and leave the capitalist state intact. Racial integration and democratic rights for the black majority can only come about through workers revolution.

Rebellion has been spreading across South Africa, flaring up in the desolate bantustans and igniting the teeming black townships, ablaze with the anger of tens of thousands of militant demonstrators. On 27 March, protesters fled police fire in Sharpeville. Over 30,000 took to the streets of Sebokeng township, 30 miles south of Johannesburg, to march to near-

by Vereeniging, to the ruling National Party offices, in protest against high rents and horrific living conditions. Police opened fire without warning and 14 blacks were shot dead, 447 wounded. Most were hit in the back by shotgun fire.

At the same time, hardline Afrikaner racists and fascists, with considerable support in the police and security forces, are roaming the townships terrorising blacks. The State of Emergency, imposed to quash the mass revolts in 1985-86, has not been lifted and detentions continue. Zulu leader Gatsha Buthelezi's Inkatha organisation—acting as dogs of war for the apartheid regime, with arms and support from the police—have unleashed a wave of violence in Natal province in which thousands have been killed, thousands more wounded and hundreds burned out of their homes.

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Steel, coal, oil: link up the struggles

Occupy Ravenscraig, bring out all British Steel!

GLASGOW—The announcement by British Steel of their plan to shut down the hot strip mill at Ravenscraig represents Thatcher's "economic miracle" for manufacturing industry throughout Britain—devastation. Cynically timed to come after the local elections and the Scottish Tory Party conference, this comes within a week of British Coal's proposals to axe up to 30,000 miners' jobs. And the Brymbo steel plant in North Wales is to close with the loss of 1100 jobs.

It's not just the hot strip mill that will go—this is the first step to scrapping the entire Ravenscraig complex while the Dalzell plate mill and the Clydesdale tube works are also on the chopping block. These are the last three steel plants in Lanarkshire; less than 15 years ago there were eleven. Industry has been devastated in Scotland, Wales and northern England because the parasitic British bourgeoisie doesn't make a profit out of it. In Scotland coal mining is all but gone,

there's little left of shipbuilding and heavy engineering, and now they want to pull the plug on steel. In Motherwell, where Ravenscraig is located, some families have had three generations of unemployed. The threat to Ravenscraig has evoked widespread outrage, because it mirrors the experiences of hundreds of thousands of skilled and militant workers who have been consigned to the industrial scrapheap and dole queues.

The response of the Labour Party

politicians and union bureaucrats has been to plead to the Tories to beg British Steel to keep Ravenscraig open. The pathetic Donald Dewar, Shadow Scottish Secretary, declared in Parliament: "When we tackle British Steel we want to know the Government is fighting our corner with us" (*Glasgow Herald*, 22 May). An all-Scotland "standing committee"—meant to embrace everyone from the trade unions to the churches, and even businessmen and Scottish Tories—has been set up to appeal to "public opinion". This is the same kind of class-collaborationist alliance—tying workers to their exploiters—that failed to save a single job at Caterpillar and Gartcosh.

The only way to win anything is to hit the bosses where it counts—in their wallets. British Steel is counting on Ravenscraig workers remaining isolated, but there are plenty of potential class allies.

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