



## From perestroika to pogroms Bloody nationalist strife in USSR



After five years of perestroika, the USSR has become a seething cauldron of economic despair and fratricidal national passions. Soviet troops enter Baku (left) as bloody communalist warfare rages in the Caucasus. Azerbaijani nationalists (right) burn down border posts between USSR and Khomeinite Iran.

In order to clamp down on the communalist slaughter raging in the Caucasian republics, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev found it necessary to send in troops. After heavy fighting against Azerbaijani nationalist partisans armed with weapons previously seized from the army, Soviet forces now occupy the capital of Baku. Mass demonstrations have been led by the Azerbaijani Popular Front, which is raising the spectre of secession. Other Soviet forces have moved to gain control of the area along the Azerbaijan/ Armenia border, which had become the front line in a savage civil war.

Addressing the Soviet people, Gorbachev explained:

"The tragic events in Baku, the border areas of Azerbaijan and Armenia, other regions of the Caucasus have laid bare the price of nationalist rampage, speculation on sacred national feeling. It is a crime to push people to blind enmity, to the madness of fratricidal war."

It is indeed. However, the violent nationalisms which now threaten to rip apart the Soviet Union are the product of six decades of Stalinist bureaucratic rule and have been intensified by Gorbachev's own policies.

The immediate trigger for the decision to send troops was the pogrom against the several thousand Armenians who still lived in Baku. Azeri mobs—many made up of refugees from the two-year-long blood feud—dragged people out of homes, reportedly burning them alive, beating them to death and throwing them off high balconies. Some Azerbaijanis were horrified at the violence and risked their own lives to hide Armenian friends and neighbours from the blood-crazed mobs. The newspaper of the Soviet Communist Youth, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*,

reports that at the initiative of the Azerbaijan Komsomol, Azeri veterans of the Afghan war patrolled Armenian neighbourhoods to prevent further pogroms.

The atrocities are by no means on one side alone. Armenian partisans, using helicopter gunships seized from the Soviet Army, have strafed Azerbaijani villages. The Moscow newspaper *Izvestia* reported that 3000 Armenians attacked a village in Nakhichevan, an Azerbaijani enclave wedged between Armenia and Iran.

The decision to send troops won wide approval among the Soviet people. "Gorbachev had a responsibility to save lives", said a woman factory worker in Byelorussia (*New York Times*, 18 January). However, the Gorbachev regime has also encouraged pacifistic attitudes to justify its withdrawal from Afghanistan, where the Soviet Army was fighting a progressive war against imperialist-armed tribalists and Islamic fanatics. Thus many Russian parents protested against sending their sons to restore civil peace in the Caucasus. In response, the Soviet government halted calling up army reservists and announced that only regular military and police forces would be used in the operation.

While spokesmen for the Azerbaijani Popular Front threaten Gorbachev with a "new Afghanistan", the Soviet Army certainly has the power to control the region. But it cannot prevent small-group terrorism nor police every area where Armenians and Azeris are bent on killing one another. And what happens when the state of emergency is relaxed? The liberal Stalinist regime of Mikhail Gorbachev has no political answer to the "nationalist rampage" and "fratricidal war" he condemns.

The Baku pogrom took place just after

Gorbachev got back from Vilnius, where he appealed to Lithuanian nationalists not to secede from the USSR. The sending of troops into Azerbaijan has for the moment overshadowed the Lithuania crisis. Yet the secession of this Baltic republic would have grave consequences for the future of the Soviet Union. It would enormously embolden Western imperialism in its drive to break up the USSR and turn the remnants into neo-colonies of Wall Street and the Frankfurt banks. The rabid anti-Communist Pat Buchanan, who enjoys defending Nazi war criminals, wrote gleefully a few weeks

ago: "Is 1990 the year the Soviet Union breaks apart?"

Both Gorbachev and the Lithuanian nationalists of Sajudis are now posing secession as simply the exercise of national self-determination formally guaranteed in the founding 1924 constitution of the USSR. (This right was incorporated as the result of the dying Lenin's last struggle against Stalin's Great Russian chauvinism.) But the overriding goal of the Baltic nationalists is not independence but unity with the capitalist "free

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# WH statement on offensive headline

In the last issue of *Workers Hammer* (no 111, November/December 1989) we ran the following headline: "Irish Workers Group calls on pope to expel Chinese ambassador/Where LRCI lurks on China". The article correctly polemicised against the IWG's grotesque call for the expulsion of the Chinese ambassador by the Irish bourgeoisie. However, equating the pope with the Irish Republic, as the headline does, is false. Worse, it smacks of bigotry against the Catholic people of that country. As a member of our Scottish Advisory Committee wrote to *WH*, strongly objecting to the headline: "this kind of automatic equation will not help people of any religious persuasion to break from their churches' political direction towards social and class struggle".

The comrade further noted that, in another context, "The United States of America was historically founded as a Protestant country rife with anti-Catholic bigotry. The election of John F. Kennedy as President of the U.S., and despite the war-mongering imperialist policy that his administration pursued, did in fact lead to a strong diminution of antagonism between Catholics and Protestants thereby removing one of the many obstacles in the way of pursuing the class struggle in the United States."

We stand ardently for the separation of church and state. That task is certainly unfinished in the reactionary clericalist Republic of Ireland. But such idiocies as contained in our headline can only put back the struggle to smash the sectarian

divide, break the chains of clerical reaction on both sides and mobilise the necessary struggle encapsulated in our slogan: "not Orange against Green but class against class". For a British communist publication, the error was especially egregious: English and British chauvinism contains a strong Protestant anti-Catholic prejudice.

We sincerely apologise for this false equation and can only say that the editorial writer who did it was American and reflecting wrong international information. We badly need a group in Ireland to stop this internationally conventional public opinion. Many things are said by the internationally "well informed" that on the ground are fully or partially false.

The letter printed below from a reader in Dublin provides a corrective on and background to the formal constitutional structure in the Irish Republic, which no longer contains the provision of a "special position" for the Catholic church. The article on p 12 ("Irish students fight anti-

abortion reaction") also deals at length with the present social reality, especially for women, in Ireland.

As for the Irish Workers Group (IWG), co-thinkers of the English Workers Power organisation: despite our mishandling, their call on the bourgeois Irish government to break with the government of the Chinese deformed workers state represents *betrayal*. It is not the first time the centrist current now calling itself the "League for a Revolutionary International" (LRCI) has crossed the class line and capitulated to clerical reaction. Its support to Khomeini's "Islamic Revolution" in Iran and to counterrevolutionary Solidarność in Poland spring to mind. These treacherous positions were taken in the safety of great distance from their repercussions. In Ireland, neither their frenzied Stalinophobia nor their capitulation to Green nationalism serves the cause of the emancipation of the working people and oppressed. ■

## letter

### On the Irish Republic and the Catholic church

December 21, 1989  
Dublin, Ireland

*Workers Hammer*  
London

Dear comrades,

The article in *WH*#111 entitled "Where LRCI lurks on China" which focuses on the Irish Workers Group's obscene call on the Irish state to expel the Chinese ambassador at the time of the Tiananmen massacre in June incorrectly states that the Irish constitution explicitly enshrines allegiance to the Pope.

The first constitution of the Irish Free State adopted in 1922 was secular in that it gave no special privilege to any religion. Eamonn de Valera's 1937 Constitution, by contrast, is blatantly clericalist. Article 44 of this document begins as follows:

1.1 The State acknowledges that the homage of public worship is due to Almighty God. It shall hold His Name in reverence, and shall respect and honour religion.

1.2 The State recognises the special position of the Holy Catholic Apostolic and Roman Church as the Guardian of the Faith professed by the great majority of its citizens.

Article 44 goes on to "recognise" various Protestant denominations as well as "the Jewish Congregations" but the "special position" of Catholicism clearly overrides all others.

In 1972, in the context of overtures by Dublin to northern Unionists for negotiations and Ireland's imminent entry into the EEC, Jack Lynch's Fianna Fail government proposed the deletion of the sections of Article 44 referring to the "special position" of the Catholic Church and "recognising" other denominations. The Fifth Amendment to the constitution was carried by 84% of a poll in which barely half the electorate voted. It should be noted that the Catholic clergy in general put up very little opposition to the 5th Amendment and the Cardinal Archbishop of Armagh, Dr. William Conway, even said that he would not weep any tears over the departure of the "special position" clause.

The reason the Cardinal Archbishop did not weep is because the passing of the 5th Amendment entailed no fundamental change in the character of the

Irish state which was clericalist at its birth in 1922 and which remains clericalist to this day. That this is so can be shown by any number of examples. Take education, where even though the constitution provides for secular control, it is indisputable that every local National School is effectively run by the Catholic clergy, except for the few which are run by the Church of Ireland clergy so they can "teach their own". In southern Ireland, it is virtually impossible to obtain a secular education. Nor is it at all surprising that in Northern Ireland today the Catholic Church is putting up stiff resistance to any attempts to introduce integrated, non-denominational education....

In 1985, the clergy suffered its only defeat on a matter of social policy in the history of the Irish state when the Dáil passed a bill making contraception legal. So now you can buy a condom in the twenty-six counties but you can't get proper sex education in the church-run schools. Though an important gain this must be weighed against the clergy's victories in the 80s, first in pushing through the 8th Amendment in 1983, thus

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TROTSKY

#### Lenin on the German Social Democracy

*With East Germany today in the throes of an unfolding political revolution, West German imperialism has again turned to its Social Democratic lieutenants to be the Trojan horse for capitalist counterrevolution. This is the same role they played 70 years ago, acting in the name of bourgeois "democracy". While the Social Democratic government of Gustav Noske, Friedrich*



LENIN

*Ebert and Philipp Scheidemann had the German workers revolution of 1918-19 drowned in blood and its heroic leaders Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg murdered, the "left" Karl Kautsky, who served as an adviser in the government, provided "democratic" imperialism with ideological weapons against the young Russian Soviet Republic. On the eve of Liebknecht's assassination, Lenin exposed the reactionary role of the Social Democracy.*

With Liebknecht and the Spartacists are all those German socialists who have remained honest and really revolutionary, all the best and dedicated men among the proletariat, the exploited masses who are seething with indignation and among whom there is a growing readiness for revolution.

Against Liebknecht are the Scheidemanns, the Südekums and the whole gang of despicable lackeys of the Kaiser and the bourgeoisie. They are just as much traitors to socialism as the Gomperses and Victor Bergers, the Hendersons and the Webbs, the Renaudels and Vanderveldes. They represent that top section of workers who have been bribed by the bourgeoisie, those whom we Bolsheviks called (applying the name to the Russian Südekums, the Mensheviks) "agents of the bourgeoisie in the working-class movement", and to whom the best socialists in America gave the magnificently expressive and very fitting title: "labour lieutenants of the capitalist class." They represent the latest, "modern", type of socialist treachery....

Between the Spartacists and the Scheidemann men are the wavering, spineless "Kautskyites", who in words are "independent", but in deeds are entirely, and all along the line, dependent upon the bourgeoisie and the Scheidemann men one day, upon the Spartacists the next, some following the former and some the latter. These are people without ideas, without backbone, without policy, without honour, without conscience, the living embodiment of the bewilderment of philistines who stand for socialist revolution in words, but are actually incapable of understanding it when it has begun and, in renegade fashion, defend "democracy" in general, that is, actually defend bourgeois democracy.

—V I Lenin, "Letter to Workers of Europe and America" (January 1919)

## WORKERS HAMMER



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# British fake left on East Germany: a spectrum of betrayal

When a quarter of a million East German workers and others came out to protest Nazi provocations in East Berlin on 3 January (see article, p 6) the West German bourgeoisie reacted with a rabid campaign of anti-Communist propaganda. First the imperialists accused the Stalinist SED of fabricating the very real threat represented by Nazi desecration of the Soviet war memorial. Then, changing tack, the West German press and East German SDP demanded the SED disavow the Spartacists who forthrightly said that the social democrats were "the Trojan horse of counterrevolution". The Treptower Park anti-fascist protest enraged those forces seeking to return the German Democratic Republic (DDR) to capitalism because it was a powerful demonstration of pro-Soviet as well as anti-fascist sentiment in the East German deformed workers state.

The International Communist League (ICL) has fought for the programme of revolutionary Trotskyism against capitalist takeover of the DDR and Stalinist sell-out, for workers and soldiers councils, mobilisation of the working class in united-front action to repulse resurgent fascism's anti-Semitic, anti-immigrant and anti-Soviet provocations, for revolutionary reunification of Germany through proletarian political revolution in the East and socialist revolution in the West, for a new communist-egalitarian party in the spirit of Lenin, Luxemburg and Liebknecht. Once again, Germany is the key to all of Europe.

In Britain, examining the positions of the fake left on the question of the current upheaval in Eastern Europe is something like lifting the lid on a sewer. Today, the Social Democrats are spearheading the drive for capitalist restoration in East Germany. When the SPD and their hangers-on talk about "democratic socialism" they mean "democratic counter-revolution", of which the SPD intends to be the general staff. As seasoned social democrats—lackeys of the British Labour Party—much of the "left" has reacted in the spirit of the SPD and shared their fear and loathing for the mass mobilisation in the DDR against fascism.

Exemplifying complete obedience to the present-day Scheidemann and Noskes,

the *Militant* retailed the slanders against the anti-fascist protest. Thus, it writes in its 12 January issue which covers the 3 January Treptower demonstration:

"The past weeks have seen the SED trying to go on the political offensive, especially using the question of a capitalist reunification of Germany and the

*workers Hammer* no 111, November/December 1989).

Tony Cliff's state-capitalist Socialist Workers Party is predictably unrestrained over the prospects of returning the workers of East Germany and elsewhere to the "democratic" mercies of the capitalist market. The SWP's precursor broke

among the most loathsome SA-type expressions of resurgent German nationalism and imperialist revanchism.

For the Russia-hating SWP: "the regimes in Eastern Europe were not the outcome of any revolution. All were set up by Stalin after the Second World War. The power behind them was the Russian army, not the mass of workers". In 1945 the Soviet Red Army liberated Berlin—and mankind—from genocidal Hitler fascism. The states which issued out of the defeat of Hitler in the East were fundamentally the same as the bureaucratically degenerated Soviet workers state: capitalism was eradicated and at the same time the workers were denied direct political rule. For revolutionary Trotskyists, it is ABC that those states where capitalism has been overthrown must be defended against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution. These hard-fought gains of the international working class are not defended by the SWP.

Grotesquely, the outfit calling itself "Revolutionary Communist Party" (RCP) has come out point-blank for German reunification under capitalism. In its newspaper the highly dubious RCP writes that it "supports the reunification of Germany... it is likely that reunification will take place on terms which are not in the interests of the working class. Nevertheless, in relation to the present reality of partition and its destructive consequences for the European working class, reunification is a step in the right direction." (*the next step*, 1 December 1989). Originating in the Cliffite SWP, the RCP has reached new depths of anti-Sovietism. Furthermore, it is known for recruiting a "former" fascist organiser and skinheads. Now the RCP says in essence: "after counterrevolution, us!"

The centrist Workers Power group, in a polemic with their former comrades in the SWP, gives a nod in the direction that capitalist restoration would be a "defeat" in Germany. *Workers Power* is as notable for what it *doesn't* say as for what it does. While the Labourite *Militant* simply retails the line of the West German bourgeoisie and social democracy, *Workers Power* for its own reasons used the same technique as the *New York Times* and simply "disappeared" the massive Treptower anti-fascist protest.

Could there be any connection between their deafening silence on this event—a united-front action including the SED, Troztkistische Liga Deutschlands, Spartakist Gruppen and others—and their Stalinophobia? The demonstration honoured the Red Army that freed Europe from Nazism—a fact that does not fit neatly with Workers Power's blinkered Stalinophobia. When the Red Army went into Afghanistan to fight for elementary social progress, WP did not support this unambiguously progressive act. Instead it waffled, "suspending" the demand for Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. In Eastern Europe, Workers Power treacherously demands the withdrawal of all Soviet troops, ie, exactly what the West German bourgeoisie, their Social Democratic front men want and Gorbachev is threatening to do.

While formally renouncing Cliffite state-capitalism, Workers Power clings to the view of the Stalinist "monolith"—

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**Morning Star** (8 January 1990): Stalinist sellout in action. **Workers Power** (January 1990) "disappears" mass anti-fascist action, demands: "Hunt down the Stalinist parasites and spies" in the DDR.

activities of a tiny number of neo-Nazis to gather support....

"the official press has been carrying reports of extreme right-wingers intervening from West Germany and of fascist activities in the GDR. Some reports were genuine, but many of the incidents clearly involved individual youth trying to goad the regime or even provocations by SED supporters."

Mr Kinnock and his Second International cohorts couldn't have said it better. (Indeed Kinnock & Co can look back nostalgically on the halcyon days of the Labour Party's international work for the CIA, not least in Eastern Europe, after the Second World War.) Here, the Labourite "socialists" of *Militant* have tried desperately and in vain to *debate* the BNP fascist scum who have been staging provocations in the Glasgow Pollok area. *Militant* took "credit" for dissuading anti-fascist youth from taking more direct action against the BNP (see "Scotland: Militant Tendency polices anti-fascist youth" *Wor-*

decisively with Trotskyism over the Korean war; unable to withstand the Cold War winds then howling, it refused to defend the North Korean deformed workers state against US imperialism.

The Cliffite organisation has been led by its virulent anti-Sovietism not only into supporting some of the darkest forces of imperialist reaction but into offering them as a model for struggle against Stalinist "totalitarianism". Following the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, the Cliffites cheered on the CIA-funded *mujahedeen* who were preparing to drown any and every element of social progress in blood, with declarations that a "Mojahedin victory will encourage the opponents of Russian rule everywhere in the USSR and Eastern Europe" (*Socialist Worker*, 4 February 1989). It is small wonder that Cliff's co-thinkers in Germany, the Sozialistische Arbeitergruppe (SAG) has attracted to its ranks many skinheads,



Workers Vanguard

## Comrade Vincent

Comrade Vincent, a working-class militant and leading cadre of Spartacism in Sri Lanka, died tragically in a motor accident last week. He had been a member of the revolutionary movement since 1964. Those in the movement who knew him deeply cared for him, and will experience not just a serious setback in their work but the loss of a deeply valued collaborator. His warmth and friendliness helped forge bonds of comradeship between comrades in Asia, Europe, America and Australia. His family has now lost a husband and a father. We extend our condolences and sympathy to his wife and three children.

Three hundred friends, family and former and present comrades attended comrade Vincent's funeral on January 6. The coffin was draped with a red flag.

In this difficult and bloody communalist period in Lanka, the reconstruction and development of the revolutionary party have received a severe blow. We can only hope that class-conscious young militants will come forward to fill the void that the death of comrade Vincent has left, to further the struggle to free this tortured island from its communal and intercommunal bloodbath so that a proletarian beacon for Lanka and all of South Asia may emerge.

—International Executive Committee,  
International Communist League  
8 January 1990

# No sellout of the DDR—No restoration of capitalism!

## Trotskyists to fight in East German elections

The article below first appeared in *Workers Vanguard* no 494 (26 January 1990). Subsequently, the Modrow government in the DDR has announced that the elections will be moved forward to 18 March. Following Gorbachev's announcement that German reunification was "inevitable", Modrow proposed a detailed plan for "German unity", i.e. a sellout of the DDR to capitalist imperialism. See *Spartakist Workers Party of Germany* press release, p 9.

The Spartakist-Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands (SAPD—Spartakist Workers Party of Germany), founded at a meeting in East Berlin on 21 January, has announced that it will present candidates and participate on a Leninist programme in the 6 May 1990 elections to the Volkskammer, the parliament of the German Democratic Republic (DDR). Representatives of the Spartakist-Gruppen and the Trozktistische Liga Deutschlands joined in forming the SAPD for that purpose.

"With this election campaign, the Spartakist-Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands seeks to mobilize against the sellout of the DDR, bringing to the broad masses of working people the program for political rule of workers and soldiers councils and their allies—in particular white-collar employees, pensioners, collective farmers, members of the intelligentsia, students and pupils—as well as for forging a truly internationalist Leninist party in all of Germany," a press release stated.

Among the documents upon which the party was founded are "What Do the Spartacists Want" (see *Workers Vanguard* no 492, 29 December 1989) and the "Open Letter to All Communists" (see page 11).

Since the beginning of the year, big sections of the bourgeoisie have gone all out to provoke a crisis in the DDR: scare-mongering headlines in the Western press, stepped-up pressure for reunification from the West German govern-

### Spartakist Workers Party founded

ment, demands for unlimited penetration of capital from Frankfurt bankers, anti-Communist witchhunt propaganda in the Leipzig demonstrations, and the first acts of violence in Berlin. The capitalists want to put a stop to the so far peaceful development of a political revolution

combative anti-fascist mobilisation on 3 January, to repudiate the Nazi defiling of the graves of Soviet soldiers at the war memorial in Berlin's Treptow Park. The Spartakist-Gruppen and TLD initiated the call for such a united-front action as well as approaching the SED directly.



30 December 1989—Spartakist banner at Treptow Park anti-fascist demonstration: "For the Communism of Lenin-Liebkecht-Luxemburg! For a Leninist-Egalitarian Party!"

against Stalinist bureaucratic rule.

The imperialists and their front men had expected the ruling SED (Socialist Unity Party) to simply dissolve as in Hungary or, following the Polish example, to meekly make way for a capitalist government after an expected rout in the elections scheduled for 6 May. (And indeed the recent defection of the SED Dresden mayor and his group in the direction of social democracy is significant.) But those plans suffered a setback when 250,000 turned out for the

"The elections to the Volkskammer are turning into a plebiscite on the continued existence of the DDR as a workers state," noted the statement of the Spartakist Workers Party. Since the powerful Treptow demonstration against fascism and for solidarity with the Soviet Union, "the capitalists—with the Social Democratic SPD in the forefront—have escalated their raging onslaught against the social foundations of the DDR. Workers here know full well that the military presence of the Red Army has so far

prevented a military intervention by NATO into East Germany, and that close political and economic cooperation of the working people of the DDR and in the Soviet Union is vital for the workers states."

A workers political revolution in East Germany would be the most powerful encouragement to similar revolutionary developments in the USSR, which is today racked by every kind of instability triggered by perestroika as the crisis of

Stalinism reaches the boiling point. Genuine proletarian internationalism can save the Soviet Union and make it a beacon for world revolution, which is why the imperialists even more than the bureaucracy fear this prospect.

#### The DDR in danger

West German capitalists are seeking to buy up valuable properties in the DDR at giveaway prices. They have insisted on eliminating even the fig leaf of a 49 per

*continued on page 9*

## A letter to Arprekorr

The following letter appeared in *Arbeiterpressekorespondenz* no 20, 26 January 1990.

19 January 1990

*Arbeiterpressekorespondenz*

Dear Comrades,

Shouldn't we consider, subject to profound transformations in the Soviet Union—many of which are essentially identical to those which we in the DDR face today, if we repel the current hysterical assault to drive us into the arms

of the BRD—joining the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics? If the Soviet Union, through the decisive intervention of the conscious and organized Soviet working classes, were to eradicate Stalinism, introduce multi-party democracy, maintain the collective ownership of the basic means of production, reaffirm the right of separation of nations in the union who are not carrying through capitalist counter-revolution—would we not be better off than to be thrown into the pit of imperialist capitalism with its violent economic crises, its illegalization of abortion, its underlying threat of wars for spheres of influence, a capitalism which sits astride the ruthless exploitation of

the Third World?

I believe that to make this possible demands far more of the Soviet Union than it does of us, but it could give us a viable economic and social way out of our present crisis, and with fundamentally more freedom than by being seized by the BRD with its capitalist instability, its *Berufsverbot* [blacklisting] and virulent nationalism and inhumanity. As things now stand, one of the revanchist ideas is to expel the Turkish population, including those born in Germany and replace their labor with that of East Germans and *Volksdeutsche* [ethnic Germans from East Europe], while creating neo-colonial spheres in which non-Aryans

would labor in places like Poland or the western Ukraine "*Lebensraum*" while the Fourth Reich itself undergoes racial purification.

Economically the DDR and the USSR, especially in the framework of federative union, could be made to fit well together; and if Kaliningrad (Königsberg) became a town in the DDR of the USSR, it could become an anti-imperialist bastion in a region of ill-advised nationalist and capitalist restorationist unrest.

The qualitative reduction of internal security forces, i.e. their elimination as organs suppressing legitimate and even intemperate internal dissent, could be a strong financial source for the selective recapitalization of the industrial base of both areas and for the ecological cleansing of noxious industrial waste.

Best greetings,  
A sympathetic reader

# Open Letter to all communists

The following Open Letter by the Spartakist-Gruppen and the Trotzistische Liga Deutschlands is translated from Spartakist/Arbeiterpressekorrespondenz no 18 (12 January).

In full consciousness of the present real danger from right-radical forces along with the massive anti-communist hate campaign in the bourgeois media of West Germany, fanned by the SPD, and the threatened sellout of the DDR to the Deutsche Bank and its likes, we are suggesting an action programme to all communists inside and outside the SED-PDS:

## Fight fascism!

In the spirit of proletarian internationalism, for reliable protection of the memorial cemeteries of slain Soviet soldiers, of anti-fascist resistance fighters and Jewish citizens, we propose joint patrols by soldiers of the Red Army, the NVA [DDR army], members of the Volkspolizei [People's Police], VP auxiliaries and workers defence groups from the factories.

The preferred target of the anti-communist hate propaganda of the neo-Nazis are above all workers who have immigrated [to the DDR]. It is the duty of all workers to defend our foreign colleagues. Against Nazi terror we mobilise workers united fronts in East and West, faithful to Lenin's principle: March separately, strike together!

To guarantee protection of our workers state and of the property of the people, defence groups should be formed within the factories, made up of disciplined and experienced colleagues, including many members and reorganised units of the fighting groups of the working class. The working class must take up the battle against fascism in organised fashion, to crush it in the egg when it is still weak. This is why we advance the slogan: For joint workers militias under the control of workers and soldiers councils!

## Against the sellout of the DDR!

The present business situation of individual plants and institutions must be revealed by the directors and managers responsible. Clear and direct answers must be given to such questions as:

- Who is it that is empowering the general directors/directors to sell the people's property at giveaway prices?
- How large is the influence of and investment of capital already in the plants?
- Are layoffs being carried out or planned?

## Reprint from Arprekorr

- Are new privileges planned for certain layers?
- Who is attempting to institute an illegal practice of SPD-style *Berufsverbote* [blacklisting] now in the DDR as well, mainly directed against members of the SED-PDS?
- Will there be social cutbacks, ie, eg wage cuts?
- Will the year's maternity leave exist in the future as well?

The policies of Modrow's governmental coalition are aimed at giving capital a green light with the aid of amending the constitution and laws, in order to legalise the notorious "joint ventures" with Western firms, to permit protection of capital and transfer of profits. This is a direct attack on the right to work and endangers socially justified subsidies. The explosion of prices and rents will above all hit

soldiers councils to prevent capital from coming! The reintroduction of capitalist exploitation endangers every worker and the existence of the DDR. To defend our social gains and to open the way to socialism we must replace the arbitrary rule of the Stalinist bureaucracy with revolutionary soviet rule, throughout Germany.

The workers must take into their own hands control of the enterprises and institutions by forming councils [soviets]. In these councils, in which all currents within the working class are represented, free and open debates will take place on all pending problems. They thereby directly represent the interests of all workers, and the delegates can be recalled at any time. Such councils must look after the overall interests of society—for example, the control of prices as well—and thus they constitute the most democratic



Auto workers in Karl-Marx-Stadt (left). DDR economics minister Christa Luft offering up East German factories to Volkswagen boss Carl Hahn.

single women, pensioners and others with low incomes.

This pro-capital, anti-worker market economy policy must be resolutely fought! We propose that worker delegations from DDR factories visit their West German class brothers at Siemens, Osram, Braun, etc, in order to work together against the sellout.

## Workers and soldiers councils to power!

The SED-PDS now proposes forming plant councils "before capital comes" (*Neues Deutschland*, 11 January). The Spartakists call for forming workers and

form of government, a million times more democratic than any bourgeois parliamentarianism can ever be.

Revolutionary workers councils would fight for free round-the-clock day care for children, and also to enable full participation by women in social and political life. Workers and soldiers councils are the firm guarantee of the defence of socialised ownership of the means of production. Central planning of the economy can fully develop its enormous advantages only in connection with workers democracy.

## For full citizenship rights for all foreign colleagues working in the DDR and for their families!

The acts of discrimination that have recently been increasing against our colleagues from Poland, Vietnam, Mozambique, etc, must be stopped at once! Everyone who works and lives here, whatever their nationality, must have the same rights as any DDR citizen. Of course the families of soldiers of the Red Army and Soviet women living here must also have full enjoyment of the social gains.

In order to prevent speculation, restrictions on purchases directed against our class brothers are an inappropriate means, since they only fan nationalism. In our opinion, appropriate customs controls offer adequate protection against trading with state-subsidised commodities. Committees of working people in each residential area should ensure that prices are not raised, that a stop is put to speculation and thus everyone can shop without discrimination.



Spartakist-Gruppen banner: "For a Red Soviet Germany in a Socialist Europe!"

our on 14 January 1990 the three great leaders of the Russian and German revolutions.

The mass demonstration in Treptow also honoured the Red Army that freed Europe from Nazism. Honouring the Three L's in January pays tribute to the revolutionary ties between the Russian and German revolutions. Despite all the talk of "disarmament", imperialist militarism has today lost nothing of its desire for booty, as the provocations in the Caribbean and the massive military manoeuvres west of the Elbe demonstrate. And in the BRD the gigantic weapons company MBB-Daimler Benz was formed. We stand resolutely for defence of the DDR and the USSR against NATO imperialism. We fight for a red soviet Germany in a socialist Europe!

Against the military threat by German imperialism and NATO, a soviet government would turn to the workers of the East, in particular to those of the Soviet Union, as well as to the workers of the West.

Independent of existing political differences on many questions, we call upon all those who share our deep concern and wish jointly with us to defend the social gains of the DDR, to agree on and carry out actions with us. Whoever fails to defend what has already been won can win no new victories. But to win new victories it is necessary to forge a new communist party in the spirit of Lenin and Trotsky.

Spartakist-Gruppen  
Trotzkistische Liga Deutschlands  
11 January 1990

# East Berlin protest against fascist desecration of Soviet War Memorial

## 250,000 say: No Nazis in East Germany!

When a quarter of a million people rallied at a Soviet war memorial in East Berlin on 3 January to protest Nazi provocations and express their will to defend the DDR against the reimposition of capitalism, it wasn't news the American press found fit to print. Clearly, the US rulers understand the greatest obstacle to their bloody schemes is the unfolding political revolution.

"The imperialists thought they already had the DDR in their pockets. Now they are going wild because it isn't so. Their media have built up the reunification intoxication with reports on the Monday demonstration in Leipzig that incite to violence. But the 250,000 anti-fascists who assembled Wednesday evening in Treptower Park in order to protest the frightful desecration of the monument to the slain Soviet soldiers thereby delivered a mighty blow to those wishing to undermine the DDR."

Thus did our German comrades respond in *Arbeiterpressekorrespondenz* (no 16, 8 January) to a rabid campaign that the West German bourgeois press mounted after the rally grotesquely attempting to make the Communist Party (SED) responsible for fascist provocations, with headlines like "Fear in the DDR—The SED's Nazi Trick" and "SED Profits



3 January, Treptower Park, East Berlin: banner of TLD/International Communist League says: "Down with NATO! Defend the Soviet Union!"

from Neo-Fascism". The provocations at the Treptow Monument and in Gera, where stars were broken off Soviet gravestones, the repeated vandalism of

Jewish graves in East Berlin, are no "trick". The growth of Schönhuber's Republikaner fascists and the proliferation of skinhead attacks on immigrant

workers in West Germany, and the efforts of their counterparts to raise their heads in the DDR, where they have been able to parade as part of sizable pro-reunification marches, are a deadly serious matter.

Of course the SED government of the DDR has used the neo-Nazi menace as an argument for reorganising and strengthening the state security apparatus. This was a theme of the speech made at the anti-fascist rally by SED head Gregor Gysi, picked up by several other speakers. But what supreme hypocrites are the mouthpieces of West German imperialism, whose own legal structure and state machinery (particularly the secret police and anti-Soviet spy agencies) came straight from the Third Reich!

The same *Arprekorr* article noted: "What we hold against the SED here is not that it makes this question into a focus for the elections, but rather that the Nazi danger cannot be eliminated by elections. That is why it was particularly important that at the Treptow demonstrations [a smaller demonstration was held the previous Saturday, organised by the DDR-Soviet friendship association], for the first time in the DDR's history, Trotskyists were able to speak, and called for a workers united front, workers militias, and workers and soldiers councils."

## Letter to commander of Soviet forces in Germany

When the hideous Nazi defacing of the Soviet war memorial in Berlin's Treptow Park was discovered on 28 December, the Spartakist-Gruppen and Trotzistische Liga Deutschlands immediately condemned this provocation in a letter to the commander of Soviet armed forces in Germany. This was followed by the call for united-front action which was taken up by the SED-PDS (Socialist Unity Party of Germany—Party of Democratic Socialism), resulting in the 250,000-strong anti-fascist mobilisation on 3 January.

28 December 1989

General of the Army B.V. Snetkov  
Commander in Chief  
Group of Soviet Forces in Germany  
Zossen-Wünsdorf

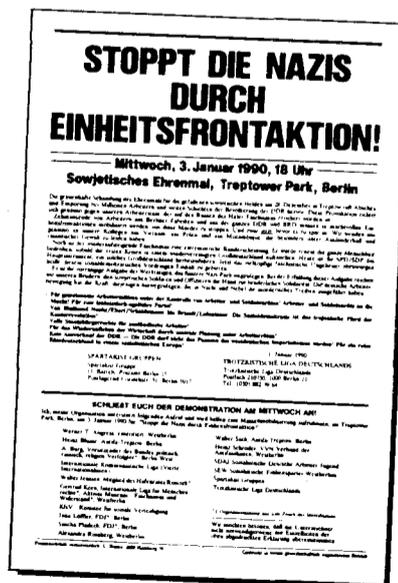
Dear Comrade General,

The vile Nazi desecration of the Memorial to Fallen Soviet Heroes in Treptow provokes disgust and outrage among millions of workers and broad layers of the population of the DDR. This provocation is directed as well at our workers state, which was built on

the ruins of Hitler fascism.

Thousands of Red Army soldiers are buried here who died in liberating Berlin—and mankind—from genocidal Hitler fascism. These are our fallen comrades too. In memory of the 20 million Soviet dead in the fight to smash the Third Reich, of six million Jews who died in the Holocaust, class-conscious German workers vow to prevent the rise of a Fourth Reich. Today neo-Nazis seek to spearhead political reunification with capitalist West Germany. While the capitalists seek to buy the DDR and the Social Democrats offer smooth words, neo-Nazis direct their racist terror against foreign workers, seeking to whip up a witchhunt against Communists. Tens of thousands of workers from Berlin factories and throughout the DDR and BRD must be mobilised in powerful united-front action to crush these killers, now before it is too late!

And they urgently want to smash the fascists, just as, we are sure, tens of thousands of Leningrad and Moscow workers would like to mobilise against the Pamyat blackshirts, whose anti-Semitic Great Russian chauvinism is a threat to the multinational Soviet



Spartakist-Gruppen, TLD call: "Stop the Nazis through united-front action!"

Union.

We internationalists must combat nationalist chauvinism against Polish, Vietnamese, Mozambican and other foreign workers. We warn that those who call for violence are doing the

work of the imperialists, who at all costs want to undermine the peaceful development of the political revolution unfolding in the DDR.

As East German working people seek to rid this land of those abuses of Stalinism, the Soviet Army has refused to be used by those who would have staged a bloodbath. We recognise, too, that in standing at your posts, far from home, on guard against NATO imperialist threats, you are a bulwark against those who dream of a new fascist nightmare.

It is above all the task of the working people to sweep away the sinister Nazi pack. In carrying out this mission, we extend the hand of fraternal solidarity to our brother Soviet soldiers and officers. The German workers movement has the strength to sweep away those who carried out their murderous work under the cover of night and fog.

Trotzistische Liga Deutschlands  
Spartakist-Gruppen

cc: Mikhail Gorbachev  
CC CPSU  
Supreme Soviet

# Where does the money come from

The following statement was published in Spartakist (no 67, 17 January), the newspaper of the Troztkistische Liga Deutschlands.

Recently we have been bringing out *Arbeiterpressekorespondenz* almost daily. This is really costing a lot of money, approximately DM17,000 a week. We also hope to be able to publish a weekly in the DDR shortly.

This money, from the dwindling reserves of the International Communist League, has been built up over a number of years through high pledges from the wages of very advanced workers in ten countries. These contributions vary according to the level of the wages received by the workers in the various countries. Members in West Germany have paid the most per capita, but members of the ICL from France and the USA, from Canada and Australia, have also made their contribution. The British comrades are too poor and the Japanese and Italian comrades too few, but nevertheless they too have helped out. And even those comrades from countries like Mexico and Lanka and elsewhere in South Asia who have received financial support from the ICL have helped as much as they could. Sometimes, when a comrade's frugal grandmother dies, we receive a portion of the inheritance as a windfall. That's where our money comes from.

The sociology of our finances is just as one would expect. Our international organisation numbers fewer than a thousand people on the entire planet, and they all work for a living. From countries with a high wage level, with older and more numerous comrades, we receive a

## Statement of the International Secretariat of the ICL and the Central Committee of the TLD

surplus. On the other hand our international organisation provides modest subsidies to our smaller sections, which have younger comrades with less professional experience and a lower wage level; in doing so we don't want to create a fool's paradise but rather to further their growth.

Since the days of the New Left, university administrations in the US, ie, in the final analysis state authorities, have offered to pay for (radical) student activities. We have successfully fought against accepting even one cent of this government-sponsored financial support.

It is in this spirit and in accord with this programme that we do our work in the DDR. We don't want even a pfennig of subsidy from anyone except from those who are in some way in serious agreement with our programme.

Therefore the working people from the BRD or DDR who pay one or two marks to read our press are indispensable for the continued appearance of our publications. At the moment the class consciousness of the West German proletariat is at an ebb, which is no doubt discouraging for militants in the DDR. Militancy has its ebb and flood tides. Large-scale economic struggles are on the agenda in the BRD this year; the stance of workers in the West toward the DDR will perhaps be completely different then.

And of course when some major action is projected or some new major develop-

ment in the world comes up, we run fund drives. The Partisan Defense Committee, a non-sectarian organisation for legal and social defence associated with the ICL, received, particularly from unions with a significant black membership, \$42,000 in donations for the series of rallies against the Nazis and the Ku Klux Klan that we recently mounted in the US. Before this, during the 1984 miners strike in Britain, the PDC raised \$23,000 in donations from the labour movement all across America and internationally in support of this hard-fought but unfortunately defeated battle against the evil prime minister Thatcher.

More recently we raised \$50,000 from left communists and militant defenders of women's rights around the world, money the Afghan government used to assist the victims of the heavy fighting around Jalalabad, a battle that stopped the counterrevolutionaries in Afghanistan cold. The PDC campaigns, being public in nature, are also heavily audited, showing to all that the money does go for the purposes intended.

And now from the entire world, in accordance with their means, radical socialists and communists are sending in money directly to our political organisation through the Lenin-Liebkecht-Luxemburg Fund to support the work of our comrades in the East German political revolution. But these donations basically have come from older, now-retired

people or from others sympathising with communism, whose financial resources are largely depleted. In general these fund-raising campaigns are undertaken for a very specific aim and as urgent circumstance demands, and are not the basis for the regular political work of our international organisation or its sections.

The genuine Trotskyists of the world have done everything in their power to defend the DDR against capitalist absorption and the USSR against imperialist provocations. At present we appear rightly in the DDR as those who express the hopes of millions of workers and sections of the intelligentsia and who counter their fears. Our international organisation, the ICL, will continue trying to help, and it will help. But bringing out our press in all Germany is essentially the responsibility of those who support the founding of a Spartakist Workers Party of Germany that will emerge from the Spartakist-Gruppen, the Troztkistische Liga Deutschlands and others supporting the fundamental programme of our political grouping.

The fate of the unfolding German workers political revolution hangs in the balance. Contributions from internationalists are urgently needed to carry forward the critical intervention of conscious Leninists. Make donations payable/send to: Spartakist, PO Box 1041, London NW5 3EU. Earmark for "Lenin-Liebkecht-Luxemburg Fund" or "3-L's Fund".

The previous issue of *Aprekorr* (no 15, 4 January) reported: "When the horrible graffiti on the Treptow Memorial were reported last Friday, broad layers of the populace were deeply shocked. The Spartakist Gruppen, recently founded in the DDR in cooperation with the Troztkistische Liga Deutschlands, condemned this provocation immediately and energetically in a 28 December letter to the commander of the group of Soviet armed forces in Germany, Army General BV Snetkov. In conjunction with this we called for a workers united-front action on Wednesday at the Treptow Memorial."

We brought this call directly to the SED leadership and urged their participation. We indicated that from our contact with sections of the working people in East Berlin after the atrocity, we believed deep anti-fascist and pro-Soviet sentiment could be mobilised by united-front protest. We said we intended to distribute over 100,000 copies of our own call for the protest mostly in working-class areas. In response to criticisms of our call (particularly our "tone" towards the policies of the social democrats), we urged others to issue their own calls and slogans. We solicited endorsements and speakers, including anti-fascist militants from West Germany.

When the SED decided to throw its weight behind the demonstration, it certainly succeeded in swamping our smaller forces. On Tuesday, 2 January, calls for the demonstration were featured on the front pages of the SED's *Neues Deutschland* and its youth press (*Junge Welt*). The *ND* call for a "fighting mobilisation" (full mobilisation of the membership), raising the SED's own slogans for a popular front "against the Right", gave a list of

sponsors of the protest, not including the TLD and SG. Meanwhile, DDR radio's announcements for the event credited its initiation to us. Finally, Wednesday morning's *ND* (DDR edition) featured a call

call for workers and soldiers councils to power."

But today, many workers and soldiers urgently see the need for organisation to express their own will. After 40 years, the



Trotskyist spokesman Renate Dahlhaus (lower right) addresses 3 January mobilisation against fascism.

for the mobilisation including the TLD and SG in the endorsers list.

At several points during the speech of the TLD's Renate Dahlhaus, raucous loudmouths attempted in time-dishonoured Stalinist fashion to interrupt with hostile interjections and chants of "SED-PDS". *Aprekorr* no 15 said: "They wanted to hear nothing of the failure of the SED's political monopoly, no words of criticism of Gorbachev's market-oriented perestroika economic reforms in the USSR. They even resorted to booing our

lid has come off, the bureaucracy is paralysed and split, the economy is in trouble, and even the SED has discovered the abuses of "Stalinism" and admits the state ought not to be synonymous with one-party rule. Despite the "dissolving" of various bodies and central committees, "somebody" is selling the plants to the West. The TLD and SG speakers' remarks properly went beyond the points of agreement among the demonstrators to touch on key questions which must be and are being debated widely. If they

were received impolitely by many of those at the rally, who equate defence of the DDR with SED party loyalty, nonetheless the revolutionary pole was heard clearly and was beamed throughout the DDR on radio and television. Some 35,000 pieces of our literature were sold.

As we go to press, the West German press has shifted to a new line of attack against the anti-fascist mobilisation: they are demanding the SED suppress the Trotskyists who dared to denounce the social democracy! (We haven't heard so much advice from the bosses about who the workers' "real" friends are since the halcyon days of anti-socialist Polish Solidarność.) And at the DDR's Round Table conference yesterday, the East German SDP demanded the SED "disavow" the TLD/SG call which termed the social democrats "the Trojan horse of counterrevolution". Gysi replied that when a rally is called, who comes and what they say "is no longer to be orchestrated, fortunately," and chided Round Table participants for not participating.

After 40 years of bureaucratic commandism at the top and atomisation at the base, a different set of working-class political traditions must be forged in the spirit of Leninist internationalism. The 3 January rally gave voice to millions of DDR citizens ready to fight the new rise of fascism. This readiness must be given organisation under the leadership of an aroused, conscious, confident working class. As a first step we suggest joint patrols to guard the graves of Soviet soldiers, composed of Soviet and DDR soldiers and factory-based workers militias.

Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* no 494, 26 January 1990

# USSR...

(Continued from page 1)

world". While screaming about the sacred cause of "independence", they are talking about forming a "Baltoscandia"—a union of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia with the capitalist countries of Scandinavia. And they expect generous aid from the coffers of Western imperialism. Under the guise of national liberation, the Lithuanian Sajudis and the Latvian and Estonian Popular Fronts are driving towards *social counterrevolution*.

The rise of reactionary nationalism is by no means limited to the periphery of the USSR. Ukrainian nationalism is stirring behind the revived Eastern Rite Catholic church. The most dangerous nationalism of all for the future of the Soviet Union is that of the dominant Russian people. And here we have seen the growth of the fascist Pamyat (Memory) and other Great Russian chauvinist outfits spewing out anti-Semitic filth as they scapegoat the Jews for the economic disaster of perestroika (restructuring). In January Pamyat-type stormtroopers forced their way into the Moscow headquarters of the Writers Union and disrupted a meeting of anti-fascist intellectuals.

Why have violent and reactionary nationalist movements erupted under



## SAM BORNSTEIN

17 APRIL 1920 — 8 JANUARY 1990

It is with sadness that we inform our readers of the death of Sam Bornstein in London in January of this year. We value his dedication to the documentation of the history of Trotskyism. He co-authored with Al Richardson the books *Two Steps Back* (1982), *Against the Stream* (1986) and *War and the International* (1986). He played an important role in the initiation of the archival journal *Revolutionary History*. In our dealings with him, we always found him comradely and collaborative.

bourgeois agitators of genocide. And in the Baltics, as elsewhere, the whole thrust of perestroika has been to benefit intellectuals, technocrats and petty entrepreneurs—the social base of the nationalist movement—at the expense of the workers and collective farmers. Hence, the Gorbachevite Stalinists cannot unite Russian-speaking workers with their Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian class brothers on an egalitarian socialist programme.

Working-class resistance to the ravages of perestroika is growing. Siberian coal miners are threatening further strikes.

ago, we pointed out that "the Armenian bureaucracy and intelligentsia are pushing themselves forward at the expense of poorer, more culturally backward Azerbaijan" (*Workers Vanguard* no 450, 8 April 1988).

Azerbaijanis reacted with a bloody pogrom against Armenians in the city of Sumgait, near Baku, in February 1988. Since then terror and counter-terror have driven 600,000 Armenians and Azeris from their homes, producing a mass of vengeful refugees on both sides. In the Azeris' eyes, the Armenians are favoured by the Russians, fellow Christians who have historically regarded themselves protectors of the Armenians against the infidel Turk. Azerbaijani nationalists now look to Iran, where a majority of Azeris live, as their protector. Khomeini's picture is carried in their demonstrations, and the Baku pogromists chanted "Islamic Republic" along with "Down with Armenians!" And now the Azerbaijani enclave of Nakhichevan has proclaimed its independence from the USSR and desire to be part of Iran.

Even more so than in the Caucasus, the resurgence of reactionary nationalism in the Baltic is directly tied to Gorbachev's market-oriented economic programme. Like Armenia, the Baltic republics are a relatively advanced region that were slated to be in the vanguard of perestroika. Just as Armenian nationalists look down on Azeris, so Baltic nationalists look down on Russians. They think they will have a bright economic future as the Eastern fringe of the European Common Market.

In his debate with Lithuanian nationalists, Gorbachev accepted their framework. He only argued that an independent Lithuanian economy could not withstand competition in the world market. "You get independence—and switch to world prices—and you'll end up in the soup in no time", the Soviet leader told a crowd in Vilnius. "No, we won't!" people shouted back (*Baltimore Sun*, 12 January). Many Lithuanians foolishly believe they will be generously treated by the Western powers for helping break up the Soviet Union. Lithuanians would do well to look at neighbouring Poland, where Solidarność programme of capitalist restoration is driving the economy down to a Third World level.

When the Gorbachev "reformers" came to power, they branded the long Brezhnev regime as the "era of stagnation" and promised a new era of "socialist renewal". Now, after five years of perestroika, the Soviet Union has become a seething cauldron of economic discontent and national passions. A sense of bitterness and frustration, of despair and impotence is openly expressed by the prominent Gorbachevite publicist Alexander Bovin:

"Gorbachev faces an almost impossible dilemma. The sentiment for leaving the union outright has grown, and not only in the Baltic states. On the other hand,

a man in Gorbachev's position cannot simply preside over the disassembly of the country, as we know it. What does he do? You tell me. Buy time any way he can—but what else?... No one sees a way out."

—*Washington Post*, 7 January

Bovin's plaintive cry—"No one sees a way out"—testifies to the total political bankruptcy of Stalinist bureaucratic rule in the Soviet Union.

There is a way out. It is returning to the proletarian internationalism of Lenin and Trotsky. As a first step, class-conscious workers and socialist intellectuals must smash the Pamyat fascists in the streets and root out all manifestations of Russian chauvinism and anti-Semitism. By combating the chauvinists among the dominant Russian nationality, patriotic Soviet workers will gain the moral and political authority to counter the other reactionary nationalisms which now threaten to rip apart the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

In the Baltics, roughly half the population of the Latvian and Estonian republics—and a majority of the proletariat—is made up of Russians, Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Jews, ethnic Siberians and other Soviet peoples. These Russian-speaking workers have organised themselves into the "Internationalist Movement" to combat Baltic nationalism and defend their democratic rights. Yet in the absence of a genuinely internationalist programme, this movement could easily fall prey to Russian nationalism, which cannot appeal to Latvian and Estonian workers, whose grandparents were staunchly *pro-Bolshevik*.

Communism has much to offer the Azeris and other traditionally Islamic and Turkic-speaking peoples in the Soviet Union—economic and social modernisation, and not least *the liberation and equality of women*. A truly internationalist, all-out effort to crush feudalist reaction in Afghanistan would have made the USSR into a beacon for social progress in the East. Under a Leninist leadership, instead of the Soviet Azeris being drawn into the orbit of Khomeinist Iran, the nationally oppressed Azeris of Iran would be drawn toward Soviet power. The programme of an independent Soviet Azerbaijan, uniting this Turkic people on both sides of the Araks River, would go a long way toward resolving on a progressive basis the national question in the Caucasus.

It is necessary to reforge in the Soviet Union an authentically Bolshevik party to lead the workers in sweeping out the Stalinist bureaucracy, establishing a regime based on soviet democracy, a planned, egalitarian economy, equality between peoples, and proletarian internationalism. Only such a programme can liberate the creative energies of *all* Soviet peoples, overcoming the fratricidal national conflicts now raging in Gorbachev's Russia.

Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 494, 26 January 1990



Anti-Soviet Lithuanian nationalists demonstrate on 10 January, the day before Gorbachev arrived in Vilnius. Under cover of the right to national self-determination, Baltic nationalists are pushing towards capitalist restoration.

Gorbachev? Soviet spokesmen used to proudly point to Baku as a cosmopolitan multinational city. The large and thriving Armenian community—over 10 per cent of the population—lived without fear of violence from their Azeri neighbours. There was a fair degree of intermarriage. At the same time, hundreds of thousands of Azeris lived peacefully in the Armenian republic. In the Baltic republics, anti-Soviet nationalism seemed limited to an extremist fringe. And Pamyat was viewed as a small group of backward-looking fanatics, not to be taken seriously.

But the apparent stability of Brezhnev's Soviet Union was illusory. Decades of Stalinist police-state rule trampled underfoot legitimate national grievances and rights while also suppressing the open, violent expression of nationalist hatreds and rivalries. All this came to the surface when Gorbachev loosened the political controls. However, perestroika has greatly fuelled and intensified pre-existing national antagonisms. Political liberalisation was tied to a programme which encouraged economic competition and self-interest, and degraded the socialist principles of equality, internationalism and working-class solidarity.

The Gorbachev regime makes no attempt to appeal to Armenian and Azerbaijani workers against the petty-

The most hated class of people in the Soviet Union are the petty capitalist entrepreneurs spawned by the economic "liberalisation". The situation is crying out for the building of a genuinely communist party which can unite and mobilise the Soviet working class against the forces of murderous nationalism and capitalist restoration.

### Perestroika fuels reactionary nationalisms

The Western media present the communalist civil war in the Caucasus as but the latest round in the ancient blood feud between the traditionally Christian Armenians and Islamic, Turkic-speaking Azeris. The immediate trigger was mass Armenian agitation to change the status of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region, a mountainous enclave of 100,000 inhabitants—75 per cent of them Armenian—within the boundaries and under the jurisdiction of the Azerbaijan republic. Nagorno-Karabakh was not an isolated territorial dispute but a symptom and symbol of resurgent Armenian nationalism. Armenian bureaucrats and intellectuals, the elite of a relatively economically advanced region of the USSR, saw themselves as the favoured children of perestroika. When the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict exploded two years

# Elections...

(Continued from page 4)

cent upper limit on foreign capital in joint ventures, and now the Volkskammer has voted a constitutional amendment eliminating the requirement for the predominance of nationalised (people's) property. At the same time as Deputy Premier Christa Luft was giving Western businessmen a green light for reintroducing capitalist exploitation, the coalition government drastically raised prices on children's clothes. Finance Minister Nickel, now under investigation for misuse of state funds, has talked of raising rents.

West German chancellor Kohl is now putting the screws to East Berlin, demanding that East German prime minister Modrow's government agree to a capitalist reunification. But the Christian Democrats are still looking for some kind of federation. The Social Democrats have become the vanguard of the push for reunification, figuring that they would be the dominant party of a united Germany. The rebaptised SPD-East, which is lavishly financed by its Western big brothers, declared at its 14 January conference that its main goal was "German unity in agreement with the federal government". An enormous West German flag at the SPD demonstration in Alexanderplatz carried the slogan: "Reunification—Ban the SED".

That same day the fascist Republikaner party, meeting near Munich, declared

itself the spearhead of "reunification now", while vituperating against Communists, Jewish leaders and foreign workers.

The next day, a mob invaded the headquarters of the former State Security (Stasi) in East Berlin. The right wing is seeking to exploit widespread hatred of the Stasi, whose brutal methods escalated in the last years of Honecker's rule. This extended to the factories, where there were many who drew a second pay-check every month for spying on their fellow workers. The government reported to the Round Table meeting with opposition parties on 15 January that the Stasi had employed 85,000 people and more than 100,000 collaborators, and consumed 3.6 billion marks, 1.5 per cent of the entire state budget. The dead weight of the secret police needed to defend bureaucratic rule is a far greater burden on the economy than the comparatively minor privileges enjoyed by the upper layer of bureaucrats.

The Spartakist Workers Party of Germany seeks to forge a Leninist-egalitarian party, against the abusive Stalinist system—from Stalin to Ulbricht and Honecker. ■

## Press release of Spartakist-Workers Party of Germany, 6 February, Berlin:

The Spartakist Workers Party of Germany is presenting candidates in the 18

March elections to the Volkskammer as a rallying cry for the working class to mobilise against the sellout of our workers state. Gorbachev now says "yes" to a Fourth Reich. With his call for "Germany—one fatherland", Modrow prepares to bury the DDR, capitulating to the threats and pressures from Bonn and the handmaidens of capital, mainly the Social Democrats. Such a policy of appeasement paves the way for counter-revolution and war.

A new government is being formed—they call themselves the "great coalition of reason". We say it is the coalition of treason. The Spartakist Workers Party is campaigning for:

- **No to capitalist restoration!** Defend the collectivised property! We the working people built this collectivised economy out of the rubble with our sweat and toil. The factories are ours and the bureaucrats have no right to sell them off at bargain prices.
- **Stop the fascist menace in the egg!** Do not forget that 20 million Soviet citizens died in the fight against fascism. We were hundreds of thousands who came out to the Soviet war memorial at Treptow on 3 January to demonstrate our determination that never again shall the Nazi plague spread racist terror in and from Germany.
- **Defend the DDR and the USSR!** The gains of the 1917 October Revolution should be extended to all humanity through international proletarian revolution.

The Spartakist election campaign is a platform for class struggle. We must stop the gutting of our social gains—low rents, pensions, health care, day care, women's right to abortion. We must fight for our jobs—against the capitalist buyout of the plants, what is necessary are strikes, factory occupations and workers control! Sweep the fascists off the streets of Leipzig and other cities with powerful workers united-front actions.

We address ourselves to those who mobilised at Treptow against the fascist menace, to the countless SED-PDS members and ex-members who were betrayed by their Stalinist leaders and oppose the appeasement policy of Modrow, Gysi & Co: join the Spartakist campaign, for a real communist programme, for workers and soldiers councils controlled by the workers on the shop floor and the soldiers in the barracks.

The Spartakist Workers Party fights for soviet power, which is more democratic than the most democratic parliament. In these Volkskammer elections we demand full proportional representation, and full voting rights for our foreign co-workers and their families.

The Soviet Union and the DDR are in danger. We must fight shoulder-to-shoulder with our Soviet fellow workers, with the Red Army soldiers and officers who are a bulwark against the invasion of the Bundeswehr up to the Oder and beyond. For a red soviet republic in all Germany, in the tradition of Lenin, Liebknecht and Luxemburg, a part of a socialist Europe!

# Letter...

(Continued from page 2)

giving "unborn children" constitutional protection and by narrowly defeating the attempt to liberalise (slightly) the divorce laws in the 1986 referendum. Article 41 of the 1937 Constitution reads in part:

1.1 The State recognises the Family as the natural primary and fundamental unit group of Society...

2.2 The State shall, therefore, endeavour to ensure that mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties in the home.

3.1 The State pledges itself to guard with special care the institution of Marriage, on which the Family is founded, and to protect it against attack.

3.2 No law shall be enacted providing for the grant of a dissolution of marriage.

This is still the law of the land! Here then is the enshrining of Catholic doctrine in the constitution, plain as day. Ireland is a clericalist state all right, a clericalist state based especially on the hideous exploitation and oppression of women.

Having said all that, I also wanted to comment on the other headline of your article: "Irish Workers Group calls on pope to expel Chinese ambassador." My first reaction to your equation of the Irish bourgeois clerical state with the Vatican was that it was a bit excessive but that no insult of this state would really be too excessive. It later occurred to me though, after talking to several people about the headline, that it comes off sounding like Sir Edward Carson's slogan, "Dublin Rule means Rome Rule" when he began "playing the Orange Card" against Home Rule in 1912. This, of course, is still effectively the line of Unionism today but one must also remember that Lord Craigavon, premier of the Northern statelet in the late 20s, once described Stormont as, "a Protestant Parliament for Protestant people."

The Irish state, clericalist as it is, is not

exactly Iran and it is important to recognise that the authority of the Catholic Church has weakened considerably in the last thirty years. Almost fifty per cent voted against the clergy in the 1986 referendum and in Dublin the clergy lost outright. More to the point, the Taoiseach doesn't "call the Pope" when he wants to expel an ambassador but he certainly does call when he considers reforming the divorce laws. But despite occasional and very half-hearted attempts by some sections of the Irish bourgeoisie (such as Garret Fitzgerald's wing of Fine Gael or Des O'Malley's Progressive Democrats) to put a more secular face on the state, the classic democratic task of the bourgeois revolution to "separate church and state" remains glaringly unachieved in modern Ireland. I doubt in fact whether it will be achieved this side of proletarian rule. Those who would be Irish communists must, therefore, fight for the unfulfilled democratic demands of the bourgeois revolution as part of the programme for socialist revolution and must inscribe on their banners the slogans: "Free Abortion on Demand! Separate Church and State! For Women's Liberation through Socialist Revolution!" Such a programme, creatively and forcefully advocated by a section of the southern proletariat, might well find a positive response from the most advanced layers of the Protestant working class in the north.

The Irish Workers Group's call on the Irish state to expel the Chinese ambassador was indeed obscene, though it would have been equally obscene for a British group to call on Her Majesty's government to do the same thing. Once again, the IWG, like their co-thinkers in Workers Power and the "League for a Revolutionary Communist International" can't seem to find the class line between a bourgeois state and a workers state, no matter how deformed. It calls to mind their willingness to be in a military bloc with counterrevolutionary Solidarnosc in 1981. The Roman Catholic Church certainly has a "special position" in Walesa's organisation and the new prime minister Mazowiecki consults the Pope on more

than divorce laws! At least there's a certain consistency to their capitulations.

The most unfortunate result of the flaws in your article is that you unwittingly let the IWG off the hook for something that I and a number of other people in Trinity College Dublin Socialist Society feel they should really be nailed for. As for myself, I will continue to support *Workers Hammer* because I believe it's

the only genuinely revolutionary paper in these islands.

Socialist Greetings,  
Tom Crean

*Workers Hammer* thanks comrade Tom for his thoughtful contribution. It has been slightly abridged for reasons of space.

## Workers Hammer goes bi-monthly

A recent meeting of the Spartacist League Central Committee, which followed an authoritative international gathering, decided to reduce the frequency of *Workers Hammer* to bi-monthly. The need to devote maximum resources—human, financial and political—of the International Communist League to urgent work in the DDR was a compelling primary consideration. Political and social revolutions are few and far between; the current very rapidly changing situation in the DDR offers a unique opportunity and an urgent responsibility for revolutionary Trotskyists.

The British section will be able to use the English-language fortnightly of the SL/US, *Workers Vanguard*, along with

*Workers Hammer* to intervene into the political life of these isles with the programme of authentic communism. *Workers Hammer* supplements may also be produced as needed. Future growth of the SL/B as well as a sharpening of social struggle will not only permit but demand an increase of our frequency. And beyond that stands our perspective—involving communist daily papers—of a revolutionary workers party, section of the reformed Fourth International.

Our subscribers will, of course, receive no fewer issues; their subscriptions will simply extend for a longer period of time. We urge those of you who do not now subscribe to *Workers Vanguard* to do so, in addition to *Workers Hammer*. ■

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# Ireland...

(Continued from page 12)

In this climate of stultifying reaction, student unions have made a statement of defiance and simple decency in printing abortion information in their handbooks. Last October, SPUC lost its bid for an injunction against 14 named student leaders. And its recent "referenda" on campuses blew up in SPUC's face. Overwhelmingly, students voted to retain distribution of abortion information, not only at the Trinity College Dublin campus which had been the scene of political ferment over SPUC's campaign but also at the largely working class technical colleges. At one of these, Carlow Regional Technical College, the vote against SPUC was 1000 to six.

The penalty for "facilitating" an abortion—let alone having one—is up to life imprisonment. As Irish Supreme Court justice Walsh declared in December: "when a pregnant woman is intent upon the destruction of the life of her unborn child that all of those who assist her or facilitate her...are acting in violation of the Constitution" (*Irish Times*, 20 December 1989). SPUC secured from Walsh the green light to obtain injunctions against named individuals. That followed the obscene ruling from the same court last July which gave SPUC the role of "guardian" for the "unborn" and the Irish constitution.

The immediate result of SPUC's campaign was that eleven more colleges in Southern Ireland joined the Union of Students of Ireland (USI), University College Dublin (UCD) and Trinity College in disseminating abortion information. Students in the North from both Catholic and Protestant communities also began to take an active part in the campaign to defend SPUC's intended victims. That SPUC has been handed a defeat by the students is a good thing. But, SPUC and its allies remain deadly serious in their attempt to suppress any manifestation of social liberalism on the questions of abortion and sex. These strike at the very heart of priest-ridden bourgeois Irish society. As James Connolly put it over 75 years ago, women in Ireland are the slaves of slaves. Their liberation requires the smashing of capitalism and its reactionary institutions by victorious proletarian revolution throughout the British Isles.

## Stop "Pro-life" bigots' offensive!

Each year over 10,000 women from the South as well as from Northern Ireland where abortion is also virtually banned take the "abortion trail" to Britain. As the pamphlet *Abortion in Northern Ireland—The Report of an International Tribunal* says of the women who travel to Britain for their abortions: "They do so quietly; more, given the repressive laws and attitudes in both societies, they do so secretly." And there are of course those who don't go, not least because they can't afford to. In the Ireland of the 1980s, the tragedy of Ann Lovett exemplifies the deep-rooted influence of the Catholic church on the questions of contraception, sex education and abortion. In January 1984, 15-year-old Ann Lovett died alone giving birth to a baby in the winter cold in an open-air grotto with its statue of the Virgin Mary in Granard, Co Longford. Her baby died with her. Her 14-year-old sister committed suicide three weeks later.

Another "option" for poverty-stricken or frightened or unmarried pregnant women is infanticide—to which a blind eye is turned by the state and the entire clericalist cabal. The institutionalised stigma attached to "illegitimacy", the absence of abortion rights and near-absence of contraception combine to ensure that infanticide is not uncommon.

Obviously, statistics do not exist. The state's victimisation of a woman wrongly accused of the brutal murder of a baby in Co Kerry in 1984 shed harsh light on this hidden fact of life. Joanne Hayes was picked up by the Gardai and charged with the murder of a baby which had been found stabbed to death with 28 wounds. It was not her child and from the outset it was clear that the "crime" being investigated was not infanticide but sex outside marriage. Joanne Hayes was known to have had a recently concluded affair with a married man and to have already had a daughter by him. Lately she had been pregnant again.

Joanne Hayes tried to tell the cops that she had given birth alone and unassisted in a field and that her baby died shortly afterwards. When the cops were taken back to the place, the body of her baby (with matching blood type, unlike the murdered child) was found. This did not stop the Gardai who then tried to get her



London, 27 January: Spartacist contingent on Bloody Sunday march in memory of the Derry civil rights demonstrators murdered by British troops.

for having two babies by different fathers at the same time! Their conduct was so outrageous that a public tribunal of enquiry was called and the charges against Joanne Hayes dropped. Needless to say, the "enquiry" became a trial not of the cops but a sensationalised inquisition and humiliation of Joanne Hayes and her family.

The "pro-life" reactionaries who wink at infanticide and the early deaths of frightened young women like Ann Lovett are no kinder to critically ill women. Nell McCafferty reported in *A Woman to Blame, The Kerry Babies Case* (1985) the following: "In Drogheda, on the east coast, Sheila Rodgers and her baby had just died. Radium treatment for the cancer the mother suffered had been ruled out, as it would harm the foetus. Her husband used to hear her screams as he crossed the hospital yard."

## For the separation of church and state!

The church dominates much of social and political life in the Irish Republic. An essay in *Unfinished Revolution* (Belfast, 1989) explains that the 1937 Constitution, drawn up by Eamonn de Valera after "consulting various Papal encyclicals" accorded the church a "special position" in Article 44. Article 41 proscribes divorce and recognises the "Family as the natural primary and fundamental unit of Society". Furthermore "the State recognises that by her life within the home, woman gives to the state a support without which the common good cannot be achieved". When the "special position" was removed by constitutional referendum in 1972, the "moral" teachings of the church remained enshrined elsewhere in the constitution.

Abortion was cited by the Bishop of Ferns in his letter to the Taoiseach in 1950 as one of the principal reasons for rejecting Noël Browne's Mother and Child Scheme. This limited reform would have provided the basis for a much needed state funded, free health care system

for a large portion of the population. The bishop described health care as the property of the "family": "Education in regard to motherhood includes instruction in regard to sex relations, chastity and marriage. The State has no competence to give instruction in such matters." He further stresses that "Gynaecological care may be, and in some countries is, interpreted to include provision for birth limitation and abortion. We have no guarantee that State officials will respect Catholic principles" (Noël Browne, *Against the Tide*).

Through its control of the educational system at primary and secondary levels for the vast majority of the population and through its control over major institutions of health care, the church exerts overwhelming social influence. It also shapes "much of the social legislation on the statute books"; family law "is riddled with provisions which deny women an independent legal status" (Ursula Barry,

United States, where abortion clinics have been bombed and blockaded, many anti-abortion bigots are Protestant fundamentalists.

The Orange demagogues in Northern Ireland use the existence of a clericalist state in the South to bind the Protestant working masses to their sectarian poison. At the same time, the Green bourgeoisie in the South uses the justified outrage of the population over the brutal oppression of the Catholic minority by the British occupying army, RUC and UDR in the North to divert attention from their own administration of misery in the Irish Republic. And Northern Ireland is far from a bastion of social liberalism: until recently homosexuality was illegal; abortion is still severely restricted.

It's worth noting that across the Irish Sea in both England and Scotland established churches exist (along with a monarchy and House of Lords). Whether in the Republic of Ireland or in Britain, we Marxists fight for the complete separation of church and state. We oppose religion mobilised as a political programme, as historical materialists we oppose all religion from a philosophical point of view, and we oppose religious persecution by the state or by other reactionary forces. The fight for separation of church and state is integral to the struggle for elementary women's rights. Furthermore, a class-centred fight for free abortion on demand, free quality health care, smashing the prohibitions on divorce etc could provide a powerful basis for cutting across the sectarian divide in the North and uniting workers on both sides of the border. The woman question is a key, explosive and strategic question in Ireland requiring fundamental social change in order to secure the most basic rights and equality.

## Women's liberation through socialist revolution!

In the Irish Republic real unemployment levels run at 20 per cent and one third of the population is dependent on welfare benefit to survive. Women now make up one third of the workforce; the majority of these are single and under 30. Jobs for women are low paid and traditionally in the service sector and health, teaching and clerical occupations. In manufacturing, women earn 60 per cent of a man's wage. The mass of working people live in virtual poverty; the treacherous trade union leadership has shackled the working class to vicious government wage restraint, keeping pay rises below 2.5 per cent while inflation runs at 5 per cent.

It has long been said that Ireland's largest export is people. The annual emigration rate is reaching an average of 46,000. Women and young workers are leaving by the thousands. To put it another way from a population of over 8 million in 1841, one and a half million starved to death in the "great hunger", another million emigrated in that period and today the combined population of both Northern Ireland and the South is five million. Emigration is a safety valve for the Irish bourgeoisie. Faced with the bleak prospects of unemployment and poverty, many don't struggle, but simply leave.

It is starkly clear that to alleviate the poverty and oppression of the working class as a whole and the special grinding oppression of women in Ireland requires an internationalist programme going

### Contact the Spartacist League

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beyond the present national boundaries. Not only the workers from both Catholic and Protestant communities in the North, but the proletariat of Britain have the material interest and the social power to smash the decaying capitalist system and establish workers rule. The Irish immigrants in Britain have historically been a militant, vanguard sector of the organised labour movement. At the same time, racist victimisation by the British state of Irish people (eg, frame-ups of "suspected Republicans" like the Guildford Four and Birmingham Six) is notorious. The media ban on Sinn Fein is an attack on the elementary democratic rights of everyone in British society. As for women's rights, in addition to the deterioration of the National Health Service, the increasingly aggressive anti-abortionists in Britain also threaten the option of an "abortion trail" for anyone. There is a powerful basis for the linking of the workers and oppressed in revolutionary struggle throughout the British Isles.

Such a perspective is flatly countered by the nationalists, the pro-imperialist Labourites and the fake-left. At Trinity College Dublin for example, the student union bowed to the pressure of SPUC's campaign when just before the referendum it stood on the platform: "Denying Information Does Not Stop

Abortions" and claimed that "Ironically in 1989 when the Students Unions right to information was at its peak the number of Irish women having abortions dropped". The Socialist Workers Student Society (co-thinkers of Tony Cliff's virulently anti-Soviet group in Britain) simply said vote "yes" to information.

The Irish Workers Group (IWG), fraternal grouping of the English Workers Power group, refused at the outset of the SPUC offensive to raise the slogan "Free abortion on demand". Rather, it concentrated its efforts on "decriminalising abortion" and for "a woman's right to choose". In response to our exposure of this waffle (see "Smash SPUC offensive against Irish women!" *Workers Hammer* no 110, October 1989) first their English group and then the IWG decided to raise this slogan in their press. (Both the IWG's *Class Struggle* and *Workers Power* ran the nauseating headline: "Is abortion murder?" in a polemic against...SPUC!)

The TCD Women's Group did unambiguously support the right to abortion, not simply "information", to its credit. Another group, including students sympathetic and/or familiar with the Spartacist League put out a leaflet calling for "free abortion on demand" on campus. This demand must be the minimal starting point for revolutionaries! Most

women cannot afford the minimum £270 necessary to take the "abortion trail", and when they do have children they cannot afford to give them a decent upbringing: this is the kind of "choice" capitalism offers. The difference between the feminists' and reformists' call for "repeal" of anti-abortion legislation and the demand for free abortion linked to free quality health care for all and free 24-hour child care is crucial. As we wrote in *Women and Revolution* (no 22, Spring 1981):

"...reforms can be granted or taken away at the bourgeoisie's whim, depending on which way the political winds are blowing. Abortion reform itself, as an isolated issue, does not threaten the institution of the nuclear family, which remains the main source of women's oppression; thus we have always linked our fight for abortion and contraception rights for all, without cost, to the fight for a socialist, working-class program for women's liberation."

This is especially the case in a country like Ireland! It is a sick joke to think of lasting reforms on such questions short of the overthrow of the bourgeois clericalist state. We are fighting to forge a Bolshevik party to lead the working class in its historic mission to liberate all the oppressed and establish a planned economy based on socialised property forms.

Such a party would call for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the British Army from Northern Ireland!

Smash the RUC and UDR! Full democratic rights for the Catholic minority in Northern Ireland! For programmatically based anti-sectarian workers militias to combat Orange and Green terror and imperialist rampage! No forcible reunification! For the separation of church and state—smash the prohibitions on divorce, abortion, homosexuality! For free abortion on demand! For free, universal secular education at all levels! Jobs for all—smash the Programme for National Recovery "social contract"! In Britain, workers revolution will sweep away the monarchy, House of Lords and established churches. Against the pro-NATO, pro-EEC Labour Party tops and the "little Englanders" we stand for a federation of workers republics in the British Isles! For a socialist united states of Europe!

The victorious socialist revolution will lay the basis for the replacement of the bourgeois family through socialised child-care and housework, thus unshackling women from the chains of capitalist slavery.

Young militants seeking to fight the viciousness of the SPUC spearhead of social reaction and for women's rights should look to the revolutionary programme of the International Communist League. Forward to a revolutionary party in Ireland—section of a reformed Fourth International! ■

## Fake left...

(Continued from page 3)

counterrevolutionary through and through. Its failure to recognise the contradictory nature of the Stalinist bureaucratic caste has led Workers Power to abandoning defence of the Soviet Union when it is posed in the concrete. Thus, when counterrevolutionary Solidarność threatened capitalist restoration in 1981, WP blocked with Walesa & Co against the Polish deformed workers state. Today, even the likes of Eric Heffer admit to being a bit queasy in the aftermath of cheerleading for Solidarność.

In Germany, it may be the case that currently for WP the less said about the task of ostensibly revolutionary Trotskyists in the DDR the better. Its co-thinkers in the Gruppe Arbeitermacht in West Germany offered as a perspective last autumn: "In the DDR we support to try to use the chance for the independent organisation of the working class through

factional work in Neues Forum, with the goal of building a revolutionary communist party in the DDR" (*Flugschrift* Nr. 7/8). Neues Forum called in November for "free elections" supervised by the UN (ie, imperialism). Workers Power now looks to the social democratic umbrella group United Left grouping as: "By far the most interesting and encouraging development" going, despite its "lack of a clear programme". Until early January, United Left was one of those in an opposition bloc with the bourgeois parties and the Social Democrats. WP's own organisation in Germany played no role in the Treptower anti-fascist action.

Enthusing over the fall of the hated Stalinist Dracula Ceausescu in Romania because it was "a real, armed and bloody revolution", Workers Power called for "rooting out every last agent of the security services". Ceausescu's Securitate was the object of justified hatred by the Romanian working masses, but the outcome of their desperate uprising has not confirmed WP's bloodthirsty triumphalism. Of all East European countries,

conditions in Romania appear most favourable for military bonapartism. Meanwhile, the East German militants who mobilised to stop the bloody provocations of Nazi fascists merit no cheers from these English centrists.

Finally, there is *Morning Star*, the Gorbachevite publication associated with the Communist Party of Britain (CPB). It has unashamedly embraced the call to "Rid Germanies of all foreign troops" (*MS*, 8 January) and reunification under capitalism, noting "German unity cannot however be left to the Germans alone. The rest of Europe cannot forget the Nazi past and the suffering of the second world war.... reunification can only become an acceptable proposition if the concerns of the rest of Europe are met." Here the CPB echoes its support of *British imperialism* against German imperialism during the Second World War, when it played the despicable role of policing the trade unions for Churchill.

Prostrate before the historic betrayal of Gorbachev's announcement that reunification under capitalism is

"inevitable", the wretched *Morning Star* can only say that "the Communist movement is paying the price for failing to grasp the full implications of the Stalinist system early enough" (*MS* 1 February 1990). But at the last CPB conference veteran Stalinist hack Andrew Rothstein was allowed to speak at great length justifying Stalin and warmly applauded from the platform. Stalin's dogma of "socialism in one country" means precisely betrayals such as the withdrawal of the Red Army from Afghanistan and handing over the DDR to the capitalist bloodsuckers in the West. Waving their "hammer and doves", the CPB has supported both of these suicidal attempts to appease rapacious imperialism.

The stakes in East Germany today are very high for the world working class. Urgently required is an authentic communist leadership as an alternative to the social democratic front men for counter-revolution and the treacherous and discredited Stalinists who capitulate to them—including their corollaries within the British left. ■

## Southall...

(Continued from page 12)

that these relatives would not overstay their visit to England!

The past year has witnessed an escalation in deadly racist and fascist terror attacks against minorities. On 6 December, 11 year old Tasleem Akhtar was viciously murdered only yards from her home in the Sparkhill area of Birmingham. A white youth has been charged with her murder. In London racist attacks have spiralled; in Tower Hamlets, children must be bussed to school. Moreover, the death of blacks in cop custody is also rising to the point that a United Families Campaign has been launched to draw public attention to this growing South Africa-style horror. The organised workers movement must avenge the murder of Kuldeep Sekhon, Tasleem Akhtar and all victims of racist and cop terror. For mass trade union/minority mobilisations to smash fascist scum!

The fascists take their cue to harass and murder Asians, blacks and other

oppressed minorities from the viciously anti-working class Thatcher regime. In an orgy of ever tighter anti-immigration laws and racist xenophobia, refugees from countries such as Turkey and Sri Lanka have been driven to their deaths in detention or sent back to face death-squad terror at home.

Justice for Kuldeep's murder cannot be expected from the capitalist courts. In January 1989, Ahmed Shekh, a Somali refugee who was studying in an Edinburgh college, was beaten and stabbed to death by a white gang. In the murder "trial" attempts were made to besmear the characters of Ahmed and his friends and the self-confessed murderer known to be associated with NF fascist filth, Reilly, got away with a slap on the wrist. It is now reported that Reilly may be released in September! At a meeting in Edinburgh on 16 January organised by the Lothian Black Forum to commemorate the death of Ahmed Shekh and protest the murder of Kuldeep Sekhon, a spokesman for the Spartacist League emphasised the need for mass trade union/minority mobilisations to crush the fascist vermin in the egg. She argued against the dangerous policy of the virulently anti-Soviet Social-

ist Workers Party who counsel "ignoring" the fascists to death. The SWP claims absurdly that mass mobilisations against the fascists will "build their organisation".

As we wrote last year, on the tenth anniversary of the death of Blair Peach, a New Zealand-born anti-fascist activist who was murdered by the cops unleashed by a Labour government against the Southall community in April 1979:

"...there is an ominous worldwide growth of fascist movements—from Le Pen's Front National in France to the NF, BNP and their skinhead allies in Britain, Nazi and Ku Klux Klan race terrorists in the United States and various West German fascist groups. The domestic reflection of the imperialists' anti-Soviet war drive abroad, these race-hate scum breed on social reaction, economic crisis and despair. A fitting memorial to the memory of Blair Peach would be the successful mobilisation of the workers movement organised in sharp class struggle against the fascist menace, on the road to the revolutionary overthrow of the rotting capitalist system which spawns them."

—*Workers Hammer* no 106, April 1989

On several occasions the Spartacist League/US has initiated successful trade

union/minority mobilisations that stopped the Nazis/Ku Klux Klan from staging racist provocations in major US cities. Recently the comrades of the Troztkistische Liga Deutschlands and Spartakist Gruppen initiated and participated in a 250,000-strong protest in East Germany against fascist desecration of the Soviet war memorial (see article, p6).

Remember the Cable Street type mobilisations of hundreds of thousands who crushed the fascists on the streets of London's East End in the 1930s! Southall has a tradition of working class militancy and defiant action against the race-terrorists. Kuldeep Singh Sekhon was representative of this tradition. Advance detachments of the multi-national working class such as Kuldeep will make up the workers militias that will sweep the fascist garbage off the streets once and for all.

- Avenge the murder of Kuldeep Singh Sekhon!
- For mass trade union/minority mobilisations to smash fascist terror!
- Full citizenship rights for foreign-born workers and immigration rights for their close family!
- Forge a Bolshevik party in Britain! ■

## Irish students fight anti-abortion reaction

Students in the Republic of Ireland have won a partial victory against a reactionary onslaught aimed at stopping their dissemination of information on abortion. The recent crusade by the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child (SPUC)—which works hand in glove with the Catholic church—to gag student organisations has been spiked for now. What this latest round of battle has underlined is the need for a mass, militant mobilisation centred on the working class to break the chains of clerical reaction and win, among others, the elementary right of *free abortion on demand*.

The question of abortion is explosive in Ireland, social tinder. Under the 1861 Offences Against the Person Act, abortion was already illegal. In an attempt to ensure that women would *never* have access to abortion, the Catholic church and SPUC instigated and won the 1983 referendum campaign to enshrine the "right of life of every unborn child" in the constitution. SPUC and other reactionary outfits have mobilised over the last several years to maintain the constitutional ban on divorce, to severely limit the availability of contraception, to extend censor-

### Free abortion on demand!



Students protest SPUC's reactionary anti-abortion campaign outside Dublin High Court on 9 October 1989.

ship and to attack any form of democratic rights for homosexuals (homosexuality for males is banned under the Offences Against the Person Act).

For the past few months, the anti-woman, anti-sex campaign has reached a near frenzied pitch. In October the London-based women's magazine *Cosmopolitan* was forbidden by the Office of Censorship in Ireland from carrying advertisements for abortion agencies in its Irish edition. At about the same time, a medical symposium on Parkinson's disease was curtailed because one of the lectures contained information on the use of foetal transplants in the treatment of this disease. In October the Irish Family Planning Association was taken to court charged with selling condoms to an unknown person in a Virgin Record Megastore. This offence carries penalties comparable to those for drug dealing—up to six months in prison with hard labour. (Under present law, medical contraceptives are available on prescription and condoms may be sold to people over 18, but only from a chemist shop or family planning clinic.)

*continued on page 10*

## Thousands protest in Southall

# Avenge the racist murder of Kuldip Sekhon!

On 31 January in the west London community of Southall, work stoppages and strikes were organised, shops closed down and children left their classrooms in protest against the brutal racist murder of mini-cab driver Kuldip Singh Sekhon. A 3000-strong memorial march through the centre of the community drew contingents from the Indian Workers Association, the Pakistani Workers Association, the Ealing Trades Council and Ealing branch of the NUT, the West London Mini Cab Association, Camden Black Workers Group and other workers movement and minority organisations. A Sekhon family support group travelled down from Scotland to take part. Suresh Grover, speaking on behalf of the local Sekhon family support group addressed a memorial rally at the nearby sports centre: "This day is meant to provide support to the Sekhon family in their private tragedy, and also to emphasise the public tragedy of racist violence.

The procession was a dignified show of strength against racial violence."

The body of Kuldip Singh Sekhon was found on 11 November last year by his car, with 54 stab wounds. He had answered a phone call requesting a cab from the Golf Links housing estate in Southall to Hounslow. The white man charged with Kuldip's murder, Stephen Cocker, had previously stabbed another Asian cab driver. London's racially integrated transport unions in particular have the social power to teach such deadly scum a lesson they richly deserve. Action by outraged Southall workers points in the right direction; however the trade union misleaders and the racist Labour Party leadership oppose mass working class and minority mobilisations, dreading the explosive potential of such mass action.

Kuldip Sekhon, who left behind a wife and five children under ten, was an active member of the T&GWU who worked at Heathrow as well as driving.

He regularly collected money for the miners during the great 1984-85 miners strike. Like the inner city black ghettos and the Catholic community in Northern Ireland, the miners were subjected to brutal attacks by cops in riot gear, orchestrated by Thatcher's government and the courts, with the complicity of the Labour Party. The miners were eventually defeated due to the treacherous refusal of the TUC tops (the "left" as well as the right) to bring out the other unions in joint strike action.

The racist Home Office added insult to injury when it initially refused entry visas to some of the relations of Kuldip Sekhon who wanted to attend his funeral. Because of a mismatch in their figures for the livestock on the farm in the Punjab, the Home Office tried to paint the bereaved family members as would-be "illegal immigrants" and even had the arrogance to demand an undertaking from the Southall community

*continued on page 11*



Kuldip Sekhon