

## Poll tax outrage, police rampage

"One almighty roar from Britain's impoverished underbelly"—despite its patrician tone, this *Irish Times* headline captures the character of the 31 March monster anti-poll tax protests. Two hundred thousand in London; 35,000 in Glasgow; overwhelmingly young and working-class—they demonstrated in the teeth of official Labour opposition and condemnation.

This massive resistance to the tax was an explosion of the pent-up frustration of Britain's working people—em-

ployed, homeless or on the dole—after ten years of Thatcherism and ten years of supine betrayal by Labour and trade-union misleaders (see "The poll tax and the fate of Thatcher" on p5). The ruling class answer was a massive and well-prepared cop riot in the heart of London, leaving hundreds of protesters injured, hospitalised and arrested. The ground was laid by a witchhunting piece in the *Evening Standard* in the run up to the demo, which "warned" of "preparations" to storm police lines. Cops

began a series of determined and indiscriminate attacks on the march by wading into anyone and everyone in the vicinity of a sit-down protest outside Thatcher's Downing Street residence. Repeated mounted police charges, riot cops swinging batons, police vans speeding at 50 mph into the crowd—for several hours demonstrators were herded, brutalised and bloodied in this sustained and orchestrated assault. The cops, however, met determined resistance which at times sent them reeling

and running for safety. South Africa's embassy and police cars alike blazed. Makeshift barricades were hurled together from wastebins and building materials as hand-to-hand fighting spread into the ritzy shopping streets of the West End.

In a desperate and dangerous attempt to pin responsibility for the police violence on the anti-poll tax protesters who defended themselves, the Tory Cabinet, Labour Shadow Cabinet

*continued on page 9*

## Baltic nationalists spearhead counterrevolution in USSR

# Moscow tries to thwart Lithuanian secessionists

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

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

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

## Disintegrating Stalinism looking to buy time



Boris Yurchenko-AP

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

Prosecutor's Office and the printing plant which produces the Sajudis newspaper.

The US rulers were taken aback by Moscow's actions. Bush yammered: "Any attempt to coerce or intimidate or forcibly intervene against the people of Lithuania is bound to backfire" (*New York Times*, 24 March). However, Washington

and the other NATO capitals have not supported Lithuanian "independence" for fear of provoking a harder line in Moscow and perhaps undermining Gorbachev, Western imperialism's favourite Kremlin ruler since Tsar Nicholas II. On 30 March, Bush sent a personal letter to Gorbachev, saying "we're not trying to

make things difficult for Lithuania or the Soviet Union".

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

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

—*New York Times*, 28 March

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

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

Whatever the immediate outcome of the Lithuania crisis, the discredited Kremlin Stalinist bureaucracy has *no political programme* to combat the reactionary nationalisms which now threaten to rip apart the Soviet Union. The Gorbachev regime could only maintain that the Lithuanian "declaration of independence" was "invalid" because it violated the USSR constitution. Gorbachev's entire strategy for dealing with nationalist separatism consists in *buying time*, nothing

*continued on page 11*

# Blair Peach: the working class will not forget!

Blair Peach, who hated and fought against the fascist filth bred by capitalist society, was murdered by the armed fist of the British state on 23 April 1979. On that day eleven years ago, the National Front staged a provocative rally in the heart of London's predominantly Asian Southall area. Blair Peach, a member of the Socialist Workers Party, was one of the many who turned out to protest this provocation alongside thousands of local residents who walked out of the factories or closed their shops in angry protest against the NF presence.

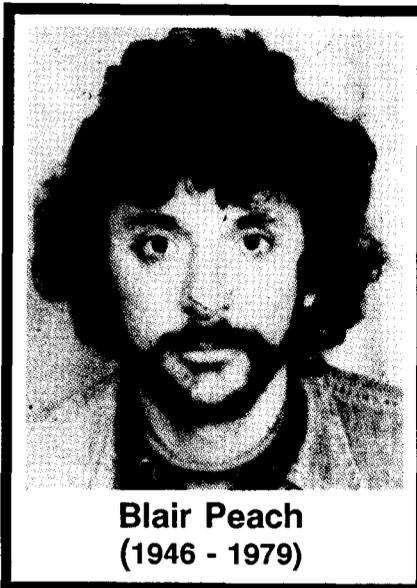
The thousands of cops deployed by the Callaghan Labour government went on a rampage to defend the NF scum. Hundreds of anti-fascist protesters were arrested, dozens were injured. Blair Peach was killed, his skull fractured by a vicious blow from the infamous thugs of the Special Patrol Group. Five days after his

murder, some 10,000 marched in defiant tribute to Blair Peach, raising clenched fists as they passed the spot where he was killed. He is remembered by many as a dedicated teacher as well as a committed fighter against racism, who had participated in numerous mobilisations against the National Front, including in Brick Lane in East London. While the criminals who struck down Blair Peach are still at liberty, the working people of this country will not forget, nor forgive.

In Thatcher's Britain the race terrorists have felt the wind in their sails. Asians and black people, Jewish synagogues, gays, leftists and trade unions have been targeted for attack. The brutal racist murder of Kuldip Sekhon in Southall called forth a protest in January of this year. Action by outraged Southall workers pointed in the right direction, however the trade union misleaders and the racist

Labour Party leadership oppose mass working class and minority mobilisations.

The race terrorists will not be stopped by ignoring them or by "debating" them, or by appealing to the capitalist state, whether under Tory or Labour auspices. It was a Labour government that unleashed the killer cops on the people of Southall in 1979 just as it was Harold Wilson's Labour government that was responsible for the death of anti-fascist protester Kevin Gateley in Red Lion Square in 1974. There, too, the cops viciously attacked those demonstrating against the NF. And the same racist state which has defended the NF fascists metes out summary execution to the IRA, frame-up trials and prison to Irish people, "detention" and deportation to the Tamils, Turks, Kurds and others seeking asylum. What is necessary to sweep the fascists off the streets is the independent



Blair Peach  
(1946 - 1979)

mobilisation of the working class and oppressed.

The murder of Blair Peach is part of the collective history of the working class in this country and internationally. Vengeance for his death will only come with victorious socialist revolution. Along the road to that revolution, the workers movement will honour its martyrs and its heroes. Blair Peach was certainly both of those. ■



TROTSKY

## Trotsky on the fate of the Soviet Union

*Today the choice of workers political revolution versus counterrevolution is posed pointblank throughout the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. More than fifty years ago Trotsky brilliantly dissected the Stalinist regime as a parasitic caste resting atop the gains of the October Revolution. He laid out how it would shatter with different elements propelled into the opposing camps of revolution and reaction.*

*His remarks have sharp prescience in the light of the current tumultuous events. While the Stalinist regimes disintegrate, the working class has not yet taken a decisive role. The latter-day "vulgar democrats" have enthused over any and all "anti-Stalinism", not least Solidarność. But today in Poland the working class has begun to fight the counterrevolutionary Solidarność leadership in a desperate struggle to survive. With the construction of an internationalist Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard we can indeed mould a bright communist future.*



LENIN

Will the bureaucrat devour the workers' state, or will the working class clean up the bureaucrat? Thus stands the question upon whose decision hangs the fate of the Soviet Union. The vast majority of the Soviet workers are even now hostile to the bureaucracy. The peasant masses hate them with their healthy plebeian hatred. If in contrast to the peasants, the workers have almost never come out on the road of open struggle, thus condemning the protesting villages to confusion and impotence, this is not only because of the repressions. The workers fear lest, in throwing out the bureaucracy, they will open the way for a capitalist restoration. The mutual relations between state and class are much more complicated than they are represented by the vulgar "democrats." Without a planned economy the Soviet Union would be thrown back for decades. In that sense the bureaucracy continues to fulfill a necessary function. But it fulfills it in such a way as to prepare an explosion of the whole system which may completely sweep out the results of the revolution. The workers are realists. Without deceiving themselves with regard to the ruling caste—at least with regard to its lower tiers which stand near to them—they see in it the watchman for the time being of a certain part of their own conquests. They will inevitably drive out the dishonest, impudent, and unreliable watchman as soon as they see another possibility. For this it is necessary that in the West or the East another revolutionary dawn arise.

—Leon Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936)

## Salute released miners Hancock and Shankland!

Dean Hancock and Russell Shankland have been finally released from prison. These two young Welsh miners were initially sentenced to life imprisonment in May 1985 for the killing of a scab-herding taxi driver during the bitterly fought miners strike of 1984-85. Victimized by the bosses and the capitalist courts because they showed courage and determination in defending their union during the strike, Dean and Russell are heroes to their brothers in the pits. For their determined defence of their union against bloody strike-breaking, they were vilified by arch-scab Neil Kinnock. When in 1988 NUM leader Arthur Scargill paid tribute to Hancock and Shankland's "spirit and courage" and insisted that "we must not forget them", Kinnock led the bourgeoisie's chorus of outrage.

The days following their sentencing saw a series of militant demonstrations involving thousands of miners, steelworkers and other trade unionists from places as far away as Yorkshire who mobilised in defence of the two miners. The vindictive Thatcher government felt the tremor, and an appeals court reduced the murder convictions to manslaughter and the life sentences to eight years imprisonment.

Normally a prisoner of the British penal system is eligible to apply for parole after having served one third of their sentence and again once a year thereafter. Hancock and Shankland saw their first two applications for parole maliciously turned down. After their third application in April 1989 went unanswered for more than six months, Hancock, Shankland and their families assumed that these applications had also been rejected. But in November last year the two were suddenly called before a review board and released on parole within a matter of days.

Although no longer behind bars Hancock and Shankland are not yet free. They must report weekly to a parole officer. The restrictions of their terms of parole prevent either of them from speaking publicly or even granting interviews,

at least until their parole reviews in April.

Russell's mother, Mrs Yvonne Pugh, described to the Partisan Defence Committee in Britain the initial weeks after Hancock and Shankland's return home: "... Although Christmas was a joyous time to be home with the family I think coming home from prison with the hustle and bustle that goes on with everyone, I think all of that in the beginning was hard for them. Both of them had trouble relaxing. And both had a bit of trouble in getting back into a routine... I think they found lots of things strange after being in prison." Both families were moved by the support Dean and Russell received from their village on being released.

To assist these victimised class-struggle militants to begin rebuilding their lives, the NUM has given Hancock and Shankland support in taking the expensive training required to receive a Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) licence. Shankland has recently passed his test and is currently looking for a job while Hancock has a test coming up in the near future. But jobs are not easy to find in South Wales. As these two young men fight to reestablish a normal life, the sacrifice they made in the defence of their union must not be forgotten.

James P Cannon, secretary of the International Labor Defense (ILD) in its earliest years and later the founder of American Trotskyism, wrote in *Notebook of an Agitator*: "No cause is a great one which has not produced fighters in its ranks who have dared to face arrest and trial and imprisonment. The fear of a ruling class, and the effectiveness of those who struggle against them, can always be measured by the number upon whom they wreak revenge in this way." We warmly greet Shankland and Hancock on their release. Because of them and those like them, because of the extraordinary solidarity and self-sacrifice amongst the miners and their families, the union was not smashed although the strike was defeated. With their release at long last, none of the 93 miners arrested during the bitter strike remain behind prison walls. ■

## WORKERS HAMMER



For a federation of workers republics in the British Isles!  
For a Socialist United States of Europe!

Bi-monthly newspaper of the Spartacist League, British section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

EDITORIAL BOARD: Bonnie Bradley (Editor), Jon Branche, Alec Gilchrist, Eibhlin McDonald, Alan Mason, Len Michelson, Ellen Rawlings, Michael Riaz, David Strachan

PRODUCTION MANAGER: Michael Riaz

CIRCULATION MANAGER: Ralf Eades

Published six times a year by Spartacist Publications, PO Box 1041, London NW5 3EU.

Subscription: £2 for 6 issues, overseas airmail £5.

Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.

Printed by Slough Newspapers Ltd (TU). ISSN 0267-8721

# Soft-core capitalist restorationists

## Workers Power: right turn on East Germany

Last November in the midst of the political revolution which had shattered the rule of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the DDR, Workers Power portrayed the disintegrating remnants of the Stalinist bureaucracy as a force co-equal with imperialism. "Down with Stalinist and imperialist plans to restore capitalism!" declared a resolution "On the political revolution in East Germany" by Workers Power's League for a Revolutionary Communist International (LRCI). Six months later, following the 18 March elections which were swept by the parties of capitalist counterrevolution, Workers Power is demanding that the Stalinist leftovers of the PDS (the renamed SED), who capitulated down the line to the imperialist stampede for capitalist reunification, hold the line against capitalist restoration! How can one explain the above contradiction?

In the April issue of its press, Workers Power writes:

"We must demand that the SPD and PDS have no truck with any Alliance-led government. They must be forced to use their votes in parliament to block any change in the constitution which aids this restoration and any other measures directed against the workers. They must table pro-working class legislation in the current parliament and dare the Alliance to oppose it in front of the workers who voted for them."

This is more than Workers Power's usual parliamentary cretinism. The SPD was the Trojan horse for capitalist counterrevolution in the DDR. They lost out to Kohl's CDU precisely because many figured: why vote for the social democratic lackeys when you can have the banker with the money in his pocket. The SPD has already thrown its lot in as a partner in Kohl's "grand coalition" Alliance government. As for the PDS, on 5 April its delegates to the Volkskammer raised their hands for the unanimous vote to delete the preamble to the constitution which called East Germany "a socialistic state of workers and farmers".

Before the elections Workers Power howled for blood, calling to "hunt down the Stalinist parasites and spies". The evident model that Workers Power had in mind was the mass revolt that toppled the family Stalinist dictatorship of Nicolae Ceausescu in Romania. These Stalinophobic centrists were really stimulated by the sight of Stalinist blood flowing in the streets of Romania. Enthusing over "a real, armed and bloody revolution", Workers Power glorified the revolt against Ceausescu as a great workers revolution, even comparing it to the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917! (What emerged from this glorious revolution was a government which abuses Hungarians and is anti-Semitic but Workers Power can take heart—it refused to allow King Michael back into the country.) Now, in East Germany, Workers Power embraces the "counterrevolutionary" Stalinists of the PDS who have identified themselves, in more than name, as an effectively social democratic component of the forces for capitalist restoration. In its role as the "opposition" in the "parliament" of the Volkskammer, the PDS is an animal which the Little England Labour Party leftists of Workers Power can really understand.

### The chickens come home to roost

In 1980, at the time of the imperialist uproar over the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, Workers Power publicly announced that it had completely broken from its origins in Tony Cliff's Socialist Workers Party and declared that it had adopted a Trotskyist understanding of the Soviet Union as a bureaucratically degenerated workers state. Although claiming to have rejected Cliff's state capitalist position, Workers Power never broke from the methodology of Third Camp anti-Sovietism, ie, one which views the Stalinist bureaucracy as a purely counter-revolutionary force.

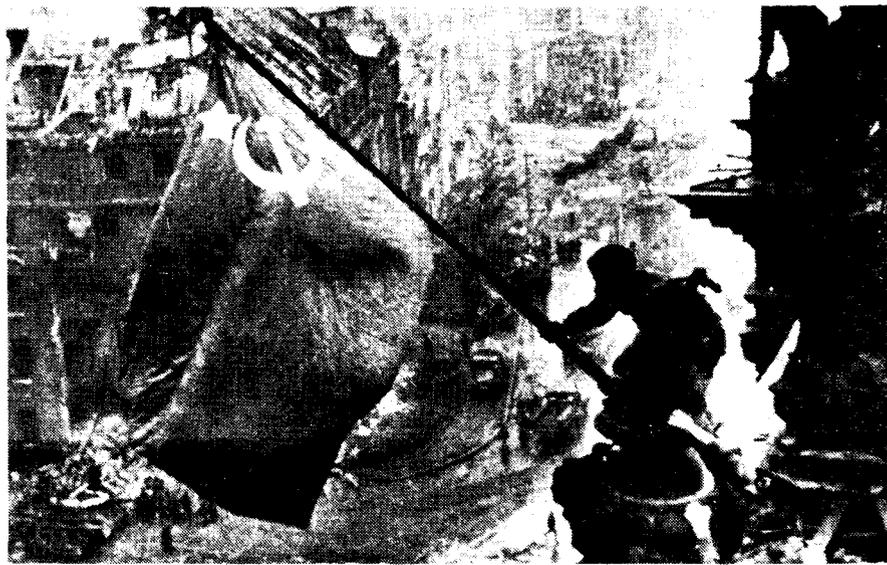
While nominally claiming a position of

Soviet defensism around Afghanistan, in the concrete Workers Power condemned the Soviet intervention against imperialist-backed feudal reaction as "counterrevolutionary". (They also denounced the Soviet withdrawal as "counterrevolutionary".) In 1981 they "critically" championed Solidarność even while admitting that Solidarność in power would mean capitalist restoration. Now that the Soli-

In an editorial entitled "Germany—no to capitalist unity" (*Workers Power*, March 1990) they write:

"The Warsaw Pact was created in response to the imperialist threat to the Soviet Union and those states it had conquered. Whilst its troops were and are a form of defence of the post-capitalist property relations of those states, the only combat they have ever undertaken has been the suppression of the insurgent working classes of the GDR, Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. That was the Pact's principal function and we are in favour of its dissolution and the withdrawal of its troops."

To declare that the only combat undertaken by Soviet troops has been the suppression of the East European proletariat is indicative of a mindset devoid of simple history. What about: 1. the civil war in Russia, 1918-19; 2. the war against Pilsudski's Poland, 1920; 3. against Japan in Manchuria, 1937 and 1939; 4. the invasion



Yevgeni Khaider

Berlin, 30 April 1945: Victorious Red Army soldiers plant the Red Flag over the Reichstag. For Workers Power, the foundation of the DDR represented the "counterrevolutionary overthrow" of Adolf Hitler's fascist state!

darność-led government in Poland is implementing its programme for capitalist restoration Workers Power pathetically opines: "Poland: No Return to Capitalism"! But, the chickens really came home to roost when Workers Power was confronted by the rapidly unfolding events in the DDR.

Here was the perfect refutation of the Third Camp view of the Stalinist bureaucracy as a monolithic new ruling class, and the perfect confirmation of Trotsky's understanding of the bureaucracy as a brittle and contradictory caste—which is simultaneously dependent on the existence of the collectivised property forms of the workers state while acting as a transmission mechanism for the pressures of hostile world imperialism in undermining the workers states. In the face of mass protest against its rule, and increasingly under the pressure of West German imperialist revanchism, the bureaucracy completely disintegrated. The choices were starkly posed: either a Germany of workers councils to replace the corrupt, nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy, or capitalist counterrevolution.

"Smash Capitalist Counterrevolution" was the headline of the first issue of *Arbeitermacht*, the newspaper of the German section of Workers Power's LRCI. But compelled by the logic that the Stalinist bureaucracy is a completely counter-revolutionary force, Workers Power ended up echoing, albeit from the "left", the imperialist campaign for the annexation of the DDR. Nowhere is this clearer than their demand for the withdrawal of the Soviet Army from the DDR.

of Finland, 1939; 5. the war against Nazi Germany, 1941; 6. the 1979 intervention in Afghanistan.

Last year, the Soviet Army in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and East Germany was politically neutralised by the Moscow government. With the exception of Romania, where there are no Soviet troops, there was no bloodshed. Impelled by his own internal problems, Gorbachev turned the key and Eastern Europe exploded with political ferment—from all quarters, in every conceivable direction from outright capitalist restorationists to anti-bureaucratic Communists.

Gorbachev's present willingness to negotiate the withdrawal of Soviet troops from the DDR is an extreme example of Stalinist betrayal in the face of imperialist pressure and one which threatens the existence of the Soviet Union. But Workers Power stands with him. Withdrawing the Red Army is obviously necessary to the consolidation of a reunified capitalist Germany. Workers Power stands reality on its head with the claim that the imperialists see the Soviet troops "as a force to prevent any local opposition to restoration in Eastern Europe generally" (*Workers Power*, April 1990).

The Soviet Army plays a contradictory role, reflecting the contradictions inherent in the rule of the Stalinist bureaucracies. In 1953 Soviet troops were used to crush proletarian political revolution in the DDR, yet even Workers Power admits that these troops simultaneously were "a form of defence of the post-capitalist property relations". Nonetheless they call

continued on page 4

### PUBLIC DEBATE

Spartacist League/Britain  
[International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)]

debates

Irish Workers Group  
[League for a Revolutionary Communist International]

## Revolution and counterrevolution in Germany

DUBLIN

2.30 pm

Saturday, 28 April 1990

Eliz Room, House 6, (above the Student Union Offices)  
Trinity College, Dublin

For more information phone: London 071-485 1396  
Glasgow 041-332 0788

# Workers Power...

(Continued from page 3)

for the withdrawal of these troops which is nothing more than calling for the creation of a power vacuum which could only be filled by the troops of the West German Bundeswehr and NATO imperialism. Similarly, if Workers Power believes its own statement that the Warsaw Pact was "created in response to the imperialist threat to the Soviet Union" how do they square their nominal claim to defend the Soviet Union against imperialist attack with the call for the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact?

The bottom line for Workers Power is that reversing the outcome of World War II doesn't matter. By their lights the bureaucratically imposed social revolutions in Soviet-occupied East Europe following the war were "counterrevolutionary". (What could a "counterrevolutionary" overthrow of capitalism mean—except maybe a return to feudalism? The closest thing to this in recent times was the mulah-led "Islamic Revolution" in Iran which Workers Power supported because it was a "mass movement".) Applied to East Germany this idiotic formulation means that the foundation of the DDR represented the "counterrevolutionary overthrow" of Adolf Hitler's fascist state! In the pages of Workers Power's theoretical journal *Trotskyist International* (no 4, Spring 1990) we read that "the division of Germany was a reactionary denial of the right of self-determination". If this is the case then Workers Power should see the 18 March election results as a victory for the self-determination of the German nation!

## The Treptow anti-fascist protest

With its view that the Soviet troops in the DDR are an "occupation army" Workers Power was obviously hard pressed to explain that 250,000 citizens of the DDR rallied at Treptow Park on 3 January to honour the Red Army and protest the Nazi desecration of a memorial to the Soviet soldiers who fell liberating Europe from Hitler's Nazis. Our German comrades initiated a call for a massive workers united-front action to stop the fascists. We brought the call directly to the SED leadership and urged their participation. So out of touch with the working class and so fearful of them, the SED initially resisted our proposal. But as our call was distributed in factories throughout Berlin, the Stalinists mobilised their forces and moved to take over the demonstration. A quarter of a million people came out to protest Nazi provocations and express their will to defend the

DDR against capitalist restoration.

As our German press *Apreakorr* noted: "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". Our criticisms of the incompetence and economic mismanagement of the SED party dictatorship and of Gorbachev's market-oriented perestroika economic reforms in the USSR, drew heckling from the largely SED crowd.

Alarmed by the Treptow mobilisation in which they correctly saw the forces that could prevail against capitalist *Anschluss*, the imperialists and their social-democratic frontmen geared up their campaign to stampe the DDR into reunification.



"State capitalist" Tony Cliff broke with Trotskyist Fourth International in 1950. Workers Power have never broken with his methodology.

The West German bourgeois press attempted to smear the SED as responsible for the fascist provocations, with headlines like "Fear in the DDR—the SED's Nazi Trick" and "SED Profits from Neo-Fascism".

What was the response of Workers Power? In an 18-page pamphlet entitled "Sectarianism and Stalinophilia: The Politics of the Spartacist League", its Irish affiliate, the Irish Workers Group, sneered:

"Eager to proclaim themselves around the world—deceitfully—as the representatives of Trotskyism in the GDR, their press reprints copious leaflets, speeches and statements reflecting their activity in Berlin. Much of it has centred on an 'East Berlin Protest Against Fascist Desecration of Soviet War Memorial' at which, they assert, '250,000 Say: No Nazis in East Germany'."

Contrary to our "assertions" that this was a massive anti-fascist mobilisation, the IWG seems to have the same appreciation of the Treptow demonstration as the West German imperialists and the social democrats, ie, that it was all a gigantic ruse by the disintegrating Stalinists to strengthen their state security apparatus.

But, in the DDR—where West Ger-

man Chancellor Helmut Kohl used skinheads to guard his own mass demonstrations for capitalist counterrevolution—the LRCI obviously felt it couldn't get away with echoing the social democrats' lies against the Treptow demonstration. In its "Action Programme for the Workers of East Germany", issued on 13 February, they write:

"The desecration of Soviet war memorials and Jewish graves, and the racist attacks on immigrant workers show the urgent necessity for an anti-fascist united front, a united front which would include all labour movement organisations, especially those of the immigrant workers, and all honest anti-fascists. The anti-Nazi rally at Treptow was the first step towards this. But it is only a beginning!"

It was a "first step" that Workers Power refused to touch with a barge pole! They wanted nothing to do with a principled and urgent united-front with the SED which was aimed against the stormtroopers for a capitalist Fourth Reich. The SED/PDS completely capitulated in the face of the imperialist campaign of lies and destabilisation following the Treptow demonstration. Now that the PDS is operating like a bunch of immiserated social democrats in their capacity as the "opposition" in the Volkskammer Workers Power calls on them to defend the workers of the DDR against capitalist counterrevolution!

In its March issue *Workers Power* notes: "Shortly after the SED [Treptow] rally... the SED government attempted to re-establish the security police (Stasi) but were prevented by mass mobilisations and seizures of the Stasi buildings. For revolutionaries this is the very stuff of revolution". Here Workers Power is speaking of a mob invasion of Stasi headquarters in Berlin on 16 January. Among those present was a hard core of fascist skinhead types. Prominently displayed was a banner in the form of a West German flag inscribed with "Germany, One Fatherland" and placards reading "SED-PDS, party of the Stasi". This is the "stuff" that capitalist counterrevolution is made of. But in its mindless enthusing over "anti-Stalinist actions" Workers Power couldn't tell the difference between revolution and counterrevolution.

Now current and former members of the SED/PDS and anyone associated with the former Stalinist regime of the DDR face the prospect of being purged in anti-Communist witchhunts (as was done in West Germany, initially by American Army Intelligence using former Gestapo agents and then picked up by the BRD government and the social democrats in the trade unions). Under the watchword of "reds out"—which was the cry of the fascist gangs that infested Kohl's CDU rallies—the forces of capitalist restoration aim to eliminate anyone who would defend the workers' interests. In its post-election coverage even Workers Power admits that "smoothing the path towards capitalism involves purging the state apparatus of any 'unreliable' elements from its Stalinist days" (*Workers Power*, April 1990). Yet WP are the guys who

were insatiable in their calls for the bloodiest "anti-Stalinist" purges.

## Why Workers Power lies

To resolve the contradiction between their call to "Smash Capitalist Restoration" and the fact that they sided with capitalist counterrevolution at every crucial stage—from demanding the withdrawal of the Red Army, echoing the social democrats' lies about the Treptow demonstration, cheering the attacks of rightist gangs on Stasi headquarters—Workers Power raves on about Spartacist "Stalinophilia". In the aftermath of the 18 March elections—in which the Spartakist Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands was the only party which took a clear and unambiguous stand against capitalist reunification—Workers Power writes: "Posing as 'defenders of the planned property relations', Spartacist public speakers utterly ignored the forty years of privilege, theft and counterrevolutionary tyranny that Stalinism meant for the workers of the GDR" (*Workers Power*, April 1990).

What did "the Spartacists" say? Here's a quote from the "Manifesto and Programme of Struggle", of which hundreds of thousands of copies were distributed during the election campaign:

"The Spartakist Workers Party of Germany is fighting in this election campaign against capitalist counterrevolution and for a proletarian political revolution against Stalinism that goes all the way.... "We are the only ones to fight for a planned economy not ruled by the arbitrary dictates of a bureaucracy but on the basis of broad deep-going workers democracy. The workers must take into their own hands control of the factories and institutions by building soviets [workers councils] in which all currents of the working class are represented.... Thousands upon thousands in the DDR have stuck to the ideals of social justice—workers, collective farmers, soldiers, even many in the bureaucracy. These goals were not wrong: it was Stalinism that betrayed your goals and deformed your communist ideals! The doctrine of 'socialism in one country', that lying invention of Stalin and Bukharin, was the first great betrayal of the October Revolution itself and led to horrible excesses."

We stressed that these elections were a plebiscite, distorted by the imperialist campaign of intimidation, on the very existence of the DDR. It was a vote for or against imperialist annexation of the DDR. And what did Workers Power's followers in Germany do? They called for "abstaining on the vote!"

The LRCI also tries to identify us with the SED's call for a reorganised state security apparatus to stop fascism. "Why at the Treptow demonstration—which we of course supported—didn't you centrally agitate against the SED plan for a new Verfassungsschutz [Office for the Protection of the Constitution]?" asks *Arbeitermacht* (April 1990). Only unmitigated Third Campists would say that the most important thing about a rally against fascist terror in the DDR was to fight against the Stalinist police. What did "the Spartacists" say at the Treptow rally? We quote: "No Verfassungsschutz in the world has yet been able to stop the Brown Plague. What we need is a broad organisation of the working masses, the masses of the working people of the whole nation. They must organise themselves in soviets, in workers and soldiers councils." But, how would *Arbeitermacht* know? Despite their proclamations of support they had nothing to do with the Treptow demonstration. In any case, Workers Power doesn't believe its own lies. In Britain, they acknowledged our call for workers militias to defend against fascist terror while sneering that this "certainly sounds revolutionary—until we find that their main task is to guard Soviet war graves!"

Self-evidently there are numerous *continued on page 9*

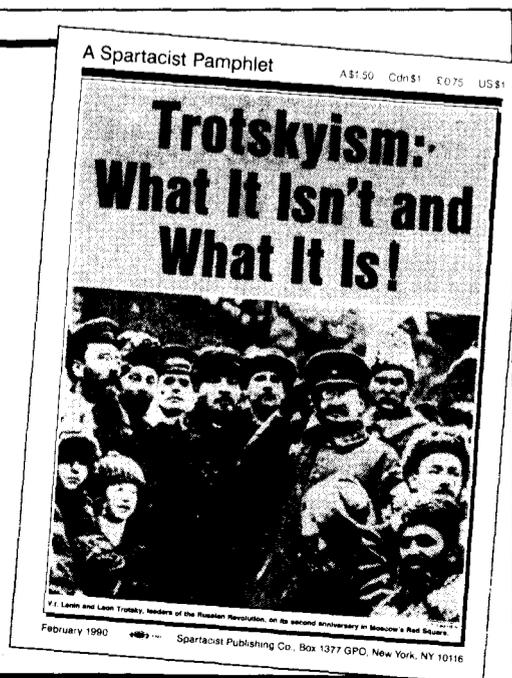
## Order now!

Spartacist Pamphlet

75p  
(24 pages)

(This pamphlet will be sent to all WH subscribers)

Make cheques payable/post to:  
Spartacist Publications  
PO Box 1041  
London NW5 3EU



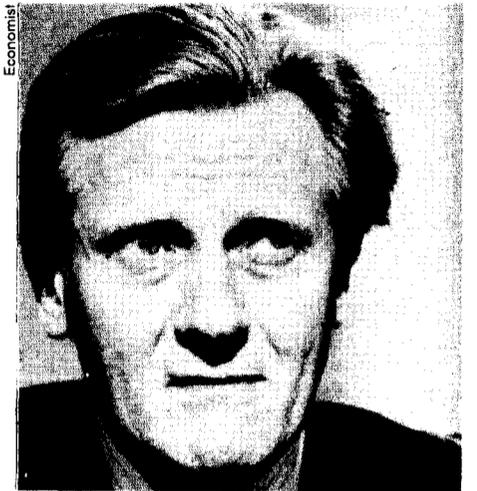
## Scabherder Kinnock, Heseltine vie for bosses' favours



Retna



Andrew Chapman



Economist

# The poll tax and the fate of Thatcher

Britain has erupted in mass demonstrations and street protests directed at the imposition of the punitive and reactionary poll tax by the Thatcher government. Across areas of Scotland almost half the population has not paid. Now, as collection of the tax is due to begin in England and Wales, local council meetings to set tax levels have been besieged by angry crowds. The government has responded by mobilising mounted police and riot cops, in scenes reminiscent of the miners strike five years ago.

Given the scale of the anger and mushrooming civil disobedience, the attempts to intimidate protesters have largely fallen flat. Motorists entering villages and towns in the Tory heartland of southeast England are greeted by hand-painted signs reading "You are entering a poll tax-free zone" (*Independent*, 9 March). Mass marches and protests have been held in areas which, as one commentator put it, "have probably never seen a demonstration before". While burning effigies of Thatcher have become a popular symbol of anti-poll tax protest, demonstrators have also jeered local Labour councillors who have set high poll tax levels, demanding "Break the law, not the poor". In Scotland, local Labour councils have issued hundreds of thousands of writs against non-payers. And when Thatcher violence-baited anti-poll tax demonstrators and denounced anyone who counselled disobeying the law by not paying the tax, Neil Kinnock responded: "I agree with everything you just said, as

I have for long made very clear" (*Independent*, 9 March).

The poll tax is likely to be ephemeral, with the strong probability that its chief architect and advocate will shortly go down the tubes. While there are large numbers of people who despise both Kinnock and his henchmen for enforcing this onerous tax, on a national level public opinion polls show the Labour Party has a huge lead over the Tories. But that could rapidly change if the Conservatives dump Thatcher before the general election. Exit polls taken during the by-election in the "safe" Tory seat of Mid-Staffordshire (which Labour won overwhelmingly) show that 77 per cent of normally Tory voters who switched their votes said Thatcher should stand down before the elections. In fact, there wouldn't be much difference between a Tory government headed by Heseltine, and a Kinnock Labour government.

### Tycoon "Tarzan" Heseltine and Ramsay MacKinnock

Even before the mid-Staffs by-election, one in four Tory backbenchers believed Thatcher should resign before the next general election. Now some Tory MPs are demanding a leadership election before autumn, while one MP said bluntly, "We need Heseltine and we need him now" (*Independent*, 24 March). Michael Heseltine has the advantage of being an opponent of the poll tax. Far from being a radical, Heseltine's political outlook is more akin to an attenuated version of a

Tory "wet". Educated at Shrewsbury and Oxford, he likes to present himself as a self-made entrepreneur and tycoon. His Haymarket publishing company is worth about £100 million, and he cruises around in a chauffeur-driven Jaguar. In terms reminiscent of Edward Heath, Heseltine frequently talks of "partnership" between government and industry, criticises the palpably low educational standards in Britain and favours closer integration with the European capitalist states. His objections to Britain being merely a junior ally of US imperialism led to his resignation from the Cabinet in the Westland affair. Particularly as the imperialist powers savour what they hope will be opportunities to exploit the working people of Eastern Europe, Heseltine's views find favour with a substantial section of bourgeois opinion which fears that Thatcher's single-minded persistence in the Anglo-American "special relationship" will blow it for them.

"Tarzan" Heseltine gained notoriety when in a Commons debate in 1976 he seized the parliamentary mace, claiming he was provoked by Labour MPs singing "The Red Flag" after a close vote. In the early years of the Thatcher regime, as environment minister Heseltine was heavily involved in the battles to rate-cap and slash funding to local councils (particularly the GLC led by left-Labourite Ken Livingstone). More importantly, Heseltine has always had close ties with the British military establishment. The son of a Welsh colonel, he served as an officer in

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

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

Labour leader Kinnock—a certified enemy of socialism—has done nothing

*continued on page 6*

# Poll tax...

(Continued from page 5)

but stab the struggles of Britain's poor and working people in the back. In the year-long miners strike, the most important class battle here in decades, Kinnock supported Thatcher's scab ballot and condemned the miners' defence of their picket lines against the strikebreaking cops and the scabs. Striking miners and other militants aptly called him "Ramsay MacKinnock", after despised Labour leader Ramsay MacDonald, who openly defected to the class enemy in the 1930s. Then when the ghettos exploded, Kinnock endorsed police terror against blacks and Asians, laying a wreath at the grave of Blakelock, the cop killed when the murderous racist police brutally invaded Broadwater Farm. Now Kinnock and his local lieutenants have been acting as Thatcher's enforcers for the hated poll tax.

As a section of the bourgeoisie deserts Thatcher, and Kinnock smells the possibility of leading the next government, he is all the more eager to demonstrate his loyalty to the capitalist order. Socialism has almost become a dirty word, the Labour tops enthuse over the "market economy", reaffirm their loyalty to NATO and promise *not* to abolish significant sections of the Tories' anti-union laws. And they're hoping people have forgotten or are too young to remember previous Labour governments—when inflation spiralled to 26 per cent, the Social Contract was imposed, troops were sent to Northern Ireland and used to break strikes at home, and the notorious virginity tests were instituted for Asian women seeking entry into Britain.

## Bells poll for Thatcher

The poll tax is neither a tax on income nor an assessment on property but a punishment for existing. Thus, a millionaire living alone on a large estate could pay one-tenth the tax of an extended Asian family living in a crowded tenement. The rich get fat tax cuts: the relative tax burden of the wealthiest 10 per cent of the population will be one-half of what it was under the old system of rates. For everyone else, taxes will go up an *average* of 50 per cent. With the local administrations turned into tax farmers, those most in need of services—the poor unable to pay—will fear to use them. Tens of thousands have "officially disappeared" from Scottish cities to escape payment; in terms of access to social services as well as the ability to vote, these "disappeared" have become non-persons. And the tax, which greatly enhances the government's ability

to maintain detailed files on every individual, also serves as part of the general onslaught against elementary democratic rights.

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

Not surprisingly people are talking about the Peasants' Revolt, triggered by the imposition of a poll tax in 1380. A version of the poll tax in 1641, levied to pay off the Scottish army occupying northern England, helped spark off the English Civil War, in which the monarch Charles I was executed by Cromwell's revolutionary forces. In British colonies hut taxes were used to force people out of subsistence farming into the system of imperialist exploitation. After the US Civil War had destroyed slavery, poll taxes were used in the American South explicitly to prevent the formally emancipated black people from exercising their democratic rights. Today Thatcher is reincarnating such measures more common to the Middle Ages feudalism and semi-slave societies. The blatant "steal from the poor and give to the rich" aspect of the tax has stirred popular protest in kind: anti-poll tax protesters who invaded Nottingham Council dressed in Robin Hood costumes. One disgruntled Tory MP admitted that the government appeared to have "declared war on the people" (*Sunday Times*, 4 March).

In high-handed fashion the poll tax was imposed in Scotland, where the Tories have minimal support, a year earlier than in England and Wales. But the Scots have not made themselves into compliant guinea pigs. Thus, in Glasgow fully 42.5 per cent of the population has refused to pay the poll tax or is at least three months in arrears (*Independent*, 8 March). Attempts to enforce the laws by seizing the property of those who don't pay the tax have largely been frustrated by the mushrooming anti-poll tax unions. Massive outpourings of residents have blocked attempts to carry out "poundings", where sheriff's officers invade homes in order to carry out preliminary valuations of property. Utilising CB radios and fleets of cars and coaches, the anti-tax unions have now organised effective "scumbuster" units that can move rapidly to the scene of a pounding.

In a situation where there is a mass boycott of the tax, withholding of tax

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

The poll tax *per se* is not essential to the maintenance of British capitalism, although the arrogant Thatcher is probably irrevocably committed to it. There is a developing *bourgeois consensus* to withdraw the tax and replace Thatcher with someone with more authority to administer capitalist austerity. A Kinnock government would be forced to attack the working class at least as much as Thatcher or Heseltine. That is what is demanded to administer the decaying capitalist society: strike-breaking, cuts in social spending, disciplining the workers and oppressed. The British bourgeoisie is not about to upgrade the country's industrial base, because it is relatively unprofitable to invest in this clapped-out and obsolescent sector, looted by parasitic exploiters.

Trade deficits spiral because the country doesn't manufacture much any more, while those fortunate enough to have jobs often must work gruelling 50- to 60-hour weeks to get by, inflation and mortgage rates are sky high, union/safety standards go by the board, while crashing trains and tube infernos have become a deadly, regular occurrence. And it's not just Thatcher's privatisation schemes that threaten essential social services like the NHS. The decay of British capitalism is mirrored in the wreckage of the once great ports and centres of production like Liverpool, Newcastle, Glasgow and Belfast. Parliament today is centred on the increasingly narrow base of the southeast of England. It cannot be made to be representative of the working class and the disenfranchised sections of the British Isles by voting out the Tories because Labour is no better. It will take a socialist revolution and a couple of ambitious five-year plans to make this a decent place to live.

## Fight anti-Scargill witchhunt!

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

When the bosses tried to whip up a hue and cry about the "Qaddafi connection" and Russian gold during the strike, it got short shrift from the miners. Said one NUM official: "If somebody sent me £100,000 for the lads on strike in Lancashire, I couldn't care less where it came from as long as it was used to ease hardship. We have people starving in Lancashire" (*Times*, 29 October 1984). Trade unionists around the world—from Soviet

miners to French CGT members to oppressed black mineworkers in South Africa—dug deep and demonstrated their international solidarity with the NUM. The NUM received \$24,000 raised internationally by the class-struggle Partisan Defense Committee.

The truly sinister "connection" in the labour movement is the well-documented CIA connection of the Labour/TUC right wing. On the eve of the miners strike, the Labourite leaders—instigated by Gerry Healy's WRP—viciously witchhunted Scargill for correctly denouncing the CIA "union" Polish Solidarność as anti-socialist. This was the signal for Thatcher's declaration of war against the miners and the prelude to the open scabberding by the TUC "rights", while the "left" TGWU and rail union leaders sabotaged the necessary spreading of the strike. The labour tops preferred to see the strike defeated rather than fight for working class power. Pathetically, Scargill calls for "unity" of the Labour Party and supported Kinnock in the last elections.

While Kinnock & Co overtly betray, a handful of "left" Labour MPs, including Tony Benn, give "moral support" to the call for non-payment. Stepping into the vacuum, the pseudo-Trotskyist and crassly Labour-loyal Militant Tendency have established themselves as the leading force in the Anti-Poll Tax Federation. But their perspective is to channel the massive discontent to serve the electoral appetites of Neil Kinnock: "The Labour leaders must get off the fence and come down on the side of the mass non-payment campaign. They must seize the opportunity—fight for an immediate general election and the return of a socialist Labour government" (*Militant*, 9 March).

This is characteristic of the fake left in Britain. The SWP will now be whooping it up for Labour, as it does whenever there are elections. The CPB's *Morning Star* is demanding that the Thatcher government resign and Labour get elected. In their pamphlet on the poll tax the centrists of Worker Power label the LP "a bosses' party" and denounce Kinnock's legalistic policies, but then they conclude: "It [Labour's policy] is a gift to the Tories. Its end result will do nothing to guarantee a Labour victory in the election..." In short, they advocate more militant tactics—in order to get Kinnock into No 10 Downing St. Similarly, they supported Kinnock's bid for office in the last general elections—fresh from his sabotage of the miners strike.

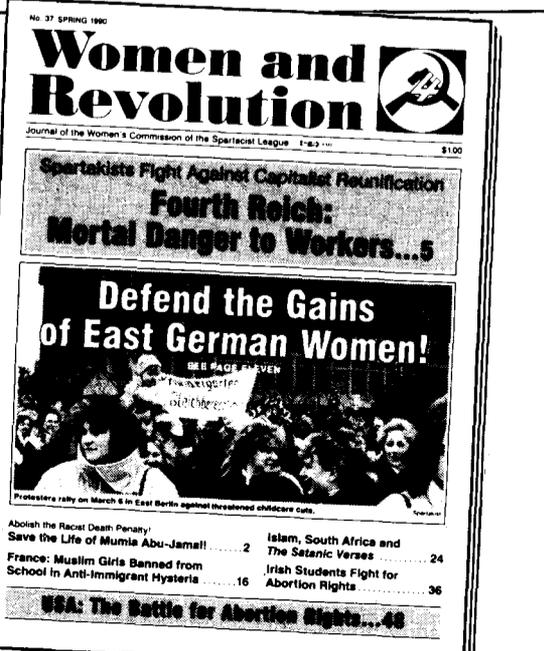
The Labour left and its apologists play a major role in keeping workers tied to Labourism. Certainly no militant believes that Kinnock is any kind of "socialist". The fake left attempts to con workers with the "lesser evil" game, ie, "anyone's better than Thatcher", and by falsely claiming that the Labour Party can be transformed into a revolutionary instrument. But after years of attempting to "pressurise" the Labour Party to the left, the Kinnock leadership is so rightist that its policies are barely distinguishable from those of a Tory party under Michael Heseltine. Anger over Labourite betrayals, combined with the demise of Thatcherism, could open the lid on social struggle.

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

**Just Out!**  
**Women and Revolution**  
 Spring 1990, no 37  
 75p (48 pages)

- Fourth Reich: Mortal Danger to Workers
- Defend the Gains of East German Women!
- Save the Life of Mumia Abu-Jamal!
- France: Muslim Girls Banned from School in Anti-Immigrant Hysteria
- Islam, South Africa, and The Satanic Verses
- Irish Students Fight for Abortion Rights
- USA: The Battle for Abortion Rights

3-issue subscription £1.50  
 Make cheques payable/post to:  
 Spartacist Publications  
 PO Box 1041  
 London, NW5 3EU



**Women and Revolution**  
 Journal of the Women's Commission of the Spartacist League  
 No 37 SPRING 1990  
 £1.00

**Spartacists Fight Against Capitalist Reunification**  
**Fourth Reich: Mortal Danger to Workers...5**

**Defend the Gains of East German Women!**

Abolish the Racist Death Penalty! Save the Life of Mumia Abu-Jamal! 2 Islam, South Africa and The Satanic Verses 24  
 France: Muslim Girls Banned from School in Anti-Immigrant Hysteria 16 Irish Students Fight for Abortion Rights 36  
**USA: The Battle for Abortion Rights...48**

# The Spartakists' programme of struggle

The following is the final section of the Manifesto and Programme of the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany, presented in the election campaign in the DDR.

- For strikes and factory occupations—Stop the capitalist takeover of our factories! We need workers defence organisations to defend these combative actions! Against the imperialist destabilisation campaign: build workers and soldiers soviets to defend our collectivised economy!

- Fight the D-mark Anschluss! For the right to a job for all! Defend our low-cost housing! Don't be taken in by the capitalist swindle of a "social market economy" or the lie of a "socialist market economy"! Market competition between independent, self-financing factories necessarily—and to an increasing extent—means inequality, factory closures and unemployment, monopolistic distortions and abuse.

- For a centralised planned economy under the rule of workers councils, the instruments of proletarian political power! That means political power belongs in the

**Vote for the "Three L's": Lenin, Liebknecht, Luxemburg!  
Vote for the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany!  
You will be voting for a pan-German party of revolutionary workers  
in the internationalist tradition of Lenin and Trotsky.  
We fight for the defence of the DDR, leading to  
a red Germany of workers councils in a socialist Europe!**

hands of freely elected councils of workers, soldiers and their allies! BRD[West German]-style "factory councils" are instruments to chain a powerful workers movement to the interests of capital. The highest soviet body should determine the overall direction of industrial production, the construction plans for housing, schools, hospitals and other installations of the social infrastructure. Consumer goods and services should be adjusted according to the changing conditions of demand and supply of the market within the framework of centralised planning. Factory committees should oversee production. Cooperatives should control the quality and prices of consumer goods.

- For proletarian internationalism! We need collaboration on an equal footing between the DDR and the USSR!

- For workers united-front actions to stop the fascists! Down with racism, anti-Semitism, hostility towards homosexuals and hatred of foreigners!

- No anti-Communist witchhunt against current or former SED members! Functionaries who are charged with crimes should be judged by people's tribunals.

- Full citizenship rights for all foreign working people and their families!

- Complete equality for women! Women must be able to fully participate in political and social life. The precondition for this is the socialisation of housework; comprehensive 24-hour care for our children; defence of the right to abortion; maintenance of socially justified subsidies.

- Preserve a humane future for youth! Defend the right to unlimited, free education for all.

- Benefits for pensioners!

- For environmental protection based on planning! The market economy cannot prevent ecological catastrophe—on the contrary. Factory committees are the most suited to guard against accidents and environmental damage. For humanity to survive on the planet, we need international cooperation and planning!

- Only through workers revolution can peace be secured! NATO is a weapons-laden alliance for war against the Soviet Union. The BRD accepts a "neutral" DDR just like Hitler accepted a "neutral Rhineland". Gorbachev's dream of "peaceful coexistence" with a Fourth Reich is as illusory and dangerous as Stalin's pact with Hitler. Imagine if Hitler had had atomic bombs! Defence of the Soviet Union begins on the Elbe!

- For proletarian political revolution! For a real socialism and a consistent break with the Stalinist-bureaucratic system! Citizens of the German Democratic Republic: There is much in the DDR you can be proud of. Don't throw the good out with the bad! ■



East Berlin, 14 January: Spartakist-Gruppen honour Lenin, Liebknecht, Luxemburg. Banner reads: "Defend foreign workers! Full citizenship rights, East and West!"

We reprint below a brief profile, released on 15 March by the East German news agency ADN, of Toralf Endruweit, one of the Spartakist Berlin candidates.

## Short biography of SpAD lead candidate Toralf Endruweit

BERLIN (ADN). Toralf Endruweit was born on 6 June 1967 in Neustrelitz and has lived in Berlin since 1972. He learned the trade of mechanic and, counting his apprenticeship, worked for more than four years in this capacity at the VEB Elektrokohle Lichtenberg on the three-shift system. Thereafter he became an employee at the German State Library and began to work on getting his *Abitur* [Gymnasium degree] in night school.

Toralf Endruweit has been interested in revolutionary Marxism and

Leninism since his school days. He believes that "political power in our workers state belongs in the hands of those who create value in our country, that is, the working people." In his opinion the Stalinists betrayed the workers and now intend to hand the country over to the capitalists. "An internationalist programme in the spirit of Lenin and Trotsky is the only realistic way to achieve socialism, which millions all over the earth and here in our country have fought for," said the lead candidate.

## East German elections...

(Continued from page 8)

the present level; other estimates are even higher. But this need not be meekly accepted. Faced with skyrocketing unemployment as a result of the introduction of a "market economy", Polish workers have been forced to strike against their pro-capitalist Solidarność leadership. DDR workers should support their Polish colleagues in such struggles, and prepare to mobilise against layoffs and anti-union attacks at home.

### Build a Leninist-egalitarian party!

With Kohl leading the charge, and in good part through the instrumentality of the SPD, the powers that are set to take over want to nail down something resembling a two-stage wage structure between East and West, subjecting DDR workers to superexploitation. No doubt through a witchhunt against former SEDers, they will seek to drive militant workers out of

key industrial sectors. We call on the workers movement to systematically defend leftists in the labour movement, the old, the women, the children, youth, students and foreign workers.

When the PDS talks of a "strong opposition on behalf of the weak", what they mean is introducing motions in a counter-revolutionary Volkskammer. And the first one, announced PDS chairman Gregor Gysi on election night, will be to eliminate the draft—a step towards disarming the workers state. Despite all their talk of realism, the idea spread by Gysi & Co (as well as the United Left, the Nelken [Carnations] and others) that reunification can take place while the social gains remain intact is a dangerous and utopian illusion. The PDS pipe dream of being a loyal opposition to an SPD undertaker government has gone up in smoke.

As opposed to the appeasement of Modrow/Gysi, the Spartakist Workers Party calls on working people to continue the fight against capitalist reunification in the plants and in the streets. And workers' struggles are already beginning, even in areas dominated by the rightist CDU-led Alliance. In Borna, a Spartakist speaker addressed a demonstration of brown-coal miners protesting the threatened closing

of their mines. Rubbish collectors in Halle, who have CDU posters in their office, staged a warning strike against plans to privatise their economy. Mansfeld copper miners also face the threat of shutdowns.

On 18 March, many bought the election fairy tale of a new "economic miracle". A DDR opinion poll showed that 92 per cent saw "improving living conditions" as a task of the new government. There will

soon be a rude awakening. Class-conscious workers must look for those struggles where the hard fights can be most powerfully waged. In doing so, they must also look to their class brothers, from West German metal workers to Soviet miners. In this way we continue our internationalist struggle. The key is the forging of a Leninist-egalitarian party. This is the task to which the Spartakist Workers Party dedicates its efforts. ■

## SUBSCRIBE NOW!

### WORKERS HAMMER

Marxist newspaper of the Spartacist League

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

6 issues of *Workers Hammer* for £2.00  
(Overseas Subscriptions: Airmail £5.00)

6 issues of *Workers Hammer* PLUS 24 issues of *Workers Vanguard*, Marxist fortnightly of the Spartacist League/U.S. for £7.00  
All above subs include *Spartacist*, organ of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)

*Women & Revolution* (3 issues) £1.50

Make cheques payable/post to: Spartacist Publications, PO Box 1041, London NWS 3EU

# Fourth Reich wins in East German elections

BERLIN, 19 March—The fateful 18 March Volkskammer elections place the social gains and the existence of the DDR in mortal danger. Western bourgeois media such as the *New York Times* (19 March) quickly proclaimed the vote “a death sentence for the German Democratic Republic” and trumpeted the “end of Communism”. The leader of the victorious Christian Democrats called for a broad coalition with a two-thirds majority, in order to bury the country with a simple parliamentary act.

But the heavy vote for reunification with capitalist West Germany threatens the livelihood and security of millions. With their backs to the wall, working people will find themselves forced into defensive struggles. And mobilising the tremendous power of the working class can throw a wrench into the campaign for *Anschluss*. For questions as weighty as the existence of a workers state will not be decided by pieces of paper in a ballot box.

The near-majority for the right-wing “Alliance for Germany”, bought and paid for by Kohl’s West-CDU (Christian Democrats), will certainly encourage forces pushing for a quick annexation by West Germany. The SPD Social Democrats were decisively defeated, winning only 20 per cent of the vote. It was a vote for the D-mark, and many no doubt figured: instead of voting for the social-democratic lackey, go for the banker with the money in his pocket.

The PDS (Party of Democratic Socialism, new name of the discredited SED Stalinist party which ran the DDR for over 40 years) came back from oblivion with 17 per cent. It lost its worker base, but managed to win the support of various other groups who will be under the gun in a capitalist Greater Germany. Yet far from opposing the drive to liquidate the DDR, these Stalinist leftovers capitulated at every step. The PDS’ belly-crawling policy was summed up in a leaflet distributed in Rostock: “We Are One People. 1:1” In other words, “One People, One Reich, One D-Mark”? (“One People,



Trotskyists say: Defend the gains of our workers state! No to capitalist reunification! SpAD candidate Toralf Endrueit speaking in East Berlin's Alexanderplatz.

One Reich, One Führer” was Hitler’s slogan justifying German expansionism.)

The DDR political revolution was marked from the beginning by the absence of any organised participation by the working class as such. Why? The SED was not “an elite”, as the bourgeois press claims, but a mass party embracing much of the working class. Small wonder that the workers experienced a deep sense of betrayal at the revelations of their leaders’ corruption and mismanagement. And quickly there followed the demoralising spectacle of every major party including the PDS seemingly accepting the inevitability, if not the desirability, of *Anschluss*.

The Spartakist Workers Party of Germany was the only party which took a categorical stand against capitalist reunification. We ran candidates in four districts (Berlin, Halle, Leipzig and Rostock), receiving 0.06 per cent of the vote

in those districts (2396 votes). Various left satellites of the PDS who capitulated to the drive for D-mark *Anschluss* got nothing in return for their opportunism.

We have repeatedly stressed that the 18 March elections were a plebiscite, distorted by the imperialist campaign of intimidation, on the fate of the DDR. Responsibility for the fateful results must be laid squarely at the door of Stalin and his heir Gorbachev. Stalin’s regime of bureaucratic tyranny, privilege and lies had only one answer to all problems: repression up to and including mass murder. Now Gorbachev’s policy of appeasing imperialism has emboldened the most aggressive Cold Warriors and Greater Germany revanchists seeking to reverse the verdicts of history. The Spartakists call for a determined resistance to this imperialist *Drang nach Osten* (drive to the East).

“Biggest leveraged buyout in history”

When up to a million people poured into Berlin-Alexanderplatz last 4 November, they were for democratising this bureaucratically deformed workers state after the collapse of the Honecker regime. On 3 January, a quarter million came out to Treptow Park to protest the vile Nazi desecration of the war memorial to the Soviet Red Army troops who freed the country from the Hitler Nazi regime.

The bourgeoisie saw the beginnings of a political revolution which would replace the decrepit Stalinist bureaucracy with the political power of the working people, opening the way to authentic socialism. In response, the imperialists stepped up their attempts to stampede the DDR into West Germany. Social Democrats and Christian Democrats in Bonn demanded a currency union, subordinating the collectivised East German economy to the Frankfurt bankers. The “caretaker” government of PDS lead candidate Hans Modrow capitulated. Modrow himself proclaimed “Germany—Single Fatherland”.

At the same time, the German bourgeoisie organised a campaign to disrupt and “destabilise” the economy. “The Planned Chaos: How Bonn Makes the DDR Economy Kaput”, headlined the West German magazine *Stern* (12 March). Rumours of shortages led to hoarding; purchases of meat in Berlin more than doubled in one month. Bonn poured in D-marks to buy the elections, over 20 billion through the foundations connected with the CDU and SPD. Records of Chancellor Kohl speaking were paid for by the federal government.

On Wall Street they talk of an *Anschluss* of the DDR as “the biggest leveraged buyout in history”. But the primary “asset” of the DDR is one of the most skilled working classes in the world. And a combative proletarian leadership can stop the sellout by leading sharp class struggle. Such a fight can mobilise millions.

Women will be hit particularly hard by social cuts affecting childcare, kindergartens and rent subsidies for single mothers. At the EKO steel plant in Eisenhüttenstadt, where one-third of the workforce are women, the night-shift crèche is being eliminated on weekends. “That’s it for me here,” fears one mother speaking for many.

Tens of thousands of foreign workers, from Angola, Cuba, Mozambique, Vietnam and elsewhere, are facing wholesale cancellation of their contracts and being sent home (ie mass deportations). Almost three million pensioners will be brought to the edge of survival, depending on social institutions likely to face the budget-cutters’ axe. And the Bonn rulers have already announced their intentions to sweep away the new trade-union law as part of an all-sided offensive to smash the FDGB (DDR union federation) unions.

West German economists are predicting that the unemployed in the DDR will increase to 1.4 million, more than 20 times

*continued on page 7*

## Urgent appeal for the “3-L’s” Fund

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

Throughout the past six months of intense and rapid political change—from the euphoria of November as the Stalinist regime crumbled to the un-

precedented capitalist campaign of destabilisation against the DDR—our comrades in Germany have stood out uniquely as the one party forthrightly opposing capitalist reunification and fighting for a Germany of workers councils. Contributions to the Lenin-Liebkecht-Luxemburg (“Three L’s”) fund have greatly assisted our international work. As we are soon going to scale down our public fund-raising for the German work, we ask our supporters and readers, to make another contribution now.

Make donation payable/send to:  
Spartacist, PO Box 1041,  
London NW5 3EU.

Earmark for:  
“Lenin-Liebkecht-Luxemburg Fund”  
(or simply “3L’s Fund”).

# Cop rampage...

(Continued from page 1)

and the police are cranking up a witch-hunt against the left. The judiciary have ordered over 20 newspapers and TV stations to hand over all film of the Trafalgar Square fighting. Column yards of vitriol against "anarchists" and "Trotskyists" filled the press in the aftermath of the cop riot. Rust Lady Margaret Thatcher blustered about "Marxist agitators and Militants [who] have organised mob violence" (*Sunday Correspondent*, 1 April). Not to be outdone Her Majesty's Premier-in-Waiting Neil Kinnock fulminated against "criminals and anarchists", as "enemies of freedom" (*Financial Times*, 2 April). Hattersley was apoplectic: "I am appalled by these disgraceful acts of violence, which are clearly the work of mindless hooligans. I extend my sympathy to all the police officers who have been injured" (*Sunday Correspondent*, 1 April).

In the face of this anti-red, anti-working-class campaign it is ABC for Marxists to defend the victims. Free all the poll-tax protesters! Drop the charges! The anarchists of *Class War* have been singled out in particular: defend *Class War* against state victimisation!

The servile Labourites of the misnamed Militant Tendency take the opposite view. Militant MP Terry Fields condemned the "group terrorism which has taken place on the streets of London". Far from defending those who battled with the police, the leaders of the Anti-Poll Tax Federation promise to open

their own "inquiry" into the events of 31 March, with the express purpose of excluding anyone they deem to have "set out to seek confrontation with the police" from the federation. A fight must go up in every anti-poll tax union to block such moves, which not only parody Labour's very own anti-Militant kangaroo courts and expulsions but also act to finger protesters to the bourgeois state.



Trafalgar Square, 31 March: Maggie Thatcher's boot boys rampage again.

Paul Mattson

Running scared in the face of the Tory/Labour onslaught, and desperately seeking to preserve the *sine qua non* of Militant politics—ie, deep entry in Kinnock's Labour Party—reformist leader Ted Grant put down his personal anti-working-class marker in the *Militant* of 6 April. There Grant offers tactical advice to the cops: they were "irresponsible" and "idiotic", they were "looking for trouble".

They were *cops*—the armed fist of the bourgeois state—attacking protesters justly expressing their outrage against the government's despised poll tax edict. Britain's rulers can be quite sure there is nothing to fear from these wimpy "Marxists in the Labour Party" who call on the Kinnock/Hattersley gang to "show they have the programme to build a socialist Britain"!

The *Glasgow Herald* observed that "there is a clear political problem for the Labour Party. It has moved so far and so fast to the right that there is now a serious vacuum on the left in British politics. The Labour Party is now virtually a centre party." The Thatcher government's authority is evaporating. Social struggle among the thousands of homeless, young people, pensioners, unemployed, women has escalated around the poll tax. But the necessary element to smash the poll tax and channel the popular outrage into a proletarian solution rather than a bourgeois dead end—the mobilisation of the organised working class—has been marginal. This is thanks to the Labourite misleaders sitting atop the trade unions who have turned their backs on the popular outrage against the poll tax.

There is a significant opportunity for the growth of a genuine Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard to provide the Bolshevik leadership which the working people of this country so richly deserve. Such a party must be based on a programme of class struggle which will stop at nothing short of the expropriation of the bourgeoisie by victorious socialist revolution and the establishment of a federation of workers republics in the British Isles. ■

# Workers Power...

(Continued from page 4)

political differences between us and Workers Power. But in order to bolster its own interpretation of events, Workers Power freely resorts to falsehood and slander. Why would anyone want to be in an organisation whose leadership knowingly tells grotesque lies to score points against us—or against anyone else for that matter? The road to the crystallisation of revolutionary cadres is obstructed by Disneyworld versions of events. Yet, for Workers Power, keeping Spartacists out of their "public" meetings in England (because we set up a literature table at a public debate with their group some years ago!) has been elevated to the same plane as the liquidation of the deformed workers states. As JV Stalin knew well, lies are the way of resolving the contradiction between one's professed programme and what one does in practice. Workers Power's slander and exclusion is simply the soft-core version of the methods Stalin, backed by force of state power, wielded against his opponents.

## Centrists who only betray when it counts

The fundamental point of departure

between us and Workers Power over the events in East Germany is our understanding of the nature of the Stalinist bureaucracy as a contradictory caste. This view was expressed most profoundly in Trotsky's 1933 work on "The Class Nature of the Soviet State":

"A real civil war could develop not between the Stalinist bureaucracy and the resurgent proletariat but between the proletariat and the active forces of the counterrevolution. In the event of an open clash between the two mass camps, there cannot even be talk of the bureaucracy playing an independent role. Its polar flanks would be flung to the different sides of the barricade. The fate of the subsequent development would be determined, of course, by the outcome of the struggle. The victory of the revolutionary camp, in any case, is conceivable only under the leadership of a proletarian party, which would naturally be raised to power by victory over the counterrevolution."

The Stalinist bureaucracy in the DDR was not defeated by proletarian political revolution, it simply capitulated before an imperialist onslaught.

The very fragility of the bureaucracy's rule imposed upon it authoritarian and totalitarian qualities. Certainly there were many elements who carried out crimes against the proletariat. But by no means was this simply an organisation of careerists or the privileged. The old SED was a mass party with over two million mem-

bers out of a population of 17 million. In these ranks—including in the army and police apparatus—were many sincere and subjective communists. They rightly felt deeply betrayed by the evidence of lies, corruption and economic mismanagement of the SED leaders.

With its "Down with Stalinism! Down with Capitalism!" line Workers Power acted as traitors to the largely SED/PDS-oriented working masses in the DDR. If Stalinism is the co-equal of capitalism, then why not vote for the fool's gold of the promises of D-Mark "prosperity"? By Workers Power's Third Camp logic, it should make no difference that the parties of a German Fourth Reich are now the government of East Germany. On the contrary the workers of the DDR should be celebrating the fulfillment of Workers Power's call to "root out and punish every filthy bureaucrat and secret police agent who made life hell for the GDR's workers for forty years". But now Workers Power tells the working class of the DDR to look to the same "filthy bureaucrats" in the PDS and the social democrats' party of capitalist restoration, the SPD, for salvation.

The imperialists are salivating over exploiting the population of the DDR as a new low-wage ghetto of Western capital and seizing the DDR as a launching pad for the imperialist conquest of the Soviet Union. It won't be easy. Many defensive battles loom ahead. The job of revolutionary Marxists is to make common cause with the struggles of the DDR working class to defend itself against imperialist *Anschluss* and to link these struggles with those of workers in the BRD. This will lay the groundwork at a juncture for the German workers going over to the economic and political offensive—for their own sake and for the growth of a larger scale German revolutionary workers party and to give encouragement and implicit guidance to the proletariat further East.

Workers Power has sought to carve out a niche for itself as the "left wing" of the spectrum of the Labourite left in Britain, something on the order of the position

occupied by the British Independent Labour Party in the 1930s. Confronted with having to draw revolutionary conclusions in the face of imperialist World War II and increasing political ferment among the working class, the ILP collapsed. Now in the face of the imperialist drive to reverse the verdicts of World War II and destroy the social gains of the DDR which were built up from the rubble of Hitler's Third Reich, the central contradiction of Workers Power's particular brand of centrism completely exploded. They were incapable of trying to straddle the fence between Trotskyism and the Third Camp. Instead, straight down the line, Workers Power performed as the Third Camp running dogs of capitalist counterrevolution. No amount of lying attacks on the Spartacists can cover up this treachery although it could be a ticket for them replacing Fenner Brockway. ■

## SPARTACIST LEAGUE GLASGOW MARXIST CLASS SERIES



1. REFORM vs REVOLUTION  
Sunday 22nd April 1990

2. THE RUSSIAN OCTOBER REVOLUTION —  
PARTY AND PROGRAMME  
Sunday 6th May 1990

Both classes will be held at 3 pm  
Committee Room 1, Queen Margaret Union,  
University Gardens, Glasgow

For further information, please phone Glasgow 041-332 0788

Volume 2, No 4  
Spring 1990

£2.50  
(58 pages)

£2.50/£5

Volume 2, No 4, Spring 1990

## REVOLUTIONARY HISTORY



## The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution

THOSE WHO DO NOT LEARN FROM HISTORY ARE DOOMED TO REPEAT IT

Order from: Socialist Platform Ltd  
BCM 7646,  
London, WC1N 3XX

# Interview with East German army officer

The following piece is reprinted from *Arprekorr* no 28, 20 March 1990.

On Wednesday, members of the Friedrich Engels Guard Regiment of the National People's Army (NVA), which watches over the eternal flame at the Monument of the Victims of Fascism and Militarism on Unter den Linden, staged a warning strike demanding better living conditions and continuation of their military service in civilian life. By the end of the month, the former NVA Guard Regiment Felix Dzerzhinsky will be dissolved, its former 10,000 men have already been mustered out. When the Western media talk of a looming dissolution of the NVA, this is no invention.

While the military leadership talk of "military reform" and dream of nonsense about an integrated NVA-Bundeswehr (West German army) under the sign of German reunification, at the base of the People's Army discontent is rife. Last month, the soldiers councils of the 43rd Fla-Raketenbrigade "Erich Weinert" addressed themselves to the Round Table, which turned a cold shoulder, with a statement complaining that "soldiers and NCOs are worried about their jobs, apartments and social security for their families". The Spartakist Workers Party of Germany (SpAD) demands that every soldier be able to return to his job after his military service is over, a right which is now threatened by the introduction of a market economy.

The SpAD calls for democratically elected soldiers councils to be organised throughout the NVA, pledged to vigilant defence of the DDR against imperialism, to create a strong proletarian military power in which rank and privilege have been abolished. We concur with Lenin, who foresaw an armed workers militia, although in the present situation, facing heavily armed imperialist armies, we cannot do without a standing army. Today, with the mounting drive for *Anschluss* of the DDR with capitalist West Germany, we must fight against victimisation of former and present SED-PDS members in the armed forces.

We print below excerpts from an interview with an officer who is a member of the Communist Platform of the PDS. While our views do not coincide in all particulars, the common commitment to internationalism and defence of the workers' gains provides a basis for genuine dialogue.

\* \* \*

**Arprekorr:** In the past period there have been numerous reports that the NVA is being dissolved in preparation for reunification, to station NATO and the Bundeswehr in the DDR. Is that true?

**Answer:** There are attempts going in many directions; just as with the political spectrum in this country, so it is reflected in the army. I can see it from the standpoint of a communist. And I would say there are preparations on the part of rightist forces who would like there to be civil servant status, who would like to be taken into the Bundeswehr.

There are likewise forces who have recognised the important role of this army for this country and for the world political situation. They say the army is necessary since it is a decisive factor for

## On the defence of the DDR

sovereignty, a decisive factor for preserving the nationalised property in this country. That, you see, is the last hurdle capitalism would have to clear to get this nationalised property. The army would always hinder it in doing so.

The army was trained and structured in a relatively communist way. There are many people in it, especially also officers, who believe in communist ideas, who would never go against the people and who understand very well how important their role is, in the international sphere as well. Anyone who dissolves the NVA is dissolving once and for all the possibility

**Answer:** On Gorbachev's policy, I see it clearly like this: he is struggling at the moment with the fact that the theory of socialism in one country has failed, and he doesn't yet accept that in its full scope. The process which has taken place in the DDR is also gradually—only somewhat longer, since it is a bigger country—taking place in the Soviet Union.

Seen from our side, at the moment a major social world event is unfolding. Now we are facing the big question: are the peoples of the Warsaw Pact states really going to let their property, or what they have created, be taken from their



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

of creating a socialist alternative.

As communists we are attempting to take part in the founding of a trade union so that this army becomes unacceptable for, say, NATO and the Bundeswehr. At the beginning of January there were some cases where soldiers councils went on strike. That spilled over into the Bundeswehr and likewise was reflected there. They were very afraid that it could become even more extensive in the Bundeswehr.

Even now, what is now being demanded, the elimination of universal compulsory military service, can also have consequences for the NATO armies, especially for the Bundeswehr. But you can't totally disarm and say to yourself, "well, the other guy will soon follow my lead". Because anyone who totally disarms runs up the white flag and surrenders his country to the other guy. It would be naive to think that we disarm and the others disarm too. That only works when you have bilateral steps.

**Arprekorr:** Now, the fact that the Red Army has played a restrained role has meant that the revolution [in the DDR] was able to take its course peacefully. And that was a good development. But obviously it's very contradictory, since Gorbachev's policy is giving a green light to capitalist reunification. What do you think the effects of this policy will be in the DDR and the Soviet Union, and upon the Soviet Army?

hands by the capitalists, or will they say at a decisive point: "this far and no further; now we will really continue the revolution that we started."

The revolution can, you see, flow into a capitalist counterrevolution. The spirits which people invoked were actually completely different from the ones that then came onto the scene. Perhaps this revolution in the whole system will extend over umpteen years. And perhaps this revolution, if you view it as a total process, will also increasingly have to be extended to the leading capitalist countries.

Yes, and Gorbachev's policy—I don't give it any future. Unless Gorbachev himself breaks, himself turns around 180 degrees, recognises the given situation and above all undertakes something to bring this revolutionary situation into the developed capitalist countries. That means, for example, supporting communist international movements, seizing the initiative, as Lenin once did, to forge a strong international communist movement. And would put a stop to the civil peace that has been agreed to with capitalism, and the social-democratic tendencies that are now being practised.

At the moment it looks like the vanguard is now coming from the Western world, the proletariat coming to us. Because we are revolutionary babies, revolutionary children who are taking our first steps, who were crippled by Stalinism. And now for us a world is being opened, where we first have to manage to

get an overview. And so that means, for example, the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany overtakes social-democratic forces and tendencies among us, creates anew a vanguard party here for the first time.

But again, that has to be a dialectic, or an interaction. We want to be creators, too. We seek contact with the proletariat of the capitalist countries. Because here the ostensible socialism has failed. Now people are asking the workers of the capitalist countries, is it really so much better for you? Or do we both now want to finally make the conscious revolution together that has already been talked about for ages?

There may be conflicts, even armed conflicts, in the course of this world revolution that is being worked towards. But I don't put an equal sign between world revolution and military conflicts. We are military officers, communists, and if there are these kinds of limited conflicts then there have to be capable officers, there have to be organised workers armies, people's armies, there have to be generals of the people who lead it in an expert manner.

And the shaping of the workers can only happen—in this country and in general—in universal compulsory military service. If universal military service is dropped, then a professional soldiers caste will automatically form, which splits away from and cuts itself off from the proletariat, and there will be the danger of a putsch and of becoming independent. There really must be, in the most general sense, a universal obligation for military service, but if someone doesn't want to serve for us then he isn't useful to us, he is someone who will shoot us in the back when things get serious. I had to deal with that as an officer for years under the Stalinist system—that I was obliged to go into battle with soldiers who wouldn't have fought for us.

Classless society is what the communists strive for. The capitalist disciplines the workforce via the civil service officialdom. This stratum wields the stick against the proletariat. If here today a large part of the Stalinist officials are now officially calling for civil servant status, that is open counterrevolution. That would be a big step backwards for society, and capitalism would acquire a means in this country to once again be able to wield the knout.

That would also be one of the most important points for the army. No civil servant status! No splitting off from the working class! My parents are workers, not civil servants. I don't want to become a civil servant. Certainly I would be socially secure, but I am a communist. I'm not a police thug—I stand in the service of the people. I will of course never act against the people.

On the question of foreigners serving in our army. I regret, and others also regret, that with the new election law the matter of foreigners being allowed to vote here was simply swept under the table. Everyone who defends the communist idea can serve both in this army and in any other internationalist army. If I stand here as a red officer, I stand not only for this people, I stand for all communists in the entire world. So it would be a signal if foreigners were also allowed to serve with this army. ■

# Lithuania...

(Continued from page 1)

more. His new draft legislation on the national question proposes a five-year waiting period before a republic can secede, followed by a popular referendum and approval by the all-Soviet Congress of People's Deputies.

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

Six decades of Stalinist bureaucratic oppression and parasitism have caused many national minorities to look upon the Soviet Union as a present-day version of tsarist Russia's "prison house of peoples", as Lenin called it. The Soviet Union can be saved only by sweeping out the Kremlin oligarchy and restoring the proletarian internationalist principles of Lenin and Trotsky. The Soviet federation must be reformed on the basis of genuine workers democracy, including the democratic right of national self-determination, ie, the right of constituent republics to secede and establish an independent workers state.

## Nationalist delirium in Lithuania

But the move towards secession in Lithuania has nothing to do with democratic aspirations. It is a move towards capitalist counterrevolution backed by witchhunting against Communists, class-conscious workers and national minorities. Three of the Sajudis members elected to the secessionist parliament were known anti-Soviet terrorists in the late 1940s-early '50s. The "declaration of independence" was pushed through in a mood of nationalist hysteria: a Lithuanian journalist sympathetic to the Sajudis reported that "anyone who speaks against it is sure to be branded a traitor." The Lithuanian nationalists have gone out of their way to incite and insult other Soviet peoples: for example, destroying monuments commemorating the Red Army's liberation of Lithuania from Nazi German occupation.

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

Since Poles (who make up 9 per cent of the republic) are traditionally fellow Catholics and anti-Russian, one might have expected them to support an independent Lithuania. But they, too, fear being subject to forced "Lithuanianisation" and second-class citizenship. Parliamentary deputies from the Polish minority abstained on the Lithuanian declaration of independence. A Polish schoolteacher told the *New York Times* (26 March): "People are losing their

native language... We are not prepared for this." Perhaps she recalled that in 1926, the virulently anti-Polish leader of independent Lithuania, Augustinas Voldemaras, closed Polish schools and jailed Polish schoolteachers.

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



(Left) 10 January separatist demonstration in Vilnius against Gorbachev visit. (Right) Lithuanian president Vytautas Landsbergis.

The harshest denunciations of the Sajudis secessionists have come from the Soviet high command. The Lithuanian port of Klaipeda (formerly Memel) is a major conduit for military supplies to other parts of the USSR. Furthermore, Lithuanian secession would cut off from the rest of the Soviet Union the important Baltic port of Kaliningrad, which is predominantly Russian-speaking and part of the Russian republic. Moscow's strong response in Lithuania may also be a reaction to the right-wing victory in the 18 March East German elections. With the spectre of a Fourth Reich looming in the West, the Soviet officer corps and other elements of the hierarchy may be less ready to tolerate a NATO beachhead on the Baltic coast.

An even more immediate danger is the encouragement Lithuanian secession would give to other nationalist-separatist movements, and not only in neighbouring Latvia and Estonia. The largest Caucasian republic, Georgia, has become a witch's cauldron of reactionary groupings. One of the biggest separatist groups is the Monarchist Party, which proclaims: "Our new state should be built on a strict principle of hierarchy" (*Wall Street Journal*, 28 March). This party is in contact with the current pretender to the Georgian throne now living in Spain. Throughout Georgia statues of Lenin have been pulled down, while monarchists and other reactionary outfits have taken over the offices of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism and of the Young Communist League.

On the scale of the USSR the three Baltic republics are Lilliputian. And the loss of the Caucasian republics would likewise not fundamentally affect Soviet power. The Ukraine, however, is an entirely different order of magnitude. The second-largest republic, it has enormous military, industrial and agricultural impor-

ance. In the latest republican parliamentary elections, the Ukrainian nationalist movement Rukh won about a third of the seats and totally dominates the city council in Lvov, the main city in the western Ukraine. Rukh parliamentary deputy Genrikh Altunyan proclaims: "We are thinking what Moscow considers unthinkable. Today Lithuania. Tomorrow the Caucasus. The day after tomorrow, the Ukraine."

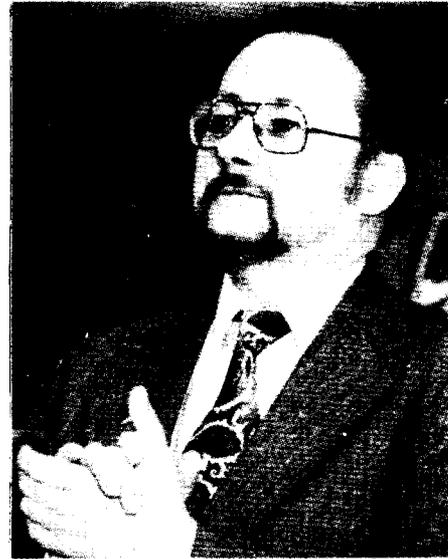
## Only communism can defeat nationalism

The rise of anti-Communist nationalism in the Baltics, Caucasus and Ukraine has been paralleled by the rise of Great Russian chauvinism and anti-Semitic demagoguery in Moscow, Leningrad and elsewhere in the Russian republic. In late March the fascist thugs of Pamyat and four like-minded outfits got together to launch the People's Russian Orthodox Movement. Its principal organiser,

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

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

Now is a time of grave crisis for the



(Right) Lithuanian president Vytautas Landsbergis.

Evgeny Pashkin, rails that the Jews are behind the bloody strife between Armenians and Azerbaijanis and are conspiring to "make Russia defenceless".

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

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

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

—*New York Times Magazine*, 28 January

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

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

Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* no 499, 6 April 1990

### Contact the Spartacist League

Glasgow	PO Box 150 Glasgow G3 7TN 041-332 0788
London	PO Box 1041 London NW5 3EU 071-485 1396

## No to the embryo bill!

# Free abortion on demand!

The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill is a sharp attack on abortion rights for women. Ostensibly designed to regulate embryo research and clinics that provide such services as *in vitro* fertilisation (IVF), the bill is a vehicle for slashing the existing 28-week legal limit for abortions. An amendment for 24 weeks has already been tabled by such Tory bigwigs as Sir Geoffrey Howe and Health Secretary Kenneth Clarke, while the limit could be reduced to as low as 18 weeks.

It is no accident that the government has chosen to link this reactionary attack on abortion rights with the embryo bill. "Rights of the embryo" and "foetal viability" are shams designed to close in on women's elementary democratic right to abortion. The attack on abortion rights has become a spearhead for social and political reaction. At its heart lies the question of legal and social equality for women. Marxists forthrightly support a woman's right to free abortion on demand and oppose the intervention of the state at any point in a woman's pregnancy.

A lowering of the limit will only embolden reactionary organisations like the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child (SPUC). And it will target the women who are the most vulnerable and disadvantaged: the very young who cannot come to grips with the fact that they are pregnant; women carrying foetuses with severe genetic disorders who cannot get early diagnosis of foetal malformation and disease; and the increasing number of women who are denied hospital beds because of NHS cuts. In fact, large numbers of abortions are now carried out in private clinics because of the shortage of NHS facilities.

Among those who will be most victimised are women from foreign countries with more restrictive abortion laws. In Ireland, where abortion is illegal, the Supreme Court recently granted temporary injunctions against individuals deemed to be "assisting" or "facilitating" a woman in "the destruction of the life of her unborn child" (*Irish Times*, 20 December 1989). The same court awarded legal costs to SPUC for two cases it brought against Irish students who courageously defied prohibition against distribution of information concerning abortion services. A total of 17 students may be forced to pay an estimated £30,000. The Union of Students in Ireland (USI) is beginning a defence campaign to help them.

At least 10,000 Irish women come to Britain each year for abortions. Many are subjected to abuse by reactionary outfits like Rescue, which have targeted private abortion clinics for demonstrations. Groups such as Rescue are also prominent among those who seek to prohibit the use of the successful abortion pill RU486 which makes abortion at an early stage inexpensive and safe, and an entirely private matter between a woman and her doctor. The anti-abortion fanatics serve as ideological servants of the ruling class, seeking to prop up the patriarchal

nuclear family, the main social institution for the oppression of women under capitalism.

The embryo bill itself panders to these same anti-abortion forces. One version would ban embryo research entirely (the other would permit embryo experimentation for up to 14 days with restrictions).



Spartacist League/US and PDC contingents at abortion rights rally, Washington DC, 9 April 1989.

In fact, embryo research has been carried on for twenty years in this country. One of the best known achievements of such research has been the IVF programme; since 1978 some 4000 babies in Britain have been born through this method. Embryo research has not only brought hope to those who are infertile, but has reached the point where screening for some genetically inherited diseases is now possible, thereby offering parents the possibility of having children free from the fear of severe chromosomal and genetic defects. Other aspects of embryo research including genetic manipulation could provide the basis for eventually eliminating such crippling and tragic disorders as cystic fibrosis, muscular dystrophy and Down's syndrome. As well, scientists are also seeking to develop new methods of birth control, including a vaccine that prevents conception.

An article in the prestigious *New Scientist* (25 November 1989) noted the close link between embryo legislation and the abortion question: "Sensitivities to abortion seem to be the deciding factor in debates about legislation in other countries for regulating research on embryos." In Japan, which has relatively liberal abortion laws, there are no restrictions on research on human embryos, though ethical committees enforce guidelines. But in many other countries embryo research has been either banned or severely restricted. In West Germany a bill to ban research is being considered, while in France the limit is seven days. In the US research is restricted to private hospitals because no federal funding is available.

The bill on offer here is the product of a 1984 commission headed up by Baron-

ess Warnock. Its recommendation of a two-week limitation, as "most scientists point out" is "arbitrary" (*New Scientist*, 25 November 1989). By setting a time limit, the bill also sets a dangerous precedent for legal rights for the "embryo" outside the womb. The implications are clear: if "outside" the womb, why not

of time. And many will vote for reduction of abortion rights when the embryo bill comes before parliament.

The fight for abortion rights cannot be isolated from the struggle for decent living conditions and democratic rights for all. Just calling for "legal abortion" begs the question: the 1967 abortion law, a

"inside the womb"? In drafting its 14-day recommendation, the commission consciously sought to assuage religious sentiments by attempting to pinpoint when a human being develops a "soul". Indeed, the Warnock commission has even popularised the term "pre-embryo" in pandering to the "sensibilities" of reactionaries. And the Warnock Report specified a preference for a "heterosexual couple living together in a stable relationship" as the beneficiaries of donor insemination and IVF treatment. Tory MP Ann Winterton attempted last October to table an Early Day Motion banning lesbians and single women from participating in donor insemination programmes.

In 1985 Enoch Powell's hastily introduced private member's bill "to make research illegal" received its second reading in an emotionally charged atmosphere in the House of Commons by a vote of 238 to 66 "before being blocked" (*Independent*, 24 November 1989). Since that time, there has been a growing atmosphere of panic, as researchers have felt compelled to accept compromises out of fear that such a total ban will be enacted. And now even this is being traded in exchange for reducing abortion rights! Riddled with reactionary social prejudices and male chauvinist conservative complacency, the Labour Party has not only failed to give a lead in the struggle to defend abortion rights, but has actively sabotaged that struggle. Labour leader Neil Kinnock's overt anti-homosexual bigotry provided the backdrop for Labour's aiding and abetting the passage of the draconian anti-homosexual Section 28. Many Labour Party MPs would have willingly voted for Liberal David Alton's 1988 anti-abortion bill had it not run out

reform which has not been extended to Northern Ireland, while providing legal rights to abortion up to 28 weeks does not compel health authorities to provide the service. The wreckage of the NHS is just one measure of the advanced state of decay of British capitalism. Millions wait for months for appointments for routine treatments and sometimes years for straightforward operations. Babies die because wards are closed and life-saving equipment is not available in many hospitals. Scientific medical advances that benefit all of humanity, many of which are extremely costly, will not be available to the vast majority of the population who are totally dependent on the NHS for medical treatment. This is of no concern to this vicious ruling class who have access to medical science at its best on a world-wide basis. Medical science has always been bound and constrained by class society, but it is being increasingly perverted to the standards of moral majority witch doctors.

The rotting corpse of British capitalism renders Labourite patchwork reforms of the NHS, education and housing absolutely meaningless. Only hard class struggle under revolutionary leadership with the aim of expropriating the wealth stolen from those who produce it will provide the solution. For free abortion on demand, free quality health care for all and free 24-hour childcare! Under the planned economy of a workers government the resources necessary will be made available to transform the quality of life for the working class and oppressed. An authentic Bolshevik Party, a tribune of all the oppressed, must be forged to lead that struggle. For women's liberation through socialist revolution! ■