

Red Action

ISSUE NO 10

EVIL BASTARDS



LORD WILSON



Rt Hon HATTERSLEY



Rt Hon LAWSON



Rt IDIOT MURRAY



Rt Hon TEBBIT



THATCHER

..... ALL MEMBERS OF THE 'MONEY PARTY'

One of the more notable aspects of the Chesterfield bye election campaign, was the actual fight for the nomination in the first place. As soon as Tony Benn announced his intention to fight for it, he was faced with the expected gush of reds under the bed scare mongering from the tory press. What was perhaps a bit more suprising, was the level and ferocity of opposition, from some elements in and around the Labour Party itself. Harold Wilson, who led Labour into four general elections, and was once thought of as a bit of a lefty himself, even went as far as describing Benn as being backed by "evil people" who were bent on the "destruction of society".

EVIL

Now no-one would expect that everyone in the same organisation would agree with each other all of the time, and of course Wilson has every right to make it known that he does not share the views of some, or all, of Benn's supporters. But why did he describe them as evil. In all the time that Harold Wilson was involved in politics, I cannot recall him using similar words to describe the Tories, who he was supposedly totally opposed to, so why use them to describe those who may have some differences with him, but are at least still on the same side?

POLICIES

In fact many would argue that the Tories themselves are far more deserving of the description of evil. It is a fact that since the present Tory government has been in power, they have deliberately pursued policies that have led to rising unemployment. It is also a fact that every time unemployment rises by one percent, the death rate rises by several thousand (through more suicides, increased social deprivation etc) So we can justifiably say, that the Tories are responsible for the death of thousands of people who could still be alive today. Is that not evil? It is also a fact, according to a letter from a Kidney Specialist to the Guardian newspaper just before Christmas, that there are at least a thousand people that die needlessly from kidney failure every year, because sufficient

dialysis facilities are not made available. Yet still we hear the Tories calling for more cuts in the health service. Why with these sort of examples in front of him, does Harold Wilson save his most hostile criticisms for those within his own party?

CAPITALISM

The reason for this, is that while people like Wilson may well have differences with the Tories, and may well be for giving the working class a better deal than the dedicated anti-working class sort of government that we have today, they still in the final analysis, have more in common with them, than they do with those sections of the Labour Party that genuinely want to change society. When all is said and done, they, like the Tories, believe in the sanctity of capitalism and the parliamentary system, and that is why they reserve their worst hostility for those that do not believe in it. There are

people within the Labour Party that believe in socialism, and want to change the system that we live under from a capitalist one to a socialist one. What these people do not seem to realise, is that as long as the Labour Party is in the grip of people like Wilson, Callaghan, Healy etc, they will NEVER BE ALLOWED TO PUT THEIR IDEAS INTO PRACTICE. If it ever looked like they were beginning to, the pro capitalist elements within it, would line firmly up with their allies within the other parliamentary parties, to defeat this threat to the system they believe in. What that means in effect is, that practically the entire leadership of the Labour Party would if it came to it, unite with the Tory Party to defend the capitalist system, if it was under threat from a militant socialist Labour Party. If we draw the quite reasonable conclusion that no movement can hope to achieve its aims when its leadership is working for the other side, it is easy to see how revolutionary socialist groups like Red Action, come to the conclusion that we will never achieve socialism through the Labour Party.

SOCIALISM

This is why we describe ourselves as revolutionary socialists. It doesn't mean that we have little secret meetings where we all wear fur hats, and call each other by Russian names. It means that we see that to change society, we cannot go through the channels that capitalism provides, like the Labour Party, but we have to find different "revolutionary" methods. It means that we have no faith in an organisation, that is lead by people who describe socialists as "evil" and share cocktails with those that think inflicting poverty and misery on thousands, is sound economic sense.

Trouble on the Streets, whether it is rioting or picket-line punch ups with the pigs means one thing for certain, and that is that strange men will appear on our television screens with a message for us: OBEY THE LAW. These strange men are usually bald, they wear suits and speak english with a Prince Charles accent. They must also be thick as rhino-shite if they think we are going to do as they say.

Rich bastards break the law every day of the year, year in, year out. Everybody knows that. Yet how many of them ever get put down for law-breaking? The fact is that the vast majority of cons in the nick came from the working class and this is not because the rich are good citizens.

FIDDLING

The rich "avoid" paying income tax even though they are the ones most able to pay it. They are on a much bigger fiddle than the so-called Social Security "Scroungers", but we all know who the State cracks down on. The rich can "cut corners" on the safety standards in the factories and on the building sites they own, and get away with piddling fines even when a death results from their negligence. The air, land and sea can be polluted in the quest for more money and those who do it have little to fear from the forces of Law and Order.

TOUCH OF CLASS

The rich have power. They exert influence and control over whichever government is elected and the State machine exists to protect their interests. The laws of this land are their laws and they have shown in the past and at this very moment in Northern Ireland that they are prepared to bend the rules whenever it suits them. Especially when they feel their priveleged position is threatened. Put simply, the Law is a weapon they use against us in what they obviously regard as a CLASS 'STRUGGLE'.

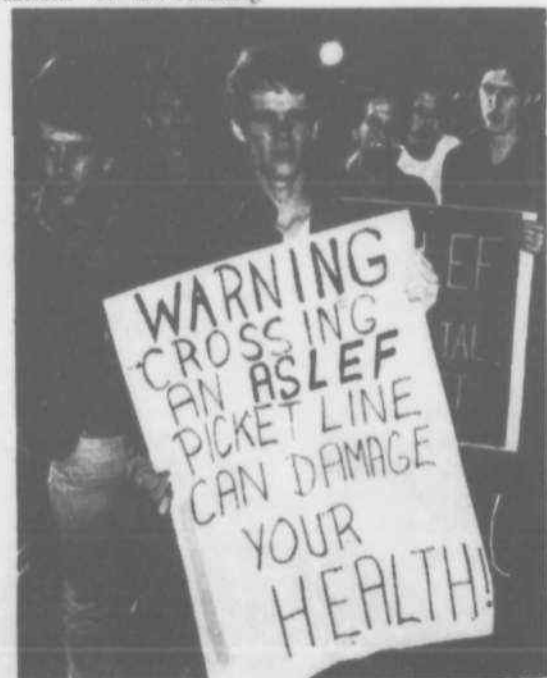
started flying around. These people are gutless bastards, and they are leading what could be a fighting movement to the slaughterhouse. They are crawling head-lice and the sooner the Unions are deloused and taken over by fighters who have won the above arguments with their mates, the better.

STRENGTH

The rich and the State they control has one answer to the crisis in their system and that is to make us pay for it. We should know by now that we can't trust our "leaders", or the Police and their Courts. Our strength lies in our self-activity and mass solidarity coupled with a willingness to use whatever means necessary to win. If this means snapping our bent rulers in half and throwing them away, so be it!

THE SHAH

Of course, where Eddie Shah was concerned, the Union leaders and the moderates shit themselves when accusations of law-breaking



FROM CRADLE TO OLD AGE

THE CONSERVATIVES PROTECT YOU

by

Child Welfare
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More Employment
More and Better Pensions
Pensions for Widows
Old Age Pensions at 65

VOTE CONSERVATIVE

GLADIATORS

Everybody has heard of Spartacus the gladiator, who escapes to form and lead a slave army that challenged the might of the Roman Empire. They ransacked and burned the estates of the rich, killed the owners, freed the slaves and inspired thousands more to join their crusade. These they trained into a formidable army who won many bloody battles. They were fighting for their freedom, an understandable and honourable aim, and they knew that if they were defeated they faced torture and death. So they didn't lack commitment. They decided to march south to the sea where they had arranged for boats to be waiting. They were betrayed and in the last battle defeated by superior numbers.

The survivors were crucified all along The Appian Way, strange to imagine that if they had succeeded in sailing to freedom and by their example igniting slave insurrection in other countries, the world might very well be a different place today.

CONSENT

A stirring and romantic tale a long time ago, but one that has little relevance today maybe, but what is significant and startling is not that they fought, or lost, but that they were defeated by SUPERIOR NUMBERS, when in Rome alone the slaves outnumbered the free by three to one, why didn't their army number millions, better to die fighting to be free than live the

life of a slave you'd imagine, but death wasn't any more attractive for them than it is for us today.

The Romans ruled by consent the same way the Nazis ran their concentration camps, the only way the screws run prisons in this country with the consent and co-operation of the inmates.

SHAME

Slavery is evil. To most people freedom may be precious, but self-preservation is dominant. Everybody has done something in their lives of which they are not particularly proud, grassed your mates, ran away to save your skin, grovelled to the boss to keep your job, maybe a mix-

ture of all three and maybe more than once. You considered discretion to be the better part of valour, would it have been any different if you had lived then?

FREEDOM

Try and imagine for an instant, that you are a slave on an estate in Italy, and you hear on the grapevine that Sparticus and his gladiator army are coming. You would have heard the rumours of the atrocities and the slaughter of innocents, allegations that the slaves were being financed by a foreign power, the leader was a psychopath known as 'Mad Dog' to his friends etc: You would listen to the old slaves who would say this 'freedom' would never work anyway, that it was against Human nature, that there had always been slaves. They would tell you to show loyalty to your master who after all, fed you and gave you a roof over your head and who only beat you when you were particularly lazy. In a few years you had a chance of promotion from field-hand

to house slave. You could do worse, why exchange all this for a life style that guarantees lots of trouble and probable death for something called 'freedom'. Basically you would associate your own security and future with the well-being of the system, that had always provided it, the same as people do today.

LEGACY

You consider all this and than think *ah fuck it anyway* dash to the kitchen, select the sharpest knife, dash down the corridor to where the master was dozing, cut the fat old bastards throat, grab as much jewels and gold as you can, fire the villa and head for the hills to welcome the glorious rebel army.

The freedom fighters of the INLA, SANDINISTAS, IRA, SWAPO etc: carry on the legacy left by Spartacus. They are the gladiators of today. *WHERE DO YOU STAND?*



MAKING A STAND

A NEW DEAL

Christmas cheer was made all the more cheerful for me this year, in the shape of a nice little £150 card win a few days before the event. The reason that this fact finds its way onto the pages of this "political" paper, is because I have found in the past, that many people find a contradiction in the fact that someone who describes himself as a socialist, should be willing to play cards and win other people's money. It seems that as a socialist I am supposed to have rejected every aspect of materialism, and monetary gain, and my participation in the regular card school in our local, is somehow hypocritical.

This is not an isolated view. There are many people who hold the view, that socialism is about complete control over people's lives. That it is a puritanical movement that seeks to control every aspect of life. They believe that under a socialist system, their little luxuries in life would be threatened. Their colour tellys, or their fast car, would be taken off them, and some of their basic pleasures like gambling, drinking or taking drugs, would be disapproved of and banned.

PROFITABLE

This view is caused partly, by the evidence of what they see happening in the Eastern bloc countries, by the lack of consumer goods, and personal freedoms that exist in those countries. However they should remember that there are very few people in the socialist movement in this country, who would use the Eastern bloc countries as an example of the sort of system that they are trying to create. Even those few that do actually support the regimes there, look upon the intrusion of personal liberties as something that will be dispensed with in the near future.

In fact socialism is about something far more important than worrying about whether someone has two cars, or whether they like to

concern is individual profit, rather than community benefit.

FROSTITUTION

That then is the main aim of the socialist movement. The personal freedom that it has the right to suppress, and the only one that it has the right to suppress, is the freedom that exists now, for the individual to gain control over those things that are basic necessities for all of us. That does not mean that a socialist government would have the right to intrude upon every aspect of people's lives. Those things that only affect the individual, should still be left to the choice of that individual. Gambling, drunkenness, drug addiction, prostitution, all of these things may well be considered by some, to be products of a corrupt and oppressive system. But as they are things that do not have a direct effect on society as a whole, society does not have the right to suppress them. If a socialist government disapproved of any or all of these things, then its task is not to become the auditor of public morals, and use the power of state to suppress them. Its task is to use that power, to remove the causes of them. Poverty, bad housing, lack of education.

But as long as any individual may wish to gamble away every penny, to fill his or her body, with any drink or drug, or to sell their body for however much they want, they must have that freedom. Ultimately the absence of individual choice, is a far greater blight upon any society, than any amount of these things.



FREEDOM OF CHOICE

HANG 'EM HIGH!

Our glorious leader, M. Thatcher, keeps telling us we should return to the values of the 'good' old days. Consider the following -

The Crown Prisoners confined in His Majesty's Gaol the castle of Lancaster who have taken their trials before Mr Baron Vaughan and Justice J Parker at the Assizes commencing the 8th August 1831.

John Grimes aged 16 and George McGiverall aged 19
Crime: Burglary at Barton-upon-Irwell
Sentence: Death recorded.

John Sidepot aged 19 and Sam Taylor aged 19
Crime: Burglary at Ashton-under-Tyne
Sentence: Death recorded.

John Riley aged 17 and Joshua Ashcroft aged 18
Crime: Stealing two watches and 16 spoons
Sentence: Death recorded.

William Brett aged 18
Crime: Stealing six letters out of a Post Office in Liverpool
Sentence: Death recorded.

George Parkinson aged 35
Crime: Having two wives
Sentence: Transported for life.

Richard Meadows aged 17
Crime: Trying to smash up a shop
Sentence: Death recorded.

Richard Clough aged 28
Crime: Stealing a horse
Sentence: Death recorded.

Signed articles are personal views that may not have the full agreement of all Red Action members.





WHO? RED ACTION!
NO VACANCIES!
NOW FUCK OFF!



WELL RED

The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists, is a truly remarkable book. It is unique in that it is one of the few books around that just about everyone inside the circle of active socialist militants, has heard of and has an opinion about, and that hardly anyone outside the circle seems to have even heard of. Perhaps it is not too much to say that one of the reasons for that, is that it is doubtful, that many people on reading this book, would afterwards consider themselves anything else but a socialist.

The book was written in the late eighteen hundreds, by a man named Robert Noonan, under the pen name Robert Tressal. It is a semi autobiographical account of a year in the life of a group of painter decorators, in a small seaside town called Mugsborough (Hastings).

Owen is one of these characters. He is a confirmed and ardent socialist, who is constantly trying to convince his workmates of the logic of socialist ideas. They are all either completely hostile to his ideas or else consider them to be alright in theory but totally impractical. "What you say might sound alright, but it'll never work in practice", "there's always been rich and poor, and there always will be, and there's nothing that you or anyone else can do about it" (doesn't it all sound horribly familiar). They all believe that their bosses and masters are their greatest friends, and that they ought to be grateful to them for providing them with work. Throughout the story, as Owen pulls their arguments apart, they leap to the defence of their bosses, and of the capitalist system that keeps them in the direst poverty, while the upper classes live in comfort on the proceeds of their sweat and labour. Hence the title of the book. They are well meaning philanthropists, with a benevolent attitude towards those that exploit them to the point that they cannot even afford decent clothes and food.

the golden age that Margaret Thatcher tells us we should get back to.

Most of the characters and situations described in the book, seem so familiar, that at first glance, it can seem a bit depressing to think that in nearly a hundred years, we have come such a little way forward. But this of course does not stand up to any inspection. All sorts of things that so many today take for granted, council housing, the National Health Service, supplementary benefits, all of these things while not exactly perfect, would seem like comforts beyond the wildest dreams of our working class forbearers of this time. Perhaps if more people were to read this book, they would be more willing to stand up in defence of these things. They might realise then that we didn't always have them, and that they certainly weren't given to us willingly. It is also gratifying to realise the decline in the amount of power that the church exercises over people's lives since this time.

INSPIRATION

Criticisms of the book? It does tend to be repetitive at times, and is also turgid in parts. This is hardly surprising when you consider that it was written over the course of many years, on old scraps of wallpaper, without any professional assistance or advice, by a man working twelve hours a day seven days a week, and suffering from consumption, from which he eventually died. In fact there has been an edition published which was edited down, but my advice would be to get the full version. The bit of effort is well worth it.

The Ragged Trousered Philanthropist is a classic book. It is arguably one of the best socialist books ever written. Robert Noonan, never lived to see any of his dreams come true. He was eventually to enter the workhouse, that he describes in such fearful tones in his book, and eventually died in Liverpool Infirmary, at the turn of the century. But his faith in the socialist ideal shines like a beacon through his book. The monumental achievement that is that book, should be an inspiration to us all, in our struggle for that ideal.

HYPOCRISY

The book abounds with incidents, that explain just what life was really like for the working classes at that time. The abject poverty that was their lot, is made very plain and clear. It shows the hypocrisy of the rich as they waffle on about religion and Christian values, while their workers children are sick from lack of food and warmth. How after a lifetime of toil, making their masters rich, they would be thrown to the tender mercies of the dreaded workshop, with their sadistic regimes. How rich and educated businessmen would demand a fee to take on young sickly children as apprentices, and use them as free labour in the most hideous working conditions. Remember, this is

ENERGY

You tell me, what more can I do?" (NME, Oct '81). People should listen to Garry Johnson when he said Oi was "... sons of rebellion, words of revolution, an attitude of contempt and anger. Not fighting each other in the streets, but fighting the system, challenging the Establishment through words and music." (Sounds, Jan '83)

Red Action has many political disagreements with various Oi supporters views, but we believe it is important to work with other working class socialists to try and achieve something positive for the "class not the party". One thing is certain, people in Oi have raised socialist politics in an area where virtually no one else was doing anything (except maybe the NF).

The latest Oi album - Son of Oi - shows how far Oi has come. From the Gonads' catchy punk anthem 'Jobs Not Jails' - "what we want's the right to work / give us jobs not jails / don't throw us on the scrapheap / because your system's failed." - to the hard-hitting poetry of Garry Johnson. The Upstarts' tribute to Richard 'Cartoon' Campbell and Atilla's scathing anti-nazi rant "Andy is a Corporatist". The energy and ideas are there and if the music can be linked to working class struggles with, say some Oi!Oi! strike benefits then may the Son of Oi go forth and multiplio!



WHITE RIOT

Most people first heard of 'Oi' on Saturday morning, 4th July 1981, when they picked up their copy of the Daily Smut and read about 'Race Riots in Southall', skinhead psychopaths, and Pakistani petrol bombers. It was the sort of incident your average no-principles journalist loves - get the skins, get the pakis, crocodile tears for the copper who copped a knock on the head.

What happened on the night of July 3rd '81 was a tragedy. It was madness to put on an Oi gig at the Hamborough Tavern in Southall after all the aggro the local Asians had received. The three bands playing (The Business, 4-Skins and Last Resort) all had skinhead followings and inevitably the disciples of the Master Race got in there and started a bloody riot. As Steve Kent (The Business'

guitarist) said, "With hindsight it was a stupid place to play. It's easy for me to say that I felt I was in the middle of a situation and I was innocent. I suppose if we played there in the first place we weren't innocent, because we should have thought about it." (NME, Oct '81).

The Southall gig gave Oi the racist tag, and it seems clear there were racists involved with a few of the bands,

strong we can be / United against society." ('United' by Garry Johnson)

Sadly the early mistakes, such as putting Nicky Crane (British Movement organiser) on the front of the 'Strength Thru Oi' album, meant the Left wouldn't touch them when they should have been supporting the socialists in Oi and the middle class liberals unleashed a frenzied attack on all skinheads - exposing their FEAR of working class anger. In March 1981 the Sunday Times carried a story on fascist influence in rock music and, surprise, surprise, came out with the usual crap that skinhead equals nazi, and gave a good slugging to skinhead bands like Infa Riot (who played for Rock Against Racism)

In reply to this the 4-Skins and Infa Riot publicly stated their opposition to racism. "We don't allow racial overtones in or out of performances. And although we do have a large skinhead following it doesn't mean they're all racists." (Infa Riot, NME, March '81)

REBELLION

In October '81 Oi tried to lose its racist label once and for all by putting on their own anti-racist gig in Sheffield with the Business, Infa Riot, Blitz, and the Partisans. The manager of Business said, "We've stood up now, we've done Oi against racism and people still seem to be asking whether we're NF or BM.

but more particularly with their followers. But Oi started as a reaction against the state of punk at the beginning of the '80s. The punk that had lost its anger, that was pose, and for the most part conservative. It was a working class protest movement with a leaning towards socialism.

"Cos Oi ain't about having a fight / Oi ain't about black v. white / The voice of Oi is unity / No them and us, just you and me / United is the thing to be / Think how



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RED ACTION IN ACTION

TOTTENHAM REPLAY

Just before Christmas a Red Action member took up an invitation to visit Tottenham Magistrates Court. The invite occurred in Tottenham last summer when the police kidnapped an NUJ press photographer who snapped them 'enforcing the law' against an Anti-National Front protester.

Seeing that a criminal act was in progress, the RA member decided to have a go and went to the aid of the photographer. Did the officers praise his public-spirited act? No! They nicked him for 'obstruction' and conveyed him to the local nick. But *en route* they stopped the van to eject the photographer.

Three cops confidently lied that the defendant had attempted the release of a different person. They denied that a photographer was involved and had been detained. Of course not. Ho! Ho!

When the defence produced photographs proving precisely the true events, three piggies were laughing on the other sides of their snouts. One cop shown a photo of his good self embracing the photographer claimed 'I was moving him out of the way to reach the trouble makers'. The next picture featured some cop dragging the same photographer into the police transit. 'I have no recollection of this your honour' squealed one flustered piggy.

After three hours of police perjury, the magistrates generously conceded there was some room for 'DOUBT'.

Dismissing the case, they ordered the police to pay the DEFENCE COSTS.

The Old Bill made no comment on the result but are known to be dis'GRUNT'ed.

AT THE HOP (HATFIELD STYLE)

Red Action was pleased to help organize a disco to raise money for a friend in jail. Paying off an outstanding fine meant he was out for Xmas. As usual the Red Action Formation Dancing Team moved with all the grace of a herd of hippos on ice but even they were upstaged by a spontaneous display of gymnastics in the rafters. Our 'anonymous' athlete unfortunately seemed to have trouble keeping his trousers up.

WE ARE RED ACTION

Red Action was formed in 1981 when a number of working class socialists were expelled from the organisation that they had belonged to. Various reasons were given for this, but it all seemed to boil down to the intellectual leadership showing their distaste for the raucous manners, and undisciplined behaviour or their working class members. We believe that we can organise ourselves as red workers on our own, without any interference from middle class intellectuals. We intend to avoid at all costs, becoming like so many other left groups, with their patronizing attitude towards the working class. We reject the idea that a socialist organisation, has the right to demand unquestioning obedience from its members at all times. Discipline when necessary must be based on respect for, and trust in, those making the decisions, and not blind servile obedience. We believe that socialism belongs to the working class, and that a socialist organisation, while it must be able to give a lead to the class, must also be able to reflect the spirit and consciousness of the class. We in Red Action will strive to this end. To justify our existence before the most cynical audience of all - the working class - and present socialist politics in a way that they can identify with, in their life, their work, and their leisure. We draw great inspiration from the Republican movement in Ireland, from the courageous and principled manner in which they conduct their struggle, and from the way that they have integrated class and cultural expression into their political movement. We unconditionally support the right of their revolutionary armies, the Irish Republican Army, and the Irish National Liberation Army, to engage in armed struggle to free their country from British Rule. We will work in co-operation with all and any groups that support the same aims as us. We do not reject any ideas tactics or strategies just because we did not think of them ourselves.

WE ARE FOR

1. A working class organisation inspired and directed by working class people
2. United action between socialist groups FOR THE CLASS NOT THE PARTY
3. The Irish National liberation struggle against our own British ruling class
4. Total opposition to fascist organisations
5. Union strength - we support any picket line - in defence of workers living standards.
6. Opposition to all prejudice which divides workers, white against black, men against women.
7. Killing the lie that the "Communist states" are socialist.
8. Young peoples fight to determine their own future.

RED ACTION IS AGAINST

1. Anything read in

THE Sun

TROUBLE ON THE TUBE

The Order of Lenin with two Gold Stars will be awarded to the Red Action supporter who foiled a fascist ambush on the tube. Six supporters of the Mein Kampf mentality spotted our hero removing the NF stickers they had just put up. They dragged him off the tube onto the platform but a few well placed punches and boots with the accuracy of an Exocet had these brave bully boys on the run. And they reckon they're the Master Race...?

MANCHESTER MARTYRS

Red Action went on the Manchester Martyrs' march in November to show our support for the Irish Republican movement. Sadly several organisations boycotted the march due to disagreements on the organizing committee. We believe unity in action is essential.

TRAFFIC JAM

3 swaggering boneheads who demanded to know where the commies were - to their dismay actually found some in the shape of four Red Action supporters. After an intense discussion one of the boneheads lost all sympathy from the motorists of West Kensington by lying in the middle of the road, blocking all the traffic and generally making a perfect nuisance of himself.

HARRODS

TEN DEAD HUNGER-STRIKERS



Bobby Sands



Francis Hughes



Raymond McCreesh



Patsy O'Hara



Joe McDonnell



Martin Hurson



Kevin Lynch



Kieran Doherty



Thomas McEiwee



Micky Devine

TEN REASONS WHY?

The recent IRA bomb blast outside Harrods resulted in a predictably hysterical reaction from the media and establishment. We would be deluding ourselves if we did not admit that most people in this country agreed with most of it. For socialists in this country then, it is important to be clear about what our attitude towards incidents such as this are.

Most people, socialist and non socialist alike, would condemn random bombings that strike innocent civilians. In doing this they would be doing no more than the IRA themselves. Amidst all the hysteria generated it seems to have been completely forgotten that (1) a warning was given 40 minutes before the blast (2) the IRA leadership, after admitting that it was one of their units involved, added that the operation was unauthorised and that an internal enquiry would be held into the events. In one interview with a French newspaper soon afterwards, an IRA source was quoted as saying that the unit involved may face internal discipline. This view was not supported however, in an interview with the IRA, in Sinn Fein's newspaper Republican News. Obviously it is very unlikely that we will find out exactly what all the internal ramifications in the IRA are. However we can say that one thing is plainly and patently obvious. If the aim of the IRA was civilian casualties in this country, they could kill hundreds, and probably thousands, with far less risk to their members than is entailed by the attacks on military targets that have previously been their hallmark.

We are being no more than fair to the IRA then, when

we say that civilian casualties such as those that occurred at Harrods are not their aim at all, and that their military operations are aimed at the active forces of the British state. There are of course, many who would argue that this is still unacceptable. That the IRA have no excuse for engaging in any kind of military struggle at all against any kind of target.

SAS SQUADS

The reason that some people are able to hold this view, is because they are ignorant of what is really happening in Ireland. They do not understand the realities of a situation where 30,000 armed men maintain their presence in a country by armed might, against the wishes of the vast majority of the people of that country. They do not understand the grief and anger aroused by the death of some ten children under the age of twelve (some as young as eight) by the British army's plastic bullets. They do not understand the effects which living in a country where over 2,000 people have died violently in the last fourteen years can have on people, a country where undercover SAS squads roam, free to summarily execute anyone that they believe may be involved in Republican activ-

ities. In short they do not understand that there is a war going on. That is why the IRA attack and kill British soldiers, and British soldiers attack and kill the IRA. Because the IRA are fighting a war for the freedom of their land, and in this war, just like any other war, tragedies sometimes occur and innocent people sometimes get hurt.

INDISCRIMINATE

Some of the more zealous supporters of the IRA would perhaps even argue that they have no reason to feel any obligation towards the safety of British civilians, most of whom if they don't actively support their government's presence in Ireland, do nothing to try and end it. When you consider the massive crimes perpetuated on the Irish people throughout the 800 year history of British occupation, it is easy to see that the Irish have little reason to feel any warmth toward, or concern for, the welfare of the British people. Those that are quick to condemn IRA atrocities should remember that it is only a few years since 14 unarmed civilians were shot in the back on the streets of Derry, and that the commander of the regiment involved was not long afterwards given an MBE.

However, acts such as these should not (and are not) used as an excuse for the IRA to stoop to the same indiscriminate tactics. They are a brave and honourable people's army waging a brave and just struggle, that is an

inspiration to oppressed peoples the world over. As such they must aspire to the highest ideals and methods of revolutionary freedom fighters, and not to the gutter ideals and aims of the British state. Incidents such as the Harrods bomb do not assist in this aim and the IRA are right to do all that they can to ensure that it is not repeated. However, we on the left in this country have to be aware that in a war situation, there can be NO ABSOLUTE SAFEGUARD against error and tragedy, and we cannot let such incidents affect our support for the right of the IRA, and the Irish National Liberation Army to engage in armed struggle as the only way that they can attain their just aims.

INTERFERENCE

Ultimately, the only way to stop the killing, on both sides, is to stop the war. The history of the last 800 years shows us that the Irish will never give up their struggle for their country, and therefore the only way to finally end the war is for Britain to end its interference in Ireland.

Margaret Thatcher and her kind all know this. They know that as long as British troops remain in Ireland, people will go on dying. No doubt they will continue to regularly appear on our screens telling us how horrible it all is. Yet they are the only ones in a position to order the one thing that will stop it all, and refuse to do so. Theirs is truly the ultimate hypocrisy.