

# Red Action

BEHIND ALL THE LIES AND BULLSHIT

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## LABOUR OR TORY

# SAME OLD STORY



KINNOCK TO THE LEFT ? THATCHER TO THE RIGHT ? BUT HOW MUCH DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEM REALLY ?

One of the more remarkable features of the British electoral system, is the way in which all of the major parties always go to such lengths to try and convince everyone how different the policies of their own parties are from all the rest, and how much better off everyone will be if it is they who are elected. Whether it is the Parliamentary candidate making speeches or being interviewed on T.V., or the party worker talking to you on your doorstep the message is invariably the same. Peace, happiness and prosperity if we win, doom gloom and disaster if we don't.

You could be forgiven for thinking that if it were really true that such drastically different consequences could result according to who wins an election, then there must be some pretty drastic differences between the policies of those contesting it. You could be forgiven for thinking it but you would be wrong. In fact the reverse is true, as a look at the record of all of them shows. It proves quite clearly that when it comes down to the really significant issues, the policies of all of the major parties, far from being opposed to each other are basically the same.

### SUPPORT

This was seen quite clearly for instance during the Falklands War, when M.P.s from all sides of the house queued up to give their support for Thatcher's war mongering. As Alliance leader David Steel said, in a quote that could just have easily applied to the vast majority of Labour M.P.s "The Alliance Party throughout the Falklands war gave Mrs Thatcher absolutely unstinting support"

It was exactly the same in the case of the murderous U.S. air raid on Libya. Again there was overwhelming all party support for Thatcher's allowing it to take off from this country. We see it every day in the case of the war in Ireland, where with the exception of a few dissenting voices, the attitude of the Labour and Alliance Parties is every bit as reactionary as the Tories. Think back to the miner's and printer's strikes. Remember the way in which nearly all the leading figures in the Labour Party joined the Tories in condemning the violence of pickets, with hardly a word about the violence of the police rampaging through picket lines and mining communities.

When we remember events such as these, and the way in which all of the "opposing" parties invariably end up lining up together over them. It becomes pretty clear that the supposed political differences which exist between them, are in reality little more than slight differences between parties who have much more in common than

they do in opposition. It also becomes clear that whichever particular one of them may happen to land up with a majority on June 12th, it is going to make little real difference to the lives of the vast majority of people in this country, and to the sort of society they live in.

### SAME POSITION

The four million or so unemployed will still be in exactly the same position. Does anyone really expect that any of the major parties would take the sort of action necessary to seriously tackle their situation, such as confiscating all of the factories and industrial plant which rich owners allow to stand idle, and using them to give work to the unemployed creating goods for the benefit of society. Or even failing this, would any one of them raise benefits to a level which would allow those for whom society can find no useful task to at least enjoy a standard of living which allows them to retain some dignity ? What do you think ?

And what about the homeless and people living in slum dwellings. Which one of the major parties can you see taking over the tens of thousands of homes owned by property speculators who allow them to stand permanently empty ? And the sick. Will a change of government cause the queues for treatment on the National Health

Service to shrink ?

Whichever political party may be in power in Parliament, the fundamental problem for working class people remains the same. They are still nothing more than the disposable pawns in an economic system which has as its aim, not the benefit and advancement of all society, but the wealth and privilege of the few. As long as that system remains in operation, working class people will always be the ones who are abused and shat on. The only thing that will fundamentally change things, is when the whole system is totally eradicated and replaced with a better one, and that is something that will never be achieved through the Parliamentary system. The Parliamentary parties argue not over whether or not to end the capitalist system, but merely over what is the best way to manage it. That is why whenever any crucial issue arises which may threaten the security of the system, we see them all coming down alongside each other in defence of it.

### REAL CHANGE

Real change for the working class, will only come when they finally realise how they are abused and exploited by the capitalist system, and get up and sweep the whole lot of it, including the Houses of Parliament, away into the dustbin where it belongs.

## VOTE RED FRONT

Revolutionary socialist groups such as Red Action, are fully committed to the belief that real socialism will never be established through the Parliamentary system, but only through the direct action of the working class. However this does not mean that we just ignore General Elections. It would be foolish to ignore the fact that at election times, far more people than usual take an interests in political affairs, and miss the opportunity of presenting our arguments to a vastly increased audience.

And so we support intervening in elections and taking a position in them. Traditionally this has usually led to a debate about whether or not it is correct to call for a vote for the Labour Party. Those in favour of this usually argue that bad as Labour may be, there is no other alternative. On this occasion, in a few constituencies at least there is.

### RED FRONT

The Red Front is a movement which has been launched by a far left group the Revolutionary Communist Party. It is standing a number of candidates in the election on a militant socialist platform, which calls for amongst other things, a full living wage for unemployed people, the defence of trade union rights, an end to anti union laws and government interference in union affairs. Equal rights for all, opposition to all forms of racial and sexual discrimination and discrimination against homosexuals. Opposition to militarism. An end to this countries involvement in U.S. war mongering. For British withdrawal from Ireland.

Red Action has no hesitation in giving it's full support to the Red Front, and calling upon all of it's members and supporters to do likewise. We have always supported the idea of trying to build the greatest possible unity between all far left groups, and will always support all initiatives which aim at this. As yet, the Red Front being a very new and embryonic movement is obviously limited in what it can hope to achieve. It has only 14 candidates in this election. However we believe that such an initiative, if it is given the sort of support it deserves, has the potential to grow into something which could in the not to distant future start to achieve a decent impact.

Obviously the Red Front cannot at this stage seriously expect any of it's candidates to win. But it does at least offer the opportunity for all those who are sick of the way the Tories have been trampling all over the working class, and sick of the cowardly capitulations of the Labour Party in the face it, to stand up and show what they think.

VOTE TO SUPPORT A WORKING CLASS FIGHTBACK VOTE RED FRONT

For a full list of Red Front candidates see inside.

**INSIDE WHY LABOUR FAIL WHAT CHANCE SOCIALISM**

# WHY LABOUR FAIL

The Labour Party proclaims itself to be, and is generally seen by most people as a party committed to socialism. Its constitution abounds with declarations of socialist intent, the most well known probably being the famous clause four, which promises to "secure for the producers by hand and brain the full fruits of their industry, and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible, upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry or service."

Sound stuff, and of course that isn't all. In speeches at rallies and conferences, prominent Labour figures are often heard thundering out such militant declarations as promises to achieve "a fundamental redistribution of wealth" (Tony Benn) or to "squeeze the rich until the pips squeak" (Denis Healey)

## EVIDENCE

But why is it then, that we have yet to see any evidence of any of this coming to pass? Why is it that after seven Labour governments being elected - four of them in the last twenty five years, we are still waiting for some sign of "the common ownership of the means of production" or "a fundamental redistribution of wealth" to say

nothing of the sound of the pips of the rich squeaking? Why is it that the Labour Party which today rails on the Tories over their cuts in the Health Service, themselves start off those cuts when they were last in power? Why did the Labour Party which today points to the governments dreadful record on unemployment, itself preside over a rise in unemployment of nearly 300% during its own last term of office? Why is it that the promises of the Labour Party when they are in opposition, so often turn to dust when they are in government?

The single most effective reason for the re-occurring failures of the Labour Party, lays in their commitment to working within the framework

of the capitalist system, in order to achieve socialism. They believe that it can be done by merely gaining a majority in Parliament, and using it to pass a series of laws and legislation, which will gradually dismantle the capitalist system, and leave a socialist one in its place. Basically what they are saying is that it is possible to make the capitalist system work towards its own abolition.

However one very important factor which this cosy little scheme overlooks is the capitalist class itself, that group of immensely powerful and wealthy people who stand to lose most from it. All historical experience shows that far from cheerfully handing over their power and control, just because a Parliamentary majority instructs them to do so, this class will in fact fight tooth and nail, using any method at its disposal, in order to hang on to their power and sabotage the plans of those trying to take it off them.

## SABOTAGE

This sabotage may take various forms. On one hand you have tactics such as the "investment strike" (threats to withdraw investment from the economy) with which several multi-national companies threatened the last Labour administration, unless they dropped certain measures they had proposed implementing. In the same way, the International Monetary Fund, forced that same government to start off cuts in the Health Service and other areas of public spending, as a condition of granting them a huge loan which they desperately needed to smooth over an economic crisis.

These examples show us quite clearly the fundamental weakness of the Labour Party's position. Because they are committed to working towards socialism gradually within the framework of the

capitalist system, they also have to keep that system healthy and ticking over in the meantime. But in order to do this, they find that so often they have to enlist the co-operation of the capitalist class, who will only give it under their own terms. They are forced to end up acting like capitalists themselves, and because the capitalist system is such an inherently unstable system, inevitably and regularly throwing up economic and social crises, they find themselves having to do this time and time, again. Eventually the socialist aims become lost in the constant battle to sort out the problems of capitalism.

## LEFT WINGERS ?

Labour left wingers tell us that it only happens this way because the Parliamentary Labour Party is dominated by right wingers. If you had a left wing Labour government they argue, they would act differently, refusing to be blackmailed by threatened investment strikes and the like. But would it work out this way? We should remember that figures such as Harold Wilson, Michael Foot and dozens of other prominent figures in recent Labour governments were all once re-knowned left wingers. This didn't stop them carrying out many blatantly anti-working class measures when they were in power. As we have seen, they are forced to do so by the conditions which they impose upon themselves, by their commitment to working within the capitalist system instead of challenging it head on. The Labour left, for all of their socialist rhetoric, are still also committed to working within that system, and there is absolutely no reason for supposing that if they were in the position of power, they would not also find themselves acting in exactly the same way.

And even in the unlikely event that you did have a



Eric Heffer and Dennis Skinner. Two of the champions of the Labour left. But will the path they tread ever lead us to socialism?

Labour government which was willing to resist the pressures imposed on it by the capitalist class, we should not run away with the idea that economic sabotage is the only option open to them. Fifteen years ago in Chile, a left wing government committed to a radical socialist programme was elected to power. When they tried to put the policies upon which they had been elected into practice, the army generals, backed up by the capitalist class staged a coup which toppled the government, murdered tens of thousands of socialists and progressives, and established a right wing military dictatorship. If this all seems somehow far away and irrelevant to the situation here, we should remember that it has been widely confirmed that during the militant industrial upheavals of the early 70s, on several occasions, meetings were held between various representatives of the establishment, including senior members of the armed forces in order to discuss the possible need for some sort of

authoritarian regime in this country.

What sort of defence could even a left wing Labour government offer against such a threat. Committed as they are to working within the rules and limits of the capitalist system, they would never be willing to take the only step which would offer an effective defence. The organising, and arming of the working class, just like the government of Salvador Allende in Chile, which refused to take this step, and so faced the inevitable consequences, so a Labour government would be forced to either back down or go under

## ONLY FORCE

The Labour Party will never be the instrument of achieving socialism. In fact if you look at the sort of things which some of them are saying now, they seem to be almost admitting this themselves. Socialism can never be built by any force other than the working class, armed with the ideas of revolutionary socialism.

# THE IRISH TEST

In no other area of politics, is the basic similarity between the major political parties brought out as clearly as it is in the case of Ireland. It is here that the claims of the Labour Party to be the party of progressiveness, the party which cares for the oppressed and under-privileged, are clearly shown up for the nonsense which they are.

## INJUSTICE

Throughout the first fifty years of existence of the Northern Irish state as part of Britain, several Labour administrations presided over it, without any attempt to do anything about the blatant injustices and discrimination that existed within it. Discrimination against Catholics in housing, employment and education, rigging of election boundaries to ensure permanent Loyalist majorities on Councils, even in areas of majority Nationalist population, all of these features were part and parcel of the Northern Ireland state, without any attempt on the part of any Labour government to do anything about them. It was only in the sixties, when the Catholic people finally rose up in open rebellion against the unjust nature of the state that anybody on this side of the water began to take any notice at all.

However if anyone was expecting that this upsurge might at least push the Labour Party into some sort of action - albeit belatedly - on behalf of the oppressed community, they were to be sorely mistaken. All that has happened is that they have ably proved their capacity to be just as reactionary as the Tories. It was a Labour government which first sent the British troops in, a Labour government which introduced the blatantly unjust non-jury Diplock courts, a Labour government which withdrew political status for Republican prisoners, as well as being responsible for a host of other oppressive measures.

## SUPPORT FOR THE TORIES

Even the years in which the Labour Party has been in opposition, when traditionally it tends to recover a radical face, we have seen no such development as far as Ireland is concerned. Consistently and repeatedly, Labour politicians have supported the Tory's use of the most viscerously repressive tactics, from the use of plastic bullets, responsible for the death of over a dozen innocent civilians including children as young as eight, through the use of the supergrass system, right up to the summary execution on sight of I.R.A. volunteers such as the eight gunned down at Loughhall recently.

The fact that the political climate in Britain is at a low key in the present era, allows the Labour Party to quite easily pose themselves as a radical movement. The evidence of Ireland proves to us that when things hot up a bit, and the system starts to come under threat, then the Labour Party will give it's full support to those who use repression to defeat radical movements. It is a lesson which badly needs learning and remembering in this country.



In Ireland, Labour have always shown themselves just as willing as the Tories to use the forces of repression.

# WHAT CHANCE SOCIALISM

The ideas of revolutionary socialism are the only real hope for the building of a socialist society, but if we were to ask ourselves what influence these ideas hold over the working class today, and were honest with the answer, we would have to admit very little. The impact of the revolutionary left at this time upon the working class in general, is probably best summed up by recalling the bye-election just before the last general election, when a far left candidate polled less votes than the Monster Raving Looney Party.

## DEPRESSING PICTURE

A pretty depressing picture really, and one which makes some people who have a lot of sympathy for the ideas of revolutionary socialism, despair of the possibility of them ever coming to anything

"Your ideas sound ok, but they'll never come to anything" "People only care about themselves"

We've all heard these arguments and others like them dozens of times over. At the heart of them lays the belief that no matter how sound the ideas of revolutionary socialism may be, the general political apathy of most working class people means that there will never be any possibility of putting them into practice.

However what those people who argue this way are doing is assuming that just because we live in a period a relative political calm and tranquility today, where people aren't really too bothered about political ideas, then it will



Revolutionary upsurges have been occurring throughout the history of the capitalist system and will continue to do so for as long as it lasts.

always remain this way. But what a brief glance through just recent history shows us quite clearly, is that the political calmness of today, far from being the rule is very much the exception.

Ever since the emergence of modern industrial capitalism, some 200 years ago, all capitalist countries, including this one, have been racked by a succession of constantly re-occurring social and economic crises. During this century in the space of just over 20 years alone, this country saw involvement in two world wars, plus between them a social upsurge which resulted in a general strike, with troops on the street, and the

real possibility of a revolutionary situation developing.

Even more recently, other European countries no different in social structure to our own have seen similar upsurges. 20 years ago, France saw a massive upsurge of anti-government riots and strikes which didn't fall far short of a revolutionary crisis and in 1974 in Portugal, there was a revolutionary upsurge which successfully swept away the ruling regime (that is not to say there was a successful socialist revolution, there wasn't. But the situation certainly existed which made one possible.)

The history of the capitalist system shows us that rev-

olutionary upsurges such as these are part and parcel of that system. Things may calm down in between them, but they inevitably re-occur. We may even be witnessing the first tremors of the next one already in this country. Think back to the scenes witnessed during the miner's strike, the barricades in the streets, the massive battles with the police. Or the inner city riots of a couple of years back. Who would have believed just ten years ago that such scenes would be witnessed in this country.

It is when people find themselves in situations such as these, as more and more will be in future, that they

Continued opposite.

# LEFT BEHIND

The most obvious task facing the revolutionary left in this country today, is to begin to try and overcome the massive gap that exists between it and the mainstream of the working class. Why does this gap exist?

The estrangement began in the years after the Second World War. These were years of one of the most sustained periods of growth and stability in the history of the capitalist system. The working class had a share in this as well, in the form of slight but constantly rising living standards. Those growing up in this period had no reason to doubt that this would continue, and so the ideas of revolutionary socialism had no relevance at all to their lives.

Today of course, the capitalist system is far from booming, and poverty is ris-

ing. You would expect that in this situation, that the ideas of revolutionary socialism would become more relevant. But still the left remains largely outside of the mainstream class. Why is this

## LEGACY

Partly it is the legacy of the years of isolation. Because of the lack of working class interest and participation, the revolutionary left became the almost exclusive domain of academics and intellectuals. Unfortunately, this situation, once established has a tendency to perpetuate itself. If the membership of an organisation is

made up almost entirely of academics and intellectual, then it will develop a collective character and outlook which reflects that. This in its turn will make the organisation very amenable to others of that background and encourage more of them to join, but unfortunately will have the opposite effect on those of a different background.

It could be argued that if someone is committed to the ideas of revolutionary socialism, then the social/cultural background of others in an organisation should be irrelevant, and of course as it stands this is true. But this doesn't allow for the fact that the vast majority of people when they are first thinking about becoming involved with a left wing group are not committed revolutionary socialists. They are usual-

ly just forming their ideas and their commitment to them is very tentative. A cultural atmosphere within the organisation which is totally alien to them will do nothing to bolster this commitment, especially when you consider the unease which many working class people, would feel as a single lone figure, in a group dominated by academic, graduate and professional people.

There is of course absolutely nothing wrong in this sort of person being a revolutionary socialist. There is certainly something wrong with an organisation which is overwhelmingly composed of them at the expense of other groups.

And so there is a social/cultural problem but this is not insurmountable, and at various times, some left

groups have managed to overcome it and have managed to involve sometimes quite large numbers of working class people in their organisations, and it's activities. The trouble is very rarely have they been able to maintain these links. The main reason for this lays in the internal structures of these organisations, which usually sends working class people when they seem them, quickly scuttling for cover.

## DEMOCRACY ?

Just about every left group today, organises itself in a structure which they refer to as "democratic Centralism" In practice, this usually turns out to mean democratic with a very small d, and centralism with a very large C. In just about every case, you have a small group of intellectuals, who seem to wield absolute and unquestioned authority. The unprincipled wheeling, dealing and backstabbing which these people practice in their internal dealings within the organisation, and the arrogant contempt with which they seem to so often treat their members has to be seen to be believed.

If in addition to these factors we think about the antics of those left groups, who insist on the imminence of the revolution, exhort their members and supporters to commit every waking minute, and most of their hard earned cash to the cause, it is not difficult to understand why the left in this country is

seen as a comic-opera type movement by so many people.

And so for various historical, social and political reasons, there exists a great gap between the revolutionary left and the working class. This must raise serious doubts about it's ability to ever be able to build and maintain a strong influence within the working class, even in the event of a revolutionary upsurge within it. It was for this reason that Red Action was formed in 1982, by a number of working class people who had been members of left groups and had had first hand experience of the nature of them. We believe that a different form of organisation is necessary if we are ever to get revolutionary socialist ideas out into the working class where they belong.

## ORGANISATION

Such an organisation will need to be one that is overwhelmingly composed of working class people, so that it is able to understand and gauge the mood and consciousness of the class. It will need to truly democratic in practice and not just name. It will need to be these and many other things. We do not claim to be that organisation today, but we do believe that a group such as Red Action will have a role to play in it's building. In the meantime we will work with all of our energy and commitment to maintain a tradition of militant working class activity.

# YOU CAN'T KILL THE SPIRIT

One of the many myths which commonly abound in our society, is the idea that women are somehow naturally more conservative than men. How often during strikes do we see the media trying to drum up stories of angry women trying to drag their menfolk back to work, trying to make it appear as if women are incapable of themselves being militant. It is of course a nonsensical idea, and one that is effectively demolished in a recently released book called "You can't kill the spirit."

The book collects the stories of a dozen women who formed a support group in South Wales. What strikes the reader immediately is the unanimity of the attitudes and convictions held by the women in common. It is not a record by one or two particularly articulate or educated women, or by women who were politically conscious before the strike. In fact most would probably agree with the women who says

"I didn't know a thing about politics until this strike happened. I just didn't realise what it was all about"

## DESCRIPTION

It is rather, a description of how an entire community of women, were radicalised in identical ways by a struggle in which almost involuntarily they found themselves. The key to it was the ending of their isolation within their own families and homes.

"The frustration when your alone, just sitting in the house, not knowing what to do or where to start."

In forming the Abertillery Women's group, the women revealed a flair for co-operative organisation which they felt the men lacked.

"We all stood up in turn, volunteered to play different roles and picked officers for all sorts of duties on the spot by a show of hands. We didn't hang about like the men who need a committee for every damn thing imaginable, and all that red tape and rules and regulations."

Once formed, the group became much more than an organisation for practical self help.

"After joining the group, talking to other women, finding out much more information about what was going on, and being in such close contact with issues arising from the strike, I became a hundred percent certain that we were right. The group gave me a lot more confidence to express my feelings,

thought and ideas. My ideas became much clearer, and as a result I was more determined than ever that we should not give in."

The impact extended beyond the strike itself.

"The Women's Group unveiled my eyes to many more issues than the miner's dispute. It was like having lessons in life itself"

Their is a tremendous sense of suddenness of this transformation of the way in which the women viewed their own lives.

"Realising what we were fighting for made me a socialist without hesitation, with a consciousness for workers which I never had before. Actually being present on picket lines was a part of it. We started to go on rallies with the men. That's when it hit us women like a ton of bricks. The greatest realisation was that what we had entered was the class war."

## UNDERSTANDING

Through this participation, they gained an understanding of how their struggle was related to other forms of oppression and those who suffer it.

"It took those rallies to make me aware that lesbians and gay people are human beings who have been mistreated too. I go a shade of purple when I think of the awful names I've called them in the past. The support we had too from the black community was astounding, but then they've been oppressed for years. They reached out to us because they know exactly what it's like."

Another myth sacred in the bosses ideology, that during strikes women are a conservative force concerned mainly with dragging their men back to work is ripped apart.

"If my husband had gone back to work I know I would have left him. By hell's bells I couldn't have lived with a man who had given in to Thatcher's demands."

All of the women echo this and declare how

"With ever day that passed, I felt stronger and more defiant."

All of them also recall the bitterness of their disillusionment with the institutions of British society.

"Now I know how corrupt and immoral the system really is. I have totally completely and utterly lost all faith in British justice. It just doesn't exist."

## THE LAW

Some were arrested and found out the hard way what a sham the courts represented. The police were hated even more.

"When we were children, we were brought up to respect the old-time bobbies on the beat, but now I wouldn't piss on one if I saw one on fire."

The shock that each of the women felt at the behaviour of the police comes across clearly, but perhaps surprisingly, their greatest hatred is reserved for the media. All of them agreed that

"The worst dark clouds all the time was the awful propaganda which filled the television and papers. The announcers on telly were so biased I could have choked half of them. They've never put a foot inside the valleys or been on a picket line, so how could they be judge and jury."

As another one put it

"What upset me more than

anything was the press and television that year, listening to the way they lied about everything. It makes you wonder if they were bought."

Equally suprising is the fact that none of the women express any regrets about their involvement in the strike, despite the great hardships

"I've talked about my losses, but what I gained was much more important. Pride in myself, self confidence that I never knew I had, pride in the working class, real delight in the people that I'm a part of, my life, my world and my culture."

Three distinct elements shine through all of the women's stories. Their pride in themselves, in other women and in their class.

"We won the comradeship of the men. It took a while, but in the end they were forced to treat us as equals, and for the first time they had to admire us."

All of the women are convinced that the radicalisation is permanent

"We suddenly found out that there is life after marriage. We have taken a political step forward in a year that most women would take a lifetime to achieve, and we don't intend to go back into the background."

However the deepest and most solid commitment, is not simply to other women, but to their class.

"I'm glad I was brought up the way I was. My culture and class is something to be proud of. We have a terrific sense of comradeship. That's something that money can never buy. I know that I can hold my head up high now and always."

## EXPERIENCE

Socialist orthodoxy about the virtues of the working class has some real conviction in the voices of these women.

"Working class people have wonderful qualities. We're proud, sincere, sharing courageous. We will always be here we cannot be destroyed."

Talking about a bitter and hard struggle which might have been expected to rank alongside their worst experiences, the testimony of these women shows that instead it was an experience which gave value and direction to their entire lives. Liberal writers and journalists given to regretting the "foolishness" of the strike, and it's "demoralisation" of the working class, are shown up for the jokes that they are, by the spirit and conviction of these women. As one herself sums up

"Even though we are abused, there's nothing better in the world than being working class, and I'm damn proud to say that I am."



One of the most significant features of the miner's strike, was the emergence of the women's support groups.

You can't kill the spirit by Jill Miller. Published by the Women's Press.

**MARCH AND RALLY  
REMEMBER  
BOBBY SANDS MP  
LONDON  
SAT JUNE 27th  
ASSEMBLE 12:30 PM  
FINSBURY PARK  
SUPPORT  
RED ACTION**



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

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

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

The cost for this is £10 for one year.

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

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begin to question their traditional values and beliefs and look for new answers. It is in such a situation that the opportunity arises for the ideas of the revolutionary to cease to be little more than the faith of a few, and to start to take on real relevance to the lives of working class people. It will mean that the basis will exist for the left to begin to grow into a serious relevant political force. Whether or not the left will be capable of responding to the challenge remains to be seen.

# THE VOICE OF REASON

More than seven hundred print jobs were lost on Merseyside when management, part of Rupert Murdoch's News International Group, announced the loss of a major contract. The seven hundred, members of the print union S.O.G.A.T. feel particularly betrayed because during the year long Wapping dispute, they continued to print the News of the World, despite repeated calls from their union colleagues to black it. Likewise a hundred electricians jobs have been sacrificed to the god of profit by electricians union leader Eric Hammond, who's treachery assisted Murdoch during the dispute.

What these incidents demonstrate quite clearly, is the need for solidarity to stand for something more than the name of a trade union in Poland, and that while people like Murdoch and Hammond may share many of the characteristics common to canines, loyalty isn't one of them.

After five years experience, a fully trained staff nurse still receives £7,000 a year less than a police cadet in training school.

Labour M.P. Dennis Skinner complained bitterly to the speaker in the House of Commons that a sixty seven year old woman, Mrs. Eileen Mills of Southwark Pensioners Action Group, was brutally attacked by ushers whilst being evicted from the House's public gallery, following a protest about pensioners fuel charges. Tory M.P.s were less than sympathetic, one of them remarking that the organisation was akin to the "provisional wing of Help the Aged".

"There are not too many middle-class Americans who will die in Central America. Not too many died in Vietnam either. They were mostly from the poorer classes"

Charles Lietky, Vietnam war-hero.

Amid a new wave of repressive measures in South Africa, aimed at crushing all dissent, was one which prohibits "the wearing of in public, any badge, sticker or article of clothing showing support for those detained" The new legislation brought forth cries of condemnation from the liberal press world-wide.

Meanwhile, back in the "Mother Country" "Bastion of Democracy" Bob Geldof's former manager, Fachna O Cellaigh, was up before a London court charged with . . . wearing a badge. He was convicted under Prevention of Terrorism Act, for wearing a one inch badge with the words "Out of the ashes arose the provisionals" on his lapel and fined £75.

"I've seen gold on the streets of Dubai and no one stole it. I've seen flogging there too. The man doing it has the Koran under one arm. The guy being flogged collapsed and they still carried on. It is a most effective way to stop crime I've seen one policeman come into a room there and everyone froze with respect. We've got a lot to learn from them."

The words of Tory M.P. Peter Brunivels, one of the chief sponsors of attempts to bring back both capital and corporal punishment. Like so many of his colleagues a glutton for punishment. Other people's of course.

"I see Nicaragua not only as a country fighting a bully in the North. I see it even more as being in the front line of the trenches in a world wide conflict . . . in a war between civilisation and barbarism."

Author Grahame Greene.

The surest indication that the capitalist system is in a crisis, is when the capitalists, like thieves begin to fall out. Recently, prominent British and American economists and industrialists have started to blame Japan for the state of their economies. For their part, the Japanese following a far more ominous historical precedent, have started to try and blame the problems of their ailing economies onto the Jews. Following Japan's worst economic performance for twelve years, there have appeared there in recent months, about a dozen books, including some best sellers, which purport to prove that there is an international Jewish conspiracy, aimed at a Jewish world take-over and the destruction of Japan. A somewhat familiar tale don't you think. I wonder what the Japanese is for Sieg Heil.

"Have you ascertained yet what message was intended to be conveyed to you by the recent spate of L.R.A. letter bombs."

Enoch Powell at the Prime Minister's question time.

Last year, the Met Police paid out a record £376,000 of tax-payers money, in unpublicised out of court compensation. The majority of payments were for cases of wrongful imprisonment and assault. Scotland Yard has concealed the identities of those officers involved, and refuses to say whether or not any disciplinary action has been taken against them or their superiors.

"I don't like fighting a war. I don't like having to kill people. I don't like being on the run. I don't like being hounded and harassed. I don't like any of these things. The reality is I am forced into that position. If I opt out, then there is no chance of change. I can acquiesce and accept British rule and all that goes with it, or I can fight against it. You can live under it if you want, or are prepared to live as a second class citizen. That term is thrown about, I don't think that it is understood."

An L.R.A. representative.

"When I look at our opponent's proposals, I see that they're imitating our training schemes."

Employment Secretary Kenneth Baker

"I think that Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher blew the legs off a baby. That's the only way I see it. They spent 30 million doing it. To be really cynical, they could of got somebody to do it cheaply and bought a hospital."

Chris Rea musician, speaking about the bombing of Tripoli.

I have often wondered about the sick humour of some Tories, but Environment Secretary Nicholas Ridley recently stooped to an all time low, when he made the following joke about the Zeebrugge ferry disaster. Questioned about a bill concerning the creation of Britain's eleventh National Park he stated that the Minister in charge, Mr. William Wildegrave was going full steam ahead then added "Though he is the pilot of the Bill, he has not got his front doors open" Margaret Thatcher was quick to point out to M.P.s calling for his resignation, that it was the habit and custom of the house to accept apologies.

Garth Cooper, the Tory candidate for Ironbridge Salop, contested three elections in the 70s as a National Front candidate. The chairman of the local Conservative Association explains that at the time Cooper had disagreed with the policies of Edward Heath but "He now agrees with the policies of Mrs Thatcher"

The question is has the N.F. moved closer to the Tories, or have the Tories adopted the policies of the N.F. ? Answers on a postcard please.

The refusal of the Prime Minister to launch an investigation into the substantial allegations made by a number of former officials involved in covert operations, who claim that in 1975 MI5 sought to discredit Labour, Liberal and moderate Tories, and establish a right wing Conservative government, is perfectly understandable seeing as how she and her cronies were the very ones who were meant to benefit from the smear campaign.

However there are some even more sinister allegations which deserve investigation, but which have been as yet, completely ignored by the press.

A few years ago, Lord Carver, former Chief of the Defence Staff confirmed that in 1974, "fairly senior officers had suggested that if the Labour government had taken a radical leftward course, the army would have to do something about it. In 1976, Airey Neave, MI6 "spook" and close confidant of Mrs. Thatcher was involved in talks aimed at setting up an "army of resistance, in the case of Tony Benn becoming leader of the Labour Party and forming a government (later that year the INLA blew him up and probably did us all a favour)

Top Tory Sir Ian Gilmour candidly admits that "Conservatives do not worship democracy. Democracy is a means to an end, and if it is leading to an end that is undesirable, or that is inconsistent with itself, then there is a theoretical case for ending it"

When Tories claim to be the "Real defenders of democracy what they actually mean is that they will give support to the political system of the country for as long as it allows capitalism to flourish, nothing more. For them to try and pretend otherwise is about as honest as Klaus Barbie trying to claim credit from the allies for his work with the French resistance.

British Gas, privatised last year, is taking a tough line with impoverished customers over fuel debts. Latest figures show that disconnections of domestic gas supplies rose last year to forty two thousand, two hundred and fifty five, an increase of almost thirty percent. The Electricity Board, with whom they share an identical code of practice for consumer disconnections, increased their's by one percent.

Tell that to Sid.

"We will not tire of repeating that violence is not Christian Pope John Paul speaking in Chile, as police tear-gassed the audience.

"This morning on the streets of Ardoyne, we saw scenes reminiscent of the ghettos of Soweto in South Africa. Our oppressors fought and argued over twenty feet of Belfast. Not their streets, our streets, and the nationalist people, and more importantly the Marley family, were denied the right to bury their loved one in peace and dignity, to use the words of Nicholas Scott several weeks ago. That was what happened this morning."

The words of Martin McGuinness, Sinn Fien representative at the funeral of Larry Marley shot dead by loyalist para-militaries. The funeral was delayed for two days due to attempts by the Royal Ulster Constabulary to hi-jack the funeral, and remove by force any political content from what was clearly a political event. Through their efforts, the state which they represent has rarely looked so seedy and sordid. Former Indian Prime Minister Gandhi was once asked what he thought of civilisation in Britain. He replied "I think that it would be a very good idea." A very accurate reflection of the way in which the majority of the Irish working class must view the British state.

"The only way to stop the spread of AIDS is to use Prime Ministerial broadcasts properly, I want to see Margaret Thatcher on T.V. showing people how to put on a condom"

Ken Livingston, speaking at a public debate at Girton College Cambridge.

## RED ACTION IN ACTION

Red Action, as part of Anti Fascist Action have maintained a high level of activity against the National Front in recent months. Activities have included being responsible for the cancellation of a proposed N.F. benefit concert in Kingston, and causing an N.F. bye-election meeting in Greenwich to be cancelled, when 15 anti-fascists gained access to it under the Representation of the People's Act. The whole place erupted almost immediately, and whilst the anti-fascists were outnumbered between two and three to one, they still put up a creditable performance before being ejected by the police.

# WE ARE RED ACTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**THE IRISH NATIONAL LIBERATION STRUGGLE AGAINST OUR OWN RULING CLASS** We support the right of oppressed people the world over to fight back. We unconditionally support the right of the revolutionary armies The Irish Republican Army, and the Irish National Liberation Army, to engage in armed struggle to free their country from British rule. We draw great inspiration from the principled and courageous manner in which they conduct their struggle, and from the way in which they have integrated cultural and class expression into their political movement.

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

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