

## Armenia at the flash-point

# Soviet Union: Perestroika fuels nationalist turmoil



Der Spiegel



Independent

Yerevan, Armenia: mass demonstration for autonomy on 26 March (above); police move against demonstrators (right). Decades of Stalinist bureaucratic misrule plus "market socialism" perestroika equal petty-bourgeois-led nationalist upheavals across Gorbachev's USSR.

In mid-September Soviet leader Gorbachev, appearing in public for the first time in six weeks, was confronted by angry working people in the Siberian town of Krasnoyarsk. "Go to our stores, Mikhail Sergeevich", they shouted at him, "there is nothing there!" "Lines everywhere! For meat, for sausage, for everything!" A few days later the Soviet news agency TASS reported that in the southern Caucasus mountain republics "mass-scale fighting" had broken out between Armenians and Azerbaijanis in the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh, this time with guns and knives. Faced with communal rioting and general strikes, virtual martial law was declared in Karabakh while Soviet troops cordoned off streets in the Armenian capital of Yerevan. Now in the Baltic republic of Estonia, anti-Russian nationalist forces have founded a "popular front" aiming ever more openly at secession from the USSR. Such are the bitter fruits of *perestroika*.

*Perestroika* (restructuring) was supposed to spur economic productivity, leading to more harmonious socialist development. Instead it has produced intensified social and national conflict as various groupings are out to

get a bigger piece of the economic pie and political power at someone else's expense. The turmoil in Soviet society is reflected in the upheaval in the upper echelons of the Kremlin oligarchy. In a dramatic move last week Gorbachev purged or downgraded his conservative critics in the Politburo. Yegor Ligachev was ousted as ideological overseer, Andrei Gromyko as Chairman of the Supreme Soviet and Viktor Chebrikov as head of the KGB. Supposedly Gorbachev now has a more effective, *perestroika*-minded team. But it will take more than a shake-up at the top of the bureaucracy to overcome the food shortages or resolve the festering national conflicts such as the Armenia crisis.

*It will take a proletarian political revolution to return the Soviet Union to the road of workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism, the road of Lenin and Trotsky.*

In the last few weeks and days the scale of nationalist turmoil in the Caucasus and the Baltic region has escalated dramatically. For months the Armenian capital of Yerevan has witnessed mass demonstrations numbering in the hundreds of thousands demanding that the autonomous re-

gion of Nagorno-Karabakh be removed from the Azerbaijani republic and ceded to Armenia. Up to half a million people thronged the centre of Yerevan in July to protest the USSR Supreme Soviet's decision maintaining the status quo. The capital of Karabakh, Stepanakert, has been gripped by an off-and-on general strike since the spring. In late September, an Armenian rally (called by local bureaucrats) degenerated into a riot. After reports that Azeris had ambushed a bus filled with Armenians, mobs left the Armenian rally and attacked Azeris in the nearby town of Khadzaly; in the fighting nearly 50 people were wounded, one of whom later died. In Stepanakert, Armenians roamed the streets for two days setting fire to homes abandoned by Azeris.

A deadly cycle of nationalist retribution has been set in motion that threatens the internationalist foundations of the Soviet state. Khadzaly came after the heinous anti-Armenian pogrom in the Azerbaijani city of Sumgait in February in which Azeri mobs brutally murdered at least 26 Armenians and six Azeris. As communalist violence escalates, Azeris long resident in Armenia have fled

in fear of their lives to Azerbaijan, and vice versa. At the time of the October Revolution, the fate of the Caucasian peoples was closely linked to each other and with the working class of Petrograd and Moscow. The Baku Soviet of 1918 was led by Armenian, Azeri and Russian Communists. Prodigious economic growth based on socialist economic relations led to an increasing interpenetration of peoples. But now the net result of more than six decades of Stalinist bureaucratic rule is forced population transfers whose ultimate logic is genocide.

Several days after the outburst of Armenian chauvinism, on 28 September riot police with truncheons broke up a demonstration in the capital of Lithuania, Vilnius. Protesters reportedly shouted at the police, "Occupiers, get out of here!" The Baltic republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have been rocked by an explosion of anti-Soviet nationalism which, unlike the communalist feuds in the Caucasus, is more or less explicitly directed against the Soviet central power. On the occasion of the anniversary of the Hitler-Stalin pact in August, tens of thousands marched in Tallinn, Riga and Vilnius.

*continued on page 8*

## Return to the road of Lenin and Trotsky!

# "All out to stop the KKK" - Philadelphia 5 November

## US anti-fascist demo call

The November 5 Mobilization to Stop the KKK has announced a mass labour-centred rally in the American city of Philadelphia in response to a threatened Ku Klux Klan/skinhead provocation on that date. As we go to press, already scores of endorsements for the anti-fascist rally have been received from labour officials and union branches in Philadelphia and elsewhere; a number of city council members; black, civil rights and minority groups; gay and lesbian organisations and prominent individuals, including Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt), former Black Panther leader imprisoned in San Quentin, California and James McPherson, author of the acclaimed history of the American Civil War, *Battle Cry of Freedom*.

The November 5 Mobilization was initiated by the Partisan Defense Committee (PDC), a nationwide class-struggle legal defence organisation. The PDC worked with the Spartacist League/US in building the successful November 1982 Labor/Black Mobilization

of 5000 which stopped the Ku Klux Klan from marching in the streets of Washington, DC. That demonstration was one of several labour-centred anti-fascist mobilisations which our comrades of the SL/US have helped to initiate in order to prevent the Klan and Nazi filth from establishing beachheads in major urban centres. Key to success is the determination of the unions and minorities to organise their forces in a display of strength on the streets. The threatened provocation by the Klan and its racist skinhead allies in Philadelphia - a city with a huge black and minority population as well as combative trade unions - must be stopped!

We print below the call issued by the PDC:

The KKK lynchers and the violent skinhead filth are threatening to strut into the heart of Philadelphia at Independence Mall on November 5. With their burning crosses and their swastikas, they are a deadly threat to



Workers Vanguard

**Washington, DC, 27 November 1982: SL-initiated Labor/Black Mobilization stops fascist Ku Klux Klan.**

blacks, Jews, Hispanics, gays, Catholics, unions - all of us.

The Klan and skinheads have already marched in Valley Forge, and Parkside where they got a hot reception. Now they're bringing their deadly provocation to Philly. There must be a massive, defiant display of labor/black power, together with minorities and all intended victims of the lynchers, on Independence Mall on November 5 to stop these fascist terrorists.

Make no mistake - the KKK are sadistic killers, in and out of their white sheets. Their idea of "free speech" is what the government did to MOVE - burning alive eleven black people, including five children. And the MOVE mothers are still locked up in jail!

We do not forget the Birmingham church bombings, the Greensboro massacre and now the torching of synagogues in NYC. And the degenerate skinheads with their Nazi regalia and jackboots want to act out their murderous Hitlerite fantasies. If we don't stop them here, who will be next to pay with their lives?

These labor-hating racists say they are going to bring their lynch ropes and Nazi salutes to the Liberty Bell, in the "cradle of liberty." For millions that "liberty" meant being born into slavery. The Civil War took care of chattel slavery. We need to finish the

job - and one step toward that can be by stopping the KKK/skinheads now.

The unions were built against the violent opposition of the KKK, and if the unions' power is unleashed we can make the streets of Philly safe from these racist criminals.

We will be at Independence Mall, Saturday, November 5 to honor the working people who built this country and have been denied the fruits of their labor. Today as black America is under the gun, all of labor is facing a union-busting offensive to roll back hard-won gains: remember the PATCO air controllers who were dragged away in chains! The Klan and skinheads are a threat to our livelihoods and our lives. The power to stop them lies with the integrated, combative unions in this city - transit, sanitation, Teamsters, teachers, longshoremen.

When the KKK tried to march against immigrants in Washington, D.C. in November 1982, the integrated power of 5,000 workers and minorities, backed by over 70 unions and union officials from Norfolk to Boston, sent them packing. The fascists must be stopped - and we can stop them here. All out to stop the KKK and skinhead thugs on November 5! *Be there!*

**Initiated by the Partisan Defense Committee**

1530 Locust St., Suite 92, Philadelphia, PA 19102 • (215) 790-1822

### For the rebirth of the Fourth International!

The Fourth International was founded 50 years ago last month, in a Europe threatened by war and fascism. Its founding document was the Transitional Programme, written by Leon Trotsky, from which the following excerpt is taken. Its cadres ravaged by murderous Hitlerite and Stalinist repression, the Fourth International



LENIN

TROTSKY

emerged from World War II politically disoriented. By the early 1950s it had succumbed to a liquidationist current which denied the need for an independent proletarian vanguard. It is our task to reforge Trotsky's Fourth International, whose banner and programme remain intact, as the world party of socialist revolution.

"People's Fronts" on the one hand - fascism on the other; these are the last political resources of imperialism in the struggle against the proletarian revolution. From the historical point of view, however, both these resources are stopgaps.... Nothing short of the overthrow of the bourgeoisie can open a road out.

The orientation of the masses is determined first by the objective conditions of decaying capitalism, and second, by the treacherous politics of the old workers' organizations. Of these factors, the first of course is the decisive one: the laws of history are stronger than the bureaucratic apparatus. No matter how the methods of the social betrayers differ - from the "social" legislation of Blum to the judicial frame-ups of Stalin - they will never succeed in breaking the revolutionary will of the proletariat. As time goes on, their desperate efforts to hold back the wheel of history will demonstrate more clearly to the masses that the crisis of the proletarian leadership, having become the crisis in mankind's culture, can be resolved only by the Fourth International.

- Leon Trotsky, "The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International" (September 1938)

## WORKERS HAMMER



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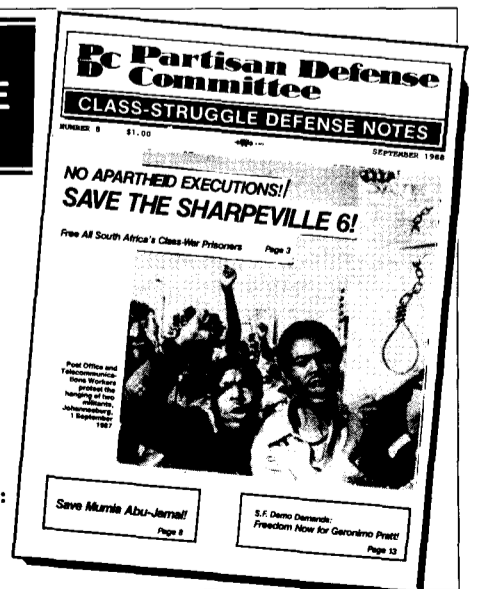
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# Spartacist League: London consolidation, Scottish beachhead

At a series of Central Committee meetings held last spring to discuss the perspectives and state of the Spartacist League/Britain, it was decided to reorganise the existing branches. A motion was passed to dissolve the existing locals in Sheffield and Birmingham, to reinforce the centre in London and to establish a beachhead in Scotland centred in Glasgow.

A major theme of the discussion was the need to reorient the SL/B as a fighting propaganda group, seeking regroupment, splits and fusions among ostensible revolutionary organisations. The disarray of the ostensible British left is evident, ranging from the spectacular implosion of the Healyites to the discomfiture of numerous reformist and centrist groups whose strategy of pressuring the Labour Party via supporting the Bennites is palpably bankrupt. In addition, the Communist Party continues to decompose, while Gorbachev's attempts to conciliate imperialism have left in the lurch those left Stalinists who looked towards closer association with Moscow to reform the CP.

Thus, the SL's programme ought to be attractive to militants breaking from anti-Sovietism, Labourism and Stalinist reformism. A major aim of our organisational consolidation is to concentrate the forces necessary to carry out effective propaganda work both energetically and thoughtfully. Failure to maintain a functioning, effective branch in London, the capital of British imperialism as well as the largest concentration of left organisations including a significant exile milieu, would doom the SL/B

to triviality. As was noted, this is particularly true given that there is no obvious second political centre as such.

By far the most significant domestic struggle in shaping the British workers movement of today was the year-long miners strike of 1984-85 - a massive class battle that confirmed in the negative the need for a fighting Bolshevik party on these islands. The strike demonstrated the fundamental

"lefts" as well as the Cold War "rights" abandoned the miners to fight alone. The strike was the occasion for a number of former "lefts" to make their peace with Kinnock. Internal differences in the Labour Party between a NATO-CIA loyal right wing and little-England, unilateralist "left" reformists, which had reached deep proportions in the early part of the decade, were thus subordinated to the funda-



Spartacist League struggles for Leninism against the dross of social democracy: SL at miners lobby of 1984 TUC (left); WH supplement (right).

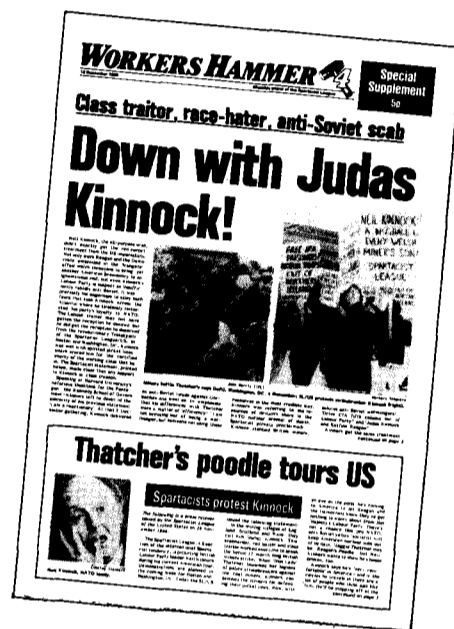
identity of all wings of reformism in their antagonism to proletarian revolution. Precisely because substantial industrial solidarity with the miners would have threatened to shut down the country, posing the question of which class shall rule, the trade union

mental goal of safeguarding British capitalism.

The miners were defeated but not crushed, reflected in the fact that today there is significant restlessness in the unions. But the bureaucratic misleaders of the organised

workers movement drew the demoralising and false conclusion that "anything" (ie, the Labour Party or even the Alliance) is better than Thatcher. This was encapsulated in Arthur Scargill's campaigning for arch scab-herder Neil Kinnock in the general election. The fake left overwhelmingly followed suit, and then supported Tony Benn's hapless Labour Party leadership campaign. While the SL correctly refused to be sucked into this social-democratic vortex, our organisation has not been immune to the gravitational pull of Labourism. Thus, we energetically distributed a special *Workers Hammer* supplement with our anti-Kinnock line and found wide interest from those outside and to the left of the Labour Party. At the same time, an opportunity was let slip to run a couple of parliamentary candidates in the 1987 general election, which could have posed in an exemplary fashion the need for a communist alternative to Labourite social betrayal.

A critical review of the protracted



anti-fascist campaign in Sheffield was also conducted in the Central Committee discussion. The SL had correctly pointed to the need to mobilise against the fascists and racist skinhead scum who gathered

*continued on page 11*

## Glasgow: letter of application

We are pleased to reprint below a letter of application for membership submitted by Sean, a young Glaswegian, who after subscribing to our press nearly a year and discussing with comrades was won to the programme of revolutionary Trotskyism.

I am writing to apply for membership of the "Spartacist League of Britain". In applying for membership I make it clear that I have come to political agreement on all major points discussed with members of the SL/B.

In coming from a Stalinist background, where from my early 'teens I have had a deep interest in politics, the defence of the Soviet Union to myself was paramount. However through my political evolution and particularly at the point at which I started to read Trotsky, I came to realise that what needed to be defended was not the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy, but the gains of "October" still to be found in the Soviet Union, ie collectivised property forms and planned economy, which is the basis of a socialist society. Trotsky's anal-

ysis of the dual nature of Stalinism is that it rests atop the gains of October which its existence depends upon, however it defends these gains through peaceful co-existence and betrayal of revolution abroad to placate imperialism which only further undermines the "dictatorship of the proletariat". In putting this into practice the "iSt" had the slogan "Hail the Red Army" in Afghanistan, this slogan contrasts Bolshevik principles with most of the left who capitulated to imperialism and ended up on the wrong side of the barricades. Again over "Solidarnosc" when the rest of the left was gloating over the "pope's shop steward" the "iSt" firmly called "Solidarnosc" counterrevolutionaries, who wanted to restore capitalism to Poland, and hailed General Pilsudski, a fascistic dictator of interwar Poland.

These two events signify for myself a break with Stalinism in the following way. How could a socialist society in Poland [lead] to workers organising massive strikes over discontentment with a socialist society? How could a socialist "state" throw the workers

into the open arms of the CIA and counterrevolution? Again how could the centre of world revolution betray the people of Kampuchea, Angola, Namibia and Afghanistan? And further repress the revolution in China in 1925-27, Spain 1936, and then crush the "workers councils" of Hungary in 1956. These issues meant I had to re-examine old ideas, I came to realise "two stage" revolution was Menshevik, and that it tied the revolutionary proletariat to the bourgeoisie in times of critical revolutionary potential. I came to realise that Eurocommunism was not a fundamental break from Stalinism, as "Socialism in One Country" will degenerate all good "communists" from being border guards of the Soviet Union to being agents of their own bourgeoisie. However more importantly I came to realise the worst crime of "Stalinism" was neglecting to give the international proletariat "international and revolutionary leadership". In discussions with the SL/B I have realised that defence of the Soviet Union is not defence of the

Stalinist bureaucracy, nor to change your line when Moscow changes course. Defence of the Soviet Union begins with "unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union", but it also means political revolution inside the deformed workers states to oust the bureaucratic caste to return them to the road of Lenin and Trotsky, for central planning through workers democracy.

The principled Bolshevik programme of the iSt which further embodies the programme of Marxist-Leninist internationalism is like a breath of fresh air. The politics of the iSt are always to be found on the right side of the class line, from defence of the Soviet Union to non-capitulation to social democracy, to defence of class war prisoners ranging from Geronimo Pratt to Russell Shankland and Dean Hancock. The iSt embodies the Leninist vanguard party, the tribune of all oppressed people based on the revolutionary potential of the proletariat....

In conclusion I would like to say that if accepted for membership I will come under the full discipline of the party and financial stipulations of the party.... Communist politics are not a game but a serious choice people have to make in their lives, I hope that I have made that choice. ■



# Russian Nazis raise their heads

## Soviet workers must crush Pamyat

Recent statements in Soviet newspapers report an ominous development. An outfit calling itself the "Russian National-Patriotic Front Pamyat" has been staging weekly demonstrations in the city of Leningrad. An Italian tourist who witnessed a Pamyat demonstration wrote to *Moscow News* (14 August), "A week has passed, and I'm still horrified. I felt as if I'd attended a real fascist meeting of the 1930s." "Surrounded by bodyguards in black shirts", Pamyat leader Dmitri Vassiliev rails against Jews while his cohorts blame the Chernobyl nuclear disaster on "enemy forces". The blood of every decent Soviet citizen boils over Pamyat's racist outrages. Leningrad must be cleansed of this fascist filth!

There is scarcely a street in Leningrad which does not evoke memories of this hero city's 900-day stand against the Nazi invaders and of the million or more who died to defend this western gateway to the Soviet homeland. From the sombre mass graves of the Piskarevskoye Memorial Cemetery, burial place of more than 500,000 Leningraders who died in the Nazi siege, it is but a few minutes' drive to the Rumyantsevsky Garden. Yet here, every Thursday, in this public park in the heart of Leningrad—the city of Lenin, the birthplace of the internationalist October Revolution—Pamyat has staged its disgusting spectacle. The proud people of Leningrad can't allow this to continue.

Leningrad writer Valery Voskoboinikov described one of the Pamyat rallies (*Moscow News*, 14 August):

"One speaker demanded that it should be forbidden for Russian men and women to marry members of definite alien races. Another called for the immediate deportation of Jews and members of other 'alien races' to 'their historical motherland.' Still another suggested declaring a ruthless war on those who 'concealed their ethnic origin under a Russian name!'"

In recent months, leaflets have appeared on walls demanding, "Russia is for Russians—Death to Yids!" Jewish gravestones in cemeteries in Moscow and elsewhere have been defaced. At a poetry reading by Andrei Voznesensky, who recently published a poem denouncing these acts, anonymous notes were sent to the stage reading, "All of you are Jews or sold out to Jews," "We will kill you." With their appeals for an anti-Semitic "Final Solution", with their ostentatious black shirts, with their racist diatribes against all non-Russian nationalities, these Great Russian "patriots" are more than extreme nationalists or latter-day Black Hundreds tsarist pogromists. They are dyed-in-the-wool Nazis, the Great Russian offspring of Hitler.

Pamyat should be made to feel the wrath of the survivors of the 20 million Soviet citizens of all nationalities who died fighting the Hitlerite invaders. For every one of these Pamyat fascists, there are tens and hundreds of fascist-hating workers, students, veterans and youth in mili-

tary service who would eagerly come out to the Rumyantsevsky Garden on a Thursday to teach the Russian Nazis a lesson. Who can doubt that a single militant demonstration of 50,000 outraged Leningraders, suitably prepared to defend themselves, coming out to burn Nazi swastika flags in Pamyat's face, ready to chase these Nazis to the nearby Neva River or drive them into the canals, would put an end to Pamyat? The Pamyat Nazis must be crushed before this festering sore becomes a gangrenous cancer threatening the Soviet state and its multinational people.

### WHY HAS PAMYAT BEEN TOLERATED?

Writer Voskoboinikov bitterly relates how at one of the weekly Pamyat rallies:

"One scene was particularly outrageous, when one of the Leningraders raised a poster with the words: 'Workers of all lands, unite!' Before the eyes of both militia and 'commissars' this poster was snatched out of his hands and torn up, and he himself was immediately pushed back by Pamyat militants. Why did the militia officials so carefully 'safeguard' the interests of the sponsors of the meetings?"

It is an open secret that Pamyat has its protectors within the bureaucracy. One of its Moscow leaders is Valery Yemelyanov, a professional anti-Semite attached to the Soviet diplomatic corps in the 1950s, who was convicted of the grisly murder and dismemberment of his wife in 1980. He was let off with a short term in a psychiatric hospital, only to re-emerge in Moscow when Pamyat became active. As we wrote last year, "With the advent of Gorbachev's *glasnost* (openness), everything from leftist currents to sinister ultranationalists are coming out of the closet" ("Pamyat: Russian Fascists Raise Their Heads", *Workers Vanguard* no 434, 7 August 1987). Obscenely declaring itself the guardian of Russia's "memory" (*pamyat* in Russian) and started organising.

While still party chief in Moscow



Yevgeni Khaldei

Victorious Red Army (left) tramples Nazi swastika, Austria, 1945. Twenty million Soviet citizens died to drive Nazi scourge from USSR. Piskarevskoye Memorial Cemetery (right), burial place of over 500,000 of the one million Leningraders who died in the 900-day siege of the city.



Pamyat fascists march in Moscow, May 1987.

Der Spiegel

last year, arch-*perestroika* advocate Boris Yeltsin granted a two-hour audience to a Pamyat delegation. Both Raisa Gorbachev and anti-Gorbachev "hardliner" Yegor Ligachev heap praise on Russian artist Ilya Glazunov, whose latest work commemorates the 1000th anniversary of the Russian Orthodox church by depicting *Stalin, Trotsky and Lenin* leading a Bolshevik mob over a road of skulls, under the gaze of Russian tsars and saints! (The government's official celebration of the millenium in June swelled Russian nationalist obscurantism—and seems to have provided the occasion for Pamyat to initiate its weekly rallies.) Most recently, tsar-lover Alexander Solzhenitsyn (who blames the *gulags* on *Lenin*) was invited to participate in an official committee appointed to erect a monument to the victims of Stalin's crimes.

With its conservative programme of "socialism in one country", its repudiation of Leninist internationalism, its embrace of the hoary traditions of Russian nationalism, the Stalinist bureaucracy at best politically disarms the Soviet masses in the face of nativist fascist reaction and at

times dangerously overlaps with outright Great Russian reactionaries. In his murderous campaign to smash the Bolshevik-Leninist Opposition led by Leon Trotsky, Stalin resorted to vile anti-Semitism. The Russian fascist groups that flourished among the counterrevolutionary emigre communities in the 1920s and '30s ultimately came to praise Stalin because he "had killed more Communists than Mussolini, Hitler, and Chiang Kai-shek combined", as one historian of Russian fascism observed.

### IS THIS WHERE GORBACHEV'S RUSSIA IS HEADING? TO PAMYAT? IT HAD BETTER NOT BE!

Describing the dual character of the nationalist bureaucratic caste, resting atop the internationalist foundations of the workers state created by the October Revolution, Trotsky wrote:

"If it were possible to X-ray politically the whole Soviet apparatus, we would find in it: concealed Bolsheviks, confused but honest revolutionaries, bourgeois democrats, and finally, candidates for fascism."  
— "New Defectors" (March 1938)

continued on page 10



Aurora Art Publishers

# As "Leninist" conciliates Russian Nazis

## TKP "rehabilitates" Stalin

The dramatic social upheavals in the Soviet Union since the accession of Mikhail Gorbachev to leadership three years ago, have further exacerbated the disarray of the crisis-torn Communist parties internationally. Gorbachev's policies – the highly contradictory and combustible combination of *perestroika*, *glasnost* and "peaceful coexistence" with the war-crazy anti-Soviet NATO imperialists – have caused particular consternation among those Stalinist groupings which, in opposition to the "Eurocommunists", solidarised with the Red Army intervention in Afghanistan and the Polish army's suppression of Solidarnosc' counterrevolutionary bid for power.

Gorbachev's withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan has opened the way for a horrible bloodbath of the Afghan peoples – particularly the women who have shed the veil in their fight for liberation against the CIA-backed Islamic fundamentalist cut-throats. Today the "Eurocommunists" see a kindred spirit in the Kremlin (as do the "tankie" *Morning Star* group, which now supports the pull-out of the Red Army). But other more critical "pro-Soviet" Stalinist groups have found themselves out in the cold. One such current is the Communist Party of Turkey (TKP), formerly the TKP Leninists who broke from the "opportunist wing" of Turkish Stalinism in 1979, opposing the latter's slavish tailing of the bourgeois Republican People's Party of Bulent Ecevit. When the Kremlin leadership sided with the "opportunists" the TKP Leninists were forced to revise their assessment of the Soviet bureaucracy and Communist parties, concluding that "the world



Pathfinder Press

Armed Spanish workers (left) were ready to fight for socialism, but Stalin strangled revolution to appease imperialist bourgeoisie.

communist movement as a whole takes up a centrist position today".

The TKP has maintained a critical posture towards Gorbachev's international policies and market-oriented reforms of the Soviet economy. On occasion, it has even used formulations traditionally associated with Trotskyism, including the call for political revolution in the Soviet Union. This demand, while vague and confused when not explicitly linked to the need to forge a Trotskyist party to lead such an anti-bureaucratic struggle, nonetheless flies in the face of the TKP's declared intent of reforming the Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy and the "world communist movement". Recent issues of



AP

the TKP's *Iscinin Sesi* (Workers Voice), however, have taken to eulogising... Joseph Stalin. In an article entitled "Kulaks reincarnated with the Gorbachev line" (*Iscinin Sesi* no 358, 25 July) the TKP writes:

"You erase from the history books the name of the communist who has the honour of having saved a great socialist country from liquidation, by seeing the advent of the war, better than others and before anyone else, and through having argued for the primacy of heavy industry over light industry. As if the millions of workers and the labouring masses who buried the fascists in the ground under the decisive and dedicated command of

'Uncle Joe' in World War II know nothing." (our translation)

*Iscinin Sesi* has not formally retracted its earlier statements on political revolution but its fulsome praise for Stalin at this point indicates a retreat to the perspective of pressuring hardliners within the bureaucracy. The TKP's coverage of the CPSU conference was heavily tilted in favour of support to Yegor Ligachev, Gorbachev's main ideological opponent within the Kremlin oligarchy. Crazy Rumanian strongman Ceausescu, who is resisting the drive toward *perestroika* in Eastern Europe and ordering thousands of Hungarian villages in Transylvania to be razed from the face of the earth as his "solution" to national antagonisms is another recent – with criticisms to be sure – favourite of *Iscinin Sesi*.

To offer Stalin, the grave-digger of revolution, as an alternative for the people of the USSR today is grotesque. The TKP's "rehabilitation" of Stalin comes at a time when the Soviet masses are critically examining their own history and topics formerly taboo are now the subject of public debate. Even Trotsky and the Left Opposition have been taken out of the realm of demonology. Indeed, the one thing Gorbachev praises Stalin for is his defeat of the Left Opposition. But *glasnost* has in effect sanctioned an intense debate on the role of Stalin and the fate of the Old Bolsheviks. *Iscinin Sesi* wants to paint "Uncle Joe" as some "hard" Bolshevik against Gorbachev today. Stalin was hard enough on Lenin's party, a man who killed more communists than Mussolini, Hitler and Chiang Kai-shek  
*continued on page 11*

## "Family values" hysteria targets gays Smash Section 28!

The intersection of disease with sex can create the conditions for severe repression or even worse under capitalism in its decay. The terrifying disease AIDS has called out every hatred, every prejudice in this sick society against "sex deviants", "drug addicts", the poor, the sick: its victims. The Thatcher government has whipped up and used the hysteria surrounding AIDS to regiment the entire population with its "moral" campaign for a return to "family values". Homosexuals, whose oppression is rooted in the institution of the patriarchal nuclear family, have become a particular target of this vicious government. As we wrote in the article "Criminal State Neglect as Epidemic Rages: The Agony of Aids", a review of Randy Shilts' book *And the Band Played On*, in *Women and Revolution* (Summer 1988):

"The fate of homosexuals – like that of any other oppressed group – is determined by the course of the class struggle. Today the rise of

'gay-bashing' and vicious discrimination against homosexuals flows not only from the rise of AIDS hysteria, but from the general reactionary climate engendered by a bourgeoisie triumphant in its 'roll-back' against the union movement and assaults on the working people and minorities."

On 24 May, Section 28 (formerly known as Clause 28 of the local government bill) became law. Section 28 baldly states, "a local authority shall not intentionally promote homosexuality". This vilely homophobic law, with its deliberately vague language of "intentionally promote", is designed to give the reactionary Thatcher government maximum flexibility in its witchhunt of the vulnerable homosexual community.

Prior to the passage of Clause 28, Britain witnessed the largest demonstrations in defence of basic democratic rights for homosexuals in this country's history. And the outrage against the bill was not confined to

Manchester:  
20,000 demonstrate against  
Clause 28 in  
February.



Britain alone. Protest demonstrations occurred throughout Europe as well as in Australia and the United States. In her recent tour of Australia, Thatcher was confronted with large demonstrations of protest against this vile law. The queen has not escaped unscathed either. In her visit to Holland this summer to celebrate the "Glorious Revolution", protesters lined the street practically every-

where she went. Pointing to the brutal mass murder of homosexuals in Nazi Germany, the World Congress of Gay and Lesbian Organisations has coordinated anti-Clause demonstrations at the British Embassy in Washington and in other US cities. Most recently, the Mayor of Amsterdam has launched a bus to travel throughout Europe to organise against Sec-  
*continued on page 10*

# Skinheads...

(Continued from page 12)

Klan and White Aryan Resistance in the US as well as the South African Afrikaans Resistance Movement. Other "Oi" bands feature names like No Remorse, Brutal Attack and Sudden Impact. Their "concerts", in reality fascist rallies, are orgies of racist insults against blacks and Jews, with "a brisk trade selling fascist literature, badges and records".

In Liverpool, a city with a black population going back several centuries, NF scum have stepped up attacks on integrated couples and families. In London, skinheads recently attacked a lesbian bar, slashing women with broken glass, leaving more than 20 battered. The fascists have particularly targeted football, the plebeian sport of Britain, for their recruitment campaigns. "To spend nearly a week with the tough-nut core of English soccer is to start to doubt the location of the boundaries of civilisation," observed a *Sunday Telegraph* (17 July) magazine reporter.

"The reason that television broadcasts of international football games never show the English fans while the pre-match national anthem is being played is that the English pens are a solid mass of Nazi salutes.... A chorus of gorilla-like grunts or a barrage of bananas from the English terraces greet opposing black players."

## SKINHEAD TERROR SPREADS

The skinhead phenomenon has been spreading its poison through Europe. In Britain, they feed off pervasive depression and despair; on the continent they have appeared together with the mass unemployment of the '80s. As well the "skins" have become fashionable among petty-bourgeois

The deadly menace of the Hitler-loving bands in West Germany has been documented in the book *Nazis, Skins und alte Kameraden* (1986), edited by Georg Biemann and Joachim Krischka. In December 1985, Turkish immigrant Ramazan Avcı was murdered by a gang of some 30 skins screaming "Turks out!" Then a black man was beaten at night at an underground station by skins who smeared him with swastikas and the slogan "Nigger out - White Power!" Earlier, in July 1983, a woman was stabbed by a skin after replying that she was Turkish.

These deadly racist assaults are not just the work of some deranged fringe elements. While neo-Nazi bands yelling "Heil Hitler!" and sporting SS symbols or the Prussian eagle beat up Turks, the respectable politicians in Bonn, both rightist Christian Democrats and Social Democrats, pass legislation to force out immigrants and set up concentration camps for Tamils seeking asylum.

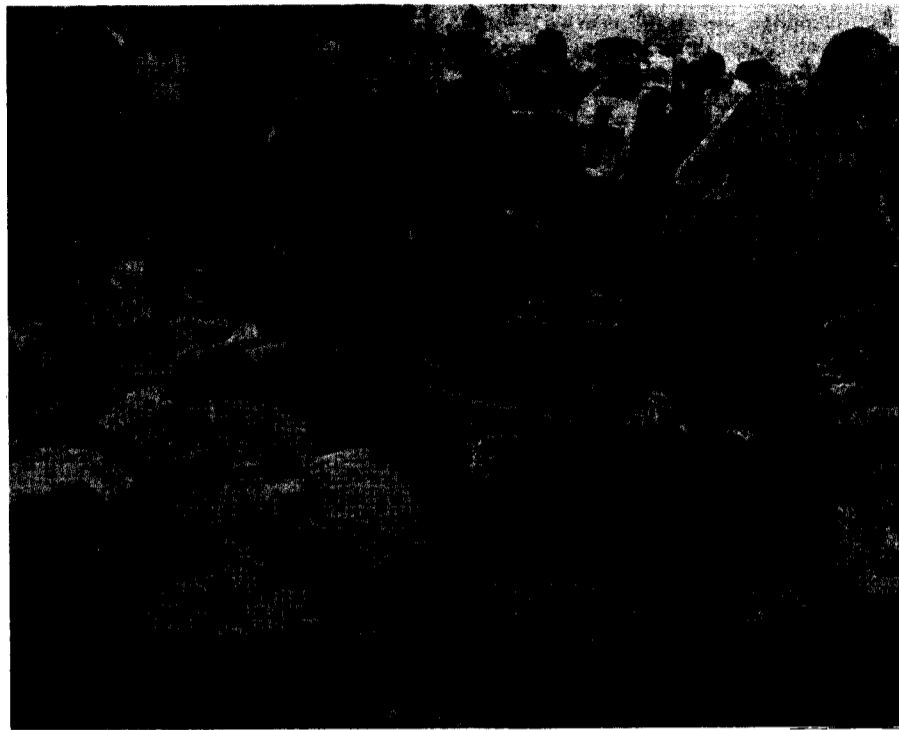
But the fascist punks have also met with opposition. In October 1983, when the West German football team played Turkey in the Olympia Stadium in Berlin, neo-Nazi gangs threatened to assault Turks in the heavily immigrant Kreuzberg neighbourhood. "Sports" clubs with names like Zyklon-B (the gas used by the Nazis in their death camps) and skinheads with bomber jackets proclaiming "Proud to Be a German" vowed "Kreuzberg must burn". West Berlin unions responded to the planned orgy of racist terror with a 3000-strong "friendship walk" and attempts to drown out the fascist chants during the game.

More recently, skinheads attacked a dormitory in Schriesheim for refugees seeking asylum on 30 January, the anniversary of Hitler's seizure of power. When Kuhnen's ANS thugs called for a pogrom against a Hamburg refugee dormitory on 20 February, several hundred leftists

skinheads staged a Europe-wide "action", converging on Normandy for a "Nazi rock concert". In Rouen and Brest this turned into a nightmare of racist violence as they attacked North Africans, Asians and blacks from the Antilles. Our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyiste de France responded with a protest demonstration the next day at Sotteville, near Rouen, where a Moroccan-owned bar was assaulted by the fascists. LTF

light (February 1988) explained how the fascists started organising skinheads around "Oi" music: "The NF saw the huge success of the rock against racism movement of the mid to late 1970s and decided to try and attract young street fighting skins into the NF by offering them gigs that would be heavily racist and anti-Jewish...."

"Rock against Racism" was the youth corollary of the popular-frontist



Peter Robinson

**Brussels, May 1985: Crushed bodies of Italian football fans after eruption of bloody chauvinist frenzy.**

signs called for "Worker/Immigrant Self-Defence Groups" and for "Full Citizenship Rights for Immigrants".

## NOT "A MATTER OF TASTE"

It is only in the absence of a class-struggle leadership of the labour movement that the barbaric skinhead scum can fester and grow. Yet while the British population at large rightly loathes and fears these killers, much of the left denies any identification of the skinheads and fascism, and even invites them into its midst. An article in the anti-fascist journal *Searchlight* (September 1986) exposed a nest of fascists with histories of violent racist attacks being hired as stewards by gay pride, CND (Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament) and anti-apartheid events. Denouncing the "complacency of many progressive organisations towards this nazi infiltration", the article concluded: "By their lack of political and moral sense the labour and gay movements have allowed a very large Trojan horse into their midst which may well turn out to be a tiger that will devour them."

A subsequent article in *Search-*

Anti Nazi League (ANL) organised by Tony Cliff's Socialist Workers Party. The SWP sought to compete with the fascists by vying for their base of support among youth with rock concerts. The Cliffites tried to organise skinheads against the Nazis, with explicit appeals to this lowlife scum: "Skins hate authority and the Nazis represent authority" (*Socialist Worker*, 1 July 1978). When the National Front staged a mass demonstration in the substantially Asian East End of London in 1978, the ANL deliberately diverted tens of thousands of anti-fascist militants away from confronting the Nazis with its "Carnival 2" rockfest. These days, the SWP does not even pay lip service to the need to fight fascism. Meanwhile, it has sponsored a rock group called the Redskins, whose album is entitled "Neither Washington Nor Moscow".

An increasingly dubious group called the Revolutionary Communist Party, which originated in a split from the Cliffites in the 1970s, has gone even further. Specialising in classless appeals to lumpen and petty-bourgeois outrage, emphasising the "politics



Workers Hammer

**Miners strike inspired support from blacks, Asians, women, lesbian and gay activists, as well as support from workers around the world.**

elements who want to get their kicks by kicking the shit out of "foreigners". While Britain reportedly has several tens of thousands of skinheads, there are now some 2000 in West Germany and several hundred in France as well (*Le Nouvel Observateur*, 19 August).

In the Fourth Reich of German imperialism, skinheads and other fascists have also targeted football fan clubs as a prime recruiting ground. Every Saturday shouts of "Sieg Heil!" and "Deutschland, Deutschland uber alles" are bellowed out in the stadiums. The National Socialist Action Front of Michael Kuhnen dominates the Hamburg "Lions" club, while the Eagle Front in Frankfurt includes former members of the "Hoffmann Defence Sport Group", the murderous Nazis who set off a bomb at the 1980 Munich Oktoberfest, killing 13 and seriously injuring over 200.

countermobilised to stop them. While various reformists called on the West German imperialist state to ban the fascists, contingents of the Trotskyistische Liga Deutschlands, German section of the international Spartacist tendency, called for mass worker/immigrant mobilisations to smash the fascists.

The skinhead "phenomenon" has now spread to France as well, where Le Pen's National Front fascists won 10 per cent at the polls last April. On May Day, squads of shaved-head thugs formed up on the Champs Elysees in a Le Pen provocation against the international workers day. And recently a homeless man was murdered outside Lille, his head kicked in by a skinhead. Hundreds outraged by this atrocity marched through the city under a banner reading "Skinheads, Nazis, Vermin".

Last May, for the first time the

## Spartacist League public meeting

**The Bolsheviks led the Russian Revolution!  
Britain needs a Bolshevik Party!**

**LONDON DATE: Tuesday, 1 November**

**TIME: 7-30 pm**

**VENUE: Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq. WC2**

For more information contact the Spartacist League:

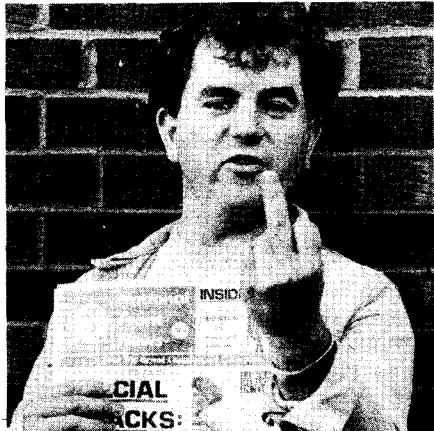
PO Box 1041, London NW5 3EU — Phone: (01) 485 1396





of power", vying with Radio Free Europe in the stridency of its anti-Soviet propaganda, disavowing the organised labour movement (even openly organising scabs during the miners strike), the RCP not only has numerous skinhead toughs in its organisation but has even recruited a "former" fascist organiser. It is a telling indictment of the rest of the British left that the Spartacist League was virtually the only organisation to raise the alarm over the RCP's invitation for fascist infiltration into the left and labour movement.

The "red skins" phenomenon has meanwhile spread to other European countries, particularly West Germany. An anti-fascist demonstration in West Berlin on 20 August allowed the presence of a contingent of "left" skinheads, who distributed a Maoist pamphlet railing against the "super-



Fascist NF scum peddling his filth.

powers" of the US and USSR, a chemically pure expression of resurgent German nationalism. Opening the door to these "red" skinheads is playing with fire, as our German comrades warned after the Berlin demo: "The TLD had to learn the hard way how the 'new German nationalism' is a transmission belt to punk-fascism. One Uli Sandhaus was expelled from our organisation in 1982, after developing an enthusiasm for 'Oi! Oi!' music and exhibiting the swastika in his apartment...." "In 1984, Sandhaus translated these 'proclivities' into direct action and led a bloody attack on our supporter, Gisela Borowski, whom he had previously sent postcards with 'Oi! Oi!' threats." - *Spartakist* no 58, September/October 1988

On 20 August one of the "red skins" declared that "Uli is my friend". No doubt!

There is nothing surprising about the existence of such "red skins". Fascist gangs are drawn from lumpenised youth who hate established authority. Divorced from the working class and socially nihilistic, they easily swing from the extreme left to the extreme right. Not a few of Hitler's storm troopers had at one point or another supported the Communists. In West Germany today there is a large lumpenised milieu of the "no future" generation - from squatters and *Autonomen* anarchists to the various skinhead gangs - in which the lines between left and right are totally blurred.

The key is revolutionary leadership - a workers movement which is not afraid to draw clear class lines, which is willing to organise a fight for workers power to resolve the crisis of bourgeois society. A revolutionary leadership of labour could draw to its side in the anti-capitalist struggle many layers of the most oppressed including desperate youth, but instead the bankruptcy of the cringing reformists leaves a vacuum which the fascists are eager to fill, while others to the left seek to compete with the fascists on the latter's terrain.

In the 1920s and '30s the German Stalinists at times appealed to Nazi militants on the basis of "national Bolshevism", ie, championing imperialist Germany's national cause against Britain and France and helping fuel the nationalist hysteria which paved the Nazis' way to power. Likewise today it is resurgent German nationalism which links the reformist left with the "red skins" with their "Neither Washington Nor Moscow" slogan - a slogan also claimed by the outright fascist skinheads since it captures nationalist resentment and anti-Communism.

In France, some of the skinhead groups call themselves the "neighbourhood SA". The Nazi SA Brownshirts were recruited from the socially pathological, criminal dregs of crisis-racked German society, used to terrorise the labour movement and Jews and then discarded after Hitler took power. The Nazis rose to power in the service of German capitalism. Once there, they had to discard their plebeian shock

troops and the rhetoric of "national socialism". In the "night of the long knives" in June 1934, following an ultimatum by the German general staff, Hitler carried out a "blood

labour movement against advocates of all persuasions of class collaboration, from the Labour Party to the chauvinist French Communist Party to the Cliffite SWP. At the time of



Hitler's notorious lumpen SA killers rounding up KPD members in 1934.

purge" of the lumpen SA Brownshirts. The skinhead rabble must be crushed in the egg before they become the shock troops for another triumphant fascist movement.

On the other side of the Atlantic, the nativist fascists of the Ku Klux Klan along with groups like Tom Metzger's White Aryan Resistance (WAR) have recently allied with skinheads in staging racist provocations from Orange County in southern California to Chicago's Marquette Park to Atlanta during the Democratic convention (see "Fascist Metzger and His Deadly Skinhead Thugs", *Workers Vanguard* no 462, 7 October). Now the skinhead cut-throats and KKK lynchers are threatening to stage a racist rally in Philadelphia, November 5. In response, the Partisan Defense Committee has initiated a mass labour-centred mobilisation to keep the streets safe from the race-terrorists. (See article, p2)

The Spartacist League/US, whose class-struggle defence strategy the PDC embraces, has a record of interdicting fascist incursions into northern US cities, including a 5000-strong labour/black mobilisation which stopped a KKK race-hate provocation in predominantly black Washington, DC in November 1982. Such a class-struggle strategy is urgently needed today in Britain and throughout Western Europe, necessarily entailing a political struggle within the

the Brussels massacre, which followed on the heels of the defeat of the bitter 12-month miners strike, we noted: "It was the heroic miners whom Thatcher tried to crush in blood who pointed the road out of the barbarism witnessed in Brussels. Instead of fences to separate rival gangs competing in bloodthirsty patriotism, we saw French and English miners shoulder-to-shoulder singing the 'Internationale'...." "Had the miners defeated Thatcher and opened up an intensified working-class offensive against capitalist oppression and unemployment, it would have given the masses of despairing and lumpenised youth something positive to look to. But the labour misleaders who in the aftermath of Brussels mutter about unemployment and underlying social causes were the very same gentlemen who stabbed the miners strike in the back...." - *Workers Hammer* no 70, June 1985

The fascists and their skinhead dogs of war are a deadly danger to minorities, to the workers movement, to all decent people. This human dust can and will be swept away by the power of the proletariat organised in sharp class struggle against the racist terrorists, on the road to the revolutionary overthrow of the rotting system that spawns this racist filth.■

## A whole town sentenced

# Down with the death sentences in Turkey!

The following article has been adapted from *Spartakist* (no 58, September/October 1988), newspaper of the *Trotzkistische Liga Deutschlands*, German section of the international Spartacist tendency.

24 August, Erzincan - Eight death penalty sentences, 14 life sentences, 313 prison sentences from one to 20 years. This was the judgement of war court no 3 in its unprecedented mass trial against almost one half of the adult inhabitants of the east Turkish town of Fatsa. The trial lasted eight years in which altogether 811 inhabitants were accused.

The campaign of extermination against the whole village began in 1979. The reason: the inhabitants had elected the master tailor Fikri Sonmez as mayor, and with that began

to build the "Model Fatsa". They formed citizen committees to democratically control the finances and administration of the town and tried to break the state purchasing monopoly of nuts. This small town became a symbol of political resistance and the wish of the population for humane, socialistic living and working conditions.

In July, 1980 the army together with the fascists devastated Fatsa: the herald of the NATO putsch of 12 September. After the putsch one-third of the inhabitants were imprisoned and hundreds were tortured. It sufficed to be a member or a sympathiser of the left organisation *Devrimci Yol*. Charges were based on Articles 146 and 168, copied from the fascist Mussolini constitution. The main defendant, Sonmez, was bru-

tally tortured to death in prison in 1985 as were many others.

Through such "trials" as that against *Dev Yol* in Fatsa and against the TBKP (United Communist Party of Turkey) leaders Haydar Kutlu and Dr Nihat Sargin the junta wants to drown in blood the struggle for human dignity (see *Workers Hammer* no 98, May/June 1988). Given that, the sectarianism of the Turkish left organisations which fail to differentiate between defence against state repression and political/programmatic solidarity is clearly suicidal. The terror against Fatsa cries out for defence action from the international working class movement. Particularly in Britain, where a large number of immigrant Turkish workers reside and where Margaret Thatcher has rolled out the red carpet for the

butcher Evren, Turkey's Pinochet, this is an urgent responsibility. The Turkish junta, seeking "respectability" among the imperialist "democracies" also hosted a visit by Thatcher where she made a point of visiting the Istanbul army headquarters. At one point in this trip she declared: "Whether it is described as Ozalite [the Turkish prime minister] or Thatcherite, the goal is the same."

The brutal Turkish regime has imprisoned hundreds of thousands of trade unionists, leftists and Kurds. Defend the accused - from *Dev Yol* to the TBKP! Down with the death sentences! Free all class war prisoners! For the Kurdish right of self-determination - For a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan! Smash the NATO military bonapartist regime - For workers revolution!

# Perestroika...

(Continued from page 1)

Marching under the flags of the inter-war bourgeois states, notorious for their persecution of Jews and Communists, many of the protesters carried placards which obscenely showed a hammer and sickle joined to the Nazi swastika. This is the language of the CIA's "Captive Nations" crowd.

What the Baltic republics and Armenia have in common is that they are among the most advanced parts of the Soviet Union, and they are playing out the dog-eat-dog logic of *perestroika* with its market-oriented reforms. A recent article in the *San Francisco Chronicle* (31 August) made the perceptive observation:

"In addition to this political turmoil, Gorbachev's economic reforms are likely to exacerbate the ethnic crisis. Perestroika is already producing unemployment, inflation, and recession....

"But its most worrying legacy may be regional economic disparity. Variations in regional patterns of employment will produce economic inequalities between ethnic groups. Machine tool builders in Russia will soon race ahead of cotton growers in Central Asia. These differences are certain to create resentments."

Decades of mismanagement by the Kremlin bureaucracy have undermined the belief that there can be equality between the Soviet peoples on an increasing plane of material well-being. Much of the intelligentsia throughout the USSR identifies social and national equality with economic stagnation and levelling down. So they're going for increasing material well-being by the *inequality* route - decentralisation and market competition.

Stalinism has been synonymous with national oppression of non-Russian peoples in the Soviet Union. Under Stalin (himself a Georgian) this meant Russification of the non-Russian republics of the USSR, the state which had been conceived by the Bolsheviks as a genuinely free union of peoples. (A contemporary



Workers Vanguard Maps

**National conflict erupts in Soviet Caucasus (at right) over demands for transfer of Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region from the Azerbaijani to the Armenian republic.**

cisive signal that there is no place for nationalist chauvinism in the homeland of the October Revolution.

What's needed is the Marxist programme which animated the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky. It is necessary to reforge in the Soviet Union an authentically Bolshevik party committed to central planning under workers democracy, social egalitarianism and equality between peoples, and proletarian internationalism. Only such a programme can liberate the creative energies of all Soviet peoples, overcoming the potentially fratricidal national conflicts which loom ever more ominously in Gorbachev's Russia.

## BEHIND RESURGENT ARMENIAN NATIONALISM

The intense nationalist agitation in Armenia and the Baltic republics underscores the historic bankruptcy of Stalinist bureaucratic rule and the dangerous effects of Gorbachev's efforts to "reform" it. For the Armenians have traditionally been the most pro-Russian of Soviet nationalities, while in the era of the October Revolution Latvia and, to a lesser degree, Estonia were strongholds of Bolshevism.

As a small Christian people in the Near East, the Armenians have long looked to Russia as a protector

sian general Denikin. Yet even then a majority of Armenians regarded unity with Russia as the only permanent basis for military security and economic stability. To save themselves from an invading Turkish army, in late 1920 the Dashnaks negotiated an agreement with the Bolsheviks which de facto incorporated Armenia into the Soviet state.

Armenia has subsequently become one of the most prosperous regions in the Soviet Union. With its well-educated working class and large intelligentsia, it is a centre of high-tech industry and scientific research in the USSR. Under Gorbachev's *perestroika*, with its emphasis on rewarding competitive superiority, the Armenian bureaucrats and intellectuals had expected to gain even more, particularly at the expense of less developed Azerbaijan. Thus Armenians are in the vanguard of "market socialism" in the Soviet Union. The idea of *perestroika* in Yerevan is that Armenians will be the factory managers, Russians the production workers and Azeris the janitors.

Beginning last year, Armenian intellectuals launched a campaign to transfer the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region, a mountainous enclave of 150,000 inhabitants, from the jurisdiction of Azerbaijan to Armenia. As we wrote last spring, "Since a majority of inhabitants of Nagorno-Karabakh are Armenians who want to be part of the Armenian republic, that is their democratic right" ("Behind the Armenia Crisis", *Workers Vanguard* no 450, 8 April). But the Karabakh movement is only part of an irredentist programme for consolidating Greater Armenia. Next on their agenda is the Autonomous Republic of Nakhichevan, once part of Armenia but now with a majority Azeri population. The demand to transfer Karabakh has been rejected by the Kremlin bureaucracy for fear of opening the door to endless territorial claims and counter-claims by the various Soviet nationalities.

Frustration over Nagorno-Karabakh has produced a wave of rabid chauvinism in Armenia. The *Washington Post* (12 September) quotes as typical an Armenian fruit merchant:

"Azerbaijanis are just Turks, the same lot, and if I see a Turk, I'll kill him. They killed our grandparents, and now they want to kill us. We could live with them if they were only human beings. But they act like animals."

A *New York Times* report from Yerevan cites a prominent Armenian intellectual offhandedly commenting "we are a nation surrounded by barbarians", while in the streets an agitator "loudly called for Christian nations to band together against the predominantly Moslem Azerbaijanis,

who, he declares, 'breed like cockroaches'."

The Armenians, a few hotheads notwithstanding, do not want to separate from Russia. They know that as a small, independent state of some three million people in the Near East they would be easy prey for stronger Islamic neighbours, especially Turkey. Traditionally they have appealed to the Russians as a fellow "Christian people" to unite against the Muslim infidel. Armenian bureaucrats, intellectuals and petty-capitalist entrepreneurs also understand their relative prosperity stems from being a culturally and technologically advanced section of the Soviet economy. They just wanted a better deal in partnership with the Russians. But when Moscow didn't give them what they wanted, the mood turned dramatically against the central government. Back in February-March demonstrators in Yerevan carried portraits of Gorbachev and hailed *glasnost*. No longer.

Gorbachev's *perestroika* has unleashed a new round of communalist blood-letting in the Caucasus. Yet the Stalinist regime *cannot* resolve the myriad national disputes, claims or aspirations in a democratic and equitable manner. Under a regime of workers democracy the borders of the various republics and autonomous regions could be adjusted according to the will of the peoples involved. Moreover, if the Soviet Union were carrying out a programme of revolutionary internationalism, smashing the reactionary CIA-backed mullahs in Afghanistan instead of temporising and then pulling Soviet troops out, if the USSR were promoting the programme of proletarian revolution in Iran, which would extend the gains of October for example to Iranian Azerbaijan, rather than capitulating before the anti-Communist Khomeini - then the Soviet peoples would not be consumed by feuding over age-old national grievances at home.

## ESTONIA AND LATVIA WERE BASTIONS OF BOLSHEVISM

In the Western media the Soviet Baltic republics are presented as hotbeds of anti-Communist nationalism. In recent months mass demonstrations have taken place in Riga and Tallinn and Vilnius, under the flags of the independent bourgeois Latvian, Estonian and Lithuanian states of the interwar years. Yet these "independent" states were created through the direct intervention of Western imperialism after crushing the pro-Soviet, revolutionary workers of Estonia and Latvia. Historically, this region was a stronghold of Bolshevism.

From its formation just prior to the Revolution of 1905, the Latvian Social Democrat Workers Party was



**Lenin's last struggle was directed against Stalin (third from left) and his lieutenant Ordzhonikidze (at right), over their Great Russian chauvinism against Georgian Communists. Photo from 1925.**

analogue to Stalin is the "solution" to the national question in Romania by the ultra-Stalinist Ceausescu, who has ordered thousands of Hungarian villages in Transylvania razed from the face of the earth.) But once the iron lid of repression has been lifted by Gorbachev, you get the flourishing of national particularism and chauvinism as the result. And the most dangerous of these is the emergence of the black-shirted *Great Russian Nazis of Pamyat*, which has been staging weekly provocations in Leningrad. A massive, organised demonstration of Leningrad workers and youth to *crush Pamyat* would be a de-

against their hostile Islamic neighbours, especially Turkey. The Armenian Dashnaks were the only nationalist party in the Russian empire to support the tsarist autocracy. At the outbreak of World War I, the Dashnaks formed volunteer regiments to fight for Russia against Ottoman Turkey. Partly in response, the Turks massacred over a million Armenians the following year.

Amid the anarchic conditions in the Caucasus created by the Bolshevik Revolution and ensuing civil war, Armenia achieved a short-lived independence under the Dashnaks, who collaborated closely with the White Rus-



closely linked to Lenin's Bolsheviks. This reflected the exceptionally high level of class consciousness – scarcely contaminated by nationalism – of Latvian workers, including many farm labourers, who hated not only the German-speaking Baltic barons and Russian bureaucrats, but also the Latvian bourgeoisie and rich peasants. Until 1917 the Latvian party was the largest component of the Russian social democracy. "Menshevism was an unwanted child in the Latvian SD", writes Andrew Ezergailis in his work, *The 1917 Revolution in Latvia* (1974), and in the year of the revolution "Bolshevik dominance was assured in the Soviets from the very beginning" unlike the rest of the empire.

At the outbreak of the 1917 Russian Revolution all eight Latvian regiments in the tsarist army went over to the soviets. The Lettish Rifles – whose heroism in the Civil War was legendary – were the only regiments from the old tsarist army to be incorporated intact into Trotsky's Red Army. In the November 1917 elections to the Constituent Assembly, the Bolsheviks received 70 per cent of the total vote in Latvia, 40 per cent in Estonia – far higher than in Russia where much of the peasantry still supported the petty-bourgeois populist Social Revolutionaries. However, the fledgling soviet republics of Latvia and Estonia were crushed when the German imperialists overran and occupied the region in late 1917.

With the collapse of Kaiser Wilhelm's Germany in November 1918, the Latvian and Estonian workers again moved to take power into their hands. Proletarian uprisings from within and support of the Red Army from without led to the formation of the Latvian Soviet Republic in early 1919. The American bourgeois historian Stanley Page in his study on *The Formation of the Baltic States* (1959) acknowledges: "In Latvia's working class, Soviet rule did find some basis for the establishment of a government able to call upon a substantial percentage of the population for support. A workers' rebellion heralded the coming of the Red Army into Riga, and similar risings also anticipated the Reds' capture of Jelgava and Ventspils." In Estonia, likewise, the advance of the Red Army was greeted by working-class uprisings.

However, Soviet power in Latvia and Estonia was crushed by an unholy alliance of British and German imperialism, White Russian forces and native bourgeois nationalists. The principal architect of counterrevolution in the Baltic was Britain, whose fleet proved an effective weapon in the battles for the coastal cities. Tallinn fell to the counterrevolution at the end of 1918, Riga held out for another five months. Following the birth of the "independent" Baltic states, their bourgeois rulers, puppets of Western imperialism, unleashed a white terror that decimated the Communists. An attempted uprising in Tallinn in 1924, engineered by Zinoviev, was a failed putsch. In the following decades the once powerful socialist proletariat of Latvia and Estonia was progressively weakened.

In the '30s the right-wing regimes in Riga, Tallinn and Vilnius became increasingly repressive towards the left and workers movement, instituting a *numerus clausus* to restrict Jewish enrolment in the universities, unleashing pogroms. Following the 1939 Stalin-Hitler pact, Moscow incorporated the Baltic states into the USSR as a strategic defensive measure. However, Stalin left the old bourgeois order virtually intact. When



Der Spiegel  
Soviet troops leave Afghanistan. Kremlin Stalinists appease imperialism, abandon Afghan leftists, women to CIA-backed Islamic slaughter.

Hitler launched Operation Barbarossa against Russia in June 1941, the Baltic countries were again overrun by the German army. The Nazi occupiers and their local allies exterminated not only Jews but anyone suspected of Communist sympathies. When the Red Army liberated the Baltic republics in 1944, the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian collaborators retreated with the Wehrmacht, becoming the first of the Captive Nations Cold Warriors in Bonn and Washington.

Today, Latvia and Estonia are the most economically advanced, Westernised parts of the USSR. The nationalist bureaucrats and intellectuals now want to retain control over every rouble generated in these republics. Activists in the Latvian and Estonian Popular Fronts – supposedly formed to promote Gorbachev's "reform" programme – are demanding that self-financing be applied not only to individual enterprises, but also want full control of all foreign trade in the hands of the republics, including trade with other parts of the Soviet Union. A petty-capitalist entrepreneur in Estonia quipped: "We'll have our own currency. The rate'll be three Soviet roubles for an Estonian rouble."

On 1 October the Popular Front of Estonia held its first national congress in the Lenin Palace of Culture in Tallinn. Reportedly, a quarter of its leaders are members of the Communist Party. But CP approval or no, where this is headed is towards the break up of the USSR. "Naturally, independent Estonia is the aim of each Estonian," said one Popular Front organiser. Among other things, they are demanding the power to stop immigration of non-Estonians (some 40 per cent of the population and half of Tallinn is now Russian), and call for the exclusive use of Estonian as the official language.

These demands amount to an attack on the very foundations of the Soviet Union. The language question in particular was seen by Lenin and the Bolsheviks as a key aspect of the struggle for national equality in the tsarist prison house of peoples. The Bolsheviks fought against the imposition of the Russian language on non-Russian nationalities, but they also opposed the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalists who demanded "national-cultural autonomy" and official sanction for their language. Lenin insisted: "The national programme of working-class democracy is: absolutely no privileges for any one nation or any one language...." As was proven in practice through

the October Revolution, a programme of consistent democracy among the mosaic of nationalities under the tsarist empire could only be implemented through the proletarian seizure of power and the creation of a centrally planned, collectivised economy.

And only on a thoroughly internationalist programme could the working masses seize power. It was under Stalin and the nationalist dogma of "socialism in one country" that Bolshevik internationalism was reversed and Great Russian chauvinism and anti-Semitism again reared their heads in the Kremlin. Lenin's last political struggle, in 1922-early '23, was against Stalin's drive to impose on the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics the old tsarist principle of "Russia, one and indivisible". Lenin insisted that "freedom to secede from the union" was fundamental, not a paper clause to cover the Russifying bureaucracy. At the same time, class-conscious Soviet workers of all nationalities must oppose movements for secession which are in reality a cover for bourgeois counterrevolution. While the Latvian Soviet Republic of 1919 was an independent workers state closely allied with Soviet Russia, the forces now pushing for an independent Latvia and Estonia are increasingly anti-Soviet and anti-Communist. Thus Western imperialism welcomes and foments Baltic nationalism as a hoped-for first step towards the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

#### FOR SOCIAL AND NATIONAL EQUALITY

The roots of the present Soviet crisis lie deep in decades of Stalinist bureaucratic misrule, now aggravated by Gorbachev's *perestroika*. Wherever "market socialism" has been introduced, it has generated widening social, regional and national inequalities. These tendencies have reached an extreme point in the country which originated "self-management" and "self-financing" 40 years ago, namely, Yugoslavia. Today, Yugoslavia is wracked by a 200 per cent inflation rate, mass lay-offs, a savage austerity programme imposed by world bankers, and violent hostility between the various national republics and autonomous regions. Nonetheless, practically all parts of Yugoslavia have seen militant workers strikes and protests against the increasingly desperate economic conditions.

On at least three occasions in the last several months workers have stormed the parliament in Belgrade.

Both the rising working-class anger and growing national hostilities were dramatically demonstrated in a rally of 70,000 in the central Serbian town of Kraljevo a few weeks ago. Officially, the rally was to be a Serbian nationalist protest over the exodus of Serbs from the predominantly Albanian region of Kosovo. However, the rally turned into a bitter attack on bureaucratic parasitism. A union leader at a railroad car factory exclaimed:

"Return all you have taken from the working class! You with your privileged pensions, which are bigger than the pay of entire brigades of steelworkers, do you ever blush when you collect them?"  
"We demand the right to dispose of the proceeds of our work" (New York Times, 23 September).

Such sentiments could lay the basis for a struggle against the parasitic bureaucracy uniting the proletarians of all the diverse nationalities. But that requires an internationalist communist leadership.

Yugoslavia has experienced "market socialism" for four decades. In the Soviet Union, the very introduction of *perestroika* has produced a deepening economic and political crisis. There exists among Soviet working people a deep reservoir of egalitarian and collectivist values, the belief that what is produced in society should be available to all of its members more or less equally. Soviet workers have been told for decades, and they believe, that the productive resources of their country belong to them. Thus *perestroika* is bound to produce massive popular resistance which can open the road to proletarian political revolution to shatter the Stalinist bureaucracy.

After coming to power in 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev enjoyed what in American parlance would be called a "political honeymoon". The confrontation over food lines in Krasnoyarsk last month and the nationalist uproar in Armenia and the Baltic republics indicate that Gorbachev's "honeymoon" with Soviet working people is over. For Soviet workers to take back political power requires the leadership of a revolutionary Marxist party, a new Bolshevik party. And like the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky, it would be based on the inextricable link between the struggle for authentic workers rule in the Soviet Union and the fight for world socialist revolution.

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# Pamyat...

(Continued from page 4)

Under *glasnost* and *perestroika*, a whole political spectrum which had lain dormant under decades of heavy-handed repression has come to the surface in Gorbachev's Russia. Pamyat stands at one extreme - outright fascist counterrevolution. Lopping off that excrescence would open up possibilities for a revolutionary transformation that would bring authentic socialism to the Soviet Union.

Having in the past suppressed everything which was seen as a threat to its bureaucratic order, now that the lid has been somewhat lifted, the Stalinist regime allows Great Russian fascists to run loose in the streets. We certainly do not look to the Stalinist regime, which won't recognise genuine fascists under its very nose, to now crush the Pamyat menace. Many Soviet citizens may be fearful, with good reason, that any crack-down would be a signal for renewed all-sided repression. The Soviet people must reassert their right to mass political demonstrations.

What is necessary now is an aggressive mobilisation organised as widely as possible - from below, independently of the authorities - in Lenin-grad, to ensure the greatest preponderance in the relationship of forces against the dangerous Pamyat fascist fanatics. People from many different political persuasions can join together in *action* to smash Pamyat. They will undoubtedly attract many Lenin-graders with embittered memories who make up in zeal what they lack in physical stamina. Massive and determined demonstrations must eliminate this nativist Hitlerite menace, presenting the authorities with an accomplished fact.

It will take a Trotskyist party at the head of the Soviet working people to restore genuine soviet democracy. The crushing of Pamyat as a necessary measure of self-defence by the Soviet people will be a step on that road.

Reporting on an attempted Nazi demonstration in Moscow in 1982, the *New York Times* (29 April 1982) commented: "Memories of the war against Nazi Germany and its 20 million Soviet victims remain sacred in the Soviet Union, and Muscovites who heard reports of the attempted rally generally expressed shock that anyone would openly profess fascism." When the handful of Russian Nazis showed up in Moscow's Pushkin Square to "celebrate" Hitler's birthday, they were immediately pounced on and given short shrift by hundreds of students and youthful sports fans from the Spartak, Dynamo and Red Army Clubs.

The political climate which emboldens Pamyat to show its face has been enhanced by the Gorbachev regime's encouragement of capitalist profiteering and its disavowal of even lip service to the cause of the international class struggle. But there are many thousands of Red Army vets who remain proud of having fulfilled their "internationalist duty" combating CIA-backed reactionaries in Afghanistan, and are well trained in defending themselves and the Soviet state against reactionary rabble. They are not about to let a ragtag gang of Nazis muscle their way into the city of the October Revolution. The mullah-led child-murderers should have been wiped out in Afghanistan; the Pamyat Nazis had better be stamped out in Leningrad!

Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* no 461, 25 September 1988.

# Section 28...

(Continued from page 5)

tion 28. The protest tour is to culminate in an anti-Section 28 conference in London at the end of this year.

Here in Britain, the reactionary ramifications of the act have been amply demonstrated in the brief months since its passage. In particular, it has created a climate of fear. While the act has been barely tested in the courts, its vague language of "intentional" and "promote" mean that every time it is evoked each case must be tested separately. Moreover, it is mainly used by local authorities, Tory and Labour-controlled councils alike, to target local homosexual groups in whatever way they please. Funding for gay and lesbian groups, counselling, centres has been slashed. Insidiously, teachers and others are now even afraid of what they can say about homosexuality in sex education classes. Teachers and other local authority employees who have openly come out as homosexual remain in fear of opening their mouths, full stop. Self-censorship is fast becoming the norm.

And when self-censorship is not enough, the real censors get into the act. *Lesbian and Gay Socialist* (Autumn 1988) reports that Manchester University Press has now axed a book by Mick Wallis and Simon Shepherd entitled *Promoting Homosexuality* - a collection of essays on the history of gay politics in the 1980s - because of concern about "opinion in the Tory Party". Early this summer the Department of Education and Science sent the packet "Teaching about HIV and AIDS" back for a rewrite because its message was not "moral enough", eg lesbian and gay groups were cited as agencies from which to get advice on sexual relationships. An educational pack for health professionals has also been stopped by the government because its "moral" message was not strong enough: "monogamy" was not touted as the answer to AIDS! And as we go to press, the Independent Broadcasting Authority has just banned Channel 4 from showing in a late night slot a film on the life of the artist David Hockney unless a "particularly explicit" homosexual love scene is cut.

Increased anti-homosexual violence has become the jagged edge of the AIDS witchhunt. Monitoring groups have reported a significant rise in the past few months of physical attacks on homosexuals around the country, particularly in Brighton, Leicester, Sheffield and London. In July more than 20 women were badly hurt when fascist skinheads attacked a group of lesbians meeting at a pub in Clerkenwell. On the same day, Highbury magistrates dismissed a case against four fascists arrested for attacking a group of gays - stabbing one man in the neck - outside the Bell Pub in Pentonville Road. Amongst those released by the cops was one Ian Stuart/Donaldson, a member of the skinhead fascist rock band "Skrewdriver" who has served time for a racist attack on a black man. According to *Lesbian and Gay Socialist*, "Islington Anti-racist Anti-fascist Action has written in strong terms" to the local police chief calling for "more action from the police".

But reliance on the capitalist state is suicidal. Two men were arrested recently outside the Bell Pub and charged with "outraging public decency" for kissing each other on the street. "Action" by Thatcher's boot-boys means just that for gays and far worse; it means increased harassment

in public toilets, street beatings and cop raids on lesbian and gay clubs. Not appeals to the cops but mobilisations of the working class and oppressed are the way to stop the murderous fascist thugs. The way to fight these scum was shown on 27 June 1982 in Chicago when a Spartacist League-initiated trade union-centred mobilisation of 3000 stopped a Nazi provocation against Chicago Gay Pride Day.

Homosexuals, at any time a vulnerable minority under capitalism, are up against all the forces of reaction in this decaying society. While fascist skins carry out their bigotry with knives and gang attacks, more "respectable" bigots do so by withholding the billions needed for AIDS research and care for the victims of this horrific disease, at the same time scaremongering amongst the population at large that AIDS is a "gay disease". Today, the Medical Research Council's directed research programme on AIDS is running at a tiny £5 million a year while the government pours billions into the Trident missile programme in its attempt to have a first strike weapon with which to target the Soviet Union. Moreover, the much vaunted new needle exchange programme to be implemented on behalf of IV drug users in Liverpool, Edinburgh and London, another - in the eyes of the bigots - "unsavoury" segment of the population to be hit hard by AIDS is but a drop in the bucket compared to what is needed: free needles and decriminalisation of drugs to remove the stigma and get help for these victims fast.

The level of hysteria is such that if you are homosexual, an IV drug user or a haemophiliac your chances

of keeping or even getting a job are greatly reduced. Last May, an accounts clerk was dismissed for simply wearing a badge "Lesbians Ignite". For fear of their livelihood, gays and IV drug users are no longer necessarily telling their GP if they have been tested positive for HIV or even going for a test at all. Insurance companies continue to push for mandatory testing in hospitals. It may well be the case that AIDS is becoming in part an underground disease.

As revolutionary Marxists we approach the question of homosexual oppression as the only consistent defenders of democratic rights for all the exploited and oppressed. These rights are indivisible and can be secured only with the proletariat in power. The slogan "Full democratic rights for homosexuals" means a commitment not only to fight such abuses as job discrimination and legal inequality, but also to mobilise the power of the working class in defence of homosexuals' democratic rights. It is not a separate demand for homosexuals, but a demand in the interests of the entire working class.

While the Tories lead the resurgence of anti-homosexual bigotry, Labour's Neil Kinnock is quick to take the cue. In the last general election, this self-admitted "I am what people call a reactionary" revelled in his own anti-gay campaign. The only way out of the murderous cycle of hatred, ignorance, bigotry and terror is through socialist revolution, liberating all the oppressed by sweeping away this decaying imperialist society. Forward to the building of a revolutionary Leninist/Trotskyist vanguard party to act as a tribune for all the oppressed and to lead the working class to power. ■

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## TKP...

(Continued from page 5)

combined. But not towards the imperialists, for whom he constantly betrayed proletarian revolution internationally in the name of "socialism in one country".

It is worth recalling that after Nikita Khrushchev's 1956 denunciation of Stalin's crimes some left Stalinists decided that the way to "fight Khrushchevism" was to rediscover the "virtues" of Stalin, in the service of their position that the Soviet Union had become "state capitalist". Some decided Mao was the alternative and would later become Maoist apologists for the military alliance between China and US imperialism, an alliance sealed in the blood of the Vietnamese and Angolan masses.

Conveniently absent from the TKP's paeon to "Uncle Joe" is the fact that in a bloc with Bukharin, Stalin resisted the Left Opposition's programme for an industrial five-year plan and the collectivisation of agriculture. When he did adopt these measures, belatedly, he did so in a deformed, brutal fashion. Another "blank page" in the TKP's rendition is Stalin's decapitation of the Red Army command on the eve of World War II, his refusal to believe that Hitler would invade the Soviet Union despite the constant flow of reports from Soviet agents. One such heroic Soviet spy Leopold Trepper, described the purge that followed the execution of Marshal Tukhachevsky in 1937:

"The blood of the Red Army soldiers flowed: 13 out of 19 com-

manders of army troops, 110 out of 135 commanders of divisions and brigades, half of the commanders of regiments, and most of the political commissars were executed. The Red Army, bled white, was hardly an army at all now, and it would not be again for years. The Germans exploited this situation to the full...."

Tukhachevsky had warned early on of the danger of attack by the Germans. In 1941 Hitler launched Operation Barbarossa and the Nazi troops invaded the Soviet Union. To defeat them cost the lives of 20 million Soviet citizens. Leopold Trepper suffered the anguish of seeing information about the Nazi invasion plans squandered by Stalin, criminally blinded by his pact with Hitler. When German deserters tried to defect and warn the Soviets of the impending invasion, Stalin ordered them shot. Due to his military idiocies, by the end of 1941 the Germans had taken 3.3 million Soviet soldiers prisoner, most of whom died in Nazi concentration camps. Summing up the reality of Stalin's "decisive and dedicated command", the author of the devastating novel *Children of the Arbat* Anatoly Rybakov said: "It was because of Stalin that the Germans got as far as Moscow.... We won the war despite Stalin."

The TKP admits that Stalin made serious mistakes after World War II. But what of 1933 when Hitler's Nazis came to power unopposed by the powerful German workers movement, a crime generalised and underscored by the Stalin-Laval pact and the adoption at the Comintern's Seventh World Congress of the "People's Front" line which sanctified con-

sistent class collaboration in the name of an alliance with the "progressive" imperialist bourgeoisie? Gorbachev's betrayal in Afghanistan is not a new invention of the Stalinist bureaucracy – sacrificing revolution on the altar of "peaceful coexistence" and "socialism in one country" was Stalin's particular speciality. To grapple with this

ers' states, there would need to be a counterrevolution. This is more likely to be led by Pamyat than by the bureaucracy."

If the USSR is not socialist, is it then capitalist? If Gorbachev says something critical about Stalin, is Stalin then nature's nobleman? Such is the maze in which these "critical" Stalinists are caught; many of the



Der Spiegel

### Hitler's Germany invades the Soviet Union, 1941.

history, however, raises the spectre of Trotsky's fight against the degeneration of the October Revolution and for the internationalist road of Lenin.

The TKP's British associates in the *Leninist* group have taken a rather different direction. We haven't noticed any pictures of "Uncle Joe" gracing the pages of its paper. Instead, the *Leninist* has taken its infatuation with classless "multiparty democracy" so far as to advocate the freedom to organise for the vile Pamyat fascists. In our summer issue, *Workers Hammer* warned that this wretched line was a watershed position for the *Leninist* (see *WH* no 99, July-August 1988). Apparently leading *Leninist* spokesman Jack Conrad agrees – and has deepened and extended the Pamyat line to the domestic terrain as well. Says Conrad:

"It is necessary to take away the social base that Pamyat enjoys. This would not be done through finding out the addresses of Pamyat members and kicking their heads in. Terror has its place but in the main we would seek out Pamyat members in order to argue with them. Many people who voted for the National Front in Britain did not understand its true nature, they were fooled. The same will be true of those who have joined Pamyat." (*Leninist*, 3 September) *Leninist* stresses that "the battle of ideas" is primary in the fight against the fascists – in the Soviet Union and Britain too. Pamyat is the Great Russian offspring of Hitler, dyed-in-the-wool Nazis, nurtured by Stalinist nationalism (see article on p4). They represent a deadly threat to the multinational proletariat of the Soviet Union and must be crushed. Some of *Leninist*'s periphery has gagged on their Pamyat line, evidenced in a recent letter in the 26 September issue:

"If the Soviet Union is socialist, how could anti-semitism survive and increase? Was Stalin anti-semitic?... Recently we have seen the emergence of Pamyat, which is fascistic, anti-semitic and Russian chauvinist. When you call for a multi-party democracy, do you really believe anti-socialist parties, groups etc, should be allowed free rein? If you see the dangers in Gorbachev's policies (I agree with your analysis) and where they can lead, you must also realise the greater dangers of organisations like Pamyat. To overthrow the socialist system or deformed work-

roads out lead in unsavoury directions. Neither the TKP nor *Leninist* has broken from the deformed worldview of Stalinism. Lacking a revolutionary Marxist (ie Trotskyist) understanding of the contradictory nature of the Soviet bureaucracy, the TKP and *Leninist* alternate between seeking a wing of the bureaucracy to support and a neo-Kautskyite conception of "multiclass" democracy. Now the TKP, in embracing "hard Stalinism", is following one of these paths to its logical conclusion, while *Leninist* pursues the other – a situation that may not bode well for their continued association.

To defend the world's first workers state against imperialism and internal counterrevolution requires both an understanding of the nature of the bureaucratic caste that usurped political power from the Soviet proletariat and a revolutionary internationalist programme. Against Gorbachev's dangerous policy of conciliating imperialism, we counterpose the road of Lenin and Trotsky. The struggle waged by the Left Opposition against Stalinism is the model for authentic communists today who must fight for a proletarian political revolution in the USSR and socialist revolution throughout the capitalist world. For the rebirth of the Fourth International – the world party of revolution! ■

## Spartacist League...

(Continued from page 3)

in the city centre market area to threaten left salesmen and minorities. Despite the sabotage of the SWP, with its disgusting "ignore the fascists" line, at one point a modest united front mobilisation was effected, which included a local trade unionist grouping. However, frustrated by the inability to draw in the forces necessary to achieve a decisive victory, we rather naively appealed to the pro-Kinnock leadership of the South Yorkshire NUM, which in its current incarnation is about as hostile to communists as it is to fascists. With greater political maturity comes the recognition that sometimes particular campaigns, however well motivated, lack the necessary resources for their implementation and therefore become a diversion from other necessary party work.

Thatcherite Britain is characterised by the decline of the three great industrial ports – Belfast, Liverpool, Glasgow – taken together with the industrial decline in the Midlands. Capital investment, such as it exists, is overwhelmingly concentrated in the southeast, centred upon London. Thus, while it is not self-evident where a small communist organisation should locate a viable second

branch, it is desperately necessary to break out of the confines of the yuppie, Tory-dominated southeast. The establishment of a beachhead in Scotland will be a challenge to the SL: running branches in two different nations. As part of our commitment to such a perspective, the importance of internal cadre education was stressed, including the necessity to study in a Leninist way the current national struggles.

It is almost a truism to assert that the peoples of the Celtic fringe have been among the most militant sections of the working class movement of these isles. But beyond that, its best representatives, often less saturated with illusions in the imperialist monarchical "United Kingdom" than their English counterparts, have been spokesmen for proletarian internationalism. Thus, shortly before the October Revolution Lenin linked the "Red Clydesider" John MacLean with Karl Liebknecht as among "the best known of these isolated heroes who assumed the heavy task of precursors of the revolution." While still a passionate advocate of revolutionary Bolshevism, MacLean wrote powerfully of the interrelation of the British and Russian proletarian revolutions: "The dictatorship in Britain will last as long as capitalism lasts: the dictatorship in Russia will end as soon as every capitalist and landlord becomes an honest worker. Down with the British dictatorship! Up the Russian dictatorship!" (*The Call*, 6 November 1919)

Today the Scottish proletariat is saddled with Labourism and equally reformist Stalinism, with such "alternatives" as the Cliffite SWP, which spits on the gains of the Russian Revolution. We will struggle to offer something better, as part of the fight to forge a Leninist party on this island. ■

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## Skinheads: psycho killers on the loose

Several years ago, television audiences around the world watched in horror as the 1985 European Cup Final football match in Brussels between Liverpool and the Juventus of Torino, Italy, exploded in bloody slaughter. Hundreds of people were maimed and 38 killed as British fans attacked Italian spectators in the terraces. This wasn't just a spontaneous outburst of mindless football violence. The sinister forces spearheading this nationalistic carnage were the pathological fascist killers known as "skinheads".

For black and Asian people in Britain's cities, this horror has become a daily fact of life and a deadly racist threat. For nearly two decades, skinheads have been on the scene, terrorising especially the Asian population. The firebombing of shops and homes, the razor and knife mutilations, the scrawled swastikas and "white power" slogans have reached epidemic proportions. In heavily Asian Newham in London's East End a racist attack occurs once an hour. In Southall a young Asian man was found with the initials of the fascist Young National Front carved into his stomach. Skinhead Anthony Carroll, tattooed with the swastika and Union Jack, was recently sentenced to a minimum of 15 years for the brutal knifing murder of an Asian restaurant worker, Abdus Sattar. Mr Sattar was attacked on his way to prayers in London, stabbed and left to die after turning over his eight cigarettes and empty wallet. The *Asian Times* caught the mood of grim satisfaction when Carroll was sentenced: "Skinhead Gets Life".

These violent white racist thugs

were spawned in the squalor of crisis-ridden British society, in the remnants of a racist Empire. This is no youth "fad" of kids drunk on rock music, beer and glue-sniffing, addicted to football and fighting, angry at being stuck in grimy slums and unemployment centres. Warped and twisted by a capitalism in terminal decline, they are human garbage. From their black combat-style "bovver boots" to their shaven heads, they aim to intimidate, to terrorise, to maim and to murder.

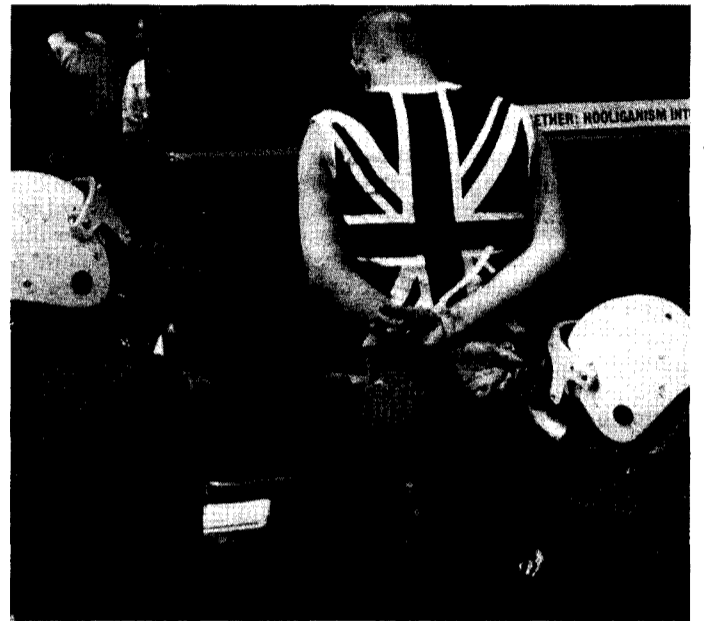
In the past few years, the skinheads have become that rarest of commodities in Thatcher's Britain – an international export. From France to West Germany to the US these dregs of a decaying system flaunt the regalia of Hitler's Third Reich, giving the Nazi stiff-arm salute, "rocking" to the racist beat of "Oi" music. And wherever these fascist "bootboys" appear, they leave a trail of sadistic, senseless, racist violence.

Now the organised fascists – the National Front in Britain, Le Pen's National Front (FN) in France, neo-Nazis in West Germany – have moved in on this white youth "movement" of race-hating despair. They are the raw material for the shock troops of fascism. They are a deadly menace to every racial minority everywhere, to everything associated with civilised society. They must be stamped out and swept away.

### THATCHER'S BRITAIN: SOCIAL ROT AND RACIST TERROR

The social rot of de-industrialised Britain, with its millions of unemployed, the grim wasteland of empty

English skinheads run amok in Germany: "exporting" racist street violence during the finals of the European Football Championships this spring.



Telegraph Sunday Magazine

factories, dead docklands and closed mines, has created a generation of enraged, hopeless, more-or-less permanently lumpenised youth. In his book *The National Front*, Martin Walker wrote:

"Britain of the early 1970s was being widely compared to the Weimar Republic of Germany in the later 1920s. The imminent economic crisis, the permissiveness of cultural life spilling over into the sordid lasciviousness of Soho, the new blunt power of the trade unions, inflation, the impotence of Government – there was a sense of the brink, of instability and of fearsome, frightful collapse." Hitler's "National Socialists" exploited immiseration and unemployment, channelling lumpen and petty-bourgeois rage into their pogroms and genocidal Holocaust against the Jewish people. Today the NF and skinheads strike out at Britain's immigrant population as the scapegoat for Britain's economic decline.

In the late 1960s and '70s, Tories and Labour alike began pushing ever-tougher anti-immigration legislation. When Enoch Powell spewed his racist "rivers of blood" demagoguery, he gave voice to the vicious racism behind the parliamentary measures and legitimised fascist "direct action". Blood flowed on the streets at the hands of "Paki-bashing" white gangs. By the 1979 general election, the National Front was fielding 300 candidates, but Margaret Thatcher won over much of their electoral base with her own unrestrained anti-immigrant ravings.

The NF and other fascist outfits experienced a prolonged period of fracturing, turning more towards open street terror against Asians, blacks and others. Not bound by the fetters of electoral campaigning, the British Movement recruited heavily

ly on this basis. Factional struggle raged within the fascist movement, with one wing identifying itself as "Strasserite", so-called after the populist-demagogic spokesman of the Hitlerite Brownshirts, the SA, the criminal lumpen terror gangs who were the shock troops for Hitler's rise to power.

For decades, the desperate conditions of British society have provided a culture medium for various violent youth gangs to spawn and flourish. The decade of the 1960s was marked by bloody street battles between mods and rockers. The "skins" came out of this culture medium, but from the very start they were identified by their proclivity to gratuitous, racist violence. In "Oi" music, they found the "cultural" expression of their sadistic nihilism. Those youth who choose to become skinheads do so not as a "matter of taste", but because they want to become racist killers as their way of expressing outrage with society.

An insight into the sort of psychopathic and degenerate creatures these budding fascists see as their idols can be found in one Ian Stuart, former lead singer for the skinhead band Skrewdriver, "a squat, powerfully-built man with a Mussolini-style bonehead haircut and a taste for paramilitary clothes" (*Observer*, 4 September). Stuart proudly proclaims, "I think Adolf Hitler was the greatest man who ever lived". He became a card-carrying NFER in 1979. In 1986 he was sentenced to 12 months for a street attack on a Nigerian in the King's Cross area of London.

Stuart has been instrumental in the formation of a "musical organisation" which calls itself Blood and Honour, linking not only European fascist groups but also the Ku Klux

continued on page 6



Workers Hammer

Fascist National Front 1979 march targets boat people during anti-immigrant campaign. Racist skinhead filth are raw material for NF shock troops.