

Pamyat Rides in Moscow

Not so long ago, one of the favorite slogans of the Spartacist League (SL) was “The Klan Doesn’t Ride in Moscow!” It was intended to cut against anti-Sovietism among sectors of the American population hostile to the Ku Klux Klan—particularly blacks, but also radical youth and others. However well-intentioned, the slogan had a distinctly Stalinophilic quality, as the recent publicity exposing the rise of the fascistic, nativist Russian Pamyat organization underlines. Strictly speaking it is, of course, true that the Klan doesn’t ride in Moscow; but then, Pamyat doesn’t ride in Washington.

Pamyat, the modern-day successor to the anti-Semitic Black Hundreds, is alive and well in Moscow and has been since the early 1980s, when it was founded as an adjunct of the USSR Ministry of the Aviation Industry. Pamyat enjoys considerable support from powerful elements in the ruling Stalinist bureaucracy and has been known to hold meetings in Communist Party premises in central Moscow.

Trotskyists have long been aware that the heterogeneous Stalinist ruling caste contains within it some of the most reactionary elements in Soviet society. In the Tran-

sitional Program, Trotsky referred to the “bourgeois-fascist grouping” in the CPSU as “the faction of Butenko.” The SL’s slogan falsely suggested that fascistic elements had been eradicated. This was one of a number of Stalinophilic deviations which this supposedly “Trotskyist” group has put forward in recent years. An example was the naming of one of its contingents on an anti-fascist demonstration the “Yuri Andropov Brigade,” after the then-chief bureaucrat in the Kremlin, who had played a key role in the suppression of the Hungarian workers revolt of 1956. (When Andropov died in 1984 he was given an “in memoriam” box on the front page of *Workers Vanguard* with a 75 percent approval rating.)

In recent months the Spartacist press has run several accounts of the alarming growth of Pamyat under glasnost, complete with calls on the Soviet workers to sweep them off the streets. The boast about the Klan not riding in Moscow has been discreetly shelved. But thoughtful members of the Spartacist group should ask themselves how a supposedly Trotskyist organization could have raised such a slogan in the first place. ■