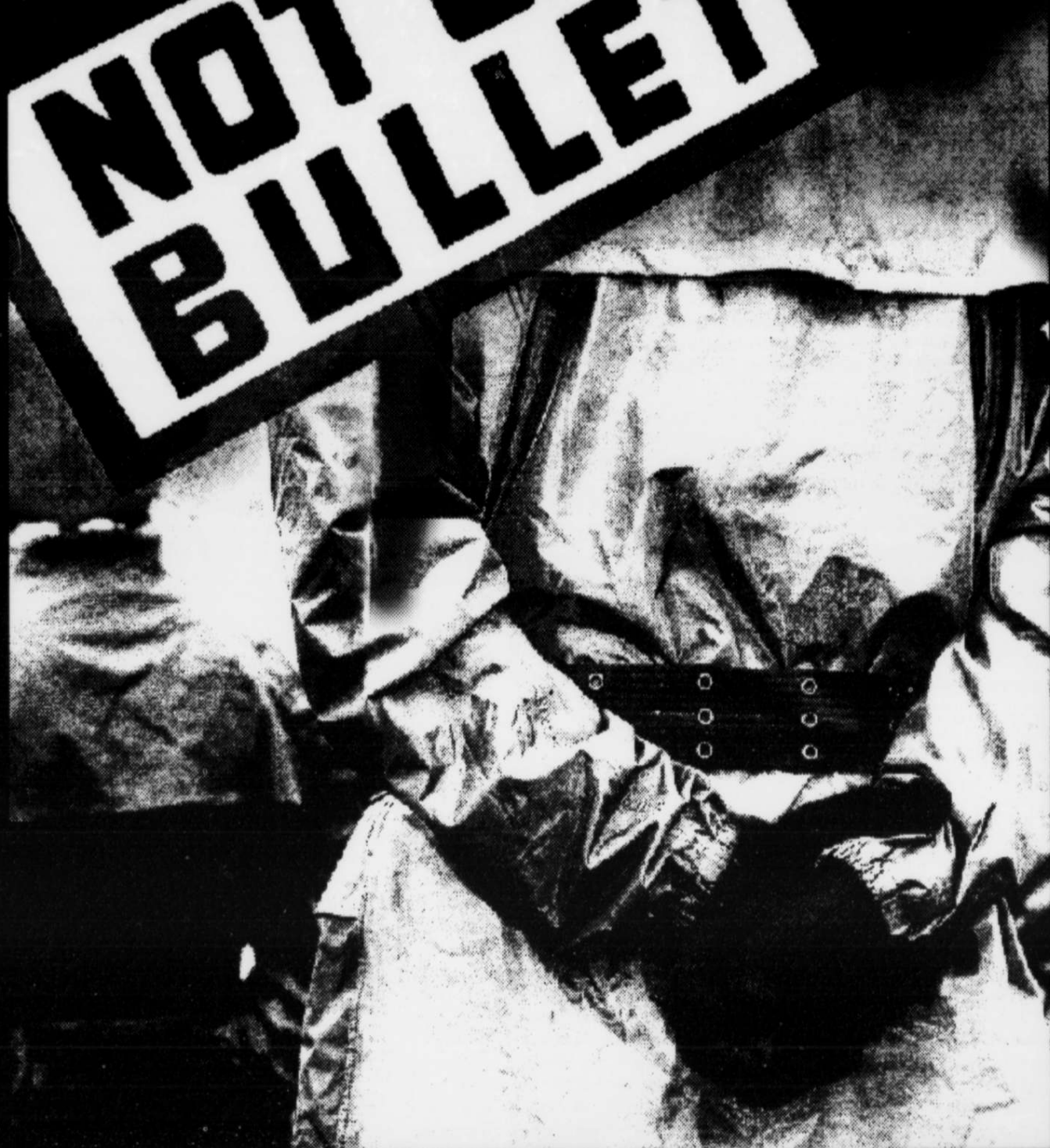


# RED ACTION

**NOT ONE  
BULLET**

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**Time For Plan B**

# EDITORIAL

## STAMINA AMBITION ORIENTATION

### Lies, lies and damn statistics.

"The British National Party" according to the July issue of *Searchlight* "polled a smaller share of the vote than it did in the 1997 general election. In total it gained 102,647 votes, a miserly 1% share of the votes cast.

**This compares poorly with the 1997 general election when the party stood 56 candidates gaining 1.43 % of the vote". Got that? Seems clear enough. More people voted BNP in 1997 than they did in 1999. Encouraging, you might think? Except it's not true.**

In fact, the numbers of people actually voting BNP almost tripled, from 35,000 in 1997 to over 100,000 in 1999. True, they stood 23 more candidates in the Euro election. But surely the ability to do so is merely evidence of a strengthening of infrastructure than anything else. Additionally, these electoral gains were off the back of a new post-war low of less than one in four of those eligible actually voting. When you take into account that from the outset the election campaign was designed to recruit, raise the BNP profile nationally, and break out of the protest group slot, "failure," "disastrous," much less a "fiasco" are just a little misleading.

In order to justify the tabloid type reporting, the 1% in 1999 is judged unfavourably against the BNP percentage in 1997 by dividing the total vote accrued by the BNP amongst the BNP's own candidates rather than against a percentage of the total numbers of votes cast. Comparing like with like, the real 1997 percentage of "votes cast" is revealed as a mere

what a devastating rebuke to the 30 year investment in entryism, opportunism, middle class student recruitment, sectarianism, paper selling and demos practiced by the now collapsing European Left

0.13%. So not only did the fascists almost triple it's number of voters from 35,000 to 102,000 in two years, but also increased it's percentage share of the vote seven fold. As a side dish the champions of the socialist Left in the form of the SLP were roundly beaten in seven out of the nine English regions.

Without taking off his socks any fascist that was numerate could work this out for himself. So, the *Searchlight* spin cannot be explained away as an attempt to demoralise the Far Right, when the people they are really mugging off are at the other end of the spectrum.

For entirely opportunist reasons it would appear the BNP Euro campaign was written up as calamity simply so *Searchlight* could justify it's existence by claiming as a "success" it's "repeated exposes" in the lead up to the election. *Searchlight* co-editor Nick Lowles, responsible for the sleight of hand, was exposed in July 1997 after a protracted AFA internal inquiry as a mole who ruthlessly

manipulated the anti-fascist movement in general and AFA in particular to further *Searchlight's* sectional agenda. Two entire AFA branches who had fallen under the *Searchlight* spell were reluctantly purged. And judging by reports it was not for his 'steadiness under fire' against a violent Far Right that Lowles earned his spurs. Rather as a result of his efforts in Yorkshire it was militant anti-fascism rather than militant nationalism that was fatally undermined. Less subtly, in Germany recently *Searchlight* agents attempted to prevent, with accompanying threats of violence, militant anti-fascists from presenting their analysis to a large political rally. Not that any of this will give Gerry Gable any sleepless nights. The 'end justifies the means' is a motto, had it not existed, Gable would have been required to invent. But given that Gable has publicly 'come out' as a member of John Grieve's State-sponsored 'Racial and Violent Crimes Task Force', what is increasingly puzzling militant anti-fascism across Europe is no longer the dubious means - but what from a *Searchlight* perspective is the desired end? A battle cry of 'Never Again!', combined with an 11 million strong, Europe-wide, fascist vote, in tandem with a *Searchlight* headline reading "Far Right set back," simply doesn't compute. I don't know who they think they're fooling, but they're not fooling us.

"It's a story of neglect.

**Of poor housing, no facilities or community centres for young people or old, of unemployment, of big money unjustly distributed, of queues for hospital beds, of withdrawal of medical services.**

It is a story of neglect and injustice. It is also a political story of apathy, of hopelessness, of corruption, of political parties scrabbling for votes against each other, and between party running mates, of political want-to-be's, blowing into areas for votes, and blowing out again, passing the parcel between them on councils, taking elections as an accolade not an obligation".

All an all it is a familiar story throughout much of Europe. Conditions ready made you would have thought for a breakthrough by a dynamic progressive working class party. Yet in the last fifteen years we have become conditioned to accept that in the unlikely event the mold is broken, it will inevitably be by the extreme-Right.

However in local elections in the 26 counties in June, Sinn Fein trebled its representation on city and county councils, taking in total 62 local authority seats. Quite apart from it's success on the other side of the border, SF is now the fourth largest party in the 26 Counties. And yet as republicans are only too happy to admit there is no secret to their success.

"The vote represents all the work which has been done by Sinn Fein down the years, every week, going out talking to people, putting newsletters out to over 10,000 houses, letting people know what we are doing, being actively involved in the community campaigns around the issues that concern people".

Expanding on the point another local activist pointed out that "people know we are not afraid. We're from the community, we live here, not like the other candidates who park their car a mile away. We've lived here all our lives. Sinn Fein lives in and is part of the community".

Overall SF's success is "a testament" according to *An Phoblact/Republican News* "to arduous patient work without glamour on the ground amongst the people." Simple as that.

As well as being an inspiration to those of us pursuing a similar strategy, what a devastating rebuke to the 30 year investment in entryism, opportunism, middle class student recruitment, sectarianism, paper selling and demos practiced by the now collapsing European Left.

Politics has always been the art of the possible not the improbable. It is essentially a collection of successful recipes. Orientation, stamina and ambition being the critical ingredients. Once the political objective is agreed, the course of least resistance is decided. Any serious or prolonged deviation from this course of action comes under the category of hobby.

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# INTERNAL AFFAIRS

## PASSIONATE DEBATE

**THIS YEAR'S** National Meeting (NM) was very satisfying for a number of reasons. The effort put into organising and promoting the NM amongst the membership clearly paid off, this being one of the best attended RA conferences in a number of years. Of particular significance was the welcome return of some long standing members alongside the newest recruits; plus a smattering of AFA 'vets' from around the country who have joined RA in the last year. Just as pleasing was the fact that all regions outside of London and the South East were well represented.

The first day of the NM was given over to a full, open, comprehensive debate on how all areas of the organisation's work is progressing and might be improved, from publications to the internet, from finance to the National Civil Rights Movement, from the state of the Left to the promotion of independent working class initiatives.

The real contentious issues however, emerged with a rash of emergency motions on the second day. The wisdom of allowing these motions onto the agenda, with members having no opportunity for prior viewing or discussion, has to be open to question. It certainly led to one of them being 'pared down' and all being voted through on the proviso that they remain at an exploratory stage.

However, it did give the accompanying debates a rawness that was lacking when discussing areas where we have been active at length.

It was the debate on 'Developing a response to drug use in working class communities' that evoked the most emotive and passionate reaction. Whilst the person responsible must be praised for attempting to open up discussion on what is becoming a crucial issue within our communities, he was left in absolutely no doubt as to the powerful reactions this issue provokes.

While I would not even attempt to represent the views of other members, who all argued their positions well, I think it's fair to say that opinions ranged from those espousing respect for the rights of drug users - all the way through to those who favoured the tactics applied by the likes of 'Direct Action Against Drugs' in the north of Ireland!

Of course what gives these kind of debates an edge within RA is the knowledge that they are rarely embarked upon as merely an academic exercise. Unlike most groups on the Left, RA members know that at some stage they might well be expected to implement any new policy.

As I outlined earlier, given the last-minute arrival of this and other motions, there was no way the debate was going to be successfully concluded before the clock ran out. It is important then that discussion of these issues are not allowed to come to an abrupt end, that they are not just simply shelved or 'parked until a future date' as a Mr D. Trimble would say. Organisers must ensure that these debates continue within branch meetings and members can also avail of space in the internal bulletin.

This year's National Meeting provides a good platform to build on in the coming year. As was highlighted, the on-going and accelerating collapse of the Left, could elevate the role of RA far beyond the actual relatively small membership and meagre resources currently at our disposal. But to do that will require all of us to play a role in ensuring that all areas of work discussed are followed up and pushed home for the maximum gains possible. As the National Organiser suggested in his opening address to the NM, "not as an end in itself, but as a means to an end. Meaning that increasingly what happens in [this room], can shape what happens out there".

**Steve Potts**



## THE BIG ISSUE

**IT STARTED** with the Euro elections. An overtly confident party personified by its leader did not bother to campaign. Yet nobody was more thunderstruck than the Tories at victory. More than just the matter of defeat it was the nature of it which will trouble Blair. Of course a participation factor of less than one in four, combined with the core Tory vote turning out, is hardly Gradgrind evidence of a "seismic shift". It was not as if all recent converts had returned to the Tory fold or something.

Far more ominously, only months after declaring 'we are all middle class now', a spectre returned to wreak revenge, albeit in a negative way. Explaining how Labour lost all 31 council seats in the Rhondda, Peter Hain put it bluntly: "the government appears gratuitously offensive to its own natural supporters." Improbably blunt for a member of the Cabinet, but in reality not blunt enough. For after only two years of Blairism, Labour no longer has natural supporters to offend, nor the activists to campaign enthusiastically in order to get a core vote it no longer has, out. Rather than address the fundamentals, Blair in typical New Labour fashion simply decreed without benefit of any electoral mandate, and more or less off the cuff, that hunting was to be outlawed instead.

A gesture which earned him the undying hatred of the 'hunt an' flog 'em' fraternity, without altering in any way the catatonic indifference of Labour's former constituency. And where a mandate, as in Ireland, was waiting to be fulfilled, he who began with the trust of everybody broke 'his own rules' so promiscuously he ended up without neither an 'Agreement', nor the trust of anybody. To function without principles is one thing, to function without credibility something entirely different.

**BIG ISSUE PREDICTION:** Not the beginning of the end but the end of the beginning.



### 'Republican friends of AFA'

**June 6:** Of all the regions contested by the BNP in Euro elections in June, Scotland showed the poorest returns. Partly as a result of being driven underground in the early 1990's the organisation thereby surrendered any public profile whatsoever. So despite the Euro-Nationalist strategy being implemented with considerable success elsewhere the Scottish BNP are still betwixt and between terrorism (talking about it anyway) and electoralism. In an effort to remedy the situation, considerable graft was put into decorating lamp posts with BNP placards stretching for miles through central Glasgow, only for equally dedicated

**continued on page 4**





# NOT WAVING...

## RED ACTION CONTINUES IT'S REGULAR LOOK AT THE BRITISH LEFT

'A WEEK', it is often said, 'is a long time in politics'. Yet it has taken a little over 750 days to lay bare the political contradiction of the century. In May 1997 New Labour formally abandoned Social Democracy as a strategy, and in June 1999 the working class in turn abandoned Labour.

In much the same way, without the fig leaf of the 'Labour Movement' (capital L, capital M) to hide behind, Trotskyism, which has dominated progressive politics in much of post-war western Europe, is undone. History has simply passed it by. As a recent *Independent* editorial commented: "the conservatives of the Left have no solutions relevant to today's problems". As if to prove that very point, the archly conservative SWP responded by calling for a lobby of the Labour conference "in order to make them meet our demands."

The irony for a group like Red Action who at one stage very nearly turned working class self deprecation into an art form, but which took out a considerable investment in the early 1990's in freeing the decks of the Leninist legacy, now finds itself at a pivotal moment in the history of the British working class, promoted by default to the frontline. Not only has the death of progressive reform neatly coincided with the renaissance of the Far-Right in Europe, but as we have both predicted and are still preparing for, in the mainstream over here. So even while accepting that it has as much to do with organisational dotage of one as the vigour of the other, the recent head to head contests between the BNP and Scargill's SLP in the Euro elections nonetheless confirm socialism as dead.

Far more interesting from a radical perspective than the fortunes of rivals, is 'learning the revolutionary trade' and the sure footedness which only comes through being proved right time and time again on the essentials. It is no accident that Red Action can anticipate events and identify diverse trends the conservative Left are incapable of working out - even after the fact. SF advances, Labour and middle England, Euro Nationalist gains, SLP fiascos are some which immediately spring to mind. Now there is no mystery in this.

The key to the Red Action method for solving political conundrums, for identifying core contradictions, for getting to the heart of the matter, is simple. Internal democracy. An internal democracy combined with a working class composition not only allows, or indeed welcomes, honest and bracing discussion, but demands it. Class composition without internal democracy or internal democracy without a radical working class instinct instantly renders the advantage of one or the other void. So in effect those posing the questions are at least as important as those to whom the questions are posed, in that the ultimate responsibility is always on the membership rather than any leadership to get it right. Putting the long term interests of the working class first, at all times, completes the jigsaw.

Only by taking in the bigger picture can you accurately position yourself to make a difference, and 'making a difference' rather than simply self promotion is what Red Action from the beginning has always been about. Only by being aware of the bigger picture is it possible to identify the cutting edge of the struggle and thereby formulate a strategy grounded in objective reality. This is the Red Action method. 'Amazing' as the man from *Vision Express* says 'we are the only ones to do this'.

Self evidently, shaping the future is what politics is all about. And working class political independence or Euro-Nationalism is the radical future. Not just here but across Europe.

In such circumstances, providing a political lead, even for a 'despised outsider' such as Red Action is not an option - but an obligation.

J. Reilly

Republican friends of AFA making sure they literally never saw the light of day. The last placard ripped down at exactly 8am. In an unrelated incident a gentleman wearing a KKK t-shirt coming badly unstuck on a city centre bus in Edinburgh was a further reminder to all concerned 'we haven't gone away you know'.

**July 1:** A 1,000 strong audience to hear Stuart Hall, former *Marxism Today* columnist, lecture on nation and race in the millennium was leafleted by AFA. Hall, a firm proponent of 'race first style anti-racism,' spoke for an hour. Later questions were answered with aplomb, until it came to questions posed by an AFA activist and strangely, former NF leader Martin Webster. Both questions were quite straight forward. Webster asking whether Hall 'really believed the indigenous population could be kept down by the use of further legislation' while the AFA representative asked if he agreed the 'very the obvious dangers of racialising social issues that pitched working class communities against each other could in the end only benefit the Far Right'. Hall's response was to clumsily conflate the two questions clearly assuming fascism and the working class were peas in the pod. But in admitting discourses other than his own had validity he fatally undermined his earlier hour long lecture in which class was mentioned only once in passing. Instructive.

**July 10&11:** At a two day event in High Wycombe, six bands publicly endorsed the AFA message. Merchandise and *Fighting Talk's* were sold. At a fund-raiser elsewhere over £200 was surrendered to the AFA coffers.

**July 18:** In a genuinely bizarre encounter in Worcester, the ANL, having had a planned internal BNP meeting at a local leisure centre cancelled on Searchlight instruction, still held a seven strong silent picket outside 'in solidarity with the local community'. On the appearance of some AFA scouts their resolve crumbled, with over half their party making a break for it leaving the remainder to face what they evidently imagined was the music. Predictably local headlines read 'Celebrations as BNP foiled'. In reality all the intervention achieved was to disrupt AFA's monitoring of the situation. Motive enough from a *Searchlight* perspective.

**July 28:** An AFA representative addressed a central London branch of the MSF, giving AFA's analysis of the political situation. Originally scheduled for 30 minutes the discussion lasted over an hour with the branch itself offering to propose a speaking slot at regional level.

## BACK ISSUES

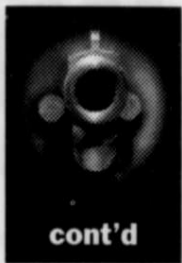
### BETRAYAL

**WHEN A** young 15 year old boy dies it is a tragedy for his family and friends. When the boy was attacked and murdered because he was black, it is a tragedy for all of us. When that murder results in anger from the community and that anger is wasted and dissipated by a babble of groups based in the race relations industry and in the so-called 'revolutionary Left', the tragedy is compounded. When a campaign launched after the murder is betrayed by opportunists and self-seekers, then the tragedy is complete.

This is what happened with the murder of Rolan Adams this year. Anti-Fascist Action were involved in the Rolan Adams Family Campaign from the inaugural meeting, through the demonstrations and the last meeting AFA attended in June. Others who attended those meetings ranged from the concerned but incompetent, to the cynical manipulators of the 'radical' groupings. Immediately after the stabbing, meetings were attended by real people who felt real and intense anger and wanted to channel that anger towards the BNP. Unfortunately their meetings were taken over and run by bureaucrats who seemed more interested in maintaining their positions as community leaders and spokespersons (for whom one wonders?) than in providing a direction for the anger. Following the inappropriately named counter-demonstration, AFA presented two documents for discussion and adoption, one contained a proposal and a set of objectives for the future of the campaign, the other contained a critique of the demo.

The discussion culminated in AFA being accused of being a racist organisation. As a consequence we left the meeting some 15 minutes before it was due to end.

Red Action, issue 60, Sept/Oct 1991



cont'd



# NO SHAME IN THIS GAME

The working classes of inner London, demoralised and downtrodden after the Thatcher onslaught on public spending and services stretched local communities to breaking point, now face a new threat: gentrification. Steve Potts investigates.

Stray a few yards from the upmarket 'Granita' restaurant, where Gordon Brown agreed to allow Blair a free-run for the leadership of the Party, and you stumble into an area classed as one of the most underresourced in England. There around a quarter of the population live in homes assessed as statutorily unfit; over half of its pupils qualify for free school meals; while recorded violent crime is the highest in the region. Sounds like? Liverpool 8? Mosside in Manchester? or Glasgow's Easterhouse even?

It is instead a description (appropriately two faced some may think) of Islington, the spiritual home of New Labour and trendy themepark of 'Cool Britannia'. Plans to resolve this somewhat embarrassing contradiction between the haves and have-nots are already well advanced. However the much trumpeted regeneration schemes will not, as the government would like us to believe, have as their priority the raising of the living standards for Islington's most impoverished. Instead what we are witnessing here, and throughout inner-London, is a huge programme of social engineering, unprecedented in its scale. Quite simply, the working classes are being socially-cleansed, to make way for what Lord Rogers, head of the government's Urban Taskforce, describes as 'middle class colonisers.' Contradiction resolution - New Labour style. As Rowan Moore pointed out in the *Evening Standard* in April, "This is the way they clear sites for development in Shanghai, not London". Until now.

The working classes of inner London, demoralised and downtrodden after the Thatcher onslaught on public spending and services stretched local communities to breaking point, now face a new threat: gentrification. The shiny, happy, New Labour-voting, trendy, middle classes have set about changing the face of former solid working class communities with an infestation of expensive loft apartments and cafe/bars; pushing up prices, leading to the closure of shops, pubs, local amenities and forcing the children of life-long residents to move miles away to find affordable accommodation.

Knowing they're in the ascendancy, they barely bother to disguise their triumphalism. "All that seems to be published are the whingeing comments from people who have made no effort to move with the times or adapt to the new demographic profile of the area. It is time to accept that the times and the area have changed and like Darwin's law of natural selection, you adapt to survive or you die out" (*Islington Gazette*).

The chattering classes openly refer to those prepared to purchase property in the most run-down parts, as 'pioneers'. In fact the language now being routinely used by councillors, council officers and developers alike, goes beyond mere snobbery. It might be called 'racist' in any other context. Certainly it mirrors the kind of bigoted stuff spouted about the Irish, blacks and indeed the working class at the turn of the century. For example, Geoff Marsh of London Property Research outlined his beliefs to the *Daily Telegraph* recently, "There is a trickle-down effect, whereby the middle-class pioneer woman will live next to the members of what were once called the 'great unwashed'. Unwashed flats may scrub up a bit as a result." And Labour's Lord Desai told the *Highbury & Islington Express* that the key to improving Islington schools is to have more middle-class parents involved because they "work hard to keep school standards up."

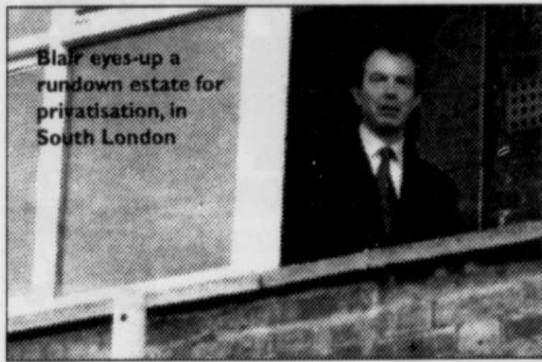
Across London, New Labour councils have decided that it is not poverty, but the working classes themselves who are the problem and therefore must be eradicated from the inner cities. They have been aided in this by the crisis in local authority housing whereby, as Rowan Moore says "local and national government have, without perhaps entirely realising it, made a defacto decision not to afford it" (*London Evening Standard*, 6.4.99).

Many councils have decided to either just sell-off their housing stock, or 'transfer' them to housing associations. Tenants on rundown estates, starved of cash for years, have now been presented with a simple fait accompli... vote for transfer and receive investment, or vote no and rot. Unsurprisingly, many are taking the cash.

Once privatised, or 'transferred,' tenants' organisations will become meaningless as tenants lose their statutory rights, have different rent levels and landlords, and are placed outside of the control of elected bodies. Added to this are Labour's plans to reduce housing benefit payments to 80%, with tenants who cannot make up the rest being 'persuaded' to move to cheaper premises in a less sought-after location. With street properties in Islington routinely changing hands for over £500,000, yards from:

**"There is ethnic cleansing going on. They don't want ordinary people in the area, they only want the middle-classes. Now, we're being told to get out."**

continued on page 6



the most 'notorious' estates, a stark form of social apartheid exists.

But this phenomenon is not restricted to Islington or Hackney. As generations of East End families in Tower Hamlets and Newham are also being targeted, with Bob Young, head of housing policy at Newham, explaining in typical New Labour speak why in the Docklands only high-priced luxury developments will be given planning permission. "What we have is a concentration of benefit-dependent people in the area. Social housing attracts people that are challenged economically who can't support local shops and services."

Pete Clark put Lord Rogers' report into perspective in the *Evening Standard* (22.4.99) when he said, "Rogers wants to avoid a class war, but while he conspires in the construction of buildings which are available only to a wealthy elite, this seems an idle fancy. The fact is that all the nice bits of London, and most of those are on or near the Thames, are being colonised by the wealthy." This is certainly true south of the river, in Southwark where the council, London's biggest landlord, owning 52,000 homes, plans to demolish council estates in sought after areas and replace them with luxury apartments. Once in the public domain, this scheme, along with the comments of Fred Manson, head of regeneration, that "Because social housing generates poor school performances, middle-class people stay away" caused absolute uproar. The Southwark Group of Tenants Organisations, which represents over a hundred tenants associations in the borough, demanded his head and forced a halt to the scheme, setting up an independent panel from which housing officers involved in drawing-up the original plans were discluded. In *The Pull of the City* (BBC2), Lil Patrick, a long-term resident, summed-up the feelings of most locals, "There is ethnic cleansing [paraphrasing a theme first used by the IWCA in Islington] going on. They don't want ordinary people in the area, they only want the middle-classes. We have been here all this time. The place was torn to pieces in the war. We stayed here and kept it going. Now, we're being told to get out."

Clearly the Left in London have failed to fully understand the all encompassing nature of the Blair project, just as they have done on a national scale. Interestingly, some of the confusion may be due to the fact that many of those involved in the privatisation of council housing, have come from what would have been seen as a Left background. In exchanging politics for a career in the 'touchy-feely' world of housing associations, many are now arch exponents of estate transfer.

New Labour appear intent on clearing the working classes from inner London, leaving a few estates standing in order to house the domestic servants, seen as a necessity by the high-flying middle classes; or as Simon Jenkins put it in the *Evening Standard*, (22.4.99), "If there is a role for council estates in the inner city it is to retain, in wealthy communities, low-income workers who would otherwise have to travel miles to their jobs."

Far from eradicating poverty, Blair plans to *relocate* it. Let's face it, if the working classes reach the end of their tether on suburban, satellite estates, they can, like their French cousins, riot from dawn to dusk without it spilling the froth from a single cappuccino.

Working class activists are fully aware there is no shame in this game. So simply to halt privatisation is not enough. Instead, as the best means of defence is attack, the goal must not only be to lobby Labour, but replace them.

# WAGING PEACE

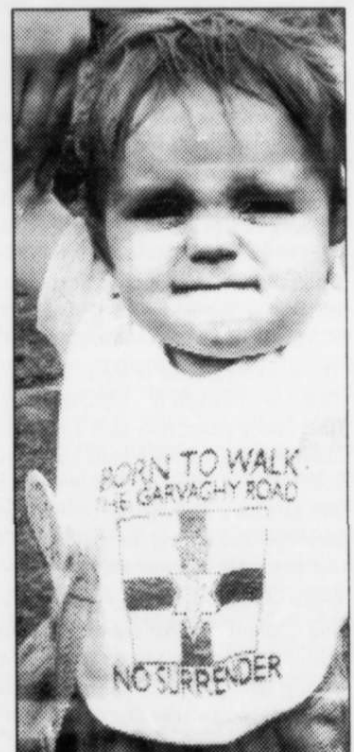
While for all the obvious reasons the IRA matters, A. Shaw explains why Sinn Fein the new power house in the partnership - at least for now.

**"A beaver with a new tooth brush" was how someone described hardline Unionist Jeffrey Donaldson as the clock ticked down on yet another absolute deadline while in the background Blair was telling anyone prepared to listen "that there was no Plan B". Similar displays of giddiness at just such a prospect were apparent in media liberals Trimble and Maginnis, unwittingly captured live on *Newsnight* guffawing loudly, seconds before solemnly announcing 'on air' that agreement was impossible due to SF/IRA intransigence.**

The following day Tony Blair toured Stormont declaring that there had been a "seismic shift" in Sinn Fein thinking. To which his old friend David Trimble correctly responded: "What fucking seismic shift?" (*Sunday Telegraph* 4.7.99) His exasperation was unduly vocal given his understanding the game had already been won. Which is to say the status quo prevailed. 'Just say no' has been mainstream Unionism's negotiating position since 1912, and neither it nor they have moved an inch since.

For Unionism life cannot imaginably get any better, so any change is necessarily negative. 'How many Unionists does it take to change a light bulb?' is the impasse approached from another direction. 'Change? Who said anything about change?'

"Destablising the situation" was of course the instinctive response of Trimble's predecessor to news of the IRA ceasefire in 1994. So naturally, any concessions real or imaginary, any perceived softening of the SF position during negotiations immediately registered as a threat. And so rather than respond positively Trimble was most concerned with shoring up any possible breach in his defenses, by piling on in the precise areas where SF appeared to be offering concessions further pre-conditions. For fifteen months Unionism has refused to implement any aspects of the Good Friday Agreement (GFA) which they had signed up to, so the more the pressure mounted the more monosyllabic the response. More than



Bigotry from father to son.

a touch exasperated Adams repeatedly drew the world media's attention to Unionist body language, explaining that SF proposals to, in the time worn phrase, 'move the situation forward' were being rejected in minutes by the UUP. And of course the more Republicans "stretched themselves", albeit, and all importantly within the terms of the GFA ('SF would encourage the IRA "to dump arms" only in the context of an overall settlement'), the more imminently reasonable appeared the Republican position, the more beleaguered Trimble and his colleagues became. At 4am one morning Trimble was challenged in the corridor by Loyalist stalwart Cedric Wilson who inquired "Are you holding the line on decommissioning?" Trimble answered "I can't find the line." (*Scotland on Sunday* 4.7.99) Trimble's colleagues were stunned.

Unionist disarray was understandable. 'A Protestant State for a Protestant people' cannot credibly survive the idea of unarmed Catholics in power, much less reputed members of the Army Council in the Cabinet. And without Unionism as a centrifugal ideological force, the knot attaching the Six Counties to Britain would likely unravel of its own accord. A scenario long recognised by the likes of ultra-Unionist Lord Cranbourne, M15, strident editorials in the right-wing press and belatedly the leadership of the Tory party. Ultimately for the right-wing of the establishment and Unionism itself, what matters is not decommissioning but keeping Unionism motivated: that is to say ideologically pure.

A position summarised by a 65 year old Orangeman who stated: "We have already given too much away. Even if they turned up with a truck load of weapons it would not make any difference because they can always get more" (*Independent* 3.7.99). Which is to say the surrender of weapons would make 'no difference' to Unionism ever countenancing SF in government. After all whether armed or unarmed an 'unreconstructed' Republican is still a Republican. Never mind the supposed triumph of ballot box over Armalite, Unionism has "dug in" and all democrats and right thinking people should support them "to prevent" according to former Thatcher adviser Simon Heffer, "criminals and murderers having a share in a constitutional process that they could never obtain other than by force." (*Daily Mail* 3.7.99) Or as another *Mail* columnist Steven Glover put it, if the outcome of the negotiations is a genuine representative democracy "peace is too high a price to pay".

**if he really knew  
what he was  
doing, Blair would  
have taken a leaf  
out of Mo  
Mowlam's book,  
who when tired  
of being badgered  
by Paisley told  
him to "fuck off."**

What a turn up. Throughout the '70s the Union was defended by the pretence that the Republican movement was a criminal conspiracy without public support. A strategy dashed with the election of Bobby Sands in 1981, and the 'Armalite and ballot box' strategy adopted thereafter. And while the right-wing of the Establishment might like to pretend that SF are in position courtesy only of the IRA, the unpalatable reality is a party which commands over 40% of the nationalist vote in the North and is increasingly being recognised as the radical alternative in the South, enjoys a political mandate created entirely off its own efforts.

Moreover, while for all the obvious reasons "the army" certainly matters, "the party" is undeniably the new power house of the Republican movement. So even while the prospects of 'bombs in London' continue to focus Brit minds wonderfully it is the political strategy which has come closest to breaking the stalemate. By any means, including if necessary, exclusively legal methods is the Republican gameplan that brought Unionism 'trembling' to the edge of the abyss. "There is one firm rule that governs the political strategy of Sinn Fein/IRA: exhaust the weaponry that you have until the enemy has perfected his defence. Then



**A Paisleyite. 'Change? Who said anything about change?'**

produce the weapon that negates those defenses... Thus you continuously stretch your enemy, force him on the defensive and maintain the initiative (*Daily Telegraph* 6.7.99). This according to IRA renegade/M15 spook Sean O'Callaghan is what Republicanism is now doing to Unionism. He explains the modus operandi thus: "if the IRA can fire a large mortar 500 yards and it's engineers devise one capable of throwing a larger one longer, the improved version is not introduced until the enemy has gone to great lengths to perfect it's defenses against the (now obsolete) mortar".

Given that it was not uncommon in the late '80s for the Northern Ireland Office to smugly boast of having reduced the terrorist threat to "an acceptable level of violence", ie. perfected their defenses against mortar Mark 1 (armed struggle) the absolute dismay caused by the introduction of mortar Mark 2 (peace strategy) proved, as was intended, all the more demoralising for the defenders of the status quo.

Certainly if body language, time and effort, u-turns, broken deadlines, broken promises, exaggerations and outright lies is anything to go by, Tony Blair very definitely 'wants out'.

Nothing unique in this of course, British PM's with various degrees of intensity having been trying to painlessly get out, ie. 'leave without being seen to have left' for at least 30 years. But having concluded in order to get out mainstream Unionism must be faced down, both he and Bertie Ahern spent the twelve months since the signing of the GFA pandering to Unionism with the pretence the 'just say no' veto had somehow been incorporated into it. A strategy that succeeded in both confusing an already extremely divided and dysfunctional Unionist family unnecessarily, and rebounded as a self fulfilling prophecy.

A wrong headed approach compounded by the last minute offer of legislation tying decommissioning to the exclusion of SF, which ran against the letter and spirit of GFA, which dismayed nationalism and was predictably rejected as insufficient by Unionism. Then unbelievably, Blair added yet further amendments even after it had been passed by Parliament. (A devastatingly effective guarantee against any future accusations of Machiavellism surely.) At that stage rather than further palliatives, Blair in true statesman like fashion should if he really knew what he was doing, have taken a leaf out of Mo Mowlam's book, who when tired of being badgered by an incalcerant Paisley told him if he didn't like what was on offer to "fuck off."

Fundamentally, where Blair differs from his Prime Ministerial predecessors like Lloyd George is that the broad strategy initiative he is responding to, and has in his own interests embraced, was never of his own design. When he "says there is no Plan B" it is not hard believe him, as neither he nor indeed Major ever had anything to do with the original Plan A. "The IRA cessation of 1994" had no British sponsorship of any kind, but was as Adams himself made clear "built on the [combined] work of Sinn Fein, John Hume, Albert Reynolds and Irish America" (*Guardian* 7.7.99). And in that order of merit. So in line with the evolving situation the original architects of Plan A, will be getting ready to introduce Plan B, while at the same studying closely the drawings for Plan C, if not plan D.



# Community Resistance

**THE IWCA** has now established itself as a force in Hackney. We have done this by making links with local tenants groups, intervening in debates in the local paper and distributing 10,000 copies of our first newsletter - the *Hackney Independent*.

As was reported in the February/March edition of *Red Action* we got started by supporting tenants in one area who are opposing the Canalside developers. Hackney Council's plan is to move the tenants out, knock their estates down and replace at least half of the homes with private housing (the other half with housing association homes on higher rents and less secure tenancies). Already IWCA members have been involved and gained in their understanding of working class politics through leafleting, supporting lobbies called by the Tenants Association (TA) and crucially, canvassing door-to-door. Some of our members had never canvassed before, yet not one of us was questioned as to why an 'outside' organisation was canvassing on behalf of the TA - because the TA had already paid their dues through tireless campaigning. Three letters from the IWCA have been published in the *Hackney Gazette* in recent months. They set out the IWCA's opposition to the attitude of Hackney's councillors generally, and the fact that 20 of them have swapped parties in the last three years. "The fact is it doesn't matter which party a councillor represents, they are all middle class parties competing over the middle class agenda.

## East London, Hackney Major Surgery

That's why the arguments between councillors in the *Gazette* are about parking, Council management and traffic routes: while they remain silent on issues they agree on like estate sell-offs... Community groups who are prepared to put up candidates in by-elections [should] achieve direct representation of working class interests on Hackney Council."

Commenting on Hackney Council winning a PR award the IWCA said... "How ironic that the council should win an award for a propaganda video aimed at off-loading its responsibilities onto the private sector. This from a council that lies fourth from bottom in the national table of cases of maladministration upheld by the ombudsman. Instead of producing fancy videos of how someone else can do a job of providing decent housing for its tenants, Hackney should direct its resources into giving residents what they want - decent housing and decent services instead of being abandoned to short-term, profit-seeking private landlords."

Most recently the IWCA contrasted two stories covered in the *Gazette* in the same week. "Peabody Options are building yuppie flats in Sheperdess Walk - which are not 'an option' for you unless you earn more than £30,000 a year. Meanwhile, the council is pushing through cuts to the well-used and popular Lion Boys' Club in Hoxton. And now the New Deal Trust plan to make things worse by selling off council housing in Shoreditch. It's not a new deal Shoreditch is getting - it's a raw deal."

Under the headline "Raw Deal for Shoreditch", 10,000 copies of the *Hackney Independent* have been distributed: "City investors and new landlords are queuing up to get their hands on Shoreditch and South Hackney. Because we are so close to the City we are a cheap, attractive

target for property investors only too willing to bid for the housing stock Hackney Council can't wait to get rid of". (Specific plans to defend the Lions Boys Club are currently being discussed.)

Turning to the £50 million the government has announced it is contributing to the New Deal, *Hackney Independent* stated. "This sounds like a lot, but by the time they pay their consultants and put up new lamp posts and railings there will be very little left. Hackney's councillors, officers and the housing associations plan to use the New Deal to make a permanent change to Shoreditch. They want to change the profile of the population from it being a working class area to a middle class playground - with canal-side flats within easy reach of the City and all the yuppie bars and restaurants. People in Shoreditch need to face facts. Hackney Council have run down the estates for years. An army of consultants and glossy brochures promoting the idea of privatising your home will soon hit you. The run down estates make a new private landlord seem like a good idea. However, the new homes are not for you - even if they allow you back, you won't be able to afford the new rents. This can and must be resisted".

An invitation to TA's and community groups to contribute ideas, and discuss what's happening in the area has led to an ongoing contact with three separate TA's and as the IWCA profile increases the numbers will grow. Hackney IWCA now has two specific aims - to help organise opposition around the New Deal and to establish a surgery in Shoreditch. As well as taking up people's problems with the council the surgery will also double as a base of operations. A lot of personal effort will be required from IWCA members - but if it wants to establish itself in the long-term as a serious organisation there is no alternative.

## Now & Then

### THIS IS ASIF.

He lives in Ethiopia  
in total poverty.  
He gets hardly any  
food to eat....



**TOUGH  
LUCK  
ASIF!**

"Federation of  
Conservative  
Students leaflet  
distributed at the LSE  
in the 1980's".  
*Searchlight*, July 1999

### OPEN LETTER TO FEDERATION OF CONSERVATIVE STUDENTS

The picture adjoining this article is from a pamphlet published by a couple of members of your federation, some of whom we are told sport 'Hang Nelson Mandela' badges, encourage links with UDA supporters and were responsible for an attack on the CND float at Brighton this year. Amidst accusations of neo-fascism from the press, you say that you only say in public what other members of the Tory party say in private. This we can well believe; we have no illusions about the 'wets' in the Tory party. Your vocal support for Far-Right causes has attracted our attention and we can assure you that having learned the lessons of Germany in the thirties we do not waste our time in theoretical debate with fascists. The methods that we employ are both practical and effective as your fellow travellers in the National Front could testify. We can assure you that if your future behaviour does not improve dramatically, then sooner or later some of you will discover what 'a good spanking' means in the rougher end of the political market.

- *Red Action*, issue 18, June 1985

Markedly different perspectives on the issue of drugs surfaced during debate on the subject at Red Action's National Meeting. Here Charlie Dow again puts the case for a more 'enlightened' approach.

# CARROT AND STICK?

**Drug use remains a minefield for many on the Left. On one hand working class activists see the devastation allegedly caused by drug use on our estates and in our communities. On the other, many people themselves take part in non-problematic drug use or at the very least enjoy the 'occasional' drink. This has led to a widespread confusion, and a general avoidance by the Left, of community campaigns on drug use.**

This position is in contrast with the priority placed on drug use by those who live in working class areas. This urgency arguably shows the power of anti-drugs propaganda which leads people to express their frustrations about poor housing, run down estates and the absence of youth services, in terms of their fears about drug use. Undeniably, it also reflects the prevalence and impact of drug use in these areas. Whatever the underlying cause, if drugs is the starting point for a discussion about the neglect of working class estates, then to fail to have a strategy becomes a major handicap to the Left.

However, it is important to recognise that drugs use is becoming increasing normalised among young people. Over 50% of young people have experimented with drug taking and their experience rarely matches the sensational headlines and Government poster campaigns. A pro-prohibition stance may set Left-wing activists against young people and serve to reinforce divides within local communities and workplaces.

In striving for more effective strategies, we need to acknowledge that drug use is here to stay. In doing this we need to question the central myth of prohibition which casts all drug users as hopeless losers. In reality the vast majority manage their drug use without significant problems. To make successful changes in our lives, we need to have good self-esteem and believe in our capacity to change. Condemning drug users, undermines these factors and forces people to become outsiders. If you are outside a local community, it is easy to disregard your neighbours and behave in an anti-social manner.

At the same time we need not to romanticise drug takers. In deprived areas, drug dealing, and the knock on effects of problem drug use, can cause significant aggravation and damage which working class activists cannot walk away from. Therefore, we need an approach which enables us to remain engaged with local communities without condemning drug use out of hand. This may be described as looking for the course of least resistance in terms of community politics and drug use.

As has been argued before in Red Action, the starting must be to allow local communities to have a platform to express their frustrations and aspirations. This allows us to expose

situations where drug use is being used as a smoke screen for the failings of the local council or national Government. Where problems are directly associated with drug users and drug taking, activists should be unafraid to let people express these concerns. When local communities step out of the anti-drugs hysteria, it is possible to identify rational and effective strategies that can lead to real benefits for both drug using, and non-drug using, members of working class communities. For the rest of this article, I will give an overview of the main areas for intervention:

## **Drug Education Backfires:**

One of the greatest fears of all parents is that our kids may become involved in drug taking. Today, almost all young people will have to make choices as to whether to use drugs or not. Availability is now reaching into even the most remote of areas.

Drugs prevention campaigns are a widely favoured strategy. However, bill board campaigns are known to be largely ineffective and at times can even be counter-productive. The 'Heroin Screws You Up' Campaign was initially thought to be a huge success as young people rushed for copies of the poster. Later, it was realised that the spotty character had become a counter-culture hero which was displayed, as a sign of rebellion, on many teenagers' bedroom walls.

Schools based 'Just Say No' Campaigns can also backfire. Research indicates that children who have received such drugs education are more likely to go on to use drugs, than their non-drugs-educated peers. The problem is that many young people reject the anti-drugs messages, and in doing so may enter drug use without taking any precautions. Also, they may switch from one drug type to another, without any awareness of the varying risks of different substances. Anti-drugs campaigns give simplistic slogans instead of thoughtful guidance.

Integrating advice on drugs into wider health and social education, avoids the issue of drugs from becoming singled out for special attention. It also allows us to offer appropriate advice to different age groups in a non-judgmental manner. Drugs becomes one of the factors of risk that young people have to make choices about as they grow up.

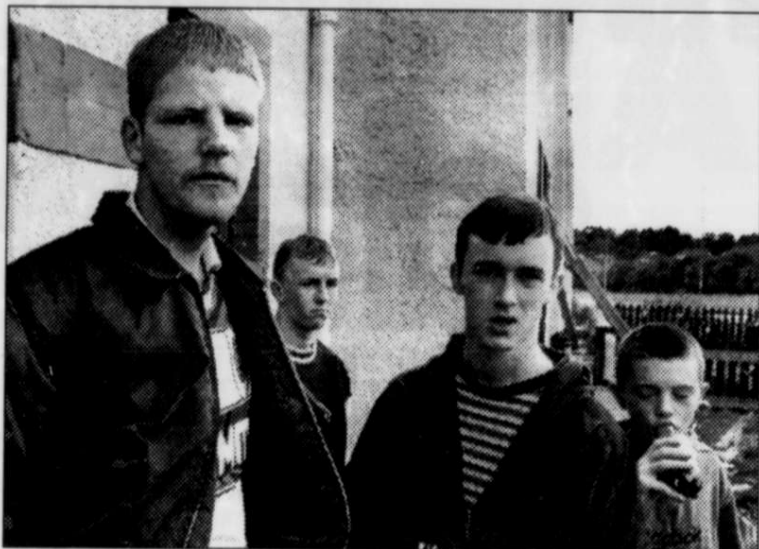
Importantly, we need to look at the underlying factors that leave young people on the streets without facilities or opportunities. Waiting for the impending revolution may be a good excuse for inaction, but it does nothing to help young people. Again diversion schemes do better if they avoid an explicit drug focus but it stands to reason that where kids are occupied and engaged they are less likely to fall into problematic drug use. It is unsurprising that we have seen a massive rise in problem drug use among teenagers at the very same period that we have seen massive cuts in youth and community services.

## **A Harm Reduction Approach:**

Problem drug use can cause significant harm to individuals, as well as distress to families and friends of those who get into difficulties. Responses to drug use are too often limited by the moral judgements of those who fund or provide services. There needs to be a dual approach which recognises the needs of the many who don't want to stop illicit use, while also providing effective drug treatment options for those who want to move away from street drug use or stop altogether. This is the basis of a harm reduction approach.

For those who are using drugs, needle exchange, methadone prescribing, health education and peer based support schemes, have all been demonstrated to be highly effective in protecting people from the damaging conse-

continued on page 10



**Youths in Ferguslie Park, Paisley. "Today, almost all young people will have to make choices as to whether to use drugs or not."**

quences of drug use.

There is a direct relationship between social policy and public health. In the mid-1980s it was found that 50% of injecting drug users in Glasgow had HIV infection. This was closely linked to a police policy of restricting the supply of syringes into the city as an anti-drugs strategy. This led to rooms of injectors sharing a single syringe thus widely transmitting blood borne viruses. This was not an active choice but a response to the environment. Liverpool, another city renowned for its high levels of heroin use in the 1980s, had an HIV rate below 1% because it intervened early and made available needles and syringes on demand. Despite the strong evidence to support methadone maintenance, access to this important service varies dramatically across the country. Drug users are left to commit crime, or be at risk from health problems, which affects not just the individual but the wider community. Community campaigns to fight for improved services reunite local communities, challenging drug users to respond constructively to their new allies.

**The 'Heroin Screws You Up' Campaign was initially thought to be a huge success as young people rushed for copies of the poster. Later, it was realised that the spotty character had become a counter-culture hero which was displayed, as a sign of rebellion, on many teenagers' bedroom walls**

local park are now providing a payment to those running the patrols. The response of both the Basque separatists ETA and the Irish Republican Movement provide examples of how local communities can be mobilised against individuals who come into conflict with local communities. Opening up communication between drug users and local communities may initially be volatile but it enables people to understand each other's problems and to develop social contracts about what is, and what is not, acceptable to local communities. Making demands of drug users, without offering them any rewards

for their social responsibility, will just be experienced as further discrimination against an already repressed community. A genuine partnership allows both groups to change their immediate situation, providing a chance for both sides to win.

#### **Drug Dealers:**

Open drug dealing scenes in particular pose huge problems. Where dealing takes place on the street, it makes areas unsafe, increases noise pollution, and causes concerns about the safety of the frail and vulnerable. Many approaches, whether from the police or community activists, target those who supply drugs rather than the users. Undeniably such approaches do have an impact on the targeted dealers, but what about the wider impact on the drugs scene?

Studies on the impact of severe police action on drug scenes suggest that such approaches increase the risks for local users, at best displace drug dealing for a period and rarely affects the levels of use in an area. With continued demand, the most ruthless dealers survive and control the market. Where drug scenes are repressed, either by the State or by community activists, the result is probably the same - drug users suffer, levels of drug taking tend not to be affected and dealing becomes more organised and controlled. This experience adds to their sense of alienation which increases their likelihood to take personal risk and anti-social behaviour.

Irish Republicans have mobilised local communities to campaign against key local dealers. Dealers can be 'named and shamed', dealer's houses can be marched on or dealers physically targeted. It is not to argue that such models can never be appropriate or effective, rather that they can have greater success, and cause less collateral damage, when applied more selectively. To target dealers who deal to young children, commit acts of violence, or otherwise abuse the local social contract, allows people to change their behaviour, or supports the adoption of replacements who are able to operate within social contracts. The application of social contract can be effective in stabilising the drugs scene and reducing its wider social impact. It may also isolate problem dealers from the wider drug using community. In fact, where social contracts can be secured, drug users can apply their economic power to boycott dealers who bring conflict into the community. Drug users successfully improved the quality of drugs by boycotting poor quality suppliers in the 1970s in Amsterdam.

#### **Drug testing: the Bosses New Weapon:**

Drug use is also being used as a means to ferment division in workplaces and there are also reports of drug testing being disproportionately targeted at working class activists. The effective model proposed in this article allows workers and unions to defend colleagues against such attacks by arguing that workers should be judged on their capability not their choice to use drugs.

To summarise, drug use poses problems for local communities and the Left. However, it is important to distinguish between the affects of prohibition and drug taking. The State uses the scapegoating of drug users to divert attention from wider social problems and it is a powerful tool of divide and rule in working class communities. The solutions are not easy but require an application of an effective response which recognises the needs and rights of all who live in working class communities.



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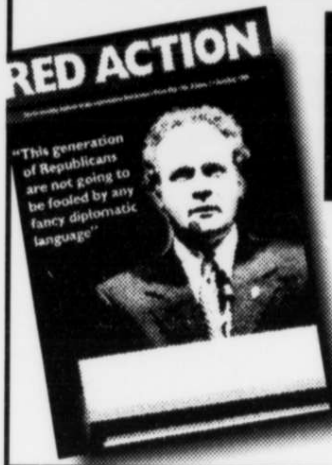
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## A Word In Your Ear...



### THE ACCUSED

**FIRST THE FACTS.** On May 1 a benefit for a Czech anti-fascist, at the time on remand for shooting a fascist in self defence, was arranged by the North London Solidarity Federation and an AFA speaker surprisingly invited.

On duly turning up at 9pm she was confronted with an individual in the company of the organisers, who had recently been expelled by AFA for taking a personal grievance to the 'federalies'. As a result a charge of ABH had been proffered against a personal friend of some of the other AFA members present, who had turned up with her (it was to have been her maiden speech, aaah...) in good faith to support the event. Not only had some of these same AFA members been forced to

personally given evidence on behalf of the defence in the subsequent trial but the (extremely minor incident) that led to the charges had been caused by the personal insecurities of the complainant himself.

Though eventually acquitted the defendant who is of frail mental health and certainly no 'street-fighter' faced the distinct possibility for eleven months, of not only going to jail on a trumped up charge, but as his family feared of 'never coming out again'. Twice over the last few years he was sectioned under the Mental Health Act so such an unwarranted tragedy was more than probable. A reality which despite repeated representations to these fine revolutionaries, one of whom incidentally is a trained social worker (you know the people who steal your kids) the Solidarity Federation as whole managed to regard the affair with stoic indifference.

So on the evening in question, following a very brief consultation the AFA speaker was withdrawn, and shortly afterward the chief witness for the prosecution also left the pub under some duress it must be admitted. Now any social group must have some moral code. It couldn't function without some form of sanction. Even Rotarians must I am sure detest a grass. Neither is ignorance any excuse. Even from programmes like The Bill it is made abundantly clear that in working class culture only a 'nonce' is regarded as lower in the food chain. An abhorrence of violence at the same fund-raiser for someone accused of murder, albeit in self defence (although he did shoot him more than once apparently), sits a little strangely with middle class indignation at witnessing what is after all a perfect example of 'proletarian' justice taking it's natural course you would have thought? But in eyes of North and East London Solidarity Federation being a grass, and a lying one at that, is clearly socially acceptable while giving the same a couple of slaps, (which is all it amounted to incidentally), is it appears deserving of international condemnation no less. As twisted priorities go, a more luminous example is hardly imaginable. (And as an illustration of where the Left generally has gone wrong, further comment is is I sincerely hope entirely superfluous).

Furthermore, within days of the initial incident, one of their organisers evidently in a bad case of funk made a cap in hand approach (actually the message was by phone but you get the drift) to AFA through an intermediary indicating that they 'didn't want any trouble blah blah' and insisted that they intended to write to AFA with a view to making good what he acknowledged was 'a diplomatic blunder'. However no letter arrived. Instead of a grovelling apology, some half wit came up with the type of scheme even Baldrick might have knocked back with a derisive "Bollocks!"

'Why not kill two birds with one stone', the twerp suggested 'and explain away the financial embarrassment ( the AFA contingent bringing, temporarily, the crowd to over double figures) down to drunken intimidation by Red Action thugs instead?' And so they did. And decided to take collective responsibility for it. After all nothing like spinning an enjoyable smear against a detested enemy to raise morale. Just so long as the golden rules are scrupulously observed: a) make sure Red Action don't hear about it b) make sure the source of the rumour is concealed, and c) leave plenty scope to pin the blame on somebody else, ie. never sign, or put anything in writing) In this case all three were well and truly flouted.

When made aware that the moggy was well and truly out of the valise, (rumours of the 'Red Action rampage' had been picked up within only a matter of days incidentally, first in Hackney housing benefit section if you must know? then Birmingham, Manchester and later amongst the Irish Republican diaspora), a letter dated June 28 duly arrived on London AFA's desk a full ten weeks after the event delivering the results 'of their inquiry'. Bad enough LAFA, like the cuckold husband, was the last to know, for it had already had been widely broadcast within anarchist circles, formally and by word of mouth, but not satisfied, they also declared their firm (I use the word loosely) intention to give the 'scandal' full international exposure.

Meanwhile for good measure a senior member of RA was threatened that 'the nature of AFA's reply would determine what further action might be taken'. Oh dear.

For a blow-by-blow account see AFA website: [www.geocities.com/capitolhill/senate/5602](http://www.geocities.com/capitolhill/senate/5602)

## Something We Said!?!?

It was bad enough when Sean Crowe clinched the first seat by topping the poll but when Mr Daly also emerged victorious, it was simply too much for disgusted Donnybrook. As his delighted supporters held aloft Mr Daly, the man's whole body shook and he rasped: "That's it. That's the start of it. They've got their foot in the door now." He may well be right. Middle class reaction to significant SF gains in recent local elections. *Irish News* 17.6.99

AFA was bruisingly effective in winning the battle for the streets with the fascists. By 1994 or so, the British National Party had had more than enough, and was forced to devise a new strategy, encapsulated in the slogan 'no more marches, meetings or punch-ups'. Essentially, the BNP has consciously avoided the damaging physical confrontations with AFA that were regularly culling it's cadre. Instead, it has shifted towards an electoral model, attempting to replicate the winning ways of it's supposed European counterparts.

*Weekly Worker* 1.6.99

According to the government sponsored Runymeade Trust, race attacks are running at around 290,000 annually. Many, as much as half, are committed by children under 16. Evidence suggests that despite good intentions, equal opportunities practice in many cases contributes to a deepening racist climate. Already Britain sustains a race attack level on par with Germany, where last year the Far Right entered regional government. So we accept the political risks of addressing the issue now, or risk the Far Right capitalising at their leisure later.'

London Anti-Fascist Action press officer, listings magazine *Time Out* 6.7.99

If you are rich, fashionable and young then using cocaine is cool and acceptable. Heroin isn't yet, but things are creeping that way... Everyone is happy. Everyone, that is, except the families and victims of the young users among what used to be called the working class. For, like so much else in Britain, this is still a class matter.

Andrew Marr, *Observer*, 30.5.99

A comrade said that a credible alternative was urgent, for there is the very real danger that the socialist Left and the working class as any sort of organised force could be thrown back to levels existing in the United States.

London Socialist Alliance, *Weekly Worker*, 17.6.99