

RED ACTION

Issue No.73 Spring 1996 — £1

Patriot Games

Red Action analyses the motives of the self-styled Commander of the SNLA

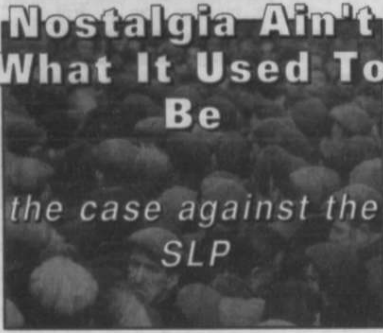
Pages 12-13



Nostalgia Ain't What It Used To Be

the case against the SLP

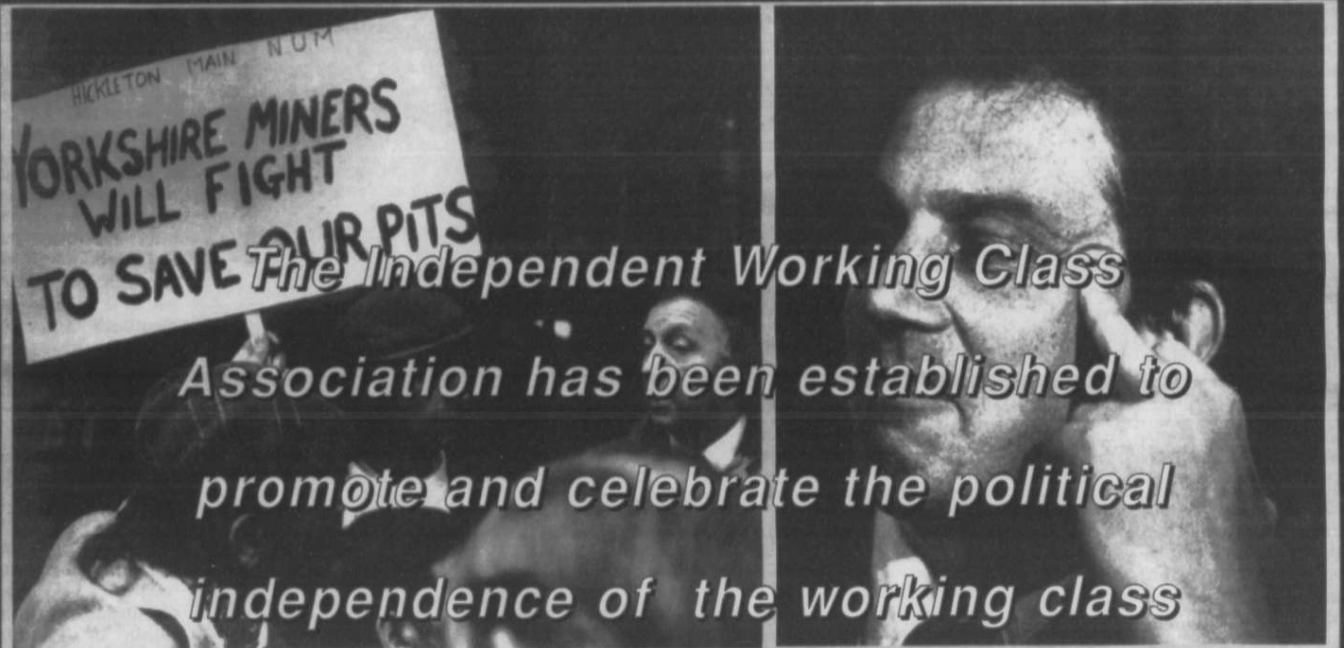
Centre Pages



A Lie Too Far

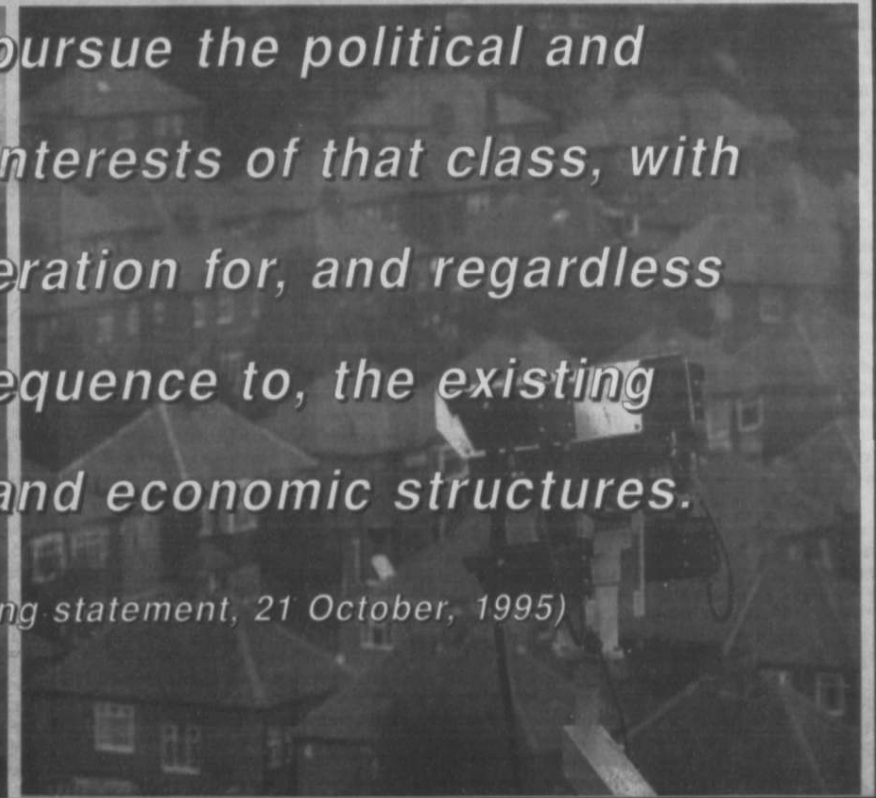
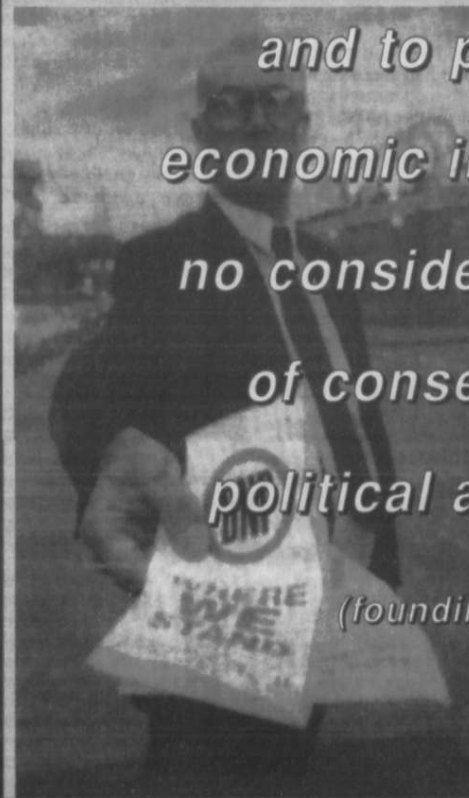
The Rise and Demise of London Saoirse

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and to pursue the political and economic interests of that class, with no consideration for, and regardless of consequence to, the existing political and economic structures.

(founding statement, 21 October, 1995)



Notice to Quit

For a period spanning two years, Leeds AFA and, in particular, a prominent member of that branch have been the subject of a campaign mounted by elements of the left that have cast doubts on the individual and the branch's integrity. Much of the source material emanated from independent researcher Larry O'Hara.

In a series of articles and pamphlets he questioned the loyalty and motives of Paul B. While never actually making the allegation directly that Paul was an MI5/SB operative or asset, the 'evidence' presented by O'Hara all pointed in this direction and he was aware that precisely this conclusion would be drawn by others. As indeed it was. And so the campaign of innuendo gathered momentum. Through all of this, Paul maintained a dignified silence. Unfortunately, far from deterring his critics, his silence gave them courage.

London AFA, who are familiar with the mentality of the hate campaigners, watched the situation with interest, and only decided to step in when it became clear that far from abating the witch-hunt had begun to implicate AFA as an organisation.

Internal Affairs

London AFA advised Leeds that it would now be prudent to provide the evidence that would allow AFA to refute the charges nationally. Somewhat reluctantly, because they considered that they had more important business on their agenda, they agreed. When the news leaked that AFA was to hold an inquiry, the campaigners were ecstatic, feeling that they had been vindicated. In this flush of triumphalism, the accusations previously whispered, were now publicly proclaimed in face-to face confrontations.

The subsequent incidents proved this forthright line of attack to be, shall we say, misjudged.

In the interim, London AFA invited Larry O'Hara to contribute anyway he could toward an equitable solution. He was more than happy to do so.

In a free and frank exchange, he was invited to prove his case; habeus corpus, produce the body. He was unable to do so. Some of the central planks to his conspiratorial edifice were discarded by mutual agreement. We parted on the understanding that the result of the inquiry, barring a confession from Leeds, was now a forgone conclusion. It would not be contested by him, and he would let the

matter drop.

Lo and behold, the Spring edition of Green Anarchist, who have been a predictable source of disinformation on this and related issues for some time, devoted a full page to the Leeds affair.

This was done with the full knowledge that O'Hara, on whose analysis the allegations were entirely based, had washed his hands of it. Indeed, as they explain in their editorial, the responsibility for the article is "ours not his". For good measure, they implicate another prominent AFA militant, Malcolm Astells, as a 'dupe' of the MI5-front Searchlight. This individual had previously

accusations would most likely have split the organisation from stem to stem.

It is credit to the discipline of the activists that this was not allowed to occur.

On the contrary, while the rumour factory was at full production, AFA was methodically fighting the BNP to a standstill. Interestingly enough, the majority of the scandal-mongers, while fearless in their exposes, showed no appetite for this form of political confrontation.

With the likely election of a Labour government, the far-right, who are rubbing their hands in glee at the

branches but against the organisation as a whole. Again unlike AFA, the allegations have not been restricted to obscure journals and pamphlets. As well as the usual unattributed whisperings amongst sections of the left, there have also been efforts by graffiti to influence the general public. On other occasions the smears have even surfaced in the media. One example was an article in a Sunday paper which simply described Red Action as a group controlled by Special Branch and MI5, as if the veracity of the claim was beyond question. Now, we have no evidence that the campaign has directly damaged Red Action in any

Special Branch"; "run by MI5"; "planting bombs" etc. Similar stories circulating on the Left have been, if anything, even more hair-raising.

Even the most credulous will recognise that this constant chipping away at an organisation's soundness and integrity leaves it vulnerable to a variety of state manoeuvres, particularly in the atmosphere of heightened political tension and intrigue that is anticipated.

It is not being suggested that suspects should be given the benefit of the doubt, or that a blind eye is turned towards any political puzzle. On the contrary, there is a need for greater scrutiny. There is also a need for an agreed code of conduct to govern responses to such scenarios.

Code of Conduct

A general recommendation would be to first inform/confront the organisation or appropriate authority within it directly and discreetly, with the grounds for suspicion. This simple safeguard is recommended to any organisation as a general political principle, and should be adopted as a core-value by any group or organisation that has any reason to fear disruption from within or without. This code of conduct

protects both the organisation and the individual. Once this basic procedure is adopted, the pointing of a finger at a colleague, or the public repetition of a rumour about an individual or group would automatically be regarded as unethical.

A false accusation can be as debilitating and disruptive as an actual provocateur. To opt for a trial by smear and innuendo, whether publicly or privately, is always to play directly into the hands of the opposition.

For those who continue to treat the reputations of individuals or organisations with which Red Action is associated in such a cavalier manner we have this to say, and it will only be said once:

From here on in, having established that the method runs counter to the stated objective, the motivation of the accuser rather than the accused will be our 'primary cause for concern'.

We have been patient but we have had enough. Notice to quit.



been smeared by Searchlight as a fascist infiltrator.

At the time that Searchlight denounced Astells, they insisted it was to 'help' protect the anti-fascist movement, particularly AFA, from itself. Searchlight's arch-enemy Larry O'Hara immediately went in to print to defend AFA organiser Paul, a Searchlight confidant, might be an MI5 asset.

O'Hara too offered his help with any subsequent investigation. Green Anarchist has squared this particular circle by denouncing both A and B as suspect, in order to, we kid you not, "help AFA's deliberations into this cause for concern".

Now, all involved know that in order to remain effective, AFA's attitude to legality has always been flexible. As a consequence, AFA is regarded by friend and foe alike as only semi-legal. Had accusations like these been taken seriously not only would it have distracted from the task in hand, but the very fact of responding to public

prospect, will re-align.

With a 'socialist' Labour in government in head on confrontation with the working class, and with the Tories discredited, the far-right will attempt to cast themselves as the natural party of opposition. Undoubtedly this will herald an unprecedented social and political conflict. Undoubtedly, the state will be active. Undoubtedly, allegations of infiltrations and provocateurs will be widespread. Not all of these allegations will be without substance... On the other hand, it may well be the provocateurs that are making the allegations. To 'bad jacket' or 'dirty joe' a colleague are familiar terms in American Black Panther and Irish Republican circles.

Whisperings

In tandem with the campaign against AFA, an even more malicious campaign has been mounted against Red Action. Though the allegations have been similar, unlike AFA this has not been directed against particular individuals or

way.

Indeed, given the shady background of the individual to whom the remarks have been attributed (IPLO, SNLA etc), the effect if any has been directly the opposite of that intended. Because of that, our attitude has always been level-headed and relaxed. That said, it would also be irresponsible to ignore the constant drip drip of disinformation and black propaganda. So the situation has been monitored.

There is a reason for going to print at this time. While we have uncovered no substantial evidence that the campaign is co-ordinated, it does not have to be.

There are sufficient indications to suggest that the real purpose is to prepare the ground for a more direct attack upon Red Action and AFA at an opportune later date. In this context it is worth remembering that at various times AFA and RA have already been described by the media as: enjoying "paramilitary structures"; "a front for the IRA"; "infiltrated by the IRA"; "infiltrated by

GLASGOW

The following report should be seen in the context of increasingly murderous attacks by loyalists/fascists on Celtic fans. Republicans and anti-fascists, which have so far led to the deaths of three young Celtic fans.

There are parts of Glasgow that are now considered unsafe to walk through if you happen to support Celtic. There are pubs from which loyalist thugs operate with impunity. We are realistic enough to recognise that there comes a time when you have to defend your community from further attacks and murders. There are people in Scotland who are willing to bring the terror of the loyalist death squads to our doorsteps.

Their growing confidence can be seen in the planned attack after the 1-1 draw between Celtic and Rangers earlier in the year. A group of 5 Celtic Casuals connected to AFA were drinking in their regular city centre bar when a mob of about 30 fascists stormed the pub shouting "C18", "BNP" and "Seig Heil". Their attackers, led by Rangers ICF Casuals and a group of skinheads were armed with knives and other assorted weapons. After an initial stand, the small group of Celtic boys were forced to barricade themselves into the pub toilet. The fascists then proceeded to batter a 70 year old man who drinks in the pub and attacked other regulars.

The main men at Rangers who have flirted with fascism for years and now claim to be fully fledged members of C18 are David Carrick from Bishopbriggs and Scott Newlands from Townhead. Carrick served a 3 year jail sentence for removing the eye of a Derby County fan in an attack by Scotland fans on a bus load of England supporters in Glasgow a few years ago. Scott Newlands was one of those turned over by a group of anti-fascists in the loyalist Glaswegian Bar about eighteen months ago.

Reprisal 1

More recently, David Carrick straggled into his regular boozier on a Saturday afternoon only to be confronted by a squad of anti-fascists. After the initial shock, he was headbutted, and pumelled by several of the concerned citizens present. A group of men drinking in the bar who we thought were a bit suspect earlier, immediately came to Carrick's aid only to be glassed, bottled and battered by the AFA contingent.

Reprisal 2

Eight days later, in the same bar, a group of Rangers Casuals are about to get a late lock-in when the doors burst open and another outfit of concerned citizens rush in. In the ensuing fight, glasses and stools were exchanged - including some thrown by the bar staff who appear to have a very cosy relationship with the fascists who drink in the pub. After giving them a good kicking, their assailants exit. One Rangers Casual has been quoted as saying, "Celtic are just a bunch of lefties and reds!" Lefties and Reds who can kick your arses.

Still smarting from the previous attack, leading fascists and loyalists have named a prominent Celtic casual who they are headhunting. We'd just like to warn them that if anything happens to this individual, the reply will be swift and not necessarily on those who most expect it. Anyone who doubts us among the fash should speak to Ian "Crazy" MacMillan about the masked men who came to visit him a few years back. Ian is no longer active in fascist circles - not so crazy these days. An instant cure for his insanity, apparently.

Rat Cornered by 'Tiny Sect'!

After last year's anti-racism march through Glasgow when a squad of Celtic boys and Red Action personnel had been mistaken for fash and Rangers casuals by the police and the march organisers, we decided to go sniffing for fascists elsewhere. Hoping to ambush Rangers' fascist mob on their way to Edinburgh, we holed up in a bar in the train station. Rangers' mob never materialised but a number of nervous Hearts fans (who were playing Celtic that day) drew our attention.

Round-up with the Usual Suspects

A couple of Celtic lads were having a word with a guy whose face they thought they recognised. From the football. "Honest, I'm not a Hearts casual!" was all the young man kept saying.

Enter a Red Action member who also saw the familiar face.

"That's right, he's not a Hearts casual, you're Chris Laing, loyalist and co-editor of the Red Hand magazine, aren't you?"

Cue the launch of glasses and bottles - the bold Chris, who likes to be at the head of every loyalist counter-demo, leaps the bar as a bottle crashes on the back of his head; the other loyalists with him scattered in all directions.

BIRMINGHAM

Supporters of the IWCA in the Midlands recently attended various SWP "public" rallies to promote the IWCA. At the meeting in Wolverhampton Tony Cliff talked about the Asylum Bill and spent the whole time slagging off the Labour Party, pointing out that their policy on immigration in the last twenty years has been every bit as bad as the Tories. This provided the opportunity for the IWCA to intervene to ask the burning question "Why the fuck do you ask people to vote for them?" Unfortunately, the SWP, being the democratic party that it is, did not allow questions from the floor. The debate had to ensue with the swappies outside. At first they seemed quite confident to debate voting Labour with us, but after a good discussion many of them were unable to defend their policy. One teacher told us, "I hate the fucking Labour Party too, you know". When asked why she voted for them and encouraged other people to do the same, she shrugged her shoulders and walked off.

This sums up our experience with the Labour-supporting Left. Presented with an alternative from working class people they run a mile. Do they not like us?

In Birmingham it was decided to just leaflet the meeting as it was only attended by the party hacks. This we did before retiring to the local pub. The next day, after frenetic phone calls from members of the SWP, we heard that after the meeting about 60 of them had been ran, a good few slapped, and two hospitalised by what appears to be have been twelve Villa fash. It seems that the Villa fash make their way into the city centre after midweek matches looking for soft targets, after Tony Burke and a few other arseheads have been seen giving it the large around New Street Station.

The SWP never learn, do they? The posters advertising the meeting announced "How to Fight Racism". Obviously the tactics need honing a little.

A white bloke was walking past with his black girlfriend when the two spies were getting battered on the floor. The brave comrades told the couple to look out as it was the "Nartsees" doing the battering. The fash told them that they didn't have to worry as they were only after "these red scum". Strange that. When ever they've come across us "red scum" they decide not to pursue that particular policy. In light

of this event we have been approached by an ex-swipie in relation to joining AFA.

Talking of the Villa fash, the 'Villa Fans Against Loyalism and Fascism' stickers have been going down (and up) really well in and around Villa Park, much to the bemusement of 'Villa C18' who have sent a sarcastic message to an alleged AFA supporter who used to follow the Villa via their C18 rag 'The Order'.

Reports hot off the press that the singing of "No surrender" by Villa fans in a boozier by Wembley before the Coca Cola Cup final so incensed a Villa anti-fascist that he led a lone kamikaze attack on the perpetrators. The ensuing melee left one broken nose and one very sore head wondering what had hit them. Well, we can provide the answer! The shape of things to come hopefully. The (not very when it comes to their mates) loyalists outnumbering our lone avenger made no attempt to help their beleaguered friends. Comrades in arms, no surrender, blah blah blah...etc.

A policeman sent faxes of stolen Acheques to another police station for chemical analysis and fingerprinting (Daily Mirror 23/3/96). The officer, who has not been named, sent the cheques from Wantage police station in Oxfordshire to Scene of Crime detectives at Newbury, Berks.

Do you think that this copper could be related to the infamous West Midlands Police who were giving evidence against one of the Celtic lads who was arrested during clashes with fascists at the pre-season game against Birmingham City? Apparently the details in their notebooks, including the time, were written before the arrest had even taken place. Spooky, eh? The case was thrown out of court, much to the bemusement of the police and CPS. Altogether now, "Celtic 1 Coppers 0".

LEICESTER

Bloody Sunday

On Saturday 27th January the annual 'Bloody Sunday' march was held in Leicester. The official



Warren Glass, conduit between the BNP and Combat 18, clearly feeling 'unwelcome' among Loyalist fellow-travellers, photographed leaving The Princess Louise for the march assembly point with police escort

AFA Press release, April 20

The English Amalgamated Committee of the Apprentice Boys of Derry with Combat 18 security intend to march on Saturday April 27, assembling at Lincoln Inn's Field at 1pm. Anti Fascist Action is calling for a counter-demonstration to assemble at the same site for 12.30. The claim by loyalist organisers that Combat 18 are 'unwelcome' on the demonstration is a sham. C18 stewarded the same march last year. Political fraternisation between the two is long established. Throughout the eighties fascists and loyalists openly collaborated violently opposing initiatives by the Irish community. AFA is a single-issue organisation. It has no policy on Ireland. It is the evidence of long-standing fraternisation between loyalists and fascists and the active participation of C18 in the event that makes it an inevitable, legitimate and inviting anti fascist target.

Irish Post, May 4.

'Anti-fascists clashed with loyalists in central London last weekend as the Apprentice Boys of Derry staged a march. Members of Glasgow's Pride of Govan Band were drinking in the White Hart pub, Theobalds Road, Holborn, when counter-demonstrators attacked, smashing the pub's windows and hospitalising four people. Anti-Fascist Action claimed responsibility for the attack. A bomb scare caused by a suspect vehicle delayed the march in setting off from Lincoln's Inn Field, and Pride of Govan band members required a police escort to the assembly point after being attacked. An estimated 100 counter-demonstrators were cordoned off in Holborn to prevent any further clashes. A massive police presence, including officers with batons and riot gear and some on horse back prevented any further fighting'

they change their name to 'Youth for Skateboarding in Europe' and leave anti-fascism to those with the commitment to do the job.

Another long-running row over spending in Leicester was the council's decision to build two temples, one Hindu and one Muslim, in an area with a minute Asian population, rather than in an area where they are actually demanded. This immediately put the backs up on the estate where the temple sites were to be and helped to create an area of racial hostility where none had existed before.

To compound matters, local Labour MP and Asian barrister Keith Vaz suggested that the answer to this kind of problem would be to create Asian-only estates. He was decried by the local Asian population, and this kind of separatist stance shows that the man is out of touch with his own community and his working class constituents.

EDINBURGH

In June last year ten supporters of I.A.F.A. were arrested in Edinburgh as they attempted to stop fascists and loyalists from attacking the James Connolly Commemoration Parade. Six months later, in December, their trial came to court. Of the ten, seven appeared in court, three failed to turn up, and before the trial went ahead another three (who were up on the one charge of Breach of the Peace) had their charges dropped. The prosecution decided that the four remaining defendants would stand trial as they faced a more serious array of charges, including Assaulting a Police Officer, Resisting Arrest and Breach.

The prosecution had brought forward fourteen witnesses (all police officers) including several who had found that arresting AFA stewards was not that easy and the atmosphere outside the courtroom was tense as the police entered the building. When the first prosecution witness took the stand the defence was able to question the use of plain clothes officers in what was basically an attack upon the AFA stewards. From the defendants' point of view this was important as they had been told by their lawyers that there was no way they could not get a guilty verdict and that a couple of them could expect a prison sentence. Pointing out the police's irregular actions on the day and their failure to properly identify themselves is most likely what caused the prosecution to stop the trial procedure after only one witness had been questioned, and to offer plea bargains to the defendants. The State obviously didn't want the defendants getting off but didn't relish the prospect of the police witnesses making an arse of it as they described their seriously out of order behaviour. So while the prosecution was still desperate to convict, in effect the defendants would benefit from the state's ineptitude.

All four AFA members were willing to accept the offer and pleaded guilty to the less serious charges facing them in order to get the others dropped. All four received community service orders from 100 to 200 hours.

The important thing to note is that after ten militant anti-fascists were arrested in what was a fairly serious situation, none received prison sentences and AFA was able to keep its activists just that, active.

It has been suggested that accepting a plea bargain on the day was tantamount to a "deal with the state". As far as AFA is concerned it was the best way out of a no-win situation and considering where the accusations came from (the ranks of the JCS) an organisation that attempted to call a truce with the forces of loyalism and fascism in order to let its march pass peacefully, AFA could easily say of its detractors that it is a case of the pot calling the kettle black. AFA is not in the habit of striking deals with the State and as its militant actions on the day show, it's not in the habit of doing deals with the fash either.

On 24 April anti-fascist activists assembling at a re-direction point in preparation for a regional meeting became suspicious of some dubious looking characters in the vicinity of the

Continued Over

USUAL SUSPECTS - continued

pub, one of whom went to the outside phone a number of times, presumably to inform others of our presence. The third time the BNP bonehead left the pub, the anti-fascists took the initiative. Two of the fascists inside the pub were immediately attacked, another two of the would-be ambushers tried to escape from the pub during the confusion, and was confronted by other anti-fascists just arriving.

Quickly assessing the situation the anti-fascists waded in. Meanwhile the fash in the phone box had adopted an "Honest, I'm talking to my girlfriend" type pose, attempting to avoid eye contact with the anti-fascists racing up and down the street in front of him. Just as he begins to relax, thinking we've missed him, a man walked towards the phone box, opens the door, and seconds later the fash crumples unconscious inside the phone box, still holding the phone!

BOLTON

Planned Loyalist march through Bolton town centre on Saturday 13th April was prevented by Greater Manchester Police following scuffles between members of Anti-Fascist Action and Combat 18 stewards. This coupled with the arrival of a large contingent of local Asian youth meant that the police could no longer guarantee public safety, and the march was stopped.

The march, organised by the English Amalgamated Committee of the Apprentice Boys of Londonderry, was of interest to AFA because a similar march in London last year had attracted a large C18 following. Press coverage, and our own enquiries had confirmed that this would be the case this year. Therefore, on the morning of the march, a large AFA contingent gathered on the outskirts of Bolton and approached the assembly point via several pubs where it was rumoured that C18 had been spotted drinking.

Upon approaching the assembly point we were spotted by the police who suddenly panicked and called in reinforcements, including dogs and horses. During the ensuing chaos, the brave Aryan warriors of C18 stayed firmly behind police lines, but continued to shout the odds and gestured at AFA members to charge through the riot police to get at them. Suddenly, the situation changed as three members of Oldham C18 foolishly wandered too close to the police lines and found themselves on the wrong side of them, and were pushed into the AFA group. They were dealt with in the time-honoured and traditional manner while their racial comrades looked on.

Intensified police activity made any further intervention impossible, and the AFA group dispersed. The following morning the AFA ansaphone was full of messages from C18, most of which went along the lines of "We're drinking in Bolton until closing time, why don't you come and get us?" However, for some strange reason they all neglected to inform us of their exact whereabouts. They had their chance on the day and bottled it.

The activities of the English Amalgamated Committee of the Apprentice Boys of Londonderry will continue to be of interest to militant anti-fascists while they continue to ally themselves with the likes of C18. As an AFA press release after the event put it: "If you lie down with dogs, you wake up with fleas!"

WIGAN

The local fascists in Wigan had until recently always enjoyed a reputation as a group of people to be feared. This owed more to the fact that they had somehow always managed to avoid contact with local

anti-fascists rather than any real ability to mix it on the streets. The problem in the past has always revolved around the now defunct NF, and their heroic street leader, David Sudworth, who was formerly the North West organiser of that organisation.

This sorry individual has recently jumped ship and is now to be heard proclaiming the invincibility of Combat 18, although C18's recent activity has amounted to nothing more than a rise in graffiti, and the intimidation of ANL types in the town. Sudworth's reputation amongst those that didn't know any better had always been one of that of a nutter, who had the backing of many influential people. This myth was forever shattered when unfortunately for him and his friends he finally met up with members of Red Action on a recent outing to a local pub.

On the night in question, Sudworth and his friends were enjoying the local beer when they were spotted by Red Action members. After we tipped off the doormen to our intentions they revealed that they were sympathetic and would not intervene as long as no violence took place on the premises. We agreed and upon entering the pub, we invited the fascists outside for a good kicking. Despite the odds being heavily in their favour, they declined. There was nothing to do but wait for them to vacate the premises of their own accord.

When they finally had no choice but to leave on account of the pub closing, they were forced into a confrontation that they obviously did not want. As soon as they reached the exit, the first one out pleaded to be left alone and denied he was a fascist. In reply, one of our number said "You will be known by the friends you keep" and he was given a kicking. At this point, the remaining fascists tried to re-enter the pub, and began pleading with the doormen to be let back in. One of their number was actually pushed out of the pub by Sudworth himself, who then pleaded for mercy on account of being a catholic. Needless to say, he was soon examining the floor in greater detail.

At this point Mr Sudworth was still trying to force his way past the four doormen, while two of our number were trying to pull him out. He was screaming like a stuck pig, and the fear on his face had to be seen to be believed. Even so he managed to escape, but not before receiving a good few slaps for his trouble. While hiding behind the doormen he was asked if he enjoyed his "Red Action kicking".

During the confusion some of his friends had escaped and came back with reinforcements, who also showed great reluctance to engage in combat. They advanced no nearer than twenty-five yards and proceeded to make threatening noises and gestures. Despite being even further outnumbered, we accepted the offer and flattened another seven of their number, before more reinforcements arrived, bringing the odds to something like ten to one in their favour. Most of this lot weren't fascists, but local football lads who fancied a fight. We decided it was time to make a strategic withdrawal, content with the night's work. However, we heard later that this lot picked a fight with an innocent bystander who was not involved in the incident.

Since that night we have heard that Sudworth's reputation has taken a severe nose-dive. In the past he had been able to trade off his reputation as some kind of hard man. We knew that he was living on borrowed time and that sooner or later we would eventually encounter him. He is now left to walk alone due to his cowardice on that fateful night in Wigan.

Dear Red Action,

Though not a subscriber to your paper, I do manage to pick up the odd copy now and then, and although not entirely agreeing with all you have to say, I find much of the content and analysis interesting.

It was with interest that I read the recent IRSP/INLA statement concerning the unseen hand of the British state within its own organisation(s), in the Weekly Worker paper.

Denying that the recent events have been part of an internal political feud, the IRSP's Kevin McQuillan claims that it is down to the activities of "two former INLA members who were expelled from INLA in November 1995 after they entered into a self-declared ceasefire". Accusations of these ex-leading members "overseeing the degeneracy of the IRSP" follow, and this unequivocal statement. "We will defend ourselves against external counter-revolutionary forces. On the simplest level they can appear as levels of ego and power. But on a more sinister level they are directed by British intelligence. On this occasion the finger is pointing in that direction".

What is significant here is the apparent seniority within the INLA of the men in question. Unless I am very much mistaken the two men in question included the (ex) chief of staff himself, a man now accused, it would appear, of "working to a sinister agenda" by Republican Socialist prisoners.

Didn't Red Action warn against this kind of thing in Issue 67, nearly three years ago. Following the arrest and conviction of two INLA members based almost entirely upon the testimony and actions of British agent provocateur Pat Daly, you reported that -

"The continued existence of the INLA must be in doubt. It has...been ripped apart by tots. Very serious implications can be drawn from the fact that when Daly was offered a place on the Army Council, M15 felt that they could afford to turn it down".

The IRSP and INLA now appear to be endorsing, at least to some degree, your suspicions, that to have added Daly to the Army Council would be a case of M15 overmanning!

I presume you will now be saying "I told you so"!

P.Roche, Rochdale.

★ LETTERS ★

Dear Red Action,

I don't know if you've seen it, but the article 'If Voting Changed Anything' in Black Flag 207 puts them in line with the SWP, and somewhere to the right of Militant in its position on the Labour Party.

The article attempts a 'defence' of anarchist principles re: elections off the back of the Independent Working Class Association, an organisation which, Black Flag admits, has "no definite commitment to standing candidates, but it is implied in their logic".

The IWCA is an attempt to bring ordinary people together to fight for their interests against the political parties of the status quo. Its basis is, simply, the establishment of the political independence of the working class. It is community based, rather than workplace based, so as to be as inclusive as possible - and on the basis that there is nothing radical per se about trade union struggles, which are too often sectional in their intent. Also, the attacks on housing and benefit rights being lined up by the establishment (Tory and Labour) for the years ahead are aimed at working class communities and need to be fought on that basis.

The IWCA is not an electoral movement. It is not tied to any one tactic regardless of circumstance and opportunity. However, why should we rule out challenging Labour in local council elections either as a means of publicising local struggles or as a means of making such elections a referendum on Labour's policies.

Blair's Labour is unequivocally hostile to the working class. It is committed to the end of universal welfare. It needs to be opposed as the class enemy in practice. That is clear enough. But not according to Black Flag: "What would be the reaction be of Black and Asian communities in East London if intervention let a fascist in?"

When Derek Beackon was elected on the Isle of Dogs for the BNP he did so with the majority of the Left calling for a vote for Labour! The then Labour candidate James Hunt released scaremongering statistics to show the likelihood of a BNP victory and the end result was that more people voted for the BNP because they thought they could win. The Labour vote is already split by the BNP. The BNP got in because there was no radical Left challenge to Labour - not because the vote was split to the left.

In August 1994 Labour and the Liberals got together to ask central government for more money for housing in Tower Hamlets. At the time 4.2% of housing stock was empty. Before coming into office Labour damned the Liberals for underspending. Since gaining office they've made £20 million in social service cuts on the basis that the Liberals overspent! They still found £85,000 to appoint Sylvie Pierce as Chief Executive.

People in Tower Hamlets and other working class communities have had to deal with this bullshit for years. They've also had to deal with a Left which instead of organising resistance has chosen to cheerlead for the Labour Party. In consequence, the BNP have been able to pose as a radical alternative simply by being anti-Labour. In short, it wasn't the presence of a radical working class alternative to Labour that let the BNP in, it was the absence of one (Eventhough Black Flag appear to view Militant Labour's campaign for 'real Labour' as such an alternative - has the rot really gone that far?).

The choice is simple: for Labour or for the working class. Perhaps the Black and Asian voters that Black Flag are concerned about might also like a choice between a BNP that believes in compulsory repatriation and a Labour Party that represents repatriation through starvation from the denial of benefits? Do Black and Asian working class voters not have political interests in relation to housing, education etc, or are they only concerned with the "narrow anti-fascism" that the anarchist movement so often claims is the sole interest of Anti-Fascist Action?

There's no real point in reshaping the historical debates about whether the Left should fight in elections or not. The Left in the UK only exists as a playground for middle class radicals. It's a sad indictment that when someone tries to do something to change that, the purists around Black Flag offer as their contribution: "Do nothing in case we split the Labour vote". R Duran, South London.



IRSP spokesperson Kevin McQuillan has denied INLA internal feud.

Dear Red Action

Enclosed is translation of a letter I received from political prisoners in Chile. There are approximately 80 in the High Security Prison. The women are in another prison (around 20). They belong to different political tendencies: MIR, Frente Patriotico Manuel Rodriguez (formerly the armed wing of the CP that broke with the party) and Lautaro Destacamento Raul Pellegrini. I have visited the political prisoners and I know they would like an exchange with political prisoners in other countries. Fraternally, EG, San Francisco.

Open Letter from the Political Prisoners in Chile.

A new concept of what a prison is - the so-called "High Security Prison" has become a cyst in Chile for two years now.

It is a prison designed to annihilate, destroy psychologically those inside it. It serves the fascist desire to bury alive human beings, eradicate their humanity. In the middle of Santiago, Chile, is "an island surrounded by walls and wires" where a handful of Chileans have been put because they fought against the dictatorship and against the installation of this new regime which pretends to simply end any problem with human rights by allowing the crimes of the dictatorship to be forgotten and exempt from punishment.

The arrival of neo-democracy in Chile was a result of the hopes for justice of many Chileans: hopes of social justice, human justice, historic justice against the crimes of a state which had disappeared and executed thousands of Chileans. And the "government of the agreement" was installed in power thanks to the support of those who were left. But this government presented a program which it has not carried out and is busy selling the country to the highest bidder, trampling the sovereignty of the nation.

We political prisoners will not stop looking for forms of struggle that turn this prison into a place that is humane and worthy. We call upon all honest Chileans to support this document in order to change the permanent punishment that is going on in this prison. Make copies of this document and send them to other organisations, such as labour organisations, student organisations, human rights groups. Send letters and faxes to the Ministry of Interior of Chile, Ministry of Justice, Gendarmerie of Chile demonstrating your opposition to the inhumane regulations in the High Security Prison.

To let us know your support and to communicate with us write to: **Comission Chilena de Derechos Humanos, Departamento juridico, Srta Alejandra Acuna Santa Lucia #162 Santiago, CHILE.**

Red Action in Ireland has constantly published articles and publicly outlined our views on the whole "Peace Process" from the lead up to the ceasefire, to the actual cessation, right through to the current situation. Our opinions on the ceasefire, its collapse and the whole "Peace Process" are the same now as they were 20 months ago. While the day to day situation has constantly changed, the overall direction of the process and its implications for the whole of the Republican Movement has not. We said it at the time and we say it now. This is a seriously flawed process and it has failed the Republican community.

In the immediate aftermath of the IRA ceasefire announcement we clearly stated that we welcomed peace but that it could not be sustained under the falsehood that it was a stepping stone to the Republican aspirations of British withdrawal and Irish unity. While we, like many others, expected short term concessions from the British, we clearly saw that the deal brokered between Hume, Adams and Reynolds, the so-called Pan Nationalist Alliance, was only the continuation of a long term strategy by successive 26 county governments to woo Sinn Féin into respectability in the hope that this would isolate the IRA. Encourage the political leadership with "respectability" and let them deliver an IRA ceasefire. This process had begun as early as the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement and encompassed all successive agreements. Sinn Féin, as we stated in our 1994 Newsletter, were only considered part of the equation because of the IRA's campaign. After all, as Bernadette McAliskey said, hadn't the "SDLP...through their own unarmed strategy, been involved...in protracted and futile negotiations with the British Government since the party was invented". Did the Republican leadership really think their unarmed strategy would fare any better?

Calling a ceasefire with no preconditions or guarantees from the British was a major mistake given Britain's past record in Ireland. There has been no indication whatsoever of any change in the British view of the 6 counties as anything more than a British colony to be governed as they see fit. The hopes of Republican grassroots activists that a secret deal had been done were gradually quashed as the British placed obstacles in the way of progress time after time. While Sinn Féin now lament Albert Reynolds being replaced by an openly Unionist Taoiseach such as Bruton it is obvious from Reynolds's own statements that he was also pursuing a line of rendering militant republicanism obsolete. His quote that "there would be no United Ireland in his lifetime" should finally put paid to the argument that with Reynolds at the helm the "Peace Process" would have progressed further. Reynolds, as leader of the Irish Establishment, was always going to back the British Establishment when the "Peace Process" came up against British inspired obstacles. Proof of this is that both the Reynolds and Bruton governments openly used Republican POWs as hostages for the 'good behaviour' of the IRA by halting planned prisoner releases. The agenda of the two governments, along with Corporate America, was always going to be the same - remove the IRA and create an

Between a Rock and a Hard Place

As with other organisations, including the Republican movement itself, opinion in Red Action varies as to the motives of those behind the ceasefire and the value of the Peace Process itself. Since February 9 the debate has focused on who is to carry the can for its failure to deliver any of the primary goals Republicans expected of it. On the following pages we produce two articles that, while not directly contradictory, do place a different emphasis on where the blame must ultimately rest.



internal solution. The Republican leadership, by committing its entire movement to the aim of All Party Talks, even trusting in the British Government to become "persuaders" to Unionism, was a grave political mistake. Belated attempts to shift the blame onto Bruton for not standing up to the British ring hollow. Whether it was Reynolds or Bruton in charge, the truth remains that the only "Alliance" was the one between Dublin, London and Washington aimed at neutralising militant Republicanism.

While none of us expected major reforms or Border changes the fact remains that no concessions were made to Nationalists. The RUC remains intact, prisoners are subjected to torturous treatment last seen in the 70's, emergency legislation is still in place and in the case of the PTA is being made more repressive, sectarian marches are still routed through Nationalist areas, etc. More insultingly Republicans had to undergo a 3 month "Decontamination" period before initial discussions could begin. The fact is that in the 2 years prior to the ceasefire the British Government was having face to face negotiations with the IRA itself, but after the ceasefire all contact with the Republican Movement was stopped. Alarmingly, the leadership's lack of an alternative strategy, other than the present one -

end the ceasefire and threaten to unleash the IRA - shows an amazing political naivety. Even when the situation changed dramatically, such as the release of murderer Lee Clegg, the leadership were caught out. Ordinary Nationalists, who had been discouraged from street agitations in favour of "Democratic Reforms" delivered by the leadership, were suddenly expected to take to the streets to vent their anger. The result was that of the IRA having to organise a series of short lived riots, with most nationalists staying at home. Ordinary activists refused to become the "Footsoldiers" for a political leadership which dictated policy to them.

The reality of the situation was becoming clear to many people. As the Republican leadership tried to claw their way to "All Party Talks", increasingly blaming the British for stalling, they failed to admit that this British strategy was inevitable. As we had previously stated in an article in Red Action in early '95, "There is a clear British agenda and strategy to be detected in the prevarication about initiating All Party Talks. Britain hopes, through continually demanding an IRA surrender - which is what "Decommissioning" actually means - that some elements of Nationalism, possibly the SDLP, Dublin or even a section of Sinn Féin, will also urge the IRA to give up arms in the return for All Party Talks". A look back to the ending of the ceasefire and the response of some Republicans through the letters pages of AP/RN indicates that this British strategy is working.

The truth of the matter is that All Party Talks were never a reality as long as the Unionist veto remained in place. The Unionist parties have never been a part of the "Peace Process". Molyneux, the former leader of the DUP, even went so far as to call the "Peace Process" "destabilising" for the 6 counties. Unionists have from the start said they will have no meaningful talks with SF. And why should they? These are the people

who maintain Major's slim hold onto power in the House Of Commons. They dictate British Government policy on all issues relating to the 6 counties. The Labour "Opposition" in Britain, meekly endorse this situation. Even when Major loses power and a Labour Government is possibly formed, their policy will be to retain the veto. Knowing this, Unionist intransigence is once again to the fore. The onus is once again on Nationalists to concede ground. The De Klerk figure that SF hoped would emerge hasn't done so because there isn't reason for one. De Klerk was forced into compromise by circumstances whereas the Unionists are not being pressurised from any side.

The other players in the "Peace Process" are the representatives of the Loyalist gunmen. Commentator after commentator have commended these people for "embracing" the ceasefire. They too have been hailed as "peace-makers" and feted around the world. What the political commentators are not saying is that the the Loyalist gunmen and their political fronts have no mandate and limited public support. It is worth remembering that at the last election in the 6 counties the PUP and UDP only received 0.3% of the vote, equal to that of the Natural Law Party!! Even the British Government have conceded the lack of political support for these groups by changing the electoral process to give them seats in the proposed Northern Ireland Forum. They are tolerated and supported in Loyalist areas only as so called "defenders" against the IRA. The fact that they are openly involved in drug dealing, extortion and general gangsterism will not encourage people to support them. The war weariness of ordinary Loyalist people can be demonstrated by their lack of a response to the IRA's recent bombing campaign on the "Mainland" and the lack of pressure on the Loyalist Death Squads to resume their sectarian murder campaign against Catholics, once the bombs are kept to England. Another important fact is that the Loyalist Death Squads are controlled by the British and are just another weapon in the armory of the British state.

With the ending of the IRA ceasefire a whole new political



Adams - dictating policy

ballgame has begun. While there has been repeated rumours of an end to the ceasefire over the past 6 months, the actual bombing was a shock to everyone. While many will point to the fact that the British moved more in the aftermath of the Canary Wharf bomb than in all the months prior, it is a gamble which will only work once. It is interesting that the statement from the IRA following Canary Wharf only mentioned "Justice and an inclusive negotiated settlement", no demand for British Withdrawal or a United Ireland. While their Easter statement that followed did state "The IRA remains fully committed to its republican objectives" it also said that "The IRA, of course, remains ready to help in developing the conditions which will allow for a meaningful negotiations process".

At present the intentions of the IRA remain ambiguous, even, we suspect, to themselves. Do we now find ourselves in a situation where the IRA are going back to war for "All Party

Talks"? The British Government has rode the shockwave of Canary Wharf and has once again began to protract the negotiations between all parties by creating the Northern Ireland Forum as a prerequisite to talks. This Forum is nothing short of a return to Stormont or the Assembly in '82, both designed to create an internal settlement in favour of the Unionists. The fact that the idea of a Northern Ireland Forum was first suggested by the OUP think-tank over 14 months ago shows the absence of progress.

Sinn Féin now find themselves in a position whereby the actions of the SDLP dictates their attitude to the proposed Northern Ireland Elections. With the SDLP always likely to contest the elections Sinn Féin are climbing on board an electoral process over which they have no control. If the SDLP decide to take their seats in the Forum what do Sinn Féin do? To have contested the elections and refuse to take their seats would leave Sinn Féin open to accusations of hypocrisy. They will be seen as calling for All Party Talks yet refusing to participate in All Party Talks under the auspices of the Forum. Sinn Féin should have the confidence in their mandate to boycott these elections which they clearly do not want. The deeper they go into the process the harder it will be to pull out. The SF leadership and their new "Upwardly Mobile" supporters are unlikely to return to what they previously described as "Political Isolation" having, according to them, strived so hard to end it.

Even before elections to the proposed Northern Ireland Forum have taken place the Unionists have said they won't talk without Decommissioning. The prospect of another stagnant six months only reaffirms Britain's clear policy of wearing down Republicans and their supporters and creating further disillusionment. By diverting Republicans into pointless elections, forums, decommissioning arguments and - maybe - Talks, British and Unionist interests will be well served in the intervening months.

There is no doubt that the IRA could return to a full scale war if it wanted to. There will always be enough volunteers and supporters to maintain an armed struggle. Moralistic condemnations by politicians and commentators, whose agenda is the destruction of the Republican Movement and the silencing of its ideals, will not remove the reality of Republican resistance. Whether the Republican movement chooses to do so is another question. Sinn Féin, as we said clearly in our pre-ceasefire article, is only engaged in the "Peace Process" because they gave the perception of being able to "Take the gun out of Irish politics", that is, they could deliver an IRA ceasefire. Britain has never listened to the political mandate of the Nationalist population of the 6 counties, Nationalists have been ignored since the creation of the artificial state. It is unlikely that Britain will now listen, especially if the only possible reason for listening, the IRA's campaign, is silenced.

Red Action in Ireland are not ashamed to say we are a "Brits Out" group. We believe that British withdrawal and a long term realignment of politics in the whole of Ireland is the way forward. The breakdown of the ceasefire was predictable, indeed inevitable, because of the lack of progress in the previous 18 months. Until the Unionist veto is broken there can be no political progress. While the future looks bleak some optimism must come from the realisation by many people how fallible a leadership based political movement can become. Hopefully people will have learned that a much more open and active involvement of all sections of the working class is needed in the decision making process. While this doesn't augur well in the present pessimistic climate the lessons learned during this process should stand to people in the future.

Out-takes

"By dismissing all doubters as mischievous malcontents the Movement has effectively circumscribed the potential of its own followers to make necessary, and uncomfortable, political adjustments in a new and unimagined situation. If you demand faith and loyalty before reason and intelligence, you cannot quibble when a seepage of faith turns cancerous"

Sean Keenan, Derry writer.

"Far from becoming a 'persuader' for Irish Unity or Irish self determination the British ... have become active protagonists on the side of the Ulster Unionists. The so called Peace Process has become a shambles. That is the truth of the matter. No amount of humbug from elements within the nationalist community will put a better gloss on the issue. The end of this bogus process may now be in sight. The idea that the British government will somehow turn around and give basic justice to the people of Ireland is now exposed as being absolutely ludicrous"

Sunday Business Post

They Thought It Was All Over...

On February 8, the Financial Times carried the headline "Security Sources Believe Ulster Ceasefire is Safe", describing the M15 assessment that the IRA leadership was committed to the ceasefire. The next day the IRA announced that their patience and their ceasefire had come to an end. An article in the Guardian by Irish correspondent David Sharrock stumbled on the one of the two principle factors which made this outcome inevitable. "There is a private view expressed by some Unionists that there is nothing to be gained from reaching a comprehensive settlement...since the outcome will inevitably involve constitutional concessions...far better to play the long ball game giving as little as possible. With any luck the IRA ceasefire will be called off, which will only go to show the Unionists were right all along not to sit down with its political wing Sinn Fein. Or better still the IRA fragments, leading to a bloody internal feud and a security crackdown which ends in military defeat". Though denied this wishful thinking, Unionist preoccupation that it was indeed 'a hardline breakaway faction' dominated studio discussions immediately following the explosion almost as much as the political impact of the bomb itself. This was underlined by Trevor McDonald on News at Ten actually announcing that a breakaway faction 'Sons of Ireland' had been responsible! The crocodile tears and told you so smugness with which Unionist representatives greeted the Canary Wharf bombing confirms the authenticity of the Sharrock analysis. The Unionists never wanted a negotiated settlement at all. The deposed Unionist Leader Jim Molyneux complained at the time of the IRA cessation that 'the ceasefire had destabilised the situation'. So only the resumption of hostilities could re-establish stability.

With the British policy increasingly hostage to the Unionists as a result of the arithmetic of Westminster, the end of the ceasefire was not caused by the failure of the process. From the Unionist point of view the ceasefire was the threat. The end of the ceasefire was the goal. Though denied the prospect of military victory, the end of the peace process - the end of the need for dialogue, the end of the prospect of a negotiated settlement - does not represent political failure, rather it is a triumph. For them it means the continuity of the Six Counties as a political entity and as an integral part of the United Kingdom. That is the Unionists' sole reason for being. Though initially wrong footed they have gradually managed throughout the 17 months to impose their agenda not only on the British government but on everyone else. Canary Wharf did not make Trimble tremble, on the contrary for him and his confederates one minute past seven on Friday Feb 9 was the climax of 17 months of painstaking work. To para-phrase Colonel Kilgore in Apocalypse Now: 'One day the war must end but for now the sound of Semtex signals victory!'

Any doubts on that score were allayed by their barely concealed triumphalist blood lust following the second and third bombs in London. Paisley junior insisted that republicanism 'must be cut out of' the body politic. Not you noticed simply its para military manifestation. The rabid-right Tory MP Terry Dicks advocated a "policy of shoot to kill...people have had enough." For OUP Peter Robinson the quarantine of Sinn Fein was not enough: renewing the peace process itself would be a mistake. "The time has come that the whole international community must be prepared to crush the IRA." Andrew Neil agreed: "good will triumphs only if good people are sometimes prepared to be as ruthless as the bad." Tory MP David Wilshire called for an end to compromise. "Compromise with evil is neither

desirable nor possible...[the peace process] was an attempt to do a one sided deal with the devil." Clearly for them at least war was better than jaw jaw.

While Unionist opposition like this was overt, the other decisive influence on the thinking of the government was armed with an identical agenda, but chose as befits its nature to be more covert. For a variety of reasons M15 had no stomach for the ceasefire either. Indeed the prospect alarmed them greatly. Political considerations apart, the prospect of an end to hostilities was in conflict with their own prospects of continued employment. It has long been recognised that purely selfish considerations can play as much a part in risk assessment by spooks as the loftier ideals of the protection of the state itself. The Bolshevik ransacking and scrutiny of the Tsar's security network revealed evidence of routine disinformation from provocateurs for entirely mercenary motives. As the motto of the American Marines; "Corps, God, Country," confirms, patriotism often comes a poor third to self interest. Any suggestion of loyalty to the government does not, you notice, even make their short list. Organ and function are inseparable terms. Take away from an organ its function and either the organ dies or its function is re-established. In addition any negotiated settlement risked the break up of that state, whose security and well being they are sworn to protect - regardless of government policy of the day. What if they too were playing the long ball game?

After the breakdown of the ceasefire, media commentators were clearly shocked that there had been no warning. When Republican spokespersons indicated that the pressure was mounting 'security sources' insisted that the ceasefire would hold and blandly dismissed such talk as mere political manoeuvring. The media were reassured. More importantly so were the government. After Canary Wharf, though still puzzled, they simply felt that M15 were left with egg on their faces. They gave them the benefit of the doubt. They shouldn't have. For there was a precedent. And the egg was on faces other than M15's.

On September 1 1994 the IRA announced a complete cessation of hostilities. On the anniversary of the ceasefire David Sharrock wrote: "Major could not believe his ears when the announcement came". A senior Irish negotiator vividly remembers the British disbelief. "They couldn't believe they'd get the ceasefire. The problem is now that they can't believe that it could breakdown."

This you remember was the ceasefire Major was given credit for brokering. He didn't even know it was going to happen. The British PM did not know there was going to be a ceasefire, and he did not know that there was not going to be one. Presumably nobody in the British government knew either. But why not? M15 knew. They just didn't bother to tell him. Indeed the evidence proves that on each occasion they told him the exact opposite. And it was on this information that British policy was based. Major's immediate insistence that the ceasefire must be permanent when it was, was based on the belief that it was only for three months, did a lot to stifle optimism on the nationalist side. The subsequent preconditions, over the following year and a half, ignored the fact that ceasefires must produce results if they are to last. But Major had no such concerns. It was after all the IRA who had sued for peace. (In November 1993 Patrick Mayhew in an effort to deflect criticism over contacts with Republicans insisted that the IRA had initiated the contact with a communique that began: "The conflict is over, but we need your advice on how to bring it to a close." Quite bizarrely Major repeated this

discredited piece of propaganda in his address to the nation - after the Canary Wharf bomb) The war was over. The British had won. There was no peace process. There was just peace. The IRA and indeed the nationalists were war weary. Regardless of what happened there would be no resumption of violence: it was safe to 'make Adams sweat'.

A curious echo of this wishful thinking followed a statement from the IRA in March 1996 that they "had no wish to engage the loyalists militarily". The DUP's Reverend McRea expressed the opinion that this was because the IRA "were all cowards", while a BBC commentator argued that prior to the ceasefire the IRA had been "outgunned". What he meant by that, he explained, was that "the loyalists had killed more people".

On the anniversary of the ceasefire the Independent's David McKittrick wrote: "The entire British apparatus failed to predict the IRA's complete cessation of violence; security chief's readily admit that they were expecting perhaps a three-month ceasefire. This same intelligence apparatus is assuring government ministers that Mr Adams has room for manoeuvre". At the beginning of April a Guardian columnist commented "a persuasive security briefing, especially issuing from the painted lips of Dame Stella Rimington, is a difficult thing for an impressionable chap to argue against. If an intelligent lay Health Secretary can find himself powerless to contradict his



Gerry Kelly accredited by the Brits with ending the ceasefire.

specialist medical advisers, then what chance is there that a jobbing politician could defy the advice of a security chief who speaks with sweet reason and whose information is, of its very nature, uncontradictable?"

In true Machiavellian fashion while formally reassuring both the liberal media and the fainthearted that Brit procrastination would not prove literally fatal to the peace process, M15 assets were through friendly channels just as routinely insisting that a breakdown was imminent.

Six months ago RA reported a catalogue of disinformation emanating from the Sunday Times. The paper was accused of "bias and falsification and planting false stories." The accusers were not Republicans but fellow journalists. To some it appeared that The Sunday Times was "part of a conspiracy to derail the peace process". Many of the stories involved 'the hardline breakaway faction', beloved of the Unionists setting impossible demands on the IRA leadership. Another known M15 asset Ulster Unionist spokesman Ken Maginness

Sunday Times headline, 25.2.96



"An IRA agenda means that the IRA have not bombed their way to the negotiating table...Far far worse. The reality is they have bombed Britain there." Red Action Autumn 1994.

stated in June last year that "the IRA had begun a rolling resumption of violence." After Canary Wharf his first comments literally were: "It gives me no pleasure to say I told you so..." This strategy served a dual purpose. The prospect of imminent breakdown served a useful reminder and justification for the importance placed on the decommissioning argument. It buttressed the Unionist position and encouraged them to sit tight. This in turn allowed Major to stall on talks by pointing to the Unionists unwillingness to sit down with Sinn Fein. This strategy of tension created the political vacuum essential to the success of M15 manipulation. And it wasn't only the government who were victims of M15 deception.

On March 6 allegations regarding M15 perfidy once again bobbed to the surface. The nature of the allegations this time concerned not policy but culpable homicide. The accusers were not angst ridden liberal journalists but - the Metropolitan Police!

These remarkable allegations were made to a committee of senior MP's trying to find out why the security service was unable to predict the end of the IRA ceasefire. According to Scotland Yard M15 discounted three coded warnings about the IRA Docklands bomb more than an hour before it went off. As the warnings were relayed to Scotland Yard, senior officers say they contacted M15 only to receive a "negative assessment". Incredulous of M15's skepticism they sent a sergeant and three constables to clear the streets around South Quay anyway. Two PC's were injured in the explosion an hour later.

That report though carried in the Evening standard on March 6, almost a month after the explosion, received little media coverage nationally. What would the residents of Canary Wharf have found most incredible had they known? The fact that Scotland Yard sent a total of four officers to evacuate the entire area after three coded bomb warnings; or that M15, already aware of reports that the IRA had issued a statement ending the ceasefire, told them not to bother? M15 told John Major that there was no threat to the peace process and it would be tactically astute to make Adams sweat. M15 told Scotland Yard that there was no bomb. Whatever else they might be accused of there can be no complaints about lack of consistency.

The only problem with the M15 approach is that it can only be done once. Once bitten twice shy. If, as a Guardian columnist acknowledged "the peace process began because Britain was finding the price of the Ulster conflict too high. The explosions in the city and the threats to Heathrow had even greater implications than the already high and seemingly unending security in Ulster", then Canary Wharf will have been an expensive reminder to the

establishment why they agreed to negotiate in the first place.

At this year's Ard Fheis, Sinn Fein's Jim Gibney said: "Last year there was a great sense of expectation of optimism of movement. I felt we had crossed the Rubicon of armed conflict. It seemed to me that, at last, dialogue as the instrument of political change was anchored centre-stage".

This was the IRA leadership's analysis as well. They had come to be convinced that the communique attributed to them by Mayhew when trying to synchronise the government's public and private positions accurately reflected the Brits own position: "The conflict is over, we need help to bring it to a close". The ceasefire was implemented on the understanding that all-party negotiations would take place with the purpose of accommodating a face-saving British withdrawal. But a withdrawal nonetheless. The ceasefire ended when the IRA leadership concluded that the British had in fact reneged on the core reason for holding discussions. And if the British do not want to leave after all, the purpose of negotiations with or without Sinn Fein, with or without preconditions, would mean only the active collaboration of Republicans with the acquiescence of the IRA in securing for the British an internal settlement. This is what Republicans really mean when they accuse the British government of "bad faith". And until the IRA's 'faith' in Britain's intentions is restored, all party talks or not, the ceasefire won't be.

From September 1994 to February 1996 Britain's policy intent was, as a Guardian columnist remarked, "frustratingly ambiguous. The signals conflict - doubtless designed so on occasions. Sometimes the emphasis is on politics, at other times it is on security. The connection between the two is arbitrarily and inconsistently made. Ask yourself what this country's policy aim over Northern Ireland is and even now the answer is opaque".

The signals conflict only because the the aims conflict. The government has one policy, the Unionists and security advisers another. During the period of the ceasefire British utterances were characterised by fudge and indecision. Now that the ceasefire is over the statements remain cryptic, mirroring the situation behind the scenes. The political language used is as George Orwell once remarked "designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable and to give an impression of solidity to pure wind". The government give the impression of a side stalling for time - while losing. Sooner or later, Major or his successor: must come to the realisation that the right-wing and the defence are not working off the same menu. Even then, how not to be there without being seen to have left will remain the conundrum of British politics.

What the Papers Say...

One Republican source said last night: "If Saoirse or anyone else wants to raise money for the Republican movement then their cash will be taken. But the fact that a top-level decision has been taken to stand down or step aside from the official organ for doing that would indicate that the IRA does not want any group of people that would be open to infiltration being publicly associated with them."

Damien Gaffney, Irish World, 22.3.96

Sinn Fein, John said, was dissolving Saoirse with immediate effect. Now that the armed struggle had been resumed, the POW department of Sinn Fein would be taking overall responsibility for prisoners' issues. Young Volunteers, he added, were again being asked to risk their lives and with the war back on it was important that a clear line of command be established unimpeded by outside groupings.

Walter Ellis, Sunday Times, 25.2.96.

The London branch of Saoirse, the republican prisoners' group, has blocked an attempt by Sinn Fein to disband it. The party had long been unhappy with the group's militant activities.

They voted by forty eight votes to seven not to disband, according to one source. Those voting against included the relatives of IRA prisoners in England.

Irish Times, March 1996.

Sinn Fein has appointed the brother of Brixton escapee Nessian Quinlivan to head its prisoner support operation in Britain.

The group takes over from the English arm of Saoirse which was disbanded or 'restructured' towards the end of February this year following protracted internal disagreements. Sinn Fein has remained tight-lipped over the demise of Saoirse, a Republican orientated group that gained a high profile during the IRA ceasefire with street protests and prison demonstrations.

Explanations offered by the Saoirse supporters differ widely. Some say the London group lost direction after infiltration by extremists from groups such as Red Action that sought to undermine Sinn Fein's peace strategy. Others maintain that local Saoirse leaders "blurred the line" between support for prisoners and troops out activities.

A further highly improbable account of the Saoirse beak up alleging financial irregularities is presently subject to a legal action.

The Irish Post, May 4, 1996.

A Lie Too Far

The Rise and Demise of London Saoirse

The Saoirse Campaign to 'Free Irish Political Prisoners', undoubtedly the most vibrant, active and dynamic group to have worked on any aspect of the 'Irish Question' in Britain to date, was unceremoniously brought to an end by Sinn Fein on 22.2.96.

Undoubtedly we will be criticised for going to print with this article, however it must be seen in the context of 'enough is enough'. Serious allegations have been made against Red Action to camouflage serious contradictions in the over-all strategy. Unless they are addressed, they will ensure that Irish Solidarity work in Britain will remain forever impotent.

Since our report on the campaign in the last issue of Red Action, Saoirse had continued, in the face of a collapsing peace process, to ensure that the issue of Irish PoWs was kept alive by keeping the pressure on with a combination of hard work and a number of

Action was in favour of a Saoirse national demo because we sought to use it as an opportunity to provoke a major confrontation with the fascists in Central London!

To anyone remotely familiar with the seriousness with which Red Action approaches its anti-fascist activities the latter point would appear ludicrous if it was not so insulting. The ensuing debate and the subsequent political wrangles may have had their origins around the march, but this double talk was, in reflection, merely a symptom of a problem that ran far deeper.

Few could argue against the fact that at the time Saoirse was launched Irish Solidarity Work in Britain was at an all-time low. The new campaign, along with the IRA's cessation of violence had presented everyone with the chance of a fresh start, or so we believed.

The problem centred around Sinn Fein's decision to appoint members of the same clique that had overseen a largely-sterile

with which the campaign was closed down (the press were told before we were) was that Saoirse was no longer viable now that the IRA's ceasefire had ended. Once again this reflected their pre-occupation with lobbying the Labour Party etc. While this was no longer viable, the hundreds of Saoirse supporters in London, overwhelmingly Republican, would not be affected.

Even if this explanation is taken at face value, it still doesn't explain why it was deemed favourable to attempt to disband the Republican Movement's largest and most active group of supporters in England since the seventies, without consultation and overnight!

Saoirse had managed to bring a small but significant section of the Irish community out of the bunker and onto the streets for the first time in decades. The one thing that campaigners have continuously pointed out is what could have been done had the obstruct-



High profile events by Saoirse included: a cavalcade of a lorry, two vans and ten cars, decked out in Saoirse propaganda and Irish tricolours, touring the Irish areas of North London distributing thousands of leaflets, and culminating in a picket of Michael Howard's private Belgravia residence; a conference entitled 'Women in the Struggle' which featured a day-long series of events including a number of contributions from prisoners relatives, ex-PoW Bromwen McGahern, and human rights solicitor Gareth Pierce; and a tour by Saoirse activists through London's West End at the height of the Christmas shopping season in a double-decker bus resplendent with flags, posters, banners and a loud PA system hammering home the message.

Free Pat Kelly!

are kept on the political agenda. To this end a new prisoners support group, Fuascailt ('Liberation' or 'Release') has been set-up under the direction of the Sinn Fein POW Dept. This new group will campaign on the following issues:

- * The release of Patrick Kelly.
- * For an end to the barbaric conditions in which Irish POWs are held in English jails, including an end to the use of Special Secure Units.
- * Transfer of Irish POWs to the occupied Six counties or repatriation to the 26 counties.
- * On behalf of all those incarcerated under the draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act.
- * Against the proposed extradition of Irish men or women to Britain.
- * To raise funds for the welfare of POWs and their families.
- * The immediate release of all Irish Political Prisoners.

Red Action calls for all those groups or individuals in England who wish to give their support to Irish POWs to join Fuascailt, PO Box 3923, London, NW5 1RA.

Send greetings, messages of solidarity to: Patrick Kelly at Port Laoise Jail, County Laois, Ireland, and to the prisoners in Belmarsh Jail, Western Way, Thamesmead, London, SE28 0EB.

"I know that I am going to die. What I require now is to get out of prison to spend time with my child and family."

Pat Kelly, Irish PoW.

Though Pat Kelly has at last been transferred to Port Laoise, amongst other cases for concern is that of Liam McCotter, Dingus Magee, Peter Sherry, Liam O'Dwyer, Danny McNamee and Andy Russell (non-IRA) accused of attempting to escape from Whitemoor jail in 1994. Since then they have all been held in Belmarsh jail's notorious Special Secure Unit and have not received a family visit since, refusing to so object their families to the closed-visit regime.

Obviously, despite the end of the IRA's ceasefire and the 'putting-on-ice' of the Saoirse campaign, there is still an urgent need for work to continue around the issue of prisoners, ensuring that they receive our support and

well-planned high profile events.

However, despite magnificent work completed by the group over the last nine months, it had become clear to those involved from early on all might not be well.

From the very first few meetings back in March '95 the Campaign displayed every danger of becoming as lacklustre as many of those that had gone before.

At that time the IRA's ceasefire was still relatively fresh and it had become glaringly obvious that this would present us with an unprecedented opportunity to advance the issues around Britain's continued occupation of the 'six' counties. Red Action openly subscribed to the view put to us by a number of activists within the Republican movement, that the IRA's ceasefire had opened a "window of opportunity" and our objective must be "to get as much through that window" before the British government slammed it shut.

With this in mind, Red Action members had put forward a programme of action to other members of London Saoirse which would see six months of work culminating in a national demonstration. We argued that the national demo would give an immediate focus to our work and that of any new branches formed outside London and at the same time inject a sense of urgency into our campaigning, which would be necessary if the demo was to be successful.

Immediately the faultlines began to appear, as in corresponding weeks we were told by prominent members of the Campaign (all claiming to speak with authority) that the march would be a mistake because - a) It would struggle to gain support and might end up embarrassingly small... b) It would be too successful, drawing large numbers of people and resources from around the country and away from concentrating work in their own areas... c) It was also put to us that the reason Red

Troops Out Movement as the leadership of Saoirse. And as this clique, used to lacklustre, ineffectual campaigns, saw Saoirse grow (particularly in comparison to the still-born Irish Peace Initiative), so did their paranoia. All of a sudden there were groups and individuals with their 'own agendas', the activities group - who had worked tirelessly to ensure that Saoirse kept up an impressive work-rate - were accused of operating as a conspiracy within the campaign. There were 'reds under the bed' wherever they looked.

The more Saoirse advanced the more the smear campaign against Red Action became hysterical and bitter. Even some half-wit from Hackney Labour Party was wheeled out to regale us with a horror story about Red Action beating up a mate of his from a band he wanted to book. As it turns out, this little diitty emerged from an alleged incident over 15 years ago - in 1981! Not only before Red Action was formed, but before those Red Action members listening to this crap were barely out of short trousers!

Much of the tension that existed was between the said clique who fought to maintain their grip by a mixture of backstabbing and sectarianism, and the membership who emphasised repeatedly at the final meetings that the reason they had worked within Saoirse was because of its high profile that had been brought about by a mixture of democracy, hard graft and dynamism throughout the twelve month period, making it the most active campaign in memory.

Prior to the campaign being closed down, the antics of the leadership clique had isolated it to the point that it had deemed it necessary to close down its own National Committee, after attempting to slander committed Republicans who had challenged its position; its final directive to close down Saoirse was defeated 7-48.

The reasons given for the indecent haste

tions of the clique been lifted and they were allowed to 'get on with the job'. And the activist had to keep the greater picture in mind as it was obvious to everyone that the wrangles were bound to disillusion and drive away activists, and that the clique appeared indifferent to this.

Indeed, the only offer from one member of the clique to help Saoirse in twelve months was to offer to write the letter informing the membership that it was being wound up!

At the heart of the problem lies the cliques' politics, the same politics that have dogged campaigning in Britain on all issues for decades - namely, Labourism. These people, who often claim to have 'no politics' of their own (ie not a member of any party) are in reality tied heart and soul, theory and practice, to Labourism; whether it be that great, almost mythical institution the 'Labour Movement' or the actual British parliamentary Labour Party itself.

Hence, all policy, tactics etc are decided with the interests of the Labour Party in mind, the same policies and tactics that have correspondingly failed year after year, decade after decade.

Emerging from Saoirse's fight to stay together and active on prisoners' issues has come Fuascailt (Liberation) to campaign for Irish PoWs. Given the complete reluctance of those responsible to address the problems of the past in Saoirse, then it is almost inevitable that these are doomed to repeat themselves.

While many people have become demoralised and fallen away, we hope that in time they will return and display the same level of commitment that ensured the success of Saoirse. For the sake of the PoWs, their relatives and the Republican struggle itself it is crucial that they do. Red Action will endeavour to play its part.

Join Fuascailt!

Nostalgia Ain't What It Is

The Case Against the Socialist Labour Party

For decades after the defeat of 1951, the Labour left dreamed of another "overwhelming Labour majority in Parliament to force through irreversible socialist transformation". There are a number of basic reasons why this scenario has not, will not, could now never happen. (1) The initial 'transformation' nationalisation etc while done in the name of the working class was actually implemented in the interests of the ruling class. (2) British capitalism cannot afford progressive reform. (3) Progressive taxation which might fuel that reform is no longer on Labour's agenda. (4) Labour is not now and never was a socialist party. Indeed the underlying motive behind the tax policies of all the major parties is designed to re-distribute from poor to rich. According to the Institute of Fiscal Studies, half of British households have £450 or less in savings. Contrary to received wisdom some statistics never lie. Indeed Labour has baldly declared itself to be the "party of business". Consequently, the very final shred of the argument for the Left ever supporting Labour even as a tactic has been stamped out. So for the first time in decades the British Left is being forced to realign. This has been confirmed by the rush of enthusiasm that has greeted Arthur Scargill's decision to found a new party; a Socialist Labour Party. Even pro-Labour elements have urged tactical support for the SLP 'in safe Labour seats where the SLP could not win and where any damage would be reduced to the minimum!'

Though the SLP was not officially launched until May the critical decisions on the structure, constitution and programme had already been made. The SLP will be organised from the top down. It will orientate towards the Labour Party and trade union movement bureaucracy and expects to attract support from the lower middle and respectable working classes.

Fatal Flaw

Along with the basic premise, the thinking behind these decisions is fatally flawed. Scargill maintains that New Labour has ditched socialism. But as Roy Hattersley has explained "Labour cannot abandon a position it has never occupied." In other words there never was the golden age of Labour radicalism that Scargill wants to recreate. It is a fiction. Curiously Scargill appears to agree: "Many on the left argue that it was never socialist and that people like me were deluding ourselves in thinking we could campaign for socialism within it. I now accept that argument" (Guardian 15/1/95). And yet in the same article he bemoans the fact that "New Labour has ditched socialist principles". Only one of these statements is true.

If the Cap Fits...



"I like to think I look at history a little bit and I wonder what people said about Keir Hardie a century ago".

Arthur Scargill Manchester Evening News Feb 1 1996

"Keir Hardie is a super cunning Scot whose demagogic tricks cannot be trusted for a minute...the man is the greatest obstacle at the moment. He appears in Parliament only on demagogic occasions in order to cut a figure with phrases about the unemployed - without getting anything done - or to address imbecillities to the Queen on the occasion of the birth of a prince which is infinitely cheap and banal..."

Frederich Engels London Nov 10 1894

And if Labour was never socialist then its cherished principles including Clause Four were no more than window dressing and a sham.

So while the formation of the SLP is a break from New Labour and the conservative Left it is clearly not a break with the past, real or imagined. Instead in true Luddite fashion (demanding the nationalisation of industries that no longer effectively exist etc) it seeks not only to recreate the Labour Party but the conditions that gave rise to it.

During the Hemsworth by-election Scargill campaigned for local pits to be reopened and "the nationalisation of the top 30 companies and for government to take back into public ownership everything that has been privatised." How is this to be implemented in 1996 when the dominant companies are all multi-national? Why is nationalisation etc regarded as vital to the political interests of the working class anyway? Scargill's disciples would argue that nationalisation is a vital piece in a planned economy. And the latter is just as vital if socialism is to be realised. All very plausible I'm sure, but for the working class in the 1890's as in the 1990's the essential contradiction is not whether the state controls this or that company, but who in society controls the state!

Cause and Effect

Predictably trade unionism is at the heart of the SLP strategy. Membership of a bona fide trade union is regarded as obligatory to qualify for membership of the SLP. This is just dogma. Trade unions only ever work effectively when capitalism is working effectively. In other words the 'labour movement' offers no protection and is largely irrelevant to those sections of the working class that need it most.

Over 7,000,000 workers operate in businesses employing less than 25 people. Unions can have little or no relevance for them. The SLP in turn bars them from membership and so compounds that failure further alienating probably, the decisive and potentially most radical section of the working class from the left. Trotskyism in particular has always been hypnotised by the point of production. Even today the SWP runs league tables on days lost through strikes as if the strikes were in themselves the key to class consciousness.

As Engels pointed out over 100 years ago business unionism is in essence about "strikes for higher wages, shorter hours and not as an expedient or means of propaganda and organisation but as an ultimate aim. These strikes whether they are won or not do not get the working class movement one step further...This is because the unions are fighting with effects, but not with the causes of those effects; they are retarding the downward movement but not changing its direction; they are applying palliatives, not curing the malady."

So for those like the SWP/SLP who believe that business unionism, even as outlined, is inherently progressive and must form the core of any Left analysis brings with it the inevitable capitalist prerequisite.

Quite simply, for British trade unionism to regain its former pre-eminence, it demands that British capitalism must first be rejuvenated. And this renaissance must moreover not only be based on the traditional manufacturing sector, but in the heavy industries; steel, coal, ship-building etc. Only this set of inconceivable circumstances will allow the unions to be restored to their normal place in society (tea and sandwiches in Downing St) and the revolutionaries to their rightful place, hectoring the TUC and issuing meaningless 'demands' within the unions.

With capitalism's restoration will follow the return of prosperity which will, they expect, allow them to squeeze, or at the very least, campaign convincingly for meaningful reform. Isn't that worth fighting for?

Blair who will be at the helm in capitalism's attempted conversion from bankrupt Britain, to 'tiger economy' knows different. (The impact of this conversion can be assessed by the stark statistics produced by BMW. In Germany BMW workers received the equivalent of \$30 an hour. In Vietnam for the same work BMW is hiring for the rate of \$1 a day) But then, unlike Scargill and co, Blair is no longer a reformist.

Lesser Evil

In defense of his plans 'for a four day week, a ban on overtime, for retirement at 55 and for the

nationalisation of everything that has been privatised', Scargill insists rather unnecessarily "that these are not revolutionary ideals".

The paradox for any movement or organisation that sets reform as its principle goal is that unless it or a rival to it threatens the power of the state itself, the state will not regard it as a lesser evil. In the absence of an authentic threat there is no case for the state conceding reforms or adopting a holding action. So even if regarded as a success in its own right, at its zenith it can hope to achieve nothing more than nuisance value. Scargill regards the recruitment of "5,000 members sufficient to justify a national organisation." By the standards of the British left this estimate is accurate. What he or any of his supporters have yet to explain is what the 5,000 members are for!

Britain was the first country to industrialise. Today it is going through this metamorphosis again but - in reverse. Just as industrialisation herded people from rural to urban areas, deindustrialisation has not only rendered millions of workers and entire industries permanently redundant but the methods of working class organisation and resistance trade unions etc have become increasingly defunct as well.

In the 19th century with the emergence of mass trade unionism many chose to believe that trade union power could be directly translated into political power. Industrial action could be used as a battering ram for legislative and social reform. The Right-wing argued that if the state could be reformed in this fashion violent revolution was not necessary. The Left convinced themselves that 'economic crises lead to strikes, which lead to a general strike which leads to revolution'.

This view that sees trade unionism as the womb-form of socialism is classical syndicalism. However, the 20th century has proved that reforms are not irreversible and there is no lasting connection between economic crises and politicisation. Though presented as diametric opposites (Reform or Revolution) they were always flip sides of the same coin. The continued promotion of the 'General Strike Now!' mantra or its parliamentary equivalent 'Vote Labour with no illusions' from any rational perspective is perverse. No longer harmlessly futile it now functions as a buttress to the status quo. It is not that the conservative Left have abandoned the class struggle entirely it is more that the ground has shifted and the position they hold is now a backward obstructive and reactionary one.

Capitalism is changing and capitalism is changing the working class. The SLP & co want to reform society to suit themselves but not reform themselves to the development of society. Arthur knows its the '90s it's not clear he knows it's the 1990s!

Messiah

Perhaps as predictably, the 'revolutionary' sects who at every opportunity stridently denounce reformism, when on being pushed kicking and screaming from the hopelessly reformist Labour immediately began kicking and screaming to gain entry to the equally reformist SLP. These are precisely the same groups who for years cheer-led for Labour on the basis that 'there was no alternative and that it was mere sectarianism to stand against it', now insist that the SLP may not be perfect (it needs to adopt their programme) but there is no alternative and to even suggest otherwise is sectarian. The very same forces that for decades sowed illusions in Labour Mark 1 are as eagerly intent on sowing illusions in Labour Mark 2. Any cul-de-sac is clearly preferable to dealing with the working class directly even if this means casting in the role of Messiah a man whose constitution is designed to exclude them, whose career judged objectively was a failure,



The SLP is a nostalgia trip for a party that never was. Capitalism is changing and capitalism is changing the working class. The SLP & co want to reform society to suit themselves but not reform themselves to the development of society. Arthur knows its the '90s it's not clear he knows it's the 1990s!

Constituency for Change

Instead what is required is an organisation that can as its first goal prove able to accommodate working class people. Some who accept this and reject Labour, but remain wedded to the belief that Labour has a mass working class base, and 'to win this layer we must be flexible and infinitely patient' will invariably wander back into the swamp. Instead, the Independent Working Class Association recognises that the constituency for real change is not the voter comfortable with Labour, but that strata of the working class already alienated from both it and the system it represents. The constituency for real change is not those formally loyal elements currently disillusioned with new Labour. The strata the IWCA must attract is the working class militants alienated by old Labour. It is on the entire working class communities bereft of illusions in labourism per se and hungry for real change that the IWCA must focus its attention. The objective of the IWCA is to make a difference rather than propaganda. Only by addressing the real concerns of the working class where they live rather than where millions of them don't work, can the IWCA help develop communities of resistance able to withstand, and ultimately exploit the opportunities presented by Labour's final 'betrayal'. If we won't, others will. So it has to be done There is no alternative.

The SLP is a nostalgia trip for a party that never was. The left has failed and the methods of the left both inside and outside the Labour Party have failed. The British and indeed European Left must re-invent itself. The radical-Left must at least match the ambition of the radical-right. To do this there needs to be a clean break with the past and a decisive change of direction. Sacred cows must be slaughtered. The Labour Party and all vestiges of labourism must be confronted.

The SLP is not the alternative. It is the same old formula of bankruptcy and impotence re-packaged under a new working title. It is the conservative Left in denial. Similarly the preoccupation with the point of production even if only theoretical has to be ditched. Sentimental syndicalism could never, and least of all now, form the basis for a strategy for total social change.



Defining the relationship? An IWCA supporter confronts Peter Mandelson at his book launch in Islington.

t Used To Be!

Labour - the Final Betrayal

One of the myths the pro-Labour sections of the media never tire of pushing is the notion that Tony Blair, in the name of realism, has refused to make wild promises as a means of securing an electoral victory; effectively, the myth amounts to this - that Labour has a benevolent but hidden agenda. The Guardian columnist, Hugo Young, tells us that, "Instead of grand old promises that the party could never deliver, this leader advocates a party making so few promises that it can never fail in the same way. He wants to get his betrayal in first".

In a review of the TV series 'The Wilderness Years' (a series which critically examined the debates within the Labour Party since losing office in 1979) Roy Hattersley claimed, "The real failure of the years in the wilderness...was Labour's inability to understand that it needed an ethical framework on which to hang its programme. We clutched policies from out of the air as if they were doves caught by a conjurer to impress his audience. The public wanted a philosophy, not a performance".

In other words, Labour has swapped undesirable policies for an ethical framework - a sense of 'social morality'.

When Michael Howard announced plans to send young offenders to military-style 'boot camps', Jack Straw responded, "This is nothing whatsoever like the boot camps I have seen in America. It seems more like a slipper camp than a boot camp".

When Straw announced Labour's package of "reforms" dealing with young people and the law, he called for powers for the police to deal with truanting, education programmes for parents, a special court order which would impose a legal requirement on parents of teenage criminals to attend counselling sessions, and a 'speed - up' of the youth court system. "Young people need to be confronted swiftly with the consequences of their own behaviour".

Among the measures proposed was "...a system which has fewer characteristics of an adversarial lawyer-based game". In other words, the youth courts would be a conveyor belt to convictions because young people would lose any right to legal representation. It's worth noting that Straw began to spell out his law and order agenda in the month that former Master of Rolls, one of Britain's most senior judges, Lord Donaldson (according to the Guardian a man who "did not have a liberal reputation as a judge"), described the current Home Secretary as a "despot".

Hattersley, meanwhile, tells us that Labour's 'big idea' is its commitment to equality. This commitment has been on show a fair bit recently. Keith Vaz, Labour's local government spokesman, is facing an inquiry into allegations of vote-rigging in Leicester East constituency after being taped in conversation saying how he wanted to turn the Hamilton estate in his constituency into an "Asian colony"; "They thought this was a long-term plan to turn Hamilton into an Asian colony. Actually, it was part of my long term plans - but the Asians didn't bloody well move in there. That's the problem with them".

Longer life expectancy, we are told, has led to spiralling costs of pensions and healthcare. Further, as the Rowntree Inquiry into Income and Wealth reported, during the last decade "more people became dependent upon state benefits like Income support as a result of both higher unemployment and economic inactivity (early retirement and invalidity)".

Labour MP Frank Field has argued that

the state welfare budget (£90 million a year) costs the average tax-payer £15 a day.

Field has argued; "No system of welfare can be independent of values...Is it right for example that young, never married mothers should gain additional income support premiums when few if any voters think that such behaviour is acceptable, let alone rewardable?"

Frank Field's report 'Making Welfare Work' proposes that claimants suspected of fraud should be made to sign on three or four times a day and that "identification cards would be a necessary accompaniment to this reform".

This agenda is identical to the attack on the welfare state carried out by Newt Gingrich's Republicans in the US. Field's reward is likely to be a cabinet position in an incoming Labour government. Shadow Chancellor Gordon Brown has already proposed an adoption of workfare schemes - with benefit cut-offs for young people who refuse all work or training. Labour's social security spokesman, Chris Smith, has announced a review of the welfare state that will focus on "a crack-down on fraud" and "promotion of personal responsibility".

Slashing the cost of welfare means big tax cuts for middle-class voters. In short, Blair thinks that he can buy his way into office by being the best guarantor of middle class living standards and business profits.

Chancellor Kenneth Clarke's recent budget included a £1,200 rise in the amount that can be earned before higher rate tax has to be paid, an increase in the threshold for paying inheritance tax to £200,000, and a 1p reduction in basic rate tax. Meanwhile, the NHS capital budget is being cut by 6.5 %, housing benefit to under twenty-fives is to be cut, and one parent benefit and lone parent premiums are to be frozen.

Cutting the spending on the poor to fund the income of the rich and middle classes. Labour's response to the budget was to attempt to go one better with Gordon Brown proposing a 10p starting rate of tax. A somewhat confused Roy Hattersley, writing in the Guardian, welcomed Brown's proposals, "assuming that, once in the Treasury, Chancellor Brown makes sure that the highest earners do not benefit from the reduction. As the bottom rate goes down, the top rate must go up".

As Hattersley points out, the top rate of tax has fallen by 50% in 10 years, while top salaries have increased ten-fold. "This change in income patterns is an argument for increasing, not reducing, the tax paid by the highest earners. Indeed, if the very rich are not taxed more...it is difficult to understand what the Labour leadership means by 'fair taxation'".

Gordon Brown, though, has not mentioned increases in the higher rate tax because he has no intention of introducing such an increase.

The Institute of Fiscal Studies has pointed out that "... the cut in the basic rate helps only those who pay tax at the basic or higher rate, and actually helps those whose taxable income is at or above the higher threshold the most. This is because higher earners have more income on which they pay basic rate tax".

In other words, Gordon Brown's answer to Kenneth Clarke's budget was to propose to give more to the middle classes and the rich. The poorest sections of society don't benefit from basic rate tax cuts because they don't earn enough to pay tax. Low-income tax payers would have any gain wiped out by higher council tax, school meals and milk costs, dental and prescription

charge increases etc.

Straightforwardly then, Labour is a middle class party pursuing a middle class constituency, determinedly at the expense of the working class.

"Labour is now almost indistinguishable from the Democratic Party in the United States, Germany's Social Democrats, or nearer to home, the Liberal Democrats. It has changed its policies on all fundamental issues which have been determined by the Party conference over many years".

Scargill believes that the Labour Party has been "politically cleansed". He recognises that "radical opposition in Britain is symbolized not by the Labour and trade union movement but by the groupings such as those which defeated the Poll Tax, the anti-motorway and animal rights bodies, Greenpeace and other anti-nuclear campaigners and those fighting open-cast mining".

The solution proposed - the formation of a Socialist Labour Party - "on the basis of class understanding, class commitment and socialist politics...[committed] fight every parliamentary seat" - drew a range of responses, which are useful to examine as an indicator of the



Peter Mandelson

extent to which the Left opportunists can overcome their craven support for Labour.

The rail union RMT gave support at senior level to the proposals. At ground level the majority of the Labour left were, for the usual reasons, entirely dismissive. Ken Livingstone, whose ramblings increasingly suggest that his orbit rarely brings him into contact with earth any more, said "My guess is that if Arthur had been serious and had pushed on with this project, the Tory party would have given him a million pounds to get it off the ground because it could take back just enough votes off Labour to give the Tories a chance. I'll bet Stella Rimington went to work on it immediately".

Tribune urged "socialists" to "stay and fight" - presumably to keep with the habit of a lifetime and seek permanent consolation in defeat at the hands of successive Labour leaderships.

Alan Simpsons, Labour MP conceded that "the only reason that the establishment wants Labour in office is to make the cuts in the welfare state that the Tories probably couldn't get away with". The best way of "meeting this challenge" is, apparently, through "Defeating the Tories at the next election and developing an analysis round which to campaign once Labour takes office".

Not wanting to be the fastest rat off a moving gravy train, Simpsons and his Briefing/Socialist Organiser cheerleaders recognise that Blair's agenda is blatantly anti-working class, and that the only means of opposition is to vote for it! Further, the best argument against the SLP is that it might take votes from

Labour! So, the best way to defeat your enemy is to mobilise the maximum possible support for it!

Not every Trot group rushed to the defence of the SLP. Workers Power argued "the real problem is not the premature foundation of a SLP. It could even have come too late. If Militant had found the political courage to break with Labour during the struggles in Liverpool in the mid-eighties, if Arthur Scargill and his allies in the NUM had made the call, tens of thousands could have been broken from the grip of Kinnock". Never mind that in the recent past, Workers Power argued against support for Militant Labour candidates who had broken from Labour, precisely because they had broken from Labour! Like many of the Left, Workers Power's approach to dialectics seems to mean the capacity to continually make contradictory statements which resolve themselves on the basis that reality is always wrong.

More serious support came from Militant Labour, calling for an "energetic rallying of all those in favour of the new initiative", and pointing to the electoral success of Communist Refoundation in Italy and the United Left in Spain as proof that relatively small forces could successfully contest for political space.

Only in the summer '95 Militant International review they declare that they support "the coming to power of a Labour government, not because there will be a fundamental change in the policies pursued by that government compared to the Tories, but because it would lift the yoke of 16 years of Tory rule off the backs of the working class!". Not unusually, Militant want the best of both worlds; "...on the basis of big events, a radical, socialist mass wave will develop in the unions. Then the question will be posed point blank: either to use the trade unions to enter the Labour Party and brutally push out the bourgeois elements, or to put a minus against the present organisation of the Labour Party and commence to create a new main socialist political party".

Unsured of which way the tide will turn, Militant Labour is designed to face both ways and ensure the maximum opportunity for growth of the Militant project, by being outside, but not against, Labour.

In the December '95 "Socialism Today" Militant concede as much: "Far from undermining the fight to defeat the Tories, the mobilisation of the advanced layers would motivate wider sections, many of who, at this stage, will vote Labour. Labour's could actually be pushed up by a Socialist Labour Party campaign in safe Labour seats, while it would not necessarily contest Labour marginals".

The SWP response has, by comparison, been muted. The December Socialist Review gives a straightforward report of the SLP proposals so far and cautions "in the longer term, such a project might become more of a runner electorally as people become disillusioned with a Labour government. But if it looks to parliament as a source for change then it too will be unable to deliver".

For the SWP, the SLP is too much like competition for the "socialist alternative". Consequently its adopting a watch and wait approach. For now, the SWP are following their age old "Vote Labour, Build the Socialist alternative" strategy and seeing whether the SLP gains momentum.

What Scargill and the pro-Labour Left have in common is the pipe-dream of a return to the good old days of Labour in 1945.

Continued

CONTINUED

Labour - the Final Betrayal

The Conservative Left: An Infantile Disorder

There is a myth, pushed by the Left, that the Labour 1945 government was "the revolution without a single cracked skull". Almost 20% of industry was nationalised - coal, gas electricity, the Bank of England. The National Health Service was set up. All was well for the working class. At least that's what they tell us. The reality is different. As the future Lord Hailsham had warned in 1943, "If you don't give the people social reform, they will give you social revolution".

Three hundred and ninety three Labour MPs took office in 1945 on the back of working class anger at the sacrifices made in the Second World War. The Beveridge report, recommending the establishment of a comprehensive system of social insurance and the foundation of the National Health Service, had been published in 1942, and the government had refused to promise their implementation on the basis that a post-war government might not have the resources to do so.

Consequently, as Beveridge put it, Labour was seen as "the one hope of a better world after the war". Strange then, that Churchill, in his first speech as Leader of the Opposition, said that "...it is evident that not only are the two parties in the House agreed on the main essentials of foreign policy and in a moral outlook on world affairs but we also have an immense programme, prepared by our joint exertions during the coalition, which requires to be brought into law and made an inherent part of the life of the people".

Labour's nationalisation programme had been discussed and accepted by all sections of the House. The majority of industries involved were already subject to some degree of public control, as a result of wartime requirements. The post-war historians Alan Sreed and Chris Cook comment that "...the mines, the railways, the canals, road haulage and the iron and steel industries were owned by commercial companies and depended for their survival on their profitability, even if their long term survival on such a basis looked less than likely".

The Labour Left would have us believe that the 1945 nationalisations were the first steps towards a planned economy. But only unprofitable industries were nationalised, profitable industries remained in control of private enterprise. The mine owners alone received £164,600,000 in compensation.

The minister for Economic affairs, Sir Stafford Cripps said "I think it would be almost impossible to have worker-controlled industry in Britain, even if it were on the whole desirable". In the years of nationalisation, troops were used to break strikes on 18 occasions. Wage restraint policies were introduced in 1948. As for planning, as Sked and Cook recognised, "Co-ordination of fuel policy was hardly promoted through the establishment of separate Gas and Electricity Boards, while the separate boards administering rail and road transport did nothing to encourage the development of an integrated transport system...Socialist planning of this type was acceptable even to Conservatives". It may

have been done in the name of the working class, but it was done in the interest of the ruling class.

The social security structures introduced in 1946 through the National Insurance Act were not Beveridge's scheme for a "national minimum". Sickness and unemployment benefits were linked to National Insurance contributions and benefit rates were not linked to the cost of living. In establishing the NHS, the government allowed consultants to retain income from private beds and fees, "stuffing the consultants' mouths with gold" as one commentator at the time put it.

The social reforms established after 1945 had two purposes, one was to quell social unrest from returning troops, the other was to regulate the inefficiencies of free-market capitalism in the long-term interests of reinforcing British capital. Labour in 1945 promised what Blair promises in 1996 - rationalisation. In reality they make the same people pay. As Herbert Morrison told the 1947 Labour Party Conference "There is little or no more to be got towards a better standard of living by squeezing the incomes of the rich...from now on, what we set in social benefits and higher wages we shall, broadly speaking, have to earn by higher production".

The 1990's are the age of what the social theorists Scott Lash and John Unry characterise as "disorganised capitalism" - hi-tech information and a globalised economy. The British economy is ill-placed to compete, because of the drain of expenditure to welfare, and because of the Tories de-skilling of the workforce through reduction of spending on education. The "disorganised capital" economy will incorporate both a highly trained, highly skilled workforce and high levels of unemployment. Hence, New Labour's emphasis on education and training.

In December, Blair told the Keidanren - the Japanese equivalent of the CBI - that "under Labour I believe it [the UK] would offer...a better educated, more skilled work force, better infra-structure, a stronger, more positive voice at the EU negotiating table and a macro-economy more conducive to sustained investment. Tax rates need to be internationally competitive". Translated, this means cheap, skilled labour, and low taxation. Given that, according to Sir Geoffrey Holland, former Permanent Secretary for the Department of Education, Britain had slipped from 14th to 18th in a league of global competitiveness because of the quality of the workforce and the inadequate education system and was "the dunce of the world", Blair's vision is essential for the turn around of British capital.

Writing in the New Statesman recently, the sociologist Ralf Dahrendorf noted that "the nature of work is changing. A career for life will be the exception rather than the model. Over a lifetime, people will be in and out of work, employed full-time and part-time, in training and re-training...if the early opportunity to encounter the uses of education and the constraints of the labour market is missed, much if not all is lost...the truly

disadvantaged - the underclass - present an almost unmanageable problem. Clearly, just offering opportunities to those who have fallen through the net is not enough. It is unpopular to speak of motivation as an obstacle to the return of some of the truly disadvantaged to the labour market, yet it is a fact of life that many have become indolent and accustomed to a life at the margin".

This is the other side of Blair's bright and shining coin - long term unemployment for those without a place in New Labour's new age. As Blair told the Keidanren, "with globalisation comes its offspring - insecurity. I have argued that in social terms, we need a new contract between society and the individual, in which rights and responsibilities are more closely defined, in which we grant each citizen a stake in our society, but demand from each clear responsibilities in return".

Blair, Jack Straw, Dahrendorf are of the social democratic left. There is nothing in their language or their proposals - workfare, withdrawal of benefits, coercive training schemes etc - to separate them from Republicans like Newt Gingrich, or the right wing US sociologist Charles Murray. In a review of Murray's book "The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life", the writer Alan Ryan noted "The middle class have neither the money to spend on the underclass or tolerance of their ways. They will insist on coercive policing and a more primitive welfare system, and will want the underclass kept in whatever high-tech and more lavish version of the Indian reservation it takes to keep them from preying on the respectable".

New Labour's agenda is to restructure British capital at the expense of the poorest sections of the working class. The pro-labour left are campaigning for this agenda. They ask us to vote for it while trying to distance themselves from the end result.

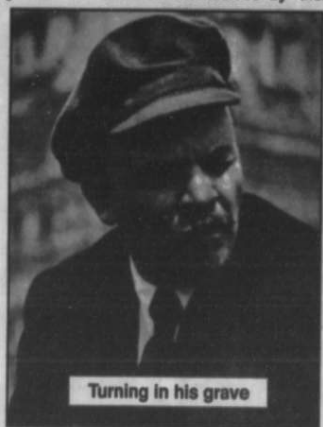
The SLP in turn are selling the "benevolent Labour of '45" dream. Labour was no more benevolent then than now. The SLP is a quest to regain a past that never was, and given the contempt for ordinary people demonstrated by its bureaucratic antics so far, it is destined to be one more in the never-ending set of initials which baffle and bullshit at every election.

The end results, as TUC leader John Monks gloated recently, "the debate on the centre left is no longer about socialism versus capitalism. It is about different kinds of capitalism".

Politics is geared to what the economist JK Galbraith called "the constituency of contentment" - the middle class, and those in secure, well paid full-time work. The IWCA's constituency of the discontented, which the likes of Blair dismiss as "the underclass", has no voice. The pro-Labour left has seen to that. We have to contest every arena, to ensure that the voice is heard again, and Marx's "gravediggers of capital" make Blair's middle class voters worst nightmare come true.

The British Left in the 20th century has always been a strange, timid beast and, with the odd exception, always willing to boost the hopes and expectations that people had in the Labour Party.

Lenin encouraged this, and much of what he wrote about the Labour Party in the period 1918-1922 is still parroted by the left, almost 80 years later. For this reason it is worth examining his views in some depth. In his pamphlet "Left Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder", Lenin set out many of the shibboleths that are still common currency now. He argued that Communists in relation to the Labour Party "...must, firstly, help Henderson and Snowden to beat Lloyd George and Churchill...secondly, we must help the majority of the working class to convince themselves by their own



Turning in his grave

experiences, that we are right, that is that the Hendersons and Snowdens are absolutely unsuitable, that they are petty bourgeois and treacherous by nature, and that their bankruptcy is inevitable".

Lenin goes on to say that the Communists should try to set up an electoral bloc with Labour, to determine in what areas the different parties should stand. If the latter don't agree, "we would take part in the election campaign, distribute leaflets in favour of communism, and, in all constituencies where we have no candidates, we would urge the electors to vote for the Labour candidate and against the bourgeois candidate".

In these two quotes we see the germs of all the attitudes of the Left over the last 75 years towards the Labour Party, but with one important proviso. Labour at this point had never been in power, whether in a coalition or alone.

The Communist Party's position towards Labour was spot on formally, in that they could say "The advent of the present leaders [of the Labour Party] to power will not constitute a worker's government, but a government in the name of Labour, pledged to capitalism".

However, when there was another election within a year, Labour became the biggest party in Parliament and formed a government with Liberal support, the CP decided it was "a victory for the working class".

Compare that with this quote from the SWP's Paul Foot, "When Labour does well in the polls, its worker supporters feel better, more confident; and when Labour goes down, its supporters go down as well".

Some things never change!

By the 1950s, the mantle of British Revolution, such as it was, had been taken up by the emerging Trotskyist groups, then as now, absolutely tiny. Ironically, while they claimed to be mortal enemies of the CP, the groups managed to uncritically copy that organisation's craven attitude to Labour. The politics they espoused varied from each other, but only in degree. For the last fifty years, all of these groups have argued, despite their blood-curdling rhetoric, that Labour has to be supported either by being in it or voting for it, and that a victory for Labour would be in the interests of the working class. The more things change, the more they stay the same...

Labour, since its inception, has been a burden on the creativity and resourcefulness of the working class. It has siphoned off generations of genuine and committed militants from the road of working class independence into the path of their own destruction. All the while, the Left, whichever variety, has encouraged them in this and will continue to do so. As things get worse in the remaining years of the nineties, with or without Blair, the faultline within working class politics is no longer between Left and Right, but between those who are for Labour and those who are against it. For those in the latter camp, there can be no hankering after the myths of the Labour movement, Trotskyism and Leninism, the time has come to bury the beast and start again.



Security Camera in Newcastle's West End (above)

"The choice is clear. There is an American route where an increasingly coercive state will be forced to adopt a 'control and contain' approach to keeping the poor in check...it will mean closed circuit TV across the country, banging more people up in prison and cutting unemployment pay in order to force people to price themselves into jobs (take pay cuts). The alternative is to introduce some policies that might do some good...the chances of this happening are negligible".

(Guardian October 30 1995)

Back to the Future

The ebb tide of capitalism in the Western democracies reproduces many of the social and political conditions once considered characteristic only of capitalism in its early or 'barbaric' stages. As exploitation within the workplace intensifies and the structures of working class resistance and defence are eradicated, so the political weight of the class disappears. How, in these conditions, is the working class to be held together?

It is therefore important to understand the historical basis of Marx's assumption that the united action of the working class would eventually overthrow the capitalist system of production. The tendencies enforcing this unity need to be considered in direct relation to the forces that tend to undermine it. Over the last decade or so in Britain, the continued weakness and disunity of the working class has often been painfully apparent.

What is the basis in the nature of capitalism for identifying the working class as a socially united 'bloc' whose interests are in opposition to those of the capitalist class? On the surface, different groups of workers have very different groups of interests which sometimes appear to bear little relationship to each other.

Marx says that the relationship between the working class and the bourgeoisie is one of contradiction in a technical sense. This means that the growth of the bourgeoisie as a class necessarily implies the existence of its opposite, the proletariat. The same factors (such as growth of industry, the concentration of capital) that create the conditions of bourgeois domination at the same time create a working population distinct from all previous labouring classes. Second, the social forces concentrated in the new proletariat ultimately undermine and destroy the conditions of bourgeois domination.

Marx frequently describes the contest between these opposing forces as he is not referring to "the actual composition of society, which by no means consists of only two classes, workers and industrial capitalists".

Patterns of class conflicts in actual societies are more complex than the abstract model of the capitalist mode of production can indicate.

There are nonetheless a number of striking passages where he confidently asserts that, "The various interests and conditions of life within the ranks of the proletariat are more and more equalised...and nearly everywhere reduces wages to the same low level".

This process, which in general terms is undoubtedly a real one, eventually results in the "simplification of class antagonisms" and such that Marx suggests it "reduces the whole of society to the simple opposition between a class of capitalists and a class of propertyless workers".

Marx occasionally generalises on the basis of the tendencies of the "general laws" identified by his formal method. In the context of his formal system, he describes "the development of the naked conflict between capital and labour", which appears to imply a degree of historical simplicity that has never in fact existed. The most eminent Marxist thinkers, including Marx himself, have too often approached the working class through the medium of an ideological analysis rather than having emerged from the ranks of the working class itself.

It is possible to see in what sense the broad historical tendency identified by Marx has been borne out by events and in what senses it has not - at least, within the historical time scale envisaged by Marx himself. The crucial (theoretical) assumption of a 'simple opposition' between worker and capitalist producing revolutionary momentum within the working class has failed to come into being. Consequently, Marx's own theoretical perspective of a "negation of capitalist production proceeding with the inexorability of a natural process" is inadequate.

Most significant of all is the total eclipse of the traditional forms of independent working class political organisation. As exploitation within the workplace intensifies and the structures of working class resistance and defence are eradicated, so the political weight of the class disappears. The interests, agenda and even the voice of the working class are dismissed from the language and structure of political interaction established by the ruling classes. Working class people henceforth only appear as a social problem, just as in the 19th century the working class was not recognised as a political entity but as a mere force of social disruption: the 'mob'.

This development, which can be relied upon to get a lot worse before it gets better, poses an urgent question. How, in these conditions, is the working class held together? What are the economic and social conditions that establish it as a coherent and independent political entity?

The diversity of interests within the working class, the material sources of their lack of unity in practice, are strongly delineated in the overtly political writings of both Marx and Engels. Yet we hear very little of this recognition. It has traditionally been suppressed by the attention paid to Marx's highly theoretical analysis of capitalism in the pages of Das Capital etc. Only the simple opposition of the working class to the bourgeoisie has emerged. Marx himself at the more abstract level of his analysis of capitalism contributed to this tendency. It is here that the conception of capitalist society divided into two antagonistic classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, is presented most forcefully. Yet it is important to note that even here Marx frequently cautions that he is not referring to "the actual composition of society, which by no means consists of only two classes, workers and industrial capitalists".

Patterns of class conflicts in actual societies are more complex than the abstract model of the capitalist mode of production can indicate.

understand Marx's distinction between the nominal, real and relative wage. Nominal wages are merely the price of labour expressed as a sum of money the worker receives; the real wage is the amount of commodities that the nominal wage will buy. Marx then introduces the concept of the 'relative wage':

"Wages are above all, also determined by their relation to the profit of the capitalist - comparative, relative wages...relative wages...express the share of direct labour it has created in relation to the share which falls to...the capitalist".

Suppose a worker during one working week produces £100 profit for his boss and is paid £100 in wages. The following week he works harder and produces £150 for his boss and is paid £110. His nominal, and indeed his real wage may have risen; he will be better off. But his boss is better off still. The relative wage of the worker has fallen.

of this tendency forcefully: "A house may be large or small; as long as the surrounding houses are equally small it satisfies all the social demands for a dwelling. But let a palace arise beside the little house, and it shrinks from a little house to a hut. The little house shows now that the owner has only very slight or no demands to make; and however high it may shoot up in the course of civilization, if the neighboring palace grows to an equal or even greater extent, the occupant of the relatively small house will feel more and more uncomfortable, dissatisfied and cramped within its four walls". This explains why the system of wage labour is: "a system of slavery, and indeed of a slavery which becomes more severe in proportion as the social productive forces of labour develop, whether the worker receives better or worse payment".

To repeat the point, this is true for all classes of productive worker, for all wage labourers producing what Marx calls 'surplus value' - whatever the wage differential between them might be.

Marx implies that the diminution of the productive worker's status has two sides. First, the growing mass of the capitalist's wealth is experienced as an oppressive social power, in relation to which the worker's share of commodities is constantly diminishing. The result of this process is to "deepen social contrasts and sharpen social antagonisms". Second, capital is experienced as an increasingly tyrannical power in the process of production:

"within the capitalist system all methods for raising the social productivity of labour are put into effect at the cost of the individual worker; all means for the development of the means of production...become means of domination and exploitation of the producers; they distort the worker into a fragment of a man, they degrade him to the level of an appendage to a machine, they destroy the actual content of his labour by turning it into a torment; they alienate him from the intellectual potentialities of the labour process in the same proportion as science is incorporated in it as an independent power".

Life on the production line becomes more labour intensive, less skilled, more mindless, offers less opportunities for the worker's control; it becomes dehumanised.

Marx is therefore claiming that despite the prospect of a higher standard of living as expressed by the quantity of commodities that can be exchanged against wages (the real wage), the 'misery' of the productive labourers increases simultaneously with the development of the productive forces in the hands of the capitalists: "Accumulation of wealth at one pole is therefore at the same time accumulation of misery, the torment of labour, slavery, ignorance, brutalisation and moral degradation at the opposite pole, ie on the side of the class that produces its own product as capital".

Although Marx seems to have the situation of the unemployed or under-employed worker uppermost in his mind here, the whole class of productive workers is affected - particularly where, as Engels wrote years later, even if the standard of living of the working class is to some degree protected by the organisation of

workers in unions, "What certainly does grow is the insecurity of existence". The threat of unemployment grows with the scale of capitalist crisis.

It is clear from Marx's analysis that the classes of productive workers are united by self interest in that the situation of all irrespective of their position to each other, is deteriorating in relation to that of the capitalist class. This situation is disguised where the standard of living, the real wage, is rising - particularly from groups of workers who benefit from higher wages during a period of capitalist prosperity. Yet as Marx points out, the key category remains that of relative wages; relative that is to the wealth and social power of the capitalist. The fact that the deterioration in the position of the workers is disguised both by the prosperity of some sections relative to others, as well as by the rise in the absolute standard of living of all, itself provides an account for the absence of a consistent revolutionary consciousness amongst the proletariat.

Where the working class does become conscious of this social and political dimension, of the increasing power of capital to dominate its life both at work and in the wider processes of society, it implies a direct transition to socialist objectives. For unlike the struggle for a greater share of surplus value within the limits of the profitability of the capitalist enterprise, awareness of the way in which the development of the productive forces under capitalism results in the increasing domination of the capitalist class irrespective of the level of wages, focuses the struggle of the working classes on the overthrow of the wage system itself. This is a struggle which equally involves all working class people.

This is true even in the most extreme case, uniting employed and unemployed workers. In the nineties, larger and larger sections of the working class are able to see that attacks on their own living standards are linked with the existence of huge numbers of unemployed - who they may join at any minute. The life of the 'reserve army' of unemployed is directly connected with that of the active working class; energies of one flow into the other as the fluctuations of the capitalist system demand. Wages and working conditions in general are regulated not by the absolute number of those in the working population, but by: "the varying proportions in which the working class is divided into an active army and a reserve army, by the increase or diminution in the relative amount of the surplus population, by the extent to which it is alternately absorbed and set free".

From the point of view of the dynamics of capitalist exploitation and domination, the reserve and active sections of the workforce are united by the action of a single law of supply and demand. Over time, through periods of crisis and prosperity, their interests can be seen to be identical.

It follows that for working class revolutionaries, notwithstanding the fact that the interests of various strata within the working class are not wholly identical in actually existing societies, there exists an essential overall alliance of interests between them on an historical scale, which justifies and makes indispensable the recognition of the opposition of interests between the working class on the one hand and the bourgeoisie on the other.

Charting the decline in the economic and political power of the working class is not difficult: the growth in the numbers of those permanently unemployed, the increasing threat to those in work, the decline in living standards during capitalist crisis, helplessness in the face of capital's decision to move or halt production, the deterioration of working conditions and the deskilling of work, the levels of repression utilised by the police and the prison system, the abdication of the trade unions' role in defending their members against the encroachments of the capitalist class and the absence of an independent working class party. The struggle for a socialist society is a political against the bourgeois state; it is not a struggle for a higher wage in the factory. In positive terms, the role of the Marxist left must be to work for the social and political control of society by the working class.

BRIEFING
POVERTY

Definitions of poverty change over the years

A report published by the Child Action Poverty Group, using Government figures, claimed that 14.1 million (one in four) in the UK are in poverty. This is almost three times the number in 1979.

It will be obvious that real wages may stay the same or even rise, while the relative wage will fall. This goes to the heart of what Marx meant when he claimed that the condition of the worker under capitalism would tend to deteriorate. Even where a group of workers find themselves materially better off, the capitalist's position has improved still more: the capitalist owns a greater quantity of capital than before since he will have invested the increased profits of the intervening period, while the workers still own nothing but their labour power: "The share of capital relative to labour has risen. The division of social wealth between capital and labour has become still more unequal...the power of the capitalist class over the worker has grown, the social position of the worker has deteriorated, has been depressed one step further below that of the capitalist".

This process can be historically confirmed. As recent government figures have shown, the gap between the wealthiest and poorest sections of society was actually wider in 1989 than in 1889, despite the poorest sections of society being far better off in 1989 than they were in 1889. In the strongest capitalist economy of all, that of the US, this process is still more evident. As Marx put it, "the social position of the worker has deteriorated", despite the advent of cars, videos and CDs.

Marx expresses the social significance

Patriot Games

A document has recently been circulating in left wing and media circles which purports to be a "security alert" and alleges Red Action's involvement in an MI5 conspiracy to entrap members of the Scottish National Liberation Army (SNLA). The document was issued from Dublin by the previously unheard of Scottish Separatist Group (SSG). It is in fact the work of Adam Busby, the self styled "leader in exile" of the SNLA. Red Action investigates...

Busby, has for the past 12 years lived in Dublin, claiming to be "on the run" from the British authorities for his part in previous SNLA activities. In fact Busby is "on the run" for an act of vandalism in which he is alleged to have criminally damaged a military vehicle. However, he continues to peddle the myth that he is the leader of a mighty guerrilla force waiting in the wings to take Scotland forward to an Independent Workers Republic. Many of those who have come into contact with Adam Busby over the years have inevitably ended up in jail - Tommy Kelly (10 years), Andrew McIntosh (12 years) to name but two. The most recent case involving alleged bomb plots by the SNLA in which two men, Kevin Paton and Terence Weber, received the sentences of 18 months and 3 years respectively, is the subject of Busby's "security alert" document. Busby claims that both Weber and Paton were state agents involved in a conspiracy to entrap Busby and another man, their co-accused Darin Brown. Brown subsequently jumped bail and his whereabouts are unknown. Busby claims that the state was forced to convict it's own agents in the absence of himself and Brown, a somewhat ridiculous scenario, to say the least.

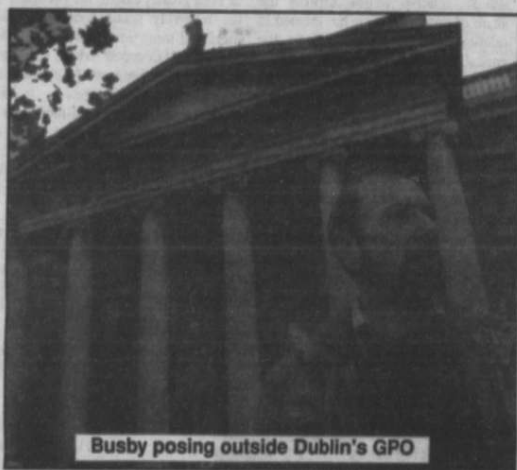
In Weber's case, there is certainly some cause for concern. Weber was able to gain access to the SNLA after he shared a cell with SNLA member, Andrew McIntosh, while he was on remand in Craiginches Prison, Aberdeen. The document points out that Weber was released on bail twice despite the fact that there was a warrant for his arrest on a charge of rape in England. It would certainly appear that Weber, a habitual thief and housebreaker, had done some sort of deal with the police whereby he might have some outstanding charges against him dropped in return for information and infiltration of the SNLA. This is certainly the explanation offered by Busby. More disturbing is the ease with which Weber was able to gain membership of the SNLA. He was either working for the state against the SNLA or alternatively, the SNLA itself is a state asset and Busby has assumed the role of a previous Walter Mitty character called Major F.A.C. Boothby, who in the 1970's set up the

entirely state run Army of the Provisional Government (APG). Interestingly, the young Adam Busby was one of Boothby's recruits. Certainly, the SNLA is always active at times when the Scottish National Party (SNP) are riding high in the opinion polls and they have provided propaganda for the Labour Party in Scotland to smear the SNP with claims that the "Tartan Terrorists" are a by product of their nationalism.

In Kevin Paton's case, Busby claims that he was an unwitting dupe of an MI5 operation which involved Red Action's Scottish organiser, who Busby claims is an MI5 officer! The

Tiocfaidh Ar La fanzine, AFA and Red Action. Kevin is a strong supporter of Irish republicanism and was attracted towards the activities of AFA. The contradictions in political terms of a Settler Watch member also becoming involved with Red Action had at this time not become apparent to him.

Red Action members first met Kevin and two friends when they came down for a Celtic game a couple of years ago. During a brief discussion and due to the increasing interest being shown by the media in the activities of anti-English groups in the North of Scotland, we asked him



Busby posing outside Dublin's GPO

reality is that Kevin Paton came into contact with the SNLA through the fascist Settler Watch group, an organisation run by SNLA members. Paton was put in touch with Busby after being 'vetted' by a German woman called Sonia Vathjunker, a fellow Settler Watch activist. Vathjunker previously gained press notoriety when she and another woman were arrested putting up Settler Watch posters. Their arrest led to the subsequent search and arms find at Andrew McIntosh's home. Vathjunker had borrowed McIntosh's car for the poster run and thereby provided the police with the reason to make further enquiries into McIntosh's activities, eventually leading to his arrest and a 12 year jail sentence. At this time Kevin Paton, a lifelong Celtic fan and former Celtic Casual, was also in contact with the

what his views on Settler Watch were. It became pretty clear to us that Kevin had some involvement with this group. We met another couple of times and communicated by phone - we pointed out to him that, in our opinion, groups like Settler Watch were dangerous because they based themselves simply on hatred of the English rather than seeing the problems of housing and unemployment as a working class issue, regardless of nationality. There are plenty of rich landowners in the north of Scotland of various nationalities, including Scots, who were exploiting the area's resources and people. Eventually Kevin, told us that he had been involved in Settler Watch and that he had established contact with Adam Busby through Vathjunker. He said that he had always been unhappy about how the SNLA and Settler

Watch targeted individual English people regardless of class and that he had argued some of these points in telephone conversations with Adam Busby. He had also told Busby that he had established contact with Red Action and although Busby had described us as a "British" group, he offered no criticism. He applied for supporting membership of Red Action and was accepted. He was finding it difficult, however to extract himself from the SNLA due to Busby's persistent phone calls.

It would seem that Busby finally snapped after Red Action printed a criticism of Settler Watch entitled "Tartan Fascists". He contacted Kevin Paton and "ranted" about the article. He also asked Paton if he was a member of Red Action, which he denied. Kevin Paton claims that Busby's parting shot was, "It doesn't matter anyway, because the shit's about to hit the fan for those bastards." Kevin reported all of this to the RA organiser. We were a little suspicious that Kevin might have been attempting to infiltrate Red Action on behalf of the SNLA but he seemed to be attempting to pull away from a group that he had regrets about ever getting involved with in the first place.

In August 1994, Kevin Paton was part of the Red Action delegation to West Belfast. The weekend was a great success with about 40 RA members from various areas attending. He visited republican prisoners in Long Kesh in the company of other Scottish RA members. On the way back to Scotland, we were stopped at Belfast Harbour by the RUC Special Branch, our car was searched and all of us were searched as well. We did not regard this with any great significance at the time although we did find it unusual that we were stopped and searched at the Belfast end rather than in Stranraer where most of the harassment of Scottish visitors to Ireland takes place. Within a fortnight of returning from Belfast the shit did indeed hit the fan as Adam Busby had predicted but it was Kevin Paton who took the fall when Busby set him up.

Paton was contacted by phone several times one night by Terence Weber and Darin Brown, men he had never met until he was in Craiginches prison on remand. Weber used a code word which Kevin recognised and he claimed that Paton had been recommended by Adam Busby and that his services were needed for an operation that night. Paton refused to participate, he worked night shift at the time, and he told them that he was finished with that stuff. Weber and Brown went ahead and were arrested

planting a device outside Aberdeen Sheriff Court. The next morning, Kevin Paton's home was raided by armed police and he was charged with SNLA related activities.

Kevin maintains that he had not been involved in any operations with the SNLA for 6 months. He admitted in statements to the police (against Red Action's advice) that he had been involved in the SNLA's "Operation Flame". He put his hands up to the actions that he had been involved in but he is adamant that the only person implicated in his confession was himself. Weber, on the other hand, made allegations that the whole operation and activities that he was involved in were run from Dublin by Adam Busby. He also made statements against Paton and Brown. When it came to court last year, Weber's defence was still that Busby and Brown were the real conspirators. Kevin Paton changed his plea to guilty to his "Flame" activities halfway through the trial. This meant that he could not be called to testify against anyone else. His plea was accepted and he received the 18 month sentence.

One other strange detail of the case with regard to Weber is that a few days after all the defendants had been released on bail, Weber turned up at the home of Kevin Paton with 2 stolen (he claimed) video recorders which he asked him to sell for £100 each. The reason he gave for appearing on Paton's doorstep was that he needed the money urgently in order to get over to Dublin to see Adam Busby. Kevin Paton told him that he wanted nothing to do with him and he left. Within 2 hours, Paton was visited by the police who asked him if he had seen Weber since their release, to which he replied, "No". The police officers told him that they knew for a fact that Weber had visited him a couple of hours ago!! What was Weber up to? Well, timers from videos have been known to be used in bomb-making...

Sonia Vajunker, who acted as a conduit from Busby to Paton. A leading light in Settler Watch, is now reportedly involved in the Tourist Industry!

Majors and Minors

To say that Adam Busby is a controversial character is not entirely accurate. That he is a liar, a fraud and a fantasist is beyond doubt. The only real question still to be decided is whether he is a witty or unwitting accomplice of the state. Eccentric he may be, but as his career shows, harmless he is not. The damage though is mostly self-inflicted. The problem is in unravelling fiction from reality. The reality of lengthy jail sentences for his comrades in arms and his precise role in it is exaggerated by the fact that Busby rarely tells the truth. To make matters worse, Busby is a publicity seeker. The phrase all news is good news describes his attitude to the press succinctly. How the press, who irregularly seek him out for interviews, view the relationship is less clear cut.

For, without the oxygen of publicity that comes courtesy of the Scottish and Irish papers, the SNLA and its commander and chief would not in any meaningful way exist. And while the coverage in the Irish and occasionally the English press is sceptical, the Scottish press can be very respectful indeed. This extract from a full page article in the Herald from 1993 is typically breathless: "Ten years ago the net tightened on the men who would be dubbed 'the two most successful letter-bombers in Scottish history', but they managed to jump bail and flee the country and have been at large ever since. David Dinsmore was a 20 year old nationalist extremist from Falkirk charged with posting a device to Scone Palace, the home of the Tory Minister the Earl of Mansfield. Other similar charges were being prepared.

terrorist trial involving both undoubtedly loomed".

This is the opening paragraph to a major article that Busby might have written himself. For two reasons. It has lies and inaccuracies in equal measures, and the bits in between are simply exaggeration.

One, the claim that Busby was one of the two most successful bombers etc was made in court. Not by the Crown, as might be imagined by the report, but by an agent provocateur from another case. Two, the charge against Dinsmore in regard to the Tory minister was subsequently dropped. Three, no other charges have been brought. Four, to describe an arrest for criminal damage as a "holding charge" when Busby got bail is totally inaccurate and designed to mislead. As is the inference that

there was something spectacular in managing to jump bail, which tens of thousands manage to do every Monday morning in Magistrates courts throughout the British Isles, simply by not turning up.

Finally, the major terrorist trial looming, etc, has never materialised. The only charge Busby has ever faced, and the one on which he successfully fought extradition from Ireland was for - criminal damage. 'Criminal damage' is not much of a war record by any standards. However, being the 'most successful letter bomber in history' is.

It was of course the state that wittingly or unwittingly provided Busby with these impeccable terrorist credentials. And, wittingly or unwittingly, press reports like this continue to sustain his credibility. Credible enough, in any case, to convince sufficient volunteers to sacrifice their freedom for a paramilitary organization that has no recognisable objective, an even slimmer prospect of success, and

that, despite fifteen years of blood thirsty rhetoric, have never killed anyone.

"Disruption and alarm, not shooting and bombing are the preferred tactics...even when the SNLA did allegedly intend to kill someone - something always seemed to prevent it. Its no wonder, as Busby says himself, that some suspect that the SNLA is an MI5 front to discredit Scottish nationalism" - (Sunday Tribune).

Whether it is or not is-of course a moot point. However, it does bear all the characteristics of its predecessors which were undoubtedly heavily infiltrated. One such outfit, with which Busby has a direct link, was the Army of the Provisional Government, founded in 1970 by a Major Boothby. According to an article in The Herald in 1993, Boothby is "now widely seen as an agent provocateur for the security services. In 'Britain's Secret War',

CONTINUED OVER

"A Motley Collection of Personality Disorders..."

Comrades in Arms

Most Scottish para-military groups have an inter-linking history that goes back as far as the late sixties and early seventies. They invariably have a cross-over in terms of members and activists. As a consequence, the state appears to have found it relatively simple to infiltrate them and entrap the more serious activists on arms charges or charges of conspiracy. For the state, the setting up of Scottish republican activists has a multitude of advantages. They can be portrayed in the media as a bunch of bungling, incompetent amateurs. Those involved in such conspiracies are usually written off as cranks, or in the words of one SNP wag, "...a motley collection of personality disorders". Most important of all, their clandestine activities can serve as a reminder - in the state's terms - of what happens when constitutional nationalism fails to deliver the goods; frustrated young men taking matters into their own hands. In other words, such groups can serve the interests of the state in undermining the position of constitutional nationalists like the SNP. However, that is not to say that all such republican groups in Scotland have worked to the agenda of the state, but, in the case of many, enough questions arise from their activities to suggest that the state has its fingers in quite a few 'haggis pies'!

That so many individuals and organisations have been imprisoned at the hands of state operatives and agents provocateur would tend to suggest that something is rotten to the core in the barrel of Scottish republicanism. This is perhaps verified by the fact that, for almost fifteen years, no Irish Republican group has publicly associated itself with any of the paramilitary organisations which proclaim themselves to be the leaders of the Scottish people. In their examination of this phenomenon, journalists Andrew Murray Scott and Iain MacLeay, in their book "Britain's Secret War" (1990, Mainstream) assert: "Some Scottish nationalists regard 'tartan terrorism' as a creature virtually summoned up by the state to discredit political nationalism and the peace movement. To others, the terrorists are simply cranks..." The first surge of 'unconstitutional nationalism' occurred around the same time as the SNP itself was poised to make electoral gains when, in 1968, they took the largest share of the votes in Scotland at the Municipal elections. This was enough to send shock waves through the British establishment and NATO who, according to Scott and MacLeay, regarded Scotland as strategically important to their interests. Scotland was essentially regarded as NATO's aircraft carrier.

The SNP, on the other hand, were, on paper at least, committed to breaking up the British state and to removing nuclear bases from Scottish soil. It is in this context, therefore, that the role of the British security services and MI5 have to be seen. Did they merely target known activists in nationalist circles whom they reckoned to be disillusioned with the constitutional road to independence, or did they adopt a more pro-active role in the formation of the Scottish para-military outfits?

The answer is probably a bit of both. From the accounts in "Britain's Secret War", there is little doubt that the state weren't just following people around in the hope of catching them 'at it'. At the same time, some of the key figures who may well have been straight, didn't exactly make it difficult for the state and its agents to find out what they

publication even went as far as to call for armed struggle and carried statements from the previously unheard of organisation called the Scottish Liberation Army (SLA). In 1970 Boothby founded the Army of the Provisional Government (APG). But, from their very first bank raid, the police were aware of the activities of APG members. Most fingers pointed at Boothby as both the instigator and the informant. The celebrated Scots poet and socialist Hugh MacDairmid, who, along with the Major had been a member of the executive of the militant nationalist 1320 Society, firmly believed Boothby to be an agent provocateur. In April 1972, MacDairmid wrote that:

"...if Boothby is playing a double game, he must be exposed and got rid of". In January 1973, Boothby was issued with a fait accompli

to rob banks and post offices for party funds. The four received a total of 81 years in prison (26 years, 25 years, 24 years and 6 years). Matt Lygate, the WPS leader who received a 24 year sentence and actually served 14 years has, in discussion with Red Action members in Scotland, been very frank about his feelings regarding the paramilitary nationalist organisations. When we asked him how he reckoned the state were able to convict him and the other WPS men, he said "Because they were in there, among us, right from the beginning".

Benny Goodwin is another state agent who crossed between groups like the Scottish National Liberation Army, Scottish Republican Socialist Party, Siol Nan Gaidheal and Arm Nan Gaidheal.

Goodwin's past would have raised doubts in the ranks of any group involved in illegal activities - but not so in the realm of the fantasy world that is Scottish paramilitarism. He was a former (?) police cadet who induced others to involve themselves in a campaign of letter bombs on behalf of the SNLA. He is the main source of evidence against Tommy Kelly who got ten years for posting two letter bombs. It was the evidence of police agent Goodwin which forced Kelly to change plea halfway through the trial and plead guilty. Charges of conspiracy against Kelly were dropped because the only person that he had conspired with was - Benny Goodwin!

Other associates of Goodwin were David Dinsmore and Adam Busby. It was Goodwin in fact who was attributed in 'Britain's Secret War' as providing Dinsmore and Busby with their oft quoted title as "the two most successful letter-bombers in Scottish history". Benny Goodwin made this statement during the trial of Tommy Kelly. Goodwin also stated that he had 'turned' undercover because of his hatred of violence and that he was proud of his part in frustrating the evil tactics of the bombers. Goodwin's statement in 1984 is not unlike that of another state operative, Patrick Daly, who boasted about "job satisfaction" at the trial a couple of years ago of INLA members who he had involved in an explosives conspiracy.

The number of informants, conspiracy trials and police set-ups are too many to detail. There have been a series of attempts to entrap and imprison members of the SRSP - the most bizarre of which was the use of explosives previously associated with the UVF, where the police, using their loyalist informants, tried to sell part of the UVF consignment to Scottish activists - a 16 year old youth, Creag Browning, received a year in jail for this police operation designed to entrap 'bigger fish'.

Other organisations to pop up over the years and to be drawn onto the spider's web that the state appears to have created around this scene have been: Tartan Army; Border Clans; Scottish Citizens Army of the Republic; 1916 Club; 100 Club; Scottish Activists; Scottish Patriots; Army of the Scottish People; Scottish Republican Army; as well as the aforementioned Army of the Provisional Government; Scottish Liberation Army; Workers Party of Scotland and the SNLA. Most of these groups have had people end up doing sentences.

The cause of a Scottish Workers Republic has only suffered as a result of the antics of the groups most associated with it. These groups have seen more splits, schisms and police operations against them than the fictitious 'Judean Popular Front' in Monty Python's 'Life of Brian'. Unlike the organisations who cover themselves in tartan and claim 'Braveheart spirit', however, the 'Life of Brian' was funny at least.

A former associate of Busby's, David Dinsmore, who fled Scotland with him, returned from exile in Brazil two years ago and admitted his part in a letter bomb campaign and jumping bail. Dinsmore received the sentence of 240 hours community service.

Whilst David Dinsmore was in Brazil, Busby, who remained in Dublin, continued to make ludicrous and grandiose claims about himself, Dinsmore and the SNLA. In an interview with Scotland on Sunday,



Dinsmore - minor role

published on 13th February, 1994, Dinsmore painted a different picture of his relationship with Busby and the SNLA. He said, "I was aware that people were using my name quite freely, saying this and that. I was supposed to be signing documents in Dublin and the News of the World claimed that I had confessed to sending a bomb to the Queen and being smuggled out of Ireland by the IRA. They simply made it all up, but I couldn't do anything about it." Busby claimed that a lot of time and money had been invested by the SNLA in keeping Dinsmore, whom he dubbed "The Tartan Pimpernel", out of jail.

When Dinsmore returned to face the music after ten years 'on the run', (ie community service!) Busby was outraged recognising that this embarrassing sentence would reflect badly on his carefully nurtured notoriety. He condemned the "shabby deal".

In 1993 Busby had told The Herald that Dinsmore was a key figure in SNLA operations in 1983: "That year there was an attack of some kind every few days - 27 letterbombs or hoax devices. Myself and Dinsmore were pushing ourselves to the limit". The 'shabby deal' changed things - retrospectively. "Dinsmore is a minor character and his defection is of no concern...He was actually an 18 year old message boy, a courier".

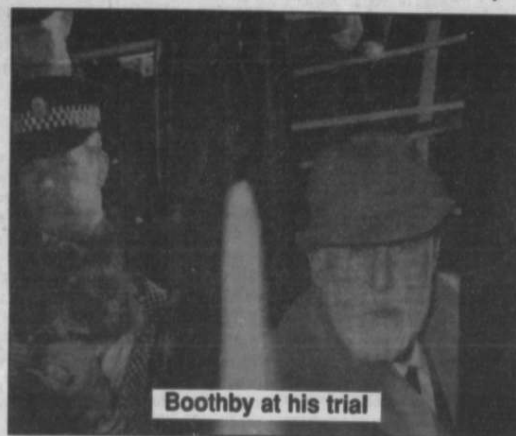
The pathological refrain is familiar. Tommy Kelly, who got ten years for SNLA activities after pleading guilty, was subsequently dismissed by Busby as "playing a minor role" and "never being a member of the SNLA". Kevin Paton was described as "a dupe who never got close", "a minor role" etc. If everybody that is captured plays the minor role, is this because Busby plays the 'major' role? Or put another way, Busby plays the role of 'Major'?

Busby, though clearly a loser, is not a graceful one. The article in Red Action 68 entitled 'Tartan Fascists' attacking the rationale and methods of Settler Watch as fundamentally racist, apparently drove Busby into paroxysms of rage. Rather than refute the allegations through the letters page or the media etc, Busby concluded that the counter argument would be better explained by covering Dublin in graffiti alleging that Red Action were all bastards, etc.

When Dinsmore was arrested in 1983 he had just posted a bulky envelope. When retrieved this was found to contain a box of matches, two tubes of lighter fuel, and emery paper.

In 1995 a parcel was collected at the London BM box. Inside a jiffy bag was a hardbacked notebook, with a hollowed-out centre. Taped to it with electricians tape was a tube of lighter fuel, matches, a plastic bag of gunpowder, a Hilti gun cartridge packed with broken glass, and attached to the package with an elastic band was a piece of - emery paper.

The 'bomb' was posted in Dublin. Red Action in Dublin also received a similar package a couple of months later. These devices were much more sophisticated than the rather primitive one that Dinsmore was captured with. Evidence which, even though circumstantial, suggests that in the ten year interim Busby has not been completely wasting his time.



Boothby at his trial

were up to!

The first modern leader of 'tartan terror' to emerge after 1968 was Major Frederick AC Boothby. A retired British Army Major, Boothby had delusional ideas about establishing a regular Scottish army - obviously with himself at its head! Boothby, an Englishman born in Dorset, with links to the old Anglo-Irish aristocracy, was educated at English public schools and was a cousin of Lord Boothby, the Conservative politician. He formed the South Hertfordshire Folklore Society, and both the society and Boothby were implicated by a TV documentary programme in strange rituals involving children (see Britain's Secret War). Boothby fled England but was later to re-emerge in Scotland as a fervent supporter of nationalism. Interestingly, like Adam Busby's first attempt - after thirteen years as a 'fugitive' - at a publication this year when he brought out the 'Scottish Separatist', Boothby's publication, 'Sgian Dubh', attacked the English and the leadership of the SNP. This

"leave Scotland or die" from, ironically, the Scottish Liberation Army, the outfit which he had founded. Boothby's activities resulted in 11 people being jailed.

Scott and MacLeay contend: "While there may have been scores of agents provocateurs, it is highly likely that Boothby was one. He was a man who revelled in clandestinity and conspiracy...this role of an agent acting as a 'focus' for potential terrorists then involving them in conspiracies leading to their arrest has proved to be a recurrent theme: in nearly every phase of terrorist activity there has been a figure playing the 'Boothby' role.

Other organisations and individual Scottish republicans have been convicted or have been framed in state attempts to involve them in arms and explosives conspiracies. Steven Niven was a police agent working inside the Workers Party of Scotland (WPS) which, in 1972, saw four of its activists receive the longest sentences ever handed out for a conspiracy trial in Scotland: Their 'crime' was to have conspired

This book is largely fictional, containing literally thousands of factual errors". Of the authors, he writes: "Both Sutherland and Murray Scott are promiscuous homosexuals, and both were involved with youthful male prostitutes so..."



The bomb - one of a number of suspect devices sent to Red Action bearing a Dublin post mark.

(CONTINUED) journalists Andrew Murray Scott and Iain MacLeay contend: "While there may have been scores of agents provocateurs, it is highly likely that Boothby was one...this role of an agent acting as a focus for potential terrorism then involving them in conspiracies leading to their arrest has proved a recurrent theme: in nearly every phase of terrorist activity there has been a figure playing the 'Boothby role'".

Perhaps all too aware of the comparisons being drawn, Busby, for whom suspicion, intrigue and paranoia are close personal friends, prefers to see Boothby as a "crank", or, alternatively, as "a totally sincere man who died in virtual poverty". 'Provocateur', 'crank', or 'totally sincere' are descriptions equally applicable, in whole or in part, to Busby himself.

Michael Shea, the former Press Secretary to the Queen, who is given a walk-on role as a kind of literary counter-provocateur in 'Britain's Secret War' describes conspiracy theorists as: "quaint fellows, oddly lodged in some sort of time warp, in one of the ante-rooms to the madhouse of politics. They define history in terms of plots, of nefarious schemers, of whisperers in the corridors of power, of networks of poisoners, propagandists or pederasts". Pederasts, or nonces, to use a more familiar expression, are men who pursue homosexual relations with boys. In the first and only edition of Scottish Separatist, Busby reviews Britain's Secret War.

The Revenge of the Lumpen Polytechnic

THE STATE WE'RE IN
WILL HUTTON

According to a recent Guardian feature (Who's Gonna be in Blair's Gang?) Will Hutton the Guardian's economics editor - "articulates what New Labour would like to say if it were not for electoral caution". The article speculates as to the likely members of Labour's 'Pink Establishment' - the liberal figures who will be rewarded for services rendered once Islington's great hero, Tony Blair, attains office. Hutton - everyone across the political spectrum agrees - is the ideas man who will wield most influence upon a Labour government.

Hutton's book is worthy enough on one level, being a defence of and updating of Keynesian state-interventionist economics. The book - and his regular columns in the Guardian and elsewhere - consistently amass a damning statistical case against Tory economic policies and City short-termism.

His thesis is straight-forward. As he summed it up in a Radio 4 interview, "Money is turned over rapidly, finance is steered towards short-term lending. The orientation is international, not domestic...British companies are stuck between a rock and a hard place. On the one hand there are uncommitted banks who are averse to lending cheap long-term debt and on the other hand are anonymous, uncommitted shareholders who demand high immediate returns, of which high dividends are but a symptom".

Britain's manufacturing base has been left to rot whilst finance capital sought better returns abroad. The task of an incoming Labour government would be to encourage long term investment in industry and infrastructure, thus expanding productivity and raising standards of

living. Hutton's models for this rational, planned capitalism are, primarily, Germany and Japan. As the American economist David Lapido puts it, "Hutton would have us believe that we can keep the market but manage it, keep the profit motive but tame it, and thereby launch the British economy into a stable, long term full employment growth path".

There are two problems with all this. One is historical, and concerns the post-'45 development of German and Japanese capital. To take the German example: the KfW (the reconstruction bank that specialises in raising long-term cash for German industry), is, as its managing director Gert Vogt admits, a product of its time - the post-war boom which was underwritten by the veracity of American capital's expansion; "The government wanted to use us to channel the Marshall plan funding for the reconstruction of the German economy. After the War, companies had no equity. They had to be financed out of nothing. There was nothing, they were destroyed, and the banks were used from the very beginning to look into the future of an offensive".

The other problem with Hutton's big idea is that it doesn't work. The US economy is about to enter its 6th year of recovery. Investment has grown, productivity has risen at twice the rate of the '70s and '80s, and inflation has remained low. Investment, particularly in computers and software, has risen at its steepest rate since 1945. Productivity has been boosted by the rapid growth of investment, continuing to accelerate (2.25% in the first three-quarters of 1995) even though the economy's overall growth was slowing.

So far, so good. The problem is that, despite what Hutton would say, the average weekly earnings of rank

and file workers fell by 18% between 1973 and 1995, from \$315/week to \$258. Between 1973 and 1995 output per person of all non-farm workers in the private sector rose by 25%, while the real hourly earnings of such workers fell by 12%.

In the last five years the US economy has done what Hutton thinks a well managed economy should do. The end result has not been gains all round, but, as Wall Street banker Felix Roherty described it, "an advanced capitalism" whose "harsh climate" imposes "strongest discipline on its participants" (although corporate chiefs execs who gave themselves real pay increases of 19% per annum between 1979-89 seem to have coped).

The failing of Hutton's schema is that capitalism isn't a system that you can adjust or fine-tune, its not - on its own terms - irrational. It's a relationship of exploitation between that section of society which owns the now hi-tec means of production, and those who don't, those whose labour produces the profits which are the driving forces of capital.

Hutton's argument is part of the private debate between industry and finance capital about the best means to an end - that end - getting more for less from the working class - remains unchanged.

However frustrating Hutton's utopian schemas for 'goodwill' capitalism are, the willful refusal of the Left to recognise Tony Blair's real agenda is worse. The fact is Hutton - damned as Blair's Keynesian mouthpiece - is way to the left of Blair. In the first week of February Hutton attacked the Tories plans to get public spending down to 35% of GDP as a means of financing pre-election tax-cut bribes ("This falling public-spending is to be the yardstick of the good society, not, for example, class size, the speed of response of fire brigades to emergencies, hospital waiting lists or well-stocked public libraries"). In the same week Tony Blair condemned a "17 year old government" for raising taxes, and Environment spokesman Frankie Dobson pointed to Budget figures showing taxes set to rise each year as a share of the national wealth in the years 1998-2001.

Roland Wales, Labour's former director of policy, wrote an inoffensive article in the New Statesman pointing out that provision of adequate social housing would cost the Labour Party between £10 billion

and £20 million, and was immediately condemned by Labour officials who were at pains to point out that Labour had no such spending plans for social housing. Mark Feddon, the editor of Tribune, warned Blair not to follow the New Zealand Labour party down the road of "privatisation, deregulation and exploding poverty".

Blair meanwhile was declaiming that Margaret Thatcher's "greatest failure was that she did not, in seeking to transform the economy, take account for the need to maintain social cohesion".

Much has been made of Blair's fascination with the 'tiger economies' of East Asia. 'Leftist' commentators have speculated that Blair is seeking proof that the East Asian 'miracle' was the product of good infra-structure and 'life long learning'. This is way off beam. Information technology has changed the operation of modern capitalism. The future, Blair knows, requires high unemployment to permanently stabilise average wages at just above the poverty level, a small number of high-wage, high-skill secure workers, and a mass of casualised, cheap, short-term "flexible" labour.

British capital is inefficient. Blair will restore its efficiency. Welfare spending is a drag anchor on profitability. He will cut welfare spending. The de-skilled generations of the Thatcher/Major years need to be retrained in new technologies. Blair will ensure that this is done.

For ordinary people he promises nothing. Hutton tells us that British capitalism, unless reformed, "will get meaner and harder and the shockwaves will radiate through-out society as inequality and economic under-performance intensifies". Blair knows this. He knows that there will be a social backlash to his policies. He is beginning to spell out an alternative social agenda, "attacking the conditions in which crime breeds, and at the same time insisting that serious crimes require punishment", compulsory training schemes, combining housing and training, cracking down on benefit frauds etc.

The feeling within the Labour Party's upper ranks is that "the working class have betrayed us. We have educated them, we housed them, we gave them their opportunities and they turned on us". In the years ahead they intend to have their revenge.

This is the real reason for Blair's trip to Singapore.

Lee Kwen Yew, the architect of modern Singapore, said in 1987: "I say without the slightest remorse that we would have not made economic progress if we had not intervened in very personal matters - who your neighbour is, how you live, the noise you make, how you spit and what language you use. We decide what's right. Never mind what the people think".

This is 'lockdown capitalism', and Blair knows (as does Clinton in the US) that that is what it will take to keep the lid on the cauldron in New Labour's New Age.

A study of Barnsley's Labour party in the '70s found a 50% middle class membership, the "lumpen polytechnic" as political columnist Peter Jenkins described them. Since then, the middle class have become the engine of Labours forward march. The Labour strategist Philip Gould has written of a feeling within the Labour Party's upper ranks that "the working class have betrayed us. We have educated them, we housed them, we gave them their opportunities and they turned on us".

In the years ahead, the lumpen polytechnic will become the Pink Establishment and they intend to have their revenge.

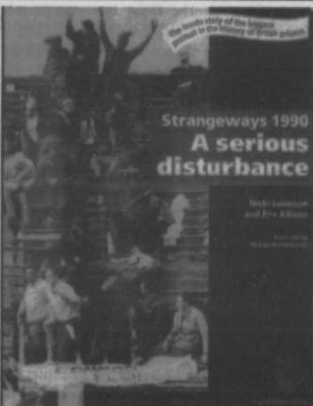
A SERIOUS DISTURBANCE, STRANGEWAYS 1990. Nikki Jameson and Eric Allison.

Out of sight, out of mind is how many people choose to regard prisoners and the prison system generally. Occasionally they will hear about riots and escapes or even the luxurious conditions inside British prisons including slap-up Xmas meals of lobster and caviar provided at the tax-payers expense. Otherwise, unless you have experienced prison yourself or know someone who has, prisons are in every sense a closed world, shut off from daily scrutiny.

That is until 1 April 1990, when around 300 prisoners took Strangeways jail by storm and spectacularly blew the lid off a degrading, brutal and dehumanising system. Originally planned as a limited protest in the prison chapel that Sunday, once underway the protest unleashed years of pent-up bitterness and injustice at the conditions under which the prisoners were held and gathered a ferocious momentum. Over 1000 prisoners took part in the protest that day. The vast majority were liberated from their cells by other prisoners who had liberated the screws of their keys, or used fire-extinguishers and other equipment to smash down cell doors. Up to 400 prisoners made their way

to the roof of the jail from where they observed the world around them: the media frenzy and journalists gathering like packs of dogs, the police operation and the screws hanging around impotently, unable to do anything. For once, power was in the hands of men who had endured months and years of physical and psychological abuse.

Strangeways 1990 - A Serious Disturbance chronicles the protest from its beginning to its end on 25 April and beyond to the aftermath, including the Woolfe Inquiry and the punishments meted out to the prisoners involved. Quoting extensively from the prisoners involved in the protest, this book captures the flavour of freedom experienced by the men during their time on the roof of the jail. It also gives them the opportunity to explain what really happened during the protest as opposed to what the media would choose for us to believe. It allows them to describe the conditions in which they were held where men were incarcerated in cells for up to



22 hours a day, three men to a cell, slopping out, one shower a week, one change of clothes a week.

"On reaching the back of the church...I exited with other inmates...I was even more taken aback to find no confrontations with any warders; the place seemed completely deserted...After going three-quarters of the way round the rotunda, my attention was automatically drawn to the scaffolding and I felt this compulsion to enter and climb it to the roof...I quickly scaled the scaffolding. This extra physical activity was most exhilarating and the prospect of reaching the top was thrilling because I was about to

observe the living outside world for the first time in ten years of incarceration.

"I noticed a large number of men occupying F-Wing roof and obviously in some kind of confrontation with warders below...I noticed that A-Wing roof was unoccupied so, with caution at first, I crossed from F-Wing to A-Wing...On finally reaching this roof I admittedly began to vent my ten years of frustration and anger over my illegal treatment and that of many other lifers who I know who've been subjected to the same brutal force by the warders, both mentally and physically, not just in Strangeways but many other institutions around the British Isles...So this relative freedom naturally brought a reaction and I began to disassemble the roof with complete joy and frustration...

"Admittedly, many insulting words were passed between us and the warders [gathered in the interior prison car-park] and some of their actions were quite provocative and they made quite obvious the serious consequences once this siege was over: the penalty on coming down would be broken limbs...My reaction was rebuke and laughter at such pathetic creatures now that the usual bosses' role was reversed and it wasn't an inmate at the end of their batons, fists and boots in some segregation unit". Alan Lord, one of the first prisoners

on the roof. He received a 10 year sentence for his part in the protest.

"Within a prison that had relied so heavily on brutality and an institutionalised denial of human rights, the Strangeways uprising represented an eloquent statement that things would never again be quite the same. The old order was indeed changing and never again would regimes that had existed in gaols like Strangeways prior to the 1990 revolt possess the same potency to terrorise and subdue. Prisoners had shown that even one of the most brutal gaols in England, a true bastion of screw power and authority could be reduced to a burning wreck if and when prisoners decided that enough was enough.

And so the struggle of prisoners continues. Strangeways was a high point in that struggle, a magnificent explosion of solidarity and courage, a true revolutionary act that inspired and strengthened prisoners everywhere". John Bowden, prisoner 1980-1992)

The highest recommendation for this book and its accurate description of life inside a British jail comes from a Mr Fred Wright, a screw working at Strangeways prior to and during the jail protest. Mr Wright has instructed his solicitors to inform the company which printed the book that he is considering taking legal action for defamation. Enough said!

YOU COULDN'T MAKE IT UP

It's hard for ordinary people to understand just how much journalists are spoon-fed information. The Spin-Master generals know all too well how to play the information game. They know how to control, restrict and, if need be, throttle access, important to newspapers and absolutely vital to radio and television. And if you don't play the game, you're toast. No stories for you, mate. Everybody's at it: the Bosnian Serbs, the police, the Labour Party. Taking on the big guns is not easy. It requires more care, more attention to that place where the devil lies, the detail. For example, Cabinet ministers are quoted with scrupulous accuracy. The unemployed on a housing estate less so. Why? Such cheap, second hand cynicism is now the governing ideology of the working journalist.

John Sweeney, 11 9 95, Guardian. The following week Sweeney, writing in the Observer, described Red Action as being 'run by Special Branch and MI5'. You're toast, John.

I remember how in the period of the Cold War the American government, terrified lest Irish Republicans (then under Stalinist control) penetrate the dockyards, set out to destroy the Official IRA. They created the Provisionals, originally backed by the Republic, and originally with an emphasis on Nationalist tradition rather than Nationalist revolution. When the new set of Troubles began twenty years ago, the Provisionals pushed the Officials out of existence and took over. It ignored its sponsors in the same way as Lenin spurned his German imperial sponsors who paved the way for Bolshevik takeover.

Albert Metzler, *I Couldn't Paint Golden Angels*.

If no-one does strike it lucky, then we hope that if the IRA ceasefire ever does breakdown by publishing this plan we may have done our bit towards the war. Class War, January 1996, on producing in their paper a ground plan of Eton College.

In an interview in the New Statesman last year, Tony Cliff, the 'leading member' of the SWP, was asked whose opinion he trusted in important matters. His reply was that, other than Chris Harman and Lindsey German - two other SWP leaders - he "couldn't think of a single other living person I could consult". IS Group leaflet.

What if any of these groupings [IWCA, SLP etc] ..were to win? Or let in the fascists by default? What would be the reaction of the black and asian communities in East London if an intervention lets the fascists in? Its hardly likely to be celebratory.

Black Flag, Issue 207. The regular advice to all and sundry from anarchists in general is 'Fuck the Vote'. What would happen if everybody, bar BNP supporters, followed their advice? Hardly likely to be celebratory.

The Gravesend Anti-Nazi League have outed Jim Taylor of Lower Range Road an alleged neo-nazi, as the lead singer and guitarist of the far-right band, Squadron. The information was passed on to local police and a meeting was organised between the ANL and, among others, Jon Snepp, the community police officer.

Expecting some sort of action the campaigners were surprised when absolutely nothing happened.

The Law, legal newspaper, Feb/March/April 1996. A meeting with the Community bobbie? By Any Means Necessary?

Tommy Sheridan (Scottish Militant Labour), in opening the conference, made it clear that he saw the Scottish Socialist Alliance as "an organisation out for revolutionary change".....There were two main areas of controversy. Firstly, the statement on local government included the point that the SSA stands for "No council tax rises above the rate of inflation". An amendment from communist members of the Socialist Labour Party sought to change that to "No council tax rises"...The arguments against the amendments came mainly from SML members. They thought we would alienate local government workers, who would assume under "no council tax rises" their jobs and pay would be under attack.

Weekly Worker, April 1996. The Scottish Socialist Alliance - out for revolutionary change, but not at the expense of a pay rise for the DSS snooper.

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Supporting membership for a year is £5. Make cheque/p.o. out to Red Action. You will receive a subscription to the paper, a regular newsletter and notification of RA activities. Subscription to the paper are still available at £3 for 5 issues

INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ASSOCIATION

The Independent Working Class Association has been established to promote and celebrate the political independence of the working class and to pursue the political and economic interests of that class, with no consideration for, and regardless of consequence to, the existing political and economic structures.

Membership enquiries, information, literature and stickers are available from:
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CASH APPEAL!

As an organisation Red Action might be considered unique on the British Left for a variety of reasons. However, what instantly distinguishes us from the competition is the social strata our members and supporters are overwhelmingly drawn from. Of all classes in society it is the working class, and unskilled manual working class in particular, that is most heavily represented within our ranks. As a direct consequence we tend to suffer unduly from low pay and no pay. The result is that while the political commitment of the membership may be second to none, the financial commitment can never hope to be better than second best.

This lack of cash has proved a serious handicap in the past. However, with the probable election of a Labour government in the autumn, the radical Left and, we believe, the radical Right, will face new challenges and opportunities. This will be the moment of truth for many on the Left. Some will be found wanting. We will not.

To enable to match our ambition to the opportunity, we are asking for the first time that our subscribers and regular readers help financially with the deficit. Your contribution will help determine what our influence in the political arena will be.

Make cheques and postal orders payable to 'Red Action' and send them to the London address.

WE ARE RED ACTION

The collapse of Soviet communism has signalled the end of an era. Capitalism's golden age, defined by the economic and political certainties of the Cold War, has turned to crisis. As a discipline on the entire working class, mass unemployment is restored as a permanent condition. As capitalism expanded, many reforms such as nationalisation, implemented to serve the needs of capital, also served the needs of society. As capitalism contracts, deindustrialisation and the return to the principal of privatisation in health, public transport, housing and education sustains the profits of the wealthy directly at society's expense.

In the short term, open conflict within and between classes is certain. Ultimately, the choice faced will be government without consent or social revolution. Leninism, which decrees the interests of the working class are subordinate to the will of one revolutionary party, is the decisive influence on the far left. An apologist for the authoritarian state, it advertises the lie that dictatorship (ie minority rule) can be progressive. This betrayal mocks the theory and practice of Marx and Engels and any notion of independent working class initiative. The surrender of the political high ground to the opponents of total social change has paralysed the working class internationally.

nothing to the real movement of the working class, except to help delay its political renaissance. In all essentials reactionary, they are the socialists of the previous generation. Anarchism, which claims to be a libertarian alternative to Leninism, could never work. Anarchism means the principled opposition to the exercise of any authority. Accordingly, even the most perfect democracy would be regarded by anarchism as authoritarian as it means the imposition of a social decision by a majority on a minority. The answer to bureaucratic authority is democratic authority, not the abolition of authority. We must start afresh.

In every country the working class possesses one striking advantage over the capitalists - numbers. However, numbers without unity and unity without organisation is free of political advantage. The purpose of a revolutionary working class organisation is to raise the working class to the position of the ruling class. To transfer political power from the minority to the majority.

Unconditional democracy is the sole political form through which the aspirations of the majority can then be exercised and made secure. A revolutionary organisation must always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole. It must be working class in instinct, composition and orientation. It must be built in a democratic manner from the bottom up, rather than by decree from the top down. Direct democratic control by working people over their own organisations is the necessary preparation for the future rule of working people over their own countries.

Secretarian division on the left continues to be a comfort to a system which socialism promised to replace. Factions, whose immaculate programmes for party dictatorship result in the pursuit of goals exclusive to themselves, contribute

IS IT SOMETHING WE SAID?

"You're gonna get your f****g head kicked in" and this seems to be the message for anyone, of Right or Left, whom Red Action see as the enemy - which appears to be just about everybody except the IRA and, of course, members of Red Action. Nobody, it appears, is safe from the boots and fists of Red Action's 'working class heroes' - BNP, NF, Loyalists, SWP, Anti-Nazi League, Combat 18, Greens, Rangers Fans, Tory, Labour and SLD supporters, Searchlight and even the little baby Jesus. All are threatened without impunity. At least we can be sure of one thing - Northern Way's writers can now expect to get a "bloody good kicking".

Northern Way, fascist Third Way publication based in Manchester.

An article in Red Action, one of the other participants in AFA, but neo-Trotskyist, ignoring the visit by Gerry Adams to the President of the United States for help in the anti-imperialist struggle, scornfully repudiated the fact that the imperialist powers could have set up the Provisional IRA when they could clearly be seen fighting against it. They took the view that the Northern Republicans were fighting fascism, and the Loyalists were fascist, as proved by the attitude of British fascists to the struggle, though almost every other fascist party in Europe supported the PIRA. The Provos took advantage of their faith by asking them to put their money where their mouth was, and two English members of Red Action were charged with the Harrods bombing and went to prison for twenty years, still confident of IRA military victory. As typical of Trots, they had taken key posts in AFA, its records and addresses fell into the hands of the police.

Anarchist Albert Metzler's autobiography, *I Couldn't Paint Golden Angels*. On behalf of the research assistants and the entire editorial board of the Voice of Reason - we are not fucking Trotskyists!

We need a united front...unity must be forged with those who have a consistent record of work, like AFA. The ANL must make serious attempts to unite with them and with the ARA. It seems that we must combine the successful United Front Welling demonstration with bureaucratic elements and bash-the Fasc elements".

The appropriately named Ged Pecker's comments on the Revolutionary Democratic Groups proposal for a united anti-fascist movement. SWP Pre-Conference Bulletin, 1995

Kevin Paton's actions were motivated by a misplaced loyalty to the British Leftist group, Red Action, of which he was and is an active member. Red Action, long suspected of being under the control of MI5, has previously attempted to form close links with a variety of revolutionary groups such as the Irish Republican Socialist Party (See "Deadly Divisions" in which IRSP/INLA activists voice their suspicions about Red Action's links to MI5)...

Adam Busby, *Scottish Separatist* (see pages 12-13). The comments about Red Action in *Deadly Divisions* were posthumously attributed to IPLO leader Jimmy Brown. Following his unlamented demise the IPLO were forcefully disbanded by the IRA

Local state politics are about the pursuit of power - we are not going to be led down that road. Red Action don't state outright and individual members have told me that they are not aiming to be an electoral force. However, this is where the organisation points. This is a pity, as it otherwise shows promise. Red Action are interested in working with others to talk to workers, not the left...Obviously many anarchists won't work with them in areas like Glasgow, where their behaviour has been outrageous, but they are at least looking in the right direction. *Black Flag*, Issue 207 (see Voice of Reason).

Whatever the working class credentials of Red Action, they represent a vanguardist tendency which is common to most Left groupings. Whereas Anarchist Communists emphasise the need for working class 'self-organisation', RA emphasise the need for an 'organisation' to represent the working class.

Yet, in their aims and principles they extol the virtues of working class self-activity. RA, it would seem, view the organisation as something outside the working class. So is the class to be active on its own behalf? We can assume that Red Action will assert their own view of a workers paradise which, they state, is democratic authority, not the abolition of authority.

And RA are also correct in saying that this most perfect democracy would be regarded by anarchists as authoritarian.

Organise, Anarchist Communist Federation magazine, No 42, Spring 1996.

The Herald calls and asks for a comment on the Celtic fans' boycott of the film. I am stunned. The reporter faxes me a leaflet from an organisation called Celtic Fans Against Fascism. I reply that I have never heard of them and that they haven't ever raised any concerns with me...We have two crews out for the Old Firm game but the CFAC boycott works well. The crew are repeatedly harassed and intimidated during the day and eventually have to give up. Finally a breakthrough. After a long struggle with Republican sources, we start filming with the Volunteer Billy Reid Republican Flute Band from Parkhead.

They are suspicious but welcome us aboard their trip to Belfast. One of the boycotters spots me in Belfast and tells me "You'll be sorry". All access is halted. We are hustled out of the Felons' Bar in the Falls Road (now there's a story to tell your grandchildren). Desperate negotiations with Sinn Fein follow in its heavily armoured HQ.

Excerpt from the diary of TV producer Alan Clements on the making of 'Football, Faith and Flutes' which sought to portray Republicanism and Loyalism as sectarian flip-sides of the same coin.

Red Action; libertarian communist, pro-Irish Republican with big connections to Anti-Fascist Action. Usually carries reports of street confrontations, news from the occupied six counties and in-depth analysis. RA's analysis of Marx, class and the failures of Trotskyism are much recommended. The dog's bollocks.

AK Distribution's catalogue description of the paper, 1996.

Hart, 27 May 1996.



What loyalists and fascists regard as 'insignificant', sections of the Left often regard as 'outrageous'. In a recent issue of the anarchist magazine 'Black Flag', in an article entitled "If voting changed anything...", VOR researchers stumbled across this little gem: "Red Action are interested in working with others to talk to workers, not the Left. Obviously, many anarchists won't work with them in areas like Glasgow where their behaviour has been outrageous but at least..." Whoa! What outrageous behaviour is this, we ask? Who was involved? When did it happen? We searched the entire article, but in vain. The remark is not put in by context or even mentioned again. Seemingly, further elaboration is not necessary. This means that they believe that everyone is familiar with the tale, or they believe that everybody they know

In the Loyalist Red Hand issue 34, Red Action are referred to as a "tiny sect". The reference is in relation to the prosecution of only ten out of sixty arrested following clashes with loyalists, fascists and police during a loyalist counter-demonstration in Edinburgh on June 3rd, 1995. Red Hand names and identifies the ten as supporters of Red Action.

A Troops Out newsletter saw things differently, insisting that "police made eleven arrests on the march - ten of which were loyalists, the other being a march steward who had tackled one of the assailants (he was released later that day). It continued: "meanwhile, outside the march, members of the BNP were fighting with Red Action who had intercepted them on their way to the march. This resulted in another forty arrests".

Curiously, there is no attempt at a breakdown of the figures. No reports of injuries, remains in custody, charges etc (or are we just being over-sensitive?)

In fact both reports were wrong. The counter-demonstration to the counter-demonstration was in fact an AFA initiative. Anyway, let's get back to the loyalist/fascist obsession with 'the tiny sect Red Action'. If there is a pressing need to mention size at all, instead of 'tiny Red Action sect', may we recommend 'the small but beautifully formed Red Action'?

The general understanding of a sect, using Left wing terminology, is a small organisation. This does not mean that everybody in it is under five foot six, but that its supporters are not numerous, and while sharing the ideology, modus operandi and orientation and objectives of, say, other Trots, they stridently cherish some insignificant historical detail that justifies independent structures.

Whether a political tendency is to be considered an organisation, group, sect or tiny sect has to be gauged by the relative size of its competitors. Because of the fragmentation of the Left, only the SWP and possibly Militant might gauge their membership in four figures, every other political tendency will register in neither the three or two figure category. Some will even count their membership in single figures.

But not Red Action! According to Red Hand, we had ten arrested in Edinburgh. Double figures! Mid-table respectability! So to continue to meet the criteria for a 'tiny sect' would mean that this counter-demonstration was in fact a national mobilisation. If so, Red Action must be the first organisation in history to have its entire membership bar none arrested on a single demonstration.

But that is probably not what Red Hand mean by 'tiny'. The subliminal message to their supporters is that Red Action is negligible, puny and wee, insignificant, nothing to worry about. Everybody reassured for the moment? Good. But as the old song goes, "We'll meet again, don't know where, don't know when but..."

STOP PRESS

"Who it was, I don't know, the next thing the windows were put in. We don't know who it came from" John McKinnon, of the Apprentice Boys of Derry, outside the White

This led to accusations by some student anarchists of people "over-reacting". Running in parallel to this was the anarchists demand to rights to access and verify Red Action's own intelligence sources etc. The timing was to say the least, unfortunate.

Relationships irrevocably broke down when the RA organiser's house was attacked while he was on holiday. Locks were super-glued, shit put through the letterbox, flammable liquid sprayed on the door etc. Though initially it was the fash that copped for it big style, there remains a lingering suspicion even today, as it bore some tell-tale hallmark of an ALF-type op.

The following day, Glasgow Red Action were informed by letter that the anarchists were setting up their own branch of AFA to be called 'Glasgow South Central AFA'. To make matters worse, the victim of the attack was named as being responsible for the break-away.



CHINGFORD ATTACK SHOW WHAT THEY THINK OF RED ACTION CHINGFORD ATTACK, YET ANOTHER GROUP NOT INTIMIDATED BY THE TINY SECT RED ACTION. THEIR DEFIANCE WOULD BE MORE CONVINCING HAD THEY NOT ADDED SUNGLASSES, EYEBROWS AND FRINGE TO MAINTAIN THEIR ANONYMITY.

is familiar with it. One way or the other, it doesn't say a lot for their circulation expectations.

Intrigued, we made our investigations. What the intrepid VOR team uncovered is indeed "outrageous", mind-boggling in fact.

A couple of years ago a Red Action member met a fellow AFA member at his work. After exchanging initial pleasantries for a few moments, our man informed him that a number of AFA houses in Edinburgh had been turned over by the plod. Inquiries had been made by Special Branch regarding Animal Liberation Front-type activities. "Yeah, I know all about that, I've met them [the Branch] as well". Stunned, our man listened as his (soon to be former) anti-fascist colleague blurted out the tortured tale. He explained that the Special Branch had contacted his grandmother who had passed on his work address. Aren't grants brilliant? SB rang him at work and he agreed to meet them at a pub they had chosen in the city centre. He didn't want them to come to his work: "I'm not one to gossip myself but you know how people talk" and so on.

Having consulted with other Red Action members, it was concluded that the incident was genuinely bizarre and, though maybe not sinister, needed to be aired publicly. When the subject was raised at the next AFA meeting, the response from his fellow anarchists left Glasgow Red Action slack-jawed in amazement. Not only did they know about it, they practically approved! "It's alright as long as you know what you're doing. You can find out what they are up to" was the general refrain.

Now, Glasgow AFAs operations from the very beginning would never have seen eye to eye with the Left's civil liberties lobby. Not unnaturally, these disclosures caused the more partisan exponents of AFA's policies to blister out in a Nixon-like sweat.

When news of the dispute filtered down to London where Red Action and the Direct Action Movement were working together amicably, the whole Special Branch aspect was (initially) denied - it was all a dastardly plot, etc etc.

In this atmosphere, informed of Glasgow South Central AFA's inaugural meeting, Glasgow AFA invited themselves, and explained why the precedent of 'rival' branches in the same city was, let's say unacceptable. Rightly or wrongly, in the inimitable style of the City of Culture, the point was reinforced with a couple of slaps.

Unlike its LA counter-part from whence it took its name, Glasgow South Central was intimidated. Anyway, by the time the 'story' had been re-cycled a couple of times, some anarchists were posturing like they were involved in a rerun of the Spanish Civil War - Fuck 1936. We want a replay! and all that. Metaphorically speaking, of course.

So there you have it all. The short and inglorious legend of Glasgow South Central AFA and Red Action's "outrageous behaviour" that caused its unlamented demise.

Although these events occurred in the summer of 1992, nobody has explained the full background in print before (apart from an aside from the anarchist Counter Information who described Red Action shortly afterwards as "Leninist bootboys"). For what it's worth, they also refer to the International Third Position as "former fascists"). This formal reserve has naturally enhanced rather than hindered the whispering campaign, which has developed into a kind of cottage industry. So naturally, the Voice of Reason is grateful for the opportunity to clear the air. Just in case Black Flag's readership may have thought for one moment that the article's reticence was simply a result of sloppy editing or something.