

Red Action

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ENEMY WITHIN



RE-INCARNATION - HEIL THATCHER

As Red Action goes to press, the dock-workers have called a national strike over the use of scab labour to break support for the miners' strike. It must be obvious to all by now that the Coal Board and the Steel Board are taking their orders direct from central government whenever any major decision has to be made. British Steel must have consulted the government before provoking another dock strike. Socialists must draw the lessons from this co-operation amongst our "rulers", if we are to have any chance of reversing their attacks upon the working class. Below we take stock of Thatcherism and suggest how we will beat it.

IN THEIR COURT

The miners' strike is now in a critical phase. The failure of the so-called "back to work movement" has obviously surprised McGregor who has now begun muttering darkly about "bullying pickets" and the use of the Courts to stop them, and the arrest of the "men behind them". Meanwhile, numerous articles, in the papers that our bosses read, suggest that imprisoning NUM leaders and provoking a generalised strike - if not a General Strike - has been the aim of Thatcher and her Class since McGregor blatantly provoked the miners' strike. Our common enemy has a common plan. The Left, on the other hand, is in disarray. One mistake made is to assume that Thatcher and her ilk just hate the miners for what they have done to the Tories in the past. No, Thatcher is a brutally logical political agent of the bosses and her "plan" is to smash US so that the Rich can go on living as they have been doing. Another great mistake is the belief that the Labour Party can smash Thatcherism. It can't.

THE THATCHER PLAN

1. **DESTRUCTION OF EFFECTIVE TRADE UNIONISM.** Effective trade-unionism is called Scargillism at the moment. It comes about when workers do a good job of defending their interests by effective picketing etc. In Thatcher's brave new world, which she hopes will see investment flooding back to Britain, picketing will be a thing of the past. That is why the Tories provoked the present strike and why they keep ignoring Labour Party pleas for a "compromise peace formula". The only kind of trade unionism envisaged in the brave new world is the type supported by right wing labourites like Terry Duffy who is busy signing "no strike no disruption" agreements with the Japanese.

2. **MASS UNEMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY WAGES.** The Thatcher Plan has

already decimated heavy industry like shipbuilding and steel. The priority in the future will be the highly profitable micro-electronics industry, whilst where mass production does continue it will be in non-unionised workplaces or areas where the unions are hand in hand with the company. The idea of "permanent employment", for what it's worth in capitalist society, is a thing of the past.

3. **HEALTH AND EDUCATION ACCORDING TO WEALTH.** Here, the Thatcher plan involves a return to the pre-1945 era, with minimal "pauper" health care and education for most of us. Those who can afford insurance and private school fees, however, will enjoy luxury facilities, pretty much as in the USA today.

4. **THE LONG ARM OF THE LAW.** The police violence and restriction on movement seen today in mining communities, in the riots of 81, and against black people generally, are the beginnings of an identity card carrying surveillance system, if the rich get their way. The repression in the occupied six counties of Ireland today is, in almost every detail, our own future staring us in the face. Its aim - to keep the "have nots" down while the bosses and bigots profit.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

The Left's answer to it must be to put the slogan "Unity in action" into practice. We Red Action are convinced, that the majority of workers can be won to the cause of the Socialist Revolution. In the mean time, the key to a successful defence of our interests has to be in a **UNITED FRONT** against the capitalist offensive.

INTERNATIONALISM

Only revolutionary socialists argue for unity with the toiling masses in every country. This need is ever more urgent now that capitalism has its clutches around every nation in the world through its multinational companies. We alone can propose **THE INTERNATIONAL UNITY OF ALL WORKING PEOPLE**

against the international power of Capital, and in the process lead the struggle against the local representatives of international capital with a determination and integrity which neither the Tories, wrapping themselves up in the blood-saked Union Jack whilst exporting our wealth as quick as they can, nor the pathetic "little Englanders" of the Labour Party leadership, always with one eye on a knighthood, can ever muster. Talk of Revolution and Internationalism may seem fanciful at the moment, but we will not shrink back from arguing for their necessity either when engaged in United Front activity with other socialists or when arguing with people new to our ideas.

THE PRICE OF FAILURE

If we fail to link up and develop the fightback against the capitalist offensive alongside non-revolutionaries then we are doomed. **MASS POPULAR STRUGGLES** - from which stronger revolutionary organisations will emerge - are the only way in which we can defend ourselves successfully. Failure to do so will leave the way open for big business to finance "fake radical" groups with anti-communist ideas, with the aim of dividing, confusing and ultimately smashing socialist and working-class forces just as the nazis did in Germany in the 30s. The task is ours and YOURS. Either we unite the Left, and its potential allies, in a generalised fightback - Red Action's participation in the Socialist Federation is a small part of this process - or we ALL go down to eventual defeat.

DIG DEEP FOR THE MINERS

Red Action has its own weekly levy for the miners' strike. All those not contributing in any other regular way are welcome to send donations to us. A considerable amount has already been raised in this way.

FURTHER SUPPORT

Those who have not already done so, should get down to their nearest miners' support group and find out how they can help. People in the London area who don't know where to go can contact Kent Miners at the **AGRICULTURAL WORKERS UNION**, 308 Grays Inn Road, London N.W.1. Remember, the miners are fighting for all of us. **WE MUST DO OUR BIT FOR THEM.**

PART OF THE UNION

According to the report of the Office of Population, Census and Survey, in the last ten years the percentage of women who work has fallen less than the percentage of men who work. It is also a well documented fact that women earn substantially less per hour than men, and that women are concentrated in work areas related to cleaning, caring or servicing, direct extensions of the work they are usually expected to do at home.

LEGISLATION

Since the early seventies and the passing of the Equal Pay Act and the Sex Discrimination Act, womens' struggles for better pay have often been geared to comparing themselves with the men that they work with, or with men who do similar jobs. This is an irrelevance, as by and large women do jobs that men do not do.

LONG TERM AIMS

As socialists we do not feel that the best way to work out these problems is, in the long term to use legislation, which merely ends up in a wrangle about the value placed on different types of work. We feel that women should organise in their Trade Unions to fight against a system of work which places less value on women and at the same time fosters male prejudice in order to be able to get away with it.

OBSTACLES

This is of course easier said than done, as the very reason that forces women into the low paid/part-time ghetto is also the reason that stop them from being active Trade Unionists. Namely, they have another full-time job: the home and children. So telling a woman to improve her position by getting out their and going for it is asking her to do a **TRIPLE SHIFT**. Home, work, meetings etc. How many hours are there in a day?? How many women are able to be active?? Clearly there is much that Trade Unionists can do to smooth the way, by bargaining for work time meetings and being willing to bear with people unfamiliar with the often complex Trade Union structures, but as any active Trade Unionist well knows, most of

the nitty gritty has to be done after work. So what is left that can give? Only the home is left.

SOLUTIONS

How this equation is worked out will no doubt be personally painful to many people, as women make demands which will free them from domestic drudgery. **BUT** if, as trends show, women are becoming a more and more significant proportion of the workforce changes must occur or women will remain poorly organised and inactive; then not just women will be the losers, but the working class as a whole.



The thirty Red Action members and friends who went to Belfast for the anti-internment demonstration this year were able to experience for themselves exactly what life is like for those that oppose British rule in their country. The actions of the RUC during the incident when one man was killed and dozens injured have been reported around the world. Much of the reporting, especially in the British press has been distorted to try and excuse the RUC. Here one of the Red Action party, Barney of the band interviewed on the opposite page, gives his impression of what it was really like.

The thousands of participants on the anti-internment march - apart from the smartly uniformed teenage flute bands - were no different from those that we pass in the streets each day. Just normal people, young and old, a whole community from its skinheads to its grandmas out together in a peaceful act of protest.

Up every turning from the main route of the march stood armoured cars and armour plated landrovers with soldiers and R.U.C. positioned near them, holding SLRs and sub machine guns.

The march ended at a large shopping square where everyone sat or stood to listen to speeches from various organisations. Then the army and R.U.C. cordoned off the entire area, their mass pres-

down when her father, with another daughter rushed through the doorway. He was obviously relieved to see his other child safe, but seething with rage, cursing the "security forces" outside. It was then that I found out that the little girl was seven years old.

Leaving the girl with her father, I went into the back room, where a man was sitting quivering with shock. He was holding a tissue to his badly swollen head. Just behind the ear it was bleeding. Another wound caused by a plastic bullet.

The man later tried to refuse to go to hospital. The reason, I discovered later to be true, was that anyone treated for plastic bullet injuries would be reported and later charged by the R.U.C. with riotous behaviour.

WITNESSES TO MURDER

ence quite unnerving. I was stood some 150 metres from the right of the speakers platform, unable to hear them because of an overhead helicopter. I was standing with a few friends looking across a peaceful attentive crowd, when suddenly, amid the deafening crack of plastic bullets being fired, everybody started to panic. People everywhere dived to the ground or ran for cover. The army and the R.U.C. had opened up on us. I ran towards a small bookshop, but couldn't get in because of a rush of people ahead of me with the same idea, so I had to get my head down behind a small wall in front of the doorway. Nearby, on my left, still in the open, stood a small girl crying, too young and confused to understand the situation. As I put my arm up and grabbed hold of her, a rebounding plastic bullet smashed into her knee, knocking the skin away and making it bleed. The next few seconds are very hazy. I remember feeling very vulnerable and fearing a baton charge. I can't remember how, but me and the little girl managed to get into the shop.

The shop was packed with frightened people and several children were crying. I was trying to calm the little girl

A thick steel mesh across the front of the shop window made the place plastic bullet proof. Outside I could see people who had been caught in the open huddled together in fear on the ground. Those who tried to run were fired on with plastic bullets and the R.U.C. were beating some one on the ground with batons.

Our first attempt to leave the shop resulted in more bullets being fired. However when we finally got out, I, along with two friends and a fifteen year old Irish boy, were showered with fragments of broken glass.

A nearby R.U.C. man had brought his truncheon down on a lemonade bottle in the top of a waste bin.

It was walking along in the open that was the most frightening, totally at the mercy of the army and the R.U.C. who had shown that they didn't need provoking to fire on us.

As everyone walked away from the area, we were passed by several R.U.C. landrovers whose occupants were flicking the 'V'.

A short time later an army landrover passed us. One of 'our brave soldiers' provocatively aimed his rifle at me and sniggered.



ANOTHER BLOODY SUNDAY?



Of all the different aspects of Red Action's politics, nothing arouses as much opposition as does our declared support for the armed struggle of the Irish Republican Army, and the Irish National Liberation Army. It is certainly true that this sets us apart from the vast majority of people in this country who view these organisations with anger and hostility. So how is it that we come to hold this attitude.

The reason that so many people in this country hold such a different view of Ireland to us in Red Action, is because their opinion is conditioned far more by the relentless propaganda and distortion of the media, than it is by an objective look at the true facts about Ireland. If you were to ask these people what was their opinion of say the French resistance movement in the Second World War, you would doubtless find overwhelming support for it as a just and honourable resistance movement against a cruel and oppressive foreign invader. If you were to ask these same people how the IRA/INLA are any different from this I doubt whether you would receive such a quick answer.

People are encouraged to hate and revile the Irish Republican movement without ever being told the real reasons as to how the situation that exists in Ireland today came about.

800 YEARS

The struggle of the IRA/INLA today is nothing more than the latest chapter in an 800 year old struggle by the Irish people, to rid their land of a hated and brutal oppressor who came to exploit the Irish land and people: the British. After many failed risings and much murderous retaliation, the Irish led by the IRA were by 1921, finally strong enough to make it impossible for Britain to maintain its rule. The British realising this, offered to give rule over most of Ireland back to the Irish, so long as they were allowed to maintain control over the most prosperous industrial part of the country, Ulster.

LOYALISTS

This part of the country was inhabited by the descendants of protestant Scottish farmers, who had been imported into the country to take over the farms of the native Irish, who had been murdered and driven off the land.

The British looked to them to help them maintain control in the North against the wishes of those many Irish people who were not willing to give up any part of their country, and wanted to continue the war against Britain until the whole of Ireland was free.

Right from the start of the Northern Ireland state the British, to maintain the loyalists allegiance, allowed them to fashion the state in any manner that they wished. This they proceeded to do by building a system that for injustice and naked discrimination was without parallel in the industrial western world.

Guarding over all of this, as well as the nearly all protestant police force, was a force of part time "police" exclusively protestant known as the "B specials". This force was in reality nothing more than the state's way of arming the protestant mobs that were encouraged to terrorise the catholic population into a state of submission. Throughout the early decades of the Northern state, these mobs carried out regular attacks on catholic areas, burning out whole streets of people. Reporting on one of these programs the Guardian newspaper reported "On the simple charge of being catholics, hundreds of families are being continually driven from their homes... In these operations the specials provide the petrol firearms and immunity from prosecution.

Eventually a movement arose that campaigned for an end to all the injustices and discriminations. It was called the civil rights movement and campaigned peacefully through marches etc. The reaction of the state was to send in the specials to brutally batter them off the streets. After one march had been attacked by a mixed band of club wielding specials and layalst civilians, a mob of drunken specials invaded the catholic Bogside area in Derry smashing windows and property, and beating up every

one in sight. Three months later members of the regular police force broke into a house in the Bogside and beat a man called Samuel Devenny to death in front of his family. The next time the specials tried to get into the Bogside they were met with a hail of petrol bombs, and three thousand of them armed and with armoured cars tried unsuccessfully for three days to get in.

It was around incidents such as these, that the IRA who had been dwindling in numbers became revitalised,

There are some people who whilst supporting the idea of a united Ireland in principle, condemn the tactics that the republican movement employ to attain this aim ie. the armed struggle of the IRA/INLA. The aim should be pursued they argue by peaceful methods.

This argument shows a total ignorance of the history of national liberation struggles against British rule in ALL of Britain's past colonies, India, Cyprus, Aden etc. In all of these countries Britain never once relinquished control peacefully. In every case it took a long and bloody armed struggle before independence was gained.

ARMED FORCE

Exactly the same applies to Ireland today. It was armed struggle that gained independence for the 26 counties in the south and it will take exactly the same for the 6 in the north. As Gerry Adams once said "People try to tell us that the British will never listen to the voice of armed force. The whole history of our country teaches us that they will never listen to anything else."

THIS COUNTRY

For us in this country, the biggest uproar is caused over IRA/INLA operations in this country. It is quite easy to get aroused over a bombing when you have been brought up in the peace and quiet of Britain and perhaps a bit difficult to understand those that cause it. If you had been brought up in Ireland you would find it a bit easier to understand. You would have seen bloody Sunday where 13 unarmed civilians were shot dead in the back by British soldiers. You would have seen children some as young as seven years old shot dead by plastic bullets. You would have seen houses

and grew into the highly efficient guerrilla army that it is today. They are able to survive because they have the overwhelming support of the working class people in the nationalist areas of the North. They have this support because those people know that the armed forces of the IRA/INLA are all that stand between them and the murderous fury of the loyalist mobs that they suffered for so long.

The republican movement knows that all the pain and suffering in Ireland over the

and homes wrecked by soldiers, heard of brutal beatings handed out in interrogation centres, people framed and imprisoned for years and years. You would have known and seen all of these things and would understand why the Irish people are driven to strike out at their tormentors wherever they can.

LESS RISK

Remember as a rule all IRA/INLA operations are directed against the state forces that are killing Irish people in Ireland. If their aim was merely to kill as many people as possible, they could easily do it with far less risk to their own people than the attacks on these selective targets entail. Of course there have been mistakes bungles and incorrect operations, and innocent people have been hurt. But Christ there is a war going on, and in a war that is what happens, innocent people get hurt and killed, exactly as they have been in Ireland for the last 800 years.

In that war there is one side that has right on it's side and that is why we in Red Action say that we stand unashamedly and totally behind that side: the Irish republican movement and its revolutionary armies.

STOP THE WAR

Ultimately the only way to stop innocent people getting hurt - and remember we in Red Action are no more or less likely than you to be a victim of some action - is to stop the war, and the only way to do that is to end British interference in Irish affairs. If IRA activities in this country offend you the solution is quite simple. Get our country the hell out of their country and we will hear no more from them.

last 800 years, has as its ultimate cause, the criminal presence of Britain in Ireland against the wishes of the overwhelming majority of the Irish people. They will fight on and on as generation after generation of Irish people have before them, until they have rid their country of this presence. Their struggle is a noble and just one in the same tradition of all freedom fighters throughout history.

It is a struggle that deserves the support of thinking people everywhere.

WORM WATCHERS



Red Action proudly presents Eddie English a new and welcome addition on the willy wagging circuit. Eddie isn't just a hunky body he has very firm ideas about life.

ON WOMEN

"Personally I prefer an intelligent woman, I mean you need someone who can organise your life for you. Eddie's girlfriend, successful teacher and mother of their four year old son says, "Yes, I'm really proud of Eddie's willy, after all it pays the mortgage, and he's no trouble around the house, in fact he's

a bit like the family dog, happy if fed and watered, but gets a bit frisky if he doesn't get taken out, which causes a problem, 'cause then Eddie wants to cock his thing at every skirt."

EDDIES INTERESTS-

Going out with his best friend Tel.
Watching Drag Racing.
Going out with his best friend Tel.
Fucking a spare end if he can get one.
Going out with his best friend Tel.
And one day he hopes his car will have puppies.

PORNOGRAPHY

Just a harmless bit of fun?



Pornography has often been portrayed in feminist media as a male dominated evil which, by its nature, is part of the oppression of women! This argument requires a little more explanation.

SLAVE

For many years (all of recorded history!) women's open sexuality has been something frowned upon as leading to the destruction of the family a threat to the foundation of society etc. etc. Even when women were brought and sold as sex consumer goods they were not allowed to show their desire/lust openly - only to the man who owned them - he had also brought that.

THE FAMILY

Thus, perhaps, pornography hinges on a fear/greed within men to have schizophrenic women, in the bedroom the sexual slave but in the house and nursery the perfect domestic, in short, the "Ideal Woman" - it's not porn in itself but this dual image of women

which is the essence of oppression; porn is the visual expression of the desire for a sexual temptress/slave or master - "whatever turns you on".

ATTITUDES

Therefore it's not surprising that most women are both dismissive and mistrustful of pornography and would not contemplate it as a part of their lives. It is completely contrary to the conditioned self-image of the chaste, moral child-raiser. However it is not porn in itself which is a threat or can be intimidating. It is the attitude which is often induced by porn: that all women are simply bodies to be compared, tried-out, used and then dispensed with.

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Therefore women will continue to fight porn as the embodiment of the oppression of women, to stop that feeling of isolation and intimidation you feel when a bloke looks at you over the top of his dirty mag. or Page 3.

DIG THE BURIAL

The Burial are a skinhead band from North Yorkshire, they are Mick (vocals), Chris (guitar), Barney (rythm guitar), Ashley (bass), Charlie (drums). We tracked them down to a small room in Scarborough where we demanded some explanations. Why would the police only allow the local music venue to re-open if they could install video cameras? Why are they banned from all the pubs? Does Ashley really want to pull someone's legs off? The answers are too explicit for a family paper like this so you'll have to make do with this lot (P.S. they've got two excellent songs on the new "Oi of Sex" album.)

RED ACTION: What do you think about Oi?

MICK: Oi's about unity between the lads.

BARNEY: There was a nasty fascist element. Now I think Oi has got a lot of positive things about it. Oi albums are about getting unknown bands like ourselves on record, which it's done.

CHRIS: Being a skinhead - politics isn't any part of the reason why I get my hair cut. We like everything from the Four Tops to Rod Stewart. You can't just say we're skinheads into Oi music. We like anything with a good beat.

MICK: What we're trying to do now, is not just play one type of music. We do rock, thrash, reggae and ska. We do a sort of calypso thing. Anything people can have a good time to.

R.A.: What happened at the gig in Stockton the other night?

MICK: There were some skinheads who couldn't get in and I argued for about ten minutes to get one of them in. So we were friends from the start. During the night I talked to a lot of skinheads, I didn't meet one NF skinhead. During the gig I made a skinhead speech.

BARNEY: What was said, right, "You read in the papers that all skinheads are thick fascist thugs. I'm not a thick fascist thug. Is there any thick fascist thugs in here?" There wasn't one response. "The way to do it is not fighting amongst ourselves, it is unity." And all the skinheads were chanting "United! United!"

R.A.: Listening to some of your lyrics, they're talking about what life is like, getting treated bad and that.

MICK: "Friday Night" was written by Charlie 'cos he used to work the same place as me. A lot of the band and most of the road crew have worked at Boyers, a bacon factory, and this song absolutely sums it up. All we have to look forward to is our Friday nights, and we're a bit sick about it.

BARNEY: The words in there say "... there must be something more." You work all your life for someone else's profits. When you become 65 you get a measly pension. That's an attack on capitalism, that song.

MICK: Charlie's unaware that he's talking political. It is a very political socialist song.

BARNEY: Socialism is a very sound idea. The people who run this show are the only people who'll suffer in a socialist country and they're trying to frighten us not to want it. They use scapegoats, blame unemployment on the blacks. It's amazing how

many suckers fall for all this shit. All we are given is what the government wants us to think - Northern Ireland, anything.

R.A.: You said you'd play a gig for the miners on strike.

ASH: We support the miners 'cos they're the most powerful union in the country and if they get defeated that

means they're gonna lose all their power and workers are gonna get shit on again. That's why they've got to win, whatever it costs - or it'll be the end of the unions.

MICK: When I was asked at work if we would support the miners strike with our union funds I said yes. When all is said and done the miners families are suffering a lot of hardships and our little bit of money will help them. It doesn't stop the fact that they should have had a national ballot.

CHRIS: There's nowt wrong with unions, but Burial has got piss all to do with the unions. If I can give people a break and they can listen to our music and relate to our words - our words are social not socialist.

MICK: Everything in life boils down to politics. If you devote half your time to caring about what's going on and who's running you, that's fair do's but you've got to have another half to enjoy yourself.

BARNEY: A lot of people just sit on their arses and they can't see the connection between politics and their own lives. It gets up my nose a lot, the apathy of a lot of people. Burial is our little bit of escapism, it's better than a factory. We're a skinhead band for a start, and with all the media shit about skinheads, one day we're going to have to say publicly what we think about fascism.

CHRIS: Why should we have to have these questions "are you a fascist?" That's an



CULTURE

CORNER

insulting question. Just because I've got short hair doesn't mean I'm a frigging nazi. Don't mean I'm a commie, either.

MICK: We all feel deep down inside us - and this is true - that nazism is wrong. The main thing is about unity.

R.A.: Have you had trouble with contracts and promoters?

MICK: In our contract for our last gig it said we get 20% of the nett door takings. It was our own bloody fault that we didn't look at the word *nett* enough, 'cos it means after deductions and

they can deduct what the hell they like. At the end of the night we had to find £28 between us and it was quite a task.

CHRIS: We met one clever cunt at that Queens Hall thing.

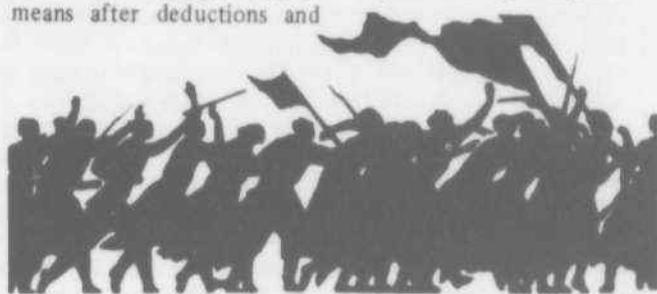
ASH: We got £10 . . .

BARNEY: The Damned got £4500 . . .

ASH: The first band got a hot dog each.

BARNEY: Even distribution of the wealth!

MICK: That wasn't the Damned's fault. We needed publicity and we got it - and we paid for it by losing out.



SUBSCRIBE TO RED ACTION

Red Action is an organisation founded and run by working class people. As such, we have no wealthy sympathisers. Everything we produce is paid for by our members. Each issue of this paper costs us nearly £200 to produce and we get back under £100 in sales. If you agree with our aims or are sympathetic to us, we would welcome your support. You could give us this in two ways.

1. By buying extra papers to resell to friends. This would help us to increase our circulation and reduce our deficit.
2. By taking out a subscription to Red Action. This costs £3 for the next ten issues posted to you and if you wished to send us an extra pound or two, rest assured that we will not be offended.

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PAPER TIGERS

It is my solemn duty to report that recently three Red Action paper sales at Kings Cross, Putney High Street and Euston were marred by violence and ugly scenes. Such was the disruption that two had to be abandoned after 20 minutes. Lest I alarm you dear reader I should explain that Red Action suffered no injuries as a result of these assaults, as they were actually carried out by the paper sellers themselves. The victims were the punters who appear unable to pass a leftie paper sale without subjecting the participants to muttered threats and prolonged verbal abuse. Most lefties when faced with this situation quickly employ the ostrich technique, while we deplore unnecessary violence. Red Action paper sellers will generally swap opinions and insults good naturedly with anybody. When faced with unprovoked intimidation, we prefer a more direct response. People prone to giving stiff arm salutes and fellow travellers be warned.

SHEFFIELD

On Sunday 5 August Red Action supporters travelled from London, Coventry and Manchester to support a Sinn Fein march in support of the repatriation of Irish POWs. Sadly the march was a non-event as it was directed through the back streets completely avoiding the city centre. There was no opposition.

BELFAST

Over 30 Red Action members, supporters and friends travelled to Belfast to take part in the annual march to commemorate the introduction of internment. Like last year we were billeted with local people in West Belfast, new friendships were made and old ones renewed. On Saturday we were invited to attend a meeting organised by the IRSP. There were speakers from relatives for justice on the current campaign against the "super-grass" trials, as well as a recently released POW who spoke on conditions inside. The meeting was instructive and educational. Early Sunday morning a Red Action member staying in the Divis flats heard the familiar sounds of a tremendous battle going on outside, he cautiously approached the window and in a quivering voice asked his host if it was the "Brits". He was informed that it was probably only a wee domestic row. Suitably chastened he took to his bed. On Sunday Red Action attended the march to Andersonstown where the well-publicised murder of Sean Downe took place. Even local people were shocked by the unprovoked violence of the RUC and British Army and later watched with weary cynicism as the media ground into gear and invented a riot to support the RUC story. As a small gesture of solidarity most of the Red Action delegation stayed over to attend the black flag march which took place in defiance of a ban by the RUC. There was a general agreement that for Socialists and sympathisers the trip is invaluable, as nothing clarifies or reviews your support for the armed struggle better than having a "Brit" shove a gun in your gut.

MINERS GIGS

Red Action members helped the miners support group in Welwyn Garden City to organise a benefit gig featuring the Astronauts and the Redskins, which raised 300 pounds for the miners. This was one of a series of gigs that we have arranged for this cause.

WOMEN ON THE STREETS

The Women's Miners March showed just how much widespread support the strike has. The symbolic route of the march - past DHSS H.Q. and several union head offices - summed up the message of the day: that the miners fight is everybody's fight. It was great to see so many women on the street demonstrating their solidarity. I wish it happened more often!

UP THE BLUES

On August Bank Holiday some Red Action Women and their friends revisited Greenham Common. We were made to feel very welcome again at the Blue Gate and a great time was had by all. We all wish them luck in the future. Women are welcome to go down to Greenham anytime, especially between 20 and 30 September which coincides with the NATO war games.

TROOPS OUT

Saturday 18 August Red Action attended a Troops Out march of about 3000 people through central London to Jubilee Gardens. The Fascists were noticeable by their absence, but a whisper of some "snipers" in Waterloo Station caused the Red Action "pest control unit" to be mobilized. Sadly the quarry had fled, visibly dejected the Red Action contingent wandered aimlessly away.

' for the class not the party '

What kind of society do you want? That was the major question facing the workers and peasants in Russia after the revolutions there in 1917. And a good clue to what they eventually decided upon can be gained by looking at the new Soviet constitution of 1918. The word "soviet" by the way is the Russian word for a council of workers or peasants.

Now, a new Soviet constitution was drawn up in July 1918 and it agreed, amongst other things, that all peasants and workers should have freedom of speech, and that there should be no censorship of the Press or suppression of Trade Unions. This was agreed in articles 13, 14, 15 and 16 of the Constitution. Articles 22 and 23 sought to prevent the allocation of special privileges to any one particular political Party either in the workplace or within the armed forces. The only people deprived of rights were those who exploited the labour of others, or those who lived on unearned income.

SLAUGHTER

Read through the above points again, and then ask yourself why it is that in March 1921, the Bolsheviks - who now were effectively "in charge" - butchered a naval garrison near Petrograd for raising exactly the same demands as the ones laid down in the Soviet Constitution of 1918. The naval base was called Kronstadt and some socialists believe that the smashing of Kronstadt by the Bolsheviks marked the beginning of the end of the revolution and the start of the slide into Dictatorship.

CRISIS AND ISOLATION

It is important to remember, of course, that Russia in 1921 was in the grip of a severe famine. A three year civil war against the reactionary White Guards and their allies had just ended with the Red Army returning victorious but having suffered heavy casualties. Russia was surrounded by hostile nations and the long hoped for revolution in Germany had been smashed - effectively by the German Labour Party who moved against the Spartakus uprising in Berlin in 1919. These are the excuses which all socialists seem to use when asked about KRONSTADT.

The Kronstadt sailors and their supporters rose up AFTER a wave of strikes



Putilov Workers, Petrograd 1917

began, in February 1921, in nearby Petrograd (LENINGRAD); ending with the massive PUTILOV works coming out on Strike. Bolshevik representatives at several factories were refused permission to address the workers and thousands left the Communist Party which the Bolsheviks controlled. Some socialists do not like to admit that this strike wave took place, but it did, and the demands it raised were for the release of all political prisoners, free speech for workers and peasants and for a "Third Revolution of the toilers". The Kronstadt sailors, naturally enough, sent a delegation to Petrograd to find out what was going on and found that a state of siege had been imposed along with an 11 o'clock curfew. The strike leaders had been arrested and the militia - at first mainly student guards - patrolled the streets.

THE KRONSTADT PROGRAMME

Inspired by their comrades in Petrograd, the Kronstadt sailors drew up a fifteen point programme, again with demands similar to the Constitution of 1918, but which also included demands for peas-

ants to be able to work their own soil as long as they did not "exploit" anyone else. An end to Bolshevik privileges and manipulation of the Red Army along with a call for the equalisation of rations except for those doing heavy or dangerous jobs and, importantly for FREE elections to the Soviets. It is obvious that people felt that the Soviets no longer reflected their interests and were calling for changes in them.

SOLIDARNOSC?

There is not space here to go into detail about the bloody battles, which followed, the demoralisation and desertion within the Red Army, or about the total lack of evidence for heavy White Guard influence at the naval base, although reactionaries the world over gave verbal support to Kronstadt in much the same way as they profess support for Solidarity in Poland today. Instead let's see what the Kronstadters had to say for themselves.

FOR THE SOVIETS NOT THE PARTY!

On the second March 1921, Communist Party members at Kronstadt, set up a "provisional" C.P. Their first proclamation was: "Long live the power of the

Soviets. Long live international working class unity."

A declaration was issued from C.P. members at the "Rif" Fort: "... many greedy careerists have flocked to our Party. This has given rise to bureaucracy and has gravely hampered the struggle for economic reconstruction." The first proclamation of the rebel Kronstadt Soviet - the White Guards don't forget - reads as follows: "We are concerned to avoid bloodshed. Our aim is to create through the joint efforts of Town and Fortress the proper conditions for regular and honest elections to the new Soviets."

ICE PICK PURGES

Eleven of the "prominent" Communists who helped put down the unrest in Petrograd and Kronstadt were later themselves "disappeared", shot or in Trotsky's case ice-picked in the Stalinist purges. It is a tragic possibility that Trotsky was busy in 1921 massacre-ing the very people who might have supported him against Stalin. Isaac Deutscher, who was a great admirer of Trotsky, admits that his accusations against the Kronstadters "appear groundless". In his book,

"The Prophet Armed", he goes on to say: "What the rebels of Kronstadt demanded was only what Trotsky had promised their elder brothers and what he and the Party had been unable to give. Once again, a bitter and hostile echo of his own voice came back to him from the lips of other people and once again he had to suppress it". But did he have to? Look again at the Kronstadt demands and decide for yourself.



WE ARE RED ACTION

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

WE ARE FOR

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

RED ACTION IS AGAINST

1. Anything read in

THE Sun