RED ACTION

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Patrick Hayes tells Old Bailey

"I AM A VOLUNTEER IN THE IRISH REPUBLICAN ARMY"

1980's street clash. IRA volunteer Patrick Hayes in another capacity as anti-fascist militant.

When Pat Hayes and Jan Taylor were sentenced on May 13th 1994 to 30 years each after a four week trial at the Old Bailey the media were perplexed. Why they asked would two 'Englishmen' one an ex soldier, get involved with the IRA ? Why did they do it? According to one security source, both had been involved in extreme left wing groups in the 70's and 80's, but had then dropped out of sight. Perhaps an even more pertinent question was how did they do it ? How did they make the transition from being 'weekend radicals', which is how the establishment actually regards the British Left, to becoming IRA volunteers ? Were they recruited by the IRA, or did they make the initial approach? If in fact they volunteered their services, how, the media wondered, did they earn the IRA's trust ? How did they, as 'Brit lefties,' bridge the credibility gap, was the question?

Similar questions were raised after Frank Portinari got five years in February this year, following his Loyalist UDA gunrunning conviction. The London magazine Time Out asked; 'just what would make an Islington born Catholic school caretaker become a gun dealer'; and then answered the question themselves. It was quite simple. Frank was a fascist. Preserving the union is a central tenet of the far right and Portinari simply took his politics to their logical conclusion. Significantly, to disclose that Pat Hayes and Jan Taylor were 'extreme left wing' or 'revolutionary' was felt in contrast to be of little help by way of an explanation. Revolutionary activity in Ireland bears no relation whatsoever, to its nominal counterpart in Britain. The latter in a nutshell, is, and is seen to be, counterfeit

For the best part of this century, and certainly post war, revolutionary politics in Britain has been reformist in ambition and opportunist in approach. Revolutionary politics in Ireland has always been insurrectionary. As a consequence the Irish question is, and perhaps always has been, the litmus test for the British Left, and the mainspring for the rupture between the reformist and revolutionary traditions. Nevertheless British Trotskyism has a core identity, and the establishment has long ago identified it as - dilettantism. In the inimitable words of MI5 officer Peter Wright, now retired the 'far and out left... despite their frightening names were about as dangerous as a pond full of ducks'. We can find no fault with that analysis, and so, it is to the other tradition that Red Action subscribe.

As an organisation, Red Action has from the outset supported the right of the Irish to bear arms in principle and supported the military campaign as a TACTIC. Where we see a synthesis between republicanism and revolution Trotskyism seeks only contradictions, and so while paying lip service to the principle of self determination the middle class left has with few exceptions been an unswerving critic of its implementation.

Of course no one in Red Action knew when, or precisely why, Patrick Hayes took the decision to join the IRA, but from his own testimony it is clear that he regards support for the military campaign and taking part in it more as a matter of emphasis than some 'quantum leap'. Pat never made the media inspired 'graduation from being a weekend radical to becoming an Irish Republican Army volunteer'. As in the case of Portinari the explanation is quite simple. He never was a weekend radical. He is, and always was in whatever capacity a revolutionary.

On the last day of the trial having dismissed his barristers Patrick Hayes addressed the jury. This is his statement:

"The prosecution opening address suggested that the process we are now finishing involved an IRA campaign stretching from late 1992 to early 1993. This is absolutely correct, save for three details. Firstly, the campaign did not end in March 1993 with my arrest but continues to date. Furthermore, unless the British respond to the Irish Peace Initiative it will only continue. Secondly, this campaign did not start in November 1992 but commenced some 23 years previously with the State's armed response to legitimate peaceful process in the North of Ireland. Thirdly, and most significantly, no attempt was made to examine an IRA campaign by the court. Indeed, when I tried to elicit this information I was stopped. This country has seen continuous IRA actions for over 20 years now, yet there has been no attempt to put it into any wider context, bar that of the two individuals sitting in the dock. The suggestion that these are motiveless crimes is a fallacy that has not been addressed by the prosecution. They have chosen to ignore the background to these incidents. To ignore the visible armed occupation of the north-eastern part of Ireland. They have also chosen to ignore the political and military resistance to this occupation by a subjugate, but risen, people. The result, then, is that you, the jury, have not had the full facts presented to you in order to see that no crimes have, in fact, been committed. Rather, a number of actions in a war conducted to unite and free Ireland from Britain's imperial grasp. I made this clear when I replied to the 11 charges at the start of this process. I said then that the case related to political matters and the laying of criminal charges is inappropriate. Nevertheless, the trial took place and, in the best tradition of British justice, winds its way to its inevitable conclusion. On the way we notice the theatre that surrounds it. Armed officers disrupt traffic in the area surrounding the court, high security within the building itself, and more armed police at the exits from this room. This is not a performance you will encounter at a normal trial here at the Old Bailey. It is a performance reserved for political/IRA trials. It is not a performance that you would see at a similar trial in the north of Ireland, either. You would not see it, members of the jury, for one simple reason. The Diplock courts there have jettisoned the notion of jury trials to facilitate the conveyor belt process of justice for Irish rebels. The abolition of jury trials is just one of many so-called rights abandoned in support of the unionist/loyalist hegemony in the north of Ireland. The simple right to form a Civil Rights movement which demanded an end to religious discrimination was ended in 1969 when the forces of the state battered the people on their own streets. The predictable result of the introduction of the British Army as peace-keepers was well illustrated on 30 January 1972 when 14 people were killed as a result of the army opening fire on a peaceful demonstration. The various attempts by the British to contain the situation and bolster the oppressive unionist/loyalist administration brought more suffering and more oppression on to the Irish nationalist community. From the introduction of internment when hundreds were imprisoned without trial; through the killing of children with plastic and rubber bullets; through the support of, and for, loyalist pro-British death squads; to the torture of suspects in interrogation and the discredited use of super-grasses to imprison, again without evidence, British policy has been designed to subjugate and terrorise the Irish people. How long can people remain on the sidelines observing injustice before they act? John Kennedy had it right when he said: *"Those who make peaceful change impossible, make violent change inevitable."* And, from the opposite end of the political spectrum, the manifesto of Umkhonto we Sizwe states: *"The time comes in the life of any people when there remain two choices; to submit or fight."* A particularly apposite quote when considered against the current changes in South Africa. How many members of the jury could or would stand idly by and watch their friends, relatives, compatriots be brutalised and dominated by an occupying force, if, for example, the nazis had prevailed in the last war?

To return to this case and the evidence offered by the prosecution. Much has been made up of adding figures to make convenient totals to support the prosecution case. Whether this be totals of cash money, pounds of semtex, rounds of ammunition, numbers of Kalashnikov AK47 assault rifles they have all been added up and conclusions drawn and expanded upon. Even lengths of white electrical flex have been accumulated, totalled and explained away at some length. I will now give you a total. The total is seven. Seven tons of home-made explosive. 1.6 tons recovered from Canary Wharf, 1.45 tons recovered from Tottenham Court Road, 3 cwt involved in the Woodside Park explosion, half a ton recovered from the Essex Lodge garage AND 3.3 tons recovered from the Volvo lorry in Stoke Newington early on 14 November 1992. In this case there was first mention of this *"extra"* bomb when questions were asked to see if links had been sought or discovered between it and the incidents I am charged with. Despite repeated attempts to prevent me pursuing this point it emerged that there is, indeed, an irrefutable forensic and scientific link between the Canary Wharf bomb and the Volvo bomb found around the corner from my home address. That link is the blue insulating tape found at both places. Despite this link being discovered, very few resources were allocated to uncover any more such links. The HME mix, the booster tubes, the construction, the packaging of the bomb were not examined for links.

I will give you another link. I drove the Volvo lorry bomb on the night of 13 and 14 November 1992 when it was stopped by the police. I was accompanied by another man who has not been apprehended. Here, then, lies the reason the links were not pursued. Patrick Kelly was convicted of driving that lorry bomb and sentenced to 25 years. He had no connection at all with that bomb or any other bomb. He was convicted on the basis of his nationality. Mr Kelly is Irish born and speaks with a suspicious and, in this instance, damning Irish accent. As for the rest of the evidence presented I have no comment to make save that the prosecution has assembled the known facts and clues of this matter, added in a large amount of conjecture and prejudice and bound it all together with emotive and hysterical language, not to mention a certain amount of theatricality. The issue of the accuracy or inaccuracy of the prosecution case is not one I am interested in challenging. Nor, indeed, is the prosecution or the crown interested either. Their interest lies in obtaining convictions and they in no way concern themselves with the wider issues of justice and egalitarianism. However, no matter what inconsistencies exist in this matter one thing is sure and certain.

I was a volunteer in the Irish Republican Army before my arrest; I am a volunteer in the Irish Republican Army now; and I will still be a volunteer in the Irish Republican Army when I leave these places. I have no criminal charges to answer to!"

"TROTSKYISM" with No illusions

"Having declared for years that the emancipation of the working class can only be accomplished through the Great Liberal Party, after having decried all independent election activity of the workers against Liberal candidates too, as disguised Toryism and after having proclaimed the permeation of the Liberal Party by socialist principles as the sole task of the Socialists these gentlemen now declare that the Liberals are traitors, that nothing can be done with them and that in the next election the workers should put up candidates of their own, regardless of Liberals or Tories..."

That was Frederick Engels verdict on the antics of the Fabian Society in 1893. For the latter part of the twentieth century, the role previously played by the Fabians in relation to the Liberal Party, is precisely the same role later played out by Trotskyism, specifically Militant, in relation to the [Fabian] dominated Labour Party. In the same way that Labour promised the peaceful transformation from capitalism to socialism, Militant promised to transform the Labour Party by the 'permeation of socialist principles' and ultimately, by the adoption of some Trotskyist programme, from mealy mouth reformism into full blown revolution red in tooth and claw. The affiliation of the working class to the Labour party, was preached and practised not only by this and that Trot group but by the for want of a better name, the Trotskyist 'movement' as a whole. Like its Liberal predecessors the Labour party,[as a proponent of progressive reform] is doomed and for some of the same reasons, lack of courage and imagination.

And in the same way that the radical demagogue Keir Hardie, described by Engels as; **'a super cunning Scot who...can not be trusted for a minute'** eventually jumped ship and founded the Independent Workers Party and later led the Labour party, so too today Militant abandon Labour and inspired by the success of another **'cunning scot'** Tommy Sheridan, proclaim their own independence. History as Marx pointed out repeats itself first as tragedy, then as farce.

The role of progressive reformists, that the Militant sought to fulfill prior to their expulsion, inside the Labour party, they know seek to occupy outside, and counterposed to the party. Fine and dandy were it not for the fact that the BNP has the same target audience.

From a revolutionary working class point of view these are the two distinct poles of repulsion. On the right fascism, on the left reformism.The emergence of the former is entirely due to the failed antics, both locally and nationally, of the wannabe reformists. Their total ineptitude; and the tangible contempt that exists between Labour and its erstwhile constituency has locally and nationally begat the BNP. And fascism begat anti-fascism. The appeal from Labour to the anti-fascists, in the recent elections and from the anti-fascists to the voters, was designed in terms of a rescue package. At all costs the BNP must be kept out, we were told. It is the job of all anti-fascists to help rescue Labour **['as the lesser evil']** from the BNP, meanwhile the BNP can be expected to continue with its campaign of rescuing the working class from Labour. The strategy of Trotskyism is to invite the working class to be cured and castrated in the same operation.

By acting as campaign managers for Labour the Left are prostituting anti-fascism, and instead of presenting a radical persona, anti- fascists are seen to be in effect defending the status quo; it being, bad housing, cockroaches, unemployment, lack of local democracy, social workers, the council tax, middle class do-gooders, the political establishment,and finally capitalism itself. As a consequence, in these areas most heavily canvassed by the ANL/YRE etc the BNP's working class credentials are established at stroke. This may prove more significant in the long run than any election results; for having shed their independence in favour of a popular front with a middle class party for these anti-fascists there can be no way back.

As a national institution the Labour Party is finished. This is because it can no longer serve its primary purpose as a campaigning party of progressive reform. This capitulation is not entirely down to lack of nerve, but more specifically because the economic system itself is exhausted and is no longer capable of progressive reform. It is of course ironic that the very people [Trotskyites] who preached the message that 'capitalism cannot be reformed' for fifty years, are in the end the last ones to to come to terms with it. So from a revolutionary point of view, while there was always principled reasons to maintain an independent position from Labour, there are now tactical reasons as well. Where previously there may on occasion have been, simply out of pragmatism, sound tactical reasons for supporting them, this is no longer the case. Instead clear tactical advantage is to be gained by NOT supporting them! Labour has openly abandoned the politics of milk and water socialism for the politics of milk and water monetarism: nevertheless the Trots persist.

Where Trotskyism habitually harangued Labour for following the path of reform, we in turn are compelled to condemn them for having no useful function, more precisely because they have CEASED to do so.!

Red Action stands for the political independence of the working class pure and simple. The message in political terms could not be more clear cut. This strategy is now of paramount importance, not only in the fight against the failed reformers, but of even more pressing importance it is as vital a weapon in the fight against the rejuvenated fascists. The May election provided us with, an opportunity to implement this strategy in practise. In Edinburgh we campaigned for the James Connolly Society candidate standing against the local Labour leader in Connolly's old ward. In north London we supported the independent candidate George Silcott brother of jailed Winston.

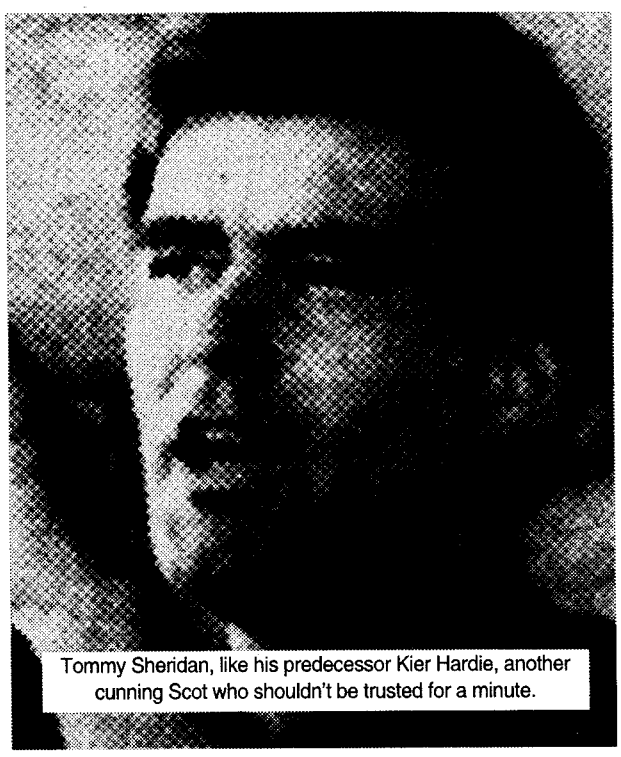
Red Actions intervention on the the Isle of Dogs meant that, for the first time there a resolute anti-fascist message was combined with a radical proposal i.e. that faced with the prospect of either the ultra conservative BNP, or a return to the old bullshit, the local people should elect their own recallable delegates. Armed with the power of de-selection a form of guerrilla warfare against the bureaucracy could be mounted and continued indefinitely until resources or progress are secured. In a battlefield position while the Trotskyite Left without exception line up with the bureaucracy in defence of the status quo, we stand with the working class against the bureaucracy, and within the working class; with the anti-racists against the racists. In 1892 Engels wrote; *"in our tactics one thing is firmly established for all modern countries and times: to convince the workers of the necessity of forming their own independent party, opposed to all bourgeois parties"*. Just as the Fabians opposed the workers split from the Liberals, so today the Trots still denounce any, even instinctive deviation from Labour. Engels exposed the motivation behind this strategy,

*"Fear of revolution is their fundamental principle. They are the **'eddicated'** par excellence...This socialism of theirs is represented as an extreme but inevitable consequence of middle class liberalism; hence their tactics of not decisively opposing the Liberals as adversaries but of pushing them on towards socialist conclusions and therefore intriguing with them, of permeating liberalism with socialism - of not putting up socialist candidates against the Liberals but of foisting and forcing them upon the Liberals...They do not realise of course that in doing this they are told a pack of lies and imposed on by others or else they themselves are lying about socialism..."* (Judging by those comments the loony left is not such a recent phenomenon!)

Today the antics of much of this strata is safely derided by the tabloid press precisely because both they and their working class readers see it exactly for what it is: an expression of self righteous, but quite harmless liberal middle class extremism. Harmless, because it is neither an expression of, nor a declaration to any working class constituency, and as a consequence no matter how radical a campaign appears on paper it invariably ends with a strident whine and in ignominious failure. This is the paradox of all liberalism; for unless there exists a greater threat, a threat possibly to the existence of the state itself; the state tactically has no incentive to make either moderate concessions or even conciliatory gestures. Ultimately, liberalism can only be successful in CONTAINING genuine pressure from below; (which it sees as its real function) when liberalism is itself regarded as the **'lesser evil'** by the powers that be. Perhaps, that is the most striking indictment against fifty years of Trotskyite endeavour: not that it was reformist opportunist and traded its principles for influence and success, but that in the absence of principles it had nothing to trade and so never needed to be bought off. And so even by the low standards it set for itself, it finished up a marginalised, and inept under achiever. At a national meeting in 1994 Red Action rubber stamped its own approach by unanimously adopting the following motion:

"..only in exceptional circumstances should Labour ever be supported ....That as an alternative to the BNP we will champion working class candidates independent from all bourgeois parties...in recognition that as a positive solution to the problems posed by the BNP agenda, this strategy is a compliment rather than an alternative to resolute and vigorous anti-fascist activity."

Support for independent working class candidates is an interim step in pursuit of the goal of the independent working-class party. After a century of treachery, fudge and failure the wheel has come full circle and for Labour and the middle class left, the party is indeed finally over.



Tommy Sheridan, like his predecessor Kier Hardie, another cunning Scot who shouldn't be trusted for a minute.

George Silcott (left) campaigned against Labour for his brothers release, and Red Action campaigned for George.

TIME FOR RED ACTION

The Labour Party, originally designed as a working class party of progressive reform, today, neither represents reform or the working class. It has abandoned its working class constituency: Labour is finished.

For decades the policy of the middle class Left,including the sponsors of the Anti-Nazi League; has been to back Labour as the 'lesser evil' to the Conservatives. The emergence of the BNP,is the consequence rather than the cause of the Left/Labour failure.

When the NF collapsed as an electoral threat in 1979, the political ground they occupied fell vacant. The middle class Left spurned the opportunity to fill the vacuum. Instead it returned to the colleges and its preoccupation with building the 'revolutionary party'.

Labour's demise should be the Left's opportunity: instead it is again the ultra-conservative right, this time in the shape of the BNP which parades as champion of the underdog.

People on the Island may feel that they are using the BNP, but in fact the BNP are using them. The BNP are not interested in housing the working class. In fact they would like to see 'public subsidy for council homes~scrapped'. For them the housing issue is a means to an end. The end being race war.

Rather than go to war with Asians on the BNP's behalf, the working class white and black should go to war on their own behalf against the people who really wield power. The Conservatives have given Tower Hamlets, a borough with the most need one of the worst housing allocations. Nationally, the government has systematically replaced elected local bodies with unaccountable quangoes like the L.D.D.C.(London Docklands Developments Corporation).

Taking advantage of the working class alienation from Labour, the ultra - conservative BNP have seized the opportunity to compliment Conservative policy, and divide the working class, the target of government policy, on racial lines - and against itself. The more effective the BNP strategy of terror on the ground the greater the working class division. The weaker working class resistance the greater government arrogance.Ultimately, greater government control means less services, and even smaller housing allocations. Working people, black and white alike are victims of this pincer movement.

The first step, towards stopping the rot must be for the working class to select its own candidates. These candidates would be elected by, and accountable in this instance - not to any party - but only to Island residents. They would therefore as community delegates, (rather than simply representatives of some party) be subject to instant recall. Armed with the power of de-selection, and as a result, with the ability to force elections at will, (if necessary every four months rather than every four years) ordinary people, would for the first time, be in a position to break the deadlock of cynicism and corruption long associated with party politics in the East End.

Working class candidates independent from all the old middle class parties and bankrupt institutions: sponsored by, and accountable to the local communities, is a strategy that in the long run will prove the only way to bring to a halt the cycle of disdain, disenfranchisement and despondency sponsored nationally by the government and exploited locally by the BNP. What is the alternative?

TIME FOR RED ACTION!

• Insert: Red Action leaflet handed out on the Isle of Dogs

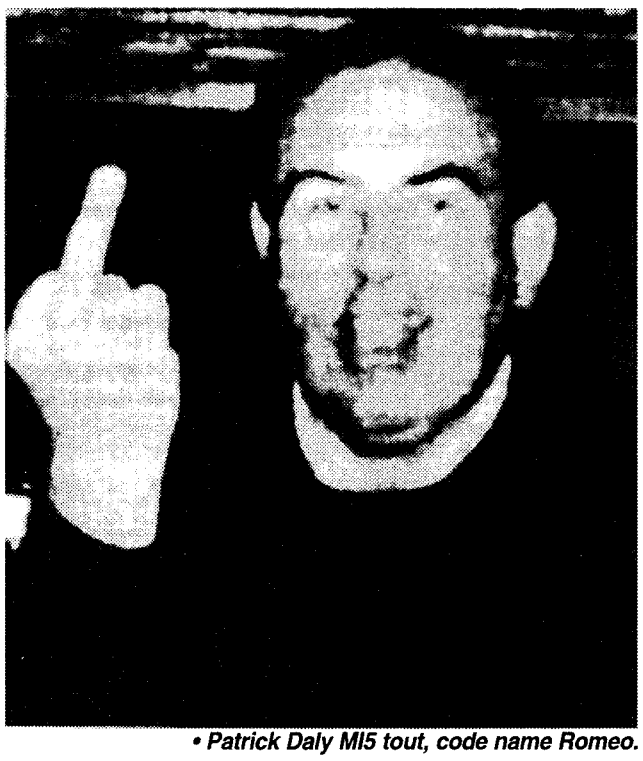
★LETTERS★

DEPLORABLE!

Dear ***Red Action***
As one who is both old and poor I can do no more than make an occasional small donation, so here's one for a beginning. I've seen issues 65 and 66 and am very impressed with the paper. In particular I enjoyed the book review on the 43 Group and the centre-spread on the Spanish Civil war - perhaps that's just a generational thing? I like the way you pack your copy with none of the currently fashionable ***"creative white space"*** nonsense - if you're going to spend money on printing anything it costs no more to cram your page as full as you can...an important point when it's propaganda of whatever kind. I hope you won't feel offended if I offer some criticism (intended to be constructive), the main point being your standard of proof-reading is **DEPLORABLE!** Yes, I do know all about the difficulties of producing printed matter on a shoestring budget and often with only inexperienced personnel, but proof-reading is a job that the untrained can do (and usually do); they gain experience as they go along and even learn **"the rules"** (yes, I do believe in rules r.e. printed matter). More time allocated (and you haven't the excuse of being a daily) to a job that creates the final impression is well justified. Still, all this nitpicking and at least some of it is a matter of taste, but it's worthwhile remembering that people are more likely to read material presented in an attractive and easily read manner. Meantime, good luck, and if I can only help you a mite towards paying fines (these are inevitable when taking on the establishment) then it's better than nothing.
No Pasaran!
M. East London.

CARDIFF AFA

Dear ***Red Action***
For the sheer comedy value some of your members might have read the article, ***"Splits, slanders and sectarianism"*** in Workers Power. It is a wholly dishonest account of what has been happening in Cardiff AFA and should be seen as an attack on ***Red Action***. As the perpetrator of the ***"witch hunt"*** against Workers Power and the ***"Storming out...emotional distress,"*** I would like to set the record straight. I am an independent member of AFA and, having witnessed from the inside the dishonesty of Workers Power in Manchester, I was keen not to see it happen here. However, it all began to happen again almost exactly. Fiddling subs with the idea of a transferable membership round their political group, demanding money for events which had never been brought to an AFA meeting and having a secret policy of not building AFA (which a less indoctrinated member of Workers Power let slip). At the same time dogging our progress with unnecessary arguments and out of context transitional demands. Sick of underhand activity, I convened a meeting on the subject of not allowing political groups to use AFA merely as a name to use in their lengthy rhetoric and just so they could recruit. I am very glad to see the back of them. In response to their ridiculous article, I would like it to be known that ***Red Action*** have revitalised Cardiff AFA and always shown integrity and a full commitment to AFA, something Workers Power will never do.
Thanks
SB
Cardiff AFA



• Patrick Daly MI5 tout, code name Romeo.

WHERE FOR ART THOU ROMEO, CONTINUED

Dear Comrades,
I'm enclosing a cheque for £3 for 6 issues of ***Red Action***. I've only been released on parole a few months ago, after being "inside" for 8½ years, and I'm still trying to get myself re-organised back into 'normal' life.
Among many things I've been reading is a pamphlet titled *"At War with the Truth"* by Larry O'Hara, and on page 26 is a 'Note 4' referring to ***Red Action*** 66 summer '93, referring to INLA/IPLO.
I'm particularly interested in this because my conviction (14 years) was *"conspiracy to cause an explosion"* . You will have recently seen reports on a MI5\Special Branch informer, Pat Daly - re the case of Liam Heffernan and Martin McMonagle. It was Daly who back in '84 was responsible for informing on me.
Comradely greetings
PJ
Bristol

NOT SO OPEN POLEMIC

Dear Comrades;
I have recently been re-reading your series of contributions to Open Polemic (O.P.) and the various responses to those contributions. From this re-reading I have two points to make. Firstly, could you please send me subscription details for your publications. Secondly, as a subscriber to the journal O.P., a participant in O.P. conferences and a member of the Association of Communists for Revolutionary Unity (ACRU), I will argue for the continued inclusion of ***Red Action*** contributions. I believe that past contributions, particularly those concerned with democratic centralism and the role of the vanguard party, have served to provide a sharp focus for debate on those subjects. I do not believe those debates have been resolved and therefore I support the continued publication by O.P. of your contributions to those debates. To this end I will be sending a copy of this letter to O.P..
Comradely greetings
RH
Bristol

HARDMAN?

Dear ***Red Action***
I read with interest the 3 accounts in the last issue of former SWP members who have now joined ***Red Action***. It is testament to the politics of RA that we now have an appeal that goes well beyond our original roots in the SWP. Our ranks now have a wide layer of working class activists who hail originally from as diverse organisations as the SWP, CP, Militant, RCG, RCP, anarchist groups and Scottish and Irish republicans - as well as the increasing number of new *recruits who have never had* any contact with the left before but who have already sussed them. I found the reference in the article to Chris Bambery as the *"Hardman of the SWP"* hilarious as Chris is about the last person that we'd consider "hard" up here in his old stomping ground. His reputation for backing losers is legendary. He was a member of the International Marxist Group (IMG) during the ANL's heyday in the late 70's and he was the scourge of those who now regard him as their darling. When he left the IMG (and the Labour Party) to join the SWP, the IMG's Glasgow bank account is also rumoured to have been plundered. Once in the SWP, Chris quickly settled into a niche setting himself up as an expert on nationalism, Scottish and Irish. During the INLA feud, Chris addressed a public meeting in Glasgow and declared that those who eventually became the gangsters of the IPLO were *"the best elements"*. For his troubles he got a stiff right hander, which put him on his arse, from an INLA supporter in the Scotia Bar after the meeting. But perhaps the best story of Chris' *"expertise"* came at last year's Marxism. A recent recruit to Glasgow RA who attended Marxism 93 tells us that during the session on Ireland, Bambery was lamenting the *"good old days of the prison protests"* when the prisoners were *"highly politicised"*. *"Now when I visit my IRA mates in the H Blocks, all they are interested in is where the next bit of dope is coming from!"* I'm sure his *"mates"* will be most interested to hear what Chris says about them in the internal meetings of SWP hacks. As for that *"hardman"* image - don't be fooled by the accent - when he comes up here, he sounds like the rest of the SWP - a middle class wanker!
Comradely
S H (Glasgow RA)

ROUND 2 OF THE 3 CORNERED FIGHT - CLASS WAR REPLY

Dear ***Red Action***
I have ben reading your paper for about a year and I have a lot of respect for it, though I must reply to your article; "A Three Cornered Fight". First I must explain Class War as I see it as I don't think you understand. CW is not the SWP and has a lot of individuals involved, each being able to have their own say on articles. Your view that CW has no real analysis has a seeming slight ring of truth. The 'monkey see monkey do' comment probably comes across in the paper (and at times in some of the members) because of the years of shit the Left/Anarchists have churned out; with deep analysis and articles that a lot of working class people just can't understand, or just find too boring. Sometimes things just have to be said in black and white. If you actually spoke to a lot of CW supporters they do have an analysis and objectives. Your damaging comments about CW being 'useless as allies and dangerous as companions' will do nothing to forward the fight against fascism. As you know AFA contains CW supporters and sympathisers; do you really not want us as allies? At the end of the day the capitalist state or even dodgy communist states are the enemy as well, though the fight against fascism is primary and must be won so we can move on with confidence.
Yours in solidarity (I hope)
John, Southampton


by GERVASE WEBB and COLIN ADAMSON

EXTREMIST Left-wing and anarchist groups who sparked Saturday's riot in Welling are now preparing to work together for the first time, for a major confrontation with the British National Party next month. At Welling on Saturday, which had the worst violence seen on the streets of Britain since the 1990 Poll Tax riot, groups like Class War, Red Action and Panther UK were each working to their own agenda.
Now they have agreed to bury their factional differences and unite for what one activist called "a ruck that will make Welling look like a tea party".
Anti Nazi League, the main organiser of the Welling protest, had been "[illegible]", an activist

The full page analysis in the 'Evening Standard' of conspiritorial violence and the mythical alliance between Class War, Red Action and Panther UK.

RA reply: If as you claim that accusation against Class War was 'unjust' why then was the other allegation; that CW invented for the media, an 'alliance' between CW and Panther UK and ***Red Action*** in a crude attempt at self-promotion not refuted? Is it because similar stunts to promote Class War as the distinct alternative to the Left have been successfully exploited by your organisation previously?
For instance, in a supporters' newsletter, 'the great strength' of founder member Ian Bone is recalled; "...for his ability to manufacture publicity without letting reality get in the way of things, something we have all been grateful for in the past." Surely that is the same corrupt kind of self-serving bullshit the left have always churned out, that CW was initially meant to oppose, but instead apparently celebrates. Exploiting the gullibility of the media (or in the case of the WELLING RIOT the media exploiting the gullibility of CW) provided, CW for a time, with a largely unwarranted subversive image, but reality invariably does get in the way of things. You say the damaging 'comments' made in the articles concerned 'will do nothing to forward the fight against fascism'; well the principal contention of the article was that peddling the politics and imitating the antics of middle-class lefties does nothing but retard the fight against fascism! Despite recent developments here and abroad, the conventional view of the middle class left, and it must be said the CONSISTENT view of Class War's paper is that fascism is an anomaly; a diversion from the onward march towards a more egalitarian socialist society. Correspondingly anti-fascism is regarded as an irritating distraction. As London Class War explain in a letter printed in ***Red Action*** no 67: "...the importance of crushing fascist activity should not distract us from creating the Social Revolution..." On a World in Action programme last year a spokesperson insisted that for the majority of people, "...their experience of organised fascists does not come from the BNP...but the police.." This is simply a resurrection of the old German Social Democrat/Stalinist equation - fascism equals reaction. Groups like Workers Power expound the trot variation of the same theme, "Fascism is capitalism's last resort. When...all other ways of suppressing the working class have been tried and failed, the capitalists turn to the fascist thugs." According to them fascism is the punishment on the left for success rather than the penalty for failure!
Even in 1923 a full decade before Hitler took power, the veteran communist Clara Zetkin saw the need even then, to refute this nonsense. "Fascism is in no sense the revenge of the bourgeoisie for the revolutionary advance of the proletariat...considered objectively fascism presents itself much more as a punishment [because] we have not acted vigorously enough...although the idea that fascism is simply bourgeois terror is entertained even by radical elements of our movement, it partly coincides with the conception held by the reformist social democrats. For them fascism is simply terror and violence; indeed bourgeois reaction to the violence initiated or threatened by the proletariat against bourgeois society." The contemporary left regurgitate all of these errors and more. On the one hand the SWP/ANL emphasise the difference between the nazi BNP and the right wing Tory party but ignore the connections, while on the other CW and the RCP place their emphasis on the connection between them but ignore the differences. Where both make the same mistake is to treat the offensive and defensive struggle as identical. Having no contact with the working class proper, they have no gauge on whether they or society is going forwards or backward; moving to the left or to the right. This inadequacy manifests itself in a number of ways. One, they refuse to accept that anti-fascism is by definition a rear guard action; the result of their (the Left's) political and strategic failure. To be forced to do so would mean accepting mistakes in analysis, that might raise question marks over their continued existence. Either they have made critical mistakes or they ARE mistakes! Such a verdict is simply unthinkable; so errors are not even identified, never mind rectified. The stubborn refusal to acknowledge mistakes means also a refusal to accept that the far right are setting the agenda. Not only for the left but for in many cases the state. Society cannot be pulled or driven in opposite directions at once. Either the left or the right are in the ascendancy; either fascism is a problem or it isn't. To even address the issue of anti-fascism is itself a tacit admission that the initiative has, or is about to swing to the far right. This of course is stoutly resisted for the reasons mentioned. Instead many prefer to continue with the pretence that the opposite is the case, ie that they, or at least the left, is in the driving seat. To do this it then becomes necessary to invert the relationship between the right wing state and the fascist party. Instead of the fascist party creating a right wing state, the right wing state is accredited with creating the fascist party. Most of the left to one degree or another, continue to plough this fallow furrow. Having established this 'fact', they can then with good conscience turn and accuse militant anti-fascists of 'posturing' of 'fetishising anti-fascism'; of being 'racist and reformist'; for doing exactly what they themselves are guilty of-treating the symptom rather than the cause. CW again "...perhaps you [***Red Action***] believe that simply slapping yourselves on the back for your macho posturing against a particular anti-social element within the working class is actually treating the disease...what we [Class War] are saying is: the importance of crushing fascist activity should not distract us from creating the Social Revolution. This is our goal, and yours?"
This is not only a denial that the likes of the BNP are a contributory cause, but also that fascism is itself a specific form of reaction. But of course if it is proven not to be a specific form, then clearly there is no need either for a specific response; there need be no analysis there need be no change of plan: steady as she goes, business as usual. Indeed for Class War fascism should be treated like drunken driving, as a SOCIAL rather than a political problem! That one section of the working class, their supposed constituency, prey on another section is no concern of theirs. It has nothing to do with them; in that at least, like much of the left, they are correct. So if indeed radical change is on a European agenda as Class War insist, it is not likely to be the 'Social Revolution' they imagine - but its antithesis. While ***Red Action*** is aware that individual supporters have contributed to the cause of militant anti-fascism this is despite rather than because of the politics of the organisation Class War to whom they pledge their allegiance. It is for them rather than us to come to terms with the contradictions.

THE CLOCK IS TICKING...

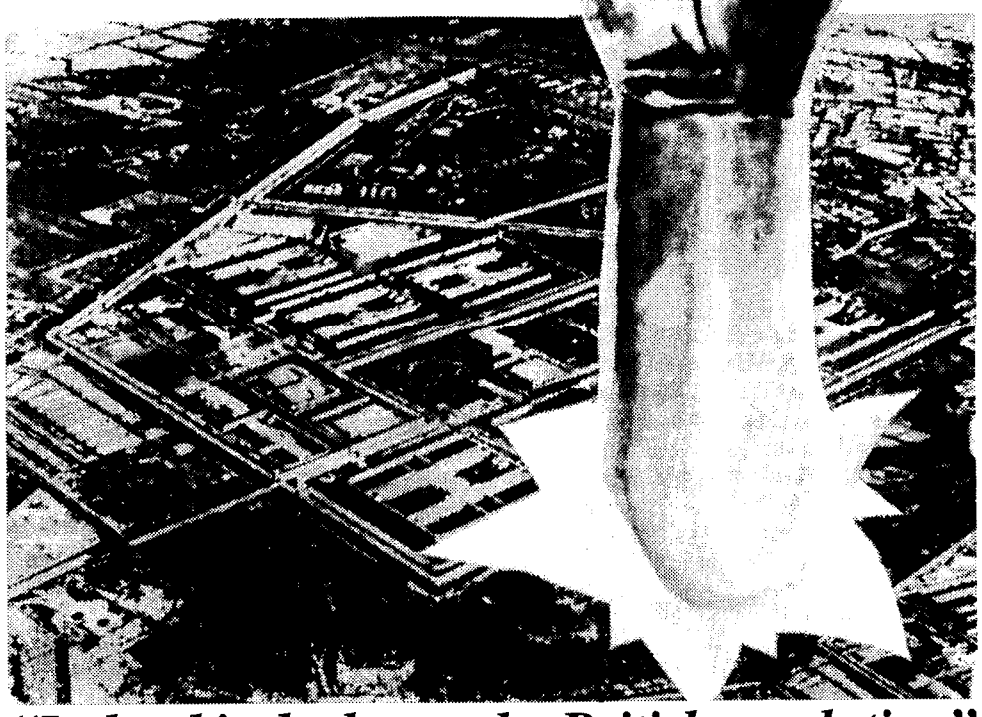
When London's Irish community turned out in its thousands to demonstrate their anger at the Bloody Sunday massacre in 1972, they were battered in Whitehall by the Met police. The ensuing battle lasted for over an hour. The British army had been installed on the streets of nationalist areas in the Six Counties for less than three years. The cold-blooded murder of 14 unarmed civilians in Derry was the British state's way of saying who was boss. The attack on the London commemoration was a warning to the *"croppies"* to lie down. Barely credible then that 22 years later the police - supposed villains of the piece- were cast into the role of protectorate of the 1994 commemoration march at the behest of the march's organisers, the Troops Out Movement. Even less credible was the motley assortment from the British left, united only by their avowed and oft stated anti-republicanism, who offered their services as stewards for the march. Contrary to the claimed turnout of 2,500 by TOM, no more than 800 people took part in the march. (If the pattern of other now defunct marches repeats itself, then in a couple of years they may well be insisting 800 took part.) This is hardly surprising given that just a week before the march not a single poster advertising it was to be seen in Kilburn - home to London's largest Irish community. Not for the first time did TOM display such scant regard to the memory of those who fell on Bloody Sunday or indeed to the task of building effective Irish solidarity work in Britain. Despite forewarning of fascist opposition to the march, TOM, both this year and last, refused to take heed and seize the opportunity to unity Republicans, socialists and anti-fascists in defence of the march. No, far better, it would seem, to be held up for two hours last year whilst the police dispersed up to 300 fascists blocking the route of the march, or indeed, this year, to demand police protection via Labour MPs. ***Red Action*** is pragmatic enough to understand the need to negotiate with the police over the route of a proposed march and other arrangements, we would be foolish to take an ultra-left position on this - we have negotiated with the police when necessary regarding proposed activity. However, we have never asked for police protection. It is inconceivable that we would rely on a pro-imperialist force to protect anti-imperialist activity. To TOM it is preferable to rely on the forces of imperialism to protect an anti-imperialist march - the alternative is far more unpalatable. That would involve the mobilisation of all those concerned with the development of an Irish solidarity movement and anti-fascist forces prepared to confront a fascist counter-demonstration. Of course, that would include both ***Red Action*** and Anti-Fascist Action. Apart from the insult of a letter received less than a week prior to the march, neither ***Red Action*** nor AFA were invited to be involved in any of the stewarding plans for the march neither last year nor this. One result of calling on a large police operation to allow the march to go ahead was that AFA, who mobilised to oppose the fascists rather than stand behind a police cordon, were treated by the police as if THEY were the counter demonstrators! (After AFA dispersed, 80 C18 ventured into Kilburn to smash windows and threaten customers of a pub used by AFA stewards earlier in the day). ***Red Action's*** refusal to take part in TOM's charade apparently left a few TOM stalwarts seething with frustration - how else can they explain a small number of the march's organisers threatening a lone RA member later that night? Behind this farce lie serious implications;.namely the future, if any of the anti-imperialist movement of England, Scotland and Wales. ***Red Action*** takes no pleasure from the fact that as far back as the late eighties/early nineties we identified through both articles in our paper and what we believe were concise, but significant, documents *("A reply to the IRSP"* and *"The Missing Link"*) the emerging crisis embracing Irish solidarity/withdrawal work in Britain. Since then, despite our efforts, the nettle was not grasped and, if anything, the situation is now worse than we envisaged it would be. The TOM march, despite national mobilisations, continues to shrink in both size and significance. The RCP who, to their credit, at least recognised that all was not well have, to their complete detriment, turned the August Irish Freedom Movement demonstration into a **Campaign Against Militarism**/CND style jamboree in an attempt to broaden its [the RCP] support. The **Birmingham Hunger-Strike Commemoration,** along with the **Leninists' Easter demonstration** vanished from the face of the earth long ago. The organisers of the **Manchester Martyrs commemoration,** who in 1990 claimed support from *'a few less than a 1000'* and whose response to ***Red Action***'s proposals in 1991 was to expel our delegates, now shuffle through Longsight along with a couple of dozen others mumbling to themselves, *"...we are not about to go away..."* The state have also been able, at least temporarily, to bury the **Edinburgh James Connolly march** and large sections of so-called Republicans and lefties must shoulder at least part of the blame due to their complete indifference. Some may feel that a number of these criticisms are harsh and may feel entitled to ask what alternatives ***Red Action*** offers. First of all, as stated in the past, the various organisations and committees responsible for Irish solidarity/withdrawal work in Britain must recognise that their impenetrable nature has meant that there has been a complete lack of new ideas, input and direction. This, along with blatant sectarianism, has meant that not only have they failed to gain influence amongst any section of the British working class but also that the the participation of the Irish community is at an all time low.

Red Action has as part of its work within AFA, helped in organising and stewarding an anti-fascist march and carnival in London's East end attracting 3,500 and 10,000 respectively. (This was in 1991 while anti-fascism was still considered unfashionable.) We have organised people from as far as Dublin and London to oppose the ban on the **James Connolly Commemoration** march in Edinburgh; participated in the **Free Dessie Ellis Campaign**; organised a speaking tour for relatives of women republican prisoners who were strip-searched and we are presently involved in a number of initiatives in support of Irish Republican POWs. These are just a few of the projects ***Red Action*** has participated in over the years. The point we are making is that the skills learned and the skills of others, including a number of individual members of the aforementioned groups such as TOM, should be encouraged and allowed to have an input into solidarity work. It is only by harnessing these skills, operating honestly and democratically, and treating people with respect,that we will be able to begin turning around the present situation.

Those that would claim that this would expose committees to being *"taken over"* by ***Red Action*** or any other organisation (mostly used as a justification for having no representative at all) are often , quite simply, living on another planet. Another aspect would involve Sinn Fein clarifying (for want of a better word) where they stand on solidarity work in Britain. Publicly they have always stated that they want people to involve themselves and do as much as possible for the struggle. Privately, they have pursued a policy of narrowing down work in Britain to that entirely under their control Their line is, that those wishing to do work should support TOM. What you should do if you are denied participation within TOM has never been made clear. In practical terms this attitude was epitomised during the **1992 Maghaberry Tour,** which brought over relatives of Republican POW'S to help highlight the issue of stripsearching. The tour which was sponsored by National union of Students (London); the Campaign Against Domestic Violence; the Connolly Association and,amongst others, six Labour MPs, opened with a press conference in the House of Commons. Four public meetlngs were held around the country, a demonstration, student and trade union branches addressed and interviews arranged with progressive publications, including The Irish Post. Greater Manchester Radio also conducted a live interview with a republican representative. In the middle of the tour the speakers were recalled to Belfast. Apparently protocol had been breached. Someone on this side of the water had not been **'sufficiently consulted'** by those participating in the tour and his nose was out of joint. Although the situation was resolved withln days, an invltation to address a 500 strong strike committee rally, plus a unique opportunity to fulfill a speaking engagement at a Nalgo Women`s Conference in front of 800 delegates was lost. and an incalculable propaganda dividend forfeit. Even worse nothing has been done since on thls issue. If it is indeed Sinn Fein's position to wind down work in this country and pursue their links with establishment figures only, then we believe this will cause enormous damage in the long run. Actively closing down the self serving antics of the looney left is one thing, but the demobilisation of Irish work at a time of rising fascism and reactionary politics will have severe, if not terminal, consequences for the British anti-imperialist and progressive movement in years to come. It also denies the Irish people the potential of becoming,like the Algerian immigrants in France, a fifth column within the oppressor country.

If there is a realistic recognition of the situation from certain organisations within both Britain and Ireland the situation may be able to move forward. As ***Red Action*** has stated repeatedly: *"We suggest a working coalition rather than a theoretical unity achieved only on paper."* And as we pointed out nearly five years ago: *"The most common criticism we can expect is that the proposals are dismissed as hopelessly utopian. In reply, we say if our critics genuinely believe that exclusively by their own efforts they will make a difference then it is them rather than us who are hopelessly utopian."*

The clock is ticking...



"Ireland is the key to the British revolution"

P.O.W. Benefit

On the very same weekend that IRA mortars rained on Heathrow Airport, **Red Action** joined fellow Republicans in organising a benefit night for Irish Republican Prisoners of War in the heart of London. **Red Action** has always emphasised that as well as political support there is an urgent need for practical support and never is this more important than in the case of support work for prisoners and their families. As stated elsewhere in this issue Irish solidarity work is running at an all time low and yet the relevant *"official"* support groups appear either unable or unwilling to take steps to rectify this situation. During an excellent evening attended by a large crowd a substantial sum was raised and speakers read messages of solidarity from Republican POWs held captive in both Britain and Ireland; the former by the son of a remand prisoner in England. Both are reprinted below.

"Comrades, the Republican Prisoners of War held hostage in Belmarsh Prison take this opportunity to convey our fraternal greetings to all our comrades who are endeavouring to raise funds for political prisoners tonight.

Your support on this occasion and throughout the year is greatly appreciated by us all. Fund raising is an important part of the struggle for Irish freedom and the support of comrades like yourselves on a continuous basis brings the resolution of the war in Ireland nearer. There can be no doubt but that the Republican movement is setting the agenda both politically and militarily and that we are making progress on all fronts.

Success is in sight and all can contribute to that success, everyone has a part to play in the struggle. Forward to victory!"

"We the Republican Prisoners of War would like to take this opportunity to thank all our comrades and friends in London who have worked in support of Republican prisoners and our families over the past year.

In particular, we would like to thank you for the hospitality and generosity which was shown to our relatives when they travelled to England as part of the Anti-Strip Search Tour. Travelling anywhere to speak at public meetings is often an ordeal for any relatives so your support and kindness in caring for them was greatly appreciated by us all.

Living and working as you do in the *'Belly of the Beast'* you have a difficult task in supporting the Republican struggle for national self-determination and the creation of a 32 County democratic socialist republic in Ireland.

At times it has been said that it is easy to be a Republican if you live in the occupied Six Counties. You have a simple choice of either resisting foreign occupation or pretending it does not exist. As Republican prisoners we made our choice and firmly believe that fighting British colonialism was the right course of action for us to take. However, for people like yourselves you have to make a conscious decision to engage in Republican politics under constant threat of harassment and arrest under the infamous PTA for standing up in support of the Irish freedom struggle when you could be involved in other forms of class struggle. You have our deepest respect and admiration.

We would like to use the opportunity presented by this function to raise issues which we feel are important for people like yourselves to become involved in over the coming year.

The first of these relates directly to our imprisoned comrades in England. In November 1992 the British Government published what has become know as the Ferrers Report. This report took over two years to produce and its key finding was that Irish prisoners in English jails who have family connections in the North of Ireland should be granted 'temporary extended transfer' to a prison here in order to facilitate contact with their families. When the Ferrers Report was announced it was given a cautious welcome as it was by no means a full solution to the difficulties experienced by Republican prisoners and our families.

We would urge everyone gathered here tonight to become actively involved in the campaign to have our comrades transferred. We need maximum unity on this issue to force the British Home Office to honour its obligations in relation to the transfer of Irish prisoners in English jails.

Equally important to us is your continued support in the Campaign Against Strip Searches. On Monday 7 March the Belfast Appeal Court rejected the claim by the women political prisoners in Maghaberry that the mass strip search of March 2 1992 was invalid and therefore illegal. What the Appeal Court has done by its judgement is to give a legal sanction to the physical and sexual assault of women political prisoners at any time in the future under the guise of 'security'. For the rest of their sentences the women in Maghaberry will have this threat of a repeat attack hanging over them. The only person now in a position to prevent such assaults is the Secretary of State for the North , Patrick Mayhew. What is needed now is a revitalised and ongoing campaign to end the policy of strip searches once and for all.

As everyone knows we prisoners are a symptom of the political conflict in Ireland. If there was an end to the conflict all prisoners would be released as a consequence of any negotiated settlement. The search for a permanent peace in Ireland is of crucial importance not only for people in Ireland but also for the working class people of Britain. We still firmly believe that ***"Ireland is the key to the British revolution"***. We would therefore urge you to redouble your efforts in support of the Irish peace initiative. The British Government must be faced with the only feasible option in relation to its failed policy in Ireland. And that is to leave us in peace to determine our own future free from British interference.

There can be no internal 'British' solution to the conflict in the Six Counties.

The only solution is to grant the Irish people complete national self-determination. While it would be desirable to have Unionist consent to this process of national reconciliation they cannot have a veto on political progress that will lead to a permanent peace.

We political prisoners are fully behind the efforts of our Party and others to achieve a permanent peace in Ireland. We ask you to stand with us and together we can go forward to a new and prosperous future free from British exploitation and control of our country.

Let everyone leave here tonight determined and committed to support Irish political prisoners in the year ahead and to work even harder to end British occupation of Ireland once and for all.

Victory to the Irish People. Tiocfaidh ar la.

Is Sinne, Republican Prisoners of War."

We plan to continue and expand our work for POWs in the future so if you wish to be kept informed of events contact the BM Box no. All other donations, enquiries and offers of help should be addressed to:

Green Cross,

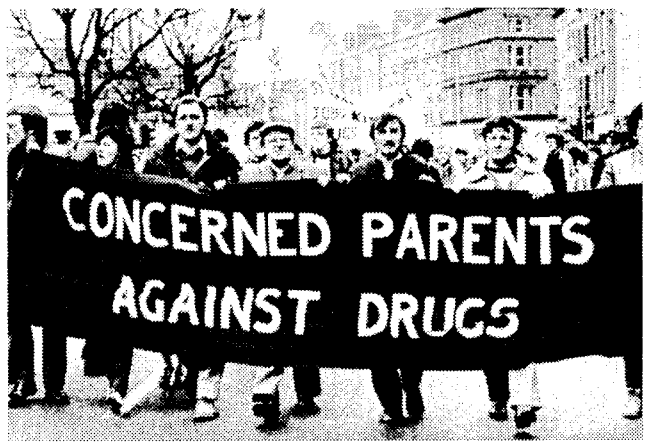
51/55 Falls Road.

Belfast 12.

Beyond the Pale
Red Action • PO Box 3355, Dublin 7

GUNS, DRUGS & THE COMMUNITY

Ten years after the height of the heroin epidemic in Dublin drugs are now a bigger problem than they were in the early 80's. Community workers and who were involved in the fight against drugs in the early 80's, have publicly stated that the problem is more widespread now. A number of factors have been blamed for this level of drug abuse, from the return to the scene of recently released major pushers like the notorious Dunnes to the drug culture surrounding the rave music scene.



Faced with the choice of either backing the working class communities against the drug barons or backing the drug barons against the Republican movement, the establishment chose the hoods.

HISTORY

By 1983 most of the inner city flat complexes,the most deprived and neglected in Dublin, had a serious drug problem. The residents were all too used to official neglect and prejudice but the sight of heroin ravaging the youth of their areas was too much. The people decided to fight back. Early 1983 saw the roots of what was to become the **Concerned Parents Against Drugs (CPAD)** formed at a public meeting in the north side Hardwick Street flats. Soon afterwards the south inner city flat complexes began to get organised. It was the local residents who called public meetings to gauge support for the fight against drugs. Support was overwhelming once people overcame their initial fear of the drug pushers. CPAD tactics were persuasion where possible and confrontation where necessary. These tactics carried with them the very real threat of retaliation from the drug pushers, given the huge amounts of money being made from drugs. In fact very little retaliation took place, the most serious incident being the shooting and wounding of a man thought to be a member of the CPAD in St. Theresa's Gardens. The reason for the lack of retaliation was the strength of support for the CPAD and the dis-organised state of the pushers, most being small time pushers with no backup. The perceived threat of IRA retaliation also played a part.

The sight of ordinary working class people organising and taking control of their lives struck terror into the hearts of the establishment. The media portrayed the CPAD as lawless, violent vigilantes beating up anybody even suspected of taking drugs. The police began to put more effort into harassing the anti drugs activists than they did the pushers. In a further effort to criminalise the CPAD the media alleged IRA infiltration of the anti drugs movement. They used the involvement of Sinn Féin members in CPAD as a basis for this allegation. The RTE television programme *"Today Tonight"* did an *"exposé"* of IRA infiltration of the CPAD. After gaining the trust of the Concerned Parents and promising not to sensationalise the drugs issue, the program makers produced a documentary which concentrated more on Sinn Féin involvement in the CPAD and the violence surrounding the campaign, than on the seriousness of the drug situation. The media part of the establishment was playing its part by demonising the CPAD movement. Increasing their efforts to harass the CPAD the police began using known drug pushers as witnesses against the CPAD in court. In one case four CPAD activists were tried in the Special Criminal Court, the court for political offences, for trying to evict a drug pusher. The pusher was used as part of the Prosecution by the state. The four were eventually acquitted. Not so lucky in the Special Criminal Court were high profile CPAD members John *"Whacker"* Humphreys and Hugh Cahill who were sent down for one year each for the eviction of a pusher in Ballymun flats. Again the state used the pusher as the main part of the Prosecution case. The police had decided that organised working class people were more of a threat than drug pushers.

The establishment also used another tactic in trying to neutralise the threat of the CPAD. In October 1983 the **National Federation of Communities for Action on Drugs (CAD)** was formed as a conscious alternative to CPAD. While the CPAD was staunchly working class the CAD was middle class and placed emphasis on working with the state agencies and on educational work. The Archbishop of Dublin was instrumental in the establishment of the CAD and the Deputy Commissioner of Police personally liaised with the CAD. The then Labour Minster for Health Barry Desmond, who refused to meet an elected delegation from the CPAD because he claimed they were infiltrated by Sinn Fein, attended the National Conference of CAD with the promise of Government finance.

A CPAD activist had been attacked at work, driven out of his house, had the windows of his new house smashed and finally, had photos of himself and his kids sent to his new house with death threats. He was jailed for 5 years for having a shotgun to protect his family against pushers.

THE VIOLENCE

Without a doubt the campaign against the drug pushers was violent at times. This was inevitable given the possible outcome options - the contamination by drugs of another generation of young people or the opportunity to live in a drug free environment. There were instances of pushers being beaten up, some had their flats burnt out or wrecked and a house bought by a pusher with drug money was gutted by fire. In a situation where people had watched a whole generation destroyed by heroin and the children growing up surrounded by drug addiction playing among the used needles it is surprising that the campaign was not even more violent. The people within these communities had every right to use whatever means necessary to protect their children and communities.

By 1985 most of the big pushers had been jailed and the smaller pushers forced out of the areas. Ironically the reasons for the success of police actions against the pushers was down to the CPAD. By forcing the pushers onto the streets they became more vulnerable to police operations and, importantly, the success of CPAD forced the police to act against the pushers for fear of CPAD becoming even more popular, a fact not lost on some members of the Concerned Parents. With the jailing of the major drug suppliers a lull appeared in the Dublin drug scene. Heroin was still a problem it wasn't so openly available as it had been previously and a lot of the inner city flat complexes were relatively drug free.

The early 90's have seen the drug problem reach crisis level again. Community activists compare the situation unfavourably with the 1980's. In the intervening years heroin had still been a problem but the two major factors influencing the rise in drug abuse were the release from jail of some of the big drug suppliers and the drug culture surrounding the hugely popular Rave dance scene. People with experience of fighting heroin were not prepared for the appearance of a *"designer"* drug like Ecstacy. Ecstacy hadn't got the horrific connotations that heroin had, it was seen as a *"fun"* drug without the disastrous consequences of heroin. An activist with the St. Catherine's Combined Communities CPAD explains that with Smack people knew what to be on the lookout for but 'E' crept into the areas hand in hand with the Rave scene, young people who wouldn't touch smack were taking 'E'. The CPAD believe this willingness to experiment with 'E' led directly to heroin.

In the 80's after the jailing of major suppliers the drug supply market had fragmented with numerous small pushers supplying their own areas. Some of the infamous Dunne families' relatives had involved themselves in the drug business. Without the bottle for the more dangerous criminal activities like armed robbery these small time pushers set up a drug supply network which was ripe for exploitation when the drug *"barons"* were released from prison. The Dunnes now account for the majority of drugs supplied in the south inner city. They no longer handle the drugs themselves but have a network of pushers working for them supplied from London through two of the brothers, Shamie and Boyo Dunne. An associate of the Dunnes, Jemmy Gantley, is also a big supplier in the south inner city. Jemmy and his brother John have been involved in drugs since the early 80's. CPAD forced them out of the Dolphin House flat complex in 1983 and out of Tallaght in 1984. John Gantley's newly acquired house, said to be worth over £90,000 then, was mysteriously burned to the ground.

In the Oliver Bond flats the Wilson brothers are the main suppliers. One even lives in his new luxury apartment nearby while dealing out of a flat in the complex. An associate of the Wilsons who is pushing drugs is Martin Foley, who the IRA abducted during their enquires into drug pushing in 1984. Foley's abduction resulted in four IRA Volunteers receiving long prison sentences. In the north inner city a pusher with a reputation going back to the 80's is again a major supplier. Once dubbed *"King Scum"* by the Sunday World newspaper Anthony Felloni was jailed in 1985. On his release he continued selling drugs and is one of the biggest pushers in the area.

Compared with the 80's the campaign against drugs is on a much lesser scale today. A number of factors are responsible for this. The shock value of heroin being sold on Dublin streets has dissipated, some activists simply got worn out etc... One important factor was State agency funding. Community activists found that by not rocking the boat and working with the State agencies funding could be obtained from these agencies. Insisting on independence could result in a lack of funding. As with the setting up of CAD it was in the interests of the middle class professionals in these agencies to marginalise any independent community activity such as the Concerned Parents. Now the fight against drugs is harder as the pushers are armed and much better organised. The pushers willingness to kill was demonstrated last Halloween when a south inner city pusher, Frank Rodgers, was shot dead during a drug feud. A member of CPAD has also had shots fired through his window. Victimisation by the police still occurs. One anti drugs activist interviewed told how he has been constantly harassed by the police and even strip searched under the Misuse of Drugs Act. A CPAD activist, Mick Kearney, was jailed for 5 years for having a shotgun to protect his family against pushers. He had been attacked at work, driven out of his house, had the windows of his new house smashed and finally, had photos of himself and his kids sent to his new house with death threats. The police told him they didn't have the manpower to ensure his protection. With every right to protect himself and his family Kearney bought a shotgun only to have his house raided by the police and he was arrested. Kearney was sentenced to 5 years while similar cases have resulted in suspended sentences.

While there is not the huge numbers involved as in the '80's those left have proved to be better organised and successful in rooting out the pushers. The triangle of Vicar Street flats, Marrowbone Lane flats and School Street flats in the south inner city, once the worse affected area in Dublin, are relativity drug free after a 9 month long battle. The CPAD are under no illusions about the success of their campaign. They realise that by forcing the pushers from one area they are just moving the problem to somewhere else. An activist from St. Catherine's Combined Communities CPAD explained that they are not equipped to deal with a city wide problem and that their priority was cleaning up their own areas. They are willing to help other areas organise but areas have to start the battle themselves. While the CPAD concentrates mainly on stopping the pushers selling they advocate proper treatment for addicts. They realise that sending addicts to prison, where drugs are readily available, is no solution. CPAD want addicts to be sent to treatment centres where they might actually have a chance to get off drugs. CPAD have in the past sent addicts to the Le Patriarche centre in France but a Workers Party-created controversy and lack of resources meant this could not be continued.

CPAD also realise that there must be facilities for the young people of the area to act as an alternative to drugs. With this in mind St. Catherine's Combined Communities have begun fundraising to build a sports complex in the area. Dublin Corporation has given them a local building to renovate. It has been made known that funding is available on condition that control of the scheme is handed over to the Labour Minister for Employment Ruairi Quinn. Quinn has again resorted to the old allegations of *"Provo front"* as an excuse to deny funding. The real reasons behind Quinn's sabotaging of funding is the fear of a working class community being seen to be able to control its own affairs. The St. Catherine's Communities are insisting that as it is their scheme they will not relinquish control to the State agencies.

The Left's attitude to this genuine instance of working class people taking control of their lives has also been pathetic. From the Socialist Workers Movement's denunciation of CPAD as vigilantes, to the serious damage done to the anti drugs campaign by the Workers Party's allegations of addicts being kept against their will in France, the left in Dublin has been a hindrance to the CPAD. Sinn Féin are the only group on the left who can claim any credibility from the fight against the drug pushers. Contrary to the allegations of Sinn Féin infiltration of CPAD, the Sinn Féin activists actually belonged to the working class communities under threat and had every right to involve themselves in the fight against drugs.

Red Action supports the Concerned Parents Against Drugs campaign We support the right of the communities under threat to use any means necessary to protect their community and children from the evils of drugs.

Red Action thanks the two activists from St Catherines who were interviewed.

The recent execution of a drug pusher and the punishment shooting of sixteen others by the IRA was a response to the growing availabilty of drugs in working class nationalist areas. Apart from the obvious effect these drugs have on the community, the various hard drugs are imported into the six counties by the UVF and sold to their drug dealing counterparts in the remnants of the IPLO, a criminal gang who once masqueraded as republicans before they were forced to disband by the IRA. Most of the people punished recently were linked to the IPLO.

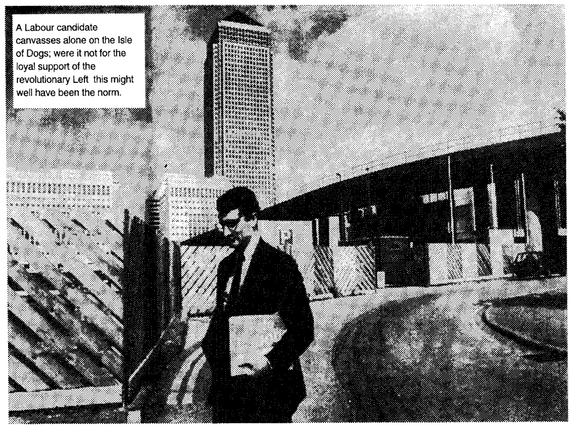
• Billy Wright - AKA 'King Rat'

One of the major drug dealers on the Loyalist side is Billy Wright, the loyalist killer from Portadown known as 'King Rat'. This man has personally been involved in sectarian killings. The UVF have financed part of their murderous campaign through the sale of drugs to both communities. It is known that Billy Wright also has links with certain Dublin criminals who buy drugs from him. The discovery of two valuable paintings in Turkey, stolen from the famous Beit art collection, which were in the possession of known Loyalists has highlighted their links with Dublin criminals. The paintings were stolen by a leading Dublin criminal gang and were later exchanged as part of a major drug deal involving Loyalist smugglers.

The fact that these drugs are destroying communities both North and South, while profits are also financing the slaughter of innocent nationalists in a sectarian campaign by the UVF should leave us in no doubt about the importance of the eradication of drug dealing by any means the community demands.

THE WAR OF THE POOR AGAINST THE POOR

Labour, the left and the BNP



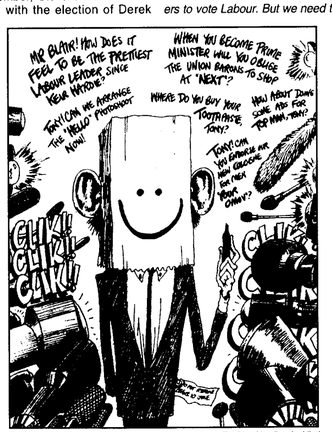
A Labour candidate canvasses alone on the Isle of Dogs; were it not for the loyal support of the revolutionary Left this might well have been the norm.

"The BNP offers only the prospect of division. Only Labour can defeat the BNP. We urge everyone who cares for the Island's future, whatever their past political allegiance, to join us in ensuring a victory for democracy, decency and commonsense," Labour Party statement, *"Pulling Together on the Island."*. When Derek Beacon was elected as a councillor by 1480 voters in the Isle of Dogs on 16 September 1993, the ever-rosy perspectives of the British left were thrown into chaos. The impossible had happened! A fascist had been elected to the council chamber. One year previously, the **Socialist Workers Party** had identified a *"well of anger and bitterness inside the working class"* at rising unemployment, poor housing, health cuts etc. They saw the battle over pit closures which led to massive demonstrations in support of the miners as the *"beginning of a period when politics will have to be calibrated on an entirely different scale, judged according to entirely different criteria."* (**Socialist Review** November 1992.) In January 1993, SWP leader Tony Cliff declared, *"Imagine if we had 15,000 members ... and 30,000 supporters, the 21 October miners' demonstration could have been different. Instead of marching round Hyde Park, socialists could have taken 40-50,000 people to parliament. If that had happened, the Tory MPs wouldn't have dared vote with Michael Heseltine. The government would have collapsed."* (**Socialist Worker** 23.1.93) At the beginning of 1993, the SWP was calling for a General Strike and the rest of the Trotskyist left was looking for ways to sound more *"radical"* and *"revolutionary"* than the SWP. Nine months later, Beackon was declaring that, *"The British people are no longer prepared to be treated as second-class citizens in their own country."* In May 1994 the BNP stood 28 candidates in the local elections and the National Front contested a further 15 seats. At a BNP rally in December, Steve Smith declared that, with the election of Derek Beacon, *"Britain had now proudly joined the ranks of other European nations in resistance."* An article in the January 1994 **'British Nationalist'** reflected on the Isle of Dogs success and ventured that, *"We have now reached the phase of growth where further electoral success will generate far more new members than simply leafleting thousands of houses at random."* For the BNP, elections were now *"the main activity of the party."* For the left, the issues were equally clear cut: *"Stop the Nazis on 5 May." The way to stop the Nazis? "Work for Labour"!* Labour MP Mick Raynsford, writing in **Tribune** on 22.4.94, set down clearly the strategy adopted by the Labour Party to counter their defeat in the previous Millwall by-election: *"...the Labour Party has given top priority to this campaign in Millwall to ensure that everything possible is done to defeat the BNP decisively. A series of **'Millwall Days'** are being held when party members from all over London are coming to help in mass canvassing sessions. These have proved very successful, with around 70 people out on the doorstep on each occasion. Our three local candidates are all working flat out to make contact with as many local electors as possible and to win their confidence and support."* In the name of anti-fascism, much of the left, both in London and elsewhere, worked to secure the election of the Labour Party. **Socialist Organiser:** *"We must campaign for a Labour vote on 5 May and link that campaign with a battle in the trade unions and Labour Party to make Labour fight for decent jobs and homes for all."* **Militant/Youth Against Racism in Europe:** *"In the areas where the BNP are standing we are calling on people to vote Labour. But we don't just call for a Labour vote. In most areas Labour councils are carrying out Tory policies ... unless local people put pressure on Labour councillors by campaigning for jobs and services, this will continue."* **Socialist Workers Party:** *"Socialist Worker calls on its readers to vote Labour. But we need to do more. Voting alone will not get rid of the Tories, and it will certainly not get rid of their system."* **Workers Power:** *"(On 5 May) There will be, and should be, a massive vote for Labour. No worker should vote Tory or Liberal Democrat."* Working within and mobilising electoral support for Labour has been part of the *"tactical armoury"* of the left since the 1920 Second Congress of the Communist International where the Russian Communist leader, Lenin, argued that in order to explode the futility of reformism and to bring communism to pass the Labour Party must have a trial in office. Therefore British communists should affiliate their party to the Labour Party and come to arrangements with it for the formation of a joint parliamentary block and the mutual sharing out of constituencies. The basis for the strategy was that the Labour leaders, *"today, represent the opinion of the majority of British workers"* and must therefore be exposed as betrayers of the real interests of the working class by being *"put to the test of office"*. This strategy was opposed at the time but was justified by Lenin on the basis that, *"Millions of backward members are enrolled in the Labour Party, therefore communists should be present to do propaganda amongst them..."*. At its formation, the Labour Party had encompassed a number of strands of socialist thought, including a Marxist current, but its defining politics were provided by Fabianism, which asserted the possibility of the peaceful transformation of capitalist society and an ethical, Christian-based *"socialism"*, defined by the British socialist RH Tawney as *"compromise is as impossible between the Church of Christ and the ideology of wealth, which is the practical religion of capitalist societies, as it was between the Church and State idolatry of the Roman Empire."*

For Tawney and his ilk, the deprivations borne by the working class were caused less by poverty than the absence of God from the lives of men! (Shades of Tony Blair.) Until the drawing up of its formal constitution in 1918, the Labour Party was a federation of trade unions, particularly craft unions, and political groups such as the Fabians, with no clear local or national structures and no clear purpose beyond support for the Liberal Party and vague intimations of reform. The passing of the 1918 constitution with its declared aim, *"To secure for the producers by hand or brain the full fruits of their industry, and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible, upon the basis of Common Ownership of the means of production, and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry and service"* - has provided a permanent justification for an assortment of Leninist and Trotskyist groups to take up working class peoples' illusions in the capacity of the Labour Party to deliver any meaningful challenge to the political status quo. As **Workers Power** put it in their document *"The Fight For Workers Power"*, *"Socialists stand for a majority Labour government, not because we have faith in the rotten programmes and leaders of the Labour Party but because we want to put the illusions that millions of working people have in Labour to the test of office. Whilst revolutionary socialists themselves may be devoid of illusions in Labour, millions of workers are not, despite the experience of past Labour governments."* Accepting the sincerity of the argument advanced at face value, it is still difficult to reconcile the lefts' talk of *"the illusions"* working class people have in the Labour Party with either the history of that party's unconditional hostility to working class interests or the reality of the Labour Party as it is today. In 1926, a General Strike in support of the miners was sold out by the Labour and TUC leaders who saw themselves being dragged into a head-on conflict with the British state and drew the conclusion, *"Never again!"* As miners' leader AJ Cook put it, *"We have been left to continue our struggle alone, but not alone, as the rank and file are still with us, they did not let us down."* The defeat and forced return to work of the miners marked the beginning of years of long-term unemployment in the coalfields. In 1928, AJ Cook's experience of defeat and betrayal at the hands of the Labour/TUC bureaucracy led him to produce a document, **"Our Case for a Socialist Revival"**, which said of the Labour constitution, "if every ... measure was .carried then we would not have socialism but rationalised capitalism, in which the main industries of the country remained in the hands of the exploiting capitalist class." Some illusions! The Labour government of 1945-51 built the welfare state on the back of the post-war boom. With European industry in ruins, British factories began to fill a gap in the international market place which allowed Labour temporarily to preside over conditions of near-full employment. With economic decline in the '60s, it was the Wilson government which in 1966 introduced a legally binding wage freeze for six months and a subsequent period of *'severe restraint.'* In the '70s, the rationalisation of British capital demanded attacks on workplace organisations and the Tories, under Heath, introduced the Industrial Relations Act. Between 1972 and '74, a wave of strikes forced a general election which led to the 1974-'79 Labour Government. Heath called the election on the question *"Who runs the country, the miners or the government?"* He lost. John Davies, the Tory Industry minister, told his children 1973 might be the last Christmas they would be able to enjoy. For the left, the return of a minority Labour government in 1974 is a remarkable victory - *"when workers broke a Tory government"* as the SWP describe it. But the 1974-'79 Labour government instituted a succession of deflationary budgets which initiated the butchering of public services which the Thatcher government siezed on with such vigour and a series of wage controls in collusion with the TUC which was intended to make ordinary working people meet the cost of a balance-of-trade deficit which stood at six per cent of GNP. The Winter of Discontent, when low-paid council workers went on strike in defence of their fast-declining living standards, was the death knell of the social democratic consensus which had been engineered as a result of the post-war boom. The period 1974-'79 must be judged as a squandered opportunity. Working class disillusion with Labour was such that, having brought down a government in 1974, sections of the working class movement were drawn into the struggle in turn with Heath's Labour successors. Throughout, the left kept up its critical solidarity with Labour, even as Labour moved to drain the blood from the organised working class. The result was the 1979 Thatcher government and 15 years of unabated attacks on our class. The

Blairs election marks Labours *formal* renunciation of class politics

1974 Labour government promised an *"irreversible shift of wealth and power"*. By 1994 that shift has taken place - but in favour of the ruling class and at our expense. By 1979 working class disillusion with Labour was such that trade union branches were debating disaffiliation from the Labour Party. The left's pro-labourism had submerged an earlier tradition of working class self-organisation to such an extent that the only options available in 1979 were attacks by a Labour government or attacks by a Tory government; and that disillusion came to nothing. Current Labour policy envisages turning the remaining state-owned companies into *"public interest companies"* operating under the same financial regime as the private sector. Shadow Chancellor Gordon Brown suggests, *"We also see a limited application in the provision of private finance for publicly-led projects in education and health. Historically, there has been a battle between public and private as if it is a matter of territory. The real issue is how you can have private and public sectors working in the public interest."* Even Tony Benn, long-time champion of the labour left, senses the malaise, *"The only political choice seems to be between two management teams, both committed to the management of the status quo. The leadership seems determined not to commit itself firmly to any policies, least of all those which might involve higher public expenditure, for fear of an electoral backlash."* **The Guardian,** which never fails to support the Labour Party, describes Labour as having a *"hole where the heart ought to be"*, and existing on *"Conservative life-support system."* In Sheffield, the Labour council is seeking to force through £39 million of cut. Tameside council in Greater Manchester is being investigated because of financial irregularities in its dealing with Tameside Enterprises Ltd which runs council homes for the elderly. One journalist has described labour as *"competing with the Tories in asking voters which undertaker they would prefer to look after the corpse of local democracy."* The reality is that most working class people have no more illusions in Labour than they have in the Tories or the Liberal Democrats. In the absence of an other alternative Labour might sometimes seem like the best option but equally the success of the Liberals in local elections has been paved by Labour corruption and inefficiency. According to **Workers Power,** *"The Liberal Democrats should be excluded from any anti-fascist united front because they are an open bourgeois party"*, whereas Labour *"remains a bourgeois workers' party, pro-capitalist, but based on the trade unions and capable of being pressurised by the working class to take action on its behalf."* For the pro-Labour left, the fact that Labour is *"pro-capitalist"* has less significance than its purported *"working class base"*. Meanwhile TUC leader John Monks has just suppressed an opinion poll which revealed 55 per cent of the general public supported a one-day public sector strike. As **Workers Power** themselves explain it: *"The members wanted a strike. The TUC didn't. So ... it ignored the members."* So much for *"being pressurised to take action."* Not only is this kind of bullshit confusing, it is now dangerous. When the political status quo is seen to collapse, the possibility exists of a break either to the left or the right. If no political force exists to the left, the vacuum is filled from the right. In Italy a right-wing coalition led by media magnate Silvio Berlusconi, and incorporating both the right-wing federalist Northern League and the fascist MSI, has come to power. Berlusconi presented his alliance as having *"clean hands"*, after two years of political turmoil during which Italy's *"old order"* - the Christian Democrats and Socialists - were revealed as corrupt puppets of the Mafia. MSI leader Gianfranco Fini, at the start of the election campaign was able to declare *"We stand for the history and culture of the Italian people"*. The left was represented in the elections in the form of the Progressive Alliance, which included the Democratic Left (the old CP), Communist Refoundation (a left-Stalinist group) in collusion with the Socialist Party and the Popular Party (ex-Christian Democrats). These latter two had already been caught with their fingers in the till when they were the *"old order"*. In 1993 Italy was racked by general strikes against cuts in living standards, factory occupations and mass demonstrations against government corruption. Two years later the MSI were part of a government which the Italian press recognised as *"the most right wing since Mussolini."* The Progressive Alliance had committed itself to carrying through the austerity programme - privatisation, job cuts, attacks on welfare - of the outgoing Ciampi government. The left-moving Communist Refoundation was in bed with a crew of political criminals - the remnants of the Socialist/Christian Democrat parties. Post-election analysis revealed the left vote was strongest within the judiciary, the intelligentsia and the labour bureaucracy. Berlusconi's Forza Italia meanwhile topped the poll in Sesto San Giovanni, an industrial suburb of Milan whose loyalty to the left had earned it the nickname *"Italy's Stalingrad"*. Another *"red"* bastion stormed by Berlusconi's troops was Porto Maghera, an industrial port near Venice. Faced with a left which had aligned itself with the status quo, or a vigorous right-wing alliance which included two parties the MSI and Northern League, which the *"old order"* had treated as pariahs - the Italian electorate jumped to the right. As Fausto Bertinotti, Communist Refoundations General Secretary, was forced to concede: *"The left has been beaten because it did not appear consistently as an alternative force with a clear political and programmatic profile and because as, a whole, it did not act as a united movement."* In the Isle of Dogs, the BNP presented themselves as a radical option to a white working class which knew it had been betrayed by the status quo. In Italy, the same phenomenon repeated itself on a national scale. In both cases, the left was seen as part of the status quo, the most *'radical'* face of that status quo - but, through its association with Labour (or in Italy, the Progressive Alliance) an apologist for the sins of its masters all the same. Fundamentally, the left entirely fail to understand the real nature of fascism. As **Workers Power** put it *"Who forms that movement?" Historically, it has been the least cohesive and solidaristic sections of society - the people who resent the power and privileges of the super-rich but hate and fear the working class even more ... it has traditionally been based in layers of the middle classes ... allied to desperate layers who have been forced out of the rest of society, including the professional criminals who prey on working class communities... Finally, fascism aims to incorporate and organise the least organised, most despairing sections of the working class itself."* This is a complete inversion of reality, middle class leftists purporting to operate in the name of the working class, while the ultra-conservative, pro-capitalist far-right recruit footsoldiers from the working class. In essence, fascism is class-collaborationist - it employs coercion to produce a fake sense of *"citizenship"*, but both at its inception and in power it requires the active collaboration of at least a section of the working class to succeed. (**Luigi Villari**, a fascist historian, in an article The Civil Strife in Italy 1919-22 describes how a *"systematic assault was delivered against the Red organisations, while at the same time new labour unions on a patriotic basis were created and attracted masses of workers who were tired of the Red tyranny and exactions."*) The broken promises and vacillations of the left open up a space for the fascist agenda within the working class. The left talks a lot of learning lessons from Millwall and from Berlusconi's victory in Italy. It has, in practice, learned nothing. When Hitler came to power in Germany, the Stalinists shrugged and said, *"After Hitler, our turn."* The left sneers at those *"readily fooled by fascism's 'radical' rhetoric"* and promises itself it will inherit fascism's base within the working class once fascism's *"anti-capitalism"* is proved to be a lie. Millard describe the success of Berlusconi as *"as setback for the working class, but it is an electoral defeat, nothing more."* For them, *"The whip of counter-revolution will force workers to fight back and show clearly the need to battle for a socialist revolution."* But the *"anti-capitalism"* of fascism impacts on its working class audience because *"socialist revolution"* from the window of a tower block in Turin or Millwall seems like a pipe dream. The MSI leader **Gianfranco Fini** talks of ***"the war of the poor against the poor"*** - the battle for resources between black and white working class which the MSI intend to resolve by rigorous prosecution of the war on behalf of the white working class. The BNP tell their working class audience that a BNP government, *"will be like the whole country winning the pools"*, that the ending of the *"multi-racial experiment"* will lead to zero unemployment and the release of housing stock to the white homeless - *"ethnic cleansing"* as the solution to the battle for resources. In backing Labour, the left thinks it's offering a class-based alternative to this ***"war of the poor against the poor"***. Yet, as **Socialist Organiser** readily admit, *"The labour movement neither fights on immediate issues - the destruction of the health service for example - nor does it offer a socialist alternative to capitalism."* For **Workers Power**, *"The best time to stop the BNP is now; before the bankruptcy of the established politicians - Tory, Liberal and Labour - allows them to make the kind of gains they have made elsewhere in Europe."* And how? - by voting Labour; one of the *"bankrupts"* whose policies have, according to Workers Power's own analysis, engendered the spread of the disease. Plague becomes the cure for plague! The American socialist, Edward Luttwak, writing in **The London Review of Books**, observes, *"neither the moderate right nor the moderate left even recognises, let alone offers any solution for, the central problem of our days; the completely unprecedented personal economic insecurity of working people... It is not necessary to know how to spell Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft to recognise the fascist predisposition engendered by today's turbo-charged capitalism."* It is an indictment of what passes for political culture of the British left that a US campus academic acknowledges the material basis for the threat of the far right in a way which the middle class *"revolutionaries"* of **Socialist Organiser** et al cannot bring themselves to do! Labour's manifesto for the Isle of Dogs was built around the promise of *"1,000 new homes in the borough over the lifetime of the new council."* There's only one small hitch - Labour don't control the purse strings. As Tribunite MP Nick Raynsford concedes, *"We are pressing the London Docklands Development Corporation to release the land to make this possible. We have also put pressure on the Tory government to release Estate Action funding for local estates in urgent need of modernisation."* So the alternative to the BNP becomes - even with all the baggage of conditions and demands *"that Labour acts in the interests of the millions it is supposed to represent,"* - one more set of broken Labour promises. With Derek Beackon's election the number of racist attacks in the area increased 300 per cent. Community groups organised *"bussing"* to allow black and Asian voters to be able to participate in the elections without intimidation - the ***"war of the poor against the poor"*** is being conducted with renewed vigour. All of this is conceded by the left. *"The racists say that whites should be OK and Asians should lose out. And Labour says, in effect, let us share out the misery evenly. It is hardly surprising that the racists find an interested audience among white workers."* **(Socialist Organiser)** Whether to call for a Labour vote or not appears to be a matter of semantics for the left, but the alienation of white working class anger from any coherent revolutionary socialist tradition is paid for in the broken bodies of the likes of Quaddus Ali, real casualties in a real war. The middle class campus-based left has no knowledge of, and nothing in common with, working class interests. This is more or less conceded now, even by the likes of ANL organiser Julie Waterson: *"The Nazis talk about Britain in crisis, the corruption of mainstream parties and so on. They talk about targeting estates, taking up issues like unemployment and bad housing. We have to do the same."* After the phoney war of the '80s, when the Labour leadership conducted a witch-hunt of the left, the bureaucrats have entered into a coalition with their former adversaries on the left. For a year before Beackon's election the Labour Party on the Isle of Dogs was moribund. Now, upwards of 70 canvassers go door-to-door for Labour every week. The majority of canvassers are recruited from the ranks of the entryst left. The 19 March TUC demo against the *"evils"* of racism was headed by the Labour/TUC bureaucracy but built for and supported by the Labour left. Witch hunters and activists alike have entered into a non-aggression pact because they can see the ground slipping away from them. The BNP are seen as radicals, the left, through their submergence in Labour, as anti-working class, pro the local state and, hence, the status quo. Former Labour voters in Millwall and elsewhere have dumped their allegiance to the likes of John Smith and Neil Kinnock; in any event the Labour leadership has expended most of its political energy to ditching any commitment to the working class in favour of the middle class protest vote (In 1992 Neil Kinnock promised that *"Labour would lead the consensus by promising a listening, non-confrontational government that will heed the advice of the professionals, such as doctors, engineers and educationalists."*) The Labour left, through its pursuit of a fake municipal socialism has become part of the problem - faced with a choice of allegiance to a working class which has begun to recognise Labour, through its actions in local office, as its enemy, or sticking with Labour, the left has chosen the latter option and the BNP has come to be seen as an ally to sections of the white working class. As one BNP voter said in a TV interview: *"If you're drowning and someone offers you a helping hand, you don't check to see whose hand it is first."* **Labour Briefing,** a key player in the municipal left is at least honest enough to acknowledge the issues: *"[The collapse of Labour's local government resistance] depoliticised the debate around local government. Every question is now dealt with as if it were purely an administrative matter...any resistance to cuts from trade unions or the community is bitterly resented.* Councillors place themselves above *'pressure groups'* and *'special interests'* and thereby collude with the Tories in undermining the very idea of grass roots self-assertion in political struggle. Local democracy has been eviscerated not only by the Tories but also by Labour. The consequences inside the Party have been tragic. The Party is rooted in local government structures...at least one out of every ten Party activists is an elected councillor. When politics is taken out of local government it is also removed from the Labour Party." (**Labour Briefing** April 1994) What remains to be said is the collusion between Labour and Tory to undermine local democracy runs parallel to a further collusion; between the left and the Labour bureaucracy to preserve the myth of Labour as a party of and for the working class. Years of pursuance of a strategy of collusion has buried a different tradition - of working class self-organisation - of rent strikes, occupations of empty homes, of tenant organisation in opposition to local authority - so that today the interests of the left appear irreconcilable with those of the working class. ***"The war of the poor against the poor"*** can only be countered by the war of the poor against the rich, of class against class. The *'neutrality'* of municipal socialism - the equal distribution of poverty within the class - has allowed the BNP a head start. Either we begin the work to establish a revolutionary tradition within the working class, rather than against or in defiance of it, either anti-fascism becomes identified with the interests of our class instead of the interests of the establishment, or the reality of Berlusconi's Italy may become our reality in the years ahead.



An accurate media reflection of the Blair/Labour relationship: The bland leading the blind

Getting stuck in at Waterloo, September 1992. AFA's most public victory, recently claimed by the ANL. Their most outrageous lie - to date.

DON'T BELIEVE THE HYPE

After 10,000 BNP votes across London, the ANL's champagne celebrations appear perverse.

The Left's sense of triumphalism after the recent elections is not only misplaced, it is perverse. It is also predictable. When Derek Beackon first received 20% of the vote in October 1993 it was, the ANL insisted, entirely due *'to a low turnout'*. His subsequent victory only months later was put down to 'special conditions' on the Isle of Dogs. On May 5th this year the turn out was 70%; more than might be expected for a General Election, and Beackon's vote went up by 560; an increase of 30%. So much for the *'low turn out'* theory. Now we are told that the Labour victory on the Isle of Dogs means that the ANL *'has turned the tide'*. Once again, reality says otherwise. In the St James ward of Bethnal Green, the BNP candidate polled 653 a 700% increase on the last election. In nearby St Peters ward they got 889 to Labours 2000. In the Borough of Newham two BNP candidates collectively polled 906, the equivalent of 80% of the total Labour vote. So much then for the *'special conditions'* theory peddled by sections of the media and the Left.

Prior to Beackons election Socialist Worker boasted: *" the Nazis are on the run... the ANL ...have done a brilliant job..."*, the BNP vote up again this time by 800. Later this BNP victory was described as a *'blip'*. Some months prior to the launch of the ANL in February 1992, its SWP sponsors had dismissed the far right *"as no more than a hard core of extremely isolated fanatics"*. Today little more than two years later, 10,000 votes for the BNP across London is being described by the same people as *'turning the tide'*.

Unpalatable though it may be for some, the truth is that support for the far right is growing steadily and there is little the middle class Left can do about it. There have been too many lies, and as a result the working class is largely immune to its propaganda. In many areas their tactics simply makes them an irrelevance, in others areas, the only impact is to undo good work previously done by others. Their politics have little resonance in working class areas and the SWP knows it. Otherwise instead of being mere cheerleaders for Labour they would stand candidates themselves. As a result of the ANL/YRE *('if you don't want a fascist for a neighbour vote Labour')* strategy , the BNP is now nationally regarded as the radical, and only alternative to the establishment parties. The ANL campaign has made a difference: it has increased the Labour vote but crucially - NOT- at the expense of the BNP. The politics of the ANL is the politics of the SWP, and the politics of the SWP is still the shrill 60's style campus protest: slogans, placards, demonstrations. In simple terms, the SWP/ANL combination has been proved a failure; despite endless media promotion and seemingly unlimited resources it has not impacted on the activities or curbed the influence of the BNP. The BNP can be stopped, and on many occasions up and down the country Anti-Fascist Action has physically stopped them. However we are not blind to the fact that the fight is political and accept that the re- emergence of support for the far-right is a symptom of a deeper malaise. We do not see it as our job to campaign for Labour. It is not AFA's role to argue that change is not needed.

The function of anti-fascism is not to see the electoral threat from the far right beaten back, so that Labour and the middle class Left can, as happened between 1982-92, turn their backs on both the social causes and their own collaboration in the political betrayals that gave rise to the NF, and the BNP in the first place. The ambition of militant anti-fascism is not simply to see the far-right defeated and removed from working class areas: the ultimate solution is to see them replaced there. The BNP's attack on Labour is from the right; and is racist, ultra conservative and anti working class. Our primary role is to guarantee that a successful challenge to Labour comes ONLY from the left. Furthermore, and purely from an anti-fascist point of view; as the best insurance against any nazi renaissance, it would be the duty of militants to offer protection and encouragement to any genuine working class revolt.

TARTAN FASCISTS

Names chosen at random from a telephone directory; telephone death threats; shit-filled jiffy bags delivered through letter boxes; windows crashed in the middle of the night; houses painted with racist slogans. At first glance, activities such as these would immediately put the traditional groups of the fascist right in the frame. However, in Scotland, these latest actions are the work not of the BNP but of anti-English groups such as Settler Watch - an organisation which combines romantic Scottish nationalism with crude anti-English racism. In the industrial centres like Glasgow, their campaign mainly takes the form of meaningless daubing of **"English Out"** slogans on walls. In Highland towns and villages, it has manifested itself in a more sinister form with a campaign of harassment of individual English people regardless of their class.

Specifically, the race hatred has already succeeded in forcing a working class English born couple out of their council house in Fraserburgh, harassed a newsagent in Argyll by shitting in his mail and issued threats to an English born Labour MP. Ethnic cleansing tartan-style!

The roots of the campaign appear to be the deep seated resentment in Scotland of 15 years of rule from Westminster by a Tory government that is loathed by most Scots. The easy answer to big problems - as the BNP have demonstrated elsewhere - is to look around for easily identifiable scapegoats. Whereas, on the Isle of Dogs, homelessness is blamed on the Asians; in the Highlands and Islands, the same problem of homelessness is perceived to be the fault of *"English settlers"* moving into the area buying up property,inflating property prices and thereby displacing local young people in need of homes. Whilst, in the case of the former the real statistics disprove the lies of the BNP on the Isle of Dogs; in the North of Scotland, the *"holiday homes"* situation has tended to have an effect on available property for local people in rural communities. A similar campaign in Mid and North Wales, where holiday homes were lying unoccupied for most of the year, saw Welsh nationalists take direct action by burning them down. The message here was simple and straightforward, that if there were to be no homes available for locals then there would be no play areas for the English upper and middle classes. Whilst accepting some criticisms of such a campaign, it at least identified that the problem was not the English *"settlers"* as such, but an economic one of lack of housing for local working class people. Settler Watch in Scotland has failed to base it's campaign on economics or class and has instead indulged in scapegoating English people regardless of class background and purely on grounds of race.

There's no doubt that there is a problem in Scotland with the ownership of land and housing, however, to put it down to the problem of the number of English people - who, incidentally, make up only 6% of the population - is completely opportunist. Landowners such as the Duke of Argyll, the Duke of Atholl - who still has his own private army, kilts and all, by way of payment for his ancestors services to the English court by coming to their aid against his rebellious countrymen - and the Whitelaw family are all *"Scottish"* but whose interests do they represent? Scotland still has feudal land duties where, despite owning your own home, you are still subject to pay charges to the *"owner"* of the land that your house is built on - and the local feudal *"landlords"* still exist! Settler Watch appears to be only interested in non-Scots regardless of their exploitative capabilities. There are many other areas of the Scottish economy that are dominated not by the *"English"* but by multinational capitalist concerns - the North Sea oil industry being the obvious one. How can the power of these multinationals be broken by crapping through your neighbour's letter box?

It's also interesting to compare the Irish republican movement with the activities of some of those who claim to be attempting to emulate their struggle in Scotland. The republican movement in Ireland was never an anti-settler movement - if it was, Scotland's problems would be even greater considering that most of the "settlers" are of Scottish origin - it is a movement, anti-imperialist in nature, which has an international perspective. Targetting individuals of a particular race, as Settler Watch does, would be akin to the IRA declaring that their enemies were the Protestants rather than the British Army. The actions so far of Settler Watch and others - for example, those who declare that *"English-based lefties are imperialists"* - has more in common with the sectarianism of the loyalists and the *"ethnic cleansing"* aspirations of the BNP and C18 than with a progressive nationalist/republican movement.

In a previous article in RA, we said that a break up of the UK state would be in the interests of the working class of Scotland, England, Wales and Ireland. It would throw the British ruling class, who are tied to the idea of a unitary state, into confusion. Divide and rule in reverse! It would also create a second front which Westminster would have to resource and would therefore be of benefit to the Irish republican struggle. A movement in Scotland which challenged the power of the ruling class and which based itself on the revolutionary working class ideas of socialist republicans like John McLean and James Connolly would oppose the opportunism and racism of tartan fascists.

UNEMPLOYED STRIKE - BACK

For the past six months, Manchester ***Red Action*** has been involved with the **Unemployed Action Group** in a campaign to disrupt the activities of an American company called Padgett-Thompson. Padgett-Thompson organises seminars designed to *"give managers and supervisors the powerful skills they need to confidently weed out employees with unsatisfactory attitudes....sidestep dismissal problems...and avoid claims"*.

Brochures advertising Padgett-Thompson seminars contain sections on building a tribunal proof case, handling dismissal sessions with more confidence, coping with all the emotions caused by employee dismissal, and a section entitled *"Stop Trying to Deal With Employees who Drive you Crazy"*. It is this section that reveals the essence of what Padgett-Thompson are trying to achieve. It contains cartoon caricatures of *"troublesome"* employees such as *'The Chatterbox'*, *'The Shark'* and *'The Plot-ician'*, it documents *"behavioural"* problems such as the employee who rarely smiles or tells a joke, has difficulty communicating with others, exhibits strange or unusual behaviour, or has troubles outside work, but it does not make any mention of workers who actually break any rules' The implication therefore is that Padgett-Thompson believe that employers already have enough powers to deal with rule-breakers, and therefore the whole point of attending their seminars is to provide supervisors and managers with loop-holes allowing them to dismiss workers who might be unpopular, miserable old gits, or more likely, someone the boss has taken a disliking to.

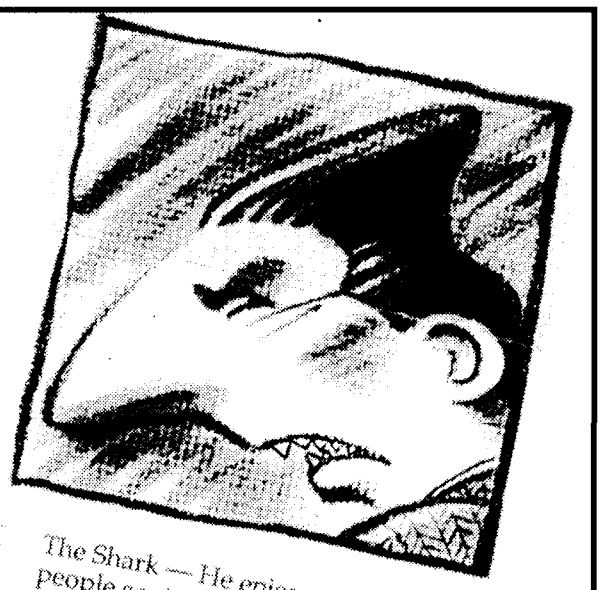
The popularity of Padgett-Thompson seminars, which have been attended by many of the country's leading companies presents clear problems for Trade Unionists (referred to cryptically as *"barrack room lawyers"*), mothers with young children, or anyone who can think of anything that they would rather do than spend 8 hours a day at work.

The campaign against Padgett-Thompson has struck a number of telling blows against the company in Manchester.

On September 30th, a seminar in the Ramada Renaissance Hotel was raided by a number of intruders *"wearing baseball caps and jeans"* who arrogantly walked straight through the hotel lobby, into the meeting room, and stole the notes of the speaker Laurence Sachs from under the noses of the organisers. This created considerable confusion in the seminar, and caused it to be delayed for over two hours. Meanwhile, staff and guests were leafleted by other members of the Unemployed Action Group.

A statement was later released to the press which claimed responsibility for the action, and exposed the hypocritical role of Laurence Sachs, who not only spoke at Padgett-Thompson seminars advising bosses on how to avoid appearing at industrial tribunals, but was himself a chairman of an industrial tribunal. Since his exposure, Mr Sachs has since found it necessary to resign from Padgett-Thompson.

In another raid on 14th April, an intruder set off a fire alarm in the Portland Thistle Hotel in the city centre. In the resulting confusion, hundreds of brochures, vital to the smooth running of the seminar disappeared, and were last seen floating down the Rochdale canal. Notes and diaries detailing forthcoming dates and venues of future seminars also went missing and will go a long way to ensure that the campaign against Padgett-Thompson is on-going.



An illustration from Padgett-Thompson promotional literature, catagorising the most efficient and trouble-free methods for disposing of unwanted employees.

BLACK PROPAGANDA & 'BLACK FLAG'

Sitting on a plane returning from Belfast I decided to kill some time by browsing through a copy of the Irish News. Turning to the letters page there was a piece under the title, *"Tradition of Free Speech."* It read; *"Intimidation is nothing new in the north, particularly in the border area. While John Hume's pal Gerry was frantically searching for the elusive key to peace somewhere in the bowels of West Belfast, his acquaintances in Crossmaglen were engaging in some earnest dialogue with Mr John Fee's head - in their own quest for peace.*

We do not condemn this act out of concern for democracy which is nothing but a sham - rather we condemn it in the spirit in which anarchist communists have always struggled against the forces of coercion and fascism."

It was signed - **Anarchist Communist Federation** (South Down). The letter referred to an attack on the aforementioned SDLP councillor by unidentified assailants and that despite denials and condemnations of the incident by local representatives of the Republican Movement the ACF decided to pronounce the IRA *"guilty"* Only that morning I had met with friends and activists from the POW department who showed me the damage to their office caused by a loyalist RPG rocket that had narrowly missed claiming their lives and now only a few hours later I was reading this bile from a so-called *"progressive"* organisation.

Although items such as that above may be annoying,irritating or just laughable the role of anarchist groups and publications in relation to the war in Ireland requires closer examination. Recently there has been a debate within the anti-fascist movement over what ***Red Action*** members would largely perceive to be almost one and the same - loyalism and fascism. The opposition to this perception has largely emanated from those who would describe themselves as anarchists. It is interesting that those who would see themselves as being the most *"anti-state"*, the most puritan when it comes to opposing the establishment are, when it comes to Ireland, the most vociferous in their support for the establishment's propaganda even to the point of putting the trendy left, who they take so much pleasure in deriding, into the shadows. For example,take the following; *'Those high up in the IRA and Sinn Fein enjoy enormous privileges, there are massive profits to be made from extortion and protection rackets. It's well known that those high up in the IRA enjoy good houses and cars all paid for by the profits of racketeering. 'We often see the local IRA Brigadier driving through our shitty council estates in his brand new Mercedes Benz. The only reason why the IRA try to stop 'hoods' and 'gangsters' in catholic communities is cause these 'hoods' are muscling in on the IRA's own business."* No, that is not from the Sunday World but from the ACFs own magazine, Organise. It goes on to give an *'analysis'* of the demise of the INLA: *"In 1987 they were ripped apart by a feud; the IPLO actually wanted to do some fighting while the Belfast Brigade (INLA) were quite content to simply rake in profits from extortion."* Any of the above could have appeared in the various British or Free State tabloid rags, usually supplied by the RUC or Gardai, except that it actually appeared in a magazine openly sold at lefty demos and in bookshops. Then there are publications such as the 'Bolton Evening Noose', a sort of local anarcho-libertarian magazine. While it prints sound articles on anti-fascism, the crisis of the left etc, it then goes onto what it calls *"Autonomous Justice"* in which it argues that if you think someone in your area is involved in anti-social crime then you should get a few mates together and wreck both the culprit and his home. This, we are told, is far more preferable than, *"groups like the IRA taking the place of the state's police and kneecapping working class youngsters for nicking rich bastards' cars."* Rich bastards? In Ballymurphy? Twinbrook?! In the last edition of the anarcho *"theoretical"* magazine, 'Black Flag', they managed to work into just a single article the following theories: the Brits could achieve a military solution tomorrow if it were not for the US President's concern over the American-Irish voters; the Prime Minister, for this reason, allows a small minority to have their own army; Special Branch engineers provo escapes; the Provos were created by the Irish Republic, the USA and probably the Brits; along with Provos as fascists and psychotic killers etc etc. You know the rest. It might be easy to dismiss this all as the rantings of a few paranoid weirdos or, if heard in a public bar, be put down to just plain ignorance - the legacy of 25 years of censorship except these people ARE *"politicos"*. As most of our readers know, apart from censorship, the Brits invest millions of pounds worldwide in promoting both counterpropaganda and disinformation directed against the Irish Republican Movement. Part of this would be pushing the line that the IRA are not a disciplined political guerilla army but instead are a group of gangsters who create huge personal profits from the war that is almost fascistic in its character and are prepared to shoot children to protect these profits while at the same time peddling anything from drugs to kiddie porn. This tactic was just a single component of a whole counter-insurgency programme developed by a certain Frank Kitson during the 1970's that had been refined during Britain's wars in Aden, Kenya and Cyprus. Another component suggested was the creation and promotion of a rogue guerilla movement which would demoralise the insurgents' support base (the ACF describe the proven drug dealers of the IPLO as those who *"actually wanted to do some fighting"*).

So are we suggesting that all anarchists are really in the pay of MI5? Well, no. Judging by the quality of many of the publications they are clearly doing it for free.

dispatches from a war zone

INFORMERS

Pro-British agent Gregory Burns, who infiltrated the IRA and with the knowledge of his handlers murdered a young women to preserve his cover. Later executed by the IRA.

When the body of Downpatrick man Martin Brown was found on the border last week there was the usual round of condemnation from churchmen and politicians. Of course all the condemnation was aimed at the IRA who claimed responsibility for executing the twenty three year old man who they claim was a leading member of their organisation in the Downpatrick area.

Not one of those, *'so called'*, community representatives in condemning the killing of this young man touched on an issue which is crucial and may show that the responsibility for Martin Brown's death lies not only at the door of the person who pulled the trigger but just as much, if not more, at the door of the RUC Special Branch for whom Brown was working.

Over the past twenty five years in their zealous pursuit of recruiting informers the RUC and British Intelligence have used many ruses. They have offered huge amounts of money to lure young recruits, used the threat of death i.e. *"We can give your Da's, Ma's, Brothers, name to the UVF/UFF and make sure there are no security forces in your area when they come for them."* They will use psychological abuse against a person in custody and when this fails send in the Branch man who is the father figure, your best friend, the person who is only thinking of you and your family and how you can do your country and yourself a favour by watching a few named individuals in your area, and besides you can always earn a few pounds for a drink into the bargain, your dole doesn't go far, does it?

Another ploy used by these *'guardians of law and order'* is to drop any charges a person in custody may be charged with, in exchange for a bit of information of course. There appears to be no limit to charges the Branch can get dropped be it joyriding, mugging, burglary, motoring offences and even sex offences. The RUC Chief Constable, Hugh Annesley, while commenting on high levels of crime in certain areas uses the excuse that while they are doing their best to combat *'ordinary crime'* their fight against *'terrorist-related or descheduled offences'* must take precedence. If this is true maybe he will explain why informers have literally been allowed to get away with murder.

When a self-confessed Special Branch informer admitted on a television current affairs programme that his handlers had permitted him to drive the get-away car when an IRA ASU executed an off-duty paratrooper in East Belfast all hell broke loose. Unionist politicians who usually support any strong-arm tactics used by the RUC, including the shoot-to-kill policy, were seething and called for this informer to be brought back from where the RUC were hiding him and be charged with murder.

Another self-confessed Special Branch informer who had escaped from an IRA Intelligence Team swore on oath in a Belfast Court that he had been working for the RUC for seven years sometimes earning up to fifty thousand pounds a year. What wasn't mentioned in court however that was three years prior to his capture by the IRA he, while being a member of the INLA had attempted to execute a person who had admitted being an informer by blasting him twice with a pump action shotgun, once in the face and again in the chest. Against all odds his victim survived and gave evidence to the police about where he was allegedly held, gave the names of three people he alleged had interrogated him one of whom had actually pulled the trigger on him. No charges were ever brought against the informer despite appeals by his victim that he be brought out of hiding and charged with attempted murder.

During the Harry Kirkpatrick Supergrass trial in 1985 another highly embarrassing case involving the RUC Special Branch came to light. Robert McAllister a self-confessed RUC informer had tipped off his handlers that he was to drive the car for an INLA ASU who intended to execute a member of the UDR who worked in a West Belfast engineering firm. His handlers told him to cry off the operation which he duly did. When the ASU set off on the operation they were unaware that undercover RUC personnel from the SAS trained E4A had moved into the area, no doubt to wipe out the ASU and gain some *'positive propaganda'* to boost the flagging moral of members of the *'Security Forces'*.

However, what followed can only be described as a major cock-up for E4A, and fortunate for the volunteers involved. The ASU succeeded in driving up to their target, shooting him dead and driving off again. It was while driving away from the scene that they ran into the RUC undercover unit, one of them a female armed with a submachine gun. All members of the ASU escaped the ambush unscathed leaving egg on the face of the RUC elite. It transpired during the supergrass trial that E4A and the Special Branch had neglected to tell the UDR man that he was a target and shouldn't turn up to work that fateful day.

When they succeeded in *'converting'* Harry Kirkpatrick, a higher ranking member than Rab McAllister, he was thrown to the wolves and despite almost succeeding in getting his former comrades butchered he is now serving a life sentence in Long Kesh. So much for the Branch being protective of their *'sources'*.

In another similar case, again involving the INLA, the SAS opened fire on an ASU who had fired on the home of a UDR man outside Strabane. It emerged a few months later that the only fatality that night, the driver of the ASU'S car, had been a Special Branch informer and he was responsible for the SAS ambush being in place.

It is hard to imagine what made each of these men turn informer, except for the case of Kirkpatrick who fingered anyone his handlers wanted him to for a deal that he would not do too long in prison despite admitting to a few murders and that on his release he would be spirited out of Ireland with a large amount of cash.

Were these men beaten into submission? Was it greed that made them succumb to the promise of financial reward? Or was it the threat against their or their families lives which persuaded them?

The depths to which the RUC will sink to recruit an informant knows no bounds. In a recent case an IRA intelligence unit arrested a New Barnsley man who passed what he believed to be important and financially rewarding information to his Special Branch handlers. When the RUC and British Army arrived in the New Barnsley area to check out the informants information, which in fact was worthless, they confirmed the IRA's suspicions in this man and he was arrested by the intelligence unit. Shortly after, however, he managed to break free and made his way to an RUC station. Having been taken into *"protective custody for his own protection"* an IRA unit returned to and searched his house. They found an RUC panic button fitted to his telephone.

Just prior to Christmas this man was accused by a fifteen year old girl of rape. She had been at a party at the man's house and at the end of the night there were just the two of them left. The R.U.C. took him into custody. In no time at all he was back on the street, the R.U.C. having *'established'* there was no truth in the girl's allegations. That is when the parties really started as money and drink was no object to this man. he widened his circle of friends to include Republican activists or fringe activists and pretty soon the house-raids, early morning covert searches of gardens and sheds began. Many people who had doubted the young girls story are now sure that he chose the path of the informer rather than that of the convicted rapist. Once again our *'protectors of law and order'* had shown us what Hugh Annesley means by *"fair and impartial policing"*.

These are just a few examples of the depths of depravity the R.U.C. are willing to sink to just to get inside information on the Republican Movement. To them their informants. usually weak and pathetic pawns in their power game, are only low-life expendables, as was proved when the Special Branch informer was cut down by the S.A.S. outside Strabane. This shoot-to-kill operation was positively reported in the media and by Unionist politicians as a success for the *"security forces"*. This was the thanks the Branch gave to someone who had laid his life on the line for them. The IRA does not, as British propaganda would have us believe, execute every informer it unearths. Nine times out of ten the informer goes up in front of a press conference in the hope that their ordeal might educate others in the manipulative ways of Special Branch recruitment.

The Republican Movement has always encouraged those who feel they are being trapped or coerced into working for the *'security forces'* to come forward and publicise their plight. Once a person gives that first piece of information they have entered a dark and murky world of deceit from which many believe there is no going back. This is not the case.The Republican Movement knows that in most cases these people would not inform if they didn't believe the RUC had some sort of a hold over them. For this reason the IRA has, over the past 25 years, offered numerous amnesties to informers. When an informer comes forward he will be debriefed as to what information he/she has imparted. The ultimate penalty in this situation is for this person to be ordered out of the country, as much for his/her own safety as that of the Republican Movement's. A handler crossed is a dangerous entity and with the level of collusion between *"security force"* members and loyalist death squads, why run the risk? The only time it is inevitable for an informer to face certain execution is when that person goes into or remains a member of the IRA expressly at the behest of his/her handlers and for the sole reason of setting up his/her comrades, arms dumps, IRA operations etc. One informer in Lurgan passed information to his Special Branch handlers which led to the RUC shooting dead his own brother. A female informer received just £160 for the murders at Loughall.

Before being integrated into an ASU recruits to the IRA are briefed on the techniques used by the Branch and how they should behave under enemy interrogation. They are made aware that the penalty for loose talk or carelessness is instant dismissal. The penalty for informing is death. They make no bones about this fact and the recruit is afforded the opportunity to leave there and then.

Since 1990 the IRA in Downpatrick have not been able to mount an operation due to RUC/Military intervention. Since 1990 the *'security forces'* in undercover operations have unearthed three major arms dumps in the Downpatrick area. By far the most serious set back was when an undercover operation mounted by the RUC's E4A resulted in the death of Colum *'Collie'* Marks. Collie was shot in the back while fleeing unarmed from a thwarted operation to set up a horizontal mortar in Downpatrick. He was the officer commanding the local IRA unit. The IRA in that area have been searching for an informer ever since.

When the IRA arrested Martin Brown, officer commanding the Downpatrick unit of their organisation, on 23 April, the RUC immediately and over the next six days carried out a number of armed raids on homes and derelict buildings in the area.When his body turned up on the border near Newry on Friday 30 April, the IRA said he had been an informer since 1990. A police spokesperson commenting on the numerous raids in the Downpatrick area denied it was a race against time to find one of their informers. He stated, *"When Mr Brown was reported missing police did carry out enquiries, as they would do for any missing person ... the police searches last Thursday were totally unconnected with Mr Browns disappearance."*

Whatever pressure was used to make an informer out of Martin Brown is known only to those who blackmailed or coerced him, the IRA unit which questioned him and his immediate family who will have been given his taped and written confessions.

Collie Marks was a friend of mine but I take no pleasure in the death of the person who may have set him up. I bear no malice to Martin Brown, as a matter of fact I feel sorry for him and for anyone who allows themselves to be used in the way he was. I do, however, feel nothing but utter contempt for those who will use this man's death as political mileage or for pulpit-bashing speeches condemning those who pulled the trigger while totally ignoring those who stood him in the firing line.

No Catholic who has had to live under this British regime would willingly walk into a police station and say, *"I want to helpyou. Can I be an informer please?"* Any priest or politician who believes different is suffering from severe delusions, is reading too much of their own propaganda or is so far out of touch with the people they claim to represent, it is unreal.

Well, it is time they faced reality. Until they start hitting out and condemning those who are blackmailing, coercing and beating our young men and women into becoming informers then they too must share in the blame each time a young person has to die to keep the Special Branch's trickle of information steady. Martin Brown's handlers will have shed no tears for him. They were probably discussing who their next recruit would be while having a pint in their local far from any nationalist area. As for guilt, well, they won't have felt any of that.After all, while no one condemns their actions they have nothing to feel guilty for, have they?

My sincere sympathy goes out to the family of Martin Brown. It is natural that they will feel only hatred and bitterness towards those who took their son's life but what of those who put their son out there in the first place? How did they get him to do their dirty work? And how many more young bodies will the RUC use up before we cry, **"enough!"**

M Collins

Belfast.

"Collie Marks was a friend of mine but I take no pleasure in the death of the person who may have set him up."

Devils Disciples

The only real barrier to peace in Ireland is the Unionists' parties unwillingness to give up its sectarian statelet. At a time when most of the British people and many British politicians would be only too glad to wash its hands of the Irish problem once and for all, the Unionist camp has resorted once more to its age old tactics of blackmail, coercion and threats of violence backed up as usual by the state-sanctioned murder gangs of the UFF, UVF and RHC, usually with RUC, RIR or British army collusion. It has taken five long and bloody months for the British government to answer Sinn Fein's calls for clarification of the Downing Street Declaration despite an unprecedented step by the IRA of calling a three day ceasefire over Easter to allow the political process of peace negotiations to progress. During the ceasefire loyalist murder gangs continued their slaughter unabated while Unionist politicians ignored them and poured scorn on the IRA for daring to halt its campaign, albeit for a short spell. It would appear that this generation of Unionist politicians believe that if the IRA didn't exist then their parties wouldn't exist. It is as if their sole existence is only to malign and condemn the Republican Movement. Strange, the UDA and UVF use the same basis for existing despite the fact that the UVF blew up Silent Valley reservoir in 1968, two years before the first IRA bomb exploded in this campaign. Unionists called for the banning of Sinn Fein which, for once, was not granted by their Whitehall masters. So, when Sinn Fein began to do well in local elections the unionists demanded that all councillors should sign a document renouncing violence before being allowed to take their seat. This was not a problem for Sinn Fein members who believed that if Sammy Wilson and Peter Robinson of the DUP could sign this document then so could they. The next ploy by the unionists was to keep Sinn Fein off all the committees within the council and then their biggest *'political'* coup of all - whenever a Sinn Fein member rose to speak they would scream, shout, bang the table, blow whistles, stamp their feet, pick their nose or fart. Nice move, but I can hardly see it catching on in Westminster. It would appear then that the Unionists believe in the democratic system of politics which we hear so much of in Western Europe just so long as this democracy does not include Catholics of any hue getting into power. It is not the case of it being just republicans they want to exclude. In the mid-seventies unionists used paramilitary groups such as the UDA, UVF and recently disbanded B Specials to violently enforce their *'workers strike'* to end power sharing with the SDLP, hardly a dyed in the wool republican grouping. It is just a case of we have power and we're keeping it, and keep it they will, at any cost. It is time for this artificial state to be terminated. It has been in power for over seventy years and it has caused nothing but grief and misery and bloodshed since its inception. Its politicians are a joke and are looked upon with amusement in the house of commons. I doubt if any of them have a political thought in their heads other than ***"Smash the IRA", "Ulster says No (to everything)"*** and ***"No Pope here, no surrender".*** It is a state run by bigots and religious fanatics who rant that the pope is the anti-Christ and the catholics are the devil's disciples. Some might say they are more to be pitied than scorned and this would be true if they weren't so bloody dangerous. If loyalist gunmen did not hang on to every word they utter then perhaps catholics could see the funny side of them as well. The only solution to the Irish problem is to oust these maniacs. I do not care whether we have protestant, catholic, muslim, hindu or atheist politicians running this country just so long as they run it fairly for all the people who live here. Under this present regime it just isn't possible.

The darker the night the brighter the star

The Real History of the Fourth International

It was Trotsky while in exile who announced the slogan that anti-fascists must, "separate those who want to fight from those who do not."

The fourth and final volume of Tony Cliff's biography of Trotsky bears the ominous motto: **'the darker the night, the brighter the star'**. The darkness symbolises the rise of fascism and stalinism during the decade 1930-40, the last years of Trotsky's life. The star, in all senses of the word is Trotsky. That too, is apt, though not in the way Cliff (hopefully the last of the **'guru'** figures on the left) proposes. For Trotsky's position throughout these years was starlike only in the sense of being remote, isolated and ineffectual.

By 1933, Trotsky was living in exile. His .support in the Soviet Union, which had never been consolidated into a mass base, became increasingly fragmented as a result of Trotsky's own entanglement within the party bureaucratic apparatus itself, and the irresolution of his challenge to Stalin. This irresolution had its roots not only in his unquestioning acceptance of the authoritarian model of the party dictatorship, but in the woeful inadequacy of his analysis of the social forces represented by the Stalinist autocracy. Trotsky mistakenly identified Stalin's ideological pragmatism with the absence of a social base. Assuming the Left Opposition stood for the interests of the proletariat, and the forces of the Right led by Bukharin as representing the interests of the rich peasant *'kulaks'*, he saw the Stalinist Centre as an opportunist regime sustained only by the mutual cancellation of the real forces on the right and left. Sooner or later he believed, the Stalinist centre would be forced to capitulate to the proletarian social forces Trotsky claimed for the **'Left Opposition'**. However, the supposed social base of the Opposition soon proved to be nothing more than an ideological shadow cast by the distorted terms of his own analysis. In reality, the Left Opposition proved to represent no more than a weak and demoralised faction of the party bureaucracy. By October 1930, Trotsky was admitting to the American Trotskyist, Max Shactman, that the Left Opposition no longer existed as an organised movement.

Alongside the few penetrating insights into the reality of Soviet bureaucracy and the mechanics of party dictatorship which appeared in Trotsky's analysis at this time, sits the hollow assertion that, despite all appearances,

"the proletariat still possess powers to exert pressure and...the state apparatus still remains dependent on it."

Accordingly, in 1928, at the outset of a period which witnessed a precipitous decline in the living standards of the Soviet working class, Trotsky ventured that;

"the proletariat can regain full power, overhaul the bureaucracy and put it under its control by the road of reform of the party and the soviets."

Catastrophically, it was not until October 1933, six months after the fascist takeover in Germany, that Trotsky brought himself to acknowledge the bitter truth:

"No normal 'constitutional' ways remain to remove the ruling clique. The bureaucracy can be compelled to yield power into the hands of the proletarian vanguard only by force."

This revelation of the obvious, partial though it remained, was too little,and far too late, to influence the structure of power in the Soviet Union. Former members of the Left Opposition had long been demoralised by the irrelevance of Trotsky's pronouncements to the everyday reality of the Soviet regime.

Fundamental to all the contradictions and paradoxes in which Trotsky entangled himself is the adherence, which he never forsook, to the model of the authoritarian party dictatorship as the *'vanguard'* of the working class. When Radek, a leading *'old bolshevik'*, said in October 1928, that there was no difference in practice between the policies and practices of the stalinist leadership and the trotskyite Left Opposition, he stated precisely the ultimate cause of the Opposition's failure. Trotsky fully supported the position outlined in a leading document of the Left Opposition written in August l929 criticising Stalin personally, but which still clung onto the coat tails of the stalinist apparatus:

"For a long time to come a significant proportion of power will necessarily be concentrated in the hands of the party and its leadership."

This conception of the vanguard role of the party effectively emasculated not only Trotsky's ideological challenge to stalinism within the Soviet Union, but negated the value of his analysis in every other area to which he turned his attention. Most notably, this was the case in Germany, France and Spain.

The strength of Trotsky's analysis of the social dynamic of fascism, and the virulent and unprecedented threat it represented to the working class of those countries where it attained power, was unrivalled, and contains insights of the greatest relevance today. The power and prescience of an analysis such as the following needs little underlining:

"the gigantic growth of National Socialism is an expression of two factors; as deep social crisis...and the lack of a revolutionary party that would today be regarded by the popular masses as the acknowledged revolutionary leader...fascism, as a mass movement, is the party of counter-revolutionary despair. When revolutionary hope embraces the whole proletarian mass, it inevitably pulls behind it on the road of revolution considerable and growing sections of the petty bourgeoisie...the election revealed the opposite picture: counter-revolutionary despair embraced the petty bourgeois mass with such force that it drew behind it many sections of the proletariat."

In this way,

"Through the fascist agency, capitalism sets in motion the masses of the crazed petty bourgeoisie, and bands of the declassed and demoralised lumpenproletariat..."

Many of his specific tactics in response to the fascist threat were equally pointed:

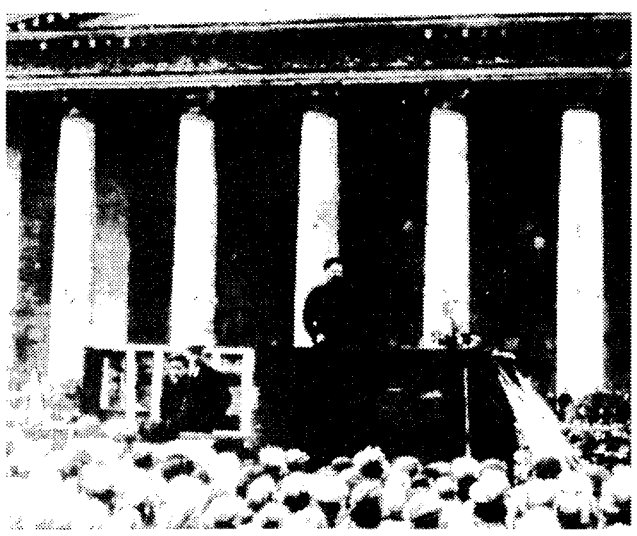
"It is necessary to have a map of the fascist barracks and all other fascist strongholds, in every city and in every district. The fascists are attempting to encircle the revolutionary strongholds. The encirclers must be encircled."

It is Trotsky who announced the slogan that anti-fascists must *"separate those who want to fight from those who do not"* and proclaimed clearly that:

"the Social Democrat leaders do not want to fight. They cherished the hope that Hindenburg would save them from Hitler. Now they are waiting for some other miracle. They do not want to fight. They lost the habit of fighting years ago. The struggle frightens them."

Here then, freed of the ideological baggage carried in his analysis of the condition of the Soviet Union under Stalin, where his own attachment to the ruling party dictatorship precluded a clear perception of political realities, Trotsky's perception of the nature of the fascist threat and following from that, his tactical prescriptions for its reversal are remarkably acute. Yet how did the strength of this abstract analysis transfer itself through to practice? What was the strength of the trotskyite anti-fascist movement in Germany in these critical years? At the time of Trotsky's first intervention in the German situation, he expected to receive initial support from the members of the Leninbund, a group of dissident communists around Ruth Fischer and Arkady Maslow. In the event, only nine members of the Leninhund became followers of Trotsky. Nor did the soft-left dissidents of the SAP (Sozialistische Arbeiterpartei) provide fertile ground for Trotskyite organisation. For a short while the German trotskyites managed to produce a fortnightly -paper circulating 2,000 - 3,000 copies, but this soon folded after a split lead by the influential Austrian dissident, Kurt Landau. The right dissident faction of the Communist party, the KPO led by Heinrich Brandler, predictably remained implacably opposed to the trotskyites. In this minefield of factions and bitter internal disputes, the trotskyite organisation in Germany never grew beyond 500 or 600 members. In March 1930 a conference was held uniting all German trotskyists into a single organisation, the United Left Opposition. It dissolved almost immediately under the pressure of bitter factional infighting, *'slanders' and 'intrigues'*.

Trotsky himself noted at the time: *"many opposition groups and groupings represent a caricature of the official party. They possess all its vices, often in an exaggerated form, but not its virtues...It can be characterised in the following manner: extreme, often sickly sensitivity in relation to everything that concerns their own circle, and the greatest indifference in relation to everything that concerns the rest of the world."*



Trotsky addressing Bolshevik rally in1920

So far, so good. But what of Trotsky's prescription to resolve such a sorry state of affairs (written in February 1931, at the time of Hitler`s rise to power!);

*"A special **Control Commission**, as authoritative as possible, must cooperate with the **International Secretariat** in examining the appeal made by the comrades who have already been expelled, and give its decision...In all cases where organisational conflicts and objections come to the fore, an examination must be referred to the International Secretariat..."*.

This knee-jerk resort to the worst excesses of bureaucratic formalism is uncannily reminiscent of Lenin`s last desperate attempts to ward off Stalin`s ascendancy in the Bolshevik party. It proved equally futile. Six months later the German trotskyists split. Kurt Landau headed a minority party of 80 - leaving a rump of 150. The 150 now became the *'official'* left opposition. To give an idea of the weight of the trotskyite grouping, it is sufficient to note that the Berlin section had 10 members. Admittedly this grew to 50 by the end of 1932 - but that figure compares with the 34,000 mustered by the stalinist KPD. Only ten days before Hitler's take over of power, the trotskyites suffered a further acrimonious split, attacking each other at the very moment of the fascist triumph. During the split, it became clear that a significant proportion of the trotskyite leadership were, in fact, stalinist plants; each plant insinuating other stalinist infiltrators into positions of *'power'* within the United Left Opposition as the trotskyites, without any apparent sense of irony, called themselves. Sadly enough, influential figures even within the various *'Control Commissions'* and *'Administrative Secretariats'* so desperately relied upon by Trotsky to revitalise dissident communist organisation, turned out to be these self-same stalinists!

One farcical incident may stand as a commentary upon the whole bureaucratic apparatus. Landau's Austrian trotskyite group expelled one of their members, Erich Kernmayer, as a police spy. The dauntingly named *'International Secretariat'* was dispatched to investigate the case. The investigation was led by a high ranking trotskyite panjandrum, a certain M Mill. Mill promptly reinstated Kernmayer. Trotsky dismissively described Landau's suspicions as typical of those in *"Bohemian circles"*. Mill himself eventually *'came out'* in 1932 as a stalinist agent of the GPU (Soviet secret police). Kernmayer joined the Nazis a year later!

Taking a wider perspective, the basic weakness of the Trotskyite organisation can be quickly identified - it attracted only declassed and dissatisfied elements from the middle class intelligensia with a taste for abstract theorising and building paper empires. Trotsky occasionally inveighed against these *"pretentious armchair communists who are unfit for any kind of serious revolutionary struggle"*, but never understood that the hierarchical, authoritarian party structure he had worked within in the Soviet Union, and untiringly sought to recreate elsewhere regardless of the infinitesimal resources at his disposal, was incapable of incorporating a membership outside of this extremely narrow social layer. As late as 1932, Trotsky complained to a colleague that the German trotskyite movement had failed to recruit *"even ten factory workers"*. He began increasingly to resort to power fantasies which can only be regarded as symptoms of megalomania. At the very end of 1931 he was writing that: *"This opposition* [the trotskyites] *is weak numerically, but in the march of events adds extraordinary strength to its voice. Under certain conditions a slight shock may bring down an avalanche. The critical shock of the Left Opposition can aid in bringing about a timely change in the politics of the proletarian vanguard."*The *"critical shock"* triggering the social "avalanche" Trotsky is talking about would have consisted in a couple of articles in an extremely obscure lefty paper: at a time when the brownshirts were physically smashing every trace of opposition to the nazis from the streets. While it may be permissible to go over the top a bit to encourage the troops, in passages such as these Trotsky entirely leaves the realm of the rational and indulges in a full-blooded Messiah complex. In the following year, 1932, he was writing: *"Numerically the Left opposition in Germany is [still] weak. But its political influence may prove decisive on the given, sharp, historical turn. As the switchman, by the timely turn of the switch, shifts a heavily laden train onto different tracks, so the small Opposition, by a strong and sure turn of the ideological switch, can compel the train...of the German proletariat, to go in a different direction."* The entire bolshevik-trotskyite conception of revolutionary social dynamics is laid unnervingly bare in such passages. The stupid *'heavy'* train (the working class) is directed onto predetermined historical tracks by the deft intellectual flicks of a tiny, concentrated intellectual elite - the vanguard party. Needless to say, despite Trotsky's frantic throwing of the switches, the train rolled straight over him.

The story of the French trotskyite groups, though less dramatic, followed a similar scenario. The proto-trotskyite organisation was founded in April 1930, the **'Ligue Communiste'**, with around 100 members. One French historian describes the prevailing atmosphere within the group: *"The Paris region contained a high proportion of intellectuals...This predominance of intellectuals is not surprising: for a rank and file worker discussions about the Kuomintang appeared completely abstract ... Intellectuals would come and raise endless debates, which either had no connections with the problems facing workers, or which they would approach abstractly. The weakness of its antennae in the working class and of its lack of real accountability in workers' struggles deeply affected the Ligue."* The hierarchical nature of the minute trotskyite groups in which ascendancy was established by mastery of *"abstract"* argument, had clear consequences for the social composition and mass appeal of the sections. Trotsky's one time secretary and member of the Ligue, Jean Van Heijendoort, recalled that in 1932 *"hardly twenty or so were really active"*. Trotsky himself noted of the French dissident communists that *"their whole psychology is adapted to an atmosphere of closed circles."* One of the disastrous consequences of the Bolshevik legacy on the left during this period (and after) was the illusion that a "closed circle" comprised of a conscious elite of 'switchthrowers' could initiate and implement revolutionary perspectives.

With the rise in working class militancy in 1934 and after, the membership of the Ligue reached a total of around 150 members. Trotsky decided that an entryist tactic into the French socialist party was the only

"It is thanks to him [Trotsky] that we can hope to build a fighting socialist organisation today" - SWP guru Tony Cliff (above)

effective solution to this lack of social weight. This move he felt, would, *"within a short space of time, completely transform the whole political constellation in the labour movement"*. In August 1934 he was writing in the same Messianic vein: *"[The trotskyists] will constitute a powerful centre of attraction for revolutionary elements in the Communist Party and will immeasurably facilitate the emergence of the proletariat on the road of revolution."* A year later the same megalomaniac optimism directed Trotsky's pseudoscientific *'analysis'*: *"From a propaganda group with some 200 members, youth included, it has transformed itself into a revolutionary factor directly and indirectly exercising an influence upon the working class movement of the country. The situation has changed not only quantitatively, but qualitatively."* The trotskyists were now, he added for good measure, *"a revolutionary factor of the first order."* In case this was not immediately obvious to everyone, Trotsky stressed the imminence of the *'transforming moment'*, the moment when the blinkers would be torn from the eyes of the masses, the moment when the apparently impotent trotskyites would be hailed as the revolutionary Messiah by the workers themselves: *"Tomorrow or the day after we will appear to the masses as the only revolutionary possibility."* In fact, in the same period as the French communist party more than doubled in size to some 87,000 members, the Trotskyists attracted maybe 150 new members - very few of them workers. As in Germany, the entire farcical history of the French trotskyite movement was capped by a split at the end of 1935 into two groups over the question as to whether or not to reverse the entry into the socialist party. Trotsky retrospectively justified the entryist policy as providing, as he phrased it, an opportunity to *"test their marxist superiority over their opponents"!* The rival organisations merged again in May 1936, but a few weeks later split a second time. While the communists once again doubled their membership (to 278,000), the trotskyites were forced to record a drop of almost a quarter of their already inconsiderable membership. At a time when millions of French workers were involved in strike actions and factory occupations, the trotskyites were too busy bitterly attacking each other - no doubt with each group demonstrating their 'marxist superiority' over its rival - to make any impact on the actual course of events.

In Spain, even in the context of a revolutionary civil war, the trotskyite movement remained so minuscule as to make any history of its *'participation'* impossible. Trotsky's prescription for the revolutionary party here as elsewhere, was based on the 'closed circle' of the ideological elite. He wrote to the leading Spanish dissident communist, Andres Nin that: *"A small but firm Marxist nucleus, understanding precisely what it wants, can save not only the Catalan Federation, but the Spanish revolution..."* With the foundation of the POUM in 1935, the trotskyites lacked even the semblance of an organisation in Spain, where, a year later, the battle between revolution and reaction would be fought. Following the May Days of 1937 (which marked the final defeat of the revolution in Spain), the trotskyists formed themselves into an outfit they called **'The Bolshevik Leninists of Spain For the Fourth International'**. Unfortunately, they had only slightly more members than words in the organisation's name, perhaps 30 at most, and nearly all of them non-Spaniards. By September 1938, the report to the Founding Conference of the Fourth International announced that this uninspiring total had fallen to between 10-20. This remember, in the middle of the Spanish revolution!

Throughout the thirties, Trotsky took refuge from the impotence of each national section of the Oppostion, in the notion of an overarching international trotskyite movement, directed from a bureaucratic centre. So far from being daunted by the events of 1933 which saw Hitler's rise to power as Chancellor of Germany, and the total failure of dissident communist organisations to combat it, Trotsky saw the remedy in an even more fantastically top-heavy and remote organisation - the tiny grouping which eventually became known to the reverent historians of trotskyism as the Fourth International. In March 1933 he was still arguing that the Third International should not be replaced, but reformed. But by June 1933, he was explicitly arguing for a new International. The idea was that: *"The formation in several countries of strong revolutionary organisation...armed with the Marxist programme and a clear revolutionary perspective, will open a new era in the development of the world proletariat. These organisations will attract all the genuine communist elements who cannot bring themselves to break with the Stalinist bureaucracy..."* In August 1933, an international conference was held of various dissident communist groups, including the German Social democratic SAP. For Trotsky, this was the nucleus of the Fourth International. He wrote a document grandiosely entitled *'The Declaration of the Four. On the Necessity and Principles of a New International.'* It proposed the creation of *"a permanent commission of delegated representatives"*. Trotsky hailed this piece of paper as: *"a momentous result...three organisations that lead a few tens of thousands of workers found no other path but to unite with us on a common document that presupposes a long and stubborn struggle....the only banner under which the proletarian vanguard can rally is the banner of Bolshevism-Leninism."* Writing to a Czech dissident communist, Trotsky wound himself up into even wilder raptures: *"The Declaration of the Four imposes upon us the duty to draft a programmatic manifesto...When we bring this out, the whole political life of the workers' movement, in every organisation and tendency, will inevitably revolve around this document..."* While it may be true that Trotsky's life, and the lives of Trotskyite groups today, revolve around documents of this kind, outside the tiny orbits inscribed by these groups themselves, such declarations reek of pure, clinical insanity. Despite Trotsky's urging that the trotskyites and the SAP should fuse immediately, absolutely nothing tangible ever resulted from the vaunted **'Declaration'.** The allies leading *"tens of thousands"* of workers (Trotsky's estimate) one by one joined the rival centrist **'London Bureau'** which plodded along without perceptible effect until its dissolution in 1939. Trotsky had thrown another *'switch'*, and still the train thundered along regardless.

While Trotsky had noted, in 1934, that the *"organisational basis for the Fourth International is as yet very narrow"*, he was arguing by the beginning of 1935, that the great advantage of such an organisation would be the: *"groups and organisations of hardened Bolsheviks that we have almost everywhere, which are internationally aligned, and therefore, subject to international control."* We have already seen what substance there was for this claim (e.g. 10 *'hardened bolsheviks'* in the whole of Spain). A couple of months later, in the spring of 1935, Trotsky was stressing again that size wasn't everything and that this *'hardness'* counted for a lot: *"Genuinely revolutionary organisations, or at least groups, exist in all countries. They are closely bound together ideologically, and in part also organisationally. Even at present they represent a force incomparably more influential, homogeneous, and steeled than the 'Zimmerwald Left' which ...took the initiative in preparing for the Third International."* Not only did the trotskyite international apparatus consist of a set of levers which were connected to absolutely nothing, but the mechanism of the levers themselves was surrealistically intricate. Even the proto-International of 1930, the so-called **'International Left Opposition'** was bound up in a complex net of hierarchical relations and offices. An International Bureau was established which proved insufficient to stem the factional fighting of the various national sections. It was then buttressed with an International Secretariat and an Administrative Secretariat: which then entered into a dispute with the International Bureau as to the respective authority of each. To give an idea of the real scale and impact of these bureaucratic nightmares, it is worth noting that the *'International Secretariat'* for example, consisted of 5 members, one of whom was a stalinist spy. Only one of these original members remained in the trotskyite movement by 1934. The July 1936 conference of the trotskyite **'International Communist League'** instituted a chillingly complex set of *'Rules Governing the Leading International Bodies'*, which were to consist of a General Council for the Fourth International, a Bureau, and an International Secretariat. In

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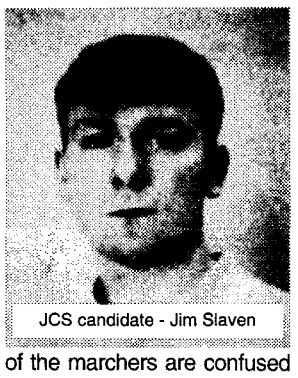
1938, the Bureau became the *'International Executive Committee'* - with a grand total of 15 members. The Fourth International proper came into being in September 1938 - with the full panoply of Bureaus, Secretariats and Executives in tow.

Uniting grand revolutionary perspectives with utterly insignificant social forces, Trotsky launched into a final phase of Messianic proclamations, the pseudo-Marxist tone of which cannot disguise his sad decline into certifiable megalomania.In October 1938 Trotsky declared;*"In the very first months of war, a stormy reaction against the fumes of chauvinism will set in amongst the working masses...an avowed revolutionary movement which will find for its crystallisation no axis other than the Fourth International.Its tempered cadres will lead the toilers to the great offensive."* He predicted that in ten years' time, *"the Fourth International will have become the decisive revolutionary force on our planet."*

In a speech delivered around the same time he let go completely: *"Ten years! Only ten years! Permit me to finish with a prediction: During the next ten years the programme of the Fourth International will become the guide of millions and these revolutionary millions will know how to storm earth and heaven."* Tragically, as the fascist war engulfed entire populations, the trotskyite movement personified in the pronouncements of its leader, had become the Jehovahs Witnesses of the revolutionary left. It is of course necessary to bear in mind that Trotsky was writing against the background of stalinist totalitarianism, of fascist victories in Germany and Spain, and of capitalist reaction elsewhere. Some may think that against such a backdrop, Trotsky's personal desperation is at least comprehensible. What is surely less comprehensible, is the continued existence of *'revolutionary'* groups today which religiously mimic the social composition, structural aspirations, and political perspectives of the original trotskyite movement .

THE JAMES CONNOLLY SOCIETY



JCS candidate - Jim Slaven

The James Connolly Society (JCS) stood a candidate in the May regional elections in Edinburgh's Holyrood/St. Giles' ward. This is the area where Connolly himself stood for election exactly 100 years ago and presented the JCS with an opportunity to emulate his campaign and to present the republican case around the banning of the 1993 James Connolly Commemoration and their militant opposition to the ban. The Labour-controlled Lothian Regional Council colluded with the police, loyalists and fascists in order to have the march banned. Around 200 marchers - including a large Red Action contingent - assembled in Edinburgh city centre and defied the ban. A procession of court cases have taken place since with sentences ranging from fines between £30 and £500 to community service orders and deferred sentences. The regional council, the police and courts have made it clear that they regard supporters of Irish republicanism as outlaws and have conspired to ensure that every possible measure has been taken to discourage support for the JCS and for the Commemoration to remain banned. The militant opposition to the state, as advocated by Red Action has, however, been uneven and inconsistent in it's approach. Last year that opposition took to the streets with the mainstay being the members and supporters of the JCS, the Republican Bands Alliance and Red Action. After the march, this coalition maintained itself through the campaign to raise finance and solidarity for those arrested. However, the original militancy of this coalition, we believe, has been allowed to subside and the basis on which the JCS stood a candidate in Edinburgh is symptomatic of the decline in the militant republican agenda which successfully unified the Commemoration's three main backers last year.

Red Action advocated, supported and campaigned for the JCS candidate, Jim Slaven, during the regional election. Unfortunately, much of the advice which we offered with regard to the politics of the candidacy were either misinterpreted or ignored. We believe that the JCS campaign was flawed in that it did not confine itself to the central issues around the banning of last year's commemoration and that it did not sufficiently identify the Labour Party as the source of the ban, not because it has abandoned socialism but because it was never socialist in the first place! It is apparent that the Labour Party is fully aware of its position towards the marchers but it is equally apparent that some of the marchers are confused about their attitude to Labour. Initially, the JCS approached the election from a tokenistic point of view and there was some talk about "splitting the Labour vote". Red Action believed that the central theme of the campaign should have been, at least, for splitting the Labour vote, if not overturning it completely! The Labour Party in Lothian clearly represents the attitudes of the British state in relation to Ireland. It has used every means at it's disposal to outlaw and isolate republicanism - from petty harassment of JCS members by the police, to whipping up loyalist and fascist bigots as streetfighting fodder. Therefore, to approach them from an angle of some form of appeal or identification with them is a serious error. The JCS election leaflet contained a cartoon which would not have been out of context in the pages of Militant. The perception was that the banning of the commemoration was a witch hunt of the left. If your perception of yourself is that you're a part of the "Labour Movement" as represented by the Labour Party, then it's easy to conclude that it's a witch hunt rather than a state-inspired attack on your fundamental right to exist, march and campaign. Republicanism, by definition is opposed, ideologically and physically, to the British state. It is therefore incumbent on it's supporters to oppose the state (ie to break bans on marching) rather than to appeal to it's 'better nature' (ie the Labour Party). Another flaw of the election campaign was that the JCS tried to take a leaf from Militant by appealing to populism rather than sticking to the main issue. Therefore, we had the ridiculous situation in a local council election of calling for a £250 minimum wage and state pensions and benefits at the same level.

There was no mention of the collusion of the Labour Party in implementing the loyalist agenda, only that the march had been banned by Labour for the last two years. The point and the opportunity was missed. Only 76 votes were polled, which itself is an achievement considering that the area was never canvassed and was only leafletted in the week prior to the election.

There's little doubt that the JCS represent, together with the republican bands, the best of Irish republican support in Scotland. However, the lack in continuity of a militant republican political agenda since the march has contributed to a dilution of that agenda..

IS IT SOMETHING WE SAID?

The system's media produced one programme on a tiny Red organisation just to make the gullible public believe they treat them in the same way as they treat us. There was no mention of ***Red Action*** funding the IRA and INLA-nothing about the INLA organising and paying for ULSTER coachs to the ANaL demo, no surprise filming of the leaders of these groups, like they did on the World in Action programme on Combat 18 and no calls for a ban on these groups.

Sigrun No 2: Northen Area British Movement

The main anti-fascist group in Scotland is ANTI-FASCIST ACTION (AFA), and here the local AFA group is more than usual dominated by ***Red Action***... ***Red Action*** have also tried desperately to involve themselves with Celtic Footbal Club and even produced a pro-IRA magazine, "Tiocfaidh Ar La" with a mock Celtic logo on the front.

Target: Issue 5: Spring 94

The owners of the back-up hall got scared at the reports of a riot and refused us access, meanwhile two Red gangs were allowed to roam London attacking our people. At Bow Road,the main re-direction point, 200 Reds clashed with C18 and 100 British skins, this lead to riot police attacking the nationalists not the Reds. A similar thing happened a few hours later at Waterloo, with riot police attacking hundreds of skinheads enjoying a quiet drink.

'Rampage' Issue 2. Skinzine produced by Nazi band 'English Rose', in reference to the Blood & Honour debacle of January 1994

By nightfall London is estimated to have had about 2000 nationalists there for the gig which is very surprising as the venue would only have held 800 at a squeeze. It is said a gang of tooled up thugs were ambushing unsuspecting little mobs of skins in full view of our lawmen. Also the rent-a-mob rabble of the IRA, ***Red Action***, were milling about with balaclavas on with such items as hammers etc on themselves. WHY WEREN`T THEY NICKED?

British Oi! Issue 27. (Nazi skinhead fanzine)

Red Action was set up in 1981 by people expelled from the Socialist Workers party for"squadism"- allegedly organising gangs to attack National Front members. It now has an estimated membership of 200-300, many of whom adopt the fashion of their far-right rivals; skinhead haircuts, bomber jackets and big boots. The organisation`s official position does not include active support for terrorism; there is no evidence that its leadership has any systematic recruitment policy for terrorist groups.

Sunday Times, 28 March 1993

Jimmy Brown, a former INLA leader who broke away to set up arival faction, claimed the INLA had used ***Red Action*** supporters during the last year. In an unpublished interview, just before he was assassinated last August, he said ***Red Action*** members had provided safe houses and logistical support for operational groups Brown said ***Red Action*** supporters had aided the escape of the INLA gang that murdered Michael Newman,the army recruiting sergeant shot in Derby last April.

Sunday Times, 28 March 1993

Republican terrorists infiltrated the House of Commons posing as German tourists, as they planned the murder of top Tory Airey Neave. And a follow-up wave of political assassinations was thwarted when MI5 infiltrated left-wing groups being used by the terror group, INLA....

The explosives used to kill Neave were supplied by the PLO and delivered to INLA at a secret meeting in Prague....

The INLA went on to form links with a number of left-wing groups in Britain, one of whom is named as ***Red Action***

But a plan to use them to assist in a mainland terror campaign was abandoned when INLA learned that a number of their contacts had been compromised by MI5 and Special Branch operatives, "Former leader Jimmy Brown told me shortly before he was killed that he distrusted ***Red Action***. He said he believed they were run by British Intelligence," McDonald said last night.

Review of "INLA Deadly Divisions" written by Northern Ireland security correspondent Henry McDonald and Jack Holland.Irish World,3 June 1994.

"This book is the finest history, complete with sharp detail, ever written about any para-military organisation." McDonald added.

Irish World ,3 June 1994

"Why do you dress like that?"

Female SWP member to working-class RA members, Isle of Dogs,28\5\94

"Huh,but you're never where the action is!"

ANL Organiser Chris Bambery to AFA leafleters at ANL carnival,28/5/94.

Two weeks ago Michael Newland, the BNP`s press officer, was attacked in his North London home by three men, and suffered a broken hand and fractured ankles and knees. Three weeks ago, Eddie Butler, the BNP`s national elections officer, was slashed across the face. Two candidates and three party workers were also attacked in Newham, East London and BNP candidate Michael Davidson lost an eye.

Mr Tyndall has admitted that some of the attacks were carried out by Combat 18, but the BNP yesterday claimed they were probably the work of a leftwing group called ANTI-FASCIST ACTION.

The Guardian, May 5, 1994

The SWP is responsible for the creation of ***Red Action***.

The Burnley-based BNP splinter group, "The Anti-Marxist League"

Yes,he's in your shops now, the super delux bendy-wendy ***Red Action*** Man.Only ***Red Action*** Man comes with two-tone teeth, detachable chest-wig and optional bad breath. Only ***Red Action*** Man can save Britain's child muggers, rapists, bombers and baby-killers.... So mums and dads, give the kiddies something they will just love to squash, pound, kick and finally tear to shreds - a ***Red Action*** Man dolly, or one of his friends. On sale at most toyshops.

The Anti-Marxist League.

The huge sigh of relief at the failure of Derek Beackon to retain his Isle of Dogs seat, as Searchlight predicted, was replaced by anxiety as the broader picture emerged....Beackon, given a mobile phone by his masters, apparently kept phoning up Scotland Yard complaining he was being followed by members of ***Red Action***, Anti -Fascist Action and probably the combined staff of Searchlight and the Salvation Army. The police found the subjects of his complaint to be local Labour Party canvassers and told Beackon to stop wasting police time.

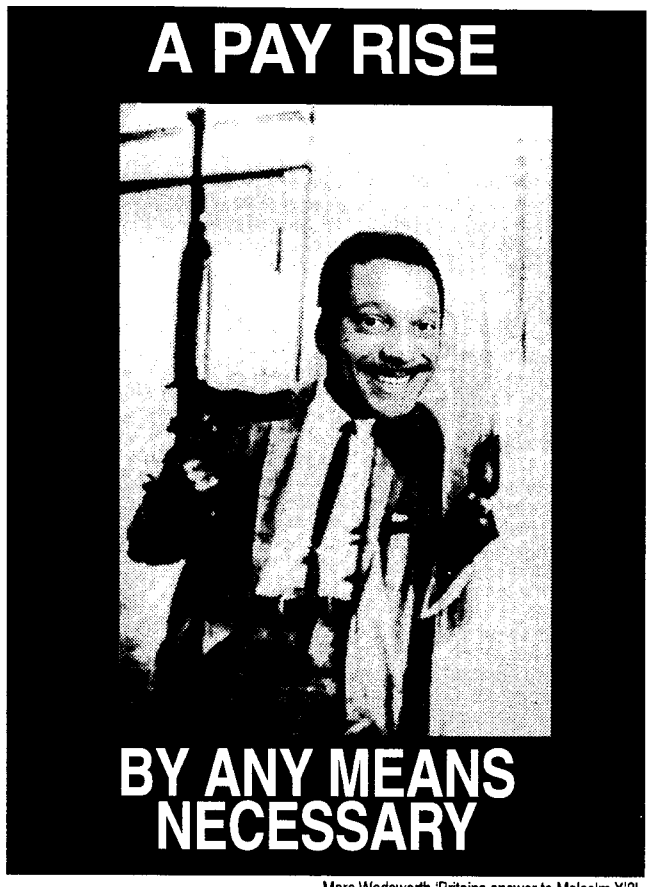
Searchlight, June 1994

Over the Cliff!

It is very rare that the left say what they mean and even rarer that they mean what they say. This was clearly demonstrated to RA members in Manchester recently. Tony Cliff, SWP guru, was speaking on how to defeat the nazi menace so RA went along to hear what he had to say. *"If you think you can defeat them through rational argument you need your head testing ... The nazis have to be smashed with the utmost brutality ... The difference between the ANL and SOS Racisme is physical confrontation ... That is how the ANL have kept back the fascist advance for the last 17 years"* ('77-'82 and '92-'94 = 17 years?!) Chests swelled with pride and faces set into looks of grim determination as the leader addressed his followers. The leader was not only a great thinker, he was also a man of action. This was what we joined for, the ranks thought. Maybe he's pissed, we thought. But he didn't look pissed so we decided to ask big Tony a couple of questions. *"Tony, what does all that mean in practice then? RA and AFA will be trying to do what you talked about in the North West in the run up to the elections so what will the attitude of the ANL/SWP be? Will you still be condemning us, saying that violence plays into the hands of the fascists?"* And, *"What is this we've heard about you writing letters for joint work? If you are going to do all those things you talked about, we're keen to discuss a joint approach."* After the usual crawling from the party hacks Big Tony was back and we waited with baited breath for more swashbuckling tales of daring deeds but were sadly disappointed. He didn't explain how, but we had *"completely misunderstood". "Squadism plays into the hands of the BNP ... the best way of fighting back was shown by the demonstration in Nottingham of 600 after the bookshop was attacked ... getting large numbers onto the streets demoralises the BNP and that's what counts. "The ANL response to the BNP victory in Millwall really demoralised the fascists. Everywhere they go they see stickers and posters for the carnival - it drives them mad"!* Our hopes had been dashed. It had just been *'macho posturing'*. He had just been talking tough. This was probably meant to impress the ranks, though frankly, they seemed visibly relieved that he didn't actually mean it! We also had a good laugh at the Workers Power leaflet dished out at the meeting. Their attempt to cuddle up to the SWP in Manchester resulted in an ultra-liberal leaflet at the Cliff meeting which bleated: *"We say self defence is no offence"*. Do you indeed - one of Trotsky's lesser known slogans, that one! The leaflet didn't, unfortunately, specify for the reader how many times you had to be hit before violence was justified and we will probably resist the temptation to find out.

A Pay Rise - By Any Means Necessary

It seems that the phrase **"By Any Means Necessary"** took on a whole new meaning recently as a meeting of the leadership of the Anti-Racist Alliance ended in fisticuffs. Evidently, **Mark Wadsworth**, self-styled leader of ARA and described at last year's ARA Fest as **"Britain's answer to Malcolm X"!?!**, was demanding along with four of his fellow full-time cronies that they should be permitted to award themselves a wage rise of £100 per month. Seemingly after *'red!'* **Ken Livingstone** had the audacity to actually question the validity of this *"rise"* Wadsworth answered him with a quick jab to the nose. After a bout of scuffling, Wadsworth was finally restrained and the meeting was abandoned amid much acrimony and accusations. Now we would be telling porkies if we said that ***Red Action*** takes no delight in taking the moral high ground here but a couple of points must be answered. Given Livingstone's comments on the **World in Action** programme condemning those that fought the police at Welling as undermining the fight against fascism what would his views now be on what the lefties call *"violence and intimidation within the Labour Movement"?* We only ask because ARA not only have attempted to cover up the incident but have even re-elected Wadsworth as the head of their organisation! While the £24,000 a year salaries of the ARA functionaries are undoubtably index-linked it is just unfortunate they are not performance related!

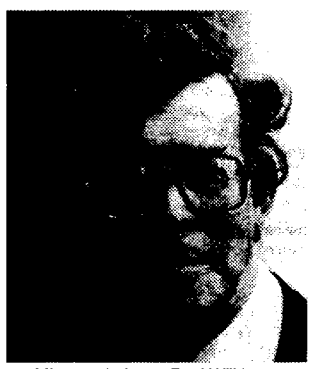


Marc Wadsworth 'Britains answer to Malcolm X'?!

Don't Give Up Your Day Job

In the mid - 1980's Professor Paul Wilkinson became a trustee at the Scotland based Research Foundation for the Study of Terrorism. He is sometimes referred to as the ITN's resident expert on terrorism. His value to the broadcasters is that at the drop of a hat he can pontificate at some length on the immense significance of the latest developments in IRA strategy. Naturally as this is a serious subject his opinions are treated with great reverence, and come of course only at great expense. For instance towards the end of '93 he was hired by the American government as an expert witness at $200 an hour! The value to the client is that it is assumed that the evidence is not only expert but is also independent; a non-aligned unvarnished statement of fact. His analysis is presented and accepted as if it were a vital and unchallenged piece of forensic evidence; little short of being scientific fact. (Did someone mention Dr Frank Skuse?) It would of course be churlish to point out that to really be an expert on terrorism, it might first be necessary to have been a terrorist. Well anyway he certainly knows his stuff. On the 17th October for instance ,the day after the police riot in Welling, he made a guest appearance on Radio Four to offer his expert testament. Funnily enough he never mentioned the role of the plod, but instead insisted that ***Red Action*** had hi-jacked the march! We have it on good authority that ***Red Action*** were indeed grateful for the unexpected plug, but nevertheless **VOR** decided to do some investigating of its own, and we uncovered this little gem.

The case in question is the Trial of the LA 8. The Professor's role is to prove that the PFLP is a terrorist organisation. The following is a close-to-the-mark paraphrase of his last 15 minutes on the witness stand and sounded something like this... **Defense Lawyer David Cole:** Mr Wilkinson, there is a CIA document blaming "Abu Lutf" for a 1976 incident in Istanbul, which you blame on the PFLP. Who is Abu Lutf? **Wilkinson:** Oh he's a leader of the PFLP. **Cole:** Okay. And in the next document the CIA blames ' Farouk Qaddoumi.' Who is Farouk Qaddoumi? **Wilkinson**: Let me think... Yes, he's a leader of the PLFP also. **Cole**: In fact, Mr Wilkinson, isn't it true that Farouk Qaddoumi is actually the foreign minister of the PLO and a leader of Fatah? **Wilkinson**: Well, yes, now that you remind me, he is a PLO leader now.He USED to be in the PFLP. **Cole:** And just when did he leave the PFLP? **Wilkinson**: I don't know exactly, but some time between the Istanbul incident and when he became foreign minister. **Cole**: now please look at the Newsweek article identifying Farouk Quaddoumi as PLO foreign minister; what is the date on that article? **Wilkinson**: It's 1976, the day after the Istanbul event. **Cole:** So what you're telling us is in the 24 hours after this incident, Quaddoumi left the PFLP joined the Fatah, and became the foreign minister of the PLO. And at exactly what time of day did that occur? **Wilkinson:** [Mumble] **Cole**: Now, Mr Wilkinson. another CIA document blames a previously unknown Lebanese organisation for the Istanbul incident; the CIA source is An-Nahar? **Wikinson**: An-Nahar is what they call Yasir Arafat. **Cole**: and finally, Mr Wilkinson, the CIA blames another non-PFLP organisation, based on



MI5 mouthpiece - Paul Wilkinson

source named As-Saffir. Who is As-Saffir? **Wilkinson:** I'm sorry, your honour, I don't know who he is. I don't know this person. **Cole:** Mr Wilkinson, isn't it true that An-Nahar and As-Saffir are the two leading daily newspapers in Beirut?

VOR'S advice to Professor Wilkinson? **Don't give up your day job!**

WE ARE RED ACTION

The collapse of Soviet communism has signalled the end of an era. Capitalism's golden age was 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.

Sectarian 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 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.

WE ARE THE REDS!

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.

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