

As millions refuse to pay Labour enforces Thatcher's tax

Thatcher's poll tax is shaping up to be that rare thing in politics: a perfect failure. Following the imposition of the tax in England and Wales, at least one-third of the population in England have refused to pay the tax. In Birmingham, England's second city, fully one half of all adults have not paid. Birmingham city officials have said they will seek payment orders from the courts for up to 120,000 people. In the capped London councils, all Labour-controlled, about two-thirds of registered adults have not paid. Public "poll tax burnings" take place regularly, with effigies of Thatcher a popular means of lighting the bonfire. It's high time Kinnock's effigy took its rightful place alongside!

The Labour Party has acted and continues to act as the enforcer of Thatcher's despised tax. "Pay the tax" and damn the non-payers is Kinnock's line and should this arch-scab come to power in the next general election his government would attack the living standards of the working class at least as much as the present government. Dreading the prospect of class struggle and massive protest against the poll tax, the Labour/TUC officialdom preach obeisance to the bosses' laws and seek to channel social discontent into the shell game of bourgeois parliamentarism.

Kinnock and his loathsome lieutenant Hattersley viciously denounced the

demonstrators at Trafalgar Square on 31 March who dared defend themselves against Thatcher's cossacks and express their outrage over the tax. Over 500 demonstrators are being prosecuted after arrests at Trafalgar Square and subsequently; the Crown Prosecution Service have set up a special unit with 125 officers working full-time on the cases. The Government, after orchestrating the police riot at Trafalgar Square, is hell-bent on making an "example" of the cops' victims in the courts. The Labour leadership are squarely on the side of the cops, with loyal "left" groups such as Militant joining in the revolting chorus, violence-baiting the protesters and with others

boycotting the defence. Small wonder that many worker militants and youth see in the Labour Party a dead end. We say: drop all the charges against the anti-poll tax protesters now!

But the Government has not had things all its way. Its recent attempt to prosecute 1800 people in the Isle of Wight turned into a complete rout for the Magistrates' Court. Angry protesters gathered outside the court during the abortive hearings. Not only were the cases finally dismissed, but the Council ended up being liable for court costs. A six-year-old boy had been summoned to appear before the courts for non-payment as were several dead

continued on page 9

No "power sharing" with the Randlords!

Smash apartheid! For workers revolution!

Across the US, hundreds of thousands of people turned out to enthusiastically greet Nelson Mandela, leader of the African National Congress, who arrived in New York on 20 June, the first stop on his ten-day American tour. The man who during his 27 years' imprisonment was the symbol of the fight against apartheid slavery has also inspired black people in America, who see in the oppression of their South African brothers a mirror of their own. At the same time, some of the most powerful oppressors and exploiters of black people joined in a hypocritical celebration of "freedom" while the South African masses and minorities in the United States bear the deadly weight of racial oppression.

Mandela got the red carpet treatment at the White House, staunch supporters of the white-supremacist Pretoria regime, and chatted with President Bush, former head of the CIA which engineered his 1962 arrest. He addressed a joint session of Congress—which talks of "sanctions" against South Africa while bankrolling the Salvadoran death squad regime to the tune of a million dollars a day. In New York there was a ticker tape parade down lower Broadway, where the ANC leader met with the captains of industry and the lords of high finance. He posed with Mayor Dinkins, and there was an enormous outpouring in Harlem organised by the "popular front" (including many labour leaders) which elected the black Democrat and now seeks to bask in



Steve Hilton-Barber/Afrapix-Impact Visuals

Power of black trade unions can smash apartheid. Above: Militant black trade unionists in Johannesburg protest anti-labour laws, October 1989.

Mandela's popularity while imposing anti-worker cutbacks which hit minorities hardest.

Mandela's message is for a non-existent "negotiated solution" in South Africa, which means *blacks will pay*. His trip grows out of the talks between the ANC and the de Klerk regime in early May,

which came on the heels of the cop massacre in Sebokeng township, where 14 black protesters were mowed down and hundreds injured in March. The apartheid rulers, hard hit by six years of black revolt and economic losses, try to salvage their class rule by removing some of the most glaring segregationist legislation,

partially lifting the state of emergency and releasing a few score political prisoners, while countless thousands remain in jail. A peaceful resolution of the conflicting interests of the multinational corporations and capitalist politicians who rule South Africa and the oppressed

continued on page 10

Free the Birmingham Six now!

Fifteen years ago, a Labour government framed, convicted and condemned six men to 21 life sentences for crimes they did not commit. Patrick Hill, Gerry Hunter, Richard McIlkenny, Billy Power and Johnny Walker were on their way to attend the funeral in Belfast of an IRA friend, James McDade, when Lancashire police arrested them and took them to Morecambe police station on 21 November 1974. Five hours earlier, the IRA had carried out the criminal bombing of Birmingham's "Mulberry Tree" and "Tavern in the Town" pubs, killing 21 and injuring 162. Beaten and tortured, by next morning, four of the five men had signed "confessions" which they all later retracted. Hugh Callaghan was arrested at his home in Birmingham. Today, the Birmingham Six still languish in prison hellholes. Like the recently released Guildford Four, they are "guilty" only of being Irish.

On 21 March, following years of ex-

posés of the frame-ups and faced with yet another Granada TV *World in Action* programme "Who Bombed Birmingham?", Home Secretary David Waddington reopened a police "inquiry" into the case. Defiantly, Johnny Walker stated from Long Lartin prison: "We will never get parole and I am speaking here for all the six. They cannot give us parole unless we ask for it and we will not. Why should I take parole for a crime I never committed?" (*Guardian*, 22 March). Meanwhile, the Police Complaints Authority thumbed its nose at Waddington, saying "it was not free to investigate" the case. As one highly-placed cop privately admitted "Everybody in the prison service knows they are innocent, and they have known it for years" (*Independent on Sunday*, 25 March). We say: No government cover-ups! Free the Birmingham Six now! Millions of pounds can't compensate for their shattered lives, nor will



October 1989: Gerry Conlon, one of the Guildford Four, emerges defiant after release from 15 years imprisonment. Now free the Birmingham Six!

jailing the criminals—including those highly placed—who framed them up, beat their confessions out of them, suppressed evidence to keep them behind bars. But elementary justice demands at least that.

The evidence against the Birmingham Six was virtually non-existent. The retracted "confessions" had all contradicted each other as to who placed what bomb where as well as contradicting the police descriptions of the alleged containers and their locations. Photographic and medical evidence confirmed the men's allegations of beatings and torture. During the 28-day appeal, experts demolished the credibility of the test performed by forensic scientist Frank Skuse soon after the men's arrest. Even one of the appeal judges observed that Skuse repeatedly "revised" his testimony and in 1985 he was elbowed out into early retirement because of "limited efficiency".

The "trial" which originally convicted the men took place during an orgy of anti-Irish chauvinism. Then Labour home secretary Roy Jenkins slammed the notorious Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) through parliament. Irish-owned businesses in the Midlands and London were firebombed. The British state knew full well that the Birmingham Six could not and did not commit the pub bombings. It was a conscious frame-up, an act designed to terrorise and intimidate the population. As Chris Mullin wrote in *Error of Judgement*:

"An editorial in the *Guardian* caught the mood of the hour. 'A liberal society,' it said, 'cannot let its freedom, and its concern for the rights of the individual be abused in order that it shall be torn to pieces. From now on anybody who complains that he is being harassed by the police bomb squad will find a less than sympathetic audience.'"

British injustice: "Innocent until proven Irish"

Like the Guildford bombing, the Birmingham pub bombings were a crime against the working class, acts of indiscriminate terror which Marxists condemn. Unlike attacks against military targets and representatives of British imperialism, these nationalist outrages are indefensible from the standpoint of the working class. But the Irish people locked away were innocent victims.

When the men pleaded innocent, maintaining that the false "confessions" had been beaten out of them, even the kangaroo court accepted that. The police have lyingly claimed that the six were not beaten while in police custody but only after they were delivered to Winson Green Prison. In *Error of Judgement*

Mullin painstakingly unravelled the elaborate police cover-up. A number of eyewitnesses have also confirmed what the six have maintained from the outset about their ordeal for three days and nights in the "custody" of the West Midlands police. A police cadet Joyce Lyness now says "she saw one of the accused being kned in the groin by one of the detectives" and a former constable, Tom Clark "gave extensive details of the beatings, threats of shootings and sleep deprivation suffered by all the men". William Bailey, a cleaning supervisor, "said he washed wet bloodstains from their cells the next morning" and a ballistics expert accepted McIlkenny's description of a rare type of mock execution (with wax bullets) as "graphic and totally accurate" (*Independent on Sunday*, 25 March).

But overwhelming evidence of police fabrication and coercion failed to win the six their appeals. Former Master of the Rolls Lord Denning stated openly that "Wrongfully convicted prisoners should stay in jail rather than be freed and risk a public loss of confidence in the law" (*Observer*, 21 February 1988). Now even Denning admits: "The whole situation has been greatly altered by the release of the Guildford Four" (*Independent*, 22 March).

In January 1989, then Chief Constable Geoffrey Dear, of Handsworth cop riot infamy, disbanded his West Midlands Serious Crimes Squad; 53 officers were transferred or suspended for alleged widespread "criminal activity" in the obtaining of false confessions. Of these, two "were directly involved in obtaining the confessions of Hill and Callaghan". Another squad member, Sergeant Brian Morton, was arrested in 1983 for assaulting a suspect: "He was also involved in the bombing investigation, and had testified at the trial to the faultless conduct of his unit" (*Independent on Sunday*, 25 March). New evidence supplied in an updated edition of *Error of Judgement* highlights efforts to bury the "serious differences of opinion" between Lancashire and West Midlands forces with regard to the timing of the beatings.

Public perception that the cops and courts wilfully lie and frame, beat "suspects" and cover-up with impunity has deepened since the Guildford Four were finally released after 15 years in British prisons for a crime they did not commit. Furthermore, the SAS' cold-blooded summary execution of three IRA members in Gibraltar and the government's breath-taking lies in the aftermath also unequivocally answered the sanctimonious debates about whether or not the British troops

continued on page 9

Robespierre against the death penalty



TROTSKY

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



LENIN

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

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

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

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

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

WORKERS HAMMER



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

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 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

Workers Power waltzes to Matgamna's anti-Soviet tune

"Tell me what company you keep, and I'll tell you what you are."
—Cervantes, Don Quixote

In our previous two issues *Workers Hammer* has documented the rightward lunge of the centrist Workers Power group under the impact of the disintegration of Stalinism in Eastern Europe. Contradicting its headline announcing "Smash capitalist restoration", Workers Power operated as soft core capitalist restorationists in East Germany. It advocated the Red Army withdrawal from East Germany and dissolution of the Warsaw Pact; recommended a witchhunt of former SED members; "disappeared" the massive Treptow anti-fascist demonstration against the fascist desecration of the Soviet war memorial and then echoed the West German bourgeoisie and social democrats who slandered the Treptow action as a rally for a new Stasi.

In May, Workers Power came out with the demand that the government of Margaret Thatcher "recognises Lithuania and supplies goods requested by Lithuania without conditions". That the secessionist Sajudis openly advocate a return to capitalism in Lithuania did not dissuade Workers Power from its embrace of Lithuanian "independence". Its call for British intervention to break the Soviet blockade was an outright appeal to imperialism to aid counterrevolution in the Baltics. Proving its dedication to this cause, Workers Power joined with the rabidly anti-Soviet Socialist Organiser group (WP's partners in the "Campaign for Solidarity with Workers in the Eastern Bloc") to picket the Soviet consulate.

Workers Power's call on British imperialism to aid "poor little Lithuania" against the Soviet Union did prompt one of its readers to protest. The June issue contained a letter from a reader who, while accepting the anti-Leninist premise that "revolutionaries should support Lithuania's right of secession on its own terms and at its own pace", at least recognised that: "Demanding the imperialists break the Russian blockade strengthens imperialism. What reason could the imperialists have in breaking the embargo if not to aid the forces of restoration and create a base to launch themselves at the heart of the Soviet Union?" He also points out that "goods without conditions must be presumed to include arms as the government has declared its intention of setting up its own standing army". *Workers Power* replied: "In the situation of the Lithuanian working class defending their independence arms in hand against the tanks of the SAF [Soviet Armed Forces] then we could not oppose the sending or receipt of such arms." This statement can leave no doubt—should the Sajudis secessionists choose the course of armed resistance to the Soviet Red Army, Workers Power would be all for imperialist arms flowing to the army of nationalist counterrevolution.

With the figleaf of nominal Soviet defencism now dangling somewhere around its ankles, Workers Power's waltz with Socialist Organiser is sweeping it back into the third camp—and not slowly. The "Campaign for Solidarity with Workers in the Eastern Bloc" (CSWEB) petition, calling on the "leaders of the Lab-

our Party and TUC to demand that the Soviet government respects the rights of the Lithuanian people", states clearly: "We are for the right to self-determination for all the nations in the USSR—up to and including separation if they so wish." No room here for the centrist cover of calls for an "independent workers Lithuania". Matgamna & Co aren't interested in such nonsense; they want to destroy "Russian imperialism".

For Trotskyists, the right of self-determination is not automatic, and we do not support calls for secession and independence where it is used as a cover (as in Lithuania) for counterrevolution. Not so very long ago, Workers Power gave lip service to this position. The MRCI's 1987 "Theses on Gorbachev" (*Trotskyist International* no 1, Summer 1988) stated: "For the right of all Soviet nationalities to self-determination up to and including secession, subject to the defence of planned property relations and of the USSR." But now *Class Struggle* (April/May 1990) simply asserts its support to secession even if this would result in "establishing independent bourgeois states" (our emphasis) and Workers Power openly appeals to British imperialism to aid this "democratic" task.

WP's strange "anti-Stalinist" bedfellows

The activities of the CSWEB are not restricted to the odd pro-nationalist petition and anti-Soviet picket. Among other things, it is a vehicle for fund-raising for Sotsprof, the Polish Socialist Party (Democratic Revolution), the East German United Left, the Czech Left Alternative and the Initiative for Independent Trade Unions in the DDR. At a London meeting of the CSWEB on 17 June, with WP activist Helen Ward in the chair, funds were duly raised. At least in Sotsprof's case, however, the princely sums brought in by CSWEB may not be required in the future. Workers Power's Irish co-thinkers explain that Sotsprof is applying "for membership of the right-wing International Confederation of Free Trade Unions" (*Class Struggle*, June/July 1990).

The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) is indeed right-wing, but it is better known as a CIA-controlled outfit. When in August 1981, Solidarność invited one Irving Brown ("Mr AFL-CIA") to Poland for its first conference, we explained:

"Irving Brown was the man who used CIA dollars to plant agents, buy officials and hire goon squads to split, smash and subdue combative unions in Western Europe after World War II. Irving Brown has been identified by former Central Intelligence Agency official Philip Agee as the 'principal CIA agent for control of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.'" (*Workers Vanguard*, no 289, 25 September 1981)

Workers Power has made some other unsavoury connections in its dealings with "anti-Stalinists" from the Eastern bloc. There is the case of Viktor Yakovlev, a Soviet miner who found Roy Lynk, leader of the scab UDM, good company. After Yakovlev and Militant fell out, he found "new friends" according to *Workers Power* "on the right wing of the labour movement and in the reactionary NTS (Pop-

ular Labour Alliance) of the Russian emigration" (*Workers Power*, May 1990). Criticising the reformists of Militant—from the right—for breaking links with Yakovlev, *Workers Power* lectures: "Viktor, and millions of Soviet workers like him, want to hear all of the ideas within the British labour movement, right and left. Who could be surprised after years of Stalinist oppression?" The latest CSWEB offering was Yuri Budchenko, a Ukrainian miner who opined at a 17 June meeting in London that "time has run out" and that there is no other alternative—"the market is it".

As a sideshow to their work with Matgamna in CSWEB, Workers Power are to be engaging their partners in a series of debates entitled "The crisis of Stalinism and the tasks of revolutionaries". While Workers Power can use this to pretend to take on SO's bureaucratic collectivist "analysis", the reality is that there is a convergence of programmatic appetite on the Russian question between the two groups and precious little of substance to debate. For the same reason, the recent debates in Dublin and Berlin between Workers Power and the Spartacists of the International Communist League revealed the programmatic gulf separating WP from genuine Trotskyism.

ICL debates LRCI

On sacred English soil no Spartacist is let into WP's "public" meetings. But cross any border and the rules miraculously change. At the Berlin debate on 3 May the Austrian LRCI group was compelled to confront the comrades of the Spartacist Workers Party of Germany (SpAD). During the course of this debate, Spartacist spokesmen pointed out that the LRCI group's flabby call on Nazi war criminal and Austrian president Waldheim simply to resign, trivialising his crimes to those of an "accomplice" and "desk top criminal", contrasted starkly with their bloodthirsty calls for "rooting out" the DDR Stalinists.

In Dublin, on 28 April, the LRCI were clearly highly defensive about their call for withdrawal of the Soviet Red Army from the DDR and for dissolution of the Warsaw Pact. Despite the ICL's speaker attacking this policy at length in the first presentation, the LRCI's spokesman only attempted to defend their line in the last five minutes of his summary. The existence of the Warsaw Pact, like the existence of the Soviets' rough nuclear parity, has prevented the imperialists from engaging in a direct military assault on the USSR. WP itself admits that the Warsaw Pact was "created in response to the imperialist threat to the Soviet Union". Simultaneously WP insists it is simply a counterrevolutionary instrument. In March, *Workers Power* declared that "the only combat" undertaken by the Warsaw Pact troops was "the suppression of the insurgent working classes of the GDR, Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia".

WP's "confusion" on the nature of the armed forces of the Soviet degenerated workers state is of a piece with their line that Stalinism is "essentially counterrevolutionary". The LRCI speaker challenged us to show where Trotsky had cited the dual nature of Stalinism after his call for proletarian political revolution.

We refer them to Trotsky's brilliant polemic against Burnham, "Not a Workers' and Not a Bourgeois State?":

"The function of Stalin...has a dual character. Stalin serves the bureaucracy and thus the world bourgeoisie; but he cannot serve the bureaucracy without defending that social foundation which the bureaucracy exploits in its own interests" (*Writings, 1937-38*, p65)

To *Class Struggle's* accusation in its coverage of the debate that we believe "the overthrow of capitalism in East Germany (and all the other overthrows up to Vietnam and Kampuchea) by the Stalinist bureaucracies had been progressive" we plead guilty. Spartacist speakers made the point that for the LRCI the 1975 triumph of the Vietnamese workers and peasants over the US puppet regime of South Vietnam was, as with all overthrows of capitalism by Stalinist/petty-bourgeois-led forces, "counterrevolutionary". Many of WP's central cadre were initially radicalised at the time of the Vietnam war, so this cut to the quick. The IWG tried to deny that this is their line, and to draw an idiotic line distinguishing between the 1975 NLF military victory and the ostensible "counterrevolutionary" event, namely the "elimination of capitalism" months later!

Workers Power ought to be reeling under the objective collapse of their line on Stalinism. WP's attempt to straddle the fence on the Russian question has been shattered by events in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. The Stalinists have proved to be what Trotsky insisted they were: a brittle and contradictory caste. The choices are starkly posed: either proletarian political revolution to replace the corrupt, nationalist Stalinist bureaucracies or capitalist counterrevolution. Workers Power and its grubby little CSWEB co-op have embraced the latter course. Those in WP who don't relish acting as the "left" water boys for Cliff or Matgamna's next "anti-Stalinist" luminary in need of quick cash must reject the programme which leads to this ignominious end. ■

A Spartacist Pamphlet 51.00

"Market Socialism" in Eastern Europe

The Bankruptcy of the Yugoslav Model

Hungary: "Goulash Communism" Goes Bust

For Central Planning Through Soviet Democracy

Gorbachev Rehabilitates Leader of Right Opposition

The Bukharin Dossier

75p

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

India, Pakistan talk war

Brutal crackdown in Kashmir

"Kashmir is at war with India" reports *India Today* (30 April). And the massive popular resistance of the overwhelmingly Muslim population of the Kashmir valley threatens to trigger a new war between Pakistan and India. Strategically placed on India's borders with Pakistan, China and Afghanistan, with the USSR nearby, disputes over Kashmir have already twice been the direct cause of wars between the two sub-continental states in 1948 and 1965. The troop build-ups, border skirmishes, threats and hysteria between two weak and unstable governments nearly exploded into full-scale war in late May. Ominously both countries hover on the threshold of a nuclear warfare capacity. As well as being a cause for war for India and Pakistan, Kashmir epitomises the seething complex of national and communal conflicts across a belt from the Kurdish areas of Turkey through Soviet Central Asia to the Muslim minority areas of China, as well as in the Indian subcontinent.

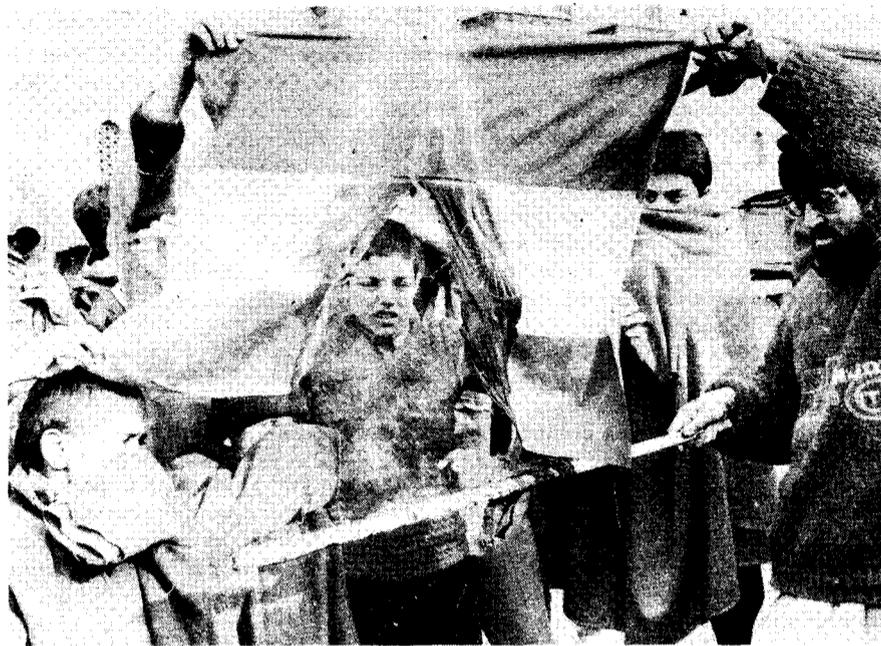
The new minority government of VP Singh had barely been installed on 2 December when Dr Rubiya Sayeed, daughter of the Muslim new Home Minister Mufti Mohamed Sayeed, was kidnapped. The government traded her for five imprisoned Kashmiri separatists, but not before search operations had triggered unprecedented protests. Then when security forces opened fire on demonstrators in the main town Srinagar on 20 January the unrest exploded in a popular uprising. The central government declared presidential rule and sent in the paramilitary police and a tough governor, Jagmohan. With the local police demoralised and disaffected, the paramilitary and army forces now number more than 150,000. One Indian magazine describes the situation:

"The whole valley has been handed over to the para-military forces. Jammu and Kashmir police are looked upon with distrust. In fact every Kashmiri Muslim is *prima facie* considered a pro-Pakistani traitor. The alienation of the people is total and the masses have lost all faith in political leaders" (*Economic and Political Weekly*, May 5-12).

Life has become one curfew after another. The economy is in tatters, and the summer tourist season, upon which about two-thirds of the population depends, is doomed. One government minister, George Fernandes admits the "total collapse of civil authority" (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 17 May).

On 21 May the security forces fired on the funeral procession of a "moderate" religious leader, killing hundreds. No one claimed responsibility for killing him. The tens of thousands at his funeral blamed governor Jagmohan and chanted: "What did the Maulana call for? Holy war, holy war" (*India Today*, 15 June).

With mounting stories of rape and death squad killings, and facing international and domestic criticism the VP Singh government replaced Jagmohan, with GC "Gerry" Saksena, the former head of India's spy agency, RAW (Research and Analysis Wing). We demand the immediate end to the repressive military/police operation in Kashmir. We demand the withdrawal of the Indian army and security forces from the Kashmir valley, and of the Pakistani army from "Azad Kashmir". Defence of the oppressed and of the right of national



Kashmiris burn Indian flag on Republic-Day eve.

self-determination is not conditional upon the character of the leadership, and as long as the Kashmiri struggle is not decisively subordinated to the intervention of the Pakistani ruling class (as was the Bangladeshi struggle to the Indian ruling class in 1971 with the Indian army's invasion) we defend the exercise of the right to self-determination. But short of a revolutionary perspective throughout the whole subcontinent the prospects for Kashmiri liberation are far from rosy. This is especially so given its strategic location and historical role in relations between India and Pakistan.

Divide and rule

Kashmir is 80 per cent Muslim; it was first linked to the area across the southern range of Pir Panjal, when the Jammu Dogra king "bought" Kashmir from the British in 1846. The kingdom, with its all-powerful British Resident, remained a horribly impoverished area. During the Indian independence struggle the secular bourgeois nationalists of the National Conference led a struggle against the Dogra autocracy and in alliance with the bourgeois Indian Congress for accession to India. Jinnah's Muslim League tried to woo the Kashmiri Muslims, and when this failed sent irregulars in to seize Kashmir for Pakistan. The emergent armies of India and Pakistan, still under British generals, fought it out until a cease-fire on 1 January 1949. This left Kashmir divided between India and Pakistan.

The Kashmiris were promised a plebiscite to decide whether they would join India or Pakistan or become independent. But the Indian bourgeoisie, acutely aware that the Kashmiris might well reject union with India, quickly reneged on this. Sheikh Abdullah and other leaders of the National Conference were jailed by their old ally Pandit Nehru, himself from a Kashmiri Hindu family. Virtually every election has been rigged. The central government has relied on engineering changes in governments and spreading patronage among various politicians. At the same time the National Conference degenerated into a corrupt and nepotistic outfit. The April 1987 elections were stolen by a combine of the National Conference and Gandhi's Congress(I) headed by Farooq Abdullah. This government

was especially corrupt and ineffective. While the government looted the treasury and built golf courses the ghettos of Srinagar have no sewage systems:

"Look around you [says one resident of Maisuma, a Srinagar ghetto]. For 40 years, despite promises, there's been no improvement. Everything is filthier, grimmer. There are no jobs. To enter engineering or medical colleges officials are bribed with Maruti cars. When we protest we are branded terrorists. Our MLA has not even visited us once" (*India Today*, 31 May 1989).

A new wave of protests began in April 1988 with demonstrations over electricity price increases.

During the partition of India while neighbouring Punjab and North West Province were gripped with murderous pogroms and population transfers Kashmir remained remarkably calm. During the Pakistani attempts to wrest Kashmir from India in 1948 and 1965 there was little mass support. Now the Kashmir Muslims are totally alienated from India. And the movement has developed a fundamentalist Islamic character. Muslim women are compelled to adopt the purdah (and Hindu women were told to wear the bindi mark on the forehead to identify themselves), cinemas, video libraries and beauty salons shut down, and liquor sales banned. The mosques preach jihad and demand beards and traditional Kashmiri garb.

Among the plethora of groups one of the largest is the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) which demands independence and seeks to distance itself from some of the more communal aspects of the struggle. Rivaling it is the Jamaat-e-Islami, which calls for an Islamic order and theocratic structure. It is linked closely to the organisation of the same name in Pakistan and calls for accession to Pakistan. Another group, the "Allah Tigers" claim allegiance to Gulbaddin Hekmatyar's Hizbe-Islami, the fascist drug-running extreme of Afghan reaction, long favoured by the CIA. Even if they were to remove the Indians, posed is an internecine war between those favouring joining Pakistan and the increasingly strong pro-independence forces.

Since last year perhaps as much as half of the non-Muslim population, Hindus

and Sikhs, have fled the Kashmir valley. Fearful of threats by some Kashmiri Muslim groups to drive out all Indians and barraged with anti-Muslim propaganda by Hindu communalist groups, the Kashmir Hindu Pandit community is fleeing. Typical of the whole of India where caste and minority divisions aid capitalist division, the Pandits have occupied a disproportionate share of government and professional posts. And the whole community sees attacks on government officials as an attack on the community as a whole.

Trip-wire for Indo-Pakistani war

The bourgeois rulers of both Pakistan and India see the Kashmir issue as integral to their existence. As recent as 1987 full scale war almost broke out, and fighting has continued atop the Siachen glacier. Pages and pages in the press of both countries are devoted to possible military scenarios. The Indians may go for a "pre-emptive" attack based on the perception that Pakistan is simply inciting a "bleeding sore" aimed at the long term weakening of India. Even more ominous are the veiled threats of both sides with regard to nuclear warfare. VP Singh told the Indian parliament that Indian scientists could and would counter any moves by Pakistan to introduce nuclear weapons.

VP Singh says that "Fundamentalism is not necessarily directed only at certain parts of India; it is a threat to the fabric of India itself" (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 17 May). Kashmir is the only Muslim majority state of India, strategic and next to it is Punjab, a hotbed of Sikh unrest for an independent Khalistan. After promising to hold elections, and repealing the draconian 59th amendment to the constitution, New Delhi again imposed a state of emergency, in the face of the central government's inability to contain the armed activity of the Khalistani groups. Moreover India has the second largest Muslim population in the world (after Indonesia), larger than Pakistan, and that of the entire Arab world.

The brutal suppression in Kashmir is intended to signal that separation is not an option. Indian bourgeois nationalists have often touted India's secular character. But Indian nationalism has always contained a strong element of Hindu and Hindi chauvinism reflecting the predominance of Hindus and strong percentage of Hindi-speaking people in the population. The late, uneven and arrested development of the Indian bourgeoisie in the context of myriad national, language and religious divisions, poses the disintegration of this prisonhouse of peoples. And today the bourgeois politicians hardly bother to mask their corruption, nepotism and venality.

Their pretensions to "secularism" are transparent. The Congress(I) of Rajiv Gandhi has long played the communalist game. In the Punjab it encouraged Khalistani fanatics like Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale in an attempt to undermine the more moderate Akali Dal. And the government of the new "Mr Clean" VP Singh relies on the support of the sinister Hindu communalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The BJP calls for pre-emptive strikes against Pakistani "Azad Kashmir" and for the opening of the valley to all Indians. This party is now a major force in the Hindi belt and across north central India, having gone from 2 to 84

Full democratic rights for homosexuals!

Cops, murderous bigots target gays

On 29 April actor Michael Boothe was kicked and battered to death by a gang of men outside public lavatories on Boston Road in Ealing, West London. In January another gay man, William Dalziel, was murdered a few miles away in Acton. In the wake of the reactionary hysteria generated by the government around AIDS, homosexuals and other victims of this tragic disease have been subjected to escalating terror, including firebombing of their homes. There has been a wholesale increase in the incidence of vicious "gay bashing" throughout the country. According to the Gay London Policing Group (GALOP), more than eleven gay men have been murdered in London in the past two years.

Nick Partridge of the AIDS charity the Terrence Higgins Trust said that, "the labeling of Aids as the 'gay plague', blaming people for their illnesses, reinforced existing prejudice, sparking the 'extraordinary violence aimed at homosexuals and people with Aids and HIV'" (*Independent*, 14 May). Lesbians and gay men have been beaten and arrested by thugs in and out of uniform—the jagged edge of the AIDS witchhunt.

Peter Tatchell, who investigated for GALOP, found that in 1988 more than 5000 gay men, and a small number of lesbians, were convicted under anti-homosexual laws. He noted that:

"the number of gay men convicted for acts relating to their sexual orientation in 1988 was one of the highest totals this century, and at least three times greater than the number convicted in the three years immediately prior to the 1967 Sexual Offences Act, which supposedly legalised male homosexuality in England and Wales. (Sex between men was only decriminalised in Scotland in 1980 and in Northern Ireland in 1982)" (*Pink Paper*, 2 June).

And the state has another 70 laws on its books with which to harass, persecute and



Cops frame-up and arrest gays as anti-homosexual terror increases on the streets.

jail homosexuals.

In May 1988, in the face of massive protests against it, the government rammed through the despicably homophobic Section 28 of the Local Government Act. Under this draconian measure "a local authority shall not intentionally promote homosexuality". It gives the state maximum flexibility to witchhunt lesbians and gay men who face the spectre of *de facto* total "recriminalisation" of homosexuality. The minimal and reversible reforms previously won are being wiped out: funding for gay and lesbian groups and support organisations have been slashed or completely withdrawn. Teachers are afraid of what they can say about homosexuality in sex education classes. Official and self-censorship on the gay question is widespread in literature, films and the media.

It is the elementary duty of the organised workers movement to defend the rights of homosexuals and smash the wave of anti-gay terror. The murderous assaults on the streets are the direct

consequence of the victimisation of homosexuals by the cops and the courts, part and parcel of the reactionary climate engendered by "roll-back" against the trade union movement and the oppressed. The increase in attacks against homosexuals has been accompanied by the escalation of racist terror, anti-Semitic outrages such as the desecration of a Jewish cemetery following the Carpentras obscenity in France, heightened persecution of Gypsies and Irish Travellers. The *Sunday Correspondent* (3 June) reported that the Ministry of Defence has branded "Gipsy sites" as "a haven for IRA terrorists". Even the *Independent* (14 May) made the connection: "The persecution of homosexuals is spiritually akin to anti-Semitism. Hitler proved the point by despatching homosexuals as well as Jews and gypsies to his concentration camps."

To combat the murderous assaults on the streets, reliance on the cops is suicidal. Plain-clothes police agent provocateurs have gone out in force to patrol

public toilets. They make sexual advances to gay men and then arrest them for "indecent". The cops go for convictions by various devious means—"indecent" becomes "resisting arrest" and then "breach of the peace". Over the months thousands of men, including heterosexuals, have been arrested, abused and maltreated at police stations, brought before the courts and convicted: for the suspicion or reality of sexual activity which is no crime!

Of the 2454 guilty verdicts in 1988, many are related to the age of consent laws; 23 convictions resulted in gay men being imprisoned for sexual relations with males aged 16 to 21, some for up to four years. A demonstration of about 30 people took place on 7 June outside the Hyde Park toilets organised by OutRage to protest cop harassment of homosexuals. Protesters called on the police to: "Arrest the murderers not the victims" and "Protection not seduction". But it is obvious that the sympathy of the cops is with the killers and not the victims. An editorial in the 2 June issue of the *Pink Paper* exhibits the continuing illusions in the reformability of the police:

"'Policing' should become minimal and reactive. We should seek, with others, to re-establish an independent and neutral force which earns community esteem. We need consultative bodies and the recognition that we are a community."

This is a version of the utopian Labourite call for "police accountability". The cops cannot be "neutral" under capitalism; they are the armed fist of the state and as such serve to enforce the reactionary aims of their ruling class masters. We demand: abolish age of consent and all anti-homosexual laws and freedom for those convicted under these laws now!

The Thatcher government whipped up hysteria around AIDS to regiment the entire population with a campaign for a return to "family values". Homosexuals, whose oppression is rooted in the institution of the patriarchal nuclear family—the main social institution for the oppression of women under capitalism—have become a particular target. Much of the left and other advocates of sectoralism (ie, the view that each oppressed group must organise as a separate "constituency"), look to the election of a Labour government as an answer. Workers Power, for one, touts Labour's policy review which has "promised to repeal Section 28 and prohibit discrimination in law on the

continued on page 8

seats at the last general elections.

For Pakistan, Kashmir represents its pretensions to stand for "one nation" of all Muslims. The Pakistani ruling class cannot accept the option of an independent Kashmir which would pose the same question for the Baluchis, Pathans and Sindhis who all bridle at the Punjabi domination. The issue of Kashmir has always been used by the fragile bourgeoisie of Pakistan to divert attention from problems within their artificial state. The government of Benazir Bhutto, under pressure from right-wing and religious forces like the Jamaat-e-Islami and the Inter Services Intelligence, has been stymied in Afghanistan, particularly at the heroic defence of Jalalabad. Now they have rushed headlong to embrace this new opportunity.

Benazir Bhutto plays the Kashmir card

Bhutto herself has not dragged her heels in whipping up chauvinism and war hysteria over Kashmir, outflanking her

most strident opponents and earning kudos from the army for her stance on Kashmir. She is after all the daughter of her father, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, a wealthy Sindhi landlord and a demagogic populist who as much as anyone was responsible for the bloody Pakistani attempt to suppress the uprising in Bangladesh. Bhutto quotes her father in vowing a thousand-year war over Kashmir. This imperialist-touted "democrat" presides over Pakistan's pivotal role in imperialism's bloody reactionary war in Afghanistan. In Pakistan itself, the notorious Haddood Ordinance, which demands public stoning for adultery and that rape can only be proved by the testimony of four male witnesses, remains on the books. A new Shariat law, introducing even more sweeping fundamentalist religious controls, has been passed by the Pakistani Senate and is not likely to be opposed by Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP).

But Kashmir has not proved sufficient diversion for Bhutto. Sind, the main base of the PPP, is awash with inter-communal gang warfare. The near anarchic condi-

tions are a direct result of the counter-revolutionary involvement in Afghanistan, with a flood of guns and drugs into the main cities of Sind intersecting bitter intercommunal strife. One inhabitant of Karachi, Pakistan's major port and commercial centre said "You could call it Beirut. Or maybe Colombia" (*India Today*, 15 June). One force is the Mohajir Qaumi Mahaz (National Mohajir Movement, MQM), based on the Mohajir community of Muslims who fled from India with the partition. The MQM was originally encouraged by General Zia as a counterweight to the PPP. Other private armies exist among the Pathans who control road transport and drugs, and among the landlords in the countryside. The provincial PPP government draws support from the Sindhi community. There is even an "All Sindh Bandits Association". Hundreds have been killed in these clashes, while the Bhutto government and the army quarrel about exactly who to crack down on.

Kashmir, the Sind and Punjab are not isolated examples. In India itself national

and communal unrest continues among the Gurkhas and Assamese, to mention only two examples. In Burma and Nepal the last period has seen mass protest against despotic regimes. In Sri Lanka the post-India intervention "peace" exploded into bloody fighting between the Tamil Tigers and the Sri Lankan army and police, with hundreds killed. The partition of the island is posed anew, with all its accompanying communalist slaughter. More broadly, from the Kurds in Turkey, through Soviet Central Asia, to the Muslims of Chinese Sinkiang, there is a wave of ethnic unrest. US imperialism has exerted strong pressure on its Pakistani client state to avoid giving an excuse "for an Indian pre-emptive war" (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 21 June). Billions of dollars have been channelled through Pakistan to aid the reactionary war in Afghanistan, with the Pakistani army committing troops to the siege of Jalalabad, but the imperialists fear that war with India could lead to the disintegration of its key ally in the region.

continued on page 8

Behind the Washington summit

Imperialists fear

for Gorbachev's survival

In recent years, the periodic summit meetings between the commander in chief of US imperialism and the head of the Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy have been dull, predictable displays of diplomatic hot air—glorified photo ops. Anti-Communist rhetoric on the American side combined with joint declarations on the sanctity of world peace. And then all the “arms control” clap-trap—so many sea-launched cruise missiles as against so many ICBMs.

However, this summit meeting took place at a pivotal moment in contemporary history. The Western rulers believe they have won the Cold War hands down, reversing the victory of the Red Army over Nazi Germany in World War II. The postwar division of Europe between the American- and Soviet-dominated spheres, which was negotiated at the Yalta and Potsdam summit meetings, is now crumbling. The Frankfurt bankers and Ruhr industrialists, backed by the US and other NATO powers, are driving to create a Fourth Reich by buying out East Germany.

Yet the NATO powers have not defeated the Russians in a war. The Soviet Union remains a military superpower with 300,000 combat-ready troops still stationed in East Germany. Rather, the Kremlin bureaucracy is *collapsing from the top down*. The “liberal” Stalinist regime of Mikhail Gorbachev is giving up Eastern Europe, has agreed to the imperialist reunification of Germany and is introducing large elements of capitalism into the Soviet economy under the watchword of *perestroika* (restructuring).

Hence Gorbachev's political survival has become a prime concern for the masters of Wall Street and Washington, and their European NATO allies. As West German foreign minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher put it: “The ambitious goals we have set before us can only be achieved with the success of Gorbachev's proposals for change in the Soviet Union.” But Gorbachev's proposals for change in the Soviet Union have been the exact opposite of a success. Thus Western imperialism's euphoria over the “death of Communism” is now being tempered by the worry of a “conservative” backlash in the Soviet Union, fuelled above all by fear of a German Fourth Reich and economic discontent over the ravages of *perestroika*.

At a press conference early in June, Bush expressed his concern that the military appears to be reasserting its influence in the Kremlin. A Sovietologist for the premier Cold War think tank, the Rand Corporation, declared that in the Soviet armed forces, “You have most, if not all, the necessary ingredients present for a civil war” (*Wall Street Journal*, 13 April). Panic buying has engulfed the Soviet Union in anticipation of a 200 per cent food price

increase. Already, Gorbachev's chief rival Boris Yeltsin, a former lieutenant of the Kremlin leader turned populist demagogue, has won, on a nationalist platform, the presidency of the Russian republic, the core of the USSR.

Western ruling circles are no longer asking: what will Gorbachev do, what does he want? Instead they are asking: what can Gorbachev do, how far will he be allowed to go? The man they've expected to bury Communism in the Sov-



Der Spiegel

Bush tries to prop up Gorbachev's crumbling authority. Right: Soviet leader with Tyumen oil field workers in 1985. This spring they ousted local CP bureaucrats, now threaten strike.

iet Union may instead be buried by his own people, from embittered veterans of the Afghan war to workers fearful of losing their jobs.

No to a Fourth Reich!

Despite the Western ruling classes' appreciation for Gorbachev and concern for his survival, the summit was no love-in. Washington and other NATO capitals are demanding of the Soviet Union *unconditional surrender* on the German front. A year ago they would have considered it unthinkable that even Gorbachev would agree to the capitalist reunification of Germany under any conditions. But now they are demanding that a unified Germany must be part of the NATO alliance.

As a compromise Gorbachev proposed it could be in both NATO and the Warsaw Pact until another arrangement was worked out. Bush and Kohl contemptuously dismissed this idea as “another formula for neutrality”. Moscow then offered to accept reunification while putting the question of military alliances on hold. Soviet foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze argued the “settlements of the internal and external aspects of German unification do not necessarily have to occur simultaneously”. Washington and Bonn immediately shot down this proposal, too.

There are any number of diplomatic formulas and arrangements that would

allow Gorbachev to save face. A unified Germany need not be a formal member of NATO to be an actual military ally of US imperialism against Russia. But Western ruling circles believe that the Soviet bargaining position is so weak, they can impose their *maximum* demands. One senior Washington official gloated: “These guys are losers on a big scale, and they know it” (*Newsweek*, 28 May).

The “we won, you lost” triumphalism

mantling of social programmes (eg, free day care for children) and even eviction from their homes.

In a statement addressed to May Day demonstrations in East and West Berlin, the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany (SpAD), section of the International Communist League, stated:

“The need for joint class struggle in West and East Germany is posed point blank by plans to erect a Fourth Reich that will mean terrible misery for mil-



Tass from Sovfoto

in NATO capitals is adding fuel to a backlash against appeasement within the Soviet military and among broad layers of patriotic Soviet citizens. Gorbachev is clearly feeling the heat. In an interview on the eve of the summit with *Time* magazine, which only a few months ago proclaimed him “Man of the Decade”, Gorbachev declared that “we will never agree” to give NATO “the leading role in building a new Europe”. A few days before Gorbachev's pronouncement, a Bonn diplomat noted in a worried tone: “The Soviets have the theoretical ability to block the whole process of unification. To unify Germany against the will of the Soviet Union would automatically destabilize the political-military situation in Europe” (*Washington Post*, 25 May).

To the extent that the Russians obstruct the drive towards reunification, it will buy precious time for the German working class to mobilise against the creation of a Fourth Reich. In recent weeks there are signs of increasing opposition to reunification in both West and East Germany. Working people in West Germany rightly fear that they will have to pay for the great “leveraged buyout” of the German Democratic Republic (DDR). In the DDR greater numbers of working people are realising that capitalist restoration will bring massive unemployment, the dis-

lions of DDR citizens, and attacks on the West German working class as well, as the bosses seek to drive down wages and living standards by threatening to shift work to lower paid workers in the DDR. Against “national unity” for the bosses, we need internationalist working-class unity in struggle *against the bosses!*”

Lithuania: anti-Soviet front line

The world bourgeoisies' concern for Gorbachev's survival came to the surface with the Lithuania crisis. When on 11 March the Sajudis nationalists proclaimed their “independence” from the USSR, they were initially cheered on in NATO capitals while Bush blustered that the Soviet government better not use force or else. However, Moscow made a show of military muscle in Lithuania, and Gorbachev imposed an economic boycott which is throttling the secessionist republic.

The hardest line against the Lithuanian secessionists has come from Soviet military cadre, who have been more openly critical of Gorbachev's course than ever before. After meeting with Aleksandr Yakovlev, the Kremlin's number two man, a Sajudis representative said, “he kept talking about the colossal pressure they were feeling from the Army” (*Newsweek*, 23 April). The deputy commander of the army garrison in Vilnius, Lieutenant Colonel Valery

Shorupov, publicly derided Gorbachev's "half-measures" and called on him to impose direct presidential rule in the republic. Higher up the chain of command, the deputy chief of the Soviet general staff, General Vladimir Denisov, wrote in the trade-union newspaper *Trud* that "the carrying out of the policy of the present Lithuanian leaders for secession is pregnant with danger for the security not only of the Baltic republics and the U.S.S.R., but for all of Europe."

Denisov linked the danger in the Baltics to the rise of "revanchist forces" in Germany. The acute fear among Soviet military men of a new Fourth Reich looming on the Western horizon was well expressed by Major General Algimantas Vysotskis, head of the Vilnius recruiting board:

"A united Germany will have 77 million people. Thatcher says 'Let it join NATO.' We pull out of Hungary and Czechoslovakia and what's the response? They put Germany in NATO. The United States and Great Britain are at it again, arming Germany. They took to the Lithuanian corridor, and along it they will come, all over again."
—*Guardian*, 23 April

General Vysotskis knows whereof he speaks. Lithuanian nationalists, who last declared their "independence" when Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union in 1941, provided some of the most vicious contingents of Hitler's extermination campaigns. Twenty million Soviet citizens died defending their country from the Third Reich and its local collaborators, and liberating all of Europe from the horror of the Nazi occupation.

When it became clear that Moscow was not simply going to cave in on this one, the NATO powers began pressuring the Sajudis nationalists to come to terms with Gorbachev. Lithuanian "president" Vytautas Landsbergis angrily accused Bush of perpetrating "another Munich", while White House officials told the press that Lithuanian leadership was "a little flaky". When Lithuanian "prime minister" Kazimiera Prunskiene visited Washington a few weeks later, she was received by Bush only as a "private" citizen. The imperial president told her bluntly his first priority was getting the Soviet forces out of Eastern Europe. Lithuania would have to wait its turn to join the capitalist "free world".

In late April West German chancellor Helmut Kohl and French president François Mitterrand, at Washington's urging, addressed an open letter to the Vilnius secessionists, telling them to suspend the laws most repugnant to the Soviet government (eg, exempting Lithuanian youth from Soviet army service). Having been given marching orders by their imperialist godfathers, the Sajudis nationalists have since put on hold a number of flagrantly anti-Soviet laws. For his part, Gorbachev offered to open negotiations which would allow Lithuania to become independent according to Soviet laws (which require a two-thirds vote in a referendum) so long as Landsbergis & Co suspend their "declaration of independence". The Lithuanian parliament refused.

In solidarity with Lithuania, early this month the Latvian nationalists, too, declared their "independence" albeit without a fixed timetable and appealing to Gorbachev to negotiate a settlement. But unlike Lithuania, almost half the population of Latvia and Estonia—and a majority of the working class—consists of Russians, Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Jews, ethnic Siberians and other Soviet peoples. These Russian speakers rightly fear that if the Baltic



Ukrainian miners inspecting pit equipment during summer 1989 Donbass strike against effects of perestroika.

nationalists gain sovereign power they will be reduced to second-class citizenship or even be driven from their homes. In mid-May thousands of Russian-speaking workers stormed the parliament buildings in Latvia and Estonia, chanting "Soviet Union" and waving red flags with the hammer and sickle. Conspicuous among the demonstrators were Soviet army officers in uniform.

It would appear that the Soviet military has decided to draw the line of retreat in the Baltics. But it is very late. Throughout the 1980s, US imperialism waged a war on the cheap against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. Had the Soviet forces and their Afghan leftist allies mopped up the CIA-armed *mujahedeen*—Islamic fanatics who shot schoolteachers for teaching young girls to read—Reagan/Bush's America would have lost a key battle in Cold War II and suffered a humiliating setback. But the Kremlin fought a *halfhearted* war in Afghanistan, and last year Gorbachev pulled out the Soviet troops in order to appease Western imperialism. Far from appeasing them, the Afghan withdrawal signalled to the NATO capitals that the Soviet government had lost its power and will to fight. And now all across Eastern Europe Soviet forces are being pulled out.

To sell the abandonment of Afghanistan to the Soviet people, Gorbachev's propaganda apparatus deliberately promoted pacifism, defeatism, narrow, self-centred nationalism and illusions in the moral superiority of the West. Moscow publicists blamed Cold War II on Brezhnev's alleged "adventurism", not on the aggressive drive of US imperialism under the rabidly anti-Communist Reagan. The "Afghanistan syndrome" was clearly in evidence earlier this year in protests against calling up military reserves to help stop the bloody communalist war between the Azerbaijanis and Armenians. Now counter-revolutionary forces pose a strategic threat in the militarily vital Baltics. This bitter experience amply demonstrates: *better to fight imperialism in Afghanistan, and now East Germany, than inside the Soviet Union!*

Soviet workers against perestroika

In one respect, resentment within the Soviet military over Gorbachev's aban-

donment of Eastern Europe is directly linked to the economics of perestroika. General Mikhail Moiseyev, chief of the general staff, exclaimed: "We will bring the troops home, but no one has clearly thought what it will cost. Families will find themselves without apartments or work, children without schools." Housing has always been scarce in the Soviet Union. But a few years ago a demobilised soldier would have had no trouble at all finding a job. Managers and economists complained about the acute shortage of labour.

However, a key aspect of perestroika is using the whip of unemployment to strengthen labour discipline. Especially since the miners strikes last summer, the Gorbachev regime has been quite cautious in implementing its market-oriented "reforms". Thus the Soviet economy is today a contradictory mess. Consumer prices are still government-controlled but state shops are empty while well-stocked private entrepreneurs ("cooperativists") practise extortion. The state treasury keeps shaky enterprises afloat but at the cost of building up pressures for an explosion of hyperinflation.

Gorbachev's caution on the economic front has brought fire from "free marketers" both at home and abroad. In March Gorbachev appointed as his latest economic adviser Nikolai Petrakov, dubbed "the Milton Friedman of the USSR" and an ardent advocate of a Polish-style "shock treatment": immed-

ately abolish all controls, letting runaway inflation clear the market; let all unprofitable enterprises go bankrupt, throwing millions of workers into the streets. But the Gorbachev regime has shied away from that kind of all-out confrontation with the masses. Petrakov ruefully conceded: "The political aspect of shock therapy must be soberly considered, and take precedence over the economic" (*Guardian*, 25 April). In other words, they don't want to be lynched by angry workers.

Nonetheless, Gorbachev & Co have just announced plans to triple the price of bread on 1 July and double food prices in general in the new year. This is highly shocking to Soviet working people and may well set off food riots. To claim a "popular" mandate to slash living standards, the architects of perestroika may call a countrywide referendum on the new economic programme. Whatever the outcome of this referendum, Soviet workers must use *the weapons of class struggle* to defend themselves against the degenerate Stalinist bureaucracy, pro-capitalist intellectuals and the growing number of rapacious private entrepreneurs.

To the extent that the working class has entered the fray it has been against the effects of perestroika. For its part, the so-called United Front of Toilers, which claims millions of supporters, combines populist economic demands with a large dose of Great Russian nationalism. An economic spokesman for the Front, Aleksei Sergeyev, noted popular hostility towards the privileges enjoyed by the present Soviet officialdom, and he went on: "I can imagine how powerful the wrath of the people will be when instead of the country houses of Politburo and Government officials they see even more luxuriously owned private country houses. The people will be in a rage" (*New York Times*, 14 May). Even the official, bureaucratically controlled trade unions have become a point of resistance to perestroika.

The hostility that many Soviet workers bear towards a "market economy" was manifest in the tumultuous May Day demonstration in Moscow. The Western media naturally focused on the orgy of anti-Communism displayed by the "unofficial" participants with slogans like "Down with Empire and Red Fascism!" Self-styled anarchists carried black flags. Others carried flags of tsarist Russia. The antics of this reactionary zoo, right under the noses of the Soviet leadership, grabbed headlines around the world. It was little noticed that the *official* trade-union contingents in the May Day parade were from the *opposite side* also marching against what Gorbachev stands for, carrying such slogans

continued on page 8



Separatist demonstration in Vilnius 10 January pushes capitalist restoration under cover of "self-determination".

Kashmir crackdown...

(Continued from page 5)

The Stalinist bureaucracies of China and the Soviet Union fear the wave of nationalist and Islamic fundamentalist unrest that has spread among their central Asian minorities and along their borders. The Chinese Stalinists supported the reactionary CIA cutthroats against the Red Army and the PDPA regime in Kabul. And it is Gorbachev's policies of perestroika, a gross capitulation to imperialism, that have encouraged reactionary movements in the region. The Red Army intervention in Afghanistan posed the possibility of a social transformation that would lift the people of Afghanistan out of feudal and capitalist immiseration, as well as dealing a blow to the most reactionary forces in the region. Leftist and minority national militants from Iran and Pakistan sought refuge in Kabul and sided with the Red Army and Kabul regime. Now Gorbachev's sellout withdrawal has encouraged imperialism and reaction while strengthening the hold of the most reactionary elements within the national liberation struggles such as that in Kashmir.

From Kurdistan to Eelam: workers must rule

It is only the perspective of proletarian revolution that can bring liberation to the oppressed nationalities of the Indian subcontinent. This will not come from the Communist Parties of the Indian subcontinent. During the 1965 Indo-Pakistan war the respective parties of India and Pakistan shamelessly supported their respective bourgeoisies. The CPI and CPI(M) both support VP Singh's current coalition government. *People's Democracy* (10 June) advises:

"The CPI(M) Central Committee urges the National Front Government to urgently address itself to the task of restoring peace in the Valley by taking firm administrative measures.... The CPI(M) calls upon the National Front Government to immediately seal the border with Pakistan in order to stop the flow of subversives and arms."

Likewise both Communist Parties oppose the right of self-determination for the Sikhs in Punjab calling for firm state measures against the Khalistani "terrorists".

Communist/national/religious divisions not only obstruct working class unity in general but in this region are particularly targeted against the working

class, since it is often made up of local minorities. The Hindi speaking workers of Calcutta, the Bihari and Gurkha tea plantation workers of Darjeeling, the immigrant workers of Bombay's industry

are evidence of this. What is required is a Bolshevik vanguard party to unite all the working class and oppressed in the struggle for workers revolution with soviet workers republics from the Sind and



Illustrated Weekly of India

Striking workers in Pune. Only working class can end communal divisions and pogroms.

and especially graphically the Indian Tamils of Lanka's hill country plantations,

Kashmir to Eelam and Lanka, as part of a socialist federation of South Asia. ■

Gays...

(Continued from page 5)

grounds of sexuality" (*Workers Power*, June 1990) warning only against Roy Hattersley who wants to make the vote one of "conscience". But Labour aided and abetted the Thatcher government in its passage of Section 28 in the first place! During the last general election, Neil "I am a reactionary" Kinnock conducted his own anti-gay purge and smear campaign within the Labour Party. Moreover, many Labour MPs have voted for reactionary restrictive amendments on abortion.

Neither the Labourites, blind to special oppression, nor the sectoralists can lead the necessary class fight to defend the rights of all the oppressed. When in 1977 the Spartacist League/US fused with the

Red Flag Union, the statement on "Homosexual Oppression and the Communist Program" explained:

"While explicitly sectoralist groups such as black nationalists or 'socialist-feminists' obviously present sectoralist 'programs,' many avowed socialist groups, as a result of their appetites to chase after every constituency that's 'in motion,' end up presenting 'programs' for each separate group, and often 'programs' at the implicit expense of other courted sectors—a direct contradiction of the role of the vanguard party to represent the historic interests of the proletariat and therefore to defend all of the oppressed" (*Women and Revolution* no 16, Winter 1977-78).

An example of the dangers of sectoralism is the campaign of Labour "lefts" like Clare Short and Dawn Primarolo to ban "pornography". These "socialist" bigots want magazines like *Playboy* and *Mayfair* removed from local news

agents. In so doing, they play straight into the hands of the government's anti-homosexual "moral crusade". We noted in *Workers Vanguard* (13 October 1989) during the reactionary censorship of work by Robert Mapplethorpe in Washington DC that it was the gay and interracial themes in Mapplethorpe's work that outraged the bigots. The new generation of Labourite and feminist Mrs Grundys are feeding the climate for similar censorship in Britain. Take the example of the suppression of the work of Paul Binnie at the Edinburgh College of Art exhibition. Four pieces of his work have been placed in a private room, "kept under lock and key... and reasons for viewing them have to be submitted in writing" because they "depict sex acts between men" (*Scotland on Sunday*, 17 June). We say: take Binnie's work out of the closet now! No to the anti-porn censorship campaign!

Marxists understand that democratic rights are indivisible: the working class has the social power and interest to defend all oppressed and vulnerable sections of society. On 27 June 1982 in Chicago the Spartacist-initiated trade union-centred mobilisation of 3000 stopped a Nazi fascist provocation against Chicago Gay Pride Day. Trade unionists, blacks, students, Jewish people and leftists joined together to stop the Nazi threat. This strategy—against the Labourite, feminist and sectoralist dead-ends—is necessary to counter the wave of anti-gay violence.

A revolutionary party must act as a tribune of the people—championing the rights of all the oppressed in the fight for a socialist society that will eliminate the root causes of the sexual and racial oppression that is inherent in the capitalist system. Smash anti-gay terror! Full democratic rights for homosexuals! ■

Summit...

(Continued from page 7)

as "Down With Private Property" and "A Market Economy Is Just Power to the Plutocracy".

The economic status quo is intolerable and unsustainable as the half-way house of perestroika produces the worst of both worlds. Managers have been given wide latitude to dispose of their enterprise's resources. Many sell their products and even assets to private entrepreneurs. While managers are looting socialised property, the state treasury is running the printing presses to keep their enterprises solvent. Under Gorbachev, the Soviet bureaucracy is in effect subsidising budding capitalists by driving down the living standards of working people.

Soviet workers cannot maintain their jobs and living standards simply through defensive trade-union struggles. To defend themselves the working class must take command of the means of production. This means taking *political power* by ousting the Kremlin oligarchy and establishing a planned, egalitarian economy administered under soviet democracy. To realise this programme it is necessary to reforge in the USSR a genuinely communist vanguard party, modelled on the Bolshevik Party which

led the October Revolution, the party of Lenin and Trotsky.

In the absence of such a revolutionary party, working-class resistance to perestroika is being channelled into Great Russian nationalism and even anti-Semitism ("the socialism of fools") backed by the conservative wing of the Kremlin bureaucracy. These forces came together last month with the formation of the Russian Communist Party. While the minority national republics (eg, the Ukraine, Armenia) have long had organisationally separate Communist parties within the framework of the Soviet CP, the Russian republic heretofore has not. The constituents of the Russian Communist Party range from the United Front of Toilers to the nationalist outfit Fatherland to the notorious defender of Stalin, the Leningrad teacher Nina Andreyeva.

Soviet workers must understand that Gorbachev's programme is not an alien Western import but the *end product* of six and a half decades of Stalinism, the political rule of a bureaucratic caste on the basis of collectivised property. The "free market" intellectuals and technocrats are for the most part the privileged offspring of Stalin's apparatchiks, who now believe their future would be brighter as capitalists or agents of Western multinationals. Likewise, Gorbachev's appeasement of imperialism

and abandonment of Eastern Europe is a consummate expression of Stalinist nationalism, codified in the dogma of "socialism in one country". At the same time, Stalin and his heirs, by imposing an oppressive police state in Eastern Europe, have driven much of the Eastern European populace, including significant sections of the working class, into the arms of "democratic" Western imperialism.

The creation of a German Fourth Reich, capitalist reconquest of Eastern Europe and the disintegration of the Soviet Union can even now be stopped

and turned back. But *not* on the basis of Russian nationalism and populism. To defend the gains of the October Revolution and defend themselves against the threat of mass unemployment, class-conscious workers and leftist intellectuals must recover the intense *proletarian internationalism* personified by the "Three L's"—the Russian VI Lenin, the Polish Jew Rosa Luxemburg and the German Karl Liebknecht. For the unity of Soviet, Polish and German workers against imperialism!

Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 503, 1 June 1990

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 NW5 3EU

Poll tax...

(Continued from page 1)

people and one of the few residents who had actually paid the tax. One man put it simply: "You people in this court prove that there is no law, however vile, that will not find people ready to administer it" (*Independent*, 2 June).

In Scotland, where the poll tax was imposed first, councils are facing severe financial crisis because of high non-payment levels. In Strathclyde, which serves half the population of Scotland, almost 20 per cent of last year's poll tax is outstanding. And non-payment levels everywhere will be dealt with by the brutal slashing of already hopelessly inadequate services and/or by raising the tax itself.

In Doncaster, where job losses from the closure of mines have already hit the working class population hard, millions of pounds for education, social services, "amenities and leisure" are on the chopping-block. "Libraries may have to close at weekends, some people may have to pay extra for home helps, school meal charges may rise and teachers could be forced to leave the authority in their hundreds" (*Independent*, 2 June). In Tower Hamlets, in London's East End, the Labour group was forced by Labour's National Executive to remove its pledge not to punish non-payers from the local manifesto. One local spokesman pointed out: "The reality is, people here are not going to be able to cope with the poll tax whatever we do. Labour councils, particularly in London, are going to be asking whether they must hound the most vulnerable people" (*Independent*, 21 May). That is exactly what Labour, as administrator of capitalism, has been and will be doing.

It is one of the particularly grotesque aspects of the poll tax that it hits hardest the poorest—including large families housed in small flats. In the impoverished, immigrant and minority Tower Hamlets Borough, plagued with overcrowded housing, the poll tax bill will be over £4000 for one family with 14 adults living in the household! In addition to being a punishment for existence, the poll tax has an Orwellian, Catch-22 quality. Thus prisoners (over a quarter of whom are imprisoned for debt in Britain) are to be taxed doubly—from prison and

from the homes they once lived in. A couple wrote to their local council inquiring what improved services might be expected as a result of the additional money they were paying in poll tax. They received the reply that much of the money would go to the extra cost of collecting the poll tax. As they opined: "We hadn't quite realised before that the Poll Tax was introduced to pay for the introduction of the Poll Tax" (*Guardian*, 6 June).

Were it not for the dead weight of Labourite social democracy, this vile tax could easily spark a popular uprising. Nonetheless, and despite the belly-crawling of Neil Kinnock & Co, mass popular hatred of the tax has taken the form of widespread civil disobedience. The tax itself has become the focus for anger at the whole range of anti-working class viciousness meted out by Thatcher and her Labour accomplices.

For hard class struggle!

Today, the ruling class and its institutions have been exposed as corrupt and vicious, beating false confessions out of and locking up Irish people for years on trumped-up charges (see "Free the Birmingham Six now!", p2). Thatcher's economic "miracle" is clearly in shambles with skyrocketing inflation, unemployment, industrial devastation. From London Underground to the Channel Tunnel, fatal industrial accidents occur with grisly regularity. Race-terror continues to take its bloody toll in the cities while anti-homosexual bigotry, violence and state repression is on the increase. Students and youth are facing virtual starvation with the poll tax, massive cuts in benefits and in loans.

The continued ability of the present government to govern is called into question while at the same time the vacuum of political leadership of the organised working class is acute. Strike action by key sections of the working class—eg, North Sea oil workers, London Underground and British Rail workers, British Telecom workers facing job losses, together with teachers and other council workers—could galvanise whole sections of the population ready to fight against the tax and the bosses' anti-working class offensive. The obstacle to unleashing the power of the organised working class movement is the trade union bureaucracy

and the Labour Party misleaders.

In this situation, the role of the so-called socialist left as a syphilitic chain linking the working class to its pro-capitalist Labour misleaders has become starkly clear. We noted in the last issue of *Workers Hammer* that the collection around *Labour Briefing* pathetically described its task: "stem the flow of left activists out of the Party". A recent issue of *Socialist Outlook* (June 1990) is equally shameless. Its editorial "Kinnock's recipe for disaster" contains a long list of bullet points: "Vote Labour, pay the poll tax; Vote Labour, hold down wages; Vote Labour, for anti-union laws; Vote Labour, and wait; Vote Labour, stay out of work; Vote Labour, back the police and judges; Vote Labour, fork out for defence; Vote Labour, keep the troops in Ireland". Its conclusion from this description: "Of course we want a Labour government to replace Thatcher!"

From the craven Labour Party entrists of Militant to the Russia-hating reformists of Tony Cliff's SWP to the rightward moving centrists of Workers Power, the bottom line is "vote Labour". *Militant* claims that Labour's "only solution" once in office "will be to carry through the nationalisation of the top 200 monopolies which account for 85 per cent of industrial and commercial wealth". Who does *Militant* think they're kidding? With its overt commitment to union-busting legislation and unemployment, its appeasement of the City fat cats and anti-working class "austerity" measures, Labour has obviously chosen other "options".

When an "open mike" was provided at the SWP-dominated anti-poll tax protest in London's Finsbury Park on 16 June, Labour MP Jeremy Corbyn was naturally accorded the utmost courtesy by his reformist hosts. However, when it came time for the Spartacist spokesman to address the rally with our anti-Labourite class-struggle programme against the poll tax, this was too much for the SWP who obligingly pulled the microphone in a vain attempt to silence our comrade. For its part, Workers Power has taken to printing selective quotations from Trotsky on the Labour Party and warnings against "sectarian" dangers. *Workers Power* (June 1990) explains the logic of its "vote Labour" line: "Putting Labour to the test of governmental office in a state which is

fundamentally alien to the interests of the workers that the party claims to represent is the whole purpose of the tactic". This is no "tactic" but a way of life for the reformist and centrist left. Kinnock's party is thoroughly exposed as a strike-breaking, violence-baiting enemy of the people and promises more of the same.

In the last general election Kinnock ran openly as the scabherder who knifed the miners strike. We advocated no vote to this Labour traitor responsible for the defeat of the largest class battle in decades in Britain. Now, with the "Iron Lady" in trouble and the Labour Party sporting the colours of "wet Tory blue", the task of building a revolutionary Leninist workers party to split the working class base from the pro-capitalist Labour tops, and dedicated to the expropriation of the bourgeoisie through victorious *workers revolution* is posed point-blank. Should any place serve as the terrible example of what capitalism in its death agony, propped up by the rotting corpse of social democracy, offers to the working people, it is Britain.

It is no accident that the Labour-loyal fake "left" were in the main the enthusiastic "socialist" partners of the imperialists' anti-Soviet war drive. From Poland to Afghanistan, they joined the imperialists' howls and aided the campaign to undermine the gains of October through internal counterrevolution and proxy war. As the working masses of East Germany and Poland face the hideous consequences of the introduction of the market economy—unemployment, dismantling of social services wholesale, the rise of fascist and racist attacks—those who cheered the likes of Lech Walesa stand exposed as enemies of the proletariat. Kinnock's social democratic fellows have served as the trojan horse of capitalist restoration while the Stalinists disintegrated in the face of the imperialist offensive.

Class struggle in the capitalist West can give a powerful impetus to the defensive battles of workers in Eastern Europe fighting to defend their gains against the encroachment of IMF shock treatment and capitalist restoration. Such struggle is manifestly on the agenda in Britain. Break with Labourism—build a Bolshevik party! For a federation of workers republics in the British Isles! For a Socialist United States of Europe! ■

B'ham 6...

(Continued from page 2)

and RUC thugs operate a policy of "shoot to kill".

The Guildford Four's release has now re-opened the related case of the Maguire family. Mrs Anne Maguire (released in 1985) and her husband were each jailed for 14 years; their sons Vincent and Patrick for five and four years; Giuseppe Conlon and Mrs Maguire's brother Sean Smyth each got twelve years and a family friend Pat O'Neill received eight years. Giuseppe Conlon, father of Gerard Conlon of the Guildford Four, died behind bars. Based on the false confessions extracted from the Guildford Four, the Maguires were arrested and convicted on zero evidence. As the *Independent* (21 May) put it: "Although no hint of explosives were found in the house, it was described in court as a 'bomb-making' factory. This assertion was based on evidence that traces of nitroglycerine were found on the hands of some of the occupants. The traces were so small that they were apparently destroyed during the tests. The results have, therefore, never been verified."

Some months after the Guildford Four were released, the Court of Appeal quashed the convictions of two Irish men and one woman known as the Winchester Three. Martina Shanahan, John McCann

and Finbar Cullen were sentenced to 25 years each at Winchester Crown Court in October 1988, charged with being part of an "IRA reconnaissance unit plotting the murder" of Tom King. Although released from prison, the three are still subject to exclusion orders under the Prevention of Terrorism Act and banned from the United Kingdom for at least three years.

The British system of "justice" has been not a little exposed through the mounting public evidence of frame-ups, dirty tricks and "shoot-to-kill". Giuseppe Conlon's dying request to his son was the freeing of the Birmingham Six. Both Gerard Conlon and Paul Hill have vowed to fight for the release of these innocent men. Freedom for the Birmingham Six must be vigorously taken up by the working people of these isles! The Labour traitors who put the Birmingham Six and Guildford Four in prison, enacted the draconian PTA, sent the troops into Northern Ireland and kneeled before the media ban on Sinn Fein, offer no alternative but rather more of the same viciousness meted out by Thatcher and her government.

The rotten racist system—whether administered by Tories or Labour—relies on state repression, police violence, and judicial frame-up for its survival. Only workers revolution can rid society of the terrorists and criminals who now hold state power: the bourgeoisie. Free the Birmingham Six now! Smash the PTA! ■

Save Jamal...

(Continued from page 12)

beliefs... An innocent man has been sentenced to die." Last month Jamal's attorney Marilyn Gelb filed for review by the US Supreme Court.

President of the Philadelphia chapter of the Association of Black Journalists and a prominent supporter of the MOVE organisation—eleven of whom were brutally massacred in the 1985 government bombing of the Philadelphia MOVE commune—Jamal was known as the "voice of the voiceless". His radio interviews presented the point of view of blacks, Puerto Ricans, the elderly, poor and other minority groups. From the depths of death row Jamal continues to speak out for them in columns appearing in newspapers throughout the US.

Jamal's case is what the death penalty is all about. It exposes not only the arbitrary cruelty of this ultimate form of state terror, but also the inherent racism of its application. There are elements within the British ruling class—including Margaret Thatcher—who long to see the full reintroduction of capital punishment here. The fate of those like the Guildford Four, Maguire family and Birmingham Six, and other victims of racist state frame-up such as the Broadwater Farm Three underlines the urgency of opposing

all attempts to reinstate this barbaric practice. As the PDC's counsel in the US put it: "We call on all death penalty abolitionists to come out and join the fight to save Jamal. With his pen and voice he's fought for so many. It's our time to fight for him."

Workers Hammer and the Partisan Defence Committee urge our readers and supporters to build the 6 July rally as widely as possible. The international protests will mark the anniversary of Jamal's sentencing on 3 July 1982 as well as the restoration of capital punishment in the US in the Supreme Court decision *Gregg v. Georgia* on 2 July 1976. As we go to press, the PDC has announced that speakers at the rally will include: D Akin, Kurdistan Workers Association, Executive Committee member*; City of London Anti-Apartheid Group; D Doolan, Defendant, Trafalgar Square Defendants' Campaign*; D Hatt, NUR National Executive Committee member*; M Massive, Managing Editor, *Caribbean Times**; Partisan Defence Committee; Ramona Africa Support Group; J Robson, Secretary, ASLEF District Council No 8*; Spartacist League/Britain; P Trewhele, Co-Editor, *Searchlight South Africa**; G Watson, Chairman, Finsbury Park NUR (* speaking in a personal capacity). The fight for Mumia Abu-Jamal's life must become the fight of the workers of the world. Abolish the racist death penalty! Save Mumia Abu-Jamal! ■

South Africa...

(Continued from page 1)

majority—including blacks, coloureds (mixed-race) and Indians—is impossible.

The imperialists are courting Mandela for they see in him the black leader whose unique authority as an anti-apartheid fighter is necessary to convince South African blacks to submit to a deal with the oppressive racist state. But despite these treacherous schemes, there will be no such "power sharing". The apartheid regime, whose wealth is based on the superexploitation of the black labouring majority, is necessarily at odds with the most minimal level of formal democracy. De Klerk's "reforms" cannot even include the simple demand of "one man, one vote" (keystone of the American civil rights fight against Jim Crow segregation) in a country with 28 million blacks and 5 million whites, let alone address economic equality, where white income is across the board *twelve times* higher than that of blacks.

The *Financial Times* (11 June) bluntly laid out the purpose of de Klerk's negotiations: to "interrupt the process of radicalisation among blacks". But despite the conciliation of their leaders, who are now backing away from even the "moderate" demands of the Freedom Charter, South African blacks know their liberation can only be achieved through a far-reaching social revolution which smashes the apartheid state. The fight to forge a racially integrated Bolshevik party that can lead the struggle for a black-centred workers government, drawing as well on the coloured and Indian populations, and growing numbers of whites who do not want to live their lives in a racist garrison state, is the task of the hour.

Massacre in Welkom—South Africa in microcosm

Last February we headlined, "Mandela Released—Black South Africa Jubilant, Defiant" (*Workers Vanguard* no 496, 23 February). We predicted an upsurge of struggle among the black masses, who saw Mandela's freedom as heralding their own, as well as an acute crisis of expectations: "The smell of rebellion is in the air," we wrote. Since then, revolt has spread through the rural bantustans, urban townships have exploded with protest and a strike wave continues (the government calculates that the number of workdays lost to strikes in the first quarter of 1990 is four times that of the same period last year).

Nowhere is this spirit more evident than in Welkom, Transvaal, a gold mining town 150 miles southwest of Johannesburg. The Welkom mine produces 27 per cent of South Africa's gold, and both the mine and the town are owned by the so-called "progressive" capitalists of Anglo American Corporation. About 58,000 well-off whites live in comfortable neighbourhoods with manicured lawns. Thousands of desperately poor black miners are jammed 21 to a room in the Saint Helena Mine hostel, and on the

other side of town 138,000 blacks live in shanties along dirt roads in Thabong township. Last month, tensions in Welkom reached the flash-point.

It began with the ANC leader's release last February. "As soon as they showed Mandela on the TV, then this started," one white shaft steward complained. The black miners began to wear ANC T-shirts, militant slogans were found scrawled on tunnel walls. They particularly objected to the segregated changing rooms and the preference given to whites in the process of "hoisting". This meant whites were the last to go



Nelson Mandela (left) seeks to negotiate "power-sharing" deal with South Africa's biggest mining and industrial magnate, Gavin Relly.

down and first to come up, spending two to three hours less underground. As black workers began to organise, the far right in Welkom formed vigilante groups organised by the Blanke Veiligheidswag (White Security Guard). This fascist outfit began "night patrols" on the streets of Welkom that meant carrying out attacks on black pedestrians.

On 16 May, 31 black miners were dismissed by Anglo American for "disobeying rules", such as by wearing ANC garb. That afternoon, the fired black miners and a few of their union brothers approached company officials outside Shaft Number One. White security cops opened fire with rubber bullets and a 9mm pistol, wounding 18. In the clash which followed, two white mine managers were stabbed to death. Scores of blacks were arrested. On Sunday, 20 May, there was a protest meeting in the black township of Thabong. About 1000 miners and 500 youth formed a procession after the meeting and attempted to march into Welkom. Police opened fire on the procession, killing eleven blacks and injuring 90.

South Africa's two most prominent leaders of black unions, National Union of Miners (NUM) president Cyril Ramaphosa and Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) secretary general Jay Naidoo, arrived in Welkom and issued a conciliatory statement over the

"regrettable" stabbing. But at funerals for the white managers there was a column of vehicles adorned with the swastika-like flag of the neo-Nazi Afrikaner Resistance Movement (AWB). Such paramilitary and fascist groups have been growing, in reaction to de Klerk's talk of "power sharing" with the ANC. On 26 May, Conservative Party leader Treurnicht gathered more than 50,000 right-wingers and neo-Nazis from the AWB for a racist rally at the Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria.

Welkom is one of the premier mines of the Anglo American Corporation,

which owns 70 per cent of the country's mining capital and has been known for its "far-sighted" approach to South African capitalism. The company recently ran a full-page ad in the *Financial Times* to ask "Do We Sometimes Wish We Hadn't Fought To Have Black Trade Unions Recognised?" "Life has not always been easy since then", they sigh with paternalism worthy of a latter-day Cecil Rhodes, particularly when "our gold and coal mines" are struck. But they sought to bring in unions "for very sound commercial, as well as moral, reasons". Anglo American's commercial interests were clear: to set up a collaborationist labour bureaucracy to prevent an outbreak of revolutionary worker agitation.

Part of this strategy has been Anglo's attempts to co-opt the NUM, not least with its "employees shareholding" in a joint fund. This draws the union into direct collaboration with finance capital. The ad explains that these "verligte" (enlightened) tycoons understand there will be no class peace until blacks have political rights. Anglo chairman Gavin Relly (since retired) was the leading capitalist to venture to Lusaka for "secret" talks with the ANC, which led to two years of "negotiations" and the freeing of Mandela. Now once again, Anglo and Relly are trying to mould the shape of a "post-apartheid South Africa", orchestrating a late May meeting at Johannesburg's Carl-

ton Hotel of 350 leading bankers and industrialists with a high-level delegation from the African National Congress.

At his first press conference after being released, Mandela caused consternation in corporate boardrooms by reaffirming the ANC's call (in its 1955 Freedom Charter) for nationalisation of South Africa's mines and redistribution of the wealth. But in a joint news conference with Gavin Relly at the Carlton, Mandela backed off from this pledge:

"I would like to share a secret with you. The view that the only words in the economic vocabulary that the ANC knows are nationalisation and redistribution is mistaken. The ANC has no blueprint that decrees that these or other assets will be nationalised, or that such nationalisation would take this or the other form." (*Independent*, 24 May)

While Mandela was appealing for "cooperation of the corporate sector", Relly said they agreed on a "mixed economy", and that "one shouldn't jump about and get frightened just because people see the word 'nationalisation' ". For his part, Joe Slovo of the South African Communist Party has been quoted as saying that redistribution of wealth does *not* mean "sectors of the economy would have to be nationalised".

Imperialist sanctions: whom do they serve?

Mandela is using his tours of Western Europe and the US to appeal to the imperialist chiefs to maintain "sanctions" against South Africa. "Sanctions must continue to be applied until the whole structure of apartheid is brought down," he said (*New York Times*, 27 May).

We have pointed out how grotesque it is to call on American rulers, who dropped atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and turned Vietnam into a moonscape, who block effective school integration in the US and whose programme for ghetto poverty amounts to genocide, to pressure their South African junior partners to... fight racism. We noted that calls for "disinvestment" were at best an empty moralistic gesture, that when multinational corporations began withdrawing productive assets it was to protect their profits and, except when a revolutionary overthrow is directly posed, this would serve to *weaken* the black unions, the organisational embodiment of the proletarian power that can bring down apartheid capitalism. "So divestment has become good business. But it is *not* good for South Africa's black workers," we summed up (*Workers Vanguard* no 434, 7 August 1987).

The Spartacist tendency (now the International Communist League) was unique in telling the truth about the liberal divestment movement when it was highly unpopular to do so. But forces in COSATU have begun questioning the policy of divestment and sanctions. COSATU's 1987 congress criticised selective sanctions, which "cause serious regional unemployment". The following year the Chemical Workers Industrial Union demanded that 41 foreign-controlled com-

LONDON SPARTACIST LEAGUE MARXIST CLASS SERIES

1. We are the party of the Russian Revolution
Thursday, 28 June

2. Stalinism
Thursday, 12 July

Both classes will be held at 7.30pm
North Room, Conway Hall,
Red Lion Square, WC1
Nearest tube: Holborn

For further information, please phone London 071-485 1396

LONDON SPARTACIST LEAGUE PUBLIC MEETING

No "power sharing" with the Randlords!
Smash apartheid!

Black workers must take power!

7.30pm, Wednesday 18 July
Small Hall, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1
Nearest tube: Holborn

panies negotiate so that divestment not be at the workers' expense. And last year, the CWIU struck nine Mobil Oil installations against plans to "divest" by selling out to the South African mining conglomerate Gencor, while the Metalworkers union struck Goodyear over the company's sellout to South Africa's Consol.

A recent article on "Financial Sanctions and the Future of South Africa", by Paul Trehwela in *Searchlight South Africa* (February 1990), incisively analyses the cause and effect of imperialist sanctions. Trehwela writes that while in the 1960s and 1970s the ANC called mainly for international consumer, sports and cultural boycotts, today "the decisive practical role in the sanctions campaign now lies with world financial capital". He notes that at the height of the 1985 township revolt, US financial capital—following the lead of Chase Manhattan Bank—imposed financial sanctions on South Africa, blocking new credits and demanding repayment of back loans. Since 1985 some \$15 billion in foreign debt was repaid by South Africa, while another \$10 billion left the country in capital flight. He observes:

"The action of the banks in July-August 1985, setting in motion the sole effective process of economic sanctions so far, was a measure by capital in its own defence against a future threatened loss.... What the banks require are political changes in South Africa that can assure them of future safety for their investments, and a safe field for future investment."

Trehwela notes that the present sanctions policy was designed by state tech-

sanctions and the agitation of the ANC for financial sanctions marks its co-option into the political operations of world capital. Outside the environs of Mrs Thatcher, it is hard to discover who does not either support or threaten to support their extension. Congresses of bishops and the Trade Union Congress, the UN and the Communist Parties, radical leftists and the far-seeing right: all look to the agency of money-dealing capital to undo what money-dealing capital set in place at the founding of modern South Africa, in the period of Rhodes and Rothschild.

"Ultimately it is the future of the workers in South Africa that is under examination. The ANC has passed from the patronage of the USSR into the US sphere of interest. Its guiding policy in international affairs has in the last resort become that of the IMF and the US banks, the real authors of 'financial sanctions'. In aligning themselves with this politics, the leaders of Cosatu, and in particular Mayekiso, have become the means of transmission of the politics of the banks within the proletariat."

Through collaboration with the banks in the question of sanctions, and such schemes as the Anglo American employee shareholder plan and retirement fund, whose first chairman is NUM secretary Cyril Ramaphosa (who called off the 1988 mine workers strike), these are all measures that bring the black unions increasingly under the control of finance capital and of the capitalist state. The aim, as Trehwela indicates, is "to build up a trade union bureaucracy and a labour aristocracy among black workers, through which it hopes to control



Superexploited black gold miners are key to producing the wealth of the apartheid state. Black workers must fight for their own class power.

week Mugabe's cops and army beat and tear-gassed striking schoolteachers and government workers). But this perspective is a conservative/liberal/reformist utopia. In fact, South Africa is barreling down the road to civil war.

While "verligte" capitalists and imperialists would like to strike a deal with the ANC, in apartheid South Africa there is very little middle ground. De Klerk's

Indian masses as well as those whites who accept a racially integrated, egalitarian South Africa.

Allied with AZAPO is the Cape Action League, whose youth group recently published a document calling for a constituent assembly rather than a negotiated settlement. CAL is led by Neville Alexander, whose latter-day Menshevism is often misidentified as Trotskyism in South Africa. The revolutionary-democratic slogan of a constituent assembly is appropriate as the ANC prepares to abandon "one man, one vote" in practice, alleging the need to assuage white fears. But by itself this slogan does not go beyond the limits of bourgeois society. To overthrow the domination of the capitalists who have sucked fabulous wealth from superexploitation of the labour of South African blacks, to ensure equality and freedom for the oppressed masses and raise them out of poverty, it will take nothing less than proletarian revolution, with black workers in the vanguard.

Today the contradictions in South Africa are excruciating: the mood of demoralisation following the exhaustion of the 1984-86 township revolts is past, the working class is insurgent as never before, yet never before has it been so politically dominated by the politics of class collaboration. A socialist revolution must be prepared and led by a genuinely communist party, forged in struggle against the reformism of the SACP and the petty-bourgeois nationalism of the ANC. It must be a racially integrated party, which includes not only blacks but also coloureds and Indians as well as whites as comrades. It will be a Trotskyist party, built on the programme of permanent revolution, which says to black workers: the nationalists want you to pull the cart of capitalism as the apartheid rulers have forced you to with their *sjamboks* and bullets, but you have the power, you produced the wealth—take it, it's yours.

Smash apartheid—For workers revolution in South Africa!

Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* no 504, 15 June 1990.



Spartacist League has consistently raised the call over South Africa: "Smash apartheid! For workers revolution!"

nocrats of imperialist countries (notably Canada and Australia, the number three and four gold producers in the world after South Africa and the USSR). They were approved by meetings last year of the Commonwealth foreign ministers in Canberra and Commonwealth heads of government at Kuala Lumpur, and endorsed by the ANC, the Pan Africanist Congress and a delegation of COSATU headed by Metalworkers union leader Moses Mayekiso, "formerly a leader of the left wing of the unions". By looking to the banks as liberators, the ANC and its various allies and satellites are playing straight into the hands of the International Monetary Fund and the drive to "mass pauperisation" of the Third World:

"The convergence of real practical bank

the class". Whether this is possible in South Africa today is another matter.

Black workers must take the power!

Trehwela holds that following the 1985 township revolt and subsequent growth of black trade unions, the existence of the apartheid regime has become "anomalous" to the banks. He assumes that a post-apartheid capitalist state is in gestation which will include an ANC presence in the government. This assumption is shared as well by a whole political spectrum, from de Klerk on the right through Gavin Relly to Nelson Mandela, Joe Slovo and leftists like Trehwela. At most this would mean that South Africa would become another Zimbabwe (where last

National Party is losing votes as white reactionaries dig in, arming themselves to defend their swimming pools, ranch houses and farms built on the toil of black labour. Moreover, it is far from clear that the maximum concessions by the Nationalist government can meet the minimum demands of the ANC if either side is to retain any support on its respective side of the yawning chasm that separates the oppressed black majority from the layer of white oppressors, far smaller but big enough to wage a bloody fight to the death. And they will. The idea that apartheid, that is to say capitalist rule based on white supremacy, will pass peacefully into history is absurd.

In the period since the Mandela-de Klerk Cape Town talks, COSATU has pushed to get in on the negotiations. "We're meeting ministers almost every day," glowed one NUM official, and Ramaphosa referred to blood-drenched top cop Adriaan Vlok as "our minister" when they met in Welkom. The Pan-Africanists oppose negotiations, but their slogan of "one settler, one bullet" is simply a call to drive whites out of a black nationalist-ruled capitalist South Africa. The Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO) also criticises the ANC negotiations with the de Klerk regime and talks of building a "mass-based people's organization with a socialist orientation" (*Socialist Action*, June 1990). But its advocacy of "Black Consciousness philosophy" denies the central role of the black African proletariat capable of leading also the oppressed, coloured and

Spartacist League educational weekend 28-29 July

Rooms G1/G2, Polytechnic of Central London
35 Marylebone Road, London NW1 (nearest tube: Baker St)

Saturday 28 July, 12.30pm - 6.00pm (registration from 11.30am)

For the revolutionary unity of the German, Polish and Russian workers
The struggle for communism in Poland

Administering capitalism, 1974-79
The last time Labour was in power

Sunday 29 July, 12.30pm - 3.00pm

Marxism, the national question and interpenetrated peoples
The partition of Ireland

Tickets: £4 waged/£2 unwaged
(available in advance from SL, PO Box 1041, London NW5 3EU, or on door)
For more information phone: London 071-485 1396, Glasgow 041-332 0788

Contact the Spartacist League

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

WORKERS HAMMER



Black political prisoner on death row in USA

Save Mumia Abu-Jamal!

Abolish the racist death penalty!

In cities around the world opponents of the racist death penalty will be rallying to save the life of American black journalist and former Black Panther Mumia Abu-Jamal, a death row political prisoner in Huntingdon, Pennsylvania. In the US, rallies will take place in New York, Chicago, Oakland and in Jamal's home town of Philadelphia. An impressive number of American trade union officials have come forward to add their voice against the execution of this courageous fighter for black freedom. As a spokesman for the Partisan Defence Committee in the US explained: "Labor has the clout to stop

the assembly line of death. Their participation recognizes the link between the death penalty, a central part of the war on black America, and attacks on the labor movement for the past decade."

International protest is also key to staying the executioner's hand. The racist state authorities in the US must be made to know that opponents of the death penalty and defenders of black rights around the world are demanding that Mumia Abu-Jamal must not die! Protest rallies and demonstrations have been called in Paris, Hamburg, Berlin (DDR), Sydney and Toronto. The Partisan De-

fence Committee here in Britain is organising a rally on 6 July in London at Lambeth Town Hall, in Brixton (see announcement, below). Over 20,000 people around the world—from Australia to France, from Poland to Britain—have signed petitions and sent letters to Pennsylvania Governor Robert Casey demanding Jamal not be executed. Among the many prominent individuals who have taken up Jamal's case are California Congressman Ron Dellums, NUJ Deputy General Secretary Jacob Ecclestone and Scottish MP Ron Brown; former DDR Prime Minister Hans Modrow has en-

dorsed the rallies in Germany.

A black militant and articulate defender of the oppressed, Jamal was targeted for a vicious state vendetta. He was framed on charges of killing a Philadelphia policeman in 1981. On 1 February of this year, despite a number of fair trial violations, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court denied Jamal's petition to reargue his appeal. As Pennsylvania State Representative David Richardson said: "Mumia's trial was a farce.... It was clear, to anyone whose eyes are open to racism, that Mumia had been framed for his political

continued on page 9

London Rally

Friday 6 July, 7.00 pm
Room 119, Lambeth Town Hall
Brixton Hill, SW2
(nearest tube: Brixton)
Tape of Jamal speaking

Speakers:

D Akin, Kurdistan Workers Association,
Executive Committee member*
City of London Anti-Apartheid Group
D Doolan, Defendant, Trafalgar Square
Defendants' Campaign*
D Hatt, NUR National Executive Committee
member*
M Massive, Managing Editor, *Caribbean Times**
Partisan Defence Committee
Ramona Africa Support Group
J Robson, Secretary, ASLEF District Council No 8*
Spartacist League/Britain
P Trehwela, Co-Editor, *Searchlight South Africa**
G Watson, Chairman, Finsbury Park NUR

* Speaking in a personal capacity

Sponsored by:
Partisan Defence Committee
BCM Box 4986, London WC1N 3XX
phone 071-485 1396

Paris

29 June, 7.00 pm
LSC, 69 ter Rue de la Chapelle

Berlin, DDR

3 July, 4.00 pm
USA-Botschaft
Neustädtische Kirchstr. 4-5

Hamburg

3 July, 4.00 pm
USA-Generalkonsulat
Alsterufer 27-28

Sydney

12 July, 7.30 pm
Tom Mann Theatre
136-140 Chalmers St., Surrey Hills

New York

28 June, 7.00 pm
Associated Musicians of Greater New York
Local 802, 330 West 42nd Street

Philadelphia

14 July, 2.00 pm
Church of the Advocate
18th and Diamond Streets

Chicago

14 July, 2.00 pm
The Blackstone Hotel
636 S. Michigan Avenue

Oakland

14 July, 7.30 pm
ILWU Local 6 Hall, 99 Hegenberger Road

Toronto

4 July, 5.30 pm
US Consulate
360 University Avenue

International campaign of protest