

Red Action

ISSUE 54 30p

THE I.R.A. ARE WINNING

In issue of 50 of Red Action after the comments by junior minister Douglas Hogg that "certain solicitors were unduly sympathetic to the I.R.A.", led to the death of lawyer Pat Finucane at the hands of loyalist assassins; we claimed that this blatantly drastic step was indicative of the fact that "The British army, all 30,000, are losing the war; simply because they are not winning it" and that this had been just yet another step being taken to try and alleviate the pressure the I.R.A. was putting them under.

This pressure has shown through in a number of instances since and culminated in the admission a few weeks back by N.Ireland Secretary Peter Brooke that he found it hard to envisage a defeat of the I.R.A., made comparisons between the situation in Ireland and the situation in Cyprus where Britain withdrew after fighting the E.O.K.A. and in turn conceded that Britain might have to sit down one day and talk with Sinn Fein.

This statement should not be misconstrued as a sign that Britain is any nearer to withdrawing from Ireland, it is clearly an attempt to demoralise and sow discord amongst the ranks of the Republican Movement. However, for the British to make such an admission publicly, demonstrates yet another of the desperate measures (amid the recent and less subtle, assassinations, censorship, extraditions, etc.) that the government has been forced to take against the unyielding I.R.A. and the resilience of its supporters.

The British government, and in particular its armed forces are, as we have just stated, under increasing pressure, and falling morale has been reflected in falling numbers of personnel, as a Ministry of Defence spokesperson quoted in the 'Daily Mail' said, "We are doing everything we can

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RENEGADES ROUTED

On the 11th November 1988, Remembrance Day, the NF organized their annual march from Victoria to the Cenotaph. Anti-Fascist Action called a counter-mobilization an hour earlier in the same area, in an attempt to stop them. Some 500 turned out in response. The basic idea was to 'take' the immediate area around Victoria Station and so discourage at least some fascists from attending the march.

With this in mind 120 stewards secured the area well in advance of themain rally and occupied one of the large pubs traditionally used by the neo-fascists. Perhaps not surprisingly this manoeuvre caused a certain amount of confusion among both the police and the Fronts followers, throughout the day. Some fascists, on arriving, were informed politely at the door that it was now a "red pub". But were still invited inside by the occupants. Not many took up that particular invitation. The police were out in massive numbers probably out-

numbering both march and counter-demo. As in previous years there were both plain-clothes surveillance and 'agent provocateurs', three van loads this time. On top of that they also employed two or three video teams to monitor and record the anti-fascists. Many times the crowd was dispersed and herded by the police towards Trafalgar Square where they insisted your organization is holding a march. But under the advice of AFA stewards the crowd, just as persistently, made their way back into the area.

Eventually thought the start of the march was delayed until the police were confident everything was secure, a motley crew of about 250 many children and elderly among them, wound their way in a sheepish and subdued fashion towards the Cenotaph. Many anti-fascists expressed their surprise and some, it must be noted, their disappointment, by the pathetic turn-out from the Front. Later, hundreds had waited

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1985 TO 1989 FROM 2,000 TO 200...NOT GOOD ENOUGH

for Soviet miners in 1989 the problem appears to be lack of soap. The real point is not that the existing soap quotas are insufficient or in short supply, but the fact that there is a specific demand for it to be 'reviewed' indeed this is one of the conditions that the miners insisted had to be met before they returned to work which remember threatened all of Gorbachev's reforms and was crippling the Soviet economy.

No 12 surely puts into perspective the very basic nature of the other demands and illustrates the real status of the workers in the "socialist state". There are still those in the West who shrilly berate others for "failing to defend the gains" made by the working class since 1917. But what do these gains amount to where the very core of the industrial working class are forced to take strike action over a bar of soap. You can only wonder at these peoples concept of the finished product, if they regard the 'socialist system' as a halfway house.

The potential for genuine working class control from below certainly existed after the revolution in 1917 but in a very short time due to many socio-economic factors, not least the fact that 14 different armies, including the British, stood on the Russian borders, anxious, indeed, determined to crush the very 'concept' of a genuine workers state. Fortunately for them the role model for the future was already in the process of being mutilated and inadvertently deformed by some of the very people who had helped give it birth.

When the dust settled and the proud parents presented their creation to the world, many were shocked, but made excuses for its impoverished, undernourished appearance. Later they looked on in horror as the 'bolshevik' baby developed into a fully grown Frankenstein monster, which under the tutelage of Josef Stalin brazenly displayed to the watching, the polished bolts in its neck.

Not everybody disapproved. For instance the philosopher and playwright George Bernard Shaw who visited Russia in 1931 wrote with gleeful approval of the Stalin government's wise custom of shooting anyone considered dangerous to the regime. He explained the need to smash all liberties and the paramount duty of states to kill opponents - "Bang, Bang" he repeated mindlessly.

This kind of drivel was too common at the time, which encouraged many to believe that to defend the revolution harsh measures had to be used and defended against any and all opposition internal or external to the regime.

After the assassination attempt on Lenin and his subsequent death in 1924, the whole process of disorientation and degeneration under Stalin's reign accelerated sharply. The opposition led by Trotsky, Zinoviev etc was quickly crushed, they were expelled, deported

CONTINUED BACK PAGE...

THE FINAL CURTAIN



A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

In the middle of July this year coalminers in the Ukraine and other areas in the Soviet Union went on strike. They had a long list of grievances that they insisted must be sorted before they returned to work. Gorbachev pointed out the grave damage they were inflicting on the Soviet economy and by implication by endangering his plans for further reforms. Though they understood, still they refused. They were tired of promises, this time they wanted real change and guarantees that they would be implemented.

Among other things this coal strike demonstrated beyond questions was the bankruptcy of the official "communist" "Trade Unions" who played no part in organising or running the strike. In the Kuzbas Strike the head of the national trade union organisation negotiated not on behalf of the strikers but as part of the management team

The rank and file miners drew up a list of demands from 1-37, which apart from the expected call for improvement in pay and conditions, also insisted that, due to corruption, all existing cooperatives be disbanded and a reduction of 50% in union staff.

There were other demands, such as the recognition of skin cancer, silicosis, anthrax as work related diseases and demands for compensation reflecting the grim conditions under which the workers live in the "workers state". However much the most curious and certainly the most significant of them all had to be no 12. If anything could illustrate more clearly the lack of influence, the real lack of control over their own lives is the simple demand outlined in no 12, many people both on the left and right of the political spectrum still refer to Russia and other Eastern bloc coun-

tries as the "Socialist States", or "Workers States". Many people both on the left and right of the political spectrum still refer to Russia and other Eastern bloc countries as the "socialist states" or "workers states", the latter used by all Trotskyite groups worldwide, because the state still maintains a centralised control of industry and production and state ownership of property. At very best it was always a very mechanical approach but surely now the existence of no 12 on the miners list of demands, must finally demolish the illusion, for it asks simply that there must be a "review of soap quotas by the authorities". I think it was George Orwell who described the working conditions of miners in pre-war Britain, who after a days work could only afford

to wash above the waist due to lack of hot water,

FROM PAUL HILL TO TERN HILL



was to give the impression that a top 'player' had been apprehended.

Shortly after Mullen had been charged articles appeared in certain sections of the Press which effectively declared him guilty before even standing trial. An example of this (and by no means the only) would be a piece by Chester Stern in the 'Mail on Sunday' which depicted Mullen's house in Zimbabwe under the caption "intended as an IRA safe house",

the article stated that a man "who cannot be named because he is facing terror charges" was involved in a whole list of criminal acts including safe housing terrorists, emerald and ivory smuggling and went on to suggest that he was party to a plot to execute Thatcher during her planned visit to Harare. The headline was "IRA had hide-away on Maggie's route". These articles appeared despite the fact that reporting restrictions had not been lifted. Mullen's solicitor has complained to the Press Council and the Attorney General has found the 'Mail on Sunday' in contempt of court but has decided not to take any action.

The behaviour of the media shows disturbing parallels with the Guildford Four, Birmingham Six and Winchester Three cases and the Press hysteria which was whipped up at those times. In a letter from Brixton prison and printed in 'The Guardian' Mullen states "I would not be surprised if an over-zealous policeman were to think

that the climate was such, that given the facts a helping hand was acceptable behaviour." Clearly the release of the Guildford Four has not deterred journalists from accepting unquestioningly police and state accounts in cases concerning Irish people accused of political offences. Five Irishmen arrested in a dawn raid last month in Cheltenham were depicted by the 'Daily Express' on the front page as "Thatcher bomb gang arrested, the following day other papers followed suit. The five were released without charge and have been forced to return to Ireland their living destroyed. Last May, the McDonagh brothers who lived in Stoke were arrested under the PTA and held for 60 hours before being released without charge. Their arrest was reported in some newspapers as being "against the Tern Hill bombers". Interviews were published with friends of the "Tern Hill Barracks bombing suspects". The McDonagh brothers have also been forced to return to Ireland their lives destroyed.

It is obvious that the government and, in particular, the security forces are acutely embarrassed by their inability to prevent the IRA and INLA mounting successful military campaigns in Britain, this flies in the face of repeated claims that these organisations are on their knees. When Mullen was arrested it was portrayed as a major victory against the Active Service Unit responsible for the present bombing campaign. Yet his arrest has not detracted from the ASU's activities, nor have the police been able to apprehend any of its members. When Mullen is convicted at his planned show trial, he will have been convicted by a legal system that responds to the needs of the state and also by the actions of journalists who prostitute truth and themselves in order to meet the needs of their employers.

NICK MULLEN DEFENCE CAMPAIGN
265 SEVEN SISTERS ROAD
LONDON N4.



TARGET: The damaged Ternhill Barracks

RENEGADES ROUTED...cont..

expectantly in Trafalgar Square for the traditional physical assault by right-wingers on the pacifist Anti-Apartheid Picket outside the South African embassy. Over 30 demonstrators were arrested last year. This year even the notorious(?) Chelsea Headhunters who had been 'run' the previous two years, didn't make an appearance. This is a mark of our success since we first mobilised against them in 1985, when an estimate of 1500 to 2000 marched. Since then, of course, the Exat have split with the revolutionary soldier section, withdrawing from the event entirely due, as a spokesman explained, "to police harassment and the existence in the area of 2,000 violent communists." The Flags group Albert Mariner March through central London, has been abandoned for similar reasons.

12 months ago practically the whole leadership of the B.N.P. were 'introduced to the pavement', by a RA contingent, drafted in to defend a Troops Out meeting in Conway Hall. Promised a 'Fenian bloodbath', the members of the UDA in attendance were no doubt suitably impressed. Finally, Blood and Honour all the rage among right-wing skinheads, appeared to have collapsed. Just six months ago they had shops in central London, the lead singer of Screwdriver, gave extensive interviews in the Evening Standard magazine, and, on May 27th, had planned a huge gig to behold

masked men armed with sledge hammers attacked the nazi Cutdown shop in central London and a substantial quantity of stock was destroyed. Cutdown, shutdown.



While all of this is a considerable source of satisfaction to the participants, who genuinely hate the bastards and what they represent. Looked at objectively it is small beer.

The real job for A.F.A. as Red Action sees it is not the extinction of fascist gangs, but that it should present sufficient reason, through activity and propaganda, to prevent the mainly working class, white youth, becoming class renegades, which is what they are, in the first place.

Fascism, and fascist ideas, are the property, not of the poor and down-trodden but of the lower and upper middle classes. Squeezed between Capitalism, at one end, and Socialism, at the other, Fascism provides an outlet for their fear and frustration. It is by nature anti-working class.

For too long fascists, and racists, have been allowed to set the agenda among working class youth, on the football terraces throughout the music scene etc, without real opposition. without an alternative argument being consistently, and forcefully, projected.

The working class is the constituency of socialism. Racism and socialism are incompatible. One only exists at the expense of the other.

For 20 years the far-right have been allowed by the far-left to occupy the constituency of the working class, to turn sections of the class against itself, by introducing middle class racist and reactionary ideas. Whole working class areas, football clubs like Leeds or Chelsea, where the fascists sport loyalist tattoos and T-shirts, or at Tottenham, where the 'chaps' are being seduced by U.D.A. propaganda, have become, as a consequence, to be regarded as 'a bit dodgy', as being somehow inherently anti-socialist, anti-working class. It is, of course self-fulfilling prophecy.

This is the probable legacy of the existing far-lefts, almost total, infatuation since 1968, with recruitment among students, and activity centred around universities. IT IS NOW TIME TO STOP THE ROT.

The fascists have invaded, and camped in, our half of the field, for too long. The job for A.F.A. is not to be content with merely confronting the organized fascist gangs, but to cut off their supply line of renegade recruits at source, on the terraces, at the gigs, in the working class communities. WE MUST BRING THE WAR HOME TO THE FASCISTS.

THE I.R.A. CONT. FROM FRONT PAGE

IRELAND UNFREE SHALL NEVER BE AT PEACE

to get both men and women into the recruiting offices, but we know the armed forces are no longer popular." The following figures from the Ministry of Defence, appeared in 'The Independent' on the 1st and 2nd of September, and show the figures from 30th June 1988 - 30th June 1989.

*Numbers leaving the R.A.F. were up 49%, in the Navy up 16% and the Army up 13%.

*Combined figures for the armed forces showed a drop of personnel from 315,758 to 307,806 a loss of nearly 8,000.

*Overall the army is understrength by 4,100 trained men, and that one army battalion stationed in Germany, (the 2nd Battalion, the Queen's Regiment) is so understrength it had to disband one of its three companies.

*In an attempt to plug the gap the 4,200-strong Women's Royal Army Corps is to be increased by more than 1,000.

In an attempt to counter the problems in recruiting, the army has received a £5m boost to advertising, but the most extravagant of advertising techniques has found it hard to compete with the simple message displayed in the steady flow of bodybags back to the mainland and the ever present images of grieving relatives on our TV screens. The effectiveness of the I.R.A. in Ireland, Europe and Britain itself over the last couple of years has certainly taken its toll on morale and this was recently demonstrated in spectacular fashion in an article that appeared in 'The Observer', October 8th, about a TV programme made shortly after the Ballygawley bombing in which eight soldiers were killed. Survivors interviewed on the programme complained that they were sent straight on duty to the border after the attack and that there was great friction between themselves and their officers over the lack of compassion shown to them, as one soldier said, "There was resentment and hatred. The officers did not care or understand." This resulted in the infantrymen refusing to obey orders for two days.

The effectiveness of I.R.A. units operating in Britain and Europe has brought an added strain on military personnel in what were normally thought of as relatively safe areas. Add increased security and the boring monotony of guard duties, the shrinking number of prestigious overseas postings, the frequency and severity of serious incidents of bullying and violence, the possibility that 10,000 of the squaddies in so-called 'safe?' postings in N.Ireland may be required to pay for food and lodgings; to the ever-present frustrations felt by soldiers trained for conventional warfare fighting a guerrilla army they cannot see, in a conflict they know little about and the effect on morale is not hard to calculate. The military withdrew from a number of recent remembrance day parades because of security considerations and when the 'union jack' flag at a military base in Duisburg, Germany, was moved away from public view because of fear of I.R.A. attacks, the reactions were very informative, as one soldier told the 'Daily Express', "Our flag has flown bravely on the Falklands, at Rourkes drift and many other battlegrounds, we feel this is just capitulation to the I.R.A." and Joe Pidgeon, of the British Legion said, "People are going to lose faith in their country if they have to go skulk around like this." The country's battleweariness, already seems evident in both press coverage and public interest; and the recent 'security forces-loyalist collusion scandal' along with the Deal bombing provoked Tory MP Ivor Standbrook into blustering. "The I.R.A. is doing marvellously well at the moment. They are winning every trick. Something must be done."

What relevance does any of this have for us, the British working class. The I.R.A. are of the working class, but not specifically for the working class. However if they win it will represent a comprehensive defeat for the British State. As a top tory once remarked "If we lose in Belfast we may well end up fighting in Brixton and Birmingham." Apart from the fact that the Irish have a clear political and moral case for self-determination it is not why Red Action take sides in the Irish war. It is because it is directly in our own self-interest. My enemy's enemy is my friend. Victory to the Provos.



A working class district of Hamburg on election day, 1931. Communism has popular appeal in Germany throughout the 1930s. In the 1932 election, the Communist Party won over five million votes; the Social Democratic Party received nearly eight million votes. Although both parties opposed Nazism, the Communist Party was the Social Democrats' most principled enemy. The two parties divide the left-wing and working class vote and fail at crucial times to unite against the Nazi threat.

in, of all places, Camden Town Hall. 1200 tickets were sold in advance. For them this was to represent the beginning, in fact it turned out to be the beginning of the end. Having been forced to change the venue, AFA called a counter-demo at the re-direction point, chosen by the neo-nazis, Speakers Corner in Hyde Park. For them it was an unmitigated disaster, with no nazis there to direct them, small groups of fascists, many of them foreign, were confronted throughout the day with the master race, consistently taking second prize. About 500 never even made to the gig. Later in the evening

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LETTERS

WHAT MARX REALLY MEANT WAS....

DEAR RED ACTION

For many parties on the British left, the description "Marxist-Leninist" supercedes the description "Marxist", implying that Marxism was somehow modified or developed to such an extent by Lenin, that there is some form of logical inconsistency in adopting the principles of the one while denying those of the other. While it is hard to imagine a group of Leninists who explicitly reject marxism, (without saying that it couldn't be done given some of the exotic fauna on the periphery of the left), the article in RA 53 on "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat", makes a case for rejecting Leninism on the principles of marxism itself. The article contains three important strands of argument. First, that the position of Marx and Lenin regarding the "dictatorship of the proletariat" are completely divergent. Second, that Leninist principles led to the dictatorship of the party as distinct from that of the class. Thirdly, that the "traditional left" in Britain is "utterly and completely wrong" in their estimate of the principles and consequences of Leninism.

Marx used the phrase "dictatorship of the proletariat" on several occasions, but failed, as the article notes, to develop a comprehensive theory as to its form. Still, it is fairly clear that it contained the following elements. The use of coercion against remaining bourgeois forces would almost certainly be necessary in any post revolutionary period; that the existing machinery of government inherited by the revolutionary forces would have to be smashed and replaced by revolutionary forms; and the political control of the proletariat, i.e. the industrial working population. Lenin unreservedly accepted the first two of these elements; it would be impossible to argue that he did not. Yet it is worth noting that the issue is not entirely clear-cut even with respect to the third. In political conditions analogous to those of Tsarist Russia, i.e. the repressive Prussian regime of the 1840's, Marx had been a leading member of a clandestine organisation, the Communist League, composed of a few hundred members, which regarded itself in the words of the Communist Manifesto as:

"the most progressive and resolute section of the working class...they have theoretically the advantage over the great mass of the proletariat of understanding the line of advance, conditions and general result of the proletarian movement".

The outlines at least of a "vanguard" conception of the party, are clearly present. Only in the midst of the bourgeois freedoms of mid-Victorian England did Marx abandon this form of organisation in favour of the loose mass association of the International Working Men's Association with its perceptibly different strategy.

It is of course true that the process through which the revolution degenerated after 1917, and Lenin's role within it, is a matter for considerable debate, which may view events very differently from the traditional left. It could be argued that given the structure of the bolshevik party, the process of degeneration was inevitable no matter what the precise course of events within the new Soviet republic. Nor does it follow from the fact that bolshevik theory and practice met with extraordinary success in Russia in 1917 imply that a similar form of organisation is mandatory or desirable within the contemporary British left. All members and sympathisers of RA would argue the contrary. The re-evaluation of the equation of marxism and leninism is valuable and well overdue. Nevertheless, the sweeping rejection of leninism/bolshevism, and the rest of the British left contained in the "Dictatorship" article throws a number theories and principles into the dustbin of history that may have to be fished out again.

Yours Sincerely F. Gordon Herts



OUT IN THE COLD ?

REPLY

Before dealing with the genuine historical confusion surrounding Marx's phrase "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat" lets first clear up a far more recent misunderstanding arising from the article of the same name which appeared in Red Action No 53.

The article did not say as the letter alleges that Marx failed to develop "A comprehensive theory as to the form of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat", instead it stated quite emphatically that no theory related either to Marx or Engels on this subject existed "He lent the phrase no particular significance. In the two decades before The Paris Commune there was not a single case of Marx use of the term "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat". Instead he always referred to the rule of the proletariat, conquest of political power, workers state and similar expressions to denote the assumption of state power by the working class. Though Marx invented the expression others, indeed many others invented the 'theory'. Lenin later canonised the watchword of dictatorship of the proletariat as the 'holy of holys' of Marxist theory. "The very essence of proletarian revolution", "The key to the problem of the entire proletarian class struggle". Exactly what this meant was as blurry and shifting as his clarification of dictatorship. But later became adopted as one of the "new principles of Marxism that Marx had never heard of. That is one of the favourite myths embraced by the orthodox far left that it was the intention of the article to bury. The second assumption held equally dear, as in the letter, follows swiftly "that coercion against remaining bourgeois

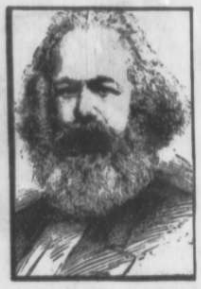
would be necessary etc There is a contrast here that obviously needs to be made very clear. In not one single locus did Marx or Engels ever associate the use of the dictatorship of the proletariat with another question of obvious importance the necessity for a victorious workers state to use force against counter-revolutionary forces. They recognised the problem of course they discussed it-all socialists did-but they did not link it up as part of the definition of the 'Dictatorship of the proletariat'. On the other hand virtually every reference to the dictatorship of the proletariat made after their time was tied to this question explicitly or implicitly. There was naturally two types of reaction to this state of affairs, some rejected Marx's formulation because they rejected 'dictatorship', some sought to find a justification for Marx's formulation by groping for a re-interpretation. These wound up as two different ways of burying Marx's thought, instead what we are now dealing with is a re-interpretation of the phrase which filled it with special content. This 'misunderstanding' led directly to another one. If dictatorship of the proletariat referred strictly to the class content of a state the government form might vary widely without affecting the content but if dictatorship entailed specific governmental forms and policies as it did in the misunderstanding then it had to be implemented by a particular govt. CONCLUSION, explicit or implicit, the dictatorship could be exercised or wielded in practice only by the revolutionary party that had conquered power and instituted the revolutionary govt. Having identified two major errors, this brief letter also

helps illuminate the method by which these conclusions might have been reached. In an attempt to secure Marx's endorsement for Lenin's concept of the 'vanguard party' the writer employs a quote from the Communist Manifesto, or in reality two quotes as we shall see. There is of course no reference at all to the Communist League but says this- 'The Communists therefore are on the one hand practically the most advanced and resolute section of the working class parties of every country, that sections which pushes forward all others on the other hand theoretically the rest as before. Far from supporting Lenin's view of an elite distinct party leading from the front, does it not in fact suggest for Communists an entirely different role? The method of applying random or selective quotes or bits of quotes is all too common on the far left, used simply to justify a pre-concieved position on this or that particular question. They then conclude in triumph "What Marx really meant was..." rather than paying more or any attention to what Marx had actually said. As we have seen in relation to our original subject with disastrous consequences. To conclude, we are not dealing with the Dictatorship of the proletariat but with 'the dictatorship of the proletariat' that is with the term or phrase. It is a limited corner of a big subject, the question of the Russian Revolution and Lenin's role in it. Its interest is that it throws light on the big subject, though perhaps with far-reaching implications. For the moment, purely for the purposes of mental hygiene its limited character must be kept in mind.

'I'M NOT A MARXIST' KARL MARX

Dear Red Action, What I would like to know is can people subscribe to the paper. Is the paper monthly or weekly. I would like to be up to date with the paper. Its no good me buying the edition and finding its out of date by a week or two or whatever. Second thing I would like to know is that in reading the back of the paper where you say we are Red Action you don't state who you belong to. Are you Syndicalist or Anarchist or both? Marxist, Trotskyists or who? Please write back to me and let me know.

Yours comradely I.S.Godfrey



REPLY

Red Action are not anist or indeed associated with any particular 'ism'. We never from the very beginning felt the need to find comfort and sanctuary within any particular ideological straight jacket. The theoretical conclusions of Red Action are in no way based on ideas or principles that have been invented or discovered by this or that would-be universal reformer. We merely express in "general terms actual relations springing from the existing class struggle. We have no interest separate and apart from the working class as a whole. we never apply the conclusions of Marx and Engels mechanically, but always try to apply the method by which he reached his conclusions, and use this as a guide to action here and now. To answer you're first question the paper appears every six to eight weeks and is available from all good quality stockists.

EX-POW.

Red Action Comrades, Being an ex I.R.S. POW who was sponsored by some of your membership supporters, I would like it very much if you could ensure that one obtains your newspaper "Red Action" on a regular basis. The last issue obtained was no. 5. Cost and postage will be paid for of course.

Yours in comradeship Downpatrick I.R.S.P. Comrade

DELIGHTED!

INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE

Dear Red Action, We address today the development of the far-right in Europe. After its last electoral successes (more than 11% in France, 7.5% in RFA, 17% in Antwerp, a local government in Austria...), the far right is getting stronger today at the European Parliament. This increase is particularly dangerous in regard to the Europe of 1993. To impose to us this "Clean Europe", and to put down any force of resistance, the European states have still important means. The Europeans Home Office minister meet than in the TREV group to strengthen the police cooperation and to settle a single legislation concerning immigration, terrorism,

and refugees. Mitterand, Thatcher, Kohl, Gonzales and the others who want to smash the Basque or Irish peoples, to put all the dissidents and rebels on card index, and to get easier traditions in Europe. All this measures have justified the full of hatred talks of the fascists, the increase of the repression, the increased number of racist murders and ill-treatments committed by the police, or by people worried about their own security, and have established the social exclusion as a political practice. The far right has become stronger in this context, not only at the electoral level, but also in peoples minds and inside the institutions. In several countries like Belgium or Italy, some fascists have reached the top level of the state, penetrating the secret services, the army, the constabulary, to undertake actions against the state's stability, to try to impose a new order in Europe. In Germany, some politicians do homage to Hitler or to Waffen SS. In France the people who want to rehabilitate Petain or the old-fashioned catholics who give asylum to criminals of war... The far-right has also used the European level to coordinate and to supplement with more efficiency its international action. If we want to stop this development, it's an illusion to trust in the institutional political forces, which use far-right for their electoral

interests, or which justify it by their security politics. For us, only radical practice (not allowing any expression to the fascists on social but not moral bases...) can stop their progression. In each country, some groups who, like here, fight on such bases. Alone, it's very difficult to fight with efficacy a far right organized at a world scale. We need today to coordinate to share our analysis, our practices, our informations and to organize common actions. Meeting each other is a necessity. That's why we propose a gathering of a radical 'antifascistes' groups who refuse the Europe ruled by money, cops et fascists that it is imposed to us. This gathering could take place in Paris at the beginning of 1990

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IS THERE L.I.F.E. BEFORE DEATH?!

The bigots are at it again... a woman's right to choose what she wishes to do with her life and her body is under attack. The governments to give anti-abortionists the chance to amend the 'Embryo Research Laws so no experiments may take place on embryos 15 days after conception, and no abortions after 18 weeks. Not only this but the underhand tactics of imported intimidation from America and Canada under the banner of 'Rescue' have been hitting clinics around the country.

RESCUE
'Rescue', funded from the US with support from SPUC (Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child) and LIFE (the religious nuts) from this country have set up pickets on abortion clinics screaming 'Murderer' swinging plastic fetuses, praying, and holding large pictures of aborted pregnancies, much to the distress of the women attempting to enter the building. Pickets of maybe 3 or 4 on weekdays to twenty or more on Saturdays (obviously part-time bigots) have been opposed at the Hazel Grove clinic, Stockport (Manchester) by supporters of the National Abortion Campaign (NAC). The workers in the clinic have merely asked NAC to escort women through the picket line, rather than proceed with a noisy counter picket which would further intimidate women wishing to enter the clinic. What we would like to see is a removal of 'Rescue' in the time honoured tradition of Red Action. NAC did organise a large contingent a couple of weeks ago which 'Rescue' unfortunately heard about, resorting to a transportation of troops to harass women in Birmingham.



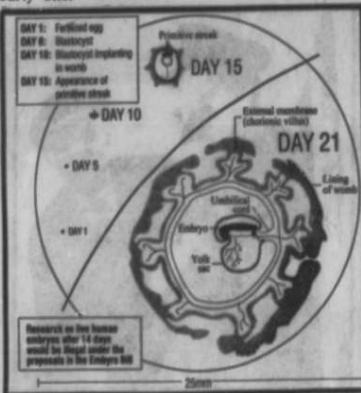
DEMONSTRATION

Red Action attended the demonstration in Stockport, where we handed out leaflets on "a woman's right to choose." We received a good response to our call for "more militant aggressive action" against 'Rescue'. Like racism and fascism they will not go away if ignored. We realise that the pickets are still relatively small, but will grow as they see the success of their tactics of intimidation, in publicity as the embryo bill draws nearer to its parliamentary hearing. Please contact us if you are involved in Pro-Choice activities, or have any information on Rescue, SPUC or LIFE movements.

TIME LIMIT

Anti-abortionist campaigning for a reduction of the 28 week limit to 18 weeks has the ultimate goal of a denial of right to any woman to choose whether or not to continue her pregnancy. As it is, a reduction of time limit will effect a small percentage, all desperate women. Those discovering that theirs is to be a handicapped child, hand-

capped women not capable of looking after a child, or young girls too frightened to tell anyone of their pregnancy. These women should have a right to abortion - after all which woman would choose a later abortion if she could get an early one.



A RIGHT TO LIFE...A RIGHT TO VOTE?

CONCEPTION

LIFE, SPUC and Rescue believe that from the moment of conception the splitting cells have a right to life...life. Why not take it to the logical conclusion and give it the VOTE. Seriously, they believe that the prospective baby should take all precedence over how the woman chooses to live her life. Every woman 'Rescue' turns away from the clinic they see as a success... a saved life, forget about the mother-to-be's life, she's not so important. Women do not undergo abortion as an easy option, or a form of contraception, it is a decision taken because they are in an intolerable situation. These reactionary, hypocritical bastards need to be stopped from preying on women at an emotional and distressing time.

CLASS

The 'crunch' is not one of birth control, but of social control, abortion is a class issue. Illegality of abortion whether from conception, 18 weeks, or 28 weeks does not mean it is not available, as long as the money and contacts are. Wealthy women will always be able to afford a hygienic termination, working class women once again condemned to the back-street abortionist, with gambles of infection, sterility and death. Desperation stakes, anything - (a hot bath and a bottle of gin - if you don't drown in the bath at least enjoy the piss up.). Reproduction in the control of the State: Women denied abortions for governmental or medical reasons: research has shown that the children born are more likely to suffer social and medical problems than their peers. Not surprising really - parents who would rather not be, subject to a system which will not provide adequate financial help, organised, subsidised creche facilities and a refusal to bring rate of pay for part time work up to even respectable levels.

SOCIALISTS

As Socialists we totally defend the freedom of right of individuals, in this case women, to do exactly as they wish with their bodies and lives, and we totally oppose the acts of 'Rescue', SPUC and LIFE who are trying to force others to conform to their will.

STOP INTIMIDATION...FIGHT FOR THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE.

WORKING FOR THE YANKEE DOLLAR!

Solidarnosc, the Polish people's voice had finally become victorious over the mighty communist machine.

Yes there were the messages that have greeted us since the elections in Poland last June, when Solidarnosc were given a share in the economic running of the country. But is this indeed such good news for the working classes in Poland? Will a Solidarnosc led government improve the living conditions of the mass of the Polish population? How will it achieve such radical change?

Well on the evidence so far it is quite obvious to see why it is the politicians and business men in the west rather than the workers in Poland who have smiles on their faces.

Solidarnosc is portrayed in this country as a mass movement, which is the overwhelming voice of the Polish working class, and headed by a militant populist figure-head in Lech Walesa.

is a middle-class which prizes the notion of contracts and property" (progressive stuff.). Other indications of the shape of things to come when one looks who the Solidarnosc government are turning to for advice, such benevolent organisations as the Adam Smith Institute and Jeffrey Sachs, the man who master-minded the Bolivian economic disaster. Of course all the western financiers can't wait to dive in and divide up the spoils. In fact even now a bank is being set up in Brussels trying to attract investors in Eastern bloc countries such as Poland under the banner of 'High risk. High return' investments, and they are forecasting returns of between 25% and 50% on investments. Basically the west now sees the likes of Poland as just another commodity to be bought and exploited. Unfortunately it won't be the likes of Walesa or Jaruzelski, who will suffer at the hands



Unfortunately for Mr. Walesa nothing could be further from the truth.

In 1981 at the height of the Solidarnosc popularity it boasted membership of some 10 million workers. At the time of the June elections this year it had a membership of under 2 million (some popularity eh.). Even other unions such as the O.P.P.Z. can boast memberships of over 7 million. So could it be that the leadership and direction of Solidarnosc is not as popular as the media would have us believe.

The fact of the matter is that the national leadership has not been renewed or re-elected since its inception in 1981 and all representatives in the organisation are personally selected by Walesa, this by the man who used to be on our TV screens ranting about democracy and the right to strike to improve conditions, the same man who is now trying to implement bans on strikes in the so-called struggle for Economic Recovery. In the words of the resigning Chairperson of Solidarnosc in the shipyards in Gdynia Edward Frankiewicz "I cannot agree to accept the line of march being advanced by leading representatives of the National, Regional and Shipyards committee. The strategy being advanced by these people, to whom I would have been loyal, reminds me of the activity of the security services."

So what is this 'Economic Recovery' and more importantly whose recovery. The governments Solidarnosc's Industry Minister Tadeusz Szyrzycki gave us a clue who this economic strategy is designed for when he states "We must change the structure of ownership. The only guarantee of democracy

of the free-market economy. No it'll be the usual casualties of 'economic miracles' the poor sods who put him in power in the first place. The sad reality of the 'economic miracle' in Poland is much the same as that of many of the surrounding Eastern bloc countries, in that the only people who can possibly gain in these so-called progressive free-market regimes are those opportunists within the government and the money-brokers of the west.

The unfortunate fact remains after over eight years of the crushing of the Trade Union Solidarnosc in 1981 the exploited still remain the exploited. Merely the face and the uniform of the exploiter has changed.

"Men fight and lose the battle and then the thing they fought for comes about in spite of their defeat and when it comes, turns out to be not what they meant and other men have to fight for what they meant under another name." (William Morris)



THE VEIL OR THE SHROUD

Who could forget the sight of Sandy Gall posing on TV in March, on the outskirts of Jalalabad (that's what he told us.) proclaiming the inevitable and glorious triumph of the Mujahedin. Last month he was exposed by 'Bandung File' on Channel 4 as having intercut propaganda footage supplied by the Mujahedin with genuine footage recorded by his own camera crew. Very naughty. Well I expect George Bush could do for one, as the assault on Jalalabad failed miserably, and nine months later the rebels appear to be in an increasing state of disarray. When the Soviet army withdrew from Afghanistan earlier this year, the West, and particularly the Americans, predicted that victory for the 'rebels' was an absolute certainty. However, the Mujahedin were repelled by the Afghan army and driven back to a point where the city can now be serviced and supplied regularly and safely by road.

The Mujahedin have not been able to make the successful transition from guerrilla to conventional warfare necessary to topple the Kabul government and have now resorted to firing 'Sakr' missiles into the capital killing almost exclusively civilians. The present impasse has both disillusioned and frustrated them. Before the Soviet withdrawal, they had clear objectives, to drive the 'foreigners' from Afghan soil. Now they have gone, they seem neither sure what they are fighting against and, more importantly, what

they are fighting for. Many have become increasingly disillusioned with the rocket attacks being launched on the cities which have removed any level of support they might have had there once, and had killed some six hundred fellow Afghans in August and September alone, most of them civilians, and at times their own relatives. Their frustration in not being able to defeat the government forces has manifested itself in many ways as the good morale and efficiency of the Afghan army is matched only by the guerrilla's incompetence, in February for example, after the Soviet withdrawal, seventy government troops went over to the rebels, who promptly rounded them up and publicly executed them, thus terminating any likelihood of significant defections from the military.

As we safely predicted in

issue no. 50 of R.A., that whether the Mujahedin defeated the government or not the result was likely to be that "The profound ethnic, class and religious divisions within the Afghan 'resistance' will in all probability be resolved in a spectacular bloodbath." This prediction is already beginning to prove correct. On July 9th, thirty Jamiat fighters were killed by members of the notorious radical muslim leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's, Hizbe group. Since then three hundred guerrilla's have said to have been killed as the groups launched, first, counter-accusation, and then, counter attacks against each other. It is estimated that some ninety per cent of guerrilla commanders have ceased fighting the Kabul government and many have joined the internal warfare that is splintering the seven-party



The choice offered to these women by the freedom lovers of the Mujahedin is the veil or the shroud. Spot the feminist!

guerilla interim government in Peshawar, Pakistan. Fighting has spread to three provinces as groups attempt to gain control of the various Heroin routes to the West; the US estimates that seven hundred and fifty tons of heroin will be provided by Afghanistan this year, the second largest producer in the world. About one thousand Mujahedin have died in various feuds during the ten-year war and presently the murder rate amongst the guerrilla's supporters in refugee camps is said to be up to twelve per day. The Americans have looked on at these events in absolute dismay. They predicted confidently that Najibullah's government would collapse 'within weeks' and the head of the C.I.A.'s Afghan task force has since been sacked, obviously Washington needed a scapegoat. Despite the numbers of setbacks to the Mujahedin, they are far from finished, and while they have not defeated the Afghan army, neither does the Afghan army look like defeating them in the near future. However, it is the duty of socialists, despite the significant limitations and failures of the Afghan government (by comparison it is progressive) to support them in opposing the Mujahedin and a return to feudalism. As a recent interview with various Kabul women, none of them particularly 'political' and some of them actually disliking the government, showed, that despite their criticisms of the government they were united in one thing, and that was their total opposition to the Mujahedin and among other things the return of the hated veil.

HANG TOGETHER

The annual MANCHESTER MARTYRS COMMEMORATIVE MARCH took place on Sunday 26 Nov, and good turn out of Red ACTION members and supporters attended this years March. The March is held to remember three Irish, ALLEN LARKIN and O'BRIEN murdered by the State in 1867. The three who were alleged to have

been shot and killed when a shot was fired to blast off the lock on the van. THE ambush was successful but later Allen, Larkin, and O'Brien were arrested, charged, an later hanged, amid massive public outcry on NOV. 23. Many marched in London and Manchester in protest at the judicial killings. Since then the Manchester Martyrs March has become an annual event, and has traditionally been addressed by prominent speakers and political activists of the day. It was smashed off the streets by the fascists in the 70s, but was revived by the

taken part in an attempt to rescue two leading members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood; who were being transported to BELLE VUE gaol in Manchester. During the rescue bid, acopper



At the rally a RA rep spoke of the need for re-conciliation pointing out the grave damage done to both sides in the last 18 months. He concluded "The evidence suggests that we hang together or hang separately"

present Committee, with support from the Bands Alliance and RED ACTION in the early 80s. Regretably this year, as in the two previous years Sinn Fein has refused to send a speaker, objecting to the presence on the platform of a representative from the left wing rival Irish Republican Socialist Party. This strategy which is in effect a policy of 'no platform' for the IRSP has at least had the effect recently, of showing some rather shady characters in their true light. Since the Sinn Fein boycott, these individuals have had their noses put out, by the Martyrs Committee's refusal to be bullied into compliance with S.F. policy. However, perhaps recognising that the Commemoration is the only Republican march of any significance in this country, outside London. A number of S.F. supporters, chiefly members of the Birmingham Hunger Strike Committee, and some individuals from the Republican Bands Alliance re-doubled their efforts to dissuade the Committee into with-

drawing their invitation to the IRSP. First off, the Bands Alliance declared their intention of not attending the Commemoration, and stated that they would be holding their own Commemorative march in Glasgow. Various attempts at reconciliation were made, which were either rejected or ignored. When an offer was made to invite neither the IRSP or Sinn Fein, the Bands alliance did an about turn and announced that they would only attend marches if there was a S.F. speaker present. It was then discovered that for some time the Bands Alliance, along with the Birmingham Hunger Strike Committee, who were probably the instigators, had for some time been secretly attempting to organise a rival Martyrs march in Manchester. It is plainly obvious that this was nothing short of a spoiling tactic to try and wreck the Commemoration. Clearly incapable of accepting the fact that the Commemoration was not going to roll over and die without them, they chose to try and smash it instead. Surely they could not be ignorant of the fact that the police were quite

likely to ban both marches. It was also necessary to point out to them the dangers of marching through Manchester without adequate stewarding or local support. This march which never looked like going ahead anyway would not only be contemptable in concept, but reckless in reality. Like Red Action, the Manchester Martyrs Committee does not say either Sinn Fein or The IRSP. It is an independent Committee. However when faced with the threat of a S.F. boycott, they naturally chose not to give in to this blatant blackmail attempt. S.F.s policy in the case of the Martyrs however is in fact very convenient as it is doubtful they would have been sending a speaker anyway. Clearly S.F. have embarked on a strategy of attempting to marginalise groups on the mainland who support the armed struggle. This of course goes hand in hand with their flirtation with the more 'respectable'

elements of the left. Whether this strategy will work is doubtful given the 'fair-weather friend' mentality of these organisations. While we accept, but dont agree with S.F.s strategy in this case, what we do not accept are the antics of a handful of their supporters in this country who claim to act on S.F.s behalf. The Manchester Martyrs should be commemorated with dignity by all who claim to support the struggle for Irish freedom. To break the boycott imposed by the Scottish Bands Alliance, Red Action with support from the R.C.L. raised over a thousand pounds to bring the Brendan Convery flute band over from Ireland to ensure that the Commemoration was the success it deserved to be. Despite police bans, threats from Loyalist/Fascist groups and the naked sectarianism of opportunists, the Manchester Martyrs march is still going strong.

UNCLE SAM AND THE GREAT SATAN

It has appeared for some time that the monolithic control of the communist parties in Russia and Eastern Europe is in crisis. It is important to recall that the settlement which led to the formation of the Stalinist empire was an agreement reached between the Soviet Union and the Western powers, principally Britain and America. Both sides recognised advantages to themselves in this division of the world into superpower blocs. This fact suggests the question, does the breakdown in communist control represent a decisive victory for western ideology as our own ruling classes are trying persuade us?

The emergence of America as a superpower exercising global control dates from the Second World War. The huge and unrivalled productive power of the US economy geared to the unlimited demands of wartime conditions threatened an unprecedented crisis of overproduction and recession with the return of peace. The slump of the thirties in America had been resolved only by the outbreak of war and the government direction of the economy. Ruling circles concluded that a large proportion on the world (roughly the western hemisphere, the former British empire, and the Far East) had to be open to US capital and to its products if American capitalism was to avoid recession. This became known as "Grand Area Strategy". This programme required continued expenditure on armaments at high levels, which in turn required people to believe that the war hadn't ended but was continuing in a new phase, the "Cold War".

How could this policy be sold to the domestic population at a time when people wanted cars and refrigerators rather than more bombs? The answer was the invention of the "domino theory" (later re-used inconspicuously with South-East Asia) and originally applied in the middle-east. It presented the Soviet Union as an aggressive power with unlimited plans for military expansion threatening all western powers and their dependencies with subversion or attack, and maintained that should one fall, so would the next and so on (like dominos). All threats to established or friendly governments were therefore to be interpreted as Russian backed communist plots. This picture was sold to an American public saturated with a volume of propaganda that it would be difficult to overestimate (including the judicial terrorism of the Macarthy era). At each period when the threat of recession in the US was felt to be most acute, in 1950, 1961 and during the Reagan administration of the eighties, the same tactic has been employed: the huge mobilisation of expenditure in the state-controlled sector of military production alleging an aggressive move or intent on the part of the demonised "Evil Empire" of the Soviets.

This mechanism has been vital to the global dominance of the US economy in two distinct ways. The expansion of the state capitalist sector of the economy, which military production within "free-market" capitalism really represents, provides the essential motor of investment and profit for the whole of the economy during periods when private capital itself is reluctant to invest in sufficient quantities due to the relative depression of profits. Vast quantities of public money are thereby diverted into providing guaranteed private profits. The actual production of the military hardware then permits the maintenance and extension of US influence over the world economy, either through direct intervention (as in Vietnam and recently the Persian Gulf) or by threats (as in the Cuban missile crisis and Nicaragua).

The snag is, as is so often the case with capitalist mechanisms, that the solution to the problem becomes the problem. The Russians, in order to maintain the integrity of their own empire were forced to match the military capabilities of the West and within a smaller economy that is wholly directed by the state, this involved virtual bankruptcy. Yet by 1970 parity had been achieved (the US estimated that it had a 10:1 superiority in 1960). This was an enormous blow to the American ruling classes since it meant that expenditure within the state capitalist/military sector had to be steadily expanded with crippling consequences for the performance of the economy as a whole. The stability of the domestic economy could be sustained in this way (more so since the establishment of what Eisenhower termed the "military/industrial complex" also contributed social and political stability and discipline), yet

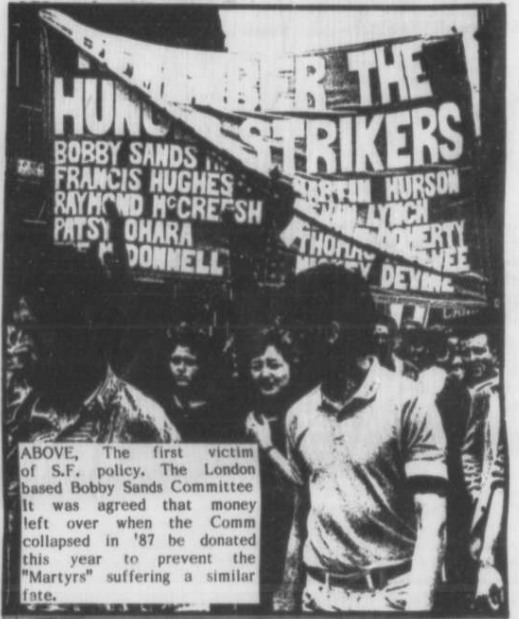
crucially, the external competitiveness of the economy is being continually eroded in relation to those of its "allies" (principally W.Germany and Japan) who are really of course, its true rivals. Russia and America are not true rivals in this fundamental sense since they do not compete in the same markets. The problems is that military spending, though it diverts resources and generates enormous profits, is the production of waste. It is not product in that can be utilised in further production. The capitalist rivals of the US have quite sensibly consistently refused to impose the burden of waste production on their own economies and have grown increasingly competitive and powerful as a result.

This situation is the background to the hysterical efforts of the Reagan administrations of the Eighties to alert the western world to the globally aggressive designs of a Russian empire equated with the forces of darkness. The growth of lunatic right-wing religious movements in America indicates just how far this process has gone. Nonetheless a large section of the American public has been regarded with far greater suspicion; unable to directly invade Nicaragua for example, Reagan had to be content with buying a mercenary army. In Europe too, peace movements have succeeded in attracting mass followings with political impact.

The events within the communist world surrounding the introduction of "perestroika", loosening the political stranglehold of party bureaucracies, has made the task of manipulating domestic populations in the west into supporting or tolerating gigantic military expenditures in place of social provisions, incomparably more difficult. It has become increasingly difficult to hide the fact that the Russian regime is ramshackle and bankrupt and faces enormous problems merely in maintaining its own stability; it is hard to imagine this lot plotting to take over the world. The unrest and protests in the satellite countries of Eastern Europe reveal a totally disenchanted population in opposition to isolated party bureaucracies. For the first time in the western media, these people have faces and can be seen to be just like people in the west, but without the videos.

Justifying a defence policy that requires billions of pounds to be diverted away from health and education services in favour of a state-directed military sector in order that these people can be exterminated in a nuclear holocaust at a moment's notice is fully revealed as the criminal lunacy it has always been.

Although the matter is too complex for any precise predictions to be made, it is difficult to envisage the current meltdown of stalinist bureaucracy being reversed. And without a Great Satan, an Orwellian "Eurasia", it is equally difficult to see how it will be possible for governments in the future to convince their populations that attacks on working class living standards are necessary to permit a constant expansion of a state-fed military sector which transfers wealth to the rich and powerful through the production of potentially deadly waste. When Gorbachev can go on an impromptu walkabout in the centre of London while Thatcher is putting up iron gates at the end of her street, the propaganda of the "sworn enemy" begins to fall apart. The crisis of stalinist ideology is at the same time a crisis of western ideology. Nor should this crisis be considered as taking place solely within a realm of ideas. The growth and stability of capitalism in the US (and consequently throughout the West) since the war, has depended crucially upon this factor - an unofficial state capitalism, the sector comprising military production, within "freemarket" capitalism. The most obvious capitalist alternative to the American world order is a return to conditions reminiscent of the period of crisis during the Thirties and a division of the non-communist world as then, into national capitals and their respective satellites; a dollar bloc, a Yen bloc, and an ECU (European) bloc. Identical problems would also re-surface, perpetual crisis and stagnation, mass unemployment, decline in international trade, relieved only by the prospect of the revival of nationalistic political movements urging preparation for war with each other. Socialism provides the perspective of a different development: an end to the divisions of the international working class and the beginning of co-operation beyond the perverse confines of capitalism.



ABOVE, The first victim of S.F. policy. The London based Bobby Sands Committee. It was agreed that money left over when the Comm collapsed in '87 be donated this year to prevent the "Martyrs" suffering a similar fate.

SUPPORT RED ACTION

Red Action is an organisation founded by working class people to work for the furthering of the cause of Socialism. Membership is open to all who accept our political principles and pay a weekly subscription. Every member has an equal vote on all Red Action policy and decisions.

If you support our aims but do not wish to become a member, you can become a supporting member. This does not entitle you to vote, but you will receive.

1. A free subscription to the newspaper.
2. A regular internal newsletter that will keep you informed of what is going on in the organisation.
3. Notification of any Red Action activities in your area.

The cost for this is £20 for one year.

Subscriptions to the paper are still available separately. The cost is £3 pounds for ten issues. Please remember that producing a paper is a very uneconomic business and we are always very grateful for any donations, and especially grateful to anyone who can take extra copies to sell.

All cheques and postal orders should be made payable to 'Red Action'.

BM BOX 37. LONDON

• WC1N 3XX •

RED ACTION ON MERSEYSIDE

If interested in finding out more/getting active in the North West or on Merseyside. There is a grouping of members and supporting members on Merseyside who can be contacted by writing to:

P.O. BOX 80
SOUTHPORT
PR8 6BH

THE FINAL CURTAIN CONT. FROM FRONT PAGE

and eventually murdered. Outside Russia, among revolutionaries there were similar re-alignments leading to bitter divisions that still exist today, indeed for many groups their 'position' on Russia is the sole reason for their existence. For some, Stalin was Lenin's true successor, a heroic and pragmatic defender of the centre of the world revolution. For others, who rallied

and has to be explained in terms of class relations. However just as the enormous pressures of the post 1917 period helped to produce the social and economic conditions out of which Stalinism was born, so too did these pressures give rise to the initial theoretical rationalizations on the basis of which marxists theory was twisted out of shape. In this way something still called Marxism

legacy of the failure of the Russian experiment represented nothing more than an intellectual cemetery full of redundant ideas and failed theories. In short: the blind leading the blind. The various Communist parties, east and west, comatose in any case for years, are about to have the life support machine cut off. This is perfectly obvious but what is yet not apparent but equally inevitable is that the various Trotskyite groups currently dancing on the stalinist graves, will, unable to detach themselves from the mistakes of the past face a similar crisis themselves in the near future. So where does all this leave a group like Red Action. From the very beginning Red Action has always been different. In the first place we are not only for the working class, but equally importantly, and in contrast to many student dominated lefty groups, visibly of the working class. Like the working class Communists after whom Marx named the Manifesto, we are neither refined nor 'respectable' and our politics are often 'rough hewn and instinctive'. We have a worms eye view of the world and so form an empathy with a worms eye view of history. Like the middle-class academics on the left who declare themselves to be the leadership of the working class we too judge things from an acute angle. The main difference is that as they view events from the top down we in Red Action view and value everything from the bottom up, not surprisingly, our conclusions, priorities and tactics tend to be radically different from theirs. We do not just sympathise with the underdogs in society simply because that is the position we ourselves occupy. We are neither reformists, sectarian or idealists, for everything we do initiate, promote or support with the emphasis on the practical, sponsorship of INLA PoW, physical chastisement of fascist gangs, street collections, or benefits for striking workers is done in our own self-interest, that is, in the short or long-term interests of the working class as a whole. While sometimes in the past

revolutionary socialism, has been ground up, re-hashed and re-processed. The arguments, deviations, distortions and contradictions that emerged first created confusion and dismay in the process destroying the self-confidence of the working class across continents. The corruption, opportunism and the constant conflict between the long-term interests of the class, set against the short term self interests of the 'party' has left the vast majority of workers viewing the whole sorry mess with a cynical detachment. In short, the working class has been betrayed, our movement has been hijacked, we must take it back. Therefore the task for genuine revolutionaries is simple. The distortions, myths and inventions associated with communism, thenew 'principles' of marxism, 'the theory of increasing misery', the 'end justifies the means', the principle of 'the worse the better' or Marx's 'Theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat' that Marx had never heard of, must be exposed, rather than be re-gurgitated, defended and adopted. The decks must first be cleared of all this garbage, and the clarity of vision restored so that once again working people, as a class know what they are fighting for, rather than simply what they are fighting against.

"We journeyed through bombed towns in country side dotted with wooden crosses on the railway embankments until we came into the territory of the 'Tommies'. One night in a port whose houses were shattered by bombs the sick man in our party, some police officers and I went into a tavern filled with British soldiers. They noticed our unusual appearance. "Who are you lot? Where are you going?" "Revolutionaries, - we are going to Russia.". Thirty tanned faces surrounded us eagerly, there were hearty exclamations all round us and we had to shake everybody's hand - the Russian revolution was once more a distant beacon to men." (V.Serge, Memoirs of a Revolutionary). The vision of the future does not need to be created orientated. But by going back to the basics it will, it must, be restored. This will not happen by repeating the tired old formulae. The new socialist



THEY GOT THE SOAP BUT THEN HAD TO STRIKE FOR EVERYTHING ELSE

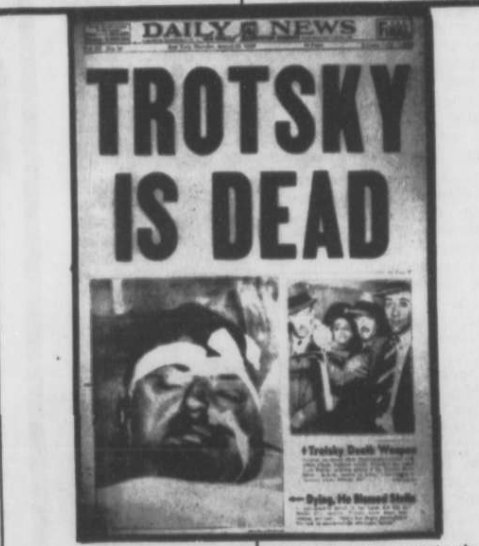
around Trotsky, claimed that the very word socialism had been tainted and corrupted by the new Tsar Stalin and his murderous system. For them at least it was simple (and still is), Stalin was an out and out villain, Leon Trotsky, the man in the white hat, the legitimate living representative of 'true' communism. Lenin was simply canonised by both sides. What has not been confronted, acknowledged or forgotten by all these groups which call themselves Trotskyite is the simple indisputable fact that it was Trotsky himself who took the theoretical lead (well in the van of Lenin) in gutting socialism of its organic enrootment, in the mess of the people. It was also he who found it necessary to justify what had been done in the name of Marx by the Bolsheviks, by accepting the label of 'workers state' for Stalin's totalitarian regime solely exclusively because it maintained control of property in the hands of the state. Here he was continuing his lamentable record of generalising the concept of a workers State from the question of Working Class control from below. Later he urged that workers democratic control of Trade Unions be incorporated into the State. Later in another theoretical step onward and downward he argued for the 'militarisation of labour.'

It is necessary to emphasise that this was not a question of some momentary lapse in Trotsky thinking but rather his adoption over a whole period of a deep ongoing systematic break with Karl Marx's view of the nature of the workers state. In Terrorism and Communism his analysis bottomed out with a new version of the old theory of the impossibility of majority control due to corruption of the masses by present day society. The masses of people are held through the educational system on the verge of complete ignorance with no opportunity of rising above the level of spiritual slavery; the capitalists corrupt, deceive and terrorize the more privileged or the more backward of the proletariat itself. The function of the dictatorship of the proletariat (read dictatorship of the party) was to reverse this situation. Somehow Trotsky and his present day followers did or do not realize that acceptance of this argument destroys Marx's concept of a class dictatorship even by a minority working class as in Russia. The question being put here is not whether the 'sins' of the Bolsheviks constituted the source of Stalinism, because the source of Stalinist counter-revolution in Russia was social and economic

was reworked to provide the stalinist counter-revolution with suitable instruments. Before Stalin could use a bastardized 'marxism' as its formal political basis, that marxism had to be ground up re-hashed and re-processed and warped into something else entirely different. The Bolsheviks did not cause stalinism but their justifications for substituting the dictatorship of the party over the working class rule from below certainly facilitated it. Lenin and the Bolsheviks fell into the fatal trap of turning exceptions into norms. This particular development was spotted by the revolutionary Rosa Luxembour who in 1919 two years after the revolution appeared the only socialist of standing, sufficiently strong and clear-headed to stand up to the Russians. She was ready to go along with emergency measures taken in the life and death struggle going on as the Soviet government fought against outside intervention; she would not denounce them simply because mistakes had been made, but for her the danger lay elsewhere. "It would be demanding something superhuman from Lenin and his comrades if we should expect of them under such circumstances they should conjure forth the finest democracy, the most exemplary dictatorship of the proletariat and a flourishing socialist economy. The danger begins when they made a virtue of necessity and want to freeze into a complete theoretical system all the tactics forced on them by these fatal circumstances, and want to recommend them to the international working class a model of socialist tactics". As we know now, the roll for the Bolshevik party hierarchical centralised disciplined became the role model for the socialist states which were then exported internationally with predictably disastrous results, 80 years on with series of implosions taking place within the various tyrannies around the world who would dare claim that her warning was not valid has not been vindicated.

If we had more space it would be possible to catalogue this theoretical debacle of Trotskys, but this is enough for our purposes; we are so far from Marx's original concept of class dictatorship that the 'socialist movement is the self conscious independent movement of the immense majority in the interests of the immense majority' (Communist Manifesto) that there is no connection. For 70 odd years the British and indeed European left has conducted a necrophiliac affair with those dead Russians, Lenin and Trotsky. Today it bears the

our overall view has been obscured, we were compensated by never losing sight of the fundamental principles of socialism and so using them as a guide to action our politics have always been straightforward consistent and principled. Today socialism is in crisis, that itself is self-evident, what is not as obvious is where the responsibility rests. What can no longer be ignored, indeed it is absolutely vital that it be recognised that the ideas of Marx and Engels which laid the theoretical foundation for



movement must contain these essential ingredients. 1. It must be grounded in the working class. 2. It must be built from the bottom up, rather, as in the past, from the top down. With the leadership the 'speaking parts', the mass of the working class the 'active chorus'. 3. Its members must be and be seen to be the best fighters for their class. 4. Must aspire, when legal, to be the living embodiment of the ultimate aim. This is Red Action's objective to build such a movement and it should be yours.

WE ARE RED ACTION

RED ACTION IS AN ORGANISATION FOUNDED TO WORK TOWARDS THE ENDING OF THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM OF PRODUCTION AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SOCIALIST ONE

CAPITALISM The need of capital and labour cannot ever be reconciled. In other words the quest by the employing classes for greater profit, is in eternal conflict with the demands of the working class for higher wages, shorter hours etc. It is in the obvious interest of the employer to keep wages down as low as possible while it is equally obvious that this does not serve the interests of the majority. The two systems capitalism and socialism cannot co-exist, as they are in constant struggle pulling in opposite directions, each in pursuit of its own goals. A victory for one is necessarily a defeat for the other. This is the major source of conflict in the world today. Capitalism is a system which is based on the private ownership of the means of production. This means that the factories, workplaces, natural resources etc. on which we all depend to produce the necessities of life are the private property of a few individuals, who use them to produce not what is most socially necessary, but whatever will make them the most profit. When it suits them, they are able to close down those productive resources, even though there may be great social need for what could be produced on them. Regardless of how rich a country may be in natural resources, capitalism can never provide equality of wealth due to its own inherent limitations. It is obviously impossible for everybody to become a capitalist (employer) and so to function, the system demands the creation and maintenance of an employing class and a working class, or if you like an upper class and lower class. Propping up this system, are the forces of social control—army, police force, civil service etc—all controlled by totally unelected and un-accountable representatives of the capitalist class.

SOCIALISM It is impossible for us today to say exactly what a socialist system will be like, as when it happens there will be millions of others involved in shaping it. However there are some features that would have to be present in any society, before we would be willing to consider it as socialist.

PUBLIC OWNERSHIP Only when all of the major productive resources and industry are taken into public ownership, will it be possible for the democratic will of the majority to ensure that they are at all times employed in the most socially useful manner. This will result in a massive increase in production and wealth.

CONTROL OF SOCIETY All those who occupy positions of power and authority will be elected by those they represent and subject to recall.

FREEDOM AND EQUALITY All will be expected to contribute to production and all will receive equal reward and have equal rights, irrespective of sex, race or creed. The state will provide adequate facilities to cater for the needs of the elderly, sick, handicapped, nursing mothers etc, who will all receive a full wage. All questions or personal morality will be free from state interference. Abortion and contraception will be legal and provided by the state. There will be freedom of worship for all religion, but no church will be allowed to interfere in state matters.

INTERNATIONALISM The capitalist economic system is linked up internationally, therefore the struggle to overthrow it is a worldwide one. All workers everywhere have the same interests. It is impossible for socialism to exist in isolation in one country, as the power of international capitalism would crush it.

NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD TO SOCIALISM Socialism cannot be achieved through the parliamentary system, because the real power in society lays not with elected MPs but with rich industrialists and the leaders of the armed forces, police judiciary etc. The present structures cannot be reformed they must be overthrown. The Labour Party does not try to end capitalism, but merely give the workers a better deal within it.

UNION STRENGTH. WE SUPPORT ANY PICKET LINE IN DEFENCE OF WORKERS LIVING STANDARDS. We support a strong organised rank and file movement within the unions. Union officials should be supported as long as they represent their members correctly. But rank and file unionists must reserve the right to take action independent of the officials when necessary.

TOTAL OPPOSITION TO RACISM AND FASCISM We opposed any movement or ideology which attempts to divide the working class on grounds of race, sex, or creed. We recognise the need to oppose fascist organisations, both ideologically and physically on the streets.

THE IRISH NATIONAL LIBERATION STRUGGLE AGAINST OUR OWN RULING CLASS We support the right of oppressed people the world over to fight back. We unconditionally support the right of the 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 draw great inspiration from the principled and courageous manner in which they conduct their struggle, and from the way in which they have integrated cultural and class expression into their political movement.

THE 'COMMUNIST' STATES The regimes in countries such as Russia, China Cuba etc, are used as examples to try and prove socialism undesirable. In our view, although these countries have planned economies, they cannot be described as socialist. We contend that socialism cannot be implemented from above by an unaccountable ruling elite. Public ownership, freedom and democracy are all essential features of socialism and in their absence it cannot exist. We support the right of the people in these states to overthrow the leadership and implement socialist policies. At the same time however, we recognise the difficulties that states such as Nicaragua—and others past and present—face, from capitalist backed necessary armies, military intervention, and economic sabotage, which make immediate transition to a socialist system impossible. While these states remain progressive, we will continue to support them.

THE ORGANISATION Traditionally, the structure of revolutionary socialist groups in this country, has been one where the leadership is made up of a small group of self selected academics and intellectual, who wield absolute authority over the membership. Such a structure fails, firstly because there can be no true democracy in such a set up, and corruption soon sets in, and secondly because those leading the organisation are so far removed from the realities of working class life, it cannot relate properly to that class. A revolutionary socialist organisation must be composed of and led by working class people. It must recognise that no leadership is immune from corruption and be truly democratic in its internal structures. It must be ready to work in a non sectarian manner with other socialist and progressive groups. It must present socialist politics in a manner in which working class people can identify with in their life and their work and their leisure. It must be consistent, principled and above all honest in its politics. Only then will it begin to be able to relate to the working class, most of whom today are cynical if not hostile towards the revolutionary left. We recognise that a revolutionary working class party is necessary if capitalism is to be overthrown. We are not that party, neither are those groups which claim to be it. We will work to keep alive a tradition of working class militancy, until such time as enough militants can be brought together to form that party.