

Baltic Nationalists Spearhead Counterrevolution in USSR

Moscow Tries to Thwart Lithuanian Secessionists

Ukrainian fascists, Georgian monarchists, Baltic collaborators of Nazi Germany: these are the anti-Soviet "freedom fighters" long honored in Western capitals. For decades imperialist strategists dreamed of bringing about the breakup of the Soviet Union by inciting and supporting reactionary nationalist movements. Now they believe that day is at hand. So the disappointment was palpable in NATO capitals when Soviet tanks noisily rumbled into Vilnius, Lithuania.

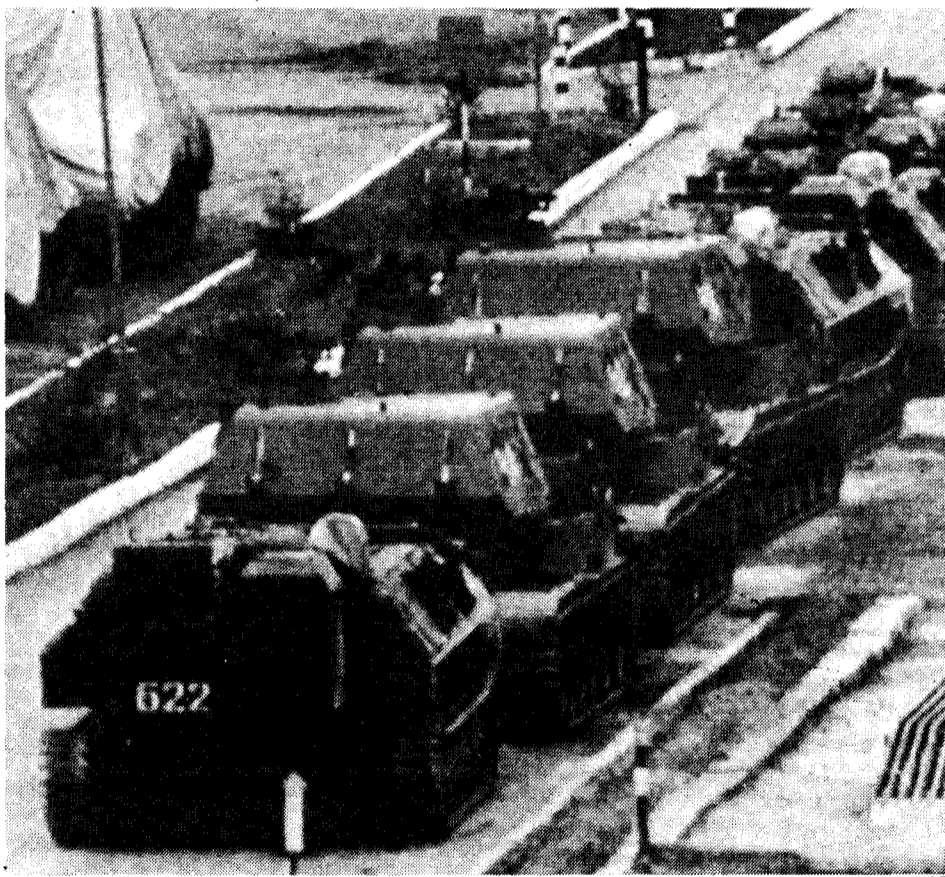
The "liberal" Stalinist regime of Mikhail Gorbachev is giving up East Europe, has accepted the imperialist reunification of Germany and is introducing large elements of capitalist exploitation into the Soviet economy. Thus many expected he would not put up serious resistance when on March 11 the Lithuanian parliament, dominated by the Sajudis nationalist movement, declared its "independence" from the USSR. Under the guise of "national self-determination," the Lithuanian Sajudis is now the spearhead of imperialist-backed counterrevolution in the Soviet Union. But even the ever-accommodating Gorbachev has not rolled over and played dead in Lithuania.

In recent days, armored convoys and tank columns have conspicuously paraded through the capital of Vilnius. KGB security guards tightened controls around the republic's borders. When Sajudis leaders talked about setting up a "territorial defense," Gorbachev ordered all Lithuanian citizens to turn in their private firearms. Paratroopers arrested Lithuanian deserters from the Soviet armed forces. Soviet troops guard the offices of the Moscow-loyal Communist Party after a nationalist split attempted to seize them. Western diplomats and journalists have been ordered to leave. In the latest move Soviet troops occupied the State Prosecutor's Office and the printing plant which produces the Sajudis newspaper.

Rogov/Zoja Pictures



Disintegrating Stalinism Looking to Buy Time

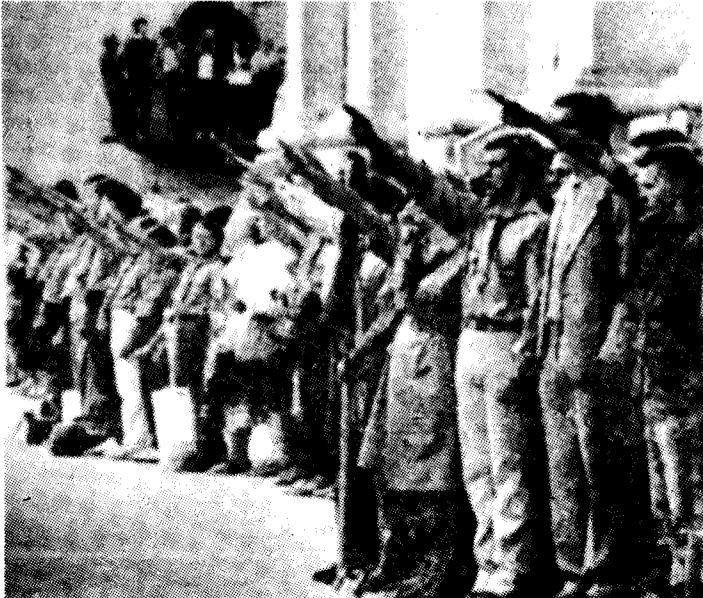


In show of strength, Soviet tanks rumble through Lithuanian capital of Vilnius.

The U.S. rulers were taken aback by Moscow's actions. Bush yammered: "Any attempt to coerce or intimidate or forcibly intervene against the people of Lithuania is bound to backfire" (*New York Times*, 24 March). However, Washington and the other NATO capitals have not supported Lithuanian "independence"

for fear of provoking a harder line in Moscow and perhaps undermining Gorbachev, Western imperialism's favorite Kremlin ruler since Tsar Nicholas II. On March 30, Bush sent a personal letter to Gorbachev, saying "we're not trying to make things difficult for Lithuania or the Soviet Union."

Skurihinaya/Pravda



Lithuanian president Vytautas Landsbergis (left) and nationalist "Scouts" pledge support for counterrevolution. Lithuanian nationalists justified this use of straight-arm Hitler salute, saying Romans invented it.

Some American ultrarightists like Jesse Helms have denounced Bush for "selling out" Lithuania to the Russians. A White House official responded:

"Do congressmen who want recognition [of Lithuania] want Gorbachev to continue to withdraw from Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland? Do they want to permit German reunification?... Obviously, they do, but I don't know whether they have considered what effect our stance on Lithuania has on those things...."

—*New York Times*, 28 March

In other words, Gorbachev is already giving us all of East Europe on a platter. Why risk all this right now over Lithuania?

Washington's diplomatic stance caused Sajudis leader Vytautas Landsbergis to decry the Western powers for having "sold us out." With their imperialist godfathers unwilling to provoke a major world confrontation, the Lithuanian nationalists have backed off somewhat. On March 29, Landsbergis & Co. proposed to discuss with Moscow holding a popular referendum on secession. Gorbachev responded that he'd talk only if the Lithuanian parliament annulled the "declaration of independence."

Whatever the immediate outcome of the Lithuania crisis, the discredited Kremlin Stalinist bureaucracy has *no political program* to combat the reactionary nationalisms which now threaten to rip apart the Soviet Union. The Gorbachev regime could only maintain that the Lithuanian "declaration of independence" was "invalid" because it violated the USSR constitution. Gorbachev's entire strategy for dealing with nationalist separatism consists in *buying time*, nothing more. His new draft legislation on the national question proposes a five-year waiting period before a republic can secede, followed by a popular referendum and approval by the all-Soviet Congress of People's Deputies.

While the Lithuania crisis was unfolding Gorbachev unexpectedly appointed the reactionary Russian nationalist and rabid anti-Semite Valentin Rasputin to his new presidential council. Ominously, this may signal a move to utilize Great Russian chauvinism as a counterweight to nationalist separatism in the Baltics, Caucasus and Ukraine. Such a deeply cynical policy will surely lead to pogroms, communalist bloodletting and the destruction of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Six decades of Stalinist bureaucratic oppression and parasitism have caused many national minorities to look upon the Soviet Union as a present-day version of tsarist Russia's "prison house of peoples," as Lenin called it. The Soviet Union can be saved only by sweeping out the Kremlin oligarchy and restoring the proletarian internationalist principles of Lenin and Trotsky. The Soviet federation

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Immigrant Community Devastated Bronx Inferno

Eighty-seven people were killed March 25 when a depraved arsonist threw a gasoline bomb into a crowded social club in the Bronx on a Saturday night. The victims were mostly young Honduran immigrants and workers enjoying a night of dancing and drinking at the "Happy Land" club. It was supposed to be a weekend of celebration, Punta Carnaval, the Honduran version of Mardi Gras. Instead, the club became a poison-gas chamber of horrors at the hands of Julio González, the jilted lover of the club's coatchecker and a Marielito former Cuban prisoner who came to the U.S. in the 1980 boatlift.

The 87 perished within minutes after González threw a dollar's worth of gaso-

line on the floor to the club's entrance followed by a match that lighted the inferno. The victims were trapped in the deathbox night club that had no working second exit, no sprinkler system, no fire escape and only a narrow staircase and small window. With macabre irony, the fire occurred 79 years to the day after the infamous Triangle Shirtwaist factory fire and the parallels were inescapable. As Murray Kempton wrote (*Newsday*, 28 March):

"There were no sprinkler systems at either Triangle or Happy Land. The explanation in both cases was that sprinkler systems cost too much.... Triangle was 1911 and Happy Land is 1990; and there is no compelling way to tell one from another. Most of Triangle's victims were



Firemen removed 87 bodies from Bronx social club deathtrap. Slumlords prefer such "shlock properties" for quick profits, easy evictions.

newly arrived Jews and Italians and most of Happy Land's were Hondurans."

The day after the tragedy, the city sent out fire and building inspectors along with police to shut down the illegal clubs. But the bitter truth is that the sleazy slumlords, including Happy Land building owner Alex DiLorenzo III and leaseholder billionaire realtor Jay Weiss (husband of the actress Kathleen Turner), will probably not spend one night in jail for their deadly profiteering. DiLorenzo reportedly liked buying run-down commercial "shlock properties" to lease for use as clubs because they are all-cash businesses and can't seek government protection in case the landlord wants to raise the rent or evict them for redevelopment.

Happy Land was one of several hundred unlicensed social clubs in New York City. They're the only places that many in the poor and immigrant neighborhoods can afford to go for some weekend socializing. "We don't have no \$20 or \$30 to spend at the Palladium or some club downtown," said one woman (*Washington Post*, 27 March). The social clubs that sprout up in the ramshackle buildings are like the dingy dance halls where Mexican agricultural workers in California's Central Valley congregate. Or the thousands of "shebeens" in the black townships of South Africa, the informal bars which provide a brief respite for black workers from the harsh realities of apartheid.

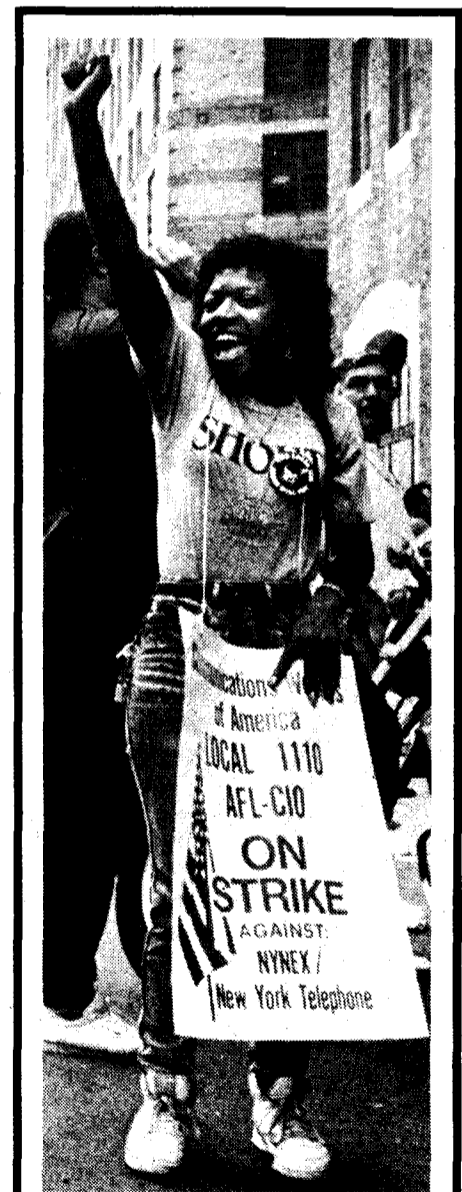
A lot of the clubs are dives. But one of the establishments closed by the city, El Caney del Barrio on 116th Street, is a notable community cultural center. For years, leading Hispanic artists have performed at El Caney, which has also hosted political discussions. The order to close it produced justified community outrage.

An estimated 6,000 Hondurans have settled in the East Tremont Avenue area of the Bronx. Many are blacks from the Atlantic Coast. They have come to escape the grinding poverty and repression of a country which is the quintessential banana republic, where the per capita income is \$1,000 a year. The bloody-minded Honduran military regime has been on the CIA payroll for decades, while for the last ten years it has been providing U.S. imperialism with base camps for the contra scum. Many poor Hondurans brave tremendous risks in the hopes of a new start in the U.S. But for scores of families, those hopes went up in the smoke of the Happy Land club.

And the ordeal is continuing. Families distraught over the deaths of loved ones who perished in the fire then had to endure the racist cruelty of the INS, which ruled that husbands or wives who accompanied the bodies back to Honduras for burial would not be readmitted to the U.S. if they didn't have green cards! After *El Diario* denounced this ruling with a front-page headline, "La Migra Doesn't Forgive," a special "dispensation" was granted to some families. Still,

children left behind in Honduras will not be permitted to reunite with their surviving parents in the U.S. We demand: Full citizenship rights for all foreign-born workers and their families!

For the sweatshop bosses who employ them and the slumlords who house them, the lives of the "poor and huddled masses" are cheap indeed. Reflecting on the Happy Land carnage, *Daily News* columnist Gail Collins warned, "let's hope that the people in Eastern Europe get to hear something about neighborhoods like this one before they fall irrevocably in love with the magic of American capitalism." How right she is. ■



Among the victims of the "Happy Land" fire, we sadly recall Kim Marlow, a vivacious mother of a young daughter, who like so many others killed that night had gone out for an evening of dancing and socializing with friends. Kim was a CWA member and a picket line militant during this past summer's NYNEX strike. An integrated crowd of over a hundred mourners, including many coworkers, attended a wake for the popular phone worker.



TROTSKY

Robespierre Against the Death Penalty

The barbaric practice of the death penalty, a survival of primitive blood vengeance and the tradition of torture, was condemned by the liberating thinkers of the 18th century Enlightenment. The most idealistic leaders of the French Revolution of 1789-94 sought to remodel society on the basis of rational humanism. Thus in 1791, the Jacobin leader Maximilien Robespierre called for abolition of the death penalty—"the barbarous old

ritual"—from the penal code. Not long after, Robespierre was utilizing the guillotine to defend the French democratic republic against the forces of Europe-wide counter-revolution. This is no "inconsistency," as bourgeois commentators maintain. To those who objected to the execution of the deposed king, Louis XVI, Robespierre answered: "You are confusing the situation of a people in revolution with that of a people with a settled government."

The death penalty is necessary, you say? If that is so, why have so many nations been able to do without it? By what chance have these nations come to possess the greatest wisdom, happiness and freedom? If the penalty of death is the most suited to prevent great crime, it must follow that crime has been less frequent among the peoples who have adopted it and been the most lavish in its use. But the opposite is the truth....

Listen to the voice of reason and justice; it cries out to us that human judgments are never sure enough for society to be able to put to death a man who has been condemned by fellow men who share his fallibility. Even if you imagine the most perfect judicial system, even if you find the most upright and the most enlightened judges, you will still have to allow place for error or prejudice. Why deny yourselves the means to correct them?...

If for the august severity and the moderate calm that should distinguish them [laws] they substitute anger and vengeance; if they shed human blood that they have the power to prevent and that they have no right to shed at all; if they display before the people scenes of cruelty and corpses bruised by torture, then they pervert in the citizens' minds all idea of what is just and unjust, and they give rise within society to terrible prejudices which engender others in their turn. Man is no longer so sacred a concern, his dignity is rated of lesser worth when public authority sets little store by his life. The idea of murder inspires far less terror when the law itself sets the example of it for all to see. Horror of crime diminishes when its only punishment is by another crime. Beware of confusing the efficacy of punishment with its excessive severity: the one is fundamentally opposed to the other.

—Maximilien Robespierre, Speech to the Constituent Assembly (May 1791)



LENIN

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One-Day General Strike Shuts Down Puerto Rico

200,000 March in San Juan

The U.S. island colony of Puerto Rico in the Caribbean was paralyzed March 28 by a 24-hour general strike, the first in 60 years since the militant island-wide cane workers general strike in the 1930s. Public services, utilities, schools, universities and all public transport were shut down. The day of struggle focused on the biggest labor protest in Puerto Rico's history as 200,000 workers, bused from all over the island, marched in militant and festive defiance to the Capitolio, where the rubber-stamp colonial legislature sits.

The general strike was called and organized by the Comité de Organizaciones Sindicales (COS—Committee of Labor Organizations), a new umbrella organization encompassing 70 unions. It struck a powerful blow at the plan of the Popular Democrats (PPD) government to sell the state-owned telecommunications complex, which includes the Puerto Rico Telephone Company (PRTC), the Telephone Authority and Telefónica Hispanoamericana. GTE, BellSouth of Atlanta, and Telefónica Española are among the corporations interested in buying the PRTC. The losses to the capitalist economy occasioned by the work stoppage were estimated at \$70 million. And the display of labor militancy may make potential buyers think again.

On that Wednesday, workers carrying banners and placards stretched out for two miles on Ponce de León Avenue. Following the beat of bongos to the "Lambada" rhythm, they blew whistles and jeered as they passed the PPD national headquarters (boarded up with plywood). Twelve-ton dump trucks loaded with workers blasted their air horns. After the demonstration ended at the Capitolio, the electrical workers union UTIER defiantly marched on to the gov-



Guzmán/El Nuevo Día

Williams/El Nuevo Día
San Juan, March 28: Huge protest, general strike called by trade unions against colonial government selloff of phone company.

ernor's mansion of La Fortaleza, guarded by hundreds of shotgun-wielding cops. There they protested the proposed sale and the government's refusal to negotiate a new contract with UTIER.

In a last-minute attempt to stop the strike, PPD governor Rafael Hernández Colón ("RHC") called in the union leaders for talks. They refused. And even though payday was moved up two days

to coincide with the strike, workers did not go to work. The few that did were met by mass pickets. Trucks blocked the entrances to the former naval base of Isla Grande. Not one bus left the Metropolitan Bus Authority barns, no taxis could be found, private automobile traffic was negligible. In an action the day before, UNTS health workers and other government unions rallied at the Río Piedras

Medical Center, denouncing the governor with chants of "RHC Real Estate selling Puerto Rico."

Hernández Colón announced last February 21 in his televised state of the colony address that the PRTC was on the block for \$3 billion. According to the London *Financial Times* (26 March), if sold, this would be the largest divestment

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Greyhound's Hit-and-Run Scabs

Stop the Buses with Mass Pickets!

Eight hundred unionists marched at the Chicago Greyhound station on March 31 in solidarity with striking Greyhound workers who are now in the sixth week of their strike. The Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) members are defending the very existence of their union from the open union-busting of Greyhound chief Fred Currey.

From Los Angeles to New York, dozens of strikers have been run down by scab drivers. On day two of the strike, Robert Waterhouse was brutally killed by a scab in Redding, California. In Orlando, Florida, the 16-year-old daughter of an ATU picket was hit by a bus, rupturing her kidney. On March 29, a scab bus accelerated up the exit ramp at New York's Port Authority terminal and, running a red light, struck down Mack Watts, a striking driver.

In the face of this company violence, the ATU bureaucrats have only crawled to the Democratic Party mayors and governors to plead they "exercise their authority" and shut down Greyhound—yet it's their cops who are harassing and arresting strikers every day. And the AFL-CIO brass make sure the pickets never get close to stopping the buses.

When Brother Watts was hit, the ATU

Local 1202 tops responded by...calling a press conference two days later. Strikers who showed up were furious to find it was postponed. "Why aren't we picketing the Teamster fuel deliveries?" one demanded. Watts told an April 3 press conference how police held him incommunicado at the hospital. And on March

31, a scab driver at the Port Authority leapt out of a bus and tried to slash a picket with an eight-inch-long martial arts knife.

The Greyhound strikers are being set up as the next "strike martyrs" by the cynical and cowardly union bureaucracy. The union hasn't even shut down compa-

nies carrying Greyhound passengers like Carolina Coach—organized by the ATU! To save their union, ATU strikers must rip the strike out of the hands of these "labor lieutenants of capital" and appeal to the rest of the working class to join them on mass picket lines which will shut down Greyhound! ■



WV Photo
Boston cops lead scab Greyhound bus through ATU pickets, March 9. Labor's gotta play hardball to win!

Japan Elections: Social Democrats Fizzle

TOKYO—The Japanese Socialist Party's bid to head a bourgeois coalition government, with Takako Doi as the first woman prime minister in this deeply male-chauvinist country, came up short. The right-wing Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which has run the government since the early 1950s, gained a secure majority in the February elections to the lower house of the Diet, reversing last year's defeat in the upper house. The election campaign was marked by red-baiting, racist attacks on the Korean minority and bickering among the opposition parties over who was more loyal to the interests of "Japan, Inc."

The LDP's victory was neither a mandate for its policies nor a restoration of its former authority. The Socialist Party (JSP) gained a majority of women voters and also won in rural areas, where these social democrats are trying to out-chauvinist the LDP as defenders of agricultural protectionism. Nonetheless, the new LDP prime minister, Toshiki Kaifu, is credited with effective damage control. He appointed a woman to the post of secretary in his first cabinet, taking a lot of wind out of Doi's sails, and managed to keep LDP sex and financial scandals off the front page. But once the election was won, Kaifu unceremoniously dumped the two women in his cabinet. And all 275 LDP members in the new Diet are male!

Nobody actually believes the JSP, if elected, would attempt to institute socialist policies! But the LDP ran a hard red-baiting campaign pushing the "Communism is dead" theme and reveling at the collapse of Stalinist rule in East Europe, national turmoil in the Soviet Union and the prospects for capitalist reunification of Germany. They railed that a Socialist victory would bring economic and political insecurity to Japan.

The JSP looked toward forming a coalition government with two smaller opposition parties to its right—the Buddhist-dominated Komeito ("clean government") party and the rabidly anti-Soviet Democratic Socialist Party. The DSP is the kind of "socialist" party where Langley, Virginia really calls the shots. To play up their support for the Washington/Tokyo axis, the Democratic Socialists ran a retired general as one of their candidates. The Japanese Communist Party—which broke with Moscow in the 1960s and has since sworn unconditional loyalty to the Japanese state in typical "Euro-communist" fashion—simply complained at being left out of any plans for a

Amid Anti-Korean Hysteria

coalition government.

Komeito and the Democratic Socialists insisted that the JSP renounce its formal, pacifistic opposition (which had reflected widespread anti-militarist sentiment among the population) to the Japanese armed forces (the "Self Defense Forces")

socialism will be achieved peacefully after the institution of "full democracy" is no different than the old discredited notion of "two-stage revolution," pioneered by the Russian Mensheviks and later taken over by Stalin with disastrous consequences from China to Spain.



Lau Chung Ren

Racist, red-baiting campaign by LDP leader Toshiki Kaifu (left) defeated increasingly right-wing Socialist Party, led by Takako Doi (below), in February elections.



Hashimoto/Syigma

and to the military treaty with the Americans. Doi & Co. promptly did so, and are also planning to drop the reference to "socialist revolution" from the JSP's official program. Doi's rightward motion has further alienated the left-wing faction (Kyokai-ha) in the Socialist Party, particularly as it has not even paid off in terms of parliamentary opportunism.

However, Kyokai-ha's program that

Whether or not the JSP keeps "socialist revolution" in its formal program, it remains what Lenin called a *bourgeois* workers party. As we wrote after the JSP won the elections to the upper house of the Diet last summer:

"...a JSP-led coalition government will be no victory for the working class and the oppressed women of Japan. Social democracy in Japan as elsewhere serves only to bind the exploited and oppressed to the decaying and war-driven capitalist order."

—"Japan Ruling Party in Disarray," *WV* No. 484, 1 September 1989

JSP Aborts "Operation Madonna"

Much of the JSP's recent ballot success can be attributed to women voters who resent their status in the most grossly male-chauvinist society of any advanced capitalist country, and who see Doi as someone who will stand up for their rights. In last year's elections, the JSP ran a significant number of women candidates, many of them previously unpolitical housewives. The Japanese media dubbed the tactic "Operation Madonna." But this time around, with a shot at governmental power, "Operation Madonna" was scrapped. Of the 66 women candidates running in the election, the JSP fielded only eight.

The recent surge of women's interest

and participation in Japanese politics has focused attention on the degrading social conditions women face in "modern" Japan. Women make up almost 40 percent of the workforce but are relegated to the most menial jobs virtually regardless of their education. In basic industry they can never rise above temporary or part-time status. A working woman is expected to live at home until she meets a husband, then move her domicile to her husband's home. Business enforces these feudal traditions by paying women such low wages that it is nearly impossible to live an independent life. Those who do are considered strange or dangerous.

In a typical Japanese office, women—even if they have university degrees—are expected to greet visitors, make tea, tidy up the place and act as bar hostesses during office parties. Last October the Second Bar Association of Tokyo held a one-day phone-in for women to air their grievances. The phone lines were tied up for six hours! Over a third of the callers said they had been assaulted or pressured to have sex at the workplace. Sexual harassment is routinely used to force older women to quit and to bully those women who refuse sexual advances.

Last year the first sexual harassment suit in Japan's history was filed by a 32-year-old single woman from Kyushu. (Significantly, there is no indigenous Japanese term for sexual harassment.) This woman was fired after protesting that rumors were being circulated around the office about her "affairs." The arbitration court told her that the "rumors were a tribute to her attractiveness" and that she was "behaving ridiculously." A typical response to the case by a male office worker is that "an executive ought to be able to innocently ask his secretary about the color of her underwear that day" (*New York Times*, 13 November 1989).

While the oppression of women is integral to all bourgeois societies, the especial degradation of women in Japan is rooted in the strong vestiges of its not-so-distant feudal past, consecrated by the emperor system. It is crucial for women to understand that on this question Doi & Co. are to the *right* of even bourgeois democracy. The 1945 convention of the Socialist Party, which united the various trends of prewar Japanese social democracy, ended with banzai cheers of "Long Live the Emperor!" Doi stood in line with the LDP mandarins to sign the condolence book for the late emperor Hirohito and is today pushing for a change in the Imperial Household Rules so a woman can ascend the throne. We've all heard of bourgeois feminism—is this feudal feminism?

Full Citizenship Rights for Koreans and All Foreign-Born Workers!

The election campaign was marked by violent anti-Korean hysteria, a direct result of the LDP's aggressive manipulation of an alleged bribery scandal in the Pachinko business in an effort to link the JSP to Communist North Korea. (Pachinko is an extremely popular legal gambling game, a cross between pinball and slot machines.) About 70 percent of the Pachinko parlors are operated by Koreans, and this multi-billion-yen industry employs a significant chunk of the Korean population. The operators are divided in their sympathies between pro-North

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Ethan Hoffman

Women employees bow to boss at typical Tokyo reception. Japan is unrivaled among advanced capitalist societies for gross male chauvinism.

As Thatcher Sinks, Labour Party Enforces Capitalist Misery



Peter Macdiarmid



Justin Sutcliffe

Massive working-class protests against soak-the-poor tax have swept Scotland, England and Wales. Above: demonstrations in east London and Bristol.

Britain: Poll Tax Revolt

This article is adapted from the *Workers Hammer supplement*, 31 March 1990, published by our comrades of the *Spartacist League of Britain*.

Britain has erupted in mass demonstrations and street protests directed at the imposition of the punitive and reactionary poll tax by the Thatcher government. Across areas of Scotland almost half the population has not paid. Now, as collection of the tax is due to begin in England and Wales, local council meetings to set tax levels have been besieged by angry crowds. The government has responded by mobilising mounted police and riot cops, in scenes reminiscent of the miners strike five years ago. On March 31 in London, 150,000 to 200,000 people protested the poll tax. Angry demonstrators torched a construction site, as mounted cops injured scores of people and arrested at least 300. Labour Party deputy leader Roy Hattersley badmouthed the protesters as "mindless hooligans." And the witchhunt has already begun against left-wing "anarchists and extreme fringe elements" who were blamed for Saturday's "violence" (*Independent*, 2 April).

The size of the demonstrations strikingly underlines the instability of Thatcher's regime. Hundreds of thousands of people have enrolled in anti-poll-tax unions. Motorists entering villages and towns in the Tory heartland are greeted by handpainted signs reading, "You are entering a poll tax-free zone" (*Independent*, 9 March). Mass marches and protests have been held in areas which, as one commentator put it, "have probably never seen a demonstration before."

While burning effigies of Thatcher have become a popular symbol of anti-poll-tax protest, demonstrators have also jeered local Labour councillors who have set high poll tax levels, demanding "Break the law, not the poor." In Scotland, local Labour councils have issued hundreds of thousands of writs against non-payers. And when Thatcher violence-baited anti-poll-tax demonstrators and denounced anyone who counselled disobeying the law by not paying the tax, Labour Party head Neil Kinnock responded: "I agree with everything you just said, as I have for long made very clear" (*Independent*, 9 March).

The poll tax is neither a tax on income nor an assessment on property but a

punishment for existing. All adults in the area are taxed at the same flat rate, regardless of wealth or social circumstances. Thus, a millionaire living alone on a large estate could pay one-tenth the tax of an extended Asian family living in a crowded tenement. The rich get fat tax cuts: the relative tax burden of the wealthiest 10 per cent of the population will be half what it was under the old system of rates. For everyone else, taxes will go up an average of 50 per cent.

With the local administrations turned into tax collectors, those most in need of services—the poor unable to pay—will fear to use them. Tens of thousands have "officially disappeared" from Scottish cities to escape payment; in terms of access to social services as well as the ability to vote, these "disappeared" have become non-persons. And the tax, which greatly enhances the government's ability to maintain detailed files on every individual, also serves as part of the general onslaught against elementary democratic rights.

Obscenely the Council in Westminster, where the Houses of Parliament as well as Buckingham Palace are located, has decided to levy a *double tax* on prisoners, treating their outside residences as "second homes," as if they were country squires or Members of Parliament. In England and Wales you can still be thrown in jail for debt; thus, those unable to pay the poll tax can be imprisoned and then taxed twice over! And in Scotland the jails are already *de facto* debtors' prisons; almost 50 per cent of inmates were incarcerated for non-payment of fines.

Not surprisingly people are talking about the Peasants' Revolt, triggered by the imposition of a poll tax in 1380. A version of the poll tax in 1641, levied to pay off the Scottish army occupying northern England, helped spark the English Civil War, in which the monarch Charles I was executed by Cromwell's revolutionary forces. In British colonies, hut taxes were used to force people out of subsistence farming into the system of imperial exploitation. After the U.S. Civil War had destroyed slavery, poll taxes were used in the American South explicitly to prevent the formally emancipated black people from exercising their democratic rights. The blatant "steal from the

poor and give to the rich" aspect of the tax has stirred tax protesters who invaded Nottingham Council dressed in Robin Hood costumes. One disgruntled Tory MP admitted that the government seemed to have "declared war on the people" (*Sunday Times*, 4 March).

In highhanded fashion the poll tax was imposed in Scotland, where the Tories have minimal support anyway, a year earlier than in England and Wales. But the Scots have not made themselves into compliant guinea pigs. In Glasgow fully 42.5 per cent of the population have refused to pay the poll tax or are at least three months in arrears (*Independent*, 8 March). Attempts to enforce the laws by seizing the property of those who don't pay the tax have largely been frustrated



Cambio 16

"Iron Lady" Thatcher sinking.

by the mushrooming anti-poll-tax unions. Massive outpourings of residents have blocked attempts to carry out "poindings," where sheriff's officers invade homes in order to carry out preliminary valuations of property. 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 poinding.

The protests by anti-poll-tax unions could potentially develop in the direction of the militant plebeian tactics used in Scotland during World War I. Be-

tween 1914 and 1919 the Glasgow area earned its name as "Red Clydeside." Working-class women, often the wives of Scottish soldiers at the front, were in the leadership of militant rent strikes. Rent strike committees were formed to coordinate the struggle and resist the bailiff's goons. The rent strikes were closely linked to proletarian struggle in the engineering and munitions factories. But today the key political question posed by the fight against the poll tax is the Labour Party.

Thatcher Down the Tubes?

The poll tax is likely to be ephemeral, with the strong probability that its chief architect and advocate (Thatcher) will shortly go down the tubes. While there are large numbers of people who despise both Kinnock and his henchmen for enforcing this onerous tax, on a national level public opinion polls show the Labour Party has a huge lead over the Tories. But that could rapidly change if the Conservatives dump Thatcher before the general election.

Now some Tory MPs are demanding a leadership election before autumn. Michael Heseltine has the advantage of being an opponent of the poll tax. Educated at Shrewsbury and Oxford, he likes to present himself as a self-made entrepreneur and tycoon. His Haymarket publishing company is worth about £100 million, and he cruises around in a chauffeur-driven Jaguar. Heseltine's objections to Britain being merely a junior ally of U.S. imperialism led to his resignation from the Cabinet in the Westland helicopter affair. Particularly as the imperialist powers savour what they hope will be opportunities to exploit the working people of Eastern Europe, his views find favour with a substantial section of bourgeois opinion which fears that Thatcher's single-minded persistence in the Anglo-American "special relationship" will blow it for them.

"Tarzan" Heseltine gained notoriety when in a Commons debate in 1976 he seized the parliamentary mace, claiming he was provoked by Labour MPs singing "The Red Flag" after a close vote. Heseltine has always had close ties with the British military establishment. The son of a Welsh colonel, he served as an

continued on page 13

Japan Elections...

(continued from page 4)

Korea and pro-South, a reflection of the social fabric of the Korean community as a whole.

The Pachinko "scandal" turned the national spotlight on the Korean minority and set off a series of racist attacks. Korean schoolgirls, who wear traditional national dress to class, were the main victims as they were assaulted by housewives and grandmothers with umbrellas. As attacks escalated and spread throughout Japan, many were organized by right-wing thugs. One veteran Korean leader remarked that this is the worst situation they have faced since the 1923 Kanto earthquake when thousands of Koreans were murdered in a xenophobic pogrom.

Between 1910 and 1945, during the Japanese occupation of the Korean peninsula, Koreans were brought to Japan as forced laborers. Following World War II, most stayed, as Japan had become their home. After three generations Koreans still have no civil rights! They are not citizens, cannot vote nor run for office, and must be fingerprinted and carry a "gaijin" (foreigner) card with them at all times. Violations of this South Africa-style pass system open up Koreans to police harassment. To become citizens in their own country they must deny their ancestry and adopt a Japanese name! Few

Koreans submit to this humiliation.

The recent attacks against Koreans in this insular and arrogantly racist society are part of a general racist upsurge being fanned by the dramatic increase in low-wage immigrant labor from Asia and Africa. These foreign workers are filling what are known as "ki" jobs (*kitani*—dirty, *kitsui*—hard, *kiken*—dangerous). The "ki" workers are viciously exploited by petty capitalists, while the state authorities subject them to every kind of racist degradation.

To take just a couple of disgusting examples, the Pakistani embassy recently protested a National Police Agency Academy memo that advised its new graduates to wash their hands after interrogating South Asians, since "Pakistanis have unique body odor they make interrogation and detention rooms stink" (*Japan Times*, 4 December 1989). The mayor of the industrial city of Kawaguchi, adjacent to Tokyo, told a forum on foreign migrant workers that "Japanese people could bump into Pakistanis at night because of their dark skin"!

Japan's traditional minorities, Burakumin (feudal-era outcasts) and Ainu (Japan's aboriginal population), are rigidly restricted to a second-class citizenship. Ainus are generally segregated in the northern island of Hokkaido while Burakumin are segregated into separate communities and suffer institutionalized discrimination in all areas of social life, reinforced by the infamous "lists," which are formally illegal. They can only work

as temporary laborers in basic industry and are denied union protection and most company benefits. Koreans are barred outright from basic industry and must work in supplier, subcontractor, Pachinko or family-oriented businesses.

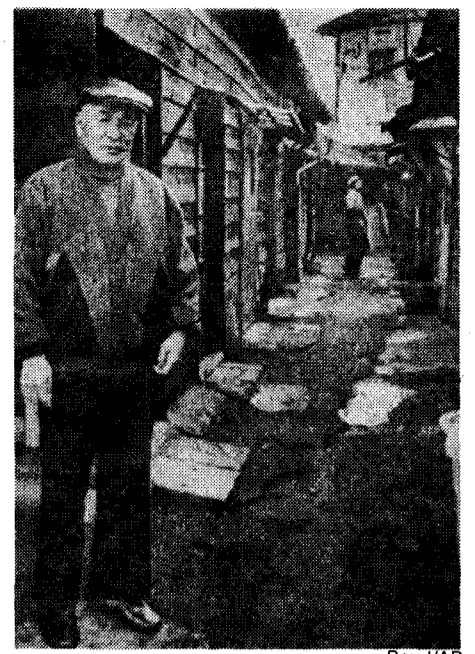
The question of racist oppression and the need for a Leninist party as a "tribune of the people" was sharply posed during the recent Diet elections. Yet none of the "left" defended the embattled Koreans nor fought against the horrid conditions immigrant workers must endure. The Spartacist Group of Japan calls for a *workers republic*, thus linking proletarian socialist revolution to the destruction of the emperor system and to the liberation of women and oppressed minorities.

We demand full citizenship rights for all non-Japanese workers and their families! End the second-class citizenship status for Burakumin and Ainu! Smash the "gaijin" card system! No to forced assimilation and mandatory Japanese names! For bilingual education and unrestricted access to cultural activities! For civil rights and full integration! Down with job, education and housing discrimination! Minority and immigrant workers must be integrated into the Japanese labor movement! Organize the unorganized, especially the temporary workers in big industry!

For Labor/Minority Mobilizations to Smash Rightist Terror!

During the interminable deathwatch for Hirohito in late 1988, the LDP mayor of Nagasaki, Hitoshi Motoshima, became a marked man when he said the emperor bore some responsibility for the crimes of the Japanese military in the Pacific War (World War II). This January Motoshima was shot and seriously wounded by right-wing thugs. These nationalist fanatics orchestrated many of the attacks on Korean schoolchildren and were encamped in Kyoto trying to disrupt a teachers union conference. The left-wing teachers union (Nikkyoso) has long been a target of the right wing, as the teachers are fighting against the institution of the education ministry's new guidelines that will make respect for the emperor, the unofficial Kimigayo national anthem and the rising-sun flag (Hinomaru) part of the curriculum.

The rise of right-wing terror is a mortal danger to the working class. As in Nazi Germany, fascism aims at the physical destruction of the labor movement.



Boyd/AP

Burakumin minority is segregated into separate communities (above) subject to pervasive discrimination.

Yet the leaders of the three big labor federations haven't lifted a finger to combat the nationalist gangs. And the idiot New Left has been too busy trying to shut down Tokyo's Narita airport (an ecology fad) to fight the real enemies of social progress in Japan. It is particularly galling that the reactionary gangs have been harassing union conventions with impunity. The labor movement has the numbers, discipline and muscle to smash these thugs.

What is urgently needed are united-front mobilizations of labor, women's rights groups and the oppressed minorities to turn off these vermin's loudspeakers and sweep them off the streets. When these right-wing creeps first descended on Nagasaki, flying squads of unionists should have kept the streets free of fascist pollution. Labor should have organized, along with residents of the Korean community, escort patrols to ensure the safety of Korean schoolchildren.

Only the proletariat, leading all oppressed sections of society, can liberate Japan from exploitation by the Mitsubishi and Mitsui and from the dead hand of emperor worship. To achieve this historic task, the working class must be broken from the social-democratic and Stalinist agents of Japan, Inc. and won to a revolutionary Marxist leadership. This is the perspective of the Spartacist Group of Japan, part of the International Communist League. ■

Nagasaki Shimbun



Der Spiegel

Right-wing terror on the rise: Nagasaki mayor Hitoshi Motoshima shot for publicly saying Emperor Hirohito had some responsibility for World War II crimes. Fascists blare nationalist, anti-communist incitement from sound trucks.

Puerto Rico...

(continued from page 3)

in U.S. history. The PRTC presently employs 8,000 workers, producing \$70 million net profit a year and the prospect of going up to \$200 million annually as cellular phones are introduced. The company was bought from ITT in 1974 for \$165 million. For years, the PPD built up a large state apparatus, the source of tens of thousands of patronage jobs and considerable social services. But now federal transfer payments are drying up, so the

PPD "populares" are looting their own creation.

In addition to the telephone companies, the profitable state telecommunications conglomerate also includes television channels 3 and 6. Moreover, thousands of government workers in the Navieras de Puerto Rico shipping company, electrical workers, teachers, health workers and employees of many other public and semi-public corporations feel threatened by the proposed PRTC sale. A year and a half ago, the militant UTIER electrical workers mobilized 10,000 workers along the same route as Wednesday's march

(see WV No. 468, 6 January 1989). This showed the power of labor action, and last week 20 times that number turned out.

However, the COS union leaders follow the political lead of the bourgeois loyal opposition parties like the New Progressive Party (PNP) and the Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño (PIP). Both the pro-statehood PNP and the pro-"independence" PIP joined hands with the PPD, George Bush and the U.S. Congress in pushing a phony "plebiscite" to supposedly resolve the 92-year-old question of Puerto Rico's "status." The debate heated up dramatically in the past year, but the "alternatives" presented are to become a beggar state, a disguised colony (the present meaningless "commonwealth" in English or deceptive "free associated state" in Spanish), or a neo-colonial bourgeois mini-republic.

Following the "plebiscite" fad, two days after the general strike, the COS labor leadership stated that an island-wide referendum on the proposed sale of the telecommunications complex would be acceptable if the government would finance an opposition campaign! This was originally proposed in a joint PIP-PNP bill which aimed at pacifying and demobilizing the labor upsurge. While supporting tame opposition to the sale of the *telefónica*, the "PNP-PIP" and the labor misleaders fear the workers' power demonstrated in the general strike. But the ruling PPD announced that it will seek legislative approval for the

sale next week anyway.

A rigged referendum on the sale of the telecommunications conglomerate won't reflect the will of the working people any more than a colonial "plebiscite" can democratically decide upon Puerto Rico's unconditional right to self-determination, i.e., independence. But while the bourgeois-nationalist PIP offers itself to Washington as reliable administrators of a formally independent Puerto Rico, the petty-bourgeois nationalist *independentistas* such as the Macheteros and PSP have no answer but their traditional impotent abstentionism. In contrast, we Trotskyists of the International Communist League seek to mobilize the power of the workers in internationalist class struggle, and not just in Puerto Rico.

In an interview with *Workers Vanguard*, UTIER president José Valentín stated that in the general strike, "our message was precisely aimed at the workers taking power in Puerto Rico. The Puerto Rican people don't believe in the politicians anymore." The island-wide work stoppage and show of strength by 200,000 working people in front of the Capitolio certainly demonstrate a will to fight. And the impact of that struggle will be felt not only on the island but in the U.S., where two million Puerto Ricans live and work. But what is needed is the leadership of a Bolshevik workers party fighting for socialist revolution throughout the Caribbean and in the decisive imperialist heartland. ■

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Daily News to Workers: "Drop Dead!"

NYC Press Unions Gotta Play Hardball

The *Daily News* has declared war on the newspaper unions of New York City. In a carefully orchestrated assault, the Chicago Tribune Company, owner of the *News*, has set out to destroy the unions at the largest-circulation metropolitan newspaper in the U.S. The capitalist press is already calling this "the next big test" for labor. The workers movement had better make damn sure this battle in the class war is won.

The contracts of the ten unions, encompassing over 2,500 workers at the *News*, expired on March 30. The workers have stayed on the job, frozen in a defensive posture by the union tops, who are waiting for the *News*' provocations. The list of "takeaways" demanded of the drivers, mailers and pressmen's unions makes it obvious the *Daily News* is out for blood: wage freezes, curtailing seniority rights, slashing vacations, no-strike clauses, trainees hired at half pay.

These takeaway demands come on top of \$100 million in union givebacks and over 1,000 jobs wiped out in the last decade—jobs that were slashed as a result of attrition agreements reached after the 1978 NYC newspaper strike. George McDonald, head of the NYC Allied Printing Trades Council, said of the *News*, "They're trying to recoup the prerogatives they gave up since 1919 in one fell swoop."

The Tribune bosses claim they need the givebacks to afford the automation and color presses to survive. Workers know the 40-year-old presses are antiquated. It's them, not management, who have to breathe air full of oil, ink and paper dust. On *60 Minutes* (1 April), CBS reporter Mike Wallace noted the unions' claim that the Tribune Co. is just out to make the *News* cheaper for a potential buyer. But Wallace closed saying that "hundreds of union jobs will have to go." Who are they kidding? The unions gave up \$30 million in concessions and more jobs three years ago to "help The News survive." The result? No color printing, no new plant, zip.

In a provocative challenge to New York labor, the Tribune Co. plans to produce and deliver a newspaper during a strike. To do it, they have brought a union-busting arsenal to town, at a cost of \$4 million a month. The Pacific Street printing plant in Brooklyn is patrolled by dogs and armed guards. Strikebreaking thugs are holed up at a New Jersey motel

and trailing drivers around to learn their routes. Another 90 rooms have been rented at a Leona Helmsley hotel next to the *Daily News* building. An abandoned Sears warehouse in New Jersey has been set up as an alternative newsroom. Ed Koch's former "corrections commissioner" has even been appointed to deal with union picket lines!

A gang of professional union busters—the Tennessee law firm of King and Ballow—is coordinating the *Daily News* attack. At Tribune-owned newspapers in Ft. Lauderdale and Orlando, Florida and

apply for 116 scab mailer jobs. What racist hypocrisy! The *News* fired more than 100 women and minority members of the mailers union when work was shipped out of New York in 1987. The *News* bosses are convicted racists. In 1987 a jury found them guilty of discrimination in a suit brought by black reporters. David Hardy, one of those reporters, and an executive board member of Newspaper Guild Local 3, told *WV*:

"The people who run the *Daily News*, namely Jim Hoge, and that gang of Bourbons out at the *Chicago Tribune*, really almost defy description in terms of their

company has left a trail of broken strikes and busted unions from Chicago to Newport News. The 1985 *Chicago Tribune* strike was defeated because Teamster and IBEW tops treacherously ordered the drivers and electricians to cross the picket lines of the Typographers, Pressmen and Mailers. The strike died a slow death, as the labor bureaucracy diverted workers into an impotent consumer boycott of the *Tribune*.

The printing trades unions must act now to spike the *News* plans, with a *solid industrywide NYC newspaper strike*. And it will be hardball. David Hardy spoke of the 88-day battle in 1978:

"You've got some people who have been [at the *News*] maybe six, seven, eight years, but they came after that '78 strike and they really have no sense of how serious it was and how determined the strikers were to shut that paper down and to deal with anyone who wanted to cross the picket line."

The *Times*, *Newsday* and the *Post* are laying back, planning to reap the benefits after the *News* guts the printing unions. The unions must strike them all. Wall Street and the bankers would howl. The threat of producing a scab paper can be met by a sit-down strike—occupy the offices and plant! Instead of a consumer boycott the unions should produce their own daily paper. A workers newspaper would be key in organizing and expanding the strike: a real paper, with news, sports and whatever. The only thing the workers news wouldn't accept would be capitalist advertising. Let Bloomingdale's and Alexander's turn up the heat on the newspaper bosses.

A fight to organize the unorganized and to create jobs through a shorter workweek at no loss in pay can forge an alliance between the unions and unemployed black and Hispanic workers. The way to break the *News*' racist plans is to fight for union-run minority recruitment and training programs at full union scale and at the capitalists' expense. But that requires a class-struggle leadership which will fight to oust the labor misleaders, whose narrow craft divisions and reliance on Democratic Party politicians are a roadblock to victory. Instead, there must be a fight for a workers party which will champion the rights of all—from the mostly highly skilled craft workers to the ghetto poor.

The *Daily News* unions' fight is all labor's struggle! ■



DeMarina/AV Post

In 1978, *Daily News* tried to run scab paper in New York... and failed. Union militancy, solidarity broke management onslaught after three days.

Newport News, Virginia, bosses recruiting scab editors and reporters openly boasted: "We need to smash these unions for the good of the Tribune Co." (*Newsday*, 16 March). At the *Daily Press* in Newport News, dummy pages of the *News* are being produced; there is even a "war room" where phones are marked "Bronx," "Manhattan" and "Brooklyn." Workers there aren't strangers to the Tribune Co.'s union-busting—the Newspaper Guild at the *Daily Press* was decertified three years ago.

Ominously, the *Daily News* has targeted their advertisements for scabs at black, Hispanic and women New Yorkers, while labeling the printing unions as bigoted. The week before the union contracts expired, the *News* drew over 3,000 mostly black and Hispanic workers to

ruthlessness and their willingness to play a low-down racist game to attempt to defeat the unions."

Like the Chicago meatpacking bosses in 1919, and Henry Ford in the 1930s, the Tribune bosses are using the club of unemployed blacks against predominantly white unions. As the NYPD killers gun down black and Hispanic youths, and racial tensions boil in New York, the *News* is out to provoke race war. Racist reaction and the deepening poverty of black and Hispanic New York exist side by side with the glittering arrogance of the Helmsleys and Trumps. And even white youth are finding themselves left out in NYC, with barely a quarter in the labor market (i.e., three-quarters have given up even looking for a job).

The management of the Tribune Com-

Stop D.A. Vendetta Against Dhoruba Moore

Panther 21 Leader Freed After 17 Years

Richard Dhoruba Moore won a victory against COINTELPRO, the FBI's murderous Counterintelligence Program, on March 15. State Supreme Court Justice Peter J. McQuillan threw out Moore's conviction and ordered a new trial on the grounds that prosecutors concealed evidence. One week later Moore walked out of prison to await the government's next move.

As we wrote in "FBI's War Against the Panthers" (*WV* No. 478, 26 May 1989), "Moore was one of the famous Panther 21. In April 1969, 21 members of the New York Black Panther Party were charged with plotting to blow up governmental and other institutions, including the Bronx Botanical Gardens, Macy's and Bloomingdale's. The cop concoction was so ludicrous that in May 1971, after nine months on trial, the

longest trial in New York State history, the jury only took 90 minutes to acquit Dhoruba and the other Panthers of the 156 counts against them. But the COINTELPRO plot accomplished its goal, keeping leading members of the NY Panther organization behind bars for over two crucial years."

Six days after their acquittal in 1971, Dhoruba Moore was rearrested on new charges stemming from a machine-gun attack on Manhattan D.A. Frank Hogan's home. President Nixon told FBI chief J. Edgar Hoover "not to pull any punches" to get the Panthers. And Dhoruba, near the top of their list, was arrested two weeks later. It took three trials for the courts to railroad Dhoruba—the first two ending in mistrials.

After a decade of legal battles, Dhoruba obtained documents from his

COINTELPRO files proving that his conviction and life sentence were the product of a conspiracy by the NYC Police Department, the FBI and the Manhattan D.A.

Star witness Pauline Joseph, a diagnosed paranoid schizophrenic, had given more than 25 contradictory statements to the cops during her 20 months in police custody. Before and during the trial Assistant D.A. John F. Keenan, now a federal judge, refused to disclose that Joseph initially asserted Dhoruba was innocent. When Dhoruba sought to call her back to the witness stand after one of her statements clearing him came to light, the prosecutors denied knowing her whereabouts although at the very moment she was still in police custody. The state's other major witness, Augustus Qualls, has since recanted his testimony,

calling it a police "fabrication."

In grudgingly reversing the conviction, McQuillan alibied for Keenan, absurdly claiming that the concealment of evidence was a "nonwillful failure" by the prosecution and that there was no "misconduct or bad faith" by the D.A.'s office.

Not content with already robbing over 18 years of Dhoruba's life, the state has announced it will appeal the decision. Dhoruba summed it up, "I have had to live with the inhuman consequences of COINTELPRO and the mean-spirited and racist District Attorney. If New York had a death penalty, they would have framed me and buried their misconduct."

Dhoruba Moore's freedom is a victory for all of COINTELPRO's victims buried behind bars. Drop all charges against Dhoruba! ■

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Selections from Spartakist Arbeiterpressekorrespondenz

ARBEITERPRESSEKORRESPONDENZ
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Arbeiter von Leuna: Vorsicht
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 Am 15. März 1989 besetzten die Arbeiter von Leuna die Betriebe der DDR. Sie wollen unsere Betriebe übernehmen oder dicht machen. Sie wollen unsere Betriebe übernehmen oder dicht machen.

The following statement of internationalist greetings was printed, in Russian and German, in Arprekorr No. 29, 27 March 1990.

Dear Comrades,

Soldiers of the Soviet Army, you come from a country that is very troubled now. Your officials and political instructors have so praised Lenin and so denied and buried Trotsky that one is now a boring icon and the other a monster. Actually they were both real men in a real time who led the masses of Soviet people to liberation insofar as was possible in a poor, backward, war-ridden country.

Today at home things are very confused. On the one hand it is permitted to talk about and seek answers to hidden things in our history. On the other hand capitalist exploitation is being encouraged. The nationalities are restless and want to break away because the decades of Stalinism have very much come to

Letter to Our Comrade Soviet Soldiers

taste of tsarism, which Lenin characterized as "a prison house of peoples." Perestroika has greatly fueled and intensified pre-existing national antagonisms by promoting economic competition and self-interest. The socialist principles of equality, internationalism and working-class solidarity are degraded.

At another pole Pamyat and their ilk long to go back to the "old Russia" of obscurantism, backwardness, and the persecution of Jews. Great Russian nationalist demagogues are spewing this poison among the workers in order to paralyze their ability to act in their self-defense across national lines. As Lenin said in 1919: "Shame on those who foment ha-

tred towards the Jews, who foment hatred against other nations. Long live the fraternal trust and fighting alliance of the workers of all nations in the struggle to overthrow capital."

The Soviet Union of today is not the poor thing that came out of the Civil War of 1920. But since 1945, its imperialist enemies have been united under the direction of the United States government in a relentless, all-sided struggle to destroy the Soviet Union. Stalin's criminal usurpation of Soviet and party democracy, hostility to international socialist revolution and cowardly crawling before one or another imperialist power has so weakened the Soviet Union that Stalin's

heirs are now seeking to give it up. They are caving in to the prospect of a "Fourth Reich." This will embolden the most dangerous warmongering forces, from West German revanchism to the Pentagon, who are now aiming for the disintegration of the Soviet Union and its destruction as an anti-capitalist state.

This course is supported and pushed by large layers of the urban intelligentsia who are in fact the children of the former bureaucrats of Stalin and who now believe that they can become capitalist administrators and prettifiers. But the economic and political reality of capitalism over the grave of the multinational homeland of the October Revolution will be anything but pretty. Beware the lies of "free market" demagogues who paint a fool's paradise of life under capitalism. Beware the lies of the nascent social democrats who speak of "controlled capitalism," they are, knowingly or not, a Trojan horse for a new Operation Barbarossa.

The Soviet Union needs a strong workers party built on internal democracy and military unity at the front. Since 1945 you and your fathers have stood here in the DDR, on this front line against imperialism's threats to our common gains, achieved through the overthrow of capitalism. We need to deepen military and economic cooperation between the DDR and the Soviet Union as well as the other workers states on the basis of workers democracy. This was the communism of Lenin and Trotsky. It is high time that you learn how the Soviet Union really came into being and apply these lessons today.

Best wishes from German, American and other communists of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

March 1990



Soviet soldiers at swearing-in ceremony at Treptow war memorial, East Berlin. For over four decades, Red Army in DDR has stood as front line of defense against imperialism.

The following article is translated from Arprekorr No. 28, 20 March 1990.

On 13 March 1990, shortly before his 90th birthday, veteran Trotskyist Oskar Hippe died. Barely six weeks before, his wife Gertrud had died on February 3 at the age of 88.

Son of a railway worker, Spartakusbund member, KPD [Communist Party of Germany] founder and Trotskyist—Oskar Hippe's life is a journal of the German communist movement in the 20th century. A socialist for more than 70 years, Hippe spent seven years in Stalinist prisons before he was released in 1956.

Shortly after hearing Karl Liebknecht speak at the 1916 May Day rally Hippe joined the Spartakusbund and later participated in the Spartakus Uprising of 1918-19 and the founding of the KPD. In the late '20s Hippe fought the Stalinist degeneration of German and international communism and joined in the formation of the Leninbund as part of the Trotskyist Left Opposition in 1929.

While the KPD and Social Democrats let Hitler come to power without a fight, Hippe and the Trotskyists in the Oranienburg section of Berlin built effective workers united-front militias to fight the Nazis. He continued the struggle in the underground after Hitler took power in 1933. After his arrest in January 1934 Hippe was imprisoned and tortured for two years in the Nazi internment camp at Luckau. Released in 1936, Hippe worked in an animal research station. There he met a French prisoner who was

Honor Oskar Hippe 1900-1990

in direct contact with PCF leader Maurice Thorez and who was in Germany as a forced laborer. At great danger to himself Hippe gave assistance to the French prisoners and forced laborers.

Following the Red Army liberation of Europe Hippe resumed trade-union activities and along with his comrades entered the reconstituted KPD, where they built two oppositional groups. With the support of both Stalinists and Social Democrats Hippe was elected one of the local secretaries of the Berlin trade-union council. In response to Hippe and his comrades' activity, the local KPD leadership decreed that anyone who had ever been expelled from the party could not rejoin. Hippe was again kicked out.

Though limited to about 50 members and despite extreme poverty the International Communists of Germany (IKD), German section of the Fourth International, published a biweekly newspaper, *Der Marxist*, and distributed publications of the International. By 1947 they had formed groups in the Soviet sector of Germany, and sympathizing groups in Merseburg, Weissenfels, Halle and the copper mines of Mansfeld. Hippe, living in West Berlin, regularly traveled East to meet contacts and speak at meetings.

In his memoirs, Hippe recalls that at



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one trade-union gathering in East Berlin a Russian officer told an SED member who sympathized with the Trotskyists: "This man speaks the way the Trotskyists talked in our country!" Hippe was arrested by the Russian military in Halle and was jailed on charges of "anti-Soviet activity" and "forming an illegal group." For 15 months Hippe was locked up in "investigative detention" and repeatedly tortured.

Unwilling to betray his beliefs, Hippe

attempted suicide when his Stalinist jailers threatened to jail, and even shoot, his wife and daughter if he didn't "confess" that the Fourth International were "agents of American imperialism." He was sentenced to 25 years' imprisonment, "justified" by the slander that the Trotskyists had "murdered Comrade Kirov," the Leningrad party chief assassinated in 1934, most probably on Stalin's orders—the same slander that sent tens of thousands of Old Bolsheviks to their deaths in the purges of 1937-38.

After his release, Hippe learned of the 1953 split in the Trotskyist movement and sided with the International Committee, the opponents of the Pabloite liquidation of Trotskyist parties. Nevertheless, after some hesitation he entered the SPD. There he worked with various left-wing groupings, including student groups that moved toward Trotskyism and split from the SPD in 1968, when he also left. In the last 20 years he advocated the "unity of all Trotskyists," although these very groups were on diametrically opposite sides over key political questions, especially the Russian question. Where he shared their opinion he would solidarize with the various groups, including the Troztkistische Liga Deutschlands (TLD).

Today the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany [formed in January by the TLD and members of the Spartakist-Gruppen] fights for the replacement of Stalinist rule by the democratic rule of workers and soldiers councils, which will be a testament to Hippe's life work. Honor comrade Hippe—our victory will also be his. ■

For Class Struggle Against Capitalist Pillage

Push to Fourth Reich Threatens All Working People



Pro-unification rally in Leipzig hails would-be Reich's chancellor Helmut Kohl. Sign says: "Helmut take us by the hand, lead us into the economic miracle land."

The following article was translated from Spartakist/Arbeiterpressekorespondenz (Workers Press Correspondence) No. 29, 27 March 1990, published by our comrades of the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany.

The allure of the almighty D-mark carried the Volkammer elections with a victory for a Fourth Reich of German imperialism. The galloping drive to reunification and the prospect of a capitalist Greater Germany pose an escalating danger not only to the social gains of the DDR—its first target—but to the working people of the whole world. Bonn's *Drang nach Osten* (drive to the East) is justifiably terrifying the people of Poland and will mean sharply escalating chauvinist and racist attacks against Poles, Turks, Vietnamese, Africans and other minorities within the DDR and the BRD.

The victory of restorationist forces in the March 18 elections took place under the sign of resurgent German nationalism, which will now be sharply reinforced by that victory. Not surprisingly, "Deutschland, einig Vaterland" (Germany, One Fatherland) is sending shivers through the peoples of Europe. Faced with the prospect of the Bundeswehr on their Western border, the Poles are even giving up the anti-Sovietism which has been rampant in recent years. Soviet troops stationed in western Poland remark how popular they have become among the population in recent months.

The Spartakist-Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands (SpAD—Spartakist Workers Party of Germany) uniquely stood in the recent elections clearly and openly against capitalist reunification. As the only all-Germany workers party, we are for internationalism against German nationalism, seeking to unite workers East and West in common struggle against the capitalists. We warn that workers in the DDR who voted for *Anschluss* (annexation) in the hopes that a "quick D-mark" would mean "yes to prosperity" will soon find that they said "yes to unemployment." And the SpAD calls on class-conscious workers to prepare now for battle in defense of our jobs, especially those of women and foreign workers, and our trade-union rights.

The Frankfurt bankers are intent on

turning the DDR into a low-wage haven, driving down the living standards of the workers. And among the first targets in their plan to destroy the socialized foundations of the DDR deformed workers state is the smashing of any serious trade-union rights. Count Otto von Lambsdorff, leader of the West-FDP [Free Democratic Party], insists that there can be no reunification as long as the new trade-union law remains on the books. West Berlin Christian Democrat Pieroth, slated to be economics minister for an "Alliance for Germany" government [of the DDR], spells this out, demanding that the ban on lockouts must go. What does that tell you about the reunification they have in mind?

The trade-union law approved by the old Volkammer in its last session provides the workers with the right of "Mitbestimmung" ("co-determination") in the introduction of capitalist exploitation. But it does codify the right to strike and to trade-union activity. This earned the denunciation not only of the Christian Democrats but also Social Democrats. DGB [West German labor federation] head Ernst Breit criticized the FDGB [East German labor federation] for demanding too many rights, while SPD-East leader Ibrahim Böhme labeled the

lockout ban "unattractive and an obstacle to investment"! They want to replicate the BRD laws where struck employers can simply lock out other workers and then deny them unemployment benefits.

Lambsdorff and Pieroth also called for rapid privatization of the VEBs [state-owned companies in the DDR]. This will mean mass layoffs on an unheard-of scale. *Handelsblatt* (23/24 March) reports estimates that unemployment will immediately soar to two million, almost one worker in four. Kombinat directors are already preparing the firing slips: IFA, which is working out deals with VW and Daimler-Benz, may sack 20,000 of its 50,000 workers. And a spokesman for Robotron said that except for color TV and electric typewriter production, workers in its other divisions (66,000 out of 68,000 in the Kombinat) "would soon find themselves out of work" (*Financial Times*, 20 March).

Many a worker who voted CDU told himself, "Well, even if I'm fired, I'll get BRD unemployment insurance, which beats DDR wages." Forget it! A statement issued following a meeting between the DGB and the BRD employers association announced agreement that wage and benefit levels in the DDR for a certain period must be "significantly less than

the West German standard" (*Frankfurter Rundschau*, 10 March). This "transitional period" was defined as lasting somewhere between two and twenty years! And that's only for those who will be fortunate enough to have a job. Women workers in the DDR will be hit doubly hard, as the elimination of school lunches and day-care centers will force many who are not directly laid off to leave work in order to take care of their children. DDR women are threatened with a return to enslavement in the kitchen.

Along with the layoffs will come an anti-Communist witchhunt aimed particularly at present and former SED-PDS members. Already the purge has begun as former Stasi [security police] employees are blacklisted. The *New York Times* (19 March) quotes an SPD-East supporter attempting to justify the coming witchhunt: "There is bound to be unemployment, particularly among the Communist Party members. A lot of them have no real vocation, or they are alcoholics, or they are always late to work because no one could do anything to them."

And this will not just take the form of layoffs. Metal workers at Bergmann-Borsig [in East Berlin] are daily being attacked by West German "rowdies" throwing rocks over the fence and even driving holes through the Wall. Kohl/CDU rallies from Rostock to Leipzig were infested with fascist gangs, the shock troops for capitalist reunification. Under the watchword "reds out" they aim to eliminate all who defend the workers' interests, and to smash the FDGB as a possible center of resistance. The Social Democrats play a leading role in this campaign, particularly with their attempt to introduce BRD-style plant councils.

The working class of the DDR has not yet made its voice heard as an organized force fighting for its own class interests. But there will certainly be sharp struggles against the capitalists' attempts to dismantle the social foundations of the DDR bureaucratically deformed workers state. Poland has had a government committed to capitalist restoration for more than seven months, but the imperialists are finding that it is not so easy to reintroduce capitalism even in Poland, whose economy is a basket case and

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Demonstration on March 6 in East Berlin protests childcare cutbacks. Sign says: "Tell us, what will happen to our jobs."

Hysteria Campaign Against DDR Nuclear Power Plant

The following article is translated from *Arprekorr* No. 29, 27 March 1990.

In the aftermath of the Volkskammer elections, the threat to the social gains of the DDR workers state posed by capitalist reunification is ever more immediate. Promising Western "know-how," the capitalists intend to introduce Western-style mass unemployment and to turn whole areas of the country into an economic garbage dump. Today the fate of Greifswald is at stake. If the "Bruno Leuschner" nuclear power plant in Lubmin is shut down, 8,000 of the 18,000 jobs in Greifswald will immediately be eliminated, the remainder will be endangered and the centralized district heating will be turned off. The city would be literally frozen out, turned into a ghost town, and 10 percent of the DDR's energy supply would be wiped out.

After a big scare campaign by Western media and a *Diktat* by West German CDU (Christian Democrat) reactor minister Karl Töpfer, the Modrow/Round Table government agreed to close down sections of the power plant. We reported (*Spartakist/Arprekorr* No. 22, 8 February) about the February 6 demonstration of 15,000 workers from the Lubmin plant and their colleagues at NEG against this decision to screw them out of their jobs on the basis of spurious "safety" recommendations by BRD "specialists." But a week later, two of the four blocks were shut down, and a third has been closed since. The 2 March *taz* reported that an "interim assessment" called for shutting down the entire power plant outright. The Spartakist Workers Party of Germany (SpAD) says: Not one job in Greifswald must go! The workers and their allies must mobilize now to defend their livelihoods.

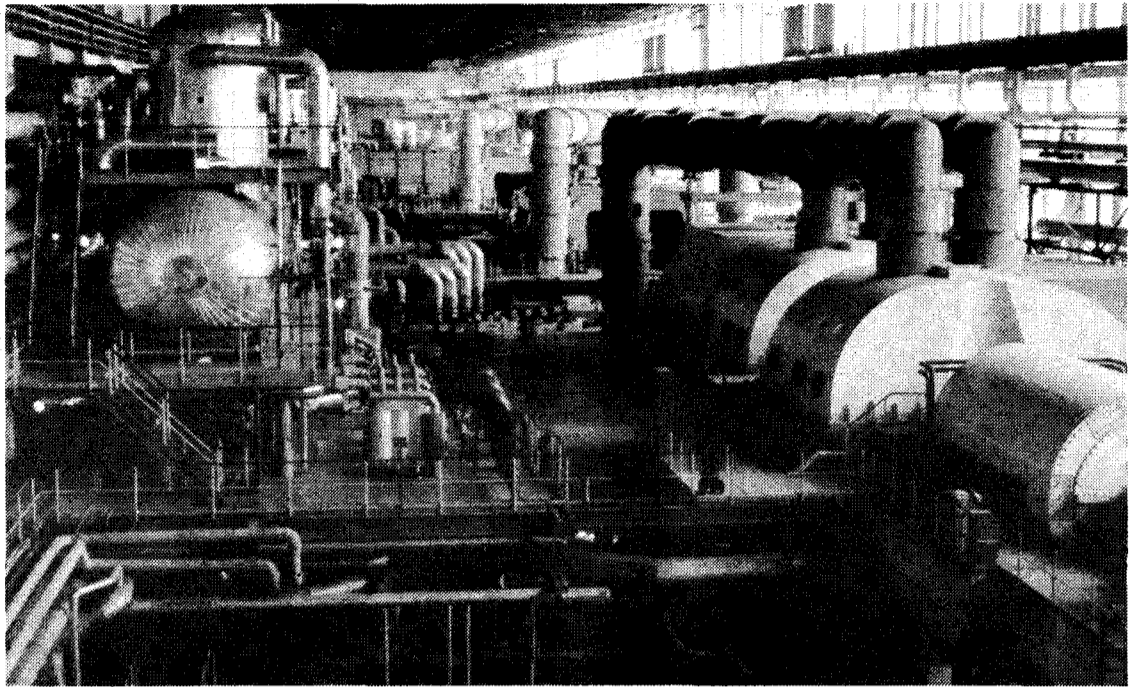
The campaign to close down the Greifswald nuclear power plant is part and parcel of an imperialist destabilization campaign directed at the DDR. It was started by *Der Spiegel* with a series of panic-mongering articles in January. These scurrilous articles were filled with loaded language about an "atomic explosive device which could blow up at any moment," "near-meltdown," "nightmare accident," "an atomic powder keg" and so on. The headline of the 29 January article was "Time Bomb 'Chernobyl North'." *Der Spiegel* has obviously been schooled in Goebbels' policy of the "Big Lie." In the drive for capitalist reunification, it rivals even Springer's *Bild-Zeitung* for wild exaggeration and massive distortion.

To begin with, neither in terms of any safety problems nor its basic design does Greifswald have anything in common with Chernobyl but for the fact that they were both Soviet-built reactors. The most serious accident which occurred at Greifswald, in December 1975, involved a short circuit which caused the power cables to burn. The power supply to all but one of the main circulation pumps went out. Yet neither the nuclear fuel nor any of the other equipment was harmed. *Der Spiegel* painted a subsequent accident as a possible catastrophe from which we were saved only by a "technical miracle." But Dr. Manfred Meurer, Director for Research and Development at the Kombinat Kernkraftwerke, points out, "At that time, the unit in question, Block 3, had not yet been loaded with any nuclear fuel" (*Wochenpost*, 9 March).

Despite this hysteria against Greifswald, there are serious questions of safety involved with nuclear energy, at Greifswald as elsewhere. The SpAD is a Marxist political party, and as such we

Imperialist destabilization campaign against East German economy targets Greifswald nuclear power plant.

Günter Paul



do not claim any particular competence on such technical questions. But in the interest of bringing the fullest information to our readers and particularly workers in Greifswald, we consulted several technical publications in this field and spoke by telephone with a Danish scientist concerned with reactor safety.

On February 2, at the peak of the West German uproar over the Greifswald nuclear plant, the Danish newspaper *Fyns Amts Avis* headlined, "No Grounds for Panic Over Atomic Reactor." Citing "the evaluation given by Danish experts of the current situation regarding the much disputed nuclear power plant located 120 kilometers from Denmark," the article said: "The latest information about a series of accidents is exaggerated and overdramatized. In most cases it is a question of routine reports, the same as those issued by any other nuclear power plant."

Likewise, the American nuclear energy magazine *Nucleonics Week* (22 February) reported that even "a senior western European reactor safety official judged [BRD minister] Toepfer's statement on Greifswald as 'technically superfluous' and motivated 'solely by the politics of German reunification'."

In an interview, Dr. Peter Fynbo of the Risø National Laboratory in Denmark noted that the Chernobyl reactor is a graphite type reactor, which is used only in the Soviet Union. The Greifswald reactor is of a different type, similar to pressurized water reactors which are common in the capitalist West. In fact, the 1975 cable fire was similar to an accident which occurred at the Brown's Ferry power plant in Alabama in the

United States, and it was far less dangerous than the near-meltdown at Three Mile Island in Pennsylvania in 1979.

An international team of eight nuclear safety experts which visited Greifswald February 12-16 "found the number of safety-significant events not above average" (*Nucleonics Week*, 22 February). In fact, in the past two years, all but six of 1,191 events at Greifswald on which reports were filed were not even registered on a newly developed international scale to measure reactor accidents. And those six were at levels one or two, "indicating only minor deviations (and signifying) that there has been neither radioactive release...nor a serious loss of safety protection."

The *Nucleonics Week* article also noted that "West German officials have suggested that replacement power for the two 440-MW units could be supplied quickly from two West German lignite stations on the border." So in the interest of our health, they want to poison us even more with sulphur dioxide fumes! It's no wonder that 45 percent of the population of the DDR, a far higher figure than in the BRD, is in favor of nuclear energy in the interests of cleaner air.

Those like Neues Forum and the Greens who have pushed for the shutdown of Greifswald are doing nothing to improve the environment, but a lot to boost the profits of the West German energy industry. Various West German firms like Bayernwerk and Preussen-elektra who want to build reactors in the DDR are interested in discrediting the Soviet-built reactors at Greifswald.

The Freiburg (BRD) Öko-Institut has accused giant West German power com-

panies of conducting "campaigns of conquest" to "divide up the DDR energy cake," including "short- and medium-term elimination of excess capacity in their power plant facilities through planned power lines to the DDR" (*Frankfurter Rundschau*, 12 March). In the long term they are planning for "nuclear arming through the construction of nuclear power plants in the DDR." In fact, German imperialism is driving toward arming with nuclear weapons, which it already possesses. This is where the real nuclear danger lies—just imagine a Hitler with A-bombs!

In a Germany of workers councils the health and safety of the population will be of much higher concern than it is or ever will be in any capitalist state. These questions cannot be decided by a handful of bureaucrats, much less by capitalist combines whose only interest is maximizing their profit. Technical specialists who today are forced to cheat and lie on behalf of capitalists or bureaucrats will under a government of workers councils be able to make full use of their abilities, advising us on the best choices to improve our lives.

The Spartakist Workers Party of Germany calls on the workers at Greifswald to organize their own safety committees, electing the most capable of their colleagues and drawing on the advice of technically competent experts. Unlike the Stalinist bureaucrats, discredited by years of cover-ups, such committees could counter the imperialist hysteria campaign and determine whether any of the blocks at Greifswald really has to be shut down for safety reasons. If so, then alternative jobs must be found for all the workers there. Only the political rule of democratically elected workers councils can ensure that sound decisions are made in the interest of the safety of all.

We are for the fullest technological development, including nuclear power, through close cooperation with the other workers states. Behind Brezhnev's decision in the early '80s to jack up Soviet oil prices was the Stalinist dogma of "socialism in one country." Now Gorbachev sells oil to the DDR for hard currency. The response of the Honecker/Mittag regime was national autarky, which meant burning more and more lignite. What we really need is international socialist economic planning. A takeover by the capitalists will mean only more unemployment and less safety. The only thing the capitalists are interested in is their own profits. The SpAD says: Down with the imperialist destabilization campaign! Defend the jobs of Greifswald workers! No to capitalist reunification! ■



Brezhnev oil price hike in early 1980s forced DDR reliance on high pollution brown coal.

Der Spiegel

Give to the Lenin-Liebkecht-Luxemburg Fund!

Our fight to forge an authentic communist vanguard and to bring the revolutionary program of Trotskyism to the German working class is more vital than ever as the workers of the DDR face the mortal danger of Kohl's Fourth Reich. Certainly the March 18 elections were a severe defeat—but the working class has yet to enter the arena in its own name, fighting for its own interests. As the capitalists seek to seize the factories and make themselves masters over the DDR workers, we must be able

to intervene to pose the way forward to victory in the defensive struggles that will inevitably break out.

Throughout the past six months of intense and rapid political change—from the euphoria of November as the Stalinist regime crumbled, to the unprecedented capitalist campaign of destabilization against the DDR—our comrades in Germany have stood out uniquely as the one party forthrightly opposing capitalist reunification and fighting for a Germany of workers councils. Con-

tributions to the Lenin-Liebkecht-Luxemburg ("Three L's") fund have greatly assisted our international work, including the production of the newsletter *Arprekorr* (Workers Press Correspondence) as well as of *Spartakist* and materials in many different languages.

Many militants have been convinced by the German events that our Trotskyist program is the only way forward. Consolidating the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany and continuing to widely distribute our literature are vital tasks ahead to provide the revolutionary political orientation and guide to action so necessary in the coming months. Our internationalist tasks lie not just in Germany; they include seeking to reach militants in the Soviet Union itself, and in key areas in Central and East Europe, such as Poland, where the working class has now begun to fight the counterrevolutionary Solidarność leadership in a desperate struggle to survive.

As Karl Liebkecht wrote in 1919:

"Hold hard. We have not fled. We are not beaten...for *Spartakus*—that means fire and spirit, heart and soul, will and deed of the proletarian revolution. For *Spartakus*—that stands for all the longing for achievement, all the embattled resolution of the class-conscious proletariat...our program will live; it will dominate the world of liberated peoples. In spite of all."



Spartakist Workers Party election poster: "No to Capitalist Reunification! For a Germany of Workers Councils!"

As we are soon going to scale down our public fund-raising for the German work, we ask our supporters and readers, who have already been very generous, to make another contribution now. For contributions of \$10 you will receive a Spartakist Workers Party button; those contributing \$25 or more will also receive an election poster in appreciation of your support.

Make donations payable/send to: Spartacist, P.O. Box 1377, GPO, New York, NY 10116. Earmark for: "Lenin-Liebkecht-Luxemburg Fund (or simply "3-L's Fund")."



Willy Römer

Karl Liebkecht, co-leader of Spartakusbund with Rosa Luxemburg, calls for workers councils to power in 1918-19 German Revolution.

Fourth Reich...

(continued from page 9)

whose working class was demoralized by Solidarność, a mass clerical-nationalist movement.

As layoffs, blacklisting and sharp price rises begin to be implemented in the DDR, workers will be forced to resist with their backs to the wall. At Bergmann-Borsig, where West German trade unionists explained the impotence of BRD plant councils and West German capitalists advertised "joint ventures," workers instead formed a workforce control council including the union leadership. But what demands, what forms of struggle should we raise? Isolated strikes in individual enterprises could feed into capitalist lockouts and plant closures.

With counterrevolution at the door, any real defense of the workers' interests

will pose a situation of dual power. Mass layoffs and attempts to close down plants must be answered with plant occupations and the maintenance of production under workers control. This requires the support of other plants of the same Kombinat and of suppliers: it is out of such struggles that workers councils will be built. And mere pressure tactics won't stop the pro-reunification Volkskammer from repealing the trade-union law: what's needed is a general strike such as the FDGB already threatened to get the law passed.

The key will be a broad working-class struggle and anti-capitalist political strategy. As they seek to create a two-tier wage system between East and West, the capitalists are seeking to drive a wedge between the workers. It will be necessary to combat West German workers' prejudices to successfully defend social gains and living standards in the DDR. And just as BRD workers must fight racism against Turkish immigrants, workers in the DDR must defend their colleagues from Mozambique, Vietnam, Cuba and Poland against attacks and deportations.

For the moment, the black-red-gold banner of German nationalism waves triumphant. PDS, VL, KPD and the rest of the opportunist left go along with the Greater German intoxication. But despite this paralysis and capitulation, there are plenty of people who don't want to see a capitalist Greater Germany. The day after the Volkskammer elections, some 3-5,000 demonstrators in Berlin marched behind a banner reading "Berlin stays left," chanting "Nazis out!" and singing the *Internationale*. In response, people leaned out of their apartment buildings to wave red and DDR flags in solidarity.

Both in the BRD and DDR and beyond the Oder-Neisse border, the key is revolutionary leadership. The Spartakist Workers Party calls on the German working class to organize effective solidarity with Polish workers fighting capitalist austerity. The unity of the German proletariat against German capital can be powerfully demonstrated by active solidarity from workers in the DDR with a BRD metal workers strike. And if the workers of Eisenhüttenstadt stand with their coworkers in the Ruhr, if proletar-



Spartakist Workers Party campaigning at demonstration in Berlin's Alexanderplatz. Sign says: "Against Privatization! No to Capitalist Reunification!"

ian solidarity extends from Frankfurt/Main to Frankfurt/Öder to Warsaw and Gdansk, the imperialist looting can be stopped.

The struggle to defend jobs and social gains is part and parcel of the struggle for a Germany of workers councils in a United Socialist States of Europe. ■



Ouwerkerk/taz

Worker at Trabant auto plant. Capitalist reunification threatens wholesale firings, deportations of foreign workers in DDR.

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Lithuania...

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must be reformed on the basis of genuine workers democracy, including the democratic right of national self-determination, i.e., the right of constituent republics to secede and establish an independent workers state.

Nationalist Delirium in Lithuania

But the move toward secession in Lithuania has nothing to do with democratic aspirations. It is a move toward capitalist counterrevolution backed by witchhunting against Communists, class-conscious workers and national minorities. 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: a Lithuanian journalist sympathetic to the Sajudis reported that "anyone who speaks against it is sure to be branded a traitor." The Lithuanian nationalists have gone out of their way to incite and insult other Soviet peoples: for example, destroying monuments commemorating the Red Army's liberation of Lithuania from Nazi German occupation.

A major reason why, of the three Baltic republics, Lithuania took the first plunge at secession is that 80 percent of the population consists of ethnic Lithuanians. By contrast, in Latvia and Estonia almost half the population—and a majority of the proletariat—are Russians, Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Jews, ethnic Siberians and other Soviet peoples. Yet despite their relative numerical weakness, the Russian-speaking and, more politically significant, the Polish minority have actively protested against the Sajudis secessionists. On March 27, a reported 10,000 supporters of the pro-Union CP demonstrated opposite the Lithuanian parliament. Speakers emphasized that secession would bring unemployment, poverty, private property and mass deportations.

Since Poles (who make up 9 percent of the republic) are traditionally fellow Catholics and anti-Russian, one might have expected them to support an independent Lithuania. But they, too, fear being subject to forced "Lithuanianization" and second-class citizenship. Parliamentary deputies from the Polish minority abstained on the Lithuanian declaration of independence. A Polish schoolteacher told the *New York Times* (26 March): "People are losing their native language.... We are not prepared for this." Perhaps she recalled that in 1926, the virulently anti-Polish leader of independent Lithuania, Augustinas Voldemaras, closed Polish schools and jailed Polish schoolteachers.

While the Sajudis often recalls the interwar Lithuanian bourgeois republic, they seldom mention that Vilnius was from 1920 to 1939 known as Wilno and was part of Poland. The Lithuanian landowning gentry considered themselves part of the Polish aristocracy. Jozef Pilsudski, the fascistic strongman of interwar Poland, and Poland's first president were both natives of Lithuania (Richard Watt, *Bitter Glory—Poland and Its Fate: 1919 to 1939* [1979]). In an ironic footnote to this history, the neighboring Soviet republic of Byelorussia last week demanded the return of Lithuania's six southern counties, including Vilnius, which was ceded to Lithuania when it became part of the USSR in 1940.

The harshest denunciations of the Sajudis secessionists have come from the Soviet high command. The Lithuanian port of Klaipeda (formerly Memel) is a major conduit for military supplies to other parts of the USSR. Furthermore, Lithuanian secession would cut off from the rest of the Soviet Union the important Baltic port of Kaliningrad, which is predominantly Russian-speaking and part of the Russian republic. Moscow's strong



(Left) March 27 Vilnius protest against Lithuanian secession from Soviet Union. (Right) January 10 separatist demonstration in Vilnius against Gorbachev visit. Baltic nationalists are pushing for capitalist restoration under guise of right to self-determination.



response in Lithuania may also be a reaction to the right-wing victory in the March 18 East German elections. With the spectre of a Fourth Reich looming in the West, the Soviet officer corps and other elements of the hierarchy may be less ready to tolerate a NATO beachhead on the Baltic coast.

An even more immediate danger is the encouragement Lithuanian secession would give to other nationalist-separatist movements, and not only in neighboring Latvia and Estonia. The largest Caucasian republic, Georgia, has become a witch's cauldron of reactionary groupings. One of the biggest separatist groups is the Monarchist Party, which proclaims: "Our new state should be built on a strict principle of hierarchy" (*Wall Street Journal*, 28 March). This party is in contact with the current pretender to the Georgian throne now living in Spain.

unthinkable. Today Lithuania. Tomorrow the Caucasus. The day after tomorrow, the Ukraine."

Only Communism Can Defeat Nationalism

The rise of anti-Communist nationalism in the Baltics, Caucasus and Ukraine has been paralleled by the rise of Great Russian chauvinism and anti-Semitic demagoguery in Moscow, Leningrad and elsewhere in the Russian republic. In late March the fascist thugs of Pamyat and four like-minded outfits got together to launch the People's Russian Orthodox Movement. Its principal organizer, Evgeny Pashkin, rails that the Jews are behind the bloody strife between Armenians and Azerbaijanis and are conspiring to "make Russia defenseless."

In the absence of a genuinely communist opposition to the Gorbachev regime,

Black Hundreds, a marriage sanctioned by the "village writer" Valentin Rasputin. A supporter of the Russian Orthodox church, Rasputin laments: "The Revolution brought people to the fore who destroyed Russia." And who does this member of Gorbachev's presidential council hold responsible for the Bolshevik Revolution?

"I think today the Jews here should feel responsible for the sin of having carried out the Revolution, and for the shape it took. They should feel responsible for the terror. For the terror that existed during the Revolution and especially after the Revolution. They played a large role and their guilt is great. Both for the killing of God, and for that."

—*New York Times Magazine*,
28 January

At the same time, Rasputin now calls for untrammelled rule by the Kremlin in order to preserve Russia "one and indivisible," to use the tsarist terminology he so cherishes.

While the Russian nationalists want a strong hand in the Kremlin to suppress political dissent and the contentious national minorities, many pro-Western intellectuals want a strong hand to impose their anti-working-class economic program. The prominent "free marketeer" Nikolai Shmelyov argues: "We need the authority of presidential power to take unpopular decisions. Without them, there will be no way out of the crisis" (*Wall Street Journal*, 14 March). There is thus a certain convergence between Westernizing intellectuals, Russian nationalists and old-line Stalinists in the direction of bonapartism—the desire for a strong leader standing above political factions and able to override public opinion.

Now is a time of grave crisis for the Soviet Union. As the bureaucracy fragments, the large layer of urban intelligentsia despise and dismiss the working class, while the restless proletariat is beginning to fight over economic grievances. With hostile nationalities driving for secession and capitalist restoration, fascistic Pamyat plays on the frustrations and fears of the discontented Russian-speaking population. What is urgently needed is a vanguard party like Lenin's Bolsheviks, who brought together revolutionary-minded intellectuals with the advanced worker militants.

The Bolsheviks, under Lenin and Trotsky, were able to combat all forms of petty-bourgeois nationalism and forge the peoples of the former tsarist empire into a soviet federation because they enjoyed great moral authority as communists, i.e., proletarian internationalists. Today a Leninist-Trotskyist party is needed to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy, restore the rule of workers soviets and introduce a planned, egalitarian economy with the full and active participation of the masses. Only a workers vanguard party based on an internationalist program can combat the dangers threatening to dismember the USSR and lead the struggle to reforge a genuine Soviet Union of Socialist Republics. ■



Jewish partisan unit following the liberation of Vilna (Vilnius) from Nazi rule. While bulk of Lithuanian population accepted Hitlerite occupation, Jewish fighters joined together with Communist partisans in the forests.

Throughout Georgia statues of Lenin have been pulled down, while monarchists and other reactionary outfits have taken over the offices of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism and of the Young Communist League.

On the scale of the USSR the three Baltic republics are Lilliputian. And the loss of the Caucasian republics would likewise not fundamentally affect Soviet power. The Ukraine, however, is an entirely different order of magnitude. The second-largest republic, it has enormous military, industrial and agricultural importance. In the latest republican parliamentary elections, the Ukrainian nationalist movement Rukh won about a third of the seats and totally dominates the city council in Lvov, the main city in the western Ukraine. Rukh parliamentary deputy Genrikh Altunyan proclaims: "We are thinking what Moscow considers

the popular economic discontent spawned by the market-oriented "reforms" (perestroika) is being channeled into Russian nationalism and anti-Semitism. The pro-Western intelligentsia, who are the social base for Gorbachev's program, are commonly identified with Jews, who are historically well represented in the country's cultural and technological elite. Thus a movement like the United Front of Toilers combines populist economic demands against perestroika (e.g., opposition to petty capitalist entrepreneurs, calls for freezing consumer prices) with Slavophile bigotry. At the same time, the more "conservative" wing of the Stalinist bureaucracy, represented by Yegor Ligachev, increasingly base their ideological and popular appeals on Russian nationalism.

The children of Stalin's apparatchiks are uniting with the children of the tsarist

Britain...

(continued from page 5)

officer in the Welsh Guards. As defence secretary, he oversaw the proliferation of NATO nuclear weapons at the height of the anti-Soviet war drive. He was Thatcher's point man in pushing the unsuccessful prosecution of Clive Ponting, a civil servant who leaked material about the *Belgrano* affair to Scottish Labour MP Tam Dalyell. During the dirty Malvinas/Falklands war the Argentine cruiser *Belgrano* was sunk, sending over 300 sailors to their death in an act of gratuitous butchery directed by Thatcher and her war cabinet. Heseltine certainly didn't resign over that!

But Kinnock too has ardently supported the anti-Soviet war drive, from championing counterrevolutionary Solidarność to boosting the SPD, Trojan horse for capitalist restoration in East Germany. The Falklands campaign was a bipartisan campaign overwhelmingly supported by the Labour Party. The Labourite *New Statesman & Society* (16 March) noted: "it seems probable that a government led by Heseltine, purged of Parkinson and Ridley, would pursue policies much like those of the Labour Party; higher taxes, investment in the infrastructure, a coordinated policy of regional revival. In fact, Michael Heseltine would probably be able to undertake a more radical programme than Neil Kinnock." This says quite a bit, mainly attesting to how right-wing the current Labour leadership is.

Labour leader Kinnock—a certified enemy of socialism—has done nothing but stab the struggles of Britain's poor and working people in the back. In the year-long miners strike, the most important class battle here in decades, Kinnock supported Thatcher's scab ballot and condemned the miners' defence of their picket lines against strikebreaking cops and the scabs. Striking miners and other militants aptly called him "Ramsay MacKinnock," after despised Labour leader Ramsay MacDonald, who openly defected to the class enemy in the 1930s. Then when the ghettos exploded, Kinnock endorsed police terror against blacks and Asians, laying a wreath at the grave of Blakelock, the cop killed when the murderous racist police brutally invaded Broadwater Farm. Now Kinnock and his local lieutenants have been acting as Thatcher's enforcers for the hated poll tax.

In a situation where there is mass boycott of the tax, withholding of tax payments is an appropriate conjunctural tactic. Revolutionaries must fight to unleash the social power of the trade unions—for political strike action against the hated poll tax! The imposition of the poll tax has coincided with further cuts in social services; Bradford teachers' unions called a one-day strike against such cutbacks; some local government union branches have voted not to collect the tax, and in Scotland's Lothian Region NALGO trade-union members are set to strike on April 3 against the freezing of workers' bank accounts for non-payment. But in the main, opposition to the poll tax remains at the level of civil disobedience, albeit of massive proportions.

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— MARXIST LITERATURE —

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The poll tax *per se* is not essential to the maintenance of British capitalism, although the arrogant "Iron Lady" is probably irrevocably committed to it. There is a developing *bourgeois consensus* to withdraw the tax and replace Thatcher with someone with more authority to administer capitalist austerity. A Kinnock government would be forced to attack the working class at least as much as Thatcher or Heseltine. That is what is demanded to administer the decaying capitalist society: strikebreaking, social spending cuts, disciplining the workers and oppressed.

Trade deficits spiral because the country doesn't manufacture much anymore, while those fortunate enough to have jobs often must work gruelling 50- to 60-hour weeks to get by. Inflation and mortgage rates are sky high, union safety standards go by the board, while crashing trains and tube infernos have become a deadly, regular occurrence. And it's not just Thatcher's privatisation schemes that threaten essential social services like the National Health Service. The decay of British capitalism is mirrored in the wreckage of the once great ports and centres of production like Liverpool, Newcastle, Glasgow and Belfast. Parliament today is centred on the increasingly narrow base of the southeast of England. It cannot be made to be representative of the working class and the disenfranchised sections of the British Isles by voting out the Tories because Labour is not better. It will take a socialist revolution and a couple of ambitious five-year plans to make this a decent place to live.

Fight Anti-Scargill Witchhunt!

Recently the bourgeois media erupted in a hysterical campaign directed at



Pro-militarist arch-Tory Michael Heseltine now being touted as savior of Conservative Party from Thatcher's poll-tax debacle.

miners leader Arthur Scargill, charging that during the strike he embezzled money raised for the union in Russia and Libya. The accusations against Scargill were aired initially in the *Daily Mirror*, owned by newspaper magnate and right-wing Labourite Robert Maxwell. Scargill's main accuser is one Roger Windsor, who resigned his appointed union position under suspicion of defrauding the NUM. Subsequently the fraud squad was called in, and Windsor—now under contract to the *Mirror*—also faces legal action for recovery of a union loan. Very "conveniently" this story broke at a time when the press was denouncing anti-poll-tax protesters as "lawbreakers" and "violent"—the same slanders hurled at striking miners five years ago.

When the bosses tried to whip up a hue and cry about the "Qaddafi connection" and Russian gold during the strike, it got short shrift from the miners. Said one NUM official: "If somebody sent me £100,000 for the lads on strike in Lancashire, I couldn't care less where it came from as long as it was used to ease the hardship. We have people starving in Lancashire" (*Times*, 29 October 1984). Trade unionists around the world—from Soviet miners to French CGT members to oppressed black mineworkers in South Africa—dug deep and demonstrated their international solidarity with the NUM. The NUM received \$24,000 raised internationally by the class-struggle Partisan Defense Committee.

The truly sinister "connection" in the

Labour Party leader Neil Kinnock. Labour hopes to ride anti-poll-tax sentiment into office while enforcing Thatcher's tax, violence-baiting protesters.



labour movement is the well-documented CIA connection of the Labour/TUC right wing. On the eve of the miners strike, the Labourite leaders—instigated by Gerry Healy's WRP—viciously witchhunted Scargill for correctly criticising the CIA "union" Polish Solidarność as anti-socialist. This was the signal for Thatcher's declaration of war against the miners and the prelude to the open scabberding by the TUC "Rights," while the "left" TGWU and rail union leaders sabotaged the necessary spreading of the strike. The Labour/TUC tops preferred to see the strike defeated rather than fight to mobilise the active solidarity of other key unions needed to win the strike—which would have shut down the country, not to mention probably bringing down the "Iron Lady."

Now Scargill, fundamentally wedded to the same reformist perspective that sold the miners out, pathetically calls for "unity" of the Labour Party and sup-

ported scabherder Kinnock in the last elections. While Kinnock & Co. overtly betray, a handful of "left" Labour MPs, including Tony Benn, give "moral support" to the call for non-payment. Stepping into the vacuum, the pseudo-Trotskyist and crassly Labour-loyal Militant Tendency have established them-

elves as the leading force in the Anti-Poll Tax Federation. But their perspective is to channel the massive discontent to serve the electoral appetites of Neil Kinnock: "The Labour leaders must get off the fence and come down on the side of the mass non-payment campaign. They must seize the opportunity—fight for an immediate general election and the return of a socialist Labour government" (*Militant*, 9 March).

This is characteristic of the fake-left in Britain. The SWP will now be whooping it up for Labour, as it does whenever there are elections. The Communist Party's *Morning Star* is demanding that the Thatcher government resign and Labour get elected. In their pamphlet on the poll tax the centrists of Workers Power label the LP "a bosses' party" and denounce Kinnock's legalistic policies, but then they conclude: "It [Labour's policy] is a gift to the Tories. Its end result will do nothing to guarantee a Labour victory in the election...." In short, they advocate more militant tactics—in order to get Kinnock into Number 10 Downing Street. Similarly, they supported Kinnock's bid for office in the last general election—fresh from his sabotage of the miners strike.

The Labour left and its apologists play a major role in keeping workers tied to Labourism. A revolutionary vanguard party in Britain can only be forged through breaking the stranglehold of Labourism on the working class. But that will take effective Leninist tactics. Simple sectarian dismissal of divisions within British social democracy no less than opportunist tailing of the Labour and union "lefts" are equally formulas for sterility. The Spartacist League of Britain is fighting to forge a genuine Bolshevik party of workers revolution, through splitting the Labour Party, winning the working-class base away from the pro-capitalist tops. Forward to a federation of workers republics in the British Isles, part of a United Socialist States of Europe! ■

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Death Penalty...

(continued from page 16)

ruthless machinery of the modern capitalist state. If Robert Harris is killed it will signal the acceptance of executions of thousands of men who encompass all kinds of individuals: those guilty of crime, those framed up, those mistakenly convicted, those whose acts were justified—but dead, all dead. If an exploitative and oppressive state has a right to take lives as a form of revenge or punishment, so does anyone with a felt just cause. This is called barbarism—ask Salman Rushdie.

Already the United States is one of the world leaders in legally sanctioned murder, although doubtless exceeded by South Africa, Iran and China. The United States uniquely—for now—among advanced capitalist countries shares legal murder with the notorious hellholes of the world.

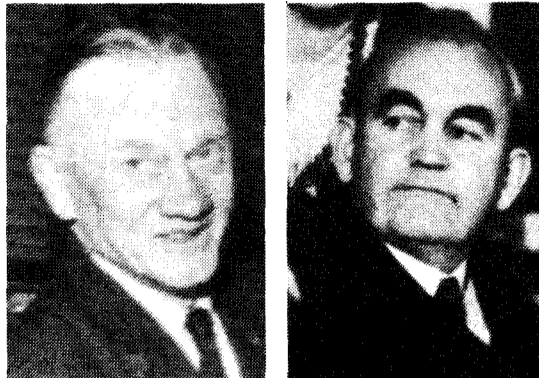
Of the 120 executions nationwide since the U.S. Supreme Court effectively reinstated the death penalty in 1976, all but eleven have been in the South—72 of them in the three states of Texas, Florida and Louisiana. Until recently California—a so-called liberal state outside the South—has been a de facto holdout. The killing of Robert Harris will be the green light for executioners across the country where more than 2,300 men, women and children have been packed into overcrowded death rows—overwhelmingly black, Hispanic and almost exclusively very poor.

Here in Marin County—the most shameless upscale yuppie haven just north of the Golden Gate Bridge from San Francisco—the natives in their hot tubs and their BMWs are restless. Gassing people in their backyard gives the place a bad name. Not only that—they fear thousands of well-meaning pilgrims clutching candles roaming their streets; and the thousands of local cops, highway patrolmen and other brutal, undignified pistol- and club-wielding tools of the upper classes, not to mention a violent fringe of skinheads and Nazis. So their proposal to solve the problems of the human condition is to instantly remove the gas chamber to Kern County, an enormous vacant area far away from the gentility of Marin.

In this country it goes back to slavery. Its crowning “legal” principle was that a black man “has no rights a white man is



San Francisco Examiner Photos



Capitalist “justice”: labor leaders Warren Billings (left) and Tom Mooney framed for 1916 SF bombing. Mooney was sentenced to death, freed 22 years later; Billings spent 43 years in jail.

bound to respect,” as U.S. Chief Justice Taney said in sending fugitive slave Dred Scott back to the slavemasters. Then there was the lynch-law terror of Jim Crow. Nightriding KKK killers and torturers were supplemented by “legal” lynching, public executions of blacks. Today the death penalty is part and parcel of racist terror from the extralegal murderers of the KKK to the summary justice of killer cops on the street—the judicial expression that to this country’s racist rulers black life is cheap. In the death penalty we have the impulse to genocide, the ultimate expression of the government’s war on the black population. The demand for the abolition of the death penalty is part of the tradition of struggle for black equality in America.

The death penalty is the signal element in the drive for increased state repression, part of a wider social and political pattern. If the death penalty is the ultimate symbol of increased state repression, the so-called “war on drugs” is most publicized. It means more cops, more arrests, more prisons, more police terror, more death—officially in legal death chambers and semi-officially on the streets. The “drug czar” wants the death penalty for drug-related murder. But the criminalization of drug use means that now half of those in prison are there for drug-related crimes.

In sanctioning the death penalty, the U.S. Supreme Court does not just “fol-

low the elections” but is a literal running dog of the period of reaction that really began with the defeat of U.S. imperialism in Vietnam which set aside Lyndon Johnson’s “Great Society reforms” and brought in Nixon. Carter deepened it and the current Reagan/Bush dynasty glories in the most ostentatious abuse of the poor and the black and grovels before the J.P. Gettys, Malcolm Forbes and Donald Trumps.

And Judge Death, the head of the Supreme Court, Rehnquist, wants to get rid of *habeas corpus*, to get it going sooner. He has embarrassed even the federal judiciary. Halls of government and editorial pages are already ringing with calls for concentration camps, military takeovers of ghettos and an all-sided barrage against democratic rights, the rights of labor, a renewed appetite for censorship and regimentation, attacks on the right of privacy and everything from drug-testing to abortion.

The selling of the death penalty and increased repression as an answer to crime is a dangerous lie. The U.S. has close to a million prisoners, with the world’s highest incarceration rate (next to South Africa). And the incarceration rate does not and *cannot* reduce the rate of crime, which continues to explode, particularly in the inner city.

The systematic oppression—the joblessness, the hopelessness, which is at the root of the crime and punishment cycle—*cannot* be solved this side of a social revolution. And because they have no solution to the problems that particularly beset those people now called the “underclass,” this state can *only* repress—and that they do with a vengeance. The only response of the state to the cycle of crime and violence bred of poverty comes out of the barrel of a gun.

This campaign for death and repression depends upon convincing people that there is no other way out, that their options are closed within the capitalist system which produced the problems. So people have been led to believe that they must choose between the violent hoodlums who terrorize their housing projects and the cop squads which turn those same projects into minimum security prisons. These no-win options are supported by *both* major capitalist parties.

Today the long-established code word for mobilizing the racist vote—“law and order”—has escalated into the ghoulish spectacle of Democratic and Republican party candidates for governor vying for the title of best hangman. [Democratic gubernatorial primary candidate Dianne] Feinstein makes her support for the death penalty a theme of her campaign, proudly proclaiming that *she* is the only Democrat who promises to kill. Democratic attorney general Van de Kamp, who claims to be “personally” opposed to the death penalty, boasts of how many people he’s put on death row and vows to see them killed.

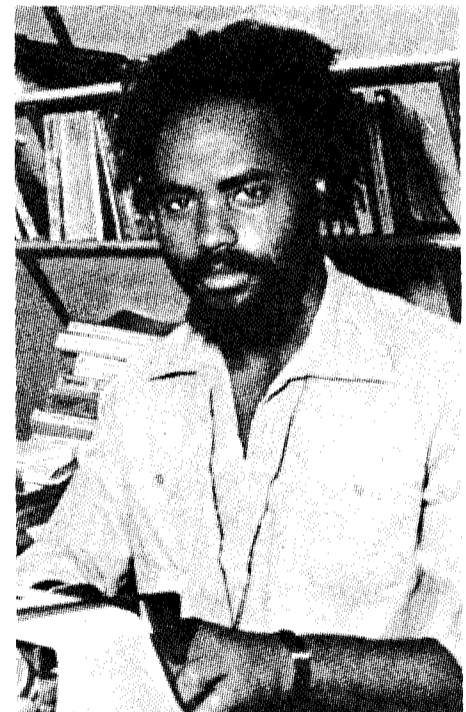
The Democratic Party achieved power in this century only in collaboration with the Southern racists, the Dixiecrats, from Woodrow Wilson to LBJ. It was New Deal “liberal” Franklin Roosevelt who opposed federal anti-lynch laws in the 1930s. Currently “liberal” Teddy Kennedy is sponsoring a bill obscenely called the Racial Justice Act to make the executioners swear they’re not being racist before they kill blacks. This is not opposing the death penalty but “prettifying” it.

An ad in the *New York Times* West Coast edition by liberal death penalty opponents of Death Penalty Focus declares, “On April 3rd, you are going to kill someone,” and goes on to appeal to those who “prefer the humane and just alternative” of life without parole. This is neither humane nor just, but a form of torture.

And illusions in the veil of “capitalist democracy” are dangerous. This system is the same fundamentally as that which produced a Hitler and a Pinochet. The U.S. capitalists also have their fascist shock troops, like the KKK. And this dangerous bourgeois state is perfectly capable of starting the next imperialist war—a nuclear holocaust.

The Partisan Defense Committee has a strategy of class-struggle defense. In the 1930s worldwide labor-centered protest against the racist frame-up of the Scottsboro Boys saved their lives and exposed the brutal persecution of blacks in the Deep South. The labor movement—not impotent moral protest which yearns for a “clean” capitalism—has the power to stop the assembly line of death.

The PDC champions the cause of former Black Panther Party spokesman and prominent black journalist and



Philadelphia Magazine

Mumia Abu-Jamal, former Black Panther and prominent black journalist, is a political prisoner on death row in Pennsylvania. Save Jamal!

MOVE defender, Mumia Abu-Jamal, now a political prisoner on death row in Pennsylvania. His 1981 frame-up, conviction and sentence illuminates the racist nature of the death penalty. Mumia was sentenced to die because as a fighter for black liberation he had been in the cross hairs of the racist Philadelphia cops for almost 20 years. Mumia Abu-Jamal, “voice of the voiceless,” must not die! The PDC has made this case a rallying point in the fight against the death penalty, bringing together representatives of the labor movement and other death penalty abolitionists in rallies across the country.

The way to victory is the way of the class struggle. The powerful, integrated labor movement must act for its own interests and the interests of all working people and oppressed. To do so labor must break the stranglehold of the Democratic Party maintained by the labor bureaucracy. It means a reinvigorated workers movement including a black and red leadership which can fight to win, all the way to a workers government. ■

“Cruel, But Not Unusual”

For three decades California has been a focal point in the struggle over the death penalty. The gassing of Caryl Chessman in 1960—never charged with physically injuring anyone, much less murder—sparked protest around the world. Aaron Mitchell was sent to death row by an all-white jury for killing a white cop who opened fire on Mitchell pointblank during a two-bit robbery. Mitchell was hit seven times but miraculously survived. In a farce of a clemency hearing, newly elected governor Ronald Reagan went to the Oscar nominations instead, sending Edwin Meese III as a “clemency” secretary—a certified racist pig who believes black lives are worthless.

As Mitchell himself wrote to his lawyer from death row, noting bitterly the white murderers whose sentences had been commuted: “Maybe we can get something on cruel and unusual punishment. Only the punishment isn’t unusual in the case of a Negro; nothing they do to us is unusual; *cruel*, yes. *But not unusual*.” Racist cops across the state literally cheered when Mitchell was gassed in April 1967.



Doubleday & Company

Last victim of San Quentin gas chamber, Aaron Mitchell, with his mother.

And when Nazi führer George Lincoln Rockwell showed up outside San Quentin with a sign reading “Gas—the only cure for black crime and red treason,” he expressed what is now the real view of a lot of people in high places.

Death Penalty Abolitionists Speak Out

S.F. Press Conference

On March 28, as the state of California was gearing up for the first execution to be scheduled in that state in 23 years, the Partisan Defense Committee and the Northern California Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty held a press conference at the Press Club of San Francisco. The PDC press release noted: "With over 270 on death row in San Quentin, California's resumption of executions threatens a bloodbath." The press conference was attended by some 35 TV, radio, wire service and newspaper reporters and cameramen.

At the press conference, Ronald Bell, the son of Aaron Mitchell, who was the last man executed in California, spoke eloquently against the death penalty: "We...as a society do not have the right to extinguish another human being's life." Earlier that morning, Bell had gone to San Quentin for the first time since just before his father's execution. "I thought about how we have a location, a certain area set aside where we actually go and we strap people down and we gas

Ronald Bell, son of Aaron Mitchell, at March 28 San Francisco press conference against the death penalty.



Mangelsdorf/SF Examiner

them to death. And to finally realize that that's exactly what they did to my father...."

In an earlier interview with the *San Francisco Examiner*, Bell said, "From statistics I've seen and the books I've read, I see the death penalty being used mostly against black people and poor people. It is being used as a racist tool,

as an extension of lynching. It is killing done with a cloak of legality, which makes the acceptance more widespread."

Robert Bryan, a San Francisco attorney who chairs the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, introduced the speakers, noting: "People have been led to believe that if we start executing people that somehow it will deter or stop or

reduce the crime problem. And we know that is not correct, that executions have never deterred crime.... We do know that innocent people are inevitably executed. And as the former and late warden Clinton Duffy of San Quentin once said, 'The death penalty is a privilege reserved for the poor.'"

Ben Visnick, first vice president of the Oakland Education Association, read a motion passed by his local condemning the death penalty. Pointing to the clear "racial and economic bias in capital punishment cases," the resolution denounced "increased use of executions in the nation and the threat of new executions in California."

In delivering the statement of the Partisan Defense Committee, PDC staff counsel Valerie West noted that in the U.S., capital punishment goes straight back to slavery: "The death penalty is part and parcel of the extralegal terror of the KKK and the summary justice of the killer cops on the street—the judicial expression that to this country's racist rulers black life is cheap.... The demand for the abolition of the death penalty is part of the tradition of struggle for black equality in America." ■

South Africa...

(continued from page 16)

black youths killed by the police while celebrating Mandela's release. In Bophuthatswana and Venda, tens of thousands marched and went on strike, demanding the resignation of the quisling governments and the formal reintegration of the territories into South Africa. At least seven people were killed March 7 in Ga-Rankuwa township just north of Pretoria, when police fired on 50,000 demonstrators marching on the local government offices. At least 500 were injured, touching off looting and burning of government offices.

The apartheid regime has tried to blame the ANC and UDF for violence, but in the Ciskei these groups are assisting the new military regime. And Patrick Lekota of the UDF denounced "widespread looting" on South African television, declaring that looters "are enemies of the people and have to be identified" (*Financial Times*, 13 March). The ANC and UDF are trying to avoid jeopardizing their proposed talks with the apartheid butchers. But it takes two to negotiate. And it is not clear the Afrikaner ruling class will oblige. Already, the police killing at Sebokeng forced the ANC to postpone a planned April 11 meeting with the de Klerk government.

Even so, Mandela reportedly told a huge rally of 300,000 near Port Elizabeth "that Mr. de Klerk was the first white leader to come to terms with the reality



no credit

Left: Ruth First, South African Communist, murdered by death squads in 1982. Right: Township rent protesters near Johannesburg don't buy "death of Communism."



Juda Ngwanya

that South Africa was destined to become a democratic country" (*New York Times*, 2 April). He has announced a private meeting with de Klerk for April 5. Yet a wing of the white ruling class wants more bloodbaths like the Sebokeng massacre, to re-establish apartheid "law and order." Hardline Afrikaner racists and fascists, with considerable support in the police and security forces, are roaming the townships terrorizing blacks. And de Klerk himself has refused to meet even the ANC's most minimal demands for negotiations: the lifting of the state of emergency and freeing of all political prisoners.

But in contrast to 1984-86, the white ruling class is now deeply divided. While de Klerk is concerned to clean up the apartheid state's image in the interest of capitalist stability, large numbers of whites recoil at the prospect of living in a permanently besieged garrison state. Hundreds of young whites have refused induction into the army and over one percent of the police force resigned in January alone. And confidence in the security forces has also been shaken by 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.

Using traditional imperialist "divide and rule" tactics, the apartheid rulers have long tried to exacerbate and even create tribal conflicts. This was a main purpose behind the creation of the "homelands." And one of their main supports has been the Inkatha organization formed by Zulu leader Gatsha Buthelezi. However, the ANC/UDF have also won wide support among Zulus, and Inkatha thugs responded by unleashing a wave of

violence in Natal province in which thousands have been killed, thousands more wounded and hundreds burned out of their homes in the last several years. Buthelezi is touted as a "moderate" but he and Inkatha are dogs of war for the apartheid regime. Behind them stand the white police and "kitsonstabels" (black auxiliary police) providing arms and support.

The working class has the social power and integrative organization to overcome divisions among the oppressed. And the black proletariat of South Africa is on the move. The 13-week battle of the SATS railway strikers, the bloodiest battle in South African labor 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 March 5, 3,000 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).

In the struggle to smash apartheid, the revolutionary mobilization of the power of black labor is central. 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. 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, which looks to "allies" such as Anglo American mining conglomerate former chairman Gavin Relly. These "enlightened" bourgeois leaders seek to rationalize South African capitalism, the better to perpetuate the superexploitation of black labor.

The revolutionary power of black labor can only make itself felt through a *break* with the ANC, Pan-Africanist Congress and other nationalist misleaders, and a fight for working-class independence of all ties to present or would-be capitalist rulers. The crucial link is forging a racially integrated Bolshevik party, cutting across all tribal and ethnic barriers, on an internationalist program that champions the struggles of all the oppressed. Smash apartheid! For workers revolution! ■



Michel/Reuters

Nelson Mandela

Spartacist Forum

Black South Africa Seething: Smash Apartheid! Workers to Power!

Speaker: Brian Manning, Spartacist League

NEW YORK CITY
Saturday, April 21, 7:30 p.m.

For more information: (212) 267-1025

Room 306, Barnard Hall
Barnard College
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WORKERS VANGUARD

Revolt in the Bantustans, Apartheid Murder in the Townships

Black South Africa Seething

Rebellion is 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 March 27, protesters fled police fire in Sharpeville. Over 30,000 took to the streets of Sebokeng township, 30 miles south of Johannesburg, to march to nearby Vereeniging, to the ruling National Party offices, in protest against high rents and horrific living conditions. But the protesters never got to present their demands—police opened fire without warning and 14 blacks were shot dead, 447 wounded. Most were hit in the back by shotgun fire.

The images of black youths fleeing the death barrage were of Sharpeville all over again, the scene of the infamous 1960 massacre. In fact, many of the demonstrators last week came from nearby Sharpeville. Sebokeng, the huge black township with a population of over 600,000, has its own militant history: it was the origin of the 1984-86 black revolt which shook the apartheid state. Not since the brutal state of emergency was imposed five years ago has the government reported so many "incidents of unrest"—2,000 in the last three months. But the African National Congress (ANC) and United Democratic Front (UDF) are working desperately to cool things out, to avoid jeopardizing negotiations with the apartheid rulers.

When Nelson Mandela was released in February after 27 years in prison, we noted (WV No. 496, 23 February) that "the effect of an upsurge of black struggle may go far beyond what the ANC wants." Mandela's release has set off an acute crisis of expectations. The op-



Sharpeville, 30 years later: Protesters flee after police opened fire, March 26. In nearby Sebokeng, 14 were killed, hundreds injured. Scene strikingly resembled the Sharpeville massacre of March 1960. AFP

pressed 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 democracy for the black majority can only come about

through workers revolution.

Last month the apartheid regime moved troops to crush demonstrators in the Ciskei, one of the fake tribal "homelands." On March 3, young military officers seized power from the hated Pretoria-imposed president-for-life, declaring sympathy with the ANC and the South African Communist Party, and announcing their desire to be reincorporated into South Africa. When tens of thousands swarmed into the streets in

celebration, the South African army went in to suppress "rioting" and "looting," killing at least 27 people and injuring hundreds. The following week, police minister Adriaan Vlok announced a renewed crackdown on "troublemakers," rounding up hundreds in the townships and detaining them without charges.

Revolt has spread to other bantustans as well. Also on March 3, over 30,000 gathered in Gazankulu for the funerals of *continued on page 15*

Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!

California Gas Chamber Murder Machine

The following statement of the Partisan Defense Committee was issued April 2, as the state of California prepared to reactivate the gas chamber at San Quentin prison for the first time in 23 years. At press time, Robert Harris had been granted a stay of execution by a federal appeals court.

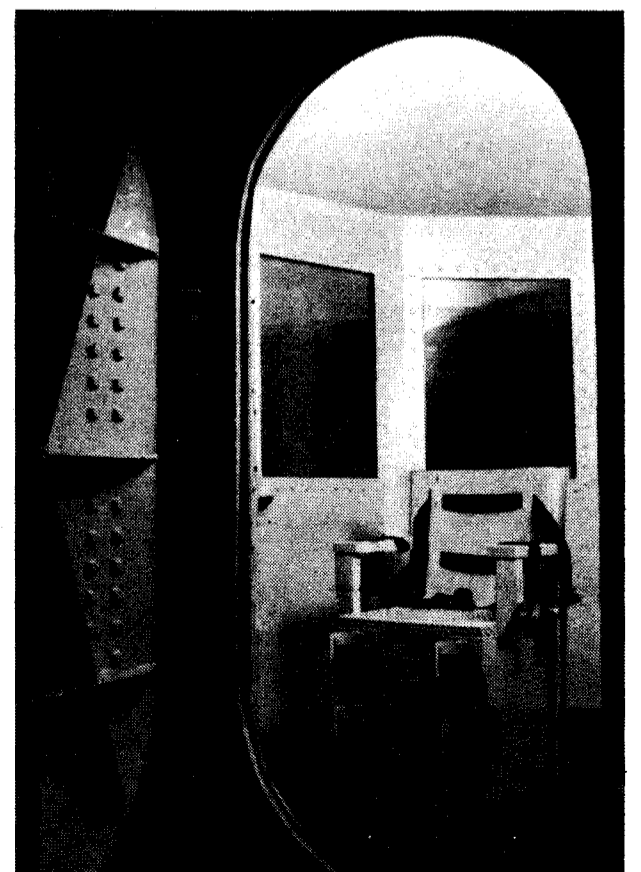
We are here to demand abolition of the barbaric death penalty everywhere it exists. Twenty-three years have passed since the last execution in California, on 12 April 1967, when a black man, Aaron Mitchell, was gassed. Now the state of California plans to kill Robert Alton Harris.

This intended execution is a watershed. It marks the attempt by the rulers of this country to achieve political acceptance of a fundamental policy of legal murder,

nationwide. The selection of the case of this man, who committed unspeakably grisly murders, for the first execution outside the South is meant to defuse any real opposition to state killing.

We oppose the death penalty because we do not accord the state the right to decide who lives and who dies. We oppose the death penalty because this legal brutalization of society necessarily enhances the brutalization of society in all respects. And in this racist country, the primary victims of this brutality are blacks.

The death penalty is the crowning point of the strengthening of the repressive powers of the bourgeois state. Not only is it irrevocable for the many innocents killed, but the death penalty harnesses the ancient tradition of arbitrary personal cruelty and torture to the *continued on page 14*



California Department of Correction
Instrument of legal barbarism: San Quentin gas chamber.