

# Red Action

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## BEATING THE FASCISTS

### SETTING THE AGENDA

#### EAST LONDON

In line with A.F.A. policy, of "setting the agenda" and so wresting the initiative from the neo-nazis and race attackers in Tower Hamlets, Anti-Fascist-Action returned to Brick Lane market on Sunday 17th March. This time we announced the event by distributing over 15,000 leaflets on the neighbouring estates. The borough of Tower Hamlets, has the highest ratio of race attacks in Britain, where it is estimated in a report from the European Parliament in December 1990, that an attack, verbal or physical occurs every 26 minutes.

A.F.A. invited everyone who believed "that Anti-Fascism meant more than empty expressions of sympathy for the victims of race attacks to be there". On the day about 250/300 Anti-Fascists, including Leon Greenman a former inmate of Auschwitz death camp, prisoner 98288 turned out. Just as significantly the Socialist Workers Party, Militant and the Revolutionary Communist Party did not attend and were conspicuous by their absence.

Perhaps they believe that because the B.N.P. are not a problem for them, "they are not a problem" for anyone else or maybe they were

deterred by the prospect of the violent confrontation anticipated by the local press. Chief Inspector Gary Elliot told the East London Advertiser that "the potential for disorder was always present in such confrontations".

There have been over 40 arrests, in clashes between AFA and the combined forces of the BNP /N.F. in the borough since April '90. This time, the fascists outnumbered three to one, were clearly intimidated, and apart from the gratuitous arrest of one Anti-Fascist A.F.A. enjoyed the full "co-operation" from both the fascists and the police.

As the A.F.A. contingent approached the paper sale, the sellers of the National Front "theoretical" magazine VANGUARD looked particularly down in the mouth. The current edition No 33 had in the lead article announced that "Anti-Fascist Action...is tearing itself apart. Good news not just for Nationalists but for the police since the 'Action' of the title is a euphemism for violent street demonstrations". (nice to know somebody cares). On our arrival leaflets were immediately distributed to the passerbys and curious onlookers in the bustling Brick Lane market. The beleaguered neo-nazis screech of "rights for whites" was smothered by the anti-fascist challenge of "rights for all".

At 11.45 'plan B' was put into operation. A 300 strong picket on the BNP pub 'The Sun'. The pub was closed with the police barring

entry. The pub governor had told the 'Jewish Chronicle' that the fascists would not be barred as "they were no trouble".

On another occasion a barmaid told AFA that the fact that the pub was associated with race-attackers and convicted bombers was "personally speaking not a problem" for her.

### A SECOND FRONT

#### SOUTH LONDON

##### A SECOND FRONT

The Sun pub in Bethnal Green is owned by Whitbread brewery as is the The Wild Fowler in Thamesmead. According to locals the Wild Fowler runs a colour bar. On 27th April 1,000 strong demonstration, the vast majority black, demonstrated against the policy of the pub and the existence of the B.N.P. H.Q. in Welling.

Since they arrived in 1989 race attacks already high have doubled. In February of this year 15 year old Rolan Adams became a victim. Unlike the others Rolan was not so lucky. Rolan was stabbed. Rolan died.

On the day of the march the pub was closed. It was also guarded by police. A video team recorded the demonstrators from inside the pub. The B.N.P. shop was also shut. Police video

team maintained video surveillance at the front and at the back of the shop. Other police video teams also took a sinister interest in individual Anti-Fascists. Hundreds of police were in the immediate vicinity. On the advice of the police the B.N.P. kept a very low profile. Both the police and the fascists no doubt hope that by removing their physical presence, the initiative would prove anticlimactic for the organisers and the participants. A.F.A. who laid on a 70 strong force of security stewards at the request of the organising committee have other ideas. It will be our intention not only to maintain the momentum but step it up. What is needed is to open up a "second front" to complement the pressure being applied in Bethnal

### LESSONS LEARNED

#### GLASGOW

Last week, 150 people attended the first Anti Fascist concert organised by Cable Street Beat in Glasgow. The gig was very successful with four bands playing-The Beggars, The Corleones, Oi Polio and Sessionhead. Also appearing were four Anti-Fascist poets. Despite a couple of 'sightings' prior to the gig, the B.N.P. decided to keep well away. A wise decision. The gig marked the beginning of what will hopefully be a series of 'Cable Street Beat' events and was followed by an Anti-Fascist Action public meeting attended by about 30 people. Those who attended included members of Red Action, Class War, D.A.M., Militant and the S.W.P., as well as a number of young people who had been at the gig. The meeting agreed that there is a need for a militant anti-fascist organisation which will fight alongside existing campaigns, as well as initiate its own events and actions. Everyone agreed that the fight against fascism is two-pronged; countering the Fascist propaganda with our own, and confronting the Fascists on the streets. The B.N.P. presence in Glasgow must be confronted 'ideologically and physically'. It was stressed that there are lessons for us in Scotland to learn from the successful camp-



"ANTI-FASCIST ACTION...IS TEARING ITSELF APART. GOOD NEWS NOT JUST FOR NATIONALISTS BUT FOR THE POLICE, SINCE THE 'ACTION' OF THE TITLE IS A EUPHEMISM FOR VIOLENT STREET DEMONSTRATIONS" From the NF theoretical journal 'Vanguard', Jan-Mar'91.

signs of A.F.A. in England, and particularly from London A.F.A.

The next big event will be another Anti-Fascist Action public meeting but this time in the East End where there has been an increase in Fascist and Racist activity. The suggested platform of speakers includes A.F.A., Scottish Asian Action and the Youth Rights Campaign (Y.R.C.).

The meeting was confident and optimistic in recognising the need for principled co-operation and unity in action by groups and individuals against the Fascist threat. Good signs for the future.

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JUST LIKE OLD TIMES

HERTS.

The Hatfield branch of Red Action recently received a call from a local group of anti-fascists requesting our participation in a protest

against the National Front holding an election meeting (in a Primary School!) in a local town, Hemel Hempstead. A swift mobilisation saw a convoy heading in the direction of Hemel on the day of the NF's assault upon the ballot box.

A pre-election meeting interview with the NF candidate, John Macaulay was requested, and much to his surprise, granted. Red Action wish to make it clear to all those NF supporters who had travelled such a long way to see candidate Macaulay on the hustings that it was in no way his fault that the meeting had to go ahead without him. The would-be councillor ended face down in the road along with two other well known NF faces and was in no condition to continue. One of his minders ended up in a hedge and refused to come out!

A truly 'nasty' NF promotional video found in their possession was confiscated. Copies of the NF paper, 'The Flag' were also removed for safekeeping to someone's bonfire. The thought-provoking headline in this particular edition was 'Ban Foreign Imports' - which will no doubt give Chancellor

ARTICLES CONTINUED,  
BACK PAGE...



(Insert) Ian Anderson, Chairman of the National Front. On Sat. 13th April, a forty strong group of 'late arrivals' for the NF meeting in Hemel Hempstead, arrogantly swept past the official picket and the police cordon at the school gates to cries of, "scum! scum! scum!" Both surprised and delighted Anderson stepped forward. A familiar figure amongst the sea of smiling faces greeted him, "Hello Ian, just like old times!" Anderson responded warmly. "How very nice to see you again!"

(Below) The scene outside the school, seconds after Anderson had been trampled into the school geraniums.



# THE MISSING LINK



**RED ACTION**

The whole art of politics lies in finding and taking as firm a grip as we can of the link that is most likely to be struck from our hands, the one that is most important at the given moment, the one that most of all guarantees the possessor of the possession of the whole chain." (V I Lenin)

At a day school organised by the Manchester Martyrs Committee in Manchester on 8.10.90 a Sinn Fein delegate present identified the ingredients considered vital to produce a defeat for British imperialism and a successful conclusion to the war in Ireland....

a) 'The existence of a viable movement for national liberation in the oppressed country'

b) 'Objective conditions'

c) 'The existence of a viable anti-imperialist movement in the oppressor country'

While there is no doubt about the existence of (a) and the 'objective conditions' will be determined by forces outside our immediate control, we therefore have a duty to focus all our attention on the only area which we can influence. It is in this very area, even after 20 years of guerrilla war that has yet even to begin to fulfill its potential. The principal criticism of Red Action is not over political form the opposition to imperialism in Britain has taken, but the undeniable lack of substance of either the 'solidarity movements' like the IFM or the purely 'withdrawal movements' like 'Troops Out Movement' etc.

For the last three years the Bloody Sunday march has gone to or from Kiburn, instead of seeking to expand and grow, the 'anti-imperialist movement' everywhere has begun to atrophy and retreat. The anti-internment march in August which commands support from similar numbers follows the traditional route from Islington to Archway year after year. Though the IFM provides a more militant platform and is better stewarded, to the uninformed eye there is not much to distinguish them (same bands, same [similar] slogans, plus the majority of the people who marched in January will be the same ones who march again in August).

TOM and their supporters do not carry propaganda for the IFM march. Militant supports neither one nor the other. Therein lies some of the problem. The various committees are isolated from the rest of the left, and isolated from each other. As a direct consequence they march and rally only where they feel they can march. Irish politics in Britain is as ghettoised over here as it is over there. The tactics are dictated if not by fear then by an understandable caution. Though for each organisation the marches represent the pinnacle of the year in effort and expense, given the geographic location is dictated more by pragmatism than ideology, it is clear that they can achieve nothing more but 'keep the issue of Ireland on the agenda' but only among the left and briefly the Irish community in the immediate vicinity. Given that neither are the intended target of the propaganda, if a march is subsequently judged a success, by what criterion is that judgement made?

While it is of vital importance to attract the support if Irish youth and left wing groups they are not a legitimate alternative or substitute target for anti-imperialist propaganda or agitation, instead they

should properly be regarded like the anti-imperialist movement itself: only as a means to an end.

As supporters Irish youth in particular may be invaluable in helping you reach your target (or on occasion prevent certain elements within the indigenous population from reaching you) nevertheless they are only one factor albeit an important one in mounting a sustained and comprehensive challenge.

If we agree that an anti-imperialist movement is properly regarded as a means to an end, rather than an end in itself, then it could certainly be argued that the 'Troops Out Now' approach or genuine solidarity work both have something positive to contribute to the Irish struggle. Properly marketed, certain personalities might be prepared to stand on troops Out platforms, but not a 'pro-IRA' one. Red Action might agree with the more militant approach but it is clear that Sinn Fein identify with the softer orientation and propaganda of TOM. What cannot be denied is that neither movement can expect to contribute anything of lasting value if they do not reach their audience (the British working class) and they cannot do this on their own.

That is the reason we suggest a working coalition rather than theoretical unity achieved only on paper. One, because even after 20 years of war neither approach has been tested in practice and two, instead of vying for ascendancy they would properly identified, complement each other as the left and right wings of the same coalition, working towards a common goal.

It is proposed that:

## A Practical Vision

- 1) That the focus of the coalition restrict itself to 4 marches a year approximately one a season. For example, Bloody Sunday march in January, a Hunger Strike march in Spring, Anti-Internment march in Summer, and the Manchester Martyrs in Autumn.
  - When not immediately organising for their own event, each committee would be expected to propagandise, mobilise, arrange transport etc for each others' marches, pool an agreed percentage of any revenue raised and so with the cooperation of the Scottish Bands Alliance bring about the maximum turn out for each event.
  - 2) That each committee retains regional autonomy over its own march, invites its own speakers, produces its own propaganda etc. It would be necessary to consult coalition partners on the choice of route (or location).
  - 3) If it is our purpose to put Ireland on the agenda for the British public then all attendant publicity is good publicity. In other words, marches that attract media attention are marches that promise confrontation, thereby achieving maximum propaganda for the event itself and the issues it wants raised. On one level at least it will have made an impact on the British public.
- For the three month period leading up to the march, the route if possible is selected to reach those sections of society already alienated from the establishment and the state, would be showered with propaganda, public meetings, pickets, publicity stunts etc: schools, housing estates leafleted, recruitment offices picketed etc.
- Instead of having powerful speakers/personalities like Fred Holroyd, Gerry Adams etc speaking to the converted in Conway Hall in WC1, instead the coalition could provide



**I.C.U.**

Dear Comrades

We welcome some of the very pertinent points you make in your 'Reply to the IRSP'.

It would seem that many on the left see 'solidarity work', with regard to Ireland and other issues, as a kind of way of life. It is often considered, consciously or not, as having a primarily a "selfish recruitment function", as you point out. All too often the main concern of those involved is to be seen doing 'at least something', without any consideration as to whether it makes a difference and what real impact it has. And yes, stemming from this moralistic rather than militant approach, the 'ritual marches' syndrome and tokenism are, and have been for a long time, the trademarks of the left's activity in this field. Not only does this approach fail to

take solidarity one inch further. It also tends to remove the issue of solidarity further away from the working class, confining it to a marginal milieu.

As we understand it, these are the fundamental criticisms you make in your text. And these are criticisms which we definitely agree with. We consider, however, that they should be taken further. In our view, the left's attitude to solidarity work is undoubtedly a symptom, but it is not the disease.

The **Communist Manifesto** stresses that the interests of communists are not different from those of the working class. How true is it of the left today? Isn't the left's overall approach, particularly its approach to the working class, ridden with moralism as well?

True, all left organisations claim to represent the interests of the working class. But what is actually behind

## INTRODUCTION

On Saturday 6th April Red Action invited over ninety different groups and organisations to a meeting in North London, to discuss the permanent crisis afflicting the whole of the Anti-imperialist Movement in Britain.

On the day representatives of four organisations, The Anarchist Workers Group, Workers Press, Direct Action Movement and Red Action entered into pre-liminary discussion.

Other organisations who had expressed an interest in the outcome of the discussions but were either unwilling or unable to attend. Including the Troops Out Movement, the Irish Republican Socialist Party, Internationalist Communist Union and the Revolutionary Democratic Group, members of the Editorial Board of Open Polemic attended as observers who along with the L.C.U. issued a statement (below). Significantly, two of the organisations who chose to ignore this initiative, the Irish in Britain Group and Hands Off Ireland held separate marches on either side of the meeting to commemorate the 1916 rising. The fact that they attracted 150 and 70 marchers respectively merely underlined the necessity for co-operation rather than competition with regard to solidarity work in Britain.

Having outlined previously why unity is necessary in a follow up document entitled "The Missing Link" we suggested how such unity might be achieved.

them with the opportunity to convert possible recruits to the British war machine in places like EC1.

The publicity/propaganda would be reaching directly, for the first time, an entirely new constituency, already in dispute on a wide number of issues with the established order.

The march as a fitting culmination to the events would be a dynamic demonstration of solidarity, defiance, even strength. Clearly, if properly executed this would present a direct challenge to the British state. As a consequence, fascist gangs etc would be allowed a free hand as a form of direct reprisal. Other forms of harassment and intimidation are just as likely to materialise, in fact the level of repression would be tailored to meet the level and depth of the challenge.

With cooperation and unity as the necessary prerequisite a powerful challenge could be sustained.

Above is the brief outline of a project that will undoubtedly develop in the making. The most common criticism we can expect is that the proposals are dismissed as hopelessly utopian; in reply we say that if our critics genuinely believe that exclusively by their own efforts they will make a difference then it is them rather than us who are hopelessly utopian.

"This antagonism [of the English working class towards the Irish] is the secret of the impotence of the English working class, despite its organisation. It is the secret by which the capitalist class maintains its power. And that class is fully aware of it."

## open polemic

As distinct from the general revolutionary struggle against imperialism, the attention of British revolutionaries should focus upon British imperialism's continuing oppression of Ireland. As such, Open Polemic welcomes today's initiative.

However, Open Polemic asserts that, in Britain today, the unity and strength of the anti-imperialist movement is inextricably linked to the unity and strength of the revolutionary movement.

For Open Polemic, our anti-imperialism is derived from a view of imperialism defined as the highest stage of capitalism. As a Marxist-Leninist view, it is distinctively different from that of the ideology of social democracy, which relies on imperialism as a material resource for the practical realisation of the reformist strategy for welfare state capitalism. Provided imperialism is not actually threatened, social democracy seeks to rid it of its visible, ugly face - the manifold manifestations of violence, racism and discrimination - while imbuing political sustenance from the hidden, super-exploitation of imperialism.

To the extent that temporary reforms of imperialism can benefit the people of oppressed nations, and assist them in their struggle for emancipation, it becomes possible for revolutionaries to work together with social democrats, but, if this is not to lapse into right-wing

this claim? During the Gulf War, while some groups dismissed almost openly the working class as being on 'the imperialist side, others argued that the anti-war movement should have a working class orientation. And what did they mean by this? For some it meant that anti-war motions should be passed at union branch meetings. Hardly a means to address the working class, for everyone knows what empty shells union branch meetings are in most workplaces, and how cut off they are from the workforce at large. For others it meant setting up anti-war committees in the workplace. But in the few places where the decision was actually implemented, rather than attempting to address the dominant mood about the war, these committees were primarily aimed at bringing together the very same milieu of union activists and left-minded workers who make up the left's milieu all year round. In both cases the rank and file workers were disregarded out of hand. In the meantime, most left groups were having a great time fighting each other over slogans and positions behind closed doors, confident of doing 'at least something' to represent the interests of the working class, but not concerned in the least as to how workers felt about the war and what could be done about it.

Much the same could be said about the day to day activity of most revolutionary groups. When confronted with the problem all of us communists face today in Britain - that our ideas are only represented by a handful of individuals within the working class and largely seen as irrelevant by the overwhelming majority of workers - the reply is invariably something like: "Oh, but we are active in the unions, naturally." And they proudly point to the number of unions branches sponsoring the next left inspired conference or rally. Or to the 'influence' of the left in the national bodies of NALGO, CPSA or NUT. Why very few workers in British industrial sites have never met a communist activist among their workmates

does not seem to matter much. Whether the left's 'activity' makes a difference in the way workers see communist ideas does not seem to be a major concern.

And again, when it comes to the left's role in industrial disputes. "Oh, but we are always on the picket lines", says the left. Tokenism again. Where, in Britain's assembly plants, building sites and workshops, do ordinary workers (tomorrow's strikers) look to left activists for leadership? hardly anywhere. What weight has the left ever had in the main struggles of the working class over the past decades? None whatsoever. How many left groups see this as a major problem that should be addressed right now, so that at some point in the future our ideas may stop being marginal in our class?

When will communists come to terms with the fact that we are faced with what may well be a long term activity, in order to build deep roots within the working class? That there is no easy, rewarding or glossy short cut. That the working class owes us nothing and has no reason whatsoever to trust us. The workers will not come to our ideas and use them unless they have an opportunity to test them and their effectiveness (that is our effectiveness) in the real world of the class struggle. In short, that communist politics are not about a moralistic claim of allegiance to the working class, but about making a difference in the short term and long term perspectives and outlook of ordinary workers. That they are not about doing 'our bit' in propagating our ideas while standing on the fringe of the class, but about winning over and arming politically groups of communist workers in at least the major workplaces of this country, so that they can be the propagators in deed of communist ideas in front of the working class as a whole. That what communists need desperately to prepare the future, is not to train replicas of Tariq Ali but revolutionary communist versions of Lech Walesa...

opportunism, the revolutionary movement needs to constantly develop ideological clarity and unity.

Open Polemic therefore welcomes this anti-imperialist initiative; firstly, because it is endeavouring to extend the parameters of unity in action beyond any one, particular segment of the revolutionary movement and, secondly, because it is endeavouring to approach unity from a revolutionary perspective.

Consequently, we regard this initiative and other such initiatives as being complementary in character to Open Polemic. Our initiative is of course different, in that it is concerned with the eventual ideological integration of the revolutionary movement. Our actual practice, therefore, can only be concerned with putting the theory of Open Polemic into effect.

The practice of unity in action across the revolutionary movement (and today's initiative is a crucial attempt at this) can both inform and strengthen that polemic.

In the era of the highest stage of capitalism, of imperialism, Open Polemic takes the view that Marxism-Leninism is the revolutionary ideology most suited to achieving the overthrow of capitalism and bringing to an end imperialism. In so doing, we recognise that there are comrades who, although not regarding themselves as Marxists-Leninists, may be closer to the ideals and essence of Marxism-Leninism than some who presently proclaim themselves to be Marxist Leninist. The columns of Open polemic remain open to ongoing re-evaluation and reassessment of the inter-related fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism which we have defined as the political and organisational principle of

democratic centralism; the principle of the leading role of the party and of the dictatorship of the proletariat; and the principle of proletarian internationalism.

Related to the above aims, is a forthcoming issue of Open Polemic, we will be focussing specifically on British Revolutionaries and their approach to anti-imperialist work. As such, Open Polemic particularly welcomes today's initiative, and we would be keen to publish any statements arising from today's meeting.

As for today's practical tasks, if a 'new anti-imperialist coalition' can be set up in a 'spirit of cooperation rather than competition', that will surely provide some impetus for British revolutionaries to seek ideological clarity on all outstanding issues of importance.

Yours comradely  
Open Polemic





# LETTERS

## SAS CALLING CARD

A Chairde  
The chilling and cold blooded murder of four Catholics in Cappagh, Co Tyrone on Sunday night has once again raised the issue of security force collusion in sectarian murders in the six counties. The villagers of Cappagh are in no doubt that although the East Tyrone Brigade of the Ulster Volunteer Force claimed responsibility for the murders, it was security force members who squeezed the triggers. The nationalist people will remember for a long time the murders of three West Belfast robbers by the SAS as they emerged from a Falls Road bookmakers. The security force explanation for the murders was that plain clothed soldiers had come across what appeared to be an armed IRA unit. The truth, when it emerged, was more complex and sinister. The three murdered men had brought weapons stolen from an SAS car parked outside a Drumbo bar. Although these weapons were later recovered, the SAS was still stinging with the embarrassment of the incident, so much so that these three young men were followed everywhere they went until they gave the SAS the opportunity they were seeking. Their murder was a cold blooded message to all who would embarrass the elite of the British Army. If the SAS was embarrassed by the loss of two weapons to local hoods, how then would they feel about the loss of two of its members after being chased out of Cappagh by an IRA active service unit? Would the murder by ambush of one of this ASU's members and another comrade at Loughall be enough to abate their embarrassment? Or would the village of Cappagh have to be taught a lesson as well? After all, while the RUC and SAS denied the loss of two soldiers, or that the incident had even taken place, it was the villagers of Cappagh who witnessed and told the whole truth. They told of how on March 24 1990 at 6.15 pm, a red Volkswagen Passat containing two SAS men was being pursued through the centre of the village by an XR3i containing an IRA active service unit. Villagers claim that during the high speed bumper to bumper chase an IRA man was directing automatic fire into the Passat from the sun roof of the XR3i. When the Passat crashed the IRA team continued pouring automatic fire into the vehicle. Locals also told of seeing the lifeless forms of the SAS men at the scene, of how, when reinforcements arrived, they fired on each other by mistake, and of how a third soldier went on his knees with his hands in his hands by the bodies of his dead comrades. The RUC dismissed the deaths

and reports of the gun battle between the reinforcements as "totally fabricated". An eyewitness to this incident told reporters he believed that a security force cover up had been implemented to prevent news of the deaths and potential propaganda victory for the IRA. He had witnessed the setting up of flood lights so photographs could be taken of the scene. He said, "Everyone around here is certain that soldiers were killed." It emerged months later that former Sinn Fein Councillor Martin McCaughey, who was shot dead in an SAS ambush last October, had been wounded up to seven times in the Cappagh shoot-out. But would this have been enough to satisfy the vengeful bloodlust of the SAS? The people of Cappagh do not believe so. While it is not known if any of the victims of the Cappagh Massacre were involved directly or indirectly in the incident of March 24, many people believe that their murder was another chilling message from the state-backed terrorists of the SAS. Father Denis Paul, an outspoken critic of the IRA, said, "It was an SAS type operation, and the people are worried that the SAS may have been involved. The army were up there until an hour before the shooting, and that makes the people very suspicious." He also said, "What everyone is clamouring to hear is the ballistic history of the weapons used." SDLP councillor Vincent Currie, another critic of the IRA, said, "What I find particularly sickening and sinister about the whole affair is that the Cappagh and Gabally areas have been saturated with UDR and SAS members in recent months. No-one can tell me that a carload of gunmen can drive into the village of Cappagh, murder four men and seriously injure a fifth, and drive out again without the so-called security forces knowing about it." These people can hardly be accused of being spokesmen for the IRA, and the very fact that they are speaking out shows how blatant state-sponsored terrorism is becoming. When claims like these are made Unionists and State figures claim they are Republican smear campaigns, but then it works both ways. Whenever the state is guilty of murder they start their own campaign of smearing and besmirching the victims and eye witnesses to their atrocities as has been proved in Gibraltar with the smearing of Carmen Proetta. When Dessie Grew was shot dead, he was one of the IRA's top hitmen. Perhaps this time they have made a mistake. When the local television media were reporting on the murders they

stated that one of the victims had been questioned by the RUC on a number of occasions regarding terrorist activities and that another had in the past received a suspended sentence for possessing documents likely to be of use to terrorists. Or in other words, "here is why they died". To those who will say that there's no proof of collusion, the people of Cappagh can show them the British Army issue gun-nuzzle cover found among the empty cartridge cases at the scene of the murder. If that does not suffice they need only look at the lengthy list of security force members doing life imprisonment for the murder of innocent Catholics. Despite denials or finger pointing to other organisations, the nationalist people of the six counties know they are on the receiving end of a dirty war. No-one can really say for sure just how many murders the SAS have been responsible for, but the people of Cappagh know for sure that they received the SAS calling card on Sunday night.

Is Mice  
M Collins  
Belfast

R.A.  
ENJOYABLE??

# TAKING SIDES



Dear Comrades!  
Thank you very much for the articles about INLA, we found them most interesting. Another thing, we are wondering when we are receiving the next issue of Red Action - one of the only British left wing newspapers which is really enjoyable??? We have not made any new 'newsletters' since the one we sent you, but we will of course send you the next issue as soon as it comes out. We heard about what happened to the three comrades from your group who were sent to jail for allegedly beating up some fascist bastard. We would like to express our solidarity and the next time any of you go to see them, give them greetings from Denmark. YOURS IN SOLIDARITY  
The ZAPATA collective

I read with interest Red Action's coverage and analysis of the Gulf war, noting that RA had deliberately not 'taken sides'. Some would no doubt argue that a failure to support Iraq against the US led forces represented itself a passive acceptance of the imperialist design. It is clear from the article that RA condemned the US led operation for what it was, a simple exercise in protecting US interests in Gulf Oil. What is not entirely clear, is what theoretical positions led RA not to support a military action aimed at stopping or restricting the US's achievement of the policy, Casting Saddam as a 'baddie' is not in itself enough here, Saddam was and is a 'baddie', his agenda was as anti-democratic and anti-socialist as the US agenda. However his actions, whatever the object, also reversed, if only temporarily - (for now) - the artificial separation of Iraq and Kuwait, a separation designed to protect western interests not arab interests. In Ireland there is an artificial border imposed by the military might of the British government. The so-called Irish Republic retains a constitutional claim to the statelet of N Ireland. If the government of the Irish Republic took military action to recover the Six Counties, would Red Action support this action. If not, why not? We have to be clear about why we support national liberation struggles, but not 'all' such struggles. The latter begs the question, what do we mean by a national liberation struggle. It would appear to me that Saddam's war was not one of 'liberation' and there perhaps part of my question answered. But had Saddam been successful, would that have consolidated his hold in Iraq or perhaps provided a further threat to that other statelet in the region, Israel, and given the arab world a new rising which its current leaders might lose control of? These are obviously mere scenarios, but the arab populace did see it as a 'hope' not just for the Palestinians but for all ordinary arabs, a potential to break the western imposed 'kingdoms' and the Israeli beachhead before them.

proposed analogy with Ireland, there is no question of the Irish Republic attacking N. Ireland with the purpose of 'liberating' it - for the reason that the status quo is as much in the interests of the bourgeois regime in the Republic as it is in the interests of the politicians at Westminster. It is in the interests of the working class of both Britain and Ireland that Ireland should be united. It is in the interests of the capitalist class of both nations that Ireland should be divided and it is the capitalist class that the Republican government represents. Does the writer really believe for one minute that the Republic is poised to invade? If not, then the point of the analogy is completely lost.

Red Action opposed the war in the Gulf because we predicted that such a war would cause unimaginable suffering, not in the interests of a progressive or even humanitarian cause, but for strictly imperialist objectives. We also believed that the political problems resulting from the war would be far more severe than those the imperialist powers claimed they wished to resolve. This has proved to be the case on both counts. We refused to countenance the slogan advanced by certain other left groups, 'Victory to Iraq,' because this slogan could in the circumstances only mean, 'Victory to Saddam and the Republican Guard'. Not only was this a very foolish, not to say meaningless slogan, given that there was not the slightest possibility of a defeat for the US and its allies. The adoption of such a slogan in these circumstances only reveals the self-obsession of left groups with rhetoric and doctrine to the exclusion of action and reality. Just as important, as events have abundantly proved, a Saddamist 'victory' (even when this meant so more than, as now, the stabilisation of his regime under US auspices) would not have strengthened the aspirations of the working people of Iraq or Kuwait, but would merely have been the prelude to the intensified torture, elimination and massacres of democratic / nationalist elements within Iraq itself. The only possible slogan for revolutionary socialists must be based on the victory of the democratic / nationalist Iraqi opposition to Saddam's obnoxious regime. How many organisations that were calling for Saddam's victory so recently are repeating that call now? They can never be taken seriously again.

REPLY:  
First, there is no question of Red Action 'not taking sides'. The side we take is the side of the Iraqi (and Kuwaiti) working people and their democratic organisations, against Saddam and against the US and its allies. As for the

## ACTION IN IRELAND



Having formed ourselves into a branch in the summer of 1990, bringing together people involved in various political campaigns, we immediately began to establish ourselves as RED ACTION DUBLIN by taking a high profile in many of these campaigns such as extradition, 1916 commemoration etc. With this and our reputation for physical confrontation with the fascists, we now feel we have a basis on which to build. The recent visit to Dublin of French fascist Le Pen and his scum, has provided us with the opportunity we needed to establish ourselves as the leading anti-fascist activists. We contacted the gay, muslim, Jewish and travelling communities to inform them of the protests against Le Pen. We provided one of the biggest contingents at these protests and outnumbered some of the longer established groups. We confronted 2 fascist women taking photographs of the protesters, displaying to the other groups that we are alert and ready to deal with any fascist threat, not like some who prefer to wait and call a meeting while the fascists still pose a threat to the people on the street, due to their inactivity. The fascists need 'photos of us because most of them only see us over their

shoulders as they run away! We received a good amount of media coverage during the Le Pen visit. We almost succeeded in penetrating the tight security surrounding the fascist delegation, with news reports on TV showing members carrying RA banners being led away by coppers. Newspapers also carried pictures of RA members carrying 'subtle' comments on nazis! We have subsequently followed up these successes with a major sticker run round Dublin. As a result of all of this publicity, we have been receiving more and more information about the fascists in Dublin. Some of this information is coming from former fascists who got fed up 'meeting' RA on dark nights. We have also held meetings with other interested parties in an attempt to secure future cooperation. We now plan to extend our activities, both physical and political into the Dublin suburbs, where these nazi scum are hiding out. Intelligence gathering backed up by action is now a major priority. We have also planned a series of 'Anti-Fascist' gigs using various bands to get our anti-fascist ideas and general politics across to people. DUBLIN RED ACTION

## BLACK SECTIONS?

Dear Comrades  
The issue 58 was a definite improvement: increased size and in-depth articles - nice one! Through your various issues I have been afforded the opportunity of obtaining a pretty good gist of the general views on particular subjects as arrived at by the left. It's of particular interest to learn of activities outside of London, e.g. SWP running from BNP in Scotland and their grovelling to the pigs for protection. But my curiosity was aroused and a gap in your coverage

realised when I read the AFA's statement of intent article - you never comment on the activities and views of Black organisations! So comrades, how's about giving us a run down on the 'state of play' within the Black Community and 'Black Movement'? I for one would be interested to hear if the likes of the Indian Workers' association, Black Panther Movement, Black Unity and Freedom Party, Black Liberation Front, Southall Youth Movement and the rest

are still around and what their views and activities are. Likewise those of any other Black organisations and also the general positions of the Black and Asian population. If we are to win the trust and respect of Black comrades - understandably disillusioned by being constantly betrayed by the SWP & Co - we must strive to get a better understanding of their politics, activities and views. Over to you comrades...

PS Would a Red Action Black Section be an idea worth pursuing? Reply: Genuine ignorance of the organisations named prevents a comprehensive critique of their politics. Despite RA's intimate involvement in AFA since 1985 our paths have never crossed. Hopefully the (national) campaign to be launched shortly, to close the BNP HQ in Welling, will provide the basis for fruitful collaboration in future, both with the groups mentioned and with the black and asian communities generally.



The car in which three of the men died outside the bar

The latest publication on the left to hit the mat is called *Open Polemic* (or to give it its proper title, *Communist open polemic for Revolutionary Unity*) and as the name suggests, "It is independent and has no connection with any outside organisation."

In its opening introduction to those comrades...to all comrades it claims, we are all now passing through the most momentous period in the history of the communist movement...it is a period of widespread ideological confusion and theoretical disorder. It is our view that the present proliferation of marxist organisations in Britain and elsewhere...represents a 1990 equivalent of the many marxist circles of the 1890's. (Everywhere left factions jostle with each other for Bolshevik orthodoxy) in a game of trivial pursuit!"

The direct result of this division and confusion as one of the founders, Jan Wachla candidly admits, is that he, "spent some 20 years of my life caught in a futile web either doing right things in the wrong order, or wrong things in no order, as for me - so for others. The net result was very little."

"I have become more and more convinced that it (the English working class) can never do anything decisive here in England while it separates its policy with regard to Ireland most definitely from the policy of the ruling classes, until it not only makes common cause with the Irish, but it actually takes the initiative in dissolving the Union established in 1801...and this must be done not as a matter of sympathy with Ireland but as a demand made in the interests of the English proletariat. If not, the English people will remain tied to the leading strings of the ruling classes, because it will have joined them in a common front against Ireland."

Because of its power to weaken and undermine the entire state it remains the weakest link, but because of past and current working class antagonisms by the English working class towards the Irish (i.e. the sullen public response to the release of the Birmingham Six) and because the antagonism is "the secret of the impotence of the working class", it could more

It is ironic that an organisation that spends the least effort on raising the consciousness and theoretical development of its members, an organisation that has the least respect for the Leninist concept of the Party of a New Type, has perhaps made the greatest progress in raising the 'revolutionary consciousness' of its members. The organisation I refer to goes by the name of Red Action, an apt name perhaps when one considers Red Action's pre-occupation of getting 'stuck in' to fascist groups. For those who are not familiar with this anarchistic outfit, it is worth noting that on one of the rare times that they ventured into the world of theory, they informed their readers of the fundamental opposites of Marxism and Leninism. Marxism, we were told, stood for the Dictatorship of the Proletariat while Leninism stood for the Dictatorship of the Party. The article's logic was routinely predictable.

opportunism of the far left, as it preceded them. (In 1920 the national executive of the National Union of Railwaymen ordered their members to refuse to handle war material intended to aid Poland in her war with Russia. However, it was deemed perfectly in order for English dockers to handle munitions going to Ireland to suppress the Irish people). More accurately, the current and total irrelevance of the latter is but a passive reflection of the powerlessness due to self-mutilation of the former. So much then for the various vanguards.

In Wachla's opinion, in his article in the first edition of 'Open Polemic', 'experimenta est optima rerum magistra', Jan Wachla draws attention to the singular position of Red Action on the British left. He writes: "It is ironic that an organisation that spends the least effort in raising the consciousness and theoretical development of its members...has perhaps made the greatest progress in raising the revolutionary consciousness of its members. The organisation I refer to goes by the name Red Action."

However, in introducing Red Action to this discussion the

**Independently of the other?**

Though the initial endorsement is quickly qualified, with the introduction of other descriptive terms, "lumpen", "anarchistic", "leftist", "adventuristic", the author clearly feels that further classification is needed.

"I am not by the way advocating the wholesale involvement of disillusioned and homeless communists in the ranks of Red Action (although there are conceivably worse courses of action for those at a loose end)".

So having walked the numerous itinerant communists with whom he appears to be familiar to the top of the hill, a theoretical rat run is provided so that they can gratefully slither back down again.

So if at present Red Action is not a fitting vehicle for 'serious' communists to join, then obviously what is needed is a serious vehicle for Red Action to join.

"However before that happy day arrives, Britain's revolutionary youth need to be convinced that our

revolutionary theory has been tested by revolutionary praxis and is not merely an intellectual by product of university campuses."

It is not Red Action's forays into theoretical denunciations of Leninism, nor their 'theoretical' elaborations on Ireland with their alleged bi-partisan support for the IRA and the INLA that is of interest here, but rather their practical activities on the streets of Britain that makes this organisation of particular significance. (That they often execute their valuable anti-fascist service unilaterally is as much due to the sectarian failings of the 'orthodox' communist movement in this country as it is of Red Action's own anarchistic adventurism). Notwithstanding their leftist and sometimes lumpen approach, at the end of the day it will likely be the working class youth currently in the employ of Red Action that are going to learn the bitter but necessary lessons of what the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie is, in essence, all about.

Initial reason given, i.e. that of contemporary organisations on the British left it is Red Action has made the "greatest progress" in "raising revolutionary consciousness", is in conflict with his final analysis - that Red Action has failed to marry its raw potential to revolutionary 'theory'. This raises the question, how does Wachla believe it possible to oppose the raising of "revolutionary consciousness" to the development of revolutionary 'theory' as if one could evolve

In other words, those working elements who display a robust and direct approach with none of the left's characteristic inhibitions about "getting stuck in" to fascist groups" will be duly awarded a place in the great scheme of things; as foot soldiers, flunkies, and doormen albeit only if armed with a revolutionary consciousness. Not for us the rarified air of pure logic (probably ruin us!) Wachla's analysis could be summarised as "Good lads, lack leadership!" That analysis in itself is customary rather than novel: what Jan Wachla should be commended for, is having the courage to analyse the Red Action phenomenon at all, rather than dismiss us as an embarrassing but irrelevant aberration like many others have done.

His belief that the occasional inclusive brutality on the streets of Britain is evidence of, and consistent with a further raising of revolutionary awareness is in direct contrast with the political reaction of the largest 'marxist parties' who regard violence as in no way progressive, instead their membership find it both repugnant and accidental. Accidental in the sense, that if Red Action were not preoccupied with bashing the far right, we might just as easily end up any day now bashing the far left. Their repugnance is based on the belief, that if their politics do not provide and cannot justify such actions, then the principal motivation "of the working class youth in the employ of Red Action" must be the



Open Polemic is intended to give all revolutionaries the opportunity to study and understand the profound and less profound differences that exist between particular defined tendencies, the essential prerequisite for achieving ideological unity. The purpose of unity is to enable the working class to revise its revolutionary potential, something that it is hardly likely to do in the present situation of theoretical disorder when it is being led in several directions at the same time...From the many vanguards to the one vanguard."

properly be described as the decisive link. As George Lukacs stated, "The strong or weak point in the state is the way in which it is reflected in the consciousness of the people."

So Ireland remains the secret ace in the hole by which the capitalist class maintains power. Only for as long as Ireland remains the missing link for the 'revolutionary left'.

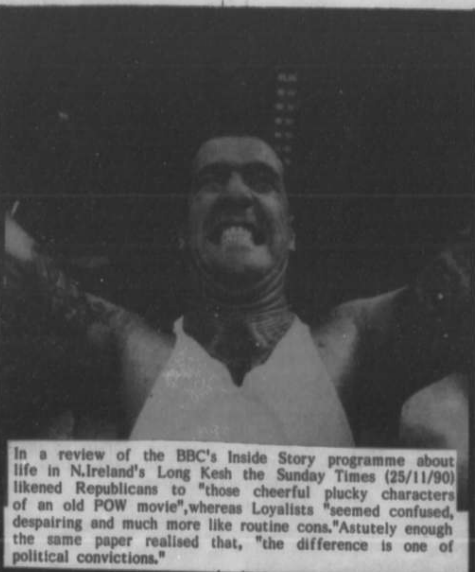
Ireland then as the article points out, "is not an optional extra for British revolutionaries, nor as Marx pointed out, a matter of sympathy with Ireland. It is the key - the only key at present - to a revolutionary consciousness for British revolutionaries."

While the statement is undoubtedly true, it also contains within it an element of contradiction as it assumes that the species already exists in any significant numbers. What is crystal clear is that the historical impotence of the English working class is not even caused by the political

So far so good so different. By far the most interesting article which dominates the publication, taking up 50% of the journal, has an incomprehensible latin title, and in it Jan Wachla analyses the infamous impotence of the far left in Britain. His conclusion is that while still professing to be revolutionary communists (and there can be no other type), the far left has opted almost entirely for the 'reformist path'.

The fundamental flaw within the reformist project is that "it everywhere and at all times fails to direct its 'comrades' to the weakest link in our own imperialist chain. For French communists in the 1950's, that link was undoubtedly Algeria. For American communists in the 60's, it was Vietnam. For British communists, the link was, always has been and still is, and will likely continue to be, Ireland. Quite simply, to fail to grasp the Irish link is to fail to be a revolutionary, and to render the notion of party building a nonsense."

Put simply, for a 'genuine' communist party to recruit by side stepping the essential question, is to risk building a party populated almost entirely by non-communists! While without a doubt Ireland is the pivotal question, does this automatically represent the weakest link in the chain? As is demonstrated in the article, Marx himself could not have been more emphatic when he wrote in 1860:



In a review of the BBC's Inside Story programme about life in N.Ireland's Long Kesh the Sunday Times (25/11/90) likened Republicans to "those cheerful plucky characters of an old POW movie", whereas Loyalists "seemed confused, despairing and much more like routine cons." Astutely enough the same paper realised that, "the difference is one of political convictions."

# TO E NOT



French paratroopers march into Algiers

April 1972: the last retreat from the

violence itself. With exemplary logic it follows that if the implementation of revolutionary politics on the streets is not responsible for the confrontations, then the violence occurs due to the absence of revolutionary politics - or in the case of Red Action, any politics. It is no coincidence that the very same organisations who are quickest to condemn the simple direct tactics of an organisation like Anti-Fascist Action are the same card carrying members of the RSPCF (Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Fascists), who are quickest to celebrate any misfortune such

to legality at any price, so for them there is never "the common revolutionary dilemma between legal and illegal work", it is not true that a reaction against legality at any price is the polar approach. Anarchistic adventurers who prefer certain actions because they are illegal are only the flip side of the same coin, and neither one is a legitimate heir to the revolutionary tradition. Simply because both tendencies still allow the actuality of the law to retain its legitimacy in the eyes of those that upheld the law and more importantly in the eyes of those who refuse to be restricted by it rather than break it.

It is indeed ironic that anarchistic organisations of the ilk of Red Action, organisations that are so disdainful of Leninist theory are, by their direct confrontation with street fascism in Britain, most likely to come to know the necessity for a highly centralised, highly disciplined, vanguard party. Despite their avowed contempt for Leninism organisations like Red Action have the potential to produce comrades that will be amongst the first in this country to come to a profound understanding of Lenin's revolutionary practice - far more likely than Proletarian's esoteric scholars.

as Enniskillen or Loughall as a justification in itself, for their consistent condemnation of the most direct and simple tactic of them all - armed struggle. Of course, if you choose not to stand with the Republican movement against the common enemy then by default you are party to a collaboration that helps reinforce the common front sponsored by the capitalist class against the revolutionary nationalism of the IRA. Similarly, if any organisation is consistently reluctant to adopt direct tactics when faced by fascist aggression, while it is possible that any alternative tactic is preferred due to physical fear, in reality the instinctual choice of any alternative tactic is dictated principally by the inevitable illegality of the simple and direct act. While the marxist by name but reformist by nature hold fast

"When total communist fearlessness with regard to the state and the law is present the law and its calculable consequences are no greater (if also no smaller) importance than any other external fact of life with which it is necessary to reckon when deciding upon any course of action. The risk of breaking

open polemic

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# BE OR TO BE

I am not by the way, advocating the wholesale involvement of disillusioned and homeless communists into the ranks of Red Action (although their are conceivably worse courses of action for those at a loose end). On the contrary, Red Action's young recruits, will need one day, to be persuaded into the ranks of a 'revolutionary' British Communist Party, whereby the directness of Red Action's approach can be wedded to the profundity of Leninist theory. Before that happy day arrives Britain's revolutionary youth will need to be convinced that 'our' revolutionary theory has been tested by revolutionary praxis, and is not merely an intellectual by-product of our university campuses.

"For French communists in the 1950s, that link was undoubtedly Algeria. For American communists in the 60s it was Vietnam. For British communists, the link was, always has been and still is, and will likely continue to be, Ireland".

detractors from the Leninist alleg.

If a revolutionary movement is ever to be built in Britain, then to become and remain effective, the law will have to be broken. If the law is broken then activists will end up in jail. As stated before, it is not the flouting of the law that is in itself important, with the decision taken on the basis of expediency but also the attitude of the law breakers to it. Neither is there any 'merit or street cred' associated with a prison sentence, being in this case only a by product of political activity.

Any professional criminal or in RUC parlance, ordinary decent criminal (ODC), who having infringed the law and been apprehended will naturally be disappointed, but will also feel guilty without necessarily feeling any remorse. This is because he understands that he is being punished for breaking the law ('fair cop gov') and that it is no less valid for him than for everybody else, in the same way that most villains if they vote, vote for the party of law's order.

Revolutionaries by contrast, whose ideology is itself a rebellion against the legitimacy of the existing order, and the action itself being consistent with the ultimate aim, who have confidence in their moral, intellectual and political superiority, may feel disappointment, but feel neither guilt nor remorse.

Facists/loyalists who are being punished by the very state they sought inopportunistly to strengthen, are prone to doubt, confusion and fear (a considerable factor during interrogation).

So if 'revolutionary consciousness' is the key ingredient, if it is not instinctive, it can only develop from the practice of implementing revolutionary theory.

"Discover the truth through practice, again through practice verify and develop the truth. Start from perceptual knowledge and actively develop it into a rational knowledge, then start from rational knowledge and actively guide revolutionary practice to change both the subjective and objective world." (Mao Tse Tung)

So at best Wachia's assessment of Red Action, is flawed in that at best, he can only be half right as his conclusion is clearly in conflict with the initial introduction.

Red Action's alleged "disdain for theory" or our "lack of

respect" for the Leninist concept of the party is and always has been a disdain for theories that interpret the world in various ways, but who are unwilling or unable to change it. Either the 'correct theory' is not implemented, or one is constructed that renders change untenable, unnecessary or unwelcome.

"If you want knowledge you must take part in changing reality". (Mao Tse Tung)

As a result of displaying an unerring accuracy for the soft option, reality and the left, the left and the working class, are but distant cousins. Akin to sex experts who produce volumes on the correct sexual techniques, but who in private admit they find the idea of actual intercourse abhorrent. Like charlatans in any other field, they 'discover' old theories but because they are not personally involved in the business of changing reality, they are unable to add anything new, or even aspire to advance beyond that which is already known.

Must we rely on Irish nationalists to come to the British mainland to plant incendiary devices outside British Army recruitment offices? Are we British too civilised to conduct the revolutionary struggle in such a manner? Are Her Majesty's Loyal Communists too committed to parliamentary democracy to resort to such 'barbaric' acts? As the Irish revolutionary democrats have often explained 'one bomb in the British mainland is worth one hundred military targets in the six counties.' yet still we hide behind our 'theoretical' polemics of Soviet politics of the 1920's and 1930's. Shall we enter the new millennium producing still more of the same? For all their denunciations of Leninism and their disdain for theory it is the comrades of Red Action that seem less preoccupied with these old outmoded agendas. To the revolutionary left it must be said: By our jail sentences so shall we be judged!

As Wachia acknowledges, the orthodox defence of democratic centralism, "is a trite regurgitation of the principle itself, devoid of any recognition of development and change."

Democratic centralism as agreed by the priests of orthodoxy is the tool by which the revolutionary programme can be upheld against internal as well as external enemies." Criticism could be tolerated only as long as it does not come into conflict with the "revolutionary interest".

"The rub was that all too often (an omniscient leadership bordering on a faction) ruled such criticism out of order and against the revolutionary interest."

Wachia also accepts that the root of the problem is not mechanical but intellectual.

"It is perfectly conceivable that a local football club could arrange itself along impeccable lines of democratic centralism,

but this hardly makes them a revolutionary unit."

Furthermore, it should be added that the principle of democratic centralism is not worth the paper it is written on, if it is divorced from the fundamental essence of marxism - revolutionary action!

If a party consist of a hierarchy of superior beings, who order by decree but restrict all activity to mundane propaganda work, then there is no need for real cohesion or any internal democracy. Blind faith, spiced by apathy and indifference can be passed off as the appropriate relationship between the membership and the leadership. A kind of 'gentlemen's agreement' is struck which is based on complete trust. It attracts the type of recruit that will dutifully propagate 'the party line' based on the implicit understanding that he/she will never be asked to risk anything (i.e. career, lifestyle, freedom) worthwhile other than perhaps, his integrity or self-respect.

In a reciprocal fashion it is perfectly clear to the

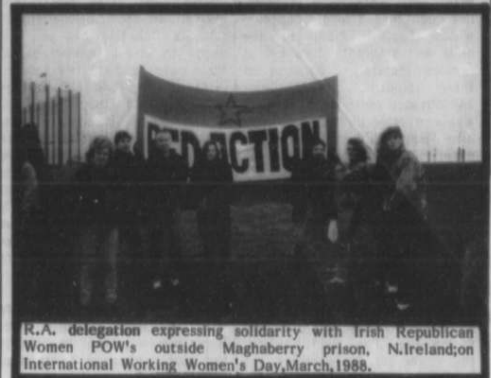
preferred in a way that in practice reinforces the stability of the system.

In contrast a genuine revolutionary party distinguishes itself from the bogus, the bourgeois, the opportunist, by the greater demands made by the party on its individual members.

And if the activity of every member is extended to every area of work, if every decision

the content and the material for its revolutionary activity, directly in its own situation: fons to be laid low, measures dictated by the needs of the struggle to be taken, the consequences of its own deeds drives it on." (Marx)

is it expected of the mass of the people to acknowledge at some unforeseen point, that the suppression of the workers' press, of the right to strike,



R.A. delegation expressing solidarity with Irish Republican Women POW's outside Maghaberry prison, N.Ireland; on International Working Women's Day, March, 1988.

by the party must result in actions, and these actions by their very nature have appreciable, physical, legal or moral risks for the membership, then there will be no hesitation in exposing any flaws in the strategy. Doubts will be voiced and strategies or tactics held up to the light and scrutinised. It also follows that if the strategy is not comprehensible, if what's being proposed is not clearly understood by the membership, then it is unlikely to be adopted, and even if adopted, implemented unevenly and without conviction.

While the entire membership decide on policy and strategy, it must be left to the elected leadership to decide within these parameters day to day tactics.

Once the proper relationship between the elected leadership and the active membership is established, democracy and centralism are not contrary - the latter is necessary, the former indispensable.

It must never be forgotten that the vanguard party of the vanguard class is essentially a combat party, and as such, the principal weapon against the capitalist order: "the weapon is nothing but the essence of the combatants themselves." (Hegel)

of the right of association and assembly, the censorship of their own opinions, to be entirely consistent with the pursuit of their own class interests? No? Then who decides? Above all, who is to determine when in the 'revolutionary interest' it has become necessary to substitute totalitarianism for democracy?

In contrast to the reformist views of social democracy, the true dialectic of social change is not through a majority to revolutionary tactics, but through revolutionary tactics to a majority. It therefore follows that any tactic that seeks to rein in or inhibit the development towards the enfranchisement of the immense majority, can be nothing but a reactionary reversal:

"Either the revolution must advance, at a rapid, stormy and resolute tempo break down all barriers with an iron hand, or it is quite soon thrown backward, behind its feeble point of departure and suppressed by counter revolution." (Rosa Luxemburg).

Once the revolution ceases to advance, it begins to retreat. The retreat signals that the counter revolution has in fact begun.

The self-emancipation of the working class is a declaration

But if the sharp theoretical criticisms by Marx, Engels and Lenin towards Bakunin and the Russian Narodniks are still relevant then Red Action's anarchistic approach cannot avoid lead to success. Red Action's inability or unwillingness to, "frankly reflect a thing in its totality, to reflect its essence, to reflect its inherent laws... to reconstruct the rich data of sense perception" (of which they have no shortage) "...of discarding the dross and selecting the essential, eliminating the false and retaining the true... in order to form a system of concepts and theories", is inevitably forging an impotence every bit as powerful as that created by Proletarian.

I have focused on these two organisations, Red Action and Proletarian, because in some sense they represent two poles of the one problem. While Red Action seems content to 'wallow' on the fringes of the first stage of cognitive development with little apparent interest in raising themselves to a theoretical plain, Proletarian (now defunct) sought to jump immediately into the rarefied air of 'pure' logic without first having dirtied their boots in the real world of sensory perception.

While Wachia sees the need to reassess the relationship between membership and leadership, paradoxically he appears happy with the equally shallow orthodox defence of the relationship between party and class.

In 'Bureaucracy in Context', which also appears in 'Open Polemic', John Stanley insists that, "we need to recognise that the dictatorship of the proletariat can take a variety of democratic and even totalitarian forms." If the term 'dictatorship of the proletariat' is to have any contemporary meaning, other than as a code word to distinguish one of them from 'one of us', then it can only mean the exclusive rule of the immense majority (with only the exploiters deprived of their political rights) in pursuit of their own interests.

"As soon as it is risen up, a class in which the revolutionary interests of society are concentrated finds

that we no longer wish to serve as instruments, is a fight for no masters, not new masters.

The advocates of an ideology, who unlike Marx, put no trust in the intellectual ability of the class, who anticipate, that at some stage decreed by them, the role of the immense majority will have to be subverted and replaced by the more enlightened rule of a minority, that the revolution to be saved, must be destroyed; are forging an impotence as great as any reformist as they themselves can never be trusted by the class.

A worker who fails to comprehend what the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie is in essence all about, is clearly no revolutionary. A revolutionary who fails to comprehend what the dictatorship of the proletariat is in essence all about is certainly no marxist.

the law should not be regarded any differently than the risk of missing a train connection when on an important journey."

As revolutionaries in Ireland will tell you, "the armed struggle is not a holy cow" - it is a tactic. So properly regarded the questions of legality and illegality for communists in Britain reduces itself to a mere question of tactics where the agents of the state, indeed the state itself, is seen merely as a power factor to be reckoned with which has no inherent natural right to determine our actions.

Ireland is the litmus test for revolutionaries. The use of physical force is the litmus test for anti-fascists. For all British revolutionaries worthy of the name the two issues - the employment of physical force in response to fascist aggression and the provision of political support for the use of force against the state really belong together - are in fact related, are in fact bound up in an indivisible dialectical unity.

The adoption and implementation of this approach to tactics, automatically provides a vital flexibility, but is indispensable in raising the revolutionary consciousness of working class youth.

It liberates the working class from an instinctive conformity with the status quo; is a rejection of our former subservience and acceptance of the capitalist state as the only natural environment, and so provides the vital contribution to complete the comprehensive self-education of any revolutionary (regardless of class origin or any other qualifications, real or imaginary).

So when Wachia comments, "To the revolutionary left it must be said: by our jail sentences must we be judged", though leaving himself open to charges of 'romanticism' he is still right. It is not just a simple case of 'vulgar macho posturing' as our mutual



In an advanced state of theoretical and organisational disorder

# WHO FEARS TO SPEAK...?

During a trip to Dublin late last year, I decided to take the opportunity to visit Kilmalham Jail, amongst the inhabitants of which had been the leaders of the 1916 Easter Rising, who were executed inside its grounds. The jail, after hard work by volunteers, has been turned into a museum which displays many of the cells and artefacts used by its famous inmates. Because of these inmates, the displays, and obvious sense of history, it was a worthwhile visit. It was also worthwhile if only to experience the enormous amount of revisionism and censorship which is the hallmark of the twenty-six county, Irish 'Free State'. We went on a guided tour of the jail for some 20 - 30 minutes, visiting the cells, escape routes etc of many of the leading Republicans who were captured fighting for the IRA during the 'Tan War', without the guide once mentioning the letters I-R-A-I. The same applied to the video shown. This revisionism has recently been brought to the fore with the 75th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising. The Free State government has found itself in the ludicrous position of actually attempting to suppress or ignore all references to the very event that was to give birth to its own existence.



James Connolly 1868-1916.

After Sinn Fein took the lead by forming what was meant to be a broad-based campaign called the 'Reclaim the Spirit of Easter 1916' committee, under the slogan of 'Who fears to speak...of Easter Week?' to promote the commemoration of the Rising; revisionists and apologists for the Free State in the media have been forced to respond, declaring that there is no link between the rebels of 1916 and the IRA of today. Due to this media coverage, the government found itself in a position where it had to respond in some way, and held a decidedly low key military

ceremony outside the GPO in Dublin. This was in stark contrast to the nationwide celebrations it conducted in 1966 on the 50th anniversary of the Rising, which was a very patriotic, almost quasi-republican affair; but was of course all safe bluff and bluster as the Nationalists in the Six Counties had not yet begun to assert themselves, as they were to do a few months later. Since 1968 and the re-emergence of the Republican movement in Ireland, aspects of history such as that of 1916 show up obvious contradictions in the very existence of the Free State itself and have, for this reason, become extremely embarrassing for the government. As the chairperson for the 'Reclaim the Spirit' initiative, artist Robert Ballagh said, "In the past cultural genocide was practised on the Irish. Now, however, this has slowly but surely changed to cultural suicide." He added, "I felt that certain values in our country were being abandoned. There seemed to be an attitude developing, particularly by people in positions of power, influence and privilege, feelings that somehow or other, being Irish was not something to be proud of."

It must be said though, that of all the figures involved in the uprising, it is Connolly who provokes the most controversy. James Connolly, born in Edinburgh in 1868, dedicated his life to the socialist and labour cause, and his writings are still regarded as some of the greatest produced by any Irish revolutionary socialist leader. He has been consistently attacked by many of the 'left' as turning his back on his marxist beliefs when he took part in the Easter Rising (a mainly nationalist affair) as attempting to swap armed nationalist rebellion, for mass working class action. But at the time, Connolly, along with Europe's first workers' militia, the Irish Citizen Army (formed to provide armed protection for workers involved in strike action) saw the period of time, when there was a World War, wide opposition to conscription, support for Home Rule, and large scale industrial unrest: as a time when their actions might be the spark that ignited the powder keg of people's anger on a nationwide scale. It is true that Connolly and his



Anti-Treaty IRA Volunteers patrol a Dublin street during the campaigns against the 'Staters'.

ICA comrades had "thrown in their lot" with the nationalist, Irish volunteers; however, as the following quote clearly illustrates, he was under no illusions, "If you remove the English army tomorrow and hoist the green flag over Dublin Castle...unless you set about the organisation of the socialist republic your efforts will be in vain." Connolly wasn't 'perfect', and must by no means be glorified nor his mistakes glossed over. However, his assertion of the primary role of the working class and socialism amongst all aspects of the nationalist revolution, his clear rejection of any deals with the capitalists over subjects such as partition, and his foresight regarding the rebellion are just some of his contributions that the working class internationally, but especially in Ireland and Britain should be eternally grateful for. His judgement regarding the rebellion (despite a gap that he had not originally envisaged, before the people rose) was proven to have been correct, as his execution along with that of 14 others and the eventual return of the prisoners involved in the rebellion was indeed to prove to be the catalyst that brought about mass support for Sinn Fein and the newborn IRA in their war against the British during the early twenties, who were forced to hand over the Twenty-six counties which now constitute the Irish 'Free State'. So who are the rightful, present-day inheritors of

those events in 1916 and the traditions of James Connolly? Sinn Fein, through their paper, An Phoblacht/Republican News, rightfully claim that the tradition of the Irish Volunteers is being carried on today in the form of the guerrilla campaign being waged by the Provisional IRA. They have rightfully identified the gross theoretical gymnastics being performed by the apologists for the state in both the media, and political parties such as Fianna Fail, Fianna Gael, Labour party, Workers Party etc etc. they also launched a scathing attack on the Trade Union and Labour movements actions after the death of Connolly up to the present day, citing how it had failed to come out for Irish self-determination and had abandoned the national question. This being true, it must also be recognised however, that the continuing failure of Sinn Fein itself, to place the social issue up alongside that of the national question will have disastrous consequences for the long-term development of the liberation struggle, which was illustrated in dramatic fashion with their poor showing during the last Free State elections. During the present phase of the struggle, one of the few leaders to emerge who has had the vision to effectively combine the importance of the national and the social questions in the Connolly tradition, has been Seamus Costello, who was tragically gunned down by supporters of the Workers Party in 1977. The party he left behind and

had been central in constructing, the Irish Republican Socialist Party, have at times, (when not riven with internal disputes or lack of political leadership, clarity or vision) attempted to keep that tradition alive. Whether they will be able to do so, given the enormous odds stacked against them, remains, as we have said before, to be seen - though we wish them well.

What cannot be in doubt, however, is that the Irish struggle is crying out for a development in the revolutionary politics of that struggle that is every bit as forceful and dynamic as that of the military campaign being waged, principally, by the IRA. Only the full integration of a socialist/communist perspective into that struggle will, we believe, offer the way through the present impasse in the political situation. So where do the 'left' in both Ireland and Britain figure in all of this? As a Red Action supporter in Dublin, who has worked consistently on the issue of anti-extradition pointed out in a letter to AP/RN, while, "there is an urgent need to revamp the whole extradition campaign...its a pity that the 'lefty' groups who attach themselves to the marches to sell their papers don't spend as much time and energy advancing the campaign as they do trying to sell their papers. Its also a pity that these groups can print article after article telling us where the campaign is going wrong, but still cannot offer any practical assistance. But then again, lengthy campaigns such as extradition probably have no opportunistic value to these groups." And there lies the key; it is only through principled, consistent and above all practical work, that the politics and ideas of socialist activists will be given any respect or currency amongst the Republican movement and its supporters. The same has to be said in

Britain about such groups as the Socialist Workers Party, who printed an article entitled, "Is this the way to beat the Tories?" after the death of MP Ian Gow at the hands of an IRA car bomb. Well, just as the SWP/Labour party were about to be swept to power and give the Irish back their Six Counties, the nasty old IRA go and muck everything up! Is it any surprise, that given this type of bullshit and the fact that thanks to the likes of the SWP, the Irish people have fought almost single handedly for the last 20 years, that many in the struggle are extremely cynical about the politics, motivations and ambitions of the left?



Socialist Worker after M.P. Ian Gow's execution.

The violence of the IRA/INLA is the voice of an oppressed people and a direct attack on the interests of our own ruling classes, and it is for that reason that a successful conclusion to the war in Ireland is the key to our own self-emancipation in Britain: that Red Action stands fully behind their actions. It is also why, on the 75th anniversary of those momentous events in Dublin, and the 10th anniversary of the supreme sacrifice made by the '81 hunger strikers, that Red Action has been working to bring about the existence of an anti-imperialist coalition, to coordinate the efforts of all those in Britain who are working for the self-determination of the Irish People. We urge you to join us in attempting to achieve its success.

## MAJOR'S OBITUARY

The Poll Tax has already steamrollered one Tory Prime Minister; there is now a good chance that it will demolish a second. The government has announced the death of the Poll Tax: political commentators have written its obituary. Unfortunately, when the Tories organised the funeral, there was no body in the coffin. They have had it carefully embalmed and preserved within the new proposals for a form of property tax. Within the new tax, there are two components, a property tax and an amputated version of the 'per head' element to be levied at

a flat rate - that is, a Poll Tax. Instead of the flat rate being levied on all adults regardless of income, there is to be an arbitrary assumption built in to the new tax to the effect that each household contains two people; households with only a single tenant will receive a 25% rebate. For the majority of households therefore, the revised 'personal element' will be 50% instead of 100% under the Poll Tax. The other 50% in the case of the typical household, will be raised by the new form of property tax. Applying some simple arithmetic it appears

that people living alone will now pay 75% of the new tax, and couples 100%, i.e. 50% each. It follows that the 'personal element', i.e. the Poll Tax element, will for most people, remain the most important factor - not the size of the property they live in or the size of their income. The rich get through the net again. The tax will be property banded and so 'related' to wealth, but those in the top band will pay no more than approximately twice as much as those in the lowest band. Those living in stately homes will be reassured to know that they will pay no more than twice as much as those living in the tiniest bedsit. The top band ends at £160,000 so that the exceedingly rich remain unmolested. The single millionaire will pay the same as a couple living on a pension in some inner-city rathole. In case the aristocracy's confidence in the government should still be shaken, the Tories have announced a special 'transitional relief' scheme which will target public money in the form of rebates only to those who lose as a result of the abolition of the Poll Tax. Such people will only be the very wealthiest, living in the most lavish

properties. Three or more people living in a mansion will therefore be paying less per head than one person living in a council flat. Because the personal or Poll Tax element has been retained, the absurd principle that people should pay a tax even when they have no income at all is preserved. For example, in households where one partner looks after the kids and the other works, both pay the tax. This was perhaps the single most resented feature of the Poll Tax - and it has been retained to placate the fury of the Tory right wing who cannot bear to see the poor not being punished for their poverty. The transparent desire to protect the rich has resulted in the dismissal of a straightforward property tax in favour of a half-baked dog's dinner. The panic stricken announcement of the £140 subsidy from central funds announced during the budget does nothing to alleviate the harshness and reactionary nature of the tax. On the contrary - the millionaire will receive the full £140 rebate, yet those on Income Support or the pensioner will receive only a fraction of this amount.



Striking against the poll tax in Greenwich

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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.

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# GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Pro-capitalist theorists have lately been busy proclaiming the 'end of history' - by which they mean that following the collapse of Stalinism, ideological conflict has been resolved by the triumph of capitalism and consequently, that the world will in future consist entirely of countries peacefully seeking to emulate cosy, 'liberal' free-market democracies. This idea is particularly associated with the name of Francis Fukuyama, an American historian, who got an enormous amount of media mileage out of the idea about a year ago. As Mr Fukuyama has now found out following the Gulf War, a year is a long time in history, and it is now apparent that, contrary to his thesis, an entirely new historical era is only just beginning in the former Stalinist states, including Russia. As Marx asserted 150 years ago, all history is the history of class struggle and consequently history will continue to be made so long as class societies, of which capitalism is one, continue to exist.



A Polish pensioner barter her few possessions for food.

With this in mind, and following articles in recent editions of Red Action on the likely consequences of the conversion of Stalinist centrally-controlled economies into dynamic capitalist concerns with happy workers drinking Coca-Cola, the Red Action Economic Correspondent has kept a keen eye on progress so far. Readers will recall that the downfall of the Communist Party and the prospect of free-market capitalism within the Eastern Bloc was hailed as a New Dawn by Western politicians and the press alike. Red Action was more cautious, pointing out the probable re-emergence of almost extinct life-forms such as fascist peasant parties, anti-semitic organisations, and violent nationalist and regional divisions - all too familiar historical entities - within the framework of the glorious capitalist liberation. In economic terms, it was asserted that it was far more likely that such countries as Poland would face the prospect of becoming not new West Germany or Japan, but new Columbia or Peru, or, if they were very lucky, new Taiwan. That is, the countries of the Eastern Bloc will serve as sources of cheap labour and raw materials to the West (an old-fashioned colonial relationship based on deindustrialisation), or export cheap manufactured goods on the basis of a highly-skilled, low cost labour force. A certain amount of disillusionment with the new capitalist mechanisms was predicted. The expectations of the propagandists have been confounded at the outset by the re-election of communist regimes in Albania, Bulgaria, Serbia and beneath a light disguise, Romania. Elsewhere, we can also be fairly sure that this prediction has been confirmed. The current Polish government, with its newly-elected President Lech Walesa, was the first and most enthusiastic in rejecting the Stalinist model and embracing capitalism. The

Polish Presidential elections proved a farce with Walesa being suspected of a strong interest in resurrecting the traditions of personal, authoritarian, right-wing government that existed in Poland before the war. He keeps a statue of the pre-war dictator Marshal Pilsudski in his office. Walesa himself has already exploited the new wave of anti-semitism that has emerged since the overthrow of the old Stalinist regime, calling for what he terms "true Poles" (ie not Jews) to take power; his manifesto is for a return to a Nationalist, Catholic Poland. Walesa's only rival was a certifiable businessman from Canada with a shady past. Less than 50% of Poles turned out to vote in what had become a meaningless charade with a barely discernible democratic content. The hopes for a new freedom and popular democracy have already been exploded. "Solidarity", having propagated the idea of a 'limited' revolution, has become a state institution with its leadership at each others' throats in the struggle for power. Its membership has slumped from 10 million at the last Congress to 2 million now. More worrying is the lack of democratic structures and organisations within Polish political life. It does not require any extraordinary degree of political foresight to see that an authoritarian political structure is being constructed to preside over market forces, which will eventually replace the old Stalinist authoritarian structure which presided over a central command economy. The liberation of the Polish working class is still far off. The Polish economy has been converted from a stagnant backwater into a disaster zone.

Prices in 1990 rose by 700%. Basic items such as bread rose 15-fold in price. As part of the IMF deal with Poland, the huge government subsidies for food and other essentials have been withdrawn. Food prices, and those of other essentials, have rocketed. Real wages have dropped by 40% in a few months. Industrial output is down by 30%. Unemployment has risen from 8,000 in December 1989 to one million and climbing. Workers at the Gdansk shipyard have been on strike against attempts at privatisation.

The condition of Poland reflects that of all the recently de-stalinised regimes, including Russia itself. The spectre of an artificial "famine" has risen in Russia due to the massive inflation in food prices - speculators sell only to those with money. In Hungary, previously subsidised food prices have shot up to surrealistic levels, threatening the pro-capitalist Centre-Right government - overall, inflation stands at 50% and may soon develop into the hyper-inflation that Germany experienced in the 1920s. In Romania the chaos is descending into civil war between Romanian and Hungarian ethnic groups. In November last year, the government put Romania on the "fast-track" to capitalism, decreasing overnight price rises of up to 250% coupled with a freeze on wages - the usual log-sided form of "liberalisation". This is the reality of the "free market", the supposed liberator of the people. The "most favoured case" of the West, East Germany, hatching under the wing of the giant West German economy, has proved the most bitter disappointment of all. For all the talk of painless regeneration, East Germany has become nothing more than an impoverished captive market for the goods of West German businessmen. Half the East German working population are expected to lose their jobs during the current year. The market in other East European states for East German goods has vanished. Strikes, protests and demonstrations threaten to equal those that originally brought down the Stalinist regime. As one Minister said, "last year's anti-socialist revolution is turning into this year's social revolution." The

head of the West German authority given the task of overseeing the transition to prosperous capitalism predicts: "We are not simply on a downward curve: we are looking at a black hole." So far from proving the saviour of the W German economy as was so widely predicted, the unification programme has caused the growth of the W German economy to fall and has reversed the customary balance of trade surplus. Despite the cost having been so great, it is not possible to say that the Eastern European countries have experienced anything more than a political revolution - a social revolution is still on the agenda. Throughout Eastern Europe, the same bureaucracies and power elites are still in control plus or minus certain changes in personnel and regressing to the political conditions of the inter-war years. These ruling elites are endeavouring to integrate their regimes into the more powerful capitalist economies, not as a means to democratise their political structures or to radicalise social relations, but to stabilise their own positions. The legitimacy of Stalinist ruling elites were opposed beyond the point where even the most elaborate forms of security and repression could prevent the progressive disintegration of social and economic equilibrium. For the ruling strata and their beneficiaries, a desperate conversion to the ideologies of the market became the only way in which their authority could be preserved. How swiftly and easily the apostles of "marxism" in the Eastern Bloc Communist Parties became born again capitalists! The former party man who managed his factory for the state which in return

guaranteed his position through a network of coercive bureaucracies, now seeks to retain his privileges as the boss of a privatised firm. The Stalinist becomes a social democrat; the party congress becomes a parliament. But the position of the working class remains unchanged: still deprived of power and still without an effective democratic voice and with worse conditions and fewer jobs. The true nature of Eastern European, or as it is sometimes called, "actually existing socialism", is demonstrated by the way in which one system of class-exploitation has been exchanged, almost imperceptibly in social terms, for another. It is apparent that western capitalism and East European "socialism" did not represent contradictory social/political systems and ideologies after all. The most important characteristic of both is that they depend on the exploitation of the labour of the working class by a ruling elite and their class-confederates. The reaction of prosperous western capitalism to its new-found poor relations is one of parasitism and occasional petty charity. All the trumped-up stories of eager western businessmen pouring money and opportunities into re-vitalised eastern economies have vanished, being replaced by scornful descriptions of incompetence, desolation and waste. With Britain and the US already in recession, W Germany facing the huge bills of reunification and a slowing economy, there will be no handouts or grandiose "Marshall Plans" such as regenerated western european capitalism after the war. There will be none of the promised hi-tech, regenerating

investment. Although East-European goods are forbidden free access to western markets, western capital has been guaranteed free movement in and out of the East - except that apart from the level of small-scale parasitism, it isn't moving. The severe political and social disintegration facing Eastern Europe will deter the interest of those who would otherwise consider the possibilities of exploiting a demoralised, low-wage workforce. In the longer term, economically, as well as politically, Eastern Europe is on its way back to the conditions of the inter-war period, when German, British, French and Italian companies controlled the area's mineral resources and agriculture, and prevented local industrial development. As marxists insisted against the fatuous triumphalism that accompanied the overthrow of Stalinism, there is a great deal of history left in the class struggle yet.

However, not all is doom and gloom. In Poland, sales of yuppy cars, Volkswagens and BMWs, are booming. The new capitalist class, though small, is prospering. The workers' sacrifices have not been in vain. And there is some good news for the thousands thrown out of work. As the Tories promised, new export opportunities for British expertise are materialising. The Department of Employment has been sending out officials to Poland to advise on solutions to the problems created by the new armies of unemployed. Britain is exporting UB 40s. Who said that the Tory economic miracle is over?

## MAJORS - OBITUARY

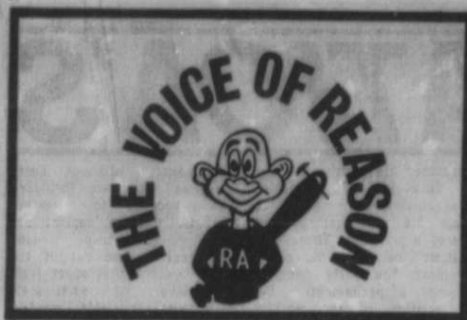
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The £140 is therefore designed by the government to target public money at the wealthiest sections of society. It is a rebate that falls steeply in worth the less money you have. Moreover, it is to be funded by another flat rate tax on goods, VAT, which once again hits those with least money hardest. It is difficult to imagine a more reactionary form of taxation than the Poll Tax bills for the forthcoming year will represent - incorporating as they do a rebate of this kind that can only be claimed if you are already relatively well-off - or to imagine a more corrupt and desperate measure to bribe the better-off prior to an election. Yet the most important immediate fact to be faced is that the Poll Tax is to be with us for at least a further two years. The government 'hope' that the new proposals will be introduced in 1993; councils have already said that this seems unlikely. The poorest sections of society will continue to be criminalised for the crime of not having enough money to live on. They will continue to be harassed with threatening letters from ruthless councils. They will continue to be dragged before the courts to be threatened with bailiffs and imprisonment. Council offices themselves will continue to operate in a state of chaos; councils will be driven to cut the services they provide nearer to the bone and finally to implement full-scale amputations. The Anti-Poll Tax movement

must therefore concentrate its mind on the realities of the next two, or maybe three or four, years. Our aim must be to smash to Poll Tax so completely that the government's timetable becomes academic. There is a real prospect that an accelerated campaign of non-payment will kick the Tories' strategy of compromise and delay from under them. The next practical task of the movement will be to defend and support those non-payers who will have warrants of commitment issued against them by the courts and who may be facing jail sentences. At the present time, it is not clear how hard magistrates are prepared to go in. The biggest victory of the Anti-Poll Tax Unions so far has been to effectively defuse the intimidation threatened by the use of bailiffs. In forming anti-bailiff groups and most important, in disseminating information concerning peoples' rights, the average bailiff profile has so far been very low. It appears that relatively few cases of bailiffs strong-arming their way into people's homes have been reported, while there are certainly a number of areas that the bailiffs have informed councils they will refuse to enter. Even the courts have occasionally ruled against them, forcing them to return goods, or finding non-payers not guilty of assaulting bailiffs who have entered their home. To destroy the base of non-payment, draconian new powers would have needed to have been granted to the bailiffs, and councils generally and the government in particular have so far bottled out of a decisive confrontation. It was at this point that active extra-legal action (bailiff-bashing) could have played an indispensable role in maintaining the momentum of the movement and possibly led

to a change in tactics and direction. Yet the decision to scrap the Poll Tax in its present form signals a crucial lack of political will on the part of the Tories. How this lack of will transmits itself to the magistrates court in relation to jailings still remains to be seen. Yet once again, if the base of non-payment is to be destroyed, magistrates and the government behind them, will have to be prepared to go on a jailing spree. A determined stand by Anti-Poll Tax Unions in support of non-payers in this situation, both inside and outside the courts, will be absolutely vital. It is true that the government's handling of the Poll Tax from the very beginning has resembled a succession of scenes from a Carry On up the Poll Tax Christmas Panto, and that there can't be many in the Anti-Poll Tax movement who have failed to have had a good few laughs at the sheer incompetence of it all. It still has to be remembered that it is the most reactionary single piece of legislation that the Tories have introduced; and that they are far from giving up yet. We cannot afford to forget that the central aim of the Tories remains the destruction of publicly-funded local services and the traditions of local government that underpin them. The Poll Tax, for all its savagery, for all the misery it has caused, has been only a means to that end. The message to all Anti-poll Tax groups and non-payers throughout the country must be: save the celebrations; there is a lot more work to be done before the principles and intent of the Poll Tax are finally buried. THE CAMPAIGN OF NON-PAYMENT MUST CONTINUE!





First there is Cleveland, then there is Rochdale - and now the Orkneys. Is it not obvious that there is something seriously wrong with the way in which Social Service Departments operate? At a recent meeting of the Social Workers professional body last week, they said that they must treat the child's welfare as the paramount concern and that they didn't have the forensic skills to uncover the evidence. Here, it would appear, is the crux of the problem. Social workers move into action when (often vague) allegations are made, not knowing or caring if there is any evidence to support them. What evidence there is often borders on the farcical. In the Orkneys case, an elderly priest with a heart condition and a colostomy bag was alleged to have repeatedly forced children to commit sexual acts with him, out in the open during the middle of a winter's night with the children's parents looking on - in a latitude close to that of Iceland! The 'ritual music' accompanying these acts was alleged, in a particularly sinister revelation, to have been provided - not by Black Sabbath, Guns and Roses or Judas Priest but by - Kylie Minogue!

It is hard to believe that the Tories can elect as a leader someone who tucks his shirt inside his underpants. This is a practice most of us stopped before we went to primary school. Besides this sartorial oddity, he seems to have the most appalling memory; he can't remember how many 'O' levels he took nor how many he got. Now anyone who has taken 'O' levels knows that they are something you just don't forget. After all, it takes 2 year's study to get them and then a 2-3 month wait for the results. This is a process which is bound to imprint itself on your memory. It seems that there may be more to it than this. In 1989, while Foreign Secretary, Major phoned his old school and requested that his examination results should be put in the County archives where an 'indefinite closure' has been put on them. However, there may be an innocent explanation. Absent-mindedness apparently runs in the family. Terry Major-Ball, the Prime Minister's brother, has disclosed that, "I've a bit of a grasshopper mind. I tend to call my wife 'John' at times." What our readers demand to know, is, at what times does Terry like to imagine that his wife is his brother? Exactly how small was that Brixton flat? Does this account for the apparently estranged relationship that now exists between the brothers? Will 'Terrygate' topple the emulsion grise?

## RED ACTION OUT OF THE CLOSET!

**Scene 1** A pub in Euston. Four members of the Birmingham N.F. are sitting down having a drink. They had travelled down to London to attack the Hands Off Ireland march, but couldn't find it. As the explained this to a couple of likely lads who had joined the four at the table. There then followed two hours of anecdote swapping and back slapping and pint buying. During the conversation it was evident that the new comers thought at present unaligned were possibly even more radical than the frontiers. As the evening wore on, the company was again reduced to four, where upon one of the likely lads enquired casually, "have you ever heard of Red Action?". Two baldy heads nodded eagerly and leaned forward in anticipation. "Why?". A pause - "cos you're talking to them". A pause pregnant with suspense while the penny dropped. Without looking at each other the two fascists stood up and left the pub without another word at a speed that would have put Linford Christie to shame.

**Scene 2** A pub in South London. A former right-wing activist is explaining why he is no longer an enthusiast. In doing so he recalled an incident, when he and Ian Stewart (he of Screwdriver fame), were turned over by reds in Finsbury Park in the mid '80s. It had apparently contributed to a political change of heart. The problem was as he explained "Red Action were all in the closet". All eyebrows raise in unison. "You mean? No I mean they come out of fucking nowhere". Pointing to a drinking companion across the table he went on breathlessly "for all I know you could be in Red Action". He then turned to an school chum eyed him suspiciously and said, "for all I know, you could be in fuckin' Red Action as well." Perhaps he's just being paranoid, but unless we make all the stories up, maybe he's got the right to be.

The curious case of Christine Chapman begs many questions of the Race Relations Industry. Ms Chapman is a former Equal Opportunities officer with the National Union of Teachers and the headmistress of a mainly asian boys school. The only such headmistress in the country. She has been found guilty of racial discrimination by an industrial tribunal. The tribunal said, "there has been no discrimination, racial or otherwise." So if this was the case, what was she guilty of? According to the majority of the tribunal (3-1) the explanation goes like this: "We all think that Ms Chapman's conscious attitude to race is impeccable, but two of us think that sub-consciously or unconsciously she was affected by the fact that the applicant was black." So what in effect has happened is that although no evidence of racial discrimination has come to light, the members of the tribunal looked into Ms Chapman's head and found a couple of dodgy attitudes lurking around with intent and on that basis found her guilty. Oh marvellous - people who spend time promoting a healthy racial climate are, without realising it, doing exactly the opposite! With logic such as this, it makes you long for the 'sanity' of a Sun editorial.

"A lot of us felt very uncomfortable when the orders came down to take the heat of the KGB and apply it instead to what was called the 'far and out left', which turned out to be an assortment of ragbag political groups like the Socialist Workers Party, and the Workers Revolutionary Party which despite their frightening names, were about as dangerous as a pond full of ducks."

Peter Wright, retired MIS officer. (Independent. 25/3/91).

Here is a late entry for the Daily Telegraph 'British Justice is the best in the world' competition. Sinn Fein member Danny Morrison has recently been sentenced to eight years for falsely imprisoning informer Sandy Lynch for a few hours. What then would be the appropriate sentence for falsely imprisoning six men for sixteen years? Answers please, to 'Sir' Michael Havers, George, 'my word is my bond' Read, 'Dr' Frank Skuse etc.

## TOLD YOU SO!

"The initiative (to dismantle Apartheid) does not represent a change of heart on behalf of the ruling class merely a change of tactics".  
Red Action Issue no.55, Feb-Apr 1990.

"Apartheid rightfully came to be regarded as one of the most discredited and evil systems since Nazi doctrine. We now see an apparent change of heart, but of course it's just a change of strategy".  
Ronnie Kasrila former head of intelligence of the ANC's military wing (Umkhonto we Sizwe), 27/4/91.

"Already surrounded by enemies on all sides from the black counter-revolutionary Inkatha, to the openly fascist AWB, and regardless of any ceasefire between the ANC and the State, if they (the black working-class) have weapons they should keep them, it would indeed be prudent to acquire more".  
Red Action Issue no.55, Feb-Apr 1990.

"Strong political leadership is the answer. But it must not be the ANC, it must be non-sectarian and community based. The community must start saving up money in order to collect weapons".  
Ronnie Kasrila, from the same interview, on his plans for armed self-defence units in the black townships.

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### EAST LONDON-CONTD

Four days later E.London AFA came back with a reply, a 40-strong picket and leaflet of the pub which again forced it to shutdown. Since then the pub has been regularly monitored and the manager appears to have got the message, that on the question of fascism there can be no neutrality. Either you are pro-fascist or anti-fascist there is no middle ground and none will be accepted. At the time of going to press the BNP appear to have lost this prestigious facility. While this represents progress our work in the borough has barely begun.

### SOUTH LONDON-CONTD

Green. This policy will like our intervention in Bethnal Green will be bitterly denounced by the same organisations who would claim that "The Fascists are not a problem". They insist that confronting the fascists does nothing but provoke them. Reality proves the opposite is true. A strategy of tolerance and appeasement is seen by the racists for what it is, a sign of weakness. It only encourages the sponsors of the violence and their young converts to believe that they can get away with anything, murder included. When the youthful killers of Rolan Adams appeared in court they giggled in the dock. The court-house was also covered in neo-nazi stickers. This behaviour might be interpreted by some as a lack of respect for the forces of law and order, but should be properly

seen as an expression of contempt by them for all of us.

Who the killer is does not appear to be in doubt, so that is where the blame ultimately rests. The responsibility must be shared between the ideological sponsors and the weasel words of the apologists on the one hand, and the appeasers on the other, who between them help prepare future killing grounds. The race attacks and Fascists within the community must be flushed out, identified and isolated. If we do not stand together now then we will stand apart, "moderates" occupying the yellow corner, the militants, the red.

It is a simple case of either or. Either together we identify and isolate them or the state will identify and isolate us. There are a couple of other factors which must be taken into consideration.

If a Labour government is elected in the Autumn and predictably fail to find a remedy for chronic unemployment simply because the system is terminally ill, the media will blame "the left", immigrants will be accused of causing unemployment etc. In such a climate Fascist solutions cannot fail to achieve greater currency. If we cannot stop them when they are small, it is naive to believe that somehow we can stop them when they are strong.

When the neo-nazis opened their HQ in Welling they threw down the gauntlet to every individual Black and Asian, every progressive and left-wing organisation in the area. 'Do your worst' was the challenge. The march on the 27th was the second

in two years. Because of the murder, and the fact that the situation was deteriorating generally this march was five times bigger than the last one. As on the previous occasion the organisers appealed to the authorities. They appealed to the police. Their appeals were ignored. A protest march once a year will not cause the shop to close. If the entire Anti-Fascist movement accepts the challenge we must be seen to finish the job this time. If we fail again the price paid will be high, for if the racist/fascist influence in South East London is confronted but not crushed it will as a result be strengthened. Their morale will be strengthened. The race attacks will multiply. Next year or the year after there will be other marches, because there will be other funerals. That is how the road runs.

On Saturday 27th April The Wild Fowler was closed. It should stay closed until either the management and the brewery decide the pub is to become a facility for everybody in the community, or the anti-fascists, black and white cause it to become a facility for nobody. Appeals to the police or lobbies of the council will not close the shop, the only people we need convince to close the hate factory are the only people that use it. The members of the British National Party. Everything else is simple propaganda, here, and here only is where the pressure must be applied.

### HERTS-CONTD

Norman Lamont some hints at budget time. We then made our way to the meeting itself, cunningly emerging from a Brookside type estate to the astonishment of two NF rookies who were keeping their



Since AFA declared war on the race attackers running amok in Tower Hamlets last April, BNP 'hard man' Tony Lecomber has had a torrid twelve months. Hospitalised at least once ('you can't top a Grolsch') he has been on the floor so much he has been nicknamed 'tarmac'. Arrested on three occasions he currently faces charges, arising from separate incidents, of ABH and affray.

eyes peeled along the main road. In answer to our sophisticated interrogation techniques, i.e. "are you fash?" one quickly answered no and the other yes. They were told to piss off and not do it again. By this time we were in the road leading to the school. At the gates was a picket organised by the SWP,

attended by the police. The police, believing we were fascists (we must look like the master race) opened the gates to let us in. Elements of the NF - who were already in the school - came outside to greet what they obviously believed were local electors eager to hear the word. Leading Nazi Ian Anderson (how could you be so naive, Ian!) stepped forward to shake hands. He and several other NF notables quickly hit the floor while the rest ran back to the safety of the hall. We removed to the pub next door to await their exit. With all anti-fascist elements now united with a stiffening of local people - including one lad with a rottweiler the size of a pit pony - the fascists decided to split into two groups. The London NF contingent, including the 'leaders' needless to say, crammed themselves into their team coach and were driven away under heavy police escort. This left the locals and those who had thoughtlessly parked their cars outside the pub to fend for themselves. And believe you me, they didn't look too happy about it. Surrounded by police, they edged down the road. They were attacked anyway; the police began to lose it; the fascists began to panic. Their strutting turned into nervous little dances of sheer terror. One local elderly woman whose husband had been in the battle of Cable Street, started to batter them with her handbag. Crushing into their cars like so much human pulp (no-one wanted to walk!), they drove away looking very stupid with only the police intervention to thank for their escape. Last to leave was getaway artist

John Hill who was shaking too much to start his car - he had to get out and look under the bonnet! Back home in their pubs, what do these people tell their mates??? Reviewing the day, it has to be said that it was very successful, though marred by the arrest and charging of four anti-fascists. Naturally, they will continue to receive our support. Not only had the NF contingent and their election 'strategy' been thoroughly demoralised, but the anti-fascist contingent gained widespread local support with many men, women and youth, joining our picket of the school. One local man who brought his kids along, spoke for many when he said that "those scum aren't welcome around here". In particular, Red Action feels that, through our intervention, a protest action which had the potential at best to provide the NF with the sort of hands-off slanging that only serves to bolster their confidence and morale and at worst with an opportunity to smack a couple of lefties, was turned into a hands-on rout of the fascists. The day's events provided a total vindication of the strategy of physical and ideological confrontation. Attempting to develop only one element in this strategy is like trying to walk on one leg; both are essential to ensure real progress. A county-wide meeting has been arranged to bring together all anti-fascists in a single organisation so that next time we will be even better prepared and, any other local racist/fascist groups can expect a similar rough ride. With any luck, a report of this meeting and further developments will be carried in the next edition of Red Action.