



Baltic Nationalists Spearhead Counterrevolution in USSR

Moscow Tries to Thwart Lithuanian Secessionists

The following article, reprinted from Workers Vanguard (No. 499, 6 April 1990), was written just before Gorbachev placed an economic embargo on Lithuania.

* * *

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

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

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

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

Disintegrating Stalinism Looking to Buy Time



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

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

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

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

—*New York Times*, 28 March

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

Washington's diplomatic stance caused Sajudis leader Vytautas Landsbergis to decry the Western powers for

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

Whatever the immediate outcome of the Lithuania crisis, the discredited Kremlin Stalinist bureaucracy has no political program to combat the reactionary

nationalisms which now threaten to rip apart the Soviet Union. The Gorbachev regime could only maintain that the Lithuanian "declaration of independence" was "invalid" because it violated the USSR constitution. Gorbachev's entire strategy for dealing with nationalist separatism consists in *buying time*, nothing more. His new draft legislation on the national question proposes a five-year waiting period before a republic can secede, followed by a popular referendum and approval by the all-Soviet Congress of People's Deputies.

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

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

Nationalist Delirium in Lithuania

But the move toward secession in Lithuania has nothing to do with democratic aspirations. It is a move toward capitalist counterrevolution backed by witchhunting against Communists, class-conscious workers and national

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For Class Struggle Against Capitalist Pillage

**Push to Fourth Reich
Threatens All Working People**

See page 5

The Partisan Defence Committee is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defence organisation which champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people. This purpose is in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League. Our fraternal organisation in the U.S. has been established for over a decade and is known to many of our readers. The Jalalabad Civilian Victims Aid Fund campaign last year provided the impetus for establishing the PDC here. *Australasian Spartacist* is pleased to bring you this occasional feature to publicise the work of the PDC.

Urgent Appeal to Save Indonesian Communists

In March the PDC sent an urgent message to the Indonesian government protesting the execution of four PKI leaders—Satar Suryanto, Yohanes Surono, Simon Soleiman and Norbertus Rohayan—who were amongst an estimated 50 prisoners who have languished in government prison hellholes since 1965. Nine more are on death row, six of whom, including peasant union leader Ruslan Widjayastra, face imminent execution. The PDC protest (27 March) also demanded:

"Stop the executions of PKI leaders Ruslan Widjayastra, Sukatno, Iskander Subekti and Asep Suryaman as well as I. Bungkus, and Marsudi. Free them now! Release all PKI members and militants imprisoned after government slaughter of half million working people in 1965.

"Your vain attempts to deprive the Indonesian toiling masses of leadership will not succeed. In 1947-49 Australian workers concretely aided just cause of Indonesian independence. Such international proletarian solidarity will help bring down your bloodthirsty regime in the struggle for a workers and peasants Indonesia."

Further protest telegrams were sent by fraternal defence organisations in Canada, Germany, Italy and Japan. Peter Baldwin, Labor MHR, and the Federated Engine Drivers & Firemens Association, Victorian Branch, also sent protest telegrams. Amnesty International points out that the recent executions "brought to at least 26 the number of prisoners executed since 1985, compared to 4 in the preceding ten years" (*Urgent Action*, 104/90, 14 March). We call for urgent international

working class protest against the decrepit regime's murderous plans.

Protest Cop Terror Against Aboriginals

PDC and Spartacist League supporters joined a 300-strong protest against cop terror in Redfern on 1 March. The 8 February cop raid on the tiny inner-city Redfern ghetto was a racist rampage. Cops held guns to children's heads, dragged elderly women from their beds and held a petrified community hostage. The Liberal Greiner state government's cops have been responsible for a series of atrocities from a similar military-style assault on Redfern in August 1988 to the cold-blooded police killing of 32-year-old David Gundy last April.

The PDC and Spartacist contingent, whose placards included "Hawke's Cold War Regime Kills Blacks—Smash Australian Apartheid!" and "For Labour/Black/Minority Action to Stop Racist Terror!", was well received by the predominantly Aboriginal crowd. However, a small group of white liberals agitated to have our placards taken down. This political exclusionism, which serves only to further exclude Aboriginals from social and political life in this white racist enclave, was opposed by many, including John Bayles from Radio Redfern, who read the following message from the PDC in the U.S. (26 February) to the rally.

"Greetings of solidarity to you in your fight against racist police terror. The outrageous New South Wales cop rampage through the streets of Redfern is further evidence of state-inspired race hate that condemns Aboriginals to an apartheid-style existence under the fist of state terror.

"In the United States the 'war on drugs' means a war on blacks and the labor movement. As in Redfern, black housing projects are raided, families thrown on the streets and ghettos placed under virtual martial law. In the factories it is a means to terrorize the workforce into quietly succumbing to each and every attack on its living standards and working conditions. And for us all it means a wholesale erosion of basic democratic rights.

"Alongside the vicious attacks on the Aboriginal community is the Hawke Labour Party government's strikebreaking and union-busting. We call for mass union and black protest mobilizations to put an end to the deep seated racist terror integral to capitalist Australia."

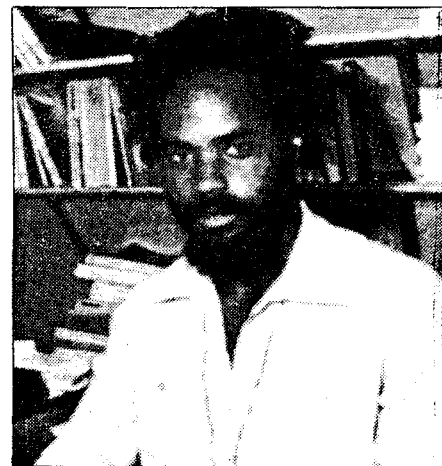
Partisan Defence Committee and Spartacist League join 1 March Redfern rally against cop terror.



ASp photo

The state vendetta against Redfern Aborigines (which dovetails with big business interests who want the prime real estate) was the subject of a Left Action meeting at Sydney University on 15 March where the PDC statement was circulated. A Spartacist speaker from the floor drew the connection between attacks on the organised working class and attacks on blacks: "the same police that beat Aboriginals over the head break workers' strikes and thereby enforce poor working conditions and low wages so that Kerry Packer can get even richer." Blacks fare no better under Labor governments than Liberal: numbers of blacks getting the "death penalty" in jail cells has increased in the Hawke years, particularly in the Labor-run state of WA. Hawke's re-election promises more of the same: attacks on organised labour hand in hand with attacks on democratic rights—of blacks, women, ethnic minorities, gays, all of us. Hand in hand, the organised working class must fight alongside blacks in mass protest mobilisations to put an end to the racist terror this white imperialist enclave was founded on.

International Campaign to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal



Philadelphia Magazine

Little known here is the case of black journalist, Mumia Abu-Jamal, who is on death row in Pennsylvania, the victim of a racist political frame-up. The PDC is joining an international week of protest from July 1-7 around the slogans,

"Abolish the Death Penalty!" and "Save Mumia Abu-Jamal!" Important international support has come from Europe, including from AGIPA-Press in Germany. Over 16,000 protest petitions have been sent to Philadelphia's Governor Casey, including 265 signatures from Australia to date.

The following excerpt from *Class Struggle Defense Notes* No. 13, April 1990, published by the PDC in the U.S. describes the case:

"The Pennsylvania Supreme Court has pushed Mumia Abu-Jamal a step closer to the electric chair. On January 26 the court denied Jamal's petition to reargue his appeal — the second time in less than a year that the court turned down his legal challenge to the racist witchhunt which condemned him to die. No legal barrier today stands between Jamal and the Governor's signing a death warrant. As Jamal wrote last March, 'Don't tell me about the valley of the shadow of death.' I live there."

"For many years Jamal was known to Philadelphia's black and minority communities as the 'voice of the voiceless.' It says plenty about the racist death penalty in America that the court has given the green light to snuff out the life of one of the most eloquent, insightful and compassionate spokesmen on the black condition in print today. As a former Black Panther Party spokesman and outspoken MOVE supporter, Jamal has been in the cross hairs of Philadelphia's racist killer cops for over 20 years.

"Framed up for the 1981 killing of a Philadelphia policeman, Jamal was a well-known journalist at the time of his arrest, President of the Philadelphia chapter of the Association of Black Journalists. His regular column from death row appears in numerous newspapers around the country.

"Up north in Philadelphia, Jamal's trial had the air of the deep south—the indigent black defendant, denied the lawyer of his choice and adequate resources to prepare a defense, fighting for his life before one black and eleven white jurors. At the sentencing hearing in 1982 the prosecutor got the death penalty by arguing that Jamal's membership in the Black Panther Party showed he was a committed cop-killer. The prosecutor cited a 12-year-old interview in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* in which Jamal used the Panther slogan, "All power to the people!" For the racist cops who terrorize the streets, and the racist prosecutors and judges who prowls the courts, this meant Mumia Abu-Jamal must die."

For more information contact: Partisan Defence Committee, PO Box Q217, Queen Victoria Building, Sydney, NSW, 2000.

Brian McGahen, 1952-1990

Brian McGahen, gay activist and leftist, died aged 38, on 2 April as a result of the AIDS disease.

Politicised through his opposition to the Vietnam War, Brian joined the CPA when he was 17. He was a driving force in establishing the Sydney Gay Mardi Gras, and was elected as an openly gay candidate to the Sydney City Council in 1984, remaining an alderman until the Council's undemocratic dismissal by ALP Premier Unsworth in 1987. He became a Director of the Sydney Home Care Service in 1986, with the purpose of extending its services to people living with AIDS. Infected with the HIV virus himself, he decided to take his own life.

We in the Spartacist League knew Brian McGahen as a decent man with a commitment to fight injustice. Although he did not share our program, we came together on several cases and causes. He marched proudly in our demonstration against the execution of Communists in Indonesia in 1986. Most recently he supported the Partisan Defence Committee's Jalalabad Civilian Victims Aid Fund. He stood out in this chauvinist and oppressive society; we mark his loss.

Australasian

SPARTACIST



For a workers republic of Australia, part of a socialist Asia!

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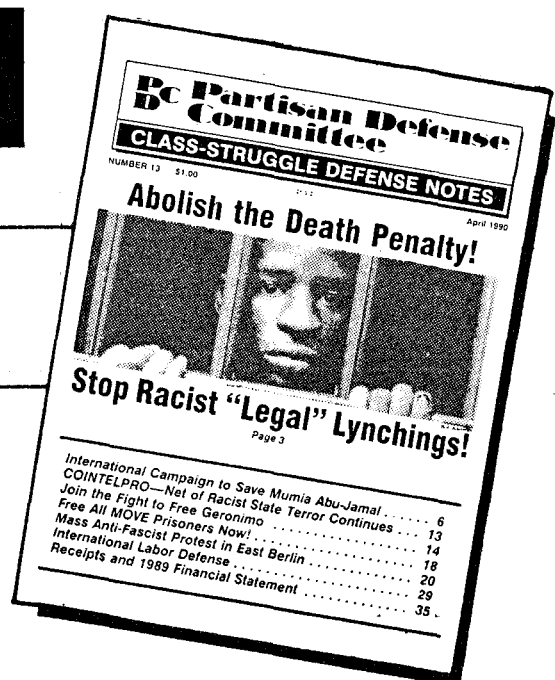
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SLL in the Camp of Counterrevolution

The land of the October Revolution is in grave danger. The relentless pressure of imperialism combined with the corrupt, self-interested and conciliatory policies of the Stalinist bureaucracy have resulted today in a Soviet Union racked by nationalist conflagrations spearheaded by counterrevolutionaries, the ominous threat of a German Fourth Reich and capitalist restorationist governments elsewhere in Eastern Europe. The elated imperialists have announced the death of communism. But the powerful working class of the Soviet Union, the DDR and all East Europe has not yet spoken. The question—capitalist restoration or proletarian political revolution in the USSR and East Europe?—will be decided by sharp class struggle. It is the legacy of Stalinism that the Soviet proletariat must now fight a civil war, from Jalalabad to Riga, to defend the gains of October. To successfully do so a Leninist-egalitarian party must be built anew and in due time to provide the vital missing ingredient: revolutionary internationalist leadership.

Last January 3, after fascists desecrated a Soviet war memorial, 250,000 came out in East Berlin's Treptow Park to say "No Nazis in the DDR!" and express their solidarity with the Russian Revolution and the Soviet victory over Hitler fascism. Initiated by a call from the Troztkistische Liga Deutschlands and Spartakist Gruppen (precursors of the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany) which was taken up by the Stalinist SED (now Party of Democratic Socialism), this was a powerful demonstration of the DDR working peoples' desire to prevent capitalist reunification. It was a genuine united front, such as Trotsky advocated in the '30s to combat Hitler's Nazis, and the Trotskyist speakers sharply criticised the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and SED policy, drawing both organised heckling and applause. It infuriated the West German bourgeoisie, who vilified it and subsequently launched a massive campaign to destabilise the DDR. The front-runner in the imperialist hue-and-cry over the Treptow anti-fascist action was the SPD, which from the first breach in the Wall sought to use its authority with especially the West German working class to act as Trojan Horse for counter-revolution. The SPD argued that the fascist threat was insignificant and outrageously even suggested that the SED itself had carried out the defacement of the monument.

Northites: Anti-Soviet Through And Through

Notably, the SPD line on Treptow was echoed by a small group masquerading as Trotskyists in Germany, the Bund Sozialistischer Arbeiter (BSA), co-thinkers of David North's International Committee of the Fourth International (IC), whose Australian section is the Socialist Labour League (SLL). The manifesto of the BSA (*Workers News*, 2 March) slanders the demonstration as "organised by the Stasi" and the SLL (*Workers News*, 26 January) retailed the SPD line almost word for word:

"The Stalinists have cynically attempted to use the activities of a small number of neo-Nazis in East Germany as the pretext for rebuilding their repressive apparatus. There are widespread reports that the Stalinists themselves staged some of the alleged fascist provocations for just this purpose."

The BSA "calls for workers to defend everything they have built in the last 40 years through strikes and factory occu-



SLL newspaper screams support for anti-Soviet counterrevolution from East Germany to Azerbaijan to Lithuania.

pations; to prevent the penetration of the capitalist banks and concerns" (*Workers News*, 30 March). This sounds like orthodox Trotskyism. But you need a little schizophrenia and a very short memory to be a supporter of the IC. Earlier *Workers News* wrote: "there is nothing progressive in the postwar division of Germany or the so-called integrity of the GDR" (23 February). Or as SLL leader Nick Beams bluntly said to a Spartakist League member in late March: "the Stalinists are the real fascists." The Northite IC maintains that Stalinism is "counterrevolutionary through and through." But the Stalinist bureaucracy is a contradictory caste. As Trotsky wrote in the *Transitional Program*, "all shades of political thought are to be found among the bureaucracy: from genuine Bolshevism (Ignace Reiss) to complete fascism (F. Butenko)." The Northite line—the main enemy of the international working class is Stalinism—in the context of the collapse of the Stalinist bureaucracies is a program of support to imperialist-backed counterrevolution.

Until 1985 the IC's guru was the late British Workers Revolutionary Party leader Gerry Healy. In the spectacular implosion of international Healyism his toady, U.S. Workers League leader David North, seized control of the rump IC and continued to carry out Healy's despicable practices. The chief targets of U.S. imperialism in its backyard are Cuba and latterly Sandinista Nicaragua, and for over a decade the Healyites/Northites have dragged the Castroist, pro-Sandinista U.S. SWP through the bourgeois courts. Recently they campaigned internationally, as if with a brief from the prosecution, in support of the state frame-up of an SWP trade unionist, Mark Curtis, who is now serving a 25-year sentence. In the late '70s they supplied information on Iraqi CP members to the Ba'athist regime in Baghdad and defended its execution of 21 "Stalinists" in the army. They were paid handsomely for this crime. Another "commercial operation" was the Australian SLL's printing of the fascist Vietnamese paper *Saigon Bell*, which during 1985 was calling on its supporters to "kill communists." SLL leader Nick Beams was up to his neck in all these dirty money deals. (For a fuller expose see our pamphlet *Trotskyism: What It Isn't and What It Is!*) The IC are a sinister outfit, whose only political consistency is hatred of the Soviet Union and craven loyalty to mass social-

democratic parties in the countries where they operate.

For over a decade, in any and every case where defence of the gains of the Russian Revolution has been posed, the Healyites/Northites have supported every force hostile to the USSR. In the early '80s the SLL proclaimed Polish Solidarność the vehicle for political revolution in Poland—a fact they would now like to bury. They opposed the Soviet Union's genuinely progressive intervention into the Afghanistan civil war (and then cynically attacked Gorbachev for his treacherous withdrawal). Last January when Gorbachev sent the Red Army into Azerbaijan to separate warring Azeri and Armenian communalists, *Workers News* (26 January) headlined "Gorbachev's Tiananmen Square," and supported the Azeri pogromists:

"What has erupted in Azerbaijan is an insurrection by the working class, unemployed and rural masses against the repressive Stalinist bureaucracy."

No doubt they came to this position at the sight of Azeri nationalists waving pictures of their erstwhile hero, the Ayatollah Khomeini, whose reactionary clerical regime they also supported in the interests of anti-Sovietism.

Over Lithuania the SLL noted: "This week's declaration of independence, though national in appearance, is first and foremost a further class attack on the working class, the outcome of decades of betrayals by the Stalinist bureaucracy



Treptow Park, East Berlin, 3 January: 250,000-strong demonstration against fascist threat and capitalist reunification addressed by TLD speaker. Northites slander it as "organised by the Stasi."

itself" (*Workers News*, 16 March). When Gorbachev, having demonstrated his willingness to give up all East Europe, dug in his heels over Lithuania and paraded armoured convoys down the streets of Vilnius, the dismay was evident in imperialist capitals, and in the Northite IC. The *Workers News* editorial (30 March) headlined "Soviet troops out of Lithuania!"

The Red Army, which has been in Lithuania since it drove out the Nazis in 1945, is the backbone of a *workers state*, albeit degenerated. Calling for its withdrawal from Lithuania is calling for power to be handed over to the counterrevolution. The SLL says that the Soviet bureaucracy is "thoroughly counterrevolutionary," Iranian mullahs, Azeri pogromists, Polish and Lithuanian counterrevolutionaries are quite progressive, and they have George Bush and Bob Hawke's line: "The intervention of Soviet troops into Lithuania is therefore entirely reactionary" (*Workers News*, 30 March).

The SLL tries to cover its tracks, claiming "Our defence of the right of national minorities to self-determination does not mean support to bourgeois secession," adding "The right to self-determination for Lithuania and any other national minorities can only be guaranteed by the intervention of the Soviet working class in a political revolution to overthrow the Stalinist bureaucracy and to resolve the national questions democratically on the basis of a common revolutionary internationalist program."

But this is only a smokescreen, the fig-leaf of orthodoxy to cover a reactionary line. *Workers News* tries to turn Lenin and Trotsky into liberal democrats, asserting that they "defended unconditionally" the right of nations to self-determination. Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks never accorded nations the right of counter-revolution, even if draped in the colours of "national rights." Using an unsourced quote the SLL equates their position on Lithuania with Trotsky's defence in 1939 of the right of the Ukraine to self-determination. They neglect to mention that Trotsky's position was for "A united, free and independent workers' and peasants' Soviet Ukraine" ("The Ukrainian Question," *Writings of Leon Trotsky [1938-39]*, emphasis in original). And he demanded:

"Not the slightest compromise with imperialism, either fascist or democratic! Not the slightest concession to the Ukrainian nationalists, either clerical-reactionary or liberal-pacifist! No 'People's Fronts'! The complete independence of the proletarian party as the vanguard of the toilers!"

The hatred of the Northites for the Soviet Union manifests as craven loyalty to social democracy. The BSA asks the SPD not to be counterrevolutionary: "Demand that the leadership of the SPD and the trade unions end their collaboration with the Kohl government, that they immediately end their support to the imperialist plans for reunification"

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Spartakist

Klassenkampf gegen Raubzug des Kapitals!
Vorstoß zum Vierten Reich
bedroht alle Werktätigen

Selections from Spartakist Arbeiterpressekorrespondenz

Gegen kapitalistische Wiedervereinigung
Verteidigt die Errungenschaften
unseres Arbeiterstaats!

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

Dear Comrades,

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

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

Letter to Our Comrade Soviet Soldiers

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

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

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

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

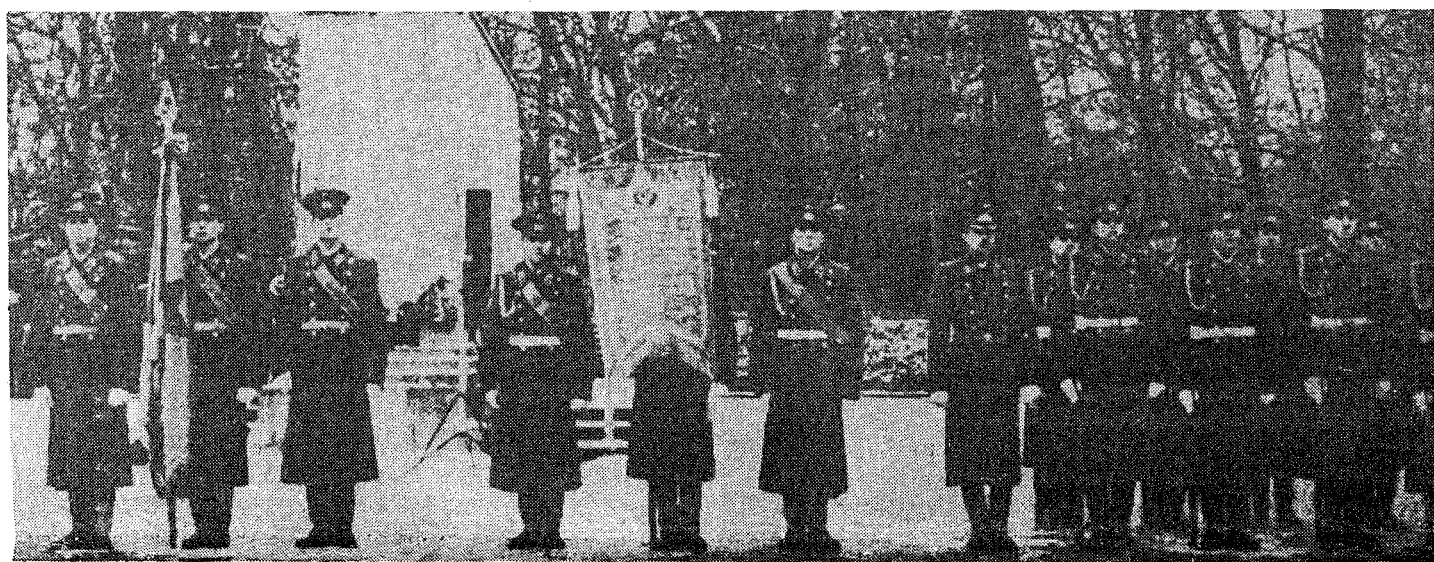
heirs are now seeking to give it up. They are caving in to the prospect of a "Fourth Reich." This will embolden the most dangerous warmongering forces, from West German revanchism to the Pentagon, who are now aiming for the disintegration of the Soviet Union and its destruction as an anti-capitalist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

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

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

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

March 1990



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

Give to the Lenin-Liebkecht-Luxemburg Fund!

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

workers, we must be able to intervene to pose the way forward to victory in the defensive struggles that will inevitably break out.

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

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

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

As Karl Liebkecht wrote in 1919:

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



Karl Liebkecht, co-leader of Spartakusbund with Rosa Luxemburg, calls for workers councils to power in 1918-1919 German Revolution.



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

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

Push to Fourth Reich Threatens All Working People

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

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

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

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

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

The trade-union law approved by the old Volkskammer in its last session provides the workers with the right of "Mitbestimmung" ("co-determination") in the introduction of capitalist exploitation. But it does codify the right to strike and to trade-union activity. This



Pro-unification rally in Leipzig demands "We want one new Germany"; Leipzig rallies hailed would-be Reichs chancellor Helmut Kohl (inset).

earned the denunciation not only of the Christian Democrats but also Social Democrats. DGB [West German labour federation] head Ernst Breit criticised the FDGB [East German labour federation] for demanding too many rights, while SPD-East leader Ibrahim Böhme labelled the lockout ban "unattractive and an obstacle to investment"! They want to replicate the BRD laws where struck employers can simply lock out other workers and then deny them unemployment benefits.

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

Many a worker who voted CDU told himself, "Well, even if I'm fired, I'll get BRD unemployment insurance, which beats DDR wages." Forget it! A statement issued following a meeting between the DGB and the BRD employers association announced agreement that wage and benefit levels in the DDR for a certain period must be "significantly less than the West German standard" (*Frankfurter Rundschau*, 10 March). This "transitional period" was defined as lasting somewhere between two and twenty years! And that's only for those who will be fortunate enough to have a job. Women workers in the DDR will be hit doubly hard, as the elimination of school lunches and day-care centres will force many who are not directly laid off to leave work in order to take care of their children. DDR women

are threatened with a return to enslavement in the kitchen.

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

And this will not just take the form of layoffs. Metal workers at Bergmann-Borsig [in East Berlin] are daily being attacked by West German "rowdies" throwing rocks over the fence and even driving holes through the Wall. Kohl/CDU rallies from Rostock to Leipzig were infested with fascist gangs, the shock troops for capitalist reunification.

Under the watchword "reds out" they aim to eliminate all who defend the workers' interests, and to smash the FDGB as a possible centre of resistance. The Social Democrats play a leading role in this campaign, particularly with their attempt to introduce BRD-style plant councils.

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

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

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

The key will be a broad working-class struggle and anti-capitalist political strategy. As they seek to create a two-tier

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Spartakist



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

Lithuania...

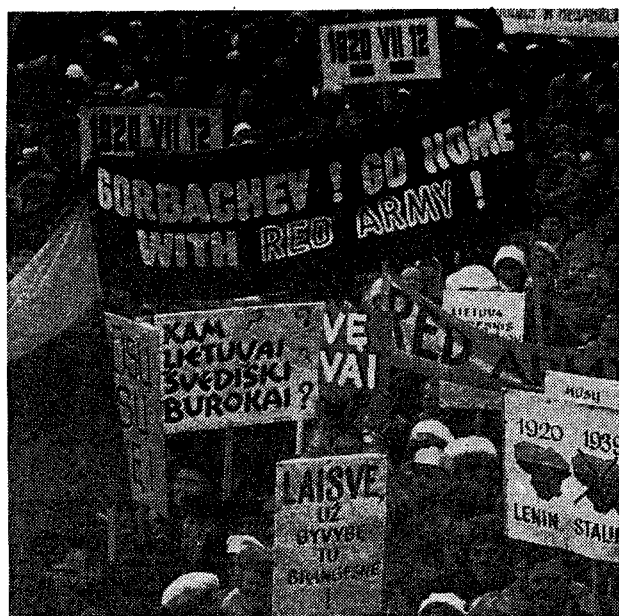
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minorities. Three of the Sajudis members elected to the secessionist parliament were known anti-Soviet terrorists in the late 1940s-early '50s. The "declaration of independence" was pushed through in a mood of nationalist hysteria: a Lithuanian journalist sympathetic to the Sajudis reported that "anyone who speaks against it is sure to be branded a traitor." The Lithuanian nationalists have gone out of their way to incite and insult other Soviet peoples: for example, destroying monuments commemorating the Red Army's liberation of Lithuania from Nazi German occupation.

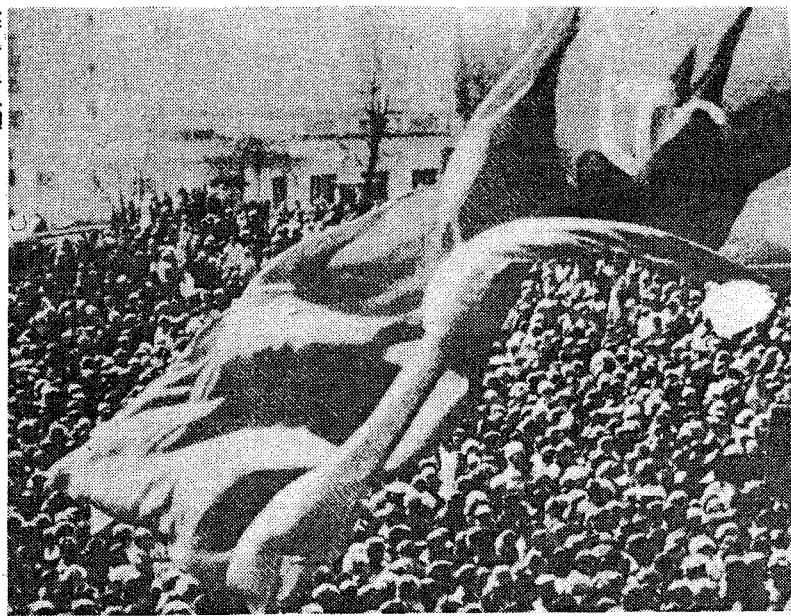
A major reason why, of the three Baltic republics, Lithuania took the first plunge at secession is that 80 percent of the population consists of ethnic Lithuanians. By contrast, in Latvia and Estonia almost half the population—and a majority of the proletariat—are Russians, Ukrainians, Byelorussians,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

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

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



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



the return of Lithuania's six southern counties, including Vilnius, which was ceded to Lithuania when it became part of the USSR in 1940.

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

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

On the scale of the USSR the three Baltic republics are Lilliputian. And the loss of the Caucasian republics would likewise not fundamentally affect Soviet

power. The Ukraine, however, is an entirely different order of magnitude. The second-largest republic, it has enormous military, industrial and agricultural importance. In the latest republican parliamentary elections, the Ukrainian nationalist movement Rukh won about a third of the seats and totally dominates the city council in Lvov, the main city in the western Ukraine. Rukh parliamentary deputy Genrikh Altunyan proclaims: "We are thinking what Moscow considers unthinkable. Today Lithuania. Tomorrow the Caucasus. The day after tomorrow, the Ukraine."

Only Communism Can Defeat Nationalism

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

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

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

"I think today the Jews here should feel

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

—*New York Times Magazine*,
28 January

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

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

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

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

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Labor...

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capitalists and politicians talk a lot about "enmeshing" the economy with the get-up-and-go Asian economies to the north, but shrink from the consequences because they are incompatible with the racially exclusionist basis of Australian imperialism. Elliott expressed their contradiction with his call for more immigration while keeping the population "homogeneous," i.e. white.

Lackey Imperialism—Scared and Desperate

The Australian bourgeoisie are desperately scared that due to Gorbachev's appeasement, their U.S. protector will scale down its military presence in the region, and that trade rivalries will rupture the U.S.-Japan military alliance. Since last year there have been three high-level Australian military delegations to Tokyo—the first such contacts since World War II. But Australian lackey imperialism isn't about to switch allegiance to Japan—capitalist White Australia doesn't want to live on Japanese rations. The Australian top brass want to preserve the U.S.-Japan military alliance and keep it pointed north, against the "Soviet threat." Hawke has supported every aggression of U.S. imperialism from the bombing of Libya in 1986 to the invasion of Panama last year and has been front man for imperialist counterrevolution in Cambodia, alongside tightening the vice on the heroic Vietnamese Revolution. Although the "Evans plan" for imperialist troops in Indochina is stalled because their genocidal Khmer Rouge contras won't play dead, it remains a centrepiece in the government's regional imperialist perspective. The U.S./Australia alliance, concretised by the strategic U.S. war bases here, remains the bourgeoisie's ticket into global imperialist war machinations. And if the big imperialist powers see the opportunity for rolling back communism and gaining new markets in Eastern Europe, jackal Australian imperialism sees its "Eastern Europe" in Indochina.

The Hawke government has been building up its armed forces to play regional policeman, but pretensions are one thing and capacities quite another. Thus for all their arrogant racist threats of military intervention in the South Pacific, a group of secessionist rebels on the island of Bougainville closed down the huge Australian-owned copper mine and forced the withdrawal of PNG troops and their Australian "advisers." Hawke, Beazley and Evans' desire for military adventures abroad also faces the political obstacle of the "Vietnam syndrome," including the memory of working class struggle against that dirty imperialist war. Hard class opposition to Australian military plans begins with the understanding

that the Main Enemy is at Home! U.S. Bases Out! Smash ANZUS! Defend the Soviet Union and Vietnam!

Down with Racist anti-Japanese Popular Front!

The desperate Opposition leader, Peacock, in a bid to win votes, deliberately stirred up an undercurrent of hysterical racism. He raved about the threat of Asian "enclaves" represented by the proposed Multi-Function Polis—a high-tech Japanese-funded "city of the future." Most revealing about this outburst of racism was the de facto anti-Japanese popular front between the extreme right, like the RSL and the League of Rights, and the nationalist, social-democratic and green "left." Anti-nuclear campaigner Helen Caldicott, who first tried to run as an ALP candidate, nearly won a rural seat as a green independent in a campaign run on opposition to "foreigners" buying up land and chopping down trees. In a letter to the *Sydney Morning Herald* (2 April) she raved: "It is not racist for me to ask why we fought World War II against the Japanese when, 45 years later, we seem ready to allow annexation of our land by that very nation for which our fathers died trying to prevent from commandeering our natural resources." If she's a "pacifist," we'd hate to see a warmonger.

The bourgeoisie's racist "yellow peril" ideology is fuel for the growth of native fascism. But historically anti-Asian racism has been the domain of the Laborite union bureaucracy. Today's rise of racist nationalism is a direct product of Hawke's Cold War and is directly proportionate to the bureaucracy-enforced defeats and rising capitalist austerity. The nationalist left seeks an alliance with Australian capital based on the racist poison of protectionism. In 1987 the strategic and historically militant Miners Federation lost thousands of jobs and union conditions of a half-century standing centrally because their "left" leadership sold them the protectionist line that their main enemy was Japan and South Korea, not their own rapacious coal bosses. The lie is given by the scenes of pitched battles between militant Hyundai strikers and South Korean police who broke their plant occupation at the end of April. Protectionism is racist, pitting Australian workers against their Asian class brothers and sisters. Protectionist trade war is the precursor to imperialist shooting wars. In Australia, international proletarian solidarity with Japanese and all Asian workers is the touchstone for a revolutionary perspective, dividing those who stand on the side of the working class from those who serve the bourgeoisie.

The Stalinist Socialist Party of Australia joined the anti-Japanese popular front and in the election recommended a vote for all manner of petty-bourgeois Greens and the outright capitalist Australian Democrats. In textbook Stalinist fashion,

they baptised the Democrats as "to the left of Labor," and said they "may prove to be a strength in such a people's alliance" (*Guardian*, 21 March). On the other hand, fake-leftists like the *Militant*, the SLL and the International Socialist Organisation (ISO), slavishly call for a vote to Labor, whether like the SLL to "deepen its exposure," or like the ISO, just out of habit. That after seven years of Hawke, these so-called "socialists" still support Labor only shows how hopelessly, irredeemably and organically attached to reactionary Laborism they really are.

The seven years of Hawke have brewed a crisis for the ALP, accumulating the political conditions for a split between the pro-capitalist parliamentary and trade union leadership, and the working class base. There is a glaring need for a revolutionary workers party forged through splitting the ALP along class lines around a revolutionary program. Only a workers government based on genuine organs of workers democracy (soviets) can expro-

Fourth Reich...

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wage system between East and West, the capitalists are seeking to drive a wedge between the workers. It will be necessary to combat West German workers' prejudices to successfully defend social gains and living standards in the DDR. And just as BRD workers must fight racism against Turkish immigrants, workers in the DDR must defend their colleagues from Mozambique, Vietnam, Cuba and Poland against attacks and deportations.

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

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

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

priate the capitalist exploiters who are driving the economy into the ground. A workers government would embark on a massive program of public works, building schools and hospitals, low-rent quality housing, roads and railways, including the Very Fast Train and a new airport in Sydney to handle the increase in Asian immigration. Most importantly, a workers government would link up with socialist revolution in Asia, especially Japan, and make a reality of the economic integration of Australia into an internationally planned socialist division of labour. The only alternative to imperialism's drive to war is socialist revolution. ■

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SLL...

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(*Workers News*, 30 March), which is of a piece with the endless calls of the SLL for the ALP "lefts" to form a workers government. This is more than pathetic delusion. The Northites habitually occupy the wrong side of the class line together with the social democrats, as when they joined with the SPD in opposition to mass anti-fascist protest in East Berlin. Over the recent Australian elections the SLL noted that "The seven years of the Hawke government have seen the greatest attacks on the working class since the 1930s" (*Workers News*, 23 February), and then they proceeded, as always, to call on workers to vote for Hawke's union-busting Labor government!

Cynical, sinister, corrupt, the Northites wallow in the slime of anti-Sovietism and Laborism, and try to pass this off as Trotskyism. Workers beware these political bandits! ■

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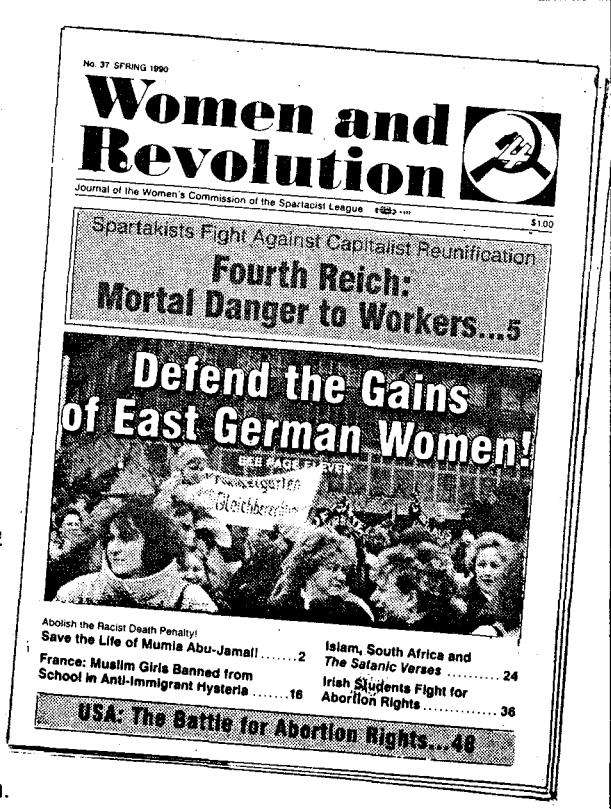
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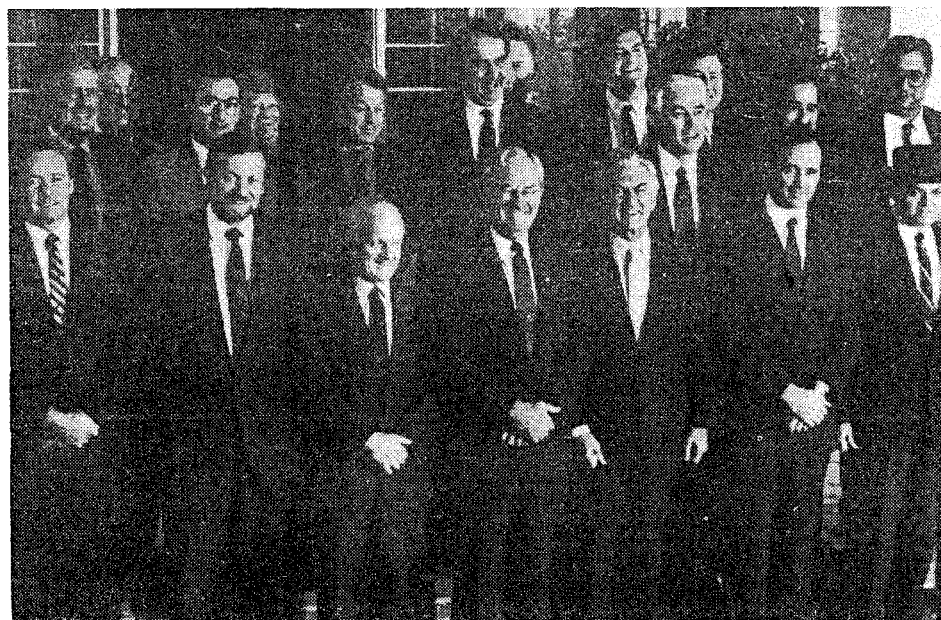
Labor's Chauvinist, Union-Busting Agenda

The 24 March federal election demonstrated the truth of the Marxist proposition that parliamentary democracy under capitalism has nothing to do with the "will of the people" but is a window dressing for exploitation and oppression by a tiny minority. For in spite of the prevailing mood among working people ranging from seething hostility to cynical indifference toward the election and the ruling ALP, the detested Hawke government just squeaked back for a record fourth term in office. Large sections of Labor's traditional base have deserted it in disgust. At 39.6 percent, the ALP vote was the lowest for decades, lower even than its debacle in 1975. They scraped in through skilful manipulation of the undemocratic electoral system—the compulsory vote and preferential voting. Legions of strategists, pollsters and ad-men ensured Labor had the Democrats and Greens' preferences safely in their pocket to channel the protest vote back their way. For class-conscious workers there was no genuine socialist alternative.

Hawke's victory was based on a promise to the bosses that he would carry out the savage anti-working-class austerity they demand. Historically, Labor's role is to administer capitalism in periods of sharpened economic and social dislocation. Labor's 80s-style Accord austerity was sold on the slim promise that things will soon improve. Today no one even questions that the economy is spiralling deeper into recession. The spectacular corporate collapses of "high flyers" like Bond, Skase and possibly even Elliott's Elders IXL underscores that. Instead bourgeois economists ponder how hard the fall is going to be.

Thanks to the Hawke government's Accord with the trade union bureaucracy real wages for workers have declined sharply while the share of national income going to profits has risen correspondingly. Social welfare has been slashed. Last year 750,000 people were approaching emergency agencies for assistance. Increasingly women workers have been forced into temporary or part-time jobs on pay rates substantially less than their male counterparts and child care services are too expensive or just not available. Under Hawke numbers of Aborigines getting the "death penalty" in cop custody has skyrocketed, and racist Australian Apartheid has been reinforced by whipped-up chauvinism against all racial minorities.

High on Labor's agenda is "micro-economic reform" of the waterfront, coastal shipping, the railways, airlines and Telecom. This is jargon for smashing union conditions and slashing jobs in the name of profits. Then there's "enterprise bargaining" which is aimed at breaking down uniform award wages and now the



Ex-republican, now Queen's man, Bill Hayden (top, centre) flanked by new Labor cabinet members. BLF demonstration in 1985 (below) against government/bosses' attacks.

Metalworkers have agreed to 12-hour shifts—which means forced overtime without penalty rates. All this has the blessing of the ACTU traitors, who are busy planning a series of bureaucratic union mergers to strengthen their corporatist stranglehold.

The government's success with Accord wage slashing and union busting is measured by their victories in critical class struggles. From smashing the BLF in 1986, to winding down the militant Cockatoo dockyard and the huge military scab operation against the Pilots last year, to the defeat of tramway workers this year, there has been a government and bosses resolve to savagely undercut and destroy union power. Critically, the Laborite ACTU bureaucracy has sanctioned scabherding and union busting. The ALP-dominated union bureaucracy is the biggest obstacle to a working class fightback.

In this climate, "lefts" such as Victorian Trades Hall Secretary John Halfpenny will play a key role in strangling workers militancy. Halfpenny was central in selling out the tramways struggle. This struggle was marked by its enormous popularity and saw innovative tactics by the militant membership, but it remained isolated. The union had the power to shut down the Melbourne transport system which was necessary to win, but the leadership sent striking bus drivers back to work. Tramway workers picketed the Arbitration Commission to stop their leadership entering. The struggle lost because there wasn't a class struggle leadership. In a small but powerful way the fight by Spartacist League supporters in the tramways union showed the way forward: extend the struggle, build mass picket lines that none would cross, not the bosses Arbitration courts but hard class struggle. This program is what's needed for the crucial

class showdowns ahead. Break from the Labor traitors! Bust the Accord! Create jobs through a shorter working week at no loss in pay! For fighting industrial unionism! For a revolutionary leadership!

Tokyo Stock Market Crash

In March and early April about 30 percent of the value of stocks on the Tokyo stock exchange was wiped out. The crash was triggered by the disintegration of the Soviet bloc under the "liberal" Stalinist regime of Mikhail Gorbachev. For the last decade Japanese money has propped up the debt-ridden and decaying U.S. economy (and the Australian bourgeoisie wants it to prop up theirs). But Japanese capital is now being channelled into the takeover bid for East Europe. Alongside the U.S. and Japan, a new capitalist superpower is looming on the horizon, a German Fourth Reich, playing havoc with world financial markets. To prevent a massive outflow of yen and dollars into Frankfurt, Tokyo and New York have been forced to jack up interest rates—triggering the Tokyo crash. Thus at the very moment that the rulers of world imperialism are proclaiming the "death of communism," capitalism isn't looking so triumphant on its home turf.

The money masters of Frankfurt, New York and Tokyo plan to turn East Europe into a giant cheap labour sweatshop while putting the rest of the world on shorter rations. The notion that counterrevolution in the Soviet bloc would lead to democracy, economic prosperity and peaceful relations between states is a terrible illusion. The trade war between the U.S. and Japan, the interest rate war between Frankfurt, New York and Tokyo, prefigure a new imperialist world war for the division of markets and spheres of exploitation.

Australia is well and truly on the nose in international financial markets. Hawke/Keating's financial deregulation fuelled an orgy of takeovers and speculation in property and the stock market. In the '80s, the nett foreign debt blew out tenfold, to \$A137 billion, the lion's share held by Bond, Elliott, Murdoch & Co. The *interest bill* alone consumes 20 percent of export earnings. The comparable figures for Eastern Europe, where "communism" has supposedly "failed," are 5 percent for Czechoslovakia, 7 percent for the USSR and 8 percent for East Germany.

The Australian ruling class are scared witless that they will be squeezed out of the trading blocs forming around the capitalist superpowers. "We've got to attach ourselves to somebody if we can," said Liberal Party president and Elders IXL boss John Elliott (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 April). The EEC, the U.S.—anyone except Japan. Australian

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