

# Red Action

## THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

Issue No 31. April 1987. 20p.



A common enough sight on the streets of Belfast. How long before it is so in London or Birmingham

For some years now, revolutionary socialists and others have repeatedly pointed out that the role of the forces of the British state in Northern Ireland, is of the greatest significance to people in this country, inasmuch as it points the way for developments in our own society. The British state uses Northern Ireland as a training ground to develop and perfect new methods of social control which will one day be used on the streets of mainland Britain.

You don't have to take our word for it. In 1974, Tory M. P. John Biggs Davidson said "What happens in Londonderry is very relevant to what can happen in London. If we lose in Belfast we may have to fight in Brixton or Birmingham"

The accuracy of these words has been clearly dem-

onstrated in recent years, by the disturbances in Britain's inner cities and the state's response to them, and also in the increasingly authoritarian tactics employed by the state, against workers involved in industrial disputes, as with the miners and printworkers.

### EVIDENCE

Another significant step in this trend, was seen only a few weeks back with the Broadwater Farm Trial. For the first time ever on mainland Britain, a major trial was staged in which the only evidence against the defendants, was confessions they were alleged to have made while in custody. There was no other evidence whatsoever, no forensic, no identification, nothing, just alleged confessions which they all either denied making, or claimed they had been forced to make under threats of violence. To anyone who has any experience of the Diplock Court system in Northern Ireland, the above lines will make familiar reading. It was also revealed during the trial, that the police had moved a number of armoured vehicles of the sort used by the R.U.C. in Northern Ireland into the Broadwater Farm area, in order to deal with any possible disturbances after the trial.

The evidence of this steady drift is there for all to see

if only they look. Unfortunately, at the moment, all to few people do look. People such as ourselves, who point out the definite and growing threats to the civil liberties of all of us, are all too often dismissed as alarmists or cranks. It is a sad but undeniable fact, that in spite of the massive encroachments which have been made in recent years on people's rights, the vast majority of them still trust and respect the forces of the state. In the final analysis, it was the jury in the Broadwater Farm trial, who chose to believe the police and convicted the defendants.

We should not really be so surprised that so many people still choose to believe in the benevolent nature of the state. For the past forty years, this society has been among the most stable and prosperous in the world, with a far higher standard of living and more civil freedom than many other societies. Of course people want to believe that that situation can continue.

### CHANGE

If that was end of story, it would of course be a very poor outlook for any chance of building a movement to bring about change in our society, but of course it isn't. Even though many people may not at the moment realise it, or may choose not to believe it, the Great British dream is coming to an end, socially economically, any way you care to mention. As the economy goes further and further down the drain, more and more people will be for-

ced into some sort of confrontation with the state, in order to try and protect the most basic of living standards. To meet this challenge the state will be forced to adopt more and more authoritarian measures. More and more people will be forced to recognise the changing nature of the British state, because it will be hitting them over the head with a truncheon, or just as likely a plastic bullet.

### EXPERIENCE

Just as the experiences of the miners and printworkers during their disputes, forced many of them to totally reassess their views of the nature of the state, so will increasing numbers of the working class come to similar conclusions as they are forced into a similar situation. They will begin to realise that the predictions of people such as ourselves, are not in fact alarmist or exaggerated, but merely a reasoned study of the forces that shape the nature of society. When people start to except this, then perhaps we will be in a position where we can begin to try and do something about it.

## HANDS TOGETHER WHAT A JOKE

Not perhaps the most subtle headline ever to appear above an article, but really how else to you begin to describe the proposed plan to get 250,000 people to join hands to form a human chain between London and Liverpool, in protest against unemployment. Just what do the organisers hope to achieve by this? Will it make one factory owner who is closing his operations down change his mind? Will it make the government suddenly decide to put back some of the millions of pounds they taken out of the public sector and create jobs that way? Of course it won't. Unemployment is caused entirely by political and economic factors, and it can only be fought by political and economic action.

Perhaps a few years ago, when there was no major focus for the fight against unemployment, you could support people putting their energies into initiatives such as the People's March for Jobs, and before that the Right to Work Marches, which at least had a bit of guts and politics to them. But there has been in the last three years, two major political fightbacks by working class people against unemployment, which have made publicity type demonstrations totally unnecessary. We refer of course to the miner's and printer's strikes.

I wonder just how many of the 250,000 people who will turn up on May 3rd to show their opposition to unemployment ever got down to a miner's or printer's picket line? I wonder how many of them regularly contributed money to the strike funds, or thought to stop buying all News International publications? Not a massive percentage I imagine. If a few more had, there might be a bit less unemployment today for them to protest about.

The miners and the printers took the only sort of action which has a real chance of fighting unemployment, even though their particular fights failed - mainly due to lack of support - Those who link up hands on May 3rd, will be doing no more than salvaging their own consciences.



The May 3rd ritual will do little to change this ritual



Urban resistance to police oppression. The ever growing reality of life in Britain today.

**Inside this Issue:** THE INLA FEUD What we say THE CAPITAL QUESTION Capital punishment. A socialist view THE WILHELMSHAVEN REVOLT When the German working class rose

When Rupert Murdoch moved his News International printing operations from Fleet St. to Wapping, socking five and a half thousand workers in the process, a new and disturbing aspect of trade unionism reared its ugly head. At Wapping, not only were the printworkers let down by lack of active support from other unions - as were the miners and other strikers in countless other disputes - they also had to contend with another union actively working with the employer against them. That union was the electricians and plumbers union the E.E.P.T.U. led by Eric Hammond.

After many denials and attempted cover ups, the full truth about the E.E.P.T.U.'s part in the dispute has been revealed in national papers and T.V. programmes. They had allowed their members to be trained to do the jobs at Wapping, with full knowledge of what was going to happen, long before the dispute started. When it did begin, E.E.P.T.U. members ignored requests not to cross the official picket lines (the basic and most sacred rule of trade unionism) along with National Union of Journalists members, who touted the line of the Notts miners "we voted to come here."

#### BACK DOWN

The next obvious step after that, was for the printers to go to the Trades Union Congress to seek support, and call for the expulsion of the scab union. Not surprisingly, the T.U.C. backed down to the E.E.P.T.U. who threatened among other things, to form a breakaway ultra right wing T.U.C. along with other unions in the grip of right wing leaderships such as the engineers union (A.U.E.) and the scab Union of Democratic Mineworkers. The T.U.C. has shown itself to be a tiger without teeth, a spent force.

Worrying as the outright treachery of the E.E.P.T.U. at Wapping is to the future of trade unionism, as less obvious, but just a big a threat can be seen in the tactics which this union has started employing, in its efforts to win recognition for itself from companies and se-

# REALISM OR COLLABORATION

## The changing face of trade union sell outs



The new look trade unionist of the 1990s, as jointly recommended by Albert Hammond and Rupert Murdoch

cure jobs with them for it's members. It has started competing with other unions, in much the same way as private companies would compete with each other for contracts. Thus they offer new companies major concessions from the workforce, such as changes in working practices or a no-strike agreement, in exchange for being granted sole recognition and bargaining rights.

#### EXAMPLE

An example of this came to light recently on Channel 4's Diverse Reports programme. It showed how in a newly opened Japanese owned company in South Wales, at first no union was recognised. The Company then announced that it would allow a union, but only one, and that it would have to be one that the Company approved of, and which would assist in increasing production. Of the four unions which approached the company, the E.E.P.T.U. with its no-strike deals and eagerness to break T.U.C. rulings looked to favourite to get the job.

It is obvious that in a situation such as this, the whole role and purpose of a trade union has been totally subverted. From being something created and controlled by the workers in order to defend their living standards and working conditions, it has become something set up and controlled by the employers, in order to assist in the smooth operation of the workplace, and the boosting of production.

These two aims cannot possibly be served by the same force. How can a union official strive to act to the best of his/her ability to defend his/her members interests involving pay and conditions etc when he/she is also trying to please the management, who's interest obviously lays in getting as much as possible out

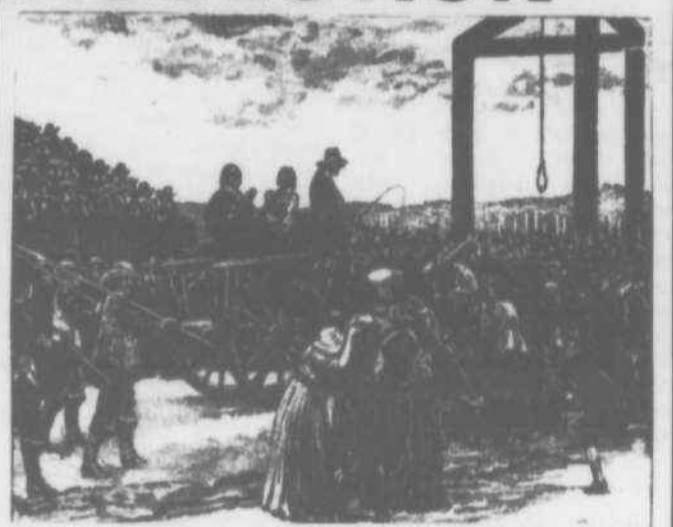
of the workforce in terms of production, and giving as little as possible back in wages thus boosting profit margins.

#### WEAPON

Ultimately, the only real weapon which workers have in their efforts to secure gains from their employers, is the threat to withdraw their labour power. That is the only thing they have which the employers need. To try and enter into negotiations with employers when you have renounced that threat under a no strike deal means that you have absolutely nothing with which to back up your demands. It is like trying to confront an armed enemy with no bullets in your own gun.

When the printers and the miners went on strike, they did so not to try and get money, but to try and defend the right to work free of the fear of redundancy, under conditions acceptable to the workforce, and to maintain the right to withdraw labour when in disagreement with management. These are basic rights which it took trades unionists hundreds of years of struggle to gain. It is obvious that by collaborating with the employers as they have been doing, the leaderships of unions like the E.E.P.T.U. and U.D.M. have totally forfeited these rights. The cost of this will eventually be born by those they have led into this situation. Right now, the biggest danger is that other union leaders may try to follow their path.

## THE CAPITAL QUESTION



A barbaric practice from a barbaric age, which has no place in any civilised society.

The recent attempt by a number of Tory M.P.s to re-introduce the death penalty has raised this issue once again. The arguments for and against capital punishment rage long and hard, often cutting across traditional political barriers, and uniting opponents on other matters. So is there what could be described as a socialist position on this matter? Would capital punishment be practiced in a socialist society?

It is a firm hope of socialists, that in a truly socialist society, crime will eventually die away, and with it the need for any form of legal system. However as long as there exists crime against the person, such a murder, robbery, rape etc, then obviously there will be the need for some sort of machinery to try and curtail this. However the only way in which such a force could morally justify its existence, would be if it aspired only to the highest ideals, to view its task not as the punishing of individuals, but merely as protecting society from anti-social acts, in a manner which causes the least suffering and inconvenience for all concerned, including the transgressor. Revenge should have no part in socialist justice. If a socialist state were to take someone's life in revenge for them having taken one, is it not just descending to the same level as the killer, and by doing so, does it not forfeit its right to sit in judgement upon others?

But what about the I.R.A.? people will no doubt reply, you support them and they kill people. Isn't that just the same as supporting capital punishment. No it isn't. The I.R.A. kill people yes. They do so because they are in a war situation into which they have been forced, as the only way in which they can realise their totally justifiable political aims. A revolutionary army engaged in armed struggle, can in no way be compared with or aspire to the ideals of an established regime, just as no capitalist regime would expect its acts when it is involved in war, to be judged by the standards of peacetime. Killing is an inescapable fact of wartime. You kill the enemy, because if you don't the enemy will kill you. In peacetime, there is no such excuse, and no civilised state should practice legal murder.

# THE INLA FEUD

The tragic and bitter feud waged recently within the ranks of the Irish National Liberation Army, brought forward much comment from various socialist groups in this country, very little of which was based on any informed or constructive appraisal of the situation. Particularly contemptable were those groups who whilst admitting that they knew little or nothing about the origins of the feud, nevertheless went on to back calls for the disbandment of the I.N.L.A., which of course was exactly what one of the factions involved were calling for. In one breath they admit that they know nothing about the issues involved in a dispute, and in the next they take sides in it.

For Red Action, our position on such a matter is merely to be consistent to what our position on Ireland has always been. We have always asserted that the primary task for socialist groups in this country as far as Ireland is concerned, is to support every facet of the struggle for Irish freedom in whatever way they can, and to work to build a solidarity and support movement in this country. This task does not require that we give our support to, or try and align ourselves with any one section of the Republican Movement. To do so would not only be irrelevant to the task at hand it would also be highly pretentious. You would in effect be putting yourself in the position of trying to judge the respective merits of the different groups involved, something which we in this country, totally removed from the practical realities of the struggle have no right whatsoever to do.

#### PRINCIPLE

Exactly the same principle applies in the case of the I.N.L.A. feud. Socialist groups in this country, with no real knowledge of the issues involved in the dispute, had no right whatsoever to take any position on it, other than to back calls for an end to the feud, and support those who were working towards this end. They certainly did not have the right to take sides in it. Yet this is exactly what those who backed the calls for the disbandment of the I.N.L.A. were in effect doing, and showing in the process, their total lack of political principle.

It is no co-incidence that those groups which took this position, are the same ones who have always been at best lukewarm in their support for the armed struggle, and at worst actively hostile towards it. Their attack on the I.N.L.A. had nothing to do with any informed analysis of the situation within the organisation, they were simply taking advantage of an opportune moment to criticise an organisation who's politics they had always opposed. The crowning hypocrisy of these people was seen, when attempting to lend more weight to their attack, they were quick to point out that by calling for the disbandment of the I.N.L.A., they were merely echoing similar calls made by Sinn Fein. It must have been quite a novel experience for them to have found themselves invoking the authority of Sinn Fein in this way, seeing as how they usually spend what little time they devote to the subject of Ireland criticising them. To now try and imply in this way that they and Sinn Fein were somehow aligned over this matter was grossly dishonest. Whatever

differences Sinn Fein may have with the political movement from which the I.N.L.A. emerges, disagreement over the need for and legitimacy of the armed struggle is not one of them. But this is exactly what really lay at the heart of these groups criticisms of the I.N.L.A. We know that because at other times they aim exactly the same sort of criticisms at Sinn Fein and the I.R.A.

#### QUESTION

The question of whether or not the I.N.L.A. should disband may well turn out to be irrelevant. After this tragedy, it will be enormously difficult if not impossible for it to exist in any coherent or effective form. If it should be the case that we are about to witness its demise, we can fully expect those on the left who have always opposed the armed struggle of the Irish people, to come forward with a great chorus of "we told you so" as if this demise somehow proves the futility of that struggle, as if the seeming failure of the I.N.L.A. in its aim of waging revolutionary war with the British state, somehow makes the politics of those who have never even begun to attempt this task superior to theirs.

We will not accept this view for one minute. The decline of the I.N.L.A. has been caused by a variety of factors, some of which could have been avoided or controlled by those involved, and others which were totally beyond their control. Whatever mistakes have been made - and no-one will be more aware and conscious of these than those involved - none of it alters for one minute, the legitimacy and correctness of the armed struggle of the Irish people to free their country from British rule.

#### DECLINE

The decline of the I.N.L.A. is just one chapter in a struggle which has been going on for EIGHT HUNDRED YEARS, and which will continue until it has successfully rid Ireland of British rule. The task of a true revolutionary in this country, is not to sit back gloating at it, as some sort of vindication of their own inability to wage a serious struggle of any from against the British state but to study it and learn from it. To learn the lessons of what mistakes were made, in order that if and when the time comes for us to enter a higher level of struggle, we will be all the more prepared for it and can avoid making those same mistakes. That is the only fitting tribute which we can pay, to the many brave dedicated and sincere revolutionaries, who gave up their lives fighting for the I.N.L.A.



Nothing will alter the fundamental correctness of the armed struggle.

## OUT OF MIND OR JUST OUT OF SIGHT

Standing in its own world, a stone cold building with grey walls, frozen from the movement of everyday life. It is a bleak picture for the human eye, the dim lit corridors echo as you approach the rows of numerous locked doors. The windows are shadowed with iron bars to keep the occupants enclosed. The victims within are trapped with mere existence. Every day is just another number on a calendar.

The picture I have just described for you is a mental institution. The people within it have been isolated from birth. This is the home without a key. Society has labelled them abnormal, and allows them no choice or power over their own lives. They have been sentenced and locked away. The crime they have committed is being mentally or physically handicapped.

The loonies, the nutters, the low grades at the funny farm. These are the sort of descriptions you hear used by people blinded by ignorance, and ignorance is dangerous. From Victorian times to the recent years of the fifties, people rolled up to see the "Freak Show" in town. The lowest form of exploitation money, changing hands to the roars of laughter at the expense of other people's disabilities. Our sick society, treating handicapped people the same as mass murderers Peter Sutcliffe and Myra Hindley, giving them the same cold shoulder treatment. The laws of the land use mental institutions to silence some dissenting voices. The E.C.T., heavy doses of Largactol and the free distribution of Valium. This treatment and these drugs breed apathy and numb the brain of all fight and feeling. If you think differently or your face doesn't fit, you're forced to the back of the crowd.

Think and question. Handicapped people have the same feelings as you or I. I feel ashamed to have to explain that fact, but to some it's not so obvious. The voice for equality and freedom must be taken to the mental institutions, and human rights must be established. We all take small human liberties for granted; voting, choice over food and clothing, baths and showers, when to watch television and play music. Spare a thought for those who exist and die behind the walls of institutions, who have no choice over their lives. Do not ignore what is staring you in the face. The walls of oppression need kicking. At first you will bruise your feet and achieve little. Persist and they will crumble. Kick down the fences, crack their filthy system. Agitate, educate and organise. Remember the home without a key.

# THE WILHELMSHAVEN REVOLT THROUGH THE POST

## Gay Rights



To Red Action

In view of the mounting hostility towards lesbians and gays, the steering committee of this year's Lesbian and Gay Pride Carnival Parade, has decided to appeal for support from predominantly heterosexual organisations. We hope that as many working People's organisations as possible will be represented in the solidarity contingent of the parade. Our slogan is "EQUAL RIGHTS FOR ALL DEFEND LESBIAN AND GAY RIGHTS"

We are writing to you to ask you to publish the enclosed resolution, and to encourage your readers to take up the task of raising it within their trades unions, trades

The pages of Red Action are open for anyone to write on any subject they wish. Please keep letters as short as possible and send them to P.O. Box 158, Hatfield, Herts.

councils and political parties. If you would like further information concerning the work of the Pride Committee's solidarity working group please do not hesitate to get in touch with me.

Mary Harper  
11 Rushton House  
Albion Avenue  
London S.W.8 2SE  
Tel. 720 7139

### MODEL RESOLUTION.

This.....rejects the attempts of the gutter press, bigots and right wing politicians, to make use of the fear of A.I.D.S. to whip up hostility against gay men. We are deeply concerned that the denial of rights to lesbians and gay men, and the increasingly common calls for greater repression are now being justified as legitimate "public health" measures. In view of the mounting violence, discrimination and hatred being directed against lesbians and gays, we believe that it is imperative for this branch/ward/committee/council to stand up and be counted. We support the initiative of the Lesbian and Gay Pride Weeks Committee, in working for the most widespread attendance of working people's organisations at the Pride Carnival parade. We support the organisers stand point of "Equality for all - Defend lesbian and gay rights" and we resolve to send our banner and as many of our members as possible to march in solidarity behind the lesbian and gay organisations in London of the 27th of June 1987.

## Republican Bands Alliance

On behalf of the Republican Band Alliance Scotland, we wish to thank the following groups

The Crossmaglen Patriots Republican flute band and the Rising Phoenix Republican flute band Edinburgh, Red Action London, Anti Fascist Action, Direct Action, Campaign for Free Ireland, Revolutionary Communist Group, Azanian Solidarity Campaign, Harringay Troops out Movement, Leicester Troops out Movement,

Both bands send their best wishes and thanks for any future commemorations. The Band Alliance hope that in the near future, all of your humanitarian ideals and political beliefs become a reality. A special thanks must go to Red Action London, who were most instrumental in bringing the band to Sheffield for this year's Bloody Sunday Commemoration, and also last year's one in London. We hope that in the not to distant future, the Red Action group will be co-opted on to the control committees as they do sterling work, for both marches were at short notice

Once again many thanks for your donations to the bands, who are mostly the unemployed youth of Scotland. We look forward to meeting all groups in London in May or June. "Tiocfaidh ar la"

Joseph Pearce O'Kane  
Public Relations Officer  
Republican Band Alliance  
Scotland

## Rank and File Group

The N.H.S. is collapsing around us. Wages are bad and so are conditions. Labour governments close as many hospitals as the Tories, and both keep healthworkers pay down. The Health Service unions N.U.P.E. and C.O.H.S.E. don't oppose the exploitation but participate in it.

In June this year, there will be a conference to start a rank and file organisation to fight for healthworkers interests. If you are interested write to  
Rank and File Healthworkers  
Box 222  
c/o 53 West Ham Lane  
London E. 15

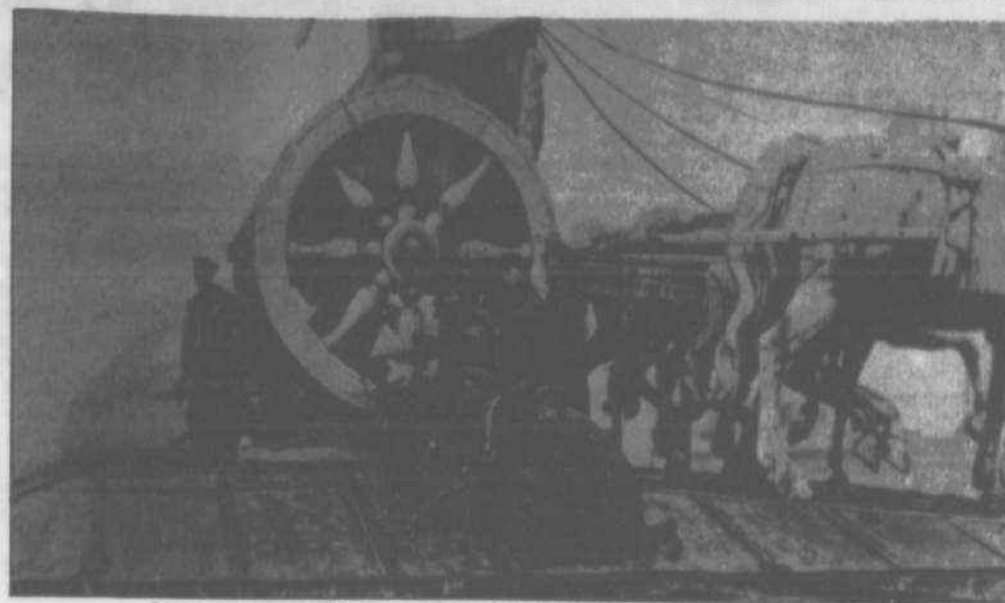
At the beginning of this century, with the rapid industrialisation of Germany, there grew up what was then numerically, the largest workers movement in the world. Unlike in Britain, a party of workers with socialist ideals was formed even before the development of the trade union movement.

It was a time of large scale industrial unrest in countries throughout Europe including Britain and Ireland, and of the world wide spread and development of revolutionary ideas, even in countries such as the U.S.A. This development was to a large extent destroyed by the outbreak of World War One in 1914, as many of the leaders of the various socialist movements rejected International working class solidarity, in favour of backing their own various governments efforts to build empires at each others expense, and joined the calls for working class people to fight and die for this aim.

### REVOLUTIONARY SPIRIT

However, in spite of the massive surge of nationalism and chauvinism in all of the combatting states, there were in each of them small groups of socialists who remained true to their ideals. In Germany, the revolutionary spirit was kept alive by people such as Karl Liebknecht. At a mass demonstration in 1916, he proclaimed the slogan "Down with the war, the principal enemy is your own government" For this he was sentenced to two years hard labour, but his message echoed across the munitions factories, battlefields and naval units at sea.

Within the German Navy, there was a long tradition of militancy from socialist sailors, who now began to organise and agitate on the various ships and vessels of the fleet, and secret revolutionary committees were formed. Broadsheets were printed addressed to soldiers at the front, and to women workers in the war industries, and thousands of copies distributed and plastered on walls and buildings. Two days later,



German revolutionaries on top of the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, in November 1918

spontaneous strikes broke out in several cities, and the bakeries of the Reich were plundered by hungry workers. In the fleet, sailors began to refuse orders, and resistance and acts of armed sabotage became common.

By the summer of 1918, the cases of insubordination and disobedience at the North Sea base in Wilhelmshaven, had grown into outright mutiny. The sailors had been ordered into one last and almost certainly suicidal push against the British fleet, but had other ideas about dieing for "The glory of the Fatherland" Within an hour, the Red Flag had been hoisted on the masts of all the warships in the port.

### REVOLUTION

The revolution spread like a forest fire fanned by a huge wind. Soldiers, sailors and workers councils began to spring up everywhere. Columns of revolutionaries were sent to every part of Germany, and attempts were made to establish contact with Russian revolutionaries at Kronstadt. Berlin was taken, the Kaiser fled, and from the balcony of the Imperial Palace, Karl Liebknecht proclaimed a German Socialist Republic.

All government buildings were occupied by representatives of the working class. The prisons were stormed,

and thousands of prisoners released including Rosa Luxemburg, another revolutionary socialist leader who had been imprisoned for her activities.

The German revolution was a spontaneous uprising which united many different sections of German society, all weary of the horrors of war and it's attendant poverty, and all determined to overthrow the regime which they held responsible for it. However by no means were all of them revolutionary socialists committed to establishing a new working class controlled state. Many were merely venting their wrath and anger at the old regime, without any clear view of what should replace it. There was also a large and influential Social Democratic movement, who wanted no more than to merely establish the sort of Parliamentary regime which existed then in most other European countries. They were totally opposed to what they saw as the "extremist" aims of the revolutionary socialists like Liebknecht and Luxemburg.

### ARGUMENTS

As the arguments between the Social Democrats and the Revolutionary Socialists over the future course of the revolution became more acute, and the relationship between them more antagonistic, the right wing of German society the army generals, rich industrialists and bankers etc, who had had to stand aside powerless as the tidal wave of revolution swept aside the monarchy, now began to quietly try to regain their power. Realising that the aims of the Social Democrats meant no real change to the basic structure of society and their own role and power within it, they quickly came to agreement with them, and joined them in their struggle against the revolutionary socialists.

As the Social Democratic press waged a crude witch hunt against the revolutionary socialists, accusing them of all sorts of crimes and excesses, the army generals began to move into the urban centres, units of soldiers who had been isolated at the front far away from the revolution, and had not been infected with it's ideas. It was these forces which eventually with the full backing of the Social Democrats, carried out a ruthless and bloody suppression of the Revolutionary Socialists, in which thousands including Liebknecht and Luxemburg were brutally murdered.

The defeat of the revolutionary socialists, left the way open for the forces of capitalism to re-assert their control of society. They could not re-establish the Monarchist regime as there would have been too much popular opposition to this, but anyway it wasn't necessary for them to do this. At the cost of a few minor concessions, they could maintain their real control through the institutions of social democratic system. This situation they were happy to tolerate, until a few

years later, when a new movement led by a certain Mr. A. Hitler emerged offering them a better deal. They then joined with him as he totally destroyed all basic freedom in German society, and Social Democracy with it.

### RELEVANCE

So what relevance do these events have to us seventy years on? What can we learn from them? For a start we can see quite clearly how even the most seemingly secure and impregnable of regimes, can so quickly lose their grip on society in changing circumstances. When the German establishment led the country away to war in 1914, to the static support of masses of the people, talk of it's overthrow would have seemed unthinkable, yet just four short years later, it was swept away powerless. It is a lesson we should all remember, especially at those occasional times when our own struggle seems so hopeless and pointless,

We also learn that the act of overthrowing a ruling regime, does no in itself guarantee the establishment of a new form of society. A revolution is the explosive culmination of years of slowly growing dissatisfaction among the mass of the people, with the nature of their society. When the storm finally and suddenly breaks, it spreads like wildfire. Almost overnight, masses of people of varying outlooks and ideas are drawn into the movement. All want to change society, but many have little idea of exactly what new form of society they want, or how it is to be established. Also drawn into the ranks of the revolutionary movement, are those who adopt revolutionary stances and slogans, but who in reality are the enemies of change and progress. Those who in the final analysis, want to do no more than reconstitute the old society in a new form, as with the Social Democrats in Germany.

### GUARANTOR

In this situation, the only guarantor of the revolutionary ideal, the only force which can give voice and direction to the hopes and aspirations of the masses, is the movement of revolutionary socialism, conscious of both the nature of the new society, and the tasks necessary to establish it. Only they will be able to see through the posturings of the enemies of revolution, who during the revolutionary storm will shelter under it's banner.

In Germany where the balance of forces was against them they were beaten, but their experience lives on to enrich our knowledge, and to inspire us in our fight to establish a society which will be one, where in the words of Rosa Luxemburg

"the great working mass ceases to be a ruled mass, and itself lives and directs the whole of political and economic life, in free and conscious self-determination."

## 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 £10 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.

PO box 158  
Hatfield  
Herts



Rosa Luxemburg, a great revolutionary leader.

# THE VOICE OF REASON

The Vatican recently re-affirmed its total opposition to abortion, but in an apparent attempt to reach a compromise on contraception, the Guardian reported on the 9th of March that the Church could recommend the use of condoms in special cases "only if a small perforation is made in the condom to allow for the possibility of fertilisation." I must admit that that left even me, a former altar boy and confirmed cynic open-mouthed in disbelief.

When the issue was last debated in 1968, the celibate pensioners ruled against the pill and all forms of contraception. They took this decision in the full knowledge of the misery it would cause millions of people, and perhaps even more surprisingly regardless of the damage which it would almost certainly cause to a company owned by the Church called Istituto Farmacologico Sereno, who's best selling product was, wait for it, an oral contraceptive.

That I suppose, is the high price that has to be paid for having principles.

I decided to give up my fast because I was losing the ability to remain lucid and rational."

The Reverend David Rushworth, who went on a hunger strike on January the First of this year declaring that "God is very angry with Haringey" in protest at the councils policy of including the subject of homosexuality in its sex education classes in schools. I can't imagine that rationality was ever one of his strong points can you?

In 1985, some twenty four thousand people went into custody for non-payment of fines, making it the biggest single reason for people being imprisoned. About one third of all female prison receptions are for fine default after a conviction for drunkenness or soliciting. Seventy percent of them are unemployed. Soliciting is a crime whilst actual prostitution is not. The practice of using a fine as a deterrent against a prostitute is complete hypocrisy, for it is tantamount to the magistrate forcing the defendant to re-offend in order to pay of the fine. Sending them to jail for failing to pay the fine is the final mockery. Screwed if you do, screwed if you don't. A perfect example of Thatcher's Britain.

"When workers are feeling discriminated against, it is probably emotional."

A comment from a white personnel manager of the Anglo American Company in South Africa, which pays its black employees thirty pounds for a forty five hour week.

The Home Office announcement that it was considering buying a roll-on roll-off car ferry for use as an immigration detention centre for refugees and visitors refused entry, temporarily solving an accommodation problem, coming as it did a week after the Zeebrugge disaster, makes it sound more like an attempt on their part to impose the final solution.

"The I.R.A. is always referred to as terrorist, the occupying army as the security forces. Repression is the restoration of law and order. British soldiers kill, I.R.A. volunteers murder. The British never kill or injure civilians, their victims are always gunmen or rioters. They are terrorists after all, and that's what terrorists do isn't it? The Republicans have kangaroo courts, the British have a judicial system - no jury, a British judge and strange rules about the admissibility of evidence, but not a kangaroo in sight."

"British" M.P. Gerry Adams, explaining to the sons and daughters of the privileged at the Oxford Union how in their name, Britannia waives the rules.

"When I went to El Salvador, I saw that America was still practising the same fraud and deceit, and all those shady characters who had been in Vietnam were showing up again."

Oliver Stone, Vietnam veteran and director of the films Midnight Express, Platoon and Salvador.

"Belfast and Derry are every bit as bad as any other war I ever covered."

Richard Boyle, war correspondent, and Oscar nominee for his part in the making of the film Salvador.

The Economic League is a right wing organisation backed by some two thousand leading British companies, which investigates individuals in industry whom they judge to be politically subversive. It points out a little optimistically, that the presence of revolutionaries is a threat to all others in the company, whatever their job or position. The management has "more in common" it claims, "with the most awkward but not politically motivated shop steward, than any member of the workforce has with the dedicated revolutionary." On a recent World in Action programme, it was alleged the the League traded information with the police, and recieved from them details of criminal records, bank accounts and car number plates. Given that the League views groups such as C.N.D., Friends of the Earth and Anti Apartheid groups as vehicles for subversives, it is not surprising that their files are considerable, with some two hundred and fifty thousand people on them. If you listen really carefully, you can just hear in the distance, the lonesome echo of the midnight knock.

Miner Graham Smithurst aged thirty six, was used to working in uncomfortable positions. He was crouching down to work a coal face in an area where the ceiling was just four foot above the floor, when the rock above collapsed in on top of him. He was crushed and suffocated to death. His colleagues at the Prince of Wales Colliery in Pontefract Yorkshire applied for permission to take time off to attend the funeral. Some of them had risked their own lives trying to dig him out of the debris. They were told that they would lose pay for any absence on the day of the funeral. Three months earlier at the same pit, another miner Tony Wiggins died of a heart attack at work. His colleague Graham Clayton, blamed his death on "the shit you are breathing in down there". For anyone who has ever read George Orwell's book "The Road to Wigan Pier" in which Orwell describes the hell-hole that was a nineteen thirties coal mine, (and praises new techniques then just being introduced to improve conditions) the above will read like a familiar anecdote from the bad old days of coal mining. Graham Smithurst died on the ninth of February this year.

"I was looking through my son's homework, and had to laugh when on reading that worker ants can drag things fifty times their own weight, I asked him "what to you conclude from that?" his reply? "They haven't got a union"

From a letter in the Sunday Mirror.

The Chief Constable of Wolverhampton, Geoffry Dear, admitted that he deliberately misled the press and public, when he had claimed that a black youth Clinton Mc Curbin, killed by the police, had died of a heart attack accelerated by drug abuse. "They were putting around false stories that were quite alarming" claimed Chief Constable Dear defending his deception "They were saying that the man had been manually strangled and that his neck had been broken. All this is very highly emotive" His release of the early "medical opinion" had successfully countered the trouble makers efforts he boasted. A post mortem later revealed the cause of death to be asphyxia.

Chief Constable Dear no doubt, would dismiss his piece of pre-emptive propaganda as a little "white lie", and the black friends and the black community will no doubt come to the same conclusion, but with their emphasis firmly on the word white.

"I enjoy sweet and blessed peace with God. Some people think that I hate Catholics."

The Reverend Ian Paisley, with I imagine his formidable tongue firmly in his cheek.

A Moscow correspondent for the Observer, writing about a vehicle factory in Riga, described the "novel experiment of electing officials by closed ballot, and of several other procedures familiar in the west, but forgotten here since Lenin's day. The election was for a new director of the factory"

Familiar in the west? When was the last time you heard of anyone electing the boss?

"Among those who have been electrocuted, poisoned, gassed hanged or shot, several were mentally ill or under the age of eighteen. Equally disturbing is the fact that convicted people who are black or poor or both, are far more likely to receive a death sentence than those similarly convicted, who are white and well off. Nearly ninety percent of prisoners executed in the last ten years, were blacks convicted of killing whites, even though there were almost as many black victims as white.

The conclusions of a report by Amnesty International, into the workings of the capital punishment system in a country which laughingly describes itself as the "Land of the free" The United States of America.

Which two people made the following two statements, and who were they talking about.

"I've wasted too many years of my life banging my head against a brick wall and working with ingrates and idiots" and "They come over here like carpet baggers to cause trouble. They prey on young unemployed kids, and lead them into a morass of hatred and intolerance. They are dangerous people and must be stopped. To me they are nothing but a bunch of Nazis."

The first quote was from a disillusioned Martin Webster, and the second is from Gusty Spence, a legendary U.V.F. gunman, jailed in 1966 for the murder of a Catholic civilian. In case you haven't guessed, in both cases the subject under discussion was the membership of the National Front.

"I love our Maggie and hate the Labour Party. They're nearly all loonies. I'm sick of hearing those moaning lefties whining on about our great country"

Former England football captain Emlyn Hughes, who certainly reinforced this readers original impression and put his own words into context far better than I ever could when he admitted "I can talk crap for hours if it's crap you want. It's no problem."

And finally, for those people who like to point to the existence of things like bread queues in other countries as proof of the poverty that exists in them, and as proof of the superiority of our own wonderful state, here is a picture of just part of the queue that formed recently, when the Salvation Army in St Albans announced that they had two tons of butter to give away free.

# 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 mercenary 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.

