

Direct Action

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Supplement ★
**THE RUSSIAN
REVOLUTION**

The Voice of Anarcho-Syndicalism

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ATTACKS ON WOMEN



ARE ATTACKS ON OUR CLASS

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Paper of the Direct Action Movement - International Workers Association

UNITE AND FIGHT

"A CHRONICLE of broken promises and cynical contempt" is how the treatment of school secretaries by Leeds Labour Council was described. For years secretaries (and other school ancillary staff) have seen their wages reduced (often by the employment of part-time term-only workers) while work has increased. So secretaries in Leeds took industrial action in July. They refused new work due to new exams, causing havoc in many

schools. On July 13th the action was called off and negotiations began. It was revealed the council had used volunteers, parents and even pupils to do secretaries' work even including confidential files such as exams!

An agreement was reached but this was arbitrarily and unilaterally thrown out by the education committee. So in September the secretaries voted at a heated meeting for

a one week strike in October. The strike went ahead despite attempts by council leader George Mudie to negotiate over their heads by appealing to NALGO president Eric Cowin, who tried to sell them out although he had no authority to negotiate! In spite of a successful march there was a small drift back to work. On October 20th secretaries returned to work as planned, intending to continue action with a work to rule as before. However it's clear that Leeds Council will use Tory anti-union laws. In a letter to school heads the education department stated secretaries are expected to do "the full range of duties" and "should they refuse to work normally they will not be paid". It's no wonder people describe the education department as "boot-boys".

The main problems the secretaries have with organising themselves is isolation due to only a few workers in each school. This means many secretaries aren't in a union at all and NALGO must be blamed. Little or no attempt was made to enlist support from other members in schools (cleaners, technicians and so on) even though they face similar problems. Also the support offered by teachers' unions was watered down to grand speeches with no backing. All school workers are suffering attacks and unless we unite and fight together we'll be picked off one by one.



Strike Won



A 4-DAY STRIKE by workers at the Leicester Metalastik factory won an outright victory, forcing management to totally withdraw unacceptable procedures for running new machinery. Only 2 out of the 480 strong workforce scabbed after an overwhelming strike vote brought all machinery to a standstill.

"In the last 2 and a half years workers at Metalastik have received numerous attacks on previous agreements, including the scrapping of our redundancy scheme", explained Dave Richardson, deputy TGWU convenor. "This latest attack over the operating of new machinery was a management demand that they should pick and choose who the new operators would be. Until then it was agreed that the longest serving workers

would run any new machines." Management wanted foremen to interview workers, taking account of absenteeism, time-keeping, dexterity, quality and "general attitudes" before awarding new jobs to the "best candidate".

After 4 days management agreed to withdraw the new conditions and return to the old method. This victory is particularly encouraging as Metalastik is not some small firm but part of the huge BTR multinational. BTR strikers from South Africa, visiting Britain, joined the picket in a practical show of international solidarity against the company. "Our branch is solid," said Dave, "and we want to thank all organisations for their solidarity on the picket lines."

Vauxhall Walkout

PRODUCTION WORKERS at Vauxhall Motors in Luton went on strike in October over the company's bonus scheme. Recently the Bedford Trucks side of the plant was merged with Isuzu and is now a separate company, however the 1,200 Bedford/Isuzu workers are still part of the 6% bonus scheme. By including these extra 1,200 workers the company now calculates more hours per product. The Vauxhall strikers lose around £10 per week because of this and are effectively subsidising the £9 pay rise offered by the firm.

workers signed their jobs away by voting for merger, they are still in the scheme at the expense of Vauxhall workers. If the workers lose this dispute it will pave the way for a greater offensive by a management that even refuses to recognise elected shop-stewards.



On the face of it, it seems like the dispute is simply a sectional one, but there is clearly an intention by management to whitewash any agreements and mislead the whole workforce. The Bedford Trucks merger with Isuzu was not as straight forward as it seemed. General Motors, the owners of Vauxhall and Bedford Trucks also own 75% of Isuzu. The new merged company is 60% Bedford and 40% Isuzu so it's not hard to see that GM have effectively got new contracts of employment that include a no-strike agreement on the pretext of an outside merger. They had even threatened to close the Bedford Trucks plant down if the merger was rejected by the workforce. Consequently the strikers see that the company has deliberately kept them in the dark about the bonus scheme. Some feel bitter that although the Bedford

The response to picketing has been good with few workers and no lorries getting past an effective picket. One worker said, "there's no way the union can sell us out on this one, the firm will have to back down". Many strikers feel that management have provoked the dispute and that it's only the tip of the iceberg. The workforce has been cut over the last few years - if GM pulls out, Luton would lose its lifeblood.

Further details: Luton Class War, c/o Box A, Europa House, Vicarage St, Luton, Beds.

Stuck For Words!

SINCE THE OCCUPATION in August and the September industrial tribunal Salplast workers have continued their 9 month strike. The tribunal (which dealt with 5 of the original 6 sacked workers) seemed to go favourably with boss, Barry Chapman, "stuck for words" during cross-examination. But the decision on compensation was delayed for 6 weeks and there is still no news of the result.

Since the occupation ended

Chapman (aka "the Bastard") has not been idle. With heavy security and 6 scabs small scale production has resumed. Though Chapman no longer supplies high street outlets his rich backers have enabled him to enter the mail order market via firms like Littlewoods, Peter Kray, Janet Fraser, John Moore and others. Worse for the strikers are recent signs indicating Chapman is shifting production to a new site north of Bolton. He has also been touting for

business at a recent Trade Fair in Birmingham, possibly intending view to selling the factory.

It is vital that Salplast workers aren't let down. Regardless of the tribunal result 25 other workers still need money and support on the picket line. Send money and messages of support to: Jim Billington, 6/196 Branch Secretary, 43 Abingdon Road, Urmston, Manchester, M31 1GW.

LABOUR'S CODE OF CONDUCT

LEEDS LABOUR controlled Council plan to introduce a code of conduct identical in many ways to the hated rules British Coal want to force on the miners. Leaked copies of a council document on disciplinary rules and practices reveal rules that would gladden the most ruthless boss' heart. Much of the lengthy code is uncontroversial waffle but the "Guidance Notes" recommend suspension without pay for "refusing to obey instructions" and "alternative work". So workers refusing striking colleagues' work or boycotting work from unfilled posts created by cuts would be sacked. Basically you can be sacked for following union instructions. Shop stewards are also threatened with suspension for simply carrying out union business.



Harsh as these threats are they're nothing compared with those against employees suspected of criminal offences outside work. You can be effectively sacked if the council believes you're guilty

ty of crimes charged against you: "They are not expected to establish whether the employee committed the offence...but rather whether the employee committed the offence on the balance of probability". In plain language, you can be sacked if they think you're guilty and you remain so even if proven innocent.

This, of course, has been likened to British Coal Code and union officials are "concerned". However there's no campaign against it. This is more ironic since the Council leader, George Mudie, is a NUPE official. As a council worker, I feel it's impossible for unions like NUPE and NALGO to represent employers and management as well as workers. Get the bureaucrats out! Unions are for workers!

WOMEN IN THE CLASS STRUGGLE

On October 27th Liberal MP, and Catholic David Alton, introduced a Private Member's Bill to the House of Commons. It proposes to reduce the time limit for abortion from 28 weeks to 18. He launched his attack at the conference of the right wing pressure group, Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child (SPUC). Since then the media has widely publicised his case. The bill spells potential disaster for women seeking abortions. Although last year only 29 had abortions after 24 weeks, 5000 did so after the proposed new 18-week limit. Of these, 20% approached their doctor before 12 weeks but due to NHS cuts, administration delays or unsympathetic doctors they had to wait. The bill will also fuel attempts to completely legalise abortion.

More than half the women seeking abortion after 20 weeks are teenage girls who did not seek help earlier either because they did not know they were pregnant, or feared unhelpful parents. Restricting abortion would condemn many young women to a life of caring for an unwanted child. Women with handicapped fetuses would also be affected; tests very rarely detect some handicaps before 18-20 weeks. Again women will have to devote their lives to a child the state refuses to care for, especially considering its "care in the community" drive. This bill thus represents a very real attempt to limit abortion rights. Coming at a time when right wing moralistic arguments are strong, it has a high chance of becoming law.

Such an issue cannot be seen in isolation. Not only is it linked to NHS cuts but also to the whole question of women's position in society. Restrictions on women's control over their sexuality are part and parcel of how they are regarded generally by church and state.

"Women's place" under capitalism is as a cheap, flexible workforce. Gone are the days when most women stayed at home and merely reproduced the labour force. Nowadays 60% of British women work. In September 1986 they were 45% of the total workforce, while men's share had fallen by 3% since 1979. Such changes show the importance of women's labour to capitalism. Far from the feminist prediction that a Tory government would

counts for 44% of all women's work. The mass introduction of women to the labour force has not put any more demand on state services as most working class women who work rely on their friends or family for childcare. Nurseries, when available are almost always geared towards part-time hours. Three quarters of women's work is in service industries which have seen an 8% growth since 1979. This sector is often non-unionised so wages and conditions tend to be poor.

The type of work women do is very much restricted. A 1983 survey revealed that 60% of manual work consisted of

women's wages have never exceeded 75% of men's, because women are ghettoised in low-paid jobs. This is as true today as it was in the age of cotton mills. Not only do they suffer in terms of hourly rates but also women often work where there is no holiday pay, sick pay, pensions, bonuses, overtime or shift pay. This is especially true of part time work.

Part time workers often don't have the same legal rights as full-timers. Those who work between 8 and 16 hours a week only get full rights after working continuously for the same employer for 5 years. This discriminates against women who take time off to have kids. The recent repeal of legislation requiring employers to re-employ women after maternity leave and the abolition of the maternity grant are also attacks on women's rights at work. This must be seen in the light of the government's strategy to create a cheap, mobile, non-unionised labour force. High unemployment and anti-trade union laws are other factors in this attack.

Women's wages and conditions are directly linked to worker's militancy. They are only improved when workers fight for them. Very often women work where it is difficult to organise and be militant. An example of this is the health service - nurses are portrayed not as workers but caring professionals and tend not to be militant, refusing to take effective strike action, so their wages and conditions remain poor.

The abortion bill is not an isolated attack, but one aspect in the drive towards a submissive working class. The state will try to remove women's right to control their own bodies like it tries to stop workers defending their interests. In a period like this when high unemployment and demoralisation mean there is little struggle against attacks, right wing arguments about abortion are more likely to be accepted than when there is strong opposition to attacks on workers. When the working class is confident to strike and win, they realise ruling class interests oppose their own. Issues like sex-

ism, racism and, of course, a woman's right to control her own body, are all thrown up in struggle and workers realise what their interests are.

MASS STRUGGLE

The question is: how can women fight attacks on their abortion rights and attacks on them in general? History shows that women, and all workers, only improve their positions by mass struggle. After the Russian Revolution women enjoyed great improvements. They gained full legal rights; divorce became easier; housework and childcare were beginning to be seen as the community's task. The revolution's failure forced women back into the home. In Spain the revolution again improved women's positions. More recently, the miners' strike for a time put women in conflict with their existing values, and were forced to challenge sexism.

Women can only fight their oppression by active participation in class struggle. The fact that most women now work puts them in a better position to fight. Instead of isolation at home, away from the point of production, they can get involved in workplace politics to an extent they never had before. This must be an important weapon in fighting attacks on women. Through workplace struggle issues affecting women can be raised. Industrial struggle creates the means for women's oppression to be fought by both men and women for it is in both sexes' interest to fight attacks on women. Such issues, like abortion, are working class issues and any attempt to fight them must be class-based.

The last concerted attempt to limit abortion was in 1979 with the Corrie Bill. The TUC was forced due to rank and file pressure to organise a march against it. This was massive, reflecting working class opposition. Attempts to fight the current attack must also be based on the working class. An attack on women's right to control their own bodies is an attack on the whole class, and only when it fights back can abortion rights be defended.



Workers Protesting Against The Corrie Bill

drive women back into the home, it recognises that a female labour force is very useful to business.

NON-UNIONISED

For several reasons this has been easy to achieve. The type and hours of work a woman does depends on whether or not she has a child. Part time work, as a result, ac-

cleaning, catering and hair-dressing while 64% of non-manual work was restricted to clerical and sales. So while women have been integrated into the labour market it is not on an equal footing with men.

The repercussions of women being forced into certain work are substantial. Even with equal pay legislation

Sisterly Solidarity

FIGURES FOR IRISH women having abortions in Britain reached record levels in 1986 with 5,642 women giving Irish addresses (many give British addresses) having abortions here exceeding the 1985 figure, a record itself. Then Dublin High Court illegalised the provision of abortion information so the only 2 Irish clinics offering such information have had to end the service. This move was initiated by SPUC in 1984, after a 1983 referendum decision to outlaw abortion permanently. A reported increase in backstreet abortions since then comes as no surprise.

The Defend the Clinics Campaign was set up to organise opposition to the ruling.

It has produced a "Fact Pack on Abortion for Irish Women" and works closely with the Irish Women's Abortion Support Groups in London which provide practical support for women. A major public meeting is to be held to discuss the last few years' attacks on Irish women's rights. Most encouraging are help-lines in Dublin and Cork to offer non-directive pregnancy counselling and referral information including information on English abortion clinics. Such extra-legal initiatives need what support they can get.

Send much needed donations and messages of support to: Defend the Clinics Campaign, 6 Crow St, Dublin 2, Eire.

THE 1967 ABORTION ACT was a step forward in Scotland, England and Wales for women's control over their bodies but the 6 counties was, and still is excluded. Since 1967 over 20,000 women from the 6 counties have had abortions in Britain - at the present rate



...And in the Six Counties

15 out of every 100 will have abortions in their lifetime. But many can't afford to trek to Britain or pay for an abortion so some resort to the backstreet and at least 4 women have died between 1968 and 1977 as a result. Also there's no ante-natal screening as there are no facilities for terminating abnormal pregnancies. Even if women are pregnant due to rape, or risk damaging their health abortion is not guaranteed.

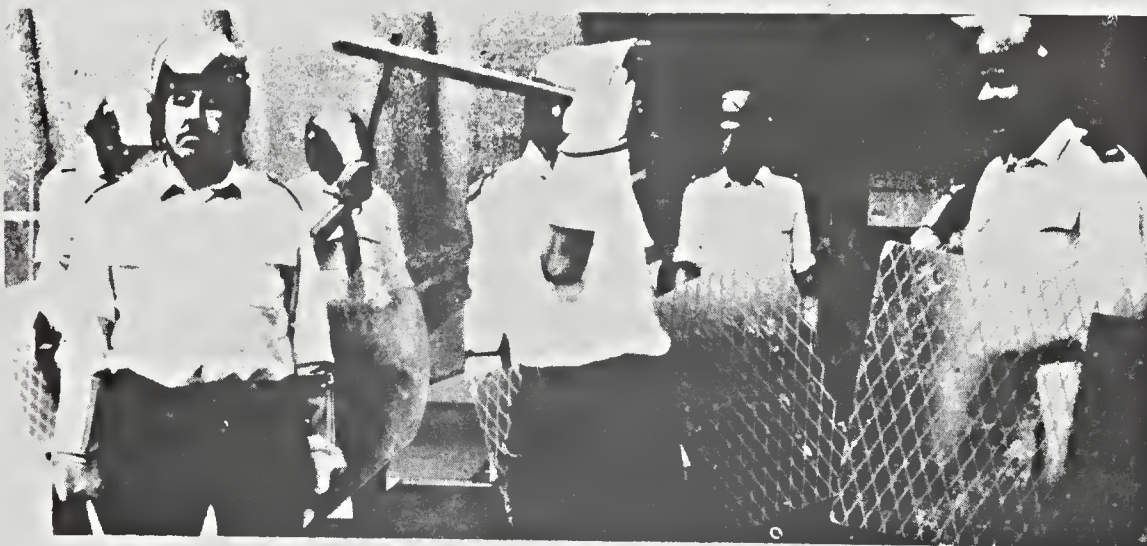
A committee has been formed to set up an international tribunal to assess the medical, legal and social effects of the 6 counties' exclusion. It would like to hear from women who travelled for abortions; continued pregnancy as

they couldn't get abortions; had a backstreet abortion; tried getting abortions in the 6 counties due to rape or counselling; requested alpha-fetoprotein testing as they were worried about abnormal pregnancy. If readers have been affected the committee would like to know. Write anonymously or if you give your name it will be treated confidentially. The tribunal results will be used to press for the 6 counties' inclusion in the 1967 Act. Meanwhile women in the 6 counties could do worse than copy their southern sisters to organise aid for women needing it now.

Contact: Sonya Murray (for the tribunal committee), c/o 7 Winetavern St, Belfast 1.

Peterhead Punishment

The SAS attack on the remaining 3 prisoners holding prison officer Stuart hostage at Peterhead top security prison heralds a new era in the state's handling of civil disobedience. The Scottish prison system failed to respond positively to the demands made by prisoners who took to the roof last winter. Those demands - including an end to brutality - remain the same. The Scottish Office's response, which last year amounted to empty promises, hasn't.



All they did was re-classify Barlinnie down to local prison status while shifting the so-called "hardcore" of prisoners to Peterhead, isolated miles from the main pop-

ulation centres. As a Peterhead inmate said to Jimmy Boyle "It looks as if they're going to use the whole of Peterhead as a punishment block". Such is the Scottish

Office's attitude, not to solve the problem but to pack it away in a remote highland town and threaten it with the SAS if trouble results. It is a solution any military dictatorship would be proud of and is symbolic of the British state's shift from liberal coercion towards overt repression.

36 hours later another screw was taken hostage in a 3 day siege at Perth jail. Prisoners are not going to lie down and take beating after beating and drugging after drugging without fighting first. The prison system's brutality - Peterhead's "secure unit" where prisoners are kept in solitary for anything up to 4 years on a wooden plank bed without heating is the perfect example - causes the trouble, not the prisoners' so-called disruptive temper.

It's not for us to moralise on many prisoners' so-called crimes. The capitalist press, while praising the murderous likes of Thatcher and Reagan who have condemned millions to poverty, does enough of that. What we will say is that most are inside for crimes against property and in a society where profit is God attempts to disrupt its accumulation, whether by strike or shop-lifting meets utmost severity. Only when the perverted profit system is changed to one of co-operation will these and other crimes begin to disappear. The prison system like capitalism which created it and which it serves is an affront to humanity. It can't be reformed, it must be changed.

Support Jailed Miners

WELSH MINERS Dean Hancock and Russell Shankland are still serving their 8 year sentence for a manslaughter charge during the 1984-'85 strike. They got no joy from a parole board in August, but are both in good health and spirits, with another board due next year. This may be preceded by a move from Gartree maximum security prison to a lower security one.



Russell's birthday is on 10th December and we strongly urge all readers to send cards and messages of support and get union branches, shop stewards' committees, trades councils, rank & file groups and all DAM groups to follow suit. Let's let the lads know they haven't been forgotten by working people. The address is: Russell Shankland, A 83 752, HMP Gartree, Market Harborough, Leics, LE16 7RP.

STATE RACISM STRIKE AGAIN

THE OCTOBER 5TH appeal hearing of 4 Chinese waiters from London was picketed. They were sentenced with affray for defending themselves from a racist attack.

The attack happened in the Diamond Chinese restaurant. Five white men refused to pay for their food, attacking the waiter when he protested. Three fellow workers went to his aid. As is often the case it was the Chinese men who were arrested not their attackers. The white men were sent to hospital although the waiters were also injured. As

can be expected, much of the Chinese community is incensed. The police took statements only from white customers, not from Chinese customers or other workers. At no time were interpreters provided even though the arrested men - Danny Tang, Kin Chy, Frankie Lam and Peter Lee speak little English. The waiters received no medical attention and their attackers weren't interrogated.

The waiters were charged with affray, wounding with intent and unlawful wounding. They were found guilty of

affray and, though this was their first offence, they got 2 year's imprisonment. How many more times must we see the police's racist and divisive tactics? How many more Broadwater Farms, Cherry Groves and incidents like the Diamond 4 have to occur before we organise to effectively counter the state's repressive forces?

For more information contact: The Diamond 4 Defence Campaign, c/o CIAC, 152-156 Shaftesbury Ave, London WC2. Tel. (01) 379 5098.



Broadwater Farm march: Black and White Stand Together Against Police Oppression

DOING BUSINESS

"I CHOSE YELLOW as the colour of the cover because yellow is the colour of danger" - Dirk Spig author of "Doing Business".

This is the latest in a long line of excellent publications by the Bradford "1 in 12" club. In the past these "amateur, ignorant and mischievous sleuths" have turned their gaze on councils, businesses and masonic lodges in West Yorkshire. What they found was not pleasant. Corruption is the main force in these august institutions which have so much influence on our lives.

"Doing Business" sets out to explain in simple terms how ordinary people such as trade unionists and activists can investigate corruption and big business. It is

written in simple language and gives a basis for investigation. It explains the nature of business, companies and the stock market. It indicates the sources of information; libraries, directories, the press and so on. There is an interesting section about gaining information from "moles" or by merely asking direct questions. Finally it gives hints on writing, printing, layout, sales and on the law relating to libel.

It is recommended to all who want to investigate the business world and will be of great value to strikers who need to dig up the dirt on their bosses. As it says "just how dangerous this book is depends on how you use it. Use it carelessly".

DOING BUSINESS

a mischief-makers handbook

SPIG/1in12publications

£2.00 40 pages - available from "1 in 12" Publications Collective, 31 Manor Row, Bradford 1, West Yorks.

IN BRIEF

THE FABIAN SOCIETY has recently published a report on the distribution of wealth in Thatcher's Britain. Leading academics discovered, after painstaking research, that the gap between rich and poor is widening. But more importantly, this was due to deliberate Tory policy! 8 years of Thatcherism and now its official. Like we always say, give the Fabians time and they get there in the end.

THE GULF WAR is causing concern throughout the world. Both Britain and France have sent minesweepers to clear the waters. In France's case it's ironic since evidence is pretty strong that they supplied the explosives in the first place! What price profit?

FOR A RECENT government-sponsored youth rally in Yugoslavia, a competition was held to design a poster advertising the event. The 1st prize was won by an avant-garde art group. However the poster had to be withdrawn in a hurry when it turned out to be a copy of an old German Nazi Party poster!

SO FAR it has cost the British government over £3 million to pursue Peter "Spycatcher" Wright through the courts. Yet it seems he only chose to write his bestseller as they wouldn't give him a full pension in the first place!



RUSSIA

1917

The Russian Revolution was a great turning point in world history and today we still live with its legacy. Initially it inspired, but then proved to be a disaster for the working class all over the world. In 1917 after 3 years of war Russia was collapsing but the revolution begun in February in Petrograd took everyone by surprise.

Workers had come out to commemorate the anniversary of Bloody Sunday of 1905. On February 14th 80,000 demonstrated in support of the Duma ("parliament") and 4 days later a strike began in the Putilov works. This was not considered serious but then thousands of women workers came out on the streets for a socialist celebration of Women's Day and, joined by the Putilov strikers, a cry went up for bread.

Clashes with the police followed but the Petrograd commander avoided provoking the crowds. Then the Tsar ordered: "I command you to put an end as from tomorrow to all disturbances". The result was 40 dead. A regiment, many young conscripts, waiting to return to the front mutinied and joined the crowds distributing their guns. Soon they controlled Petrograd.

Workers resurrected the soviets that had appeared in 1905. The Duma set up a provisional government but it could not be effective without Petrograd soviet's agreement. Local soviets sprang up and an All-Russian soviet conference established an executive committee. A series of reforms were made but the crucial decision was to continue the war. The Petrograd soviet issued Order No1: "Orders...shall be executed only in such cases as they do not conflict with the orders and resolutions of the soviet". This was crucial in future developments in the army.

SOVIET POWER

The soviets had the real power but they co-operated with, without being part of, the provisional government. This was due to domination by political parties who looked to the election of a constituent assembly. Anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists, alone, pushed for the next stage with the slogans "down with the war", "arm the workers", "land to the peasants, factories to the workers". Sadly there was no coherent organisation to back this up. As war dragged on promised reforms were delayed. Peasants and workers became impatient with the provisional government and left wing parties. In April Lenin arrived in Petrograd and shocked the Bolsheviks with a new policy - no co-operation with the government, an end to the war, nationalisation of land and all power to the soviets. He won the party round by revealing that the soviets should not take over until controlled by the Bolsheviks.

Increasing unrest saw a coalition government created with 6 socialists in ministerial posts. Feelings moved leftwards: factory committees began to move towards workers' control, workers' militias were set up, peasants seized land and soldiers deserted. Bolshevik influence grew not only due to their slogans but since Lenin had returned they had more financial resources. Money was supplied indirectly by Germany enabling them to build up "Pravda" and other papers and to create the Red Guards. In July workers, soldiers and sailors in Kronstadt demanded that the soviets take power. For the Bolsheviks, still a minority in the soviets, this was too soon.

In an attempted right-wing coup by General Kornilov, the coalition government had to arm the workers who deprived Kornilov of the railways and telegraph service. His troops were reluctant to fight and the threat melted away. Now a new revolution was possible. The Bolsheviks gained control of Petrograd and Moscow soviets. Lenin was convinced the time was right to seize power and returned to Petrograd. After hours of arguing drove the Bolshevik central committee round to his view. On October 24th the coup began. By next day they controlled Petrograd. On November 2nd Moscow was taken by which time most industrial cities recognised Bolshevik power.



Lenin disguised

The Social Revolutionaries split and the left wing supported the Bolsheviks. The Mensheviks were also in disarray. In provincial cities where soviet power was still shared, Bolshevik dominated "congresses" claimed to have authority. Elections to the constituent assembly occurred on November 12th. 2 days before, Lenin curtailed press freedom, trying to influence the outcome. The Bolsheviks, took part and when they found themselves in a minority they dissolved the assembly.

Lenin had already set up a secret police - the Extraordinary Commission for Suppression of Counter Revolution and Sabotage - the notorious Cheka under Felix Dzerzhinsky a Polish landowner's son. He had carte-blanc, including summary execution, to deal with "counter revolutionaries" - anyone opposing the Bolsheviks. At one point he ordered that people with smooth hands be shot. This was changed as it would have included most of the Bolshevik leadership. The Cheka was soon turned against the Bolsheviks' left-wing opponents, firstly the Right Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. Then in April 1918 they attacked anarchists in Moscow

The Whites began to mobilise and Trotsky was appointed commissar for war. Before the coup Lenin talked of abolishing the army and replacing it with workers' militias. The Red Army, however, was conscripted, under centralised command with officers appointed, not elected. Each unit had a political commissar and Cheka agent. As civil war went on the Whites' internal differences meant they were never co-ordinated. They were scattered around Russia thousands of miles apart with patchy communications. They met fierce resistance from peasants especially in the Ukraine. Western powers, preoccupied with defeating Germany, then with their own internal unrest, never pushed their initial intervention. Slowly the Red Army advanced. By 1921 the Whites were beaten and the Bolsheviks had secure control.

"War Communism" proved an abject failure so Lenin abandoned it in March 1921. At the 10th Party Congress the free market, higher prices and encouragement of private

As Kropotkin wrote in a letter to the workers of Western Europe in 1919: "We are learning to know in Russia how not to introduce communism". The Bolsheviks gained influence once Lenin returned to Russia by abandoning any principle but that of power. His sense of purpose and political manoeuvring fooled opponents and left him leading other Bolsheviks by the nose. He used arguments that were mere tactical points to be dropped when need arose. He raised the slogan "all power to the soviets", abandoned it then resurrected it in October when the Bolsheviks had a majority.

BOLSHEVIK IDEA

His essay, "State and Revolution" is often cited by marxists to prove the events following the Bolshevik seizure of power were forced upon a reluctant Lenin. It was written in September 1917 as the Bolsheviks vied for power in the soviets. It was published after October and the purpose was to quell revolutionaries' doubts over Bolsheviks' intentions, shocking



Red Guards

with machine guns and cannon. Red Terror had begun.

RED TERROR

It soon extended beyond political groups. Lenin initially adopted the Social Revolutionaries' land policy for tactical reasons. But soon forcible requisitioning of grain was done by armed units that rapidly degenerated into drunken mobs. In industry the factory committees were subjugated to Bolshevik needs. Lenin had supported the factory committees up to October as they undermined successive governments. In power he advocated 1-man management and reinstatement of former managers and technicians on high salaries. The Supreme Council of National Economy (Vesenkha) was formed to establish centralised state control.

This policy was later dubbed "war communism", implying a temporary measure forced on the Bolsheviks by the civil war. In truth it was the natural realisation of state communism's ideal. It shows the Bolsheviks' distrust and contempt of Russian workers and peasants. Their elitism could not allow anything but their own dictatorship. Opposition was "bourgeois" and so worthy of elimination. This took place before the civil war when the Whites were in disarray and the Allies, involved in WWI, were in no position to intervene.

and foreign business was introduced in the New Economic Policy (NEP). This was state capitalism and Lenin admitted it. The relaxing of economic controls went with a tightening of political ones. Factions in the Bolshevik party were banned. The leadership's control was reinforced and the first systematic purge of the party began.

Finally Bolshevik control was imposed on trade union and political rivals. Rank and file militants were arrested en masse. Lenin stated for all opposition "our revolutionary courts must pass the death sentence". Reasons for this reinforcement of the dictatorship lie not in the civil war which was over. It was simply that the Bolsheviks were so unpopular due to their dictatorial rule.



Dzerzhinsky

many marxists with its almost-anarchist phrasing. In hindsight it was a case of saying one thing while doing the opposite.

Lenin had no intention of following the "State and Revolution". The tightening of political power was necessary to Bolshevik ideology. Each step was taken when the threat was minimal - before and after the civil war. In 1922 a bitter Emma Goldman, who returned to Russia after the revolution, wrote: "It is not so much the Bolshevik who killed the Russian Revolution as the Bolshevik idea". It is an idea that has not disappeared and is as deadly today as 70 years ago.

"The Bolsheviks and Workers' Control (1917-1922)" - M. Brinton.

A reprint of the classic blow by blow account of the Bolshevik takeover of industry, the unions and the Factory Committees (last printed 1975 by Solidarity). Available with a new cover and introduction from mid November price £1.40. Orders to Bolton DAM c/o Socialist Club, 16 Wood St., Bolton.

Bolshevik Treachery

In August 1921 Nestor Makhno and a handful of the Revolutionary Insurrectionary Army of the Ukraine entered Rumania ending a unique episode. The revolution developed very differently in the Ukraine than in Russia proper, as the Bolsheviks and other left parties had no power base. After February nationalists set up an autonomous "democratic" republic under Simon Petlura. A peasants' and workers' opposition also developed. Unlike Russia factory councils and peasant assemblies were free of political parties.



After the Bolshevik coup troops were sent to overthrow Petlura. Kiev, the capital, was taken in January 1918. Then came the Brest-Litovsk treaty and the Ukraine was given up to the Austro-German army. The Bolsheviks' need to retain power overrode the Ukraine's needs. Makhno was asked to create peasants' and workers' fighting units to oppose the occupation and Hetman Skoropadsky's puppet regime. Aided by peasants the partisans resisted effectively. Despite the Austro-German ferocity, they had a general rule towards captives: officers, landlords and exploiters suffered revolutionary justice and were shot on the spot - ordinary troops were freed with the suggestion they return to their own countries, tell what the Ukrainian peasants were doing and work for social revolution.

With the armistice the Austro-Germans withdrew and Petlura was restored. In the south the Makhnovists resisted; from the north came the Red Army. For 6 months there was relative peace as the Ukraine was divided between the 3 forces. In the area under Makhnovist control peasants set up free communes and soviets. A Revolutionary Military Council was created by the Regional Congress to organise resistance. This wasn't authoritarian but only carried out the Congress' instructions subject to recall. Volunteers, rather than conscripts fought, supplied by the communes.

The Makhnovists held the front against Denikin's White armies. When the Bolsheviks appeared in the north of the area they hoped to incorporate them into the Red Army. At once political differences were obvious but the Makhnovists hoped conflict would be kept to ideas. A co-operation pact was drawn up. The Insurrectionary Army retained its organisational basis; it was only subordinated to the Red Army on military matters. Two important clauses were that it could not be removed from

the front against Denikin and that it retained its name and black flags.

BOLSHEVIK HOSTILITY

The strictly military pact didn't please the Bolsheviks. They hoped to absorb the Makhnovists and subjugate the population. The peasants had other ideas. They boycotted government agents and drove out the Cheka wherever they were established. Bolshevik hostility increased - a campaign of lies; militants were arrested; ammunition supplies reduced; the 3rd Regional Congress in April 1919 was declared counter revolutionary. Trotsky arrived, branding the Makhnovists "anarcho-bandits" and a movement of Kulaks. He wrote: "It would be better to yield the whole Ukraine to Denikin...while the Makhnovshchina developed in the depths of the masses and aroused the masses themselves against us".

In May the Bolsheviks failed to assassinate Makhno. When Denikin advanced again Trotsky ordered supplies to be suspended. In the north the Bolsheviks moved against the communes unleashing Red terror ravaging the Whites. The greatest treachery was the weakening of the front by a Red Army withdrawal letting Denikin surround the Makhnovists. Makhno resigned to save the Insurrectionary Army and asked his units to temporarily accept Red command. The Bolsheviks, thinking they had won as Makhno and some cavalry disappeared, ordered a retreat leaving the Ukraine to its fate. Then the Makhnovists received instructions to leave the retreating Red Army with what weapons they could. Many Red units, tired of Bolshevik deceit, joined them.

The Makhnovists retreated before Denikin, taking on a strange appearance, joined by thousands of peasants fleeing White terror. For 4 months they carried out a skilful, rearguard action. When they took the offensive lack of

ammunition hampered them. In an attempt to wipe out the Makhnovists Denikin threw in fresh troops. Their retreat ended when, with the Insurrectionary Army surrounded, they suddenly changed direction attacking Denikin's main force by surprise and breaking through. From then on they pursued the retreating Whites and Denikin abandoned his advance on Moscow.

MASS ARRESTS

Only then did the Red Army advance once more. Again an agreement was struck, but the Bolsheviks worried about the Makhnovists influencing their own troops. They ordered the Insurrectionary Army to the Polish front. When it refused they attacked with Latvian and Chinese troops and using White tactics they attacked defenceless communes, made mass arrests and executions and installed their political commissars. In spring, 1920, Wrangel re-assembled the remnants of Denikin's troops. Again the Makhnovists were attacked on 2 fronts. Wrangel was the main enemy so yet another agreement was reached with the Bolsheviks. They

finally threw the Whites out once and for all.

Under Insurrectionary Army protection the experiment of a free communist society in the Ukraine was revived. The Bolsheviks could not tolerate this. Breaking the agreement they arrested anarchists in areas under their control and in November 1920 they attacked. The next 8 months saw furious fighting as the whole weight of the Red Army was sent against the Makhnovshchina. Only military skill and heroism prevented immediate defeat. Again Red terror came to the Ukraine. Makhno was badly wounded as Red Army divisions released from other parts of Russia bore down on the Insurrectionary Army. It was an uneven contest. By August 1921 when the remaining partisans entered Rumania the Ukraine was subjugated by the Bolshevik dictatorship.

The Makhnovists are largely ignored by historians. Yet they saved the Bolsheviks by defeating Denikin and Wrangel. The Bolsheviks accused them of being bandits, petty-bourgeois, even of collaboration with the Whites. This is

absurd! They fought non-stop for 4 years with overwhelming support among poor peasants, and maintained by voluntary enlistment and supplies. It had support from Ukrainian Jews, many joining its ranks. Despite Bolshevik lies no evidence has been found of Makhnovist anti-semitism. The policy of releasing ordinary soldiers or conscripts, who hadn't committed acts of terror, was maintained.

For anarchists the lesson is clear. Although we can't let our fight against capitalism and the state waver we must always be aware of Leninist treachery. Their ideology cannot allow rivals, especially an idea so opposed to their authoritarianism. Parallels between the Ukraine and Spain, 1936-39, can be seen. Restriction of munitions to anarchists, the withdrawal of communist units at strategic times leaving anarchists surrounded, imprisonment and execution of anarchists behind the lines. Today our struggle with marxist-leninism is in the realm of ideas. The Makhnovists' experience teaches us that one day that struggle will be more decisive.

"The Pride of the Revolution"

By 1921 years of war, revolution and civil war had bled Russia. As civil war drew to an end people awaited abolition of wartime restrictions and the start of reconstruction. But the same policies continued and militarisation of labour increased. The belief grew that the Communist Party was more interested in retaining power than in saving the revolution.

In February workers in 4 Petrograd factories struck after an extremely hard winter of cold, hunger and exhaustion. They demanded more food rations, fuel and clothing. Some concessions were made but there was also brutal repression. Sailors in nearby Kronstadt were concerned about this. On February 28th the crew of "Petrovavlovsk" passed a resolution supported by the "Sevastopol" crew demanding re-elections to the Kronstadt soviet (tenure of office was about to expire).

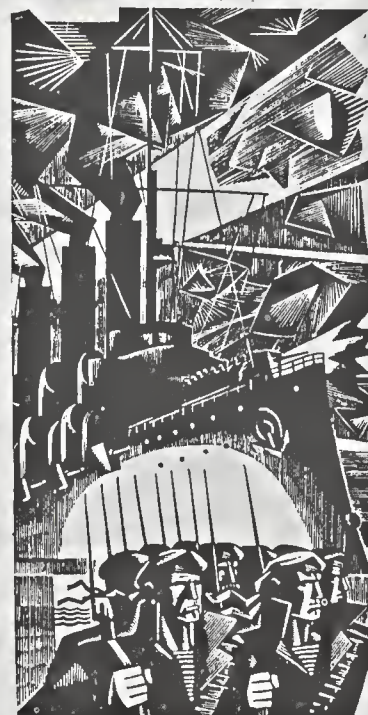
March 1st saw a mass meeting of 16,000 sailors, soldiers and workers. The main points were freedom of speech and press for revolutionaries, amnesty for imprisoned revolutionaries and re-election to the soviets. A committee of 30 was sent to Petrograd to ask a delegation to return with them to see the situation in Kronstadt. They were arrested by the Bolsheviks and never seen again.

A meeting on March 2nd of 300 delegates from workers' organisations, to prepare for the elections, elected an executive committee of 5. Kuzmin, commissar of the Baltic fleet, stated provocatively: "If you want open warfare, you shall have it, for the Communists will not give up the reins of government". He and Vassiliev (chair of Kronstadt soviet's executive committee) were arrested. A motion to detain other Commun-

ists was overwhelmingly voted down as they were considered equal with those from other organisations and had the same rights. The March 1st resolutions were passed.

DENOUNCED

Amid rumours of a Bolshevik advance, and Kuzmin's threats, the executive committee was enlarged and called



ed the Provisional Revolutionary Committee. It was to preserve the city's order and safety and to prepare the new elections to the soviet. On March 2nd Lenin and Trotsky denounced Kronstadt as a mutiny against the Communists,

charging the sailors of being "tools of former Tsarist generals who together with SR traitors staged a counter revolutionary conspiracy". This was supposed to be headed by General Kozlovsky. There was a former general, Kozlovsky, in Kronstadt - Trotsky had sent him there. Neither was Kronstadt controlled by SR's. (Social Revolutionaries)

Meanwhile in Petrograd, those suspected of sympathy with Kronstadt were arrested. Petrograd sailors and many army regiments thought "politically untrustworthy" were sent far away. Relatives of Kronstadt sailors living in Petrograd were taken hostage.

The Provisional Revolutionary Committee declared in number 1 of the daily "Izvestia", that it was "most concerned that no blood be shed". The Revolutionary Committee consisted mostly of revolutionary workers. Izvestia stated: "These are OUR generals, Messrs Trotsky and Zinoviev (head of Petrograd Defence Committee), while the Brussilovs, Kamenevs, Tukhachevskys, and other celebrities of the Tsarist regime are on YOUR side". The Revolutionary Committee adhered to "equal rights for all, privileges to none". Rations were equalised and sailors, who before received more, voted to accept no more than the average worker. Few Communists were arrested, despite the kidnap of sailors' families. Izvestia contained communications from Communists condemning the government's attitude and endorsing the Revolutionary Committee. Many Communists publicly announced their withdrawal from the party in protest.

Against Bolshevik allegations "Izvestia" wrote: "... We can reply only this - all

power to the soviets! Keep your hands off, hands red with the blood of the martyrs of liberty. Having gained power (the Communist Party) is now fearful only of losing it...Here in Kronstadt has been laid the cornerstone of the 3rd Revolution to break the last chains of the worker and open the new broad road to socialist creativeness... leaving behind the constituent assembly with its bourgeois regime, and Communist Party dictatorship with its Cheka and state capitalism."

Kronstadt never took the offensive, aiming to convince workers in Petrograd and the rest of Russia to stand with them. There was a refusal to believe the government would attack so the ice was not broken and fortified barrages were not set up along the probable line of attack.

On March 4th the Petrograd soviet met. On the basis of the March 1st resolution and Kalinin's (chair of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee) hysterical denunciation, Kronstadt was found guilty of a counter revolutionary uprising and immediate surrender was demanded. Next morning Trotsky issued an ultimatum: "Only those surrendering unconditionally may count on the mercy of the Soviet Republic...This warning is final." A group of anarchists in Petrograd urged the Committee of Defence to resolve the crisis through negotiation but was ignored.

On March 7th the 1st shot was fired against Kronstadt. Artillery fire was followed by an attempted storming. But vicious snow and widespread desertion forced the government to retreat. On the 16th they made a concentrated attack from the north, south and east, with re-organised forces. "Sympathetic" troops had been removed and punished

while assault troops went to battle with machine guns behind them. By the next day a number of forts were taken. Street-fighting continued and each house was defended like a fortress, but the rebels were overwhelmed and surrendered. Thousands fled to Finland. On March 18th, whilst the Kronstadt rebels were being executed by the Cheka, the Bolshevik government and the Russian Communist Party celebrated the anniversary of the Paris Commune of 1871.

WHITE PLOT?

Bolshevik arguments insist it was necessary to crush the uprising to stop the counter revolution gaining a foothold. "Proof" usually put forward that it was a White plot is the French paper "Le Monde" reporting the uprising before it took place. Such things happened many times before and after Kronstadt. This particular story probably related to the 2nd Communist Conference of the Baltic fleet voting for a resolution criticising its political leadership. Trotsky dropped charges of a White plot in 1938.

But could it have unwittingly let in counter revolution? The truth is, although a threat remained the civil war had all but finished. In fact half the Red Army had already been disbanded. On examining the Kronstadt programme, we see that it never called for a constituent assembly or free trade or for legalising bourgeois parties. We are told the social composition of Kronstadt had changed and they were no longer the workers Lenin called "the flower of the revolution" in 1917. However, even in 1917 the sailors derived from the peasantry. It is often such "transitory" classes that are most revolutionary, as borne out by the Kronstadt's strong

argument for re-introduction of workers' democracy.

Why was Kronstadt attacked without any negotiation? The answer lies in Lenin's frank statement that: "The sailors did not want the counter-

revolutionaries but they did not want us either". Captured rebels were shot without trial so the Bolsheviks did not have to justify their actions publicly. They invented the White plot story because party rule was threatened.



Kronstadt Sailors Demonstrate

The idea of a centralised vanguard party leads inevitably to substitution - the party is substituted for the class, the central committee for the party, and the leader for the central committee. Delegates end up taking orders from the central committee, not from workers' assemblies. Substitution is summed up by a confused and contradictory Trotsky: "It has been said...we have substituted dictatorship of the party for dictatorship of the soviets. However, we can claim...dictatorship of the soviets was only made possible by dictatorship of the party...there has been no substitution at all since the Communists express the fundamental interests of the working class... (and in a revolutionary period) become the true representatives of the working class as a whole."

THREATENED

Soon after Kronstadt Lenin introduced the New Economic Policy asserting "we must satisfy the middle peasantry economically and go over to free exchange". Why crush Kronstadt and then bring in what they were accused of demanding? Kronstadt threatened party rule, capitalistic relations didn't; economic concessions were made to the petty-bourgeoisie, not political ones to the proletariat.

Anarchists may not understand the adverse conditions in which the Russian Revolution tried to survive. But it's essential to realise the Bolshevik model of organisation is most open to pressure of this sort, leading ultimately to party rule. Any organisation can put its politics to the working class but cannot threaten the class' independence. Pluralism of currents within the revolutionary movement must be guaranteed at all times.

FROM LENINISM TO STALINISM

In 1938 Nikolai Bukharin, a leader of the October Revolution, was executed by Stalin. He and his supporters had been ousted from power in 1929 as Stalin secured his autocratic grip on the Communist Party and the State.

How did this occur? Leninists and trotskysts usually say "objective circumstances" defeated the revolution leading to "degeneration". Russia was backward, isolated and devastated by civil war. So "fate" (a strange word for Marxists to use!) determined the revolution's course. This misses the point completely. There could have been many outcomes - a restoration of Tsarist rule; constitutional democracy; but the specific form it took was stalinism. To understand why we must look beyond the usual answers to Bolshevik ideology (leninism), particularly at the relationship of the party to the proletariat.

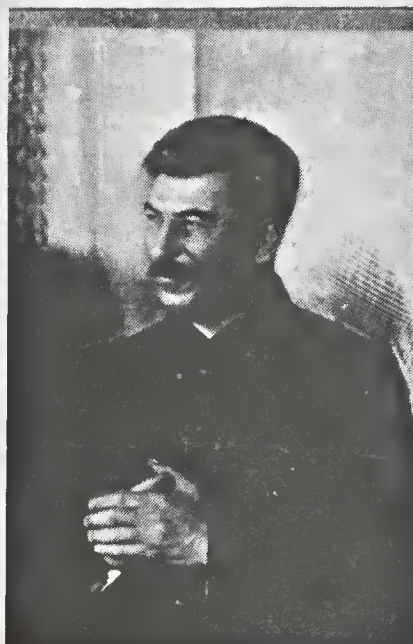
THE VANGUARD

Leninist basics were formulated in 1901-3. In "What Is To Be Done" Lenin expounded on the party's role as the vanguard. His idea was of a group of professional revolutionaries, strictly defined membership, rigid discipline,

absolute centralised control and a clear divide between party and working class. He always took care to back himself up by quoting from Marx, Engels and Kautsky (considered the leading marxist theoretician of the time) endeavouring to present his acts and theories as the only true interpretation of Marx. The vanguard idea wasn't peculiar to Lenin - it figures in the "Communist Manifesto". That workers couldn't evolve revolutionary socialist consciousness without a marxist party was a view shared by most leading marxists. It was stressed to highlight their differences with syndicalism which was gaining greater influence in the working class.

Lenin's innovation is in 2 related ideas. Firstly, every social movement has a definite class character. If workers can only reach a "trade union consciousness" unaided and there are only 2 forms of ideology - bourgeois and socialist - a workers' movement

is bourgeois until subordinated to the vanguard party. Secondly, it follows that a working class movement is not defined by being a movement of workers but by possessing the correct ideology - leninism. The party's class composition has no significance in



determining its class character. This is why a working class revolutionary organisation, like an anarcho-syndicalist union, is described as "petty-bourgeois" while a revolutionary party, with no

support in the working class, made up entirely of intellectuals and middle class students, can be the sole embodiment of proletarian consciousness.

POLITICAL LINE

Lenin also believed all theoretical questions were mere instruments to achieve the party's aims. Art, literature, laws, institutions and democratic values could all be used or discarded as need dictated. This justifies the "bending of the stick" (adoption at appropriate times of anarchist slogans or the Social Revolutionaries' policy towards the peasants). As there could be only 1 correct path factionalism in the party was a serious weakness. The political line is determined by those possessing the most understanding. While he lived this was Lenin himself. Later Stalin laid claim to be the true voice of leninism.

He did this by ensuring a majority for his line by controlling the party bureaucracy. Lenin Himself opened the way to this bureaucratisation at the Communist Party's 7th Congress in 1918. Stalin used its rapid growth, due to centralisation of state func-

tions and then to its own internal dynamic. Stalin always outflanked opposition, playing one group off against another, letting them argue while acting the moderate between factions. All factions appealed to Lenin's pronouncements but Lenin himself had banned factions at the 10th congress in 1921. Only the party could decide, and Stalin, through the bureaucracy, controlled it.

Leninists' "explanations" don't stand up. A backward country? - Russia was the 4th industrial power. Anyway the peasantry proved how revolutionary they could be. Isolation? - Russia covers a third of the world's land surface. It had the resources, industrial and agricultural, to survive. Civil war? - this helped the Bolsheviks. Revolutionaries were often forced to support the Reds against the Whites. Also the Bolsheviks' own actions contributed to the civil war.

There is nothing in stalinism's worst excesses that isn't justified by leninist principles. The only difference between the "Lenin" and "Stalin" eras is that Stalin

Continued Over

The Revolution That Never Was

The shock waves of 1917 went far beyond Tsarist Russia. All over Europe war-weary and increasingly restless workers were inspired by the news of the Tsar's overthrow and later by the Bolsheviks seizure of power. These events profoundly affected the British labour movement with a significant shift resulting in dire consequences for the working class.

From pre-war anti-electoralism, direct action and rejection of political parties by 1923 the British revolutionary movement was dominated by a unified centralised and highly-disciplined Communist Party under Moscow's control. This was no natural development but an artificial one requiring many British revolutionaries to abandon their ideas and experiences

* Ireland was on the verge of Civil War. Home Rule had been blocked by the Lords and army officers were refusing to act against Orangemen openly preparing to fight.

* The women's suffrage campaign, although middle class-dominated and not posing a fundamental threat to the state, caused important divisions in the ruling class.

re-affirmed the bankruptcy of centralised leadership and stood by the concept of rank and file control.

Then came news of October. Reports were confused but the impression in Britain was that the soviets had ended the period of dual power. The Bolsheviks were most identified with soviets and considered semi-syndicalist. The shop stewards movement saw their ideas as similar to their own, failing to see the difference between Bolsheviks and soviets. They sidetracked attempts to set up breakaway industrial unions mistaking workers' councils as a development of their pre-war syndicalism. This proved costly. The high esteem enjoyed by the Bolsheviks enabled the

(WSF) and shop stewards movement delegates. The aim was to set up a centralised international party with "national sections modelled on the Communist Party of Soviet Russia".

Commissions headed by Bolshevik experts examined each country's situation - the "British Question" was rated so highly Lenin himself took responsibility. He had little knowledge of the British situation or the make up of British groups. Even on basic facts he was shaky - 2 years later he still didn't know how many British miners there were! British revolutionaries were condemned in Russian terms, some as "Mensheviks", others as "ultra-leftists" as Lenin argued for a centralised Communist Party which would take part in elections and even affiliate to the Labour Party.

This totally opposed the experiences of many British delegates. Lenin backed up his arguments by publishing "Left Wing Communism: an Infantile Disorder" where he attacked Sylvia Pankhurst and others for opposing him. Jack Tanner, a leading shop steward, argued against Lenin, and political parties, saying the Bolsheviks dismissed the struggles and experiences of other movements out of hand and that they "have come not to learn, only to teach". Tanner and others were beaten by the Bolsheviks' prestige and many delegates returned seemingly brainwashed.

Thus negotiations to form a communist party were shaped by the 3rd International. A network of couriers and instructors carried orders from Moscow. Financial assistance was given to approved groups and individuals to smooth any doubts; thousands of pounds were given to certain papers. This should not be underestimated - it was on a scale hitherto unknown in Britain. Negotiations dragged on as previously hostile groups had to find a way of working together. Undoubtedly the main sticking points were parlia-

Bolshevik prestige ensured it would be dominant on the left of the Labour Party.

DAMAGE

The Bolshevik idea of the party - a centralised elite, seeking to establish itself as the vanguard in every aspect of working class life to launch an onslaught under its own leadership, aimed at conquering political power - was nowhere to be found in pre-1919 Britain. The most militant of the working class completely rejected party and political leadership looking towards revolutionary unionism to achieve its aims. The CPGB caused irreparable damage to the working class for the next 20 years. Through the twists and turns of the periods of Social Fascism, United Front and Popular Front it slavishly obeyed, financially and ideologically dependent on Moscow.

It existed due to a fundamental misunderstanding of the situation in Britain. The Bolsheviks having successfully seized power believed their methods and theories were the only valid and correct ones. Revolution in Britain lay not in armed insurrection or a workers' coup but in a more subtle and far-reaching challenge to state power that could have been based on union organisation. Syndicalism was still strong and concerted nationwide action through a general strike was the best way forward.

Wartime collectivisation largely put the government in control of industry. The line between industrial and political power was obscured. The British labour movement could have challenged state power through direct industrial action. The government and reformist union leaders both realised this, knowing the army could not be trusted and that a large-scale strike by the Triple Alliance would take Britain towards revolution. Their actions, coupled with the obsession of forming a Communist Party meant this never happened. Militancy



and submit to the will of Lenin and the Bolsheviks. The years before 1914 saw unprecedented industrial unrest in the Syndicalist Revolt. British Syndicalism, developing from native anti-parliamentary socialist traditions, was becoming the dominant revolutionary current. When war was declared the state faced a 3-pronged threat:

* a prospective syndicalist-inspired general strike by the militant "Triple Alliance" of miners, railworkers & transport workers.

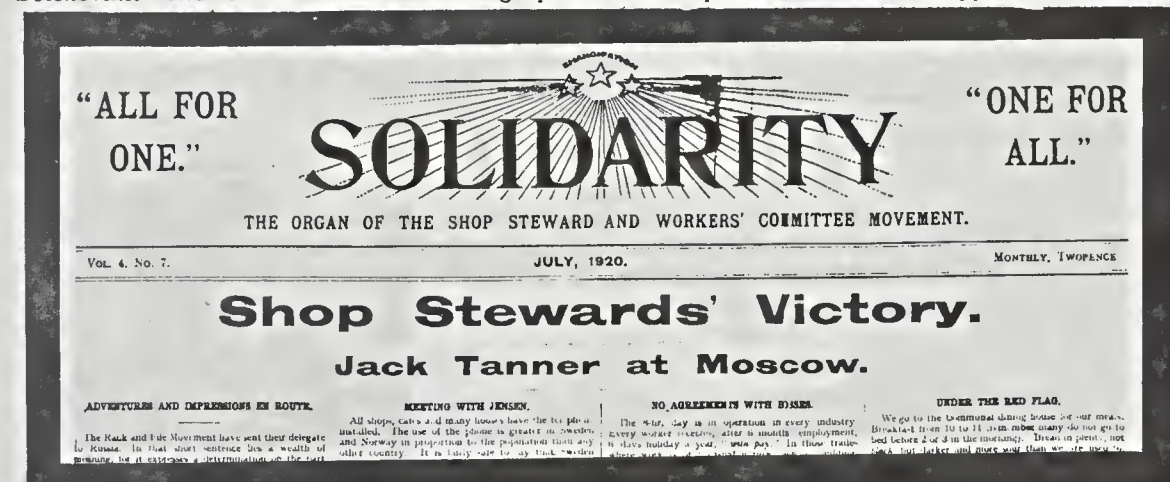
World War One effectively saved the ruling class. These issues weren't resolved but diffused and dealt with separately. The war began with industrial calm but this ended in 1915 when 200,000 South Wales miners and the Clyde engineers struck. The latter signalled the beginning of the Clyde Workers' Committee, the catalyst for the war-time shop stewards movement. The shop stewards, under syndicalist influence, were the focus of rank and file resistance. Trade union leaders co-operated with the government to dampen working class discontent. Many disputes involved higher paid workers and were sectional but the shop stewards, coming from the revolutionary left, tried to widen the issues and raise class antagonisms.

By 1917 the discontent was increasingly volatile. News of the Tsar's overthrow and soviets brought an immediate response. If Tsarist Russia, long considered the bastion of reaction, could be overthrown anything was possible. There were strikes in May 1917 as mounting casualties, food shortage, rising prices, and low wages, combined with excitement over Russia put Britain in a state of incipient revolt. Soviets caught British revolutionaries' imagination. August 1917 saw a shop stewards' conference in Manchester declaring the most important features of the revolution were "mass uprisings and the formation of soviets". At the same time they

artificial creation of a Communist Party with no roots in British working class tradition, culture or practice. It took over two years, in which Britain went from possible revolution to working class defeat.

ARTIFICIAL

The Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) was created by the Third International, itself artificially created and dominated by the Bolsheviks. The 3rd Interna-



Stalinism Continued

extended Lenin's dictatorial rule to the whole of Soviet society, not due to his personality, but to the natural development of leninism. Whoever had succeeded Lenin - Trotsky, Kamenev, Zinoviev, Bukharin - to be consistent with leninism they would have acted much the same. Stalin later used Trotsky's own policy concerning forced collectivisation of agriculture.

Today all leninist parties including those who thunder most against stalinism have the same internal dynamic the Bolsheviks had 70 years ago, one reason for the many splits. There can only be 1 true vanguard party and within it there can be no factions. All outside the party are counter revolutionary. If ever they reach a position of power the terror Russia suffered would be repeated.

tional first met in January 1919. "Delegates" were mainly Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) members and a few communists who happened to be there at the time. Foreign parties were "affiliated" by so-called delegates who had little contact with them. At the second congress among British representatives were the BSP (British Socialist Party), SLP (Socialist Labour Party), Sylvia Pankhurst's Workers Socialist Federation

mentary action and Labour Party affiliation. Also, the BSP's presence insulted many, identified as they were with opportunism and deceit.

When the CPGB eventually formed it had 3-5,000 members about the same size as the pre-war BSP. It was claimed as many as 20,000 people were represented at the negotiations so a considerable number of groups stayed outside. But financial backing and

subsidised as economic slump followed defeat. One last upsurge in the 1926 General Strike was sabotaged as the CPGB supported the TUC General Council.

This damage is still with us and reformism still dominates the labour movement. Many on the left still cling to the notion that the Bolshevik action applies to all countries for ever. It's time we rediscovered our heritage.

Letters

Dear comrades,

IT WAS THE militant workers that set-up the unions and when the DAM puts forward the idea of leaving the present unions and setting up of an alternative anarcho-syndicalist union (ASU), what you are advocating is the surrender of the trade union movement to the class collaborators who have gained control of many unions.

It is a fact that most workers in the unions have only a limited trade union consciousness and are apathetic when it comes to struggle against the capitalist establishment. So if all the trade union militants joined the ASU it would leave the vast majority of union members under the influence of the class traitors. It could be argued that the militant unionists would take the majority of union members with them into the ASU. This argument fails to take into account the historical apathy of the vast majority of union members to political actions. The ASU could only strengthen the position of the class traitors by removing the militants who are fighting to regain the unions. In turn the ASU would remove the influence of the militant and class conscious workers by marginalising them, making it easier for the capitalist and class collaborator to victimise and harass them.

The policy of ASU is counter-productive and negative. It would be much more advantageous for the mass of workers if they had a rank and file organisation co-ordinating all militants and class-conscious workers in the fight to rid the unions of class collaborators, traitors and career opportunists enabling the workers to change the whole structure of their unions until they are a true reflection of workers organisation envisaged by the founding militants. Unity is strength is more than a mere slogan, it is an unarguable fact and ASU does not build unity but would cause untold harm to the working-class movement. The DAM must work where most of the militant class conscious workers are and like it or not that is within the present trade unions.

Yours fraternally,

LG.

Patriarchy

Comrades,

ALL THE LETTERS in issue 42 re: "Forgotten Women" miss the essential contribution of F Engels on the subject (The Orgins of the Family Private Property and the state).

Engels points out that it is the development of private property (not of "capitalism" which didn't develop until much later) which marks the advance of patriarchy. Both patriarchy, the oppression of women and the various forms of private ownership of wealth which followed ran in tow

ever since. The primitive communist societies which essentially had no private property were basically matriarchal societies.

Private property gave birth to patriarchy which in turn mutually gave birth to capitalism. Engels calls the advance of private property "the world defeat of women", indeed women themselves become features of private property, owned and controlled in much the fashion of other "objects". Much of the emphasised resistance among Afghan tribesman is in the defence of their "right" to buy and sell and put a deposit (the veil price) on women and girls. Less obvious but nonetheless real "ownership" patterns over women exist all around us in Britain.

In so far as any patriarchy thus confirms potential privilege on all males in that society and a higher social position of men over women then all men do benefit or have benefits from the oppression of women and their subservient position. However, this is not to say all men individually or consciously repress all women; or that the rape of a women is the responsibility of all men, except in the most convoluted abstract way.

The subsequent abolition of private property (and capitalism is the most dominant form) will end the basis on which patriarchy is built and upon which women's oppression is based. This of itself will not overnight change the sexist conditioning of centuries, but once a social/economic base which nurtures sexism is gone, the road is that much easier.

The fight is against attitudes and against the system which gives them life. Some men, who proudly or ignorantly perpetuate sexism are the enemy and must be confronted, but the struggle against capitalism as a feature of the process to an end to all private property and therefore patriarchy must surely be the central target of struggle.

Revolutionary greetings,

DD.

Public Meeting

THE FIRST MAYDAY



One Hundred Years -
The Haymarket Martyrs

Anarcho-syndicalism -
What it is and what it
means today.

Time: 7.30 pm,
Thurs. 12th Nov.
Venue: Red Rose Club,
Seven Sisters Rd.,
Finsbury Park,
North London.
(Finsbury Park Tube)

Organised by Central
and North London DAM.

CONTRACEPTION

Dear Comrades,

AS A FAMILY planning nurse I would like to enlarge on the subject of depo provera in the article "Just Sign here" in issue no.42.

Under the heading "women's control" depo provera is said to be "deemed unfit for humans in Europe and the US". Whereas it is popular in Holland and widely used in England.

Depo is essentially the same drug as the mini-pill, except that it is given as one dose of 150 mg. into the muscle and is slowly released over 12-14 weeks.

It works by thickening the mucus at the neck of the womb (cervix). Therefore preventing semen getting through. It also often inhibits ovulation which means the women doesn't have periods or has erratic periods - the most common side effect. After long term use of depo, periods can take up to two years before they return, which means the women is infertile during this time. This can always be rectified by use of a drug called clomid.

The combined pill which

most women take, who take the pill, can also cause amenorrhoea (no periods), for up to one year after stopping it.

The combined pill also has more side effects than the progestogen-only pill or depo provera.

For many women depo provides a greater degree of independence, as it is the only method that goes entirely undetected, except by the women and the person who has administered it.

This is very important for women whose partners are unwilling for them to use any form of contraception and where the woman cannot afford to get pregnant.

For women whose lives are very stressful due to capitalism placing them at the bottom of the pile, depo provides an easier alternative than trying to remember the pill every day.

Right on assumptions about natural family planning, the cap, sheath etc. are easy to make, but for many working class women the day to day reality is very different.

Yours in solidarity,

JA.

DAM Aims and Principles

1. The Direct Action Movement is a working class organisation.
2. Our aim is the creation of a free and classless society.
3. We are fighting to abolish the state, capitalism and wage slavery in all their forms and replace them by self-managed production for need not profit.
4. In order to bring about the new social order, the workers must take over the means of production and distribution. We are the sworn enemies of those who would take over on behalf of the workers.
5. We believe that the only way for the working class to achieve this is by independent organisation in the workplace and community and federation with others in the same industry and locality, independent of and opposed to all political parties and trade union bureaucracies. All such workers' organisations must be controlled by the workers themselves and must unite rather than divide the workers' movement. Any

and all delegates of such workers' organisations must be subject to immediate recall by the workers.

6. We are opposed to all States and State institutions. The working class has no country. The class struggle is worldwide and recognises no artificial boundaries. The armies and police of all States do not exist to protect the workers of those States, they exist only as the repressive arm of the ruling class.

7. We oppose racism, sexism, militarism and all attitudes and institutions that stand in the way of equality and the right of all people everywhere to control their own lives and environment.

8. The Direct Action Movement is a federation of groups and individuals who believe in the principles of anarcho-syndicalism; a system where the workers alone control industry and the community without the dictates of politicians, bureaucrats, bosses and so-called experts.

The DAM was formed in 1979 from the SWF (Syndicalist Workers' Federation) and other groups and individuals believing in the principles of anarcho-syndicalism. It is the British section of the International Workers' Association. This was formed in 1922 and has national sections in more than dozen countries.

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Direct Action

POLAND

SURVIVAL UNDER MARTIAL LAW

Recently DA interviewed Arne Borg, national secretary of Solitaritet-Norge-Polen (SNP) - a Norwegian organisation giving practical support to Solidarnosc in Poland. Here, he talks about the situation Solidarnosc now finds itself in and of the views and experiences of the activists he met while staying in Poland earlier this year. First of all we asked him about SNP.

AB: We have around 200 local groups, mainly union branches - anything from nurses to steelworkers. Every year we hold a national trade union action. This year we produced a trade union magazine about Polish (anti-) union laws. In 4 months we got £3-4,000 to support our work allowing us to produce leaflets, posters, press releases and so on. Last year town hall and transport workers invited Polish workers to Norway, provided accommodation and helped them find work. This is important for Polish workers. It provides contact with and information on Western workers besides funds - a percentage of earnings goes to Solidarnosc.

Our principle is: "you are allowed no other opinion than solidarity". There has been no conflict since 1982 and the situation in France and Denmark where political wrangling led to 2 or 3 groups claiming to be the real support organisation, has been avoided.

DA: What is the standard of living like in Poland?

AB: The average wage is 18 to 30,000 Zlotys (£50-80). Rent is quite cheap but 10 year waiting lists aren't uncommon - the standard is comparable to British council houses. Although Poland is very agricultural bureaucratic distribution means much food is too old on reaching the shops. Meat is rationed, the amount depending on your work. In January the government will drop this but a price explosion will follow. Goods previously rationed are now so expensive many people can't afford them anyway.

DA: How does Solidarnosc survive under martial law?

AB: Since it was banned union laws have been changed 3 or 4 times. Membership of Solidarnosc is illegal. Up to 1984/85 members got long sentences of hard labour. Now there are heavy fines - for small offences like leafletting it is 20-30,000 Zlotys. If you are caught with leaflets on a bicycle or in a car, it is confiscated. Recently flats have been confiscated for possession of leaflets, underground papers or for holding illegal

meetings. At work 2 types of punishment are used - immediate sacking or lower paid work. A docker I met should have been earning 44,000 Zlotys but was sent to another dock on beginners' wages of 22,000 Zlotys. No old activists now have cars, some have lost flats, and all were arrested under martial law.

EXPERIENCE

To survive they hold any meetings of more than 15-20 people in churches. There are exhibitions on Polish history such as the 1956 strikes, the events of 1970-1 and the period of Solidarnosc's height. An underground university enables people to share organisational experience, so if anything happens to those who are most experienced there'll be others to carry on organising. Most activists aren't religious but where else can they meet and discuss freely?

DA: What strength does Solidarnosc now have and how does it organise?

AB: In 1981 there were 10 million members, now there are a under 1 million. Their stronghold is Gdansk docks. Of 8,000 dockers only 15% are in official state-sponsored unions. They are also strong



in the Silesia mines (southern Poland) and in some large steelworks. It is more difficult in smaller workplaces. Often the choice is to join a Communist union or the sack.

There are about 3,000 underground papers. In 1981 SNP sent 250 small printing machines and a fair number are still used. To possess proper white paper or a typewriter you need official authority. But people are more interest-

ed in news than printing quality. They are distributed by leaving them behind in trams, buses and railway stations, hand-delivery door to door, or through trusted people. This is dangerous as the police are always on the look out for it.

- its members should be children and housewives besides workers. In the docks clerks, drivers, dockers and canteen staff are in the same union. This, they see as how to make industrial action effective.

Connected to Solidarnosc



Solidarnosc marching in Gdansk.

Solidarnosc's internal organisation is such that each workplace sends a delegate to the equivalent of a trades council. Each local council sends a delegate to a regional council which then sends one, to the national council. Delegates are strictly mandated and are replaced if they don't say what the members who elected them have asked.

DA: What political outlook do the activists have? What role do they see for a union such as their own?

AB: They say "we have a parliament and 3 parties but no freedom" and ask why should the working class give power to parties when they can use it better themselves. Solidarnosc is a union but the activists don't see this as an end, only a beginning of a new society. They say a union should not only talk about wages, conditions and so on, but also about pollution and the environment. It should control everything in society

is Wolnosc Polska, a peace movement of mainly young members of the union. They don't talk only of disarmament but link it to the working class saying there will be no disarmament and peace without freedom of speech and free and independent trade unions.

DA: What are the main tendencies within Solidarnosc?

SYNDICALIST

AB: The main one is anti-party. Solidarnosc organises on the basis of class relations, not on what they think. Most activists want to extend the union's work to housing, living conditions, the family, technology and distribution and link these to free speech - in Poland today such issues won't be solved as no one can speak out. It's mainly the most syndicalist people that are left now. There are no other major tendencies in the organised working class.

DA: What of Lech Walesa?

AB: Today he's a symbol, a working class saint. The real work is done locally in small groups by people who trust each other. This is very active as militants try to survive and keep the organisation going. The old militants have fought the Communists since 1944. Through talking to them I feel there's little chance of a party calling itself socialist/communist getting support in eastern Eur-

ope as the working class has seen what a Communist state is. I can't say what Poland's or Solidarnosc's future is, but for us in Norway it's important to carry on the work as Solidarnosc is the only working class opposition.

MINERS' STRIKE

DA: What relations has Solidarnosc had with unions in western Europe?

AB: Support work in western Europe generally has dropped off. To stop social democratic union leaders in western Europe recognising the official unions they joined IFTU (International Federation of Trade Unions). But they don't trust such politicians and union bosses and are wary of their open door policies towards the Soviet bloc.

Solidarnosc activists had mixed feelings on the British miners' strike. Scargill went to Moscow and was treated as a hero in the Polish Communist Party newspaper. There was an impression that the strike was initiated by the Communist Party for that was how it was presented in Poland. There was a split as to what was going on in Britain. They knew the Polish government sent cheap coal to Britain attacked them for it. In the end they supported the miners on strike but didn't like the NUM leadership who they saw as CP-types who they wouldn't trust.

Solidarnosc would like to have more contact with rank and file trade unionists in western Europe. Finally I'd like to extend greetings to all those in Britain who do the same work as ourselves.