

Red Action

Issue No 26 September 1986 20p.

THE DEALERS IN DEATH

ANOTHER COP OUT

Nicaragua is a small country of some four million people, situated in that thin strip of land that divides the two great land masses of the American continent. It's recent history has been bloody and turbulent. For decades, the country was totally controlled by the Somoza family dynasty. Backed up by a private army of National Guards, the Somozas maintained a cruel and repressive regime, from which the ruling clique and their circle derived a life of luxury, while the vast majority of the people lived in poverty and squalor.



ally toppled and the Sandinistas formed a government. The social and economic problems that they faced were immense. The country's industry and agriculture, already backward had been further disrupted by the civil war. Illiteracy among the people was rife. There was little sign of the resources necessary, to try and establish a modern state. Never the less, with great enthusiasm, and backed by a large measure of support from the people the Sandinistas embarked on a massive programme of reform, aimed at achieving just that.

Living standards, were as low as anywhere in the world. Education and welfare, were almost non-existent. Nearly all basic freedoms and civil rights were denied. Any attempt to organise any sort of movement for change or reform, was brutally suppressed by the National Guard.

OPPOSITION

The only real opposition to the ruling forces was for many years provided by an armed guerrilla movement, operating from the hills and forests, which cover much of the Nicaraguan country. For many years in the early part of the century, this movement was led by a man called Sandino. In the nineteen thirties, Sandino was killed by the National Guards, but his name was to live on in the revolutionary movement who became known as the "Sandinistas".

In 1979, after many years of long and bloody struggle, the Somoza regime was finally



THE REALITY. SANDINISTAS DEFEND THEIR COUNTRY FROM U.S.A. SPONSORED TERRORISM



THE MYTH. THE U.S.A THE LAND OF FREEDOM AND OPPORTUNITY

The first threat to the regime, came when the old National Guards of Somoza, most of whom had fled over the border to neighbouring Honduras, regrouped and began making raids into Nicaragua, aimed at terrorising the population, and undermining the Sandinista regime. Almost immediately these "Contras" as they were now known, were being given military assistance by the government of the U.S.A., anxious to do everything that it could, to try and topple the "Communist menace" in it's "Own back yard."

ASSISTANCE

It was this assistance, which enabled the Contras to launch the campaign which has carried on to this very day, and which has cost thousands of innocent lives. The Contras make very little distinction about what constitutes a legitimate military target, and their brutality is renowned. Because they don't enjoy any popular support - the one thing that is usually absolutely necessary in order to enable a guerrilla movement to survive - they don't have to worry about losing that support, and so treat the civilian population in a savage fashion, murdering and plundering at will. The only thing which keeps this campaign, which threatens the very existence of the Sandinista regime alive, is U.S. aid.

Recently it seemed that there might be a glimmer of hope. When Ronald Reagan went to the Senate - the U.S parliament - to get them to rubber stamp another ONE HUNDRED MILLION dollars worth of aid for the Contras, the democrats, the supposedly more liberal party, refused to endorse it and Reagan was defeated.

Socialists and progressive minded people the world over gave a shout of joy at what would have meant the ending of the greatest threat to one of the most most exciting and encouraging political and social developments, anywhere

in the world. No doubt they gave one of surprise too, that at least some people in the government of the U.S. seemed to have some sort of conscience.

We should have known better. A couple of weeks later, it was announced that the democrats had dropped their opposition to the aid for the Contras, in return for Reagan's Republican Party dropping their opposition to sanctions against South Africa.

CYNICAL

A more blatant example of the sort of cynical wheeling and dealing which goes on in these places it is difficult to imagine. If you are opposed to what the U.S. is doing in Nicaragua, as certain individuals in the U.S. government claim to be, then how can you start bargaining over it. It's not some minor political issue that you're talking about, it's people's lives. No doubt the liberal minded democrats will be congratulating themselves on what they have achieved for the black South African people (not that the sanctions will ever finally be applied anyway). More to the point, is the fact that they are just as guilty as Reagan and his crowd, of sponsoring and backing one of the most brutal and murderous movements in the world.

TRUTH

The simple truth is that the U.S. government, every part of it, is the agency responsible for causing more death destruction and suffering, than any other on this planet. The aid that they are sending to the Contras will be used for no other purpose than to murder and terrorise innocent men women and children, and to try and destroy the brave efforts, of a long oppressed and brutalised people, of a tiny country to build a better life for themselves.

If the printworkers involved in the dispute at Rupert Murdoch's News International plant at Wapping, had been hoping that this year's Trades Union Congress, might bring some new dimension to their dispute, they must have been sadly disappointed. Sure enough the Congress voted overwhelmingly to call upon the electricians union, the E.E.P.T.U. to stop it's members working at Wapping, but will this actually mean anything in practice. Earlier this year, the T.U.C. General Council had threatened to actually expell the electricians unless they stopped their members working there, and they didn't take any notice then, so they are hardly likely to take any more notice of a request. The response of the Council, to this total defiance of their agreed policy and the threatened consequences, was to quietly let the whole matter drop.

What a typical response. How often have we witnessed this spectacle, of union leaders threatening all sorts of dire consequences over some issue, only to do absolutely nothing when the time comes to put their words into effect

fresh Tory assault, on the rights of trade unions, and the living standards of workers. A lot of blather and bluster, but precious little action. You could almost be forgiven for believing that they want to see the Tories trample all over us.

ENFORCE

For example, when the government first announced it's plans to legally enforce the unions to hold ballots for all internal elections, and to provide the money to pay for them. Nearly all of the union leaders were up in arms at this "Totally unacceptable interference" in their affairs, threatening to defy any such legislation.

However as soon as the engineers union, the A.U.E. took the money, again in defiance of a threat of expulsion from the T.U.C. General Council, others soon started to follow suit. No doubt most of them soon will. Witness the general secretary Norman Willis's statement at this year's T.U.C that "Ballots are here to stay".

In fact of course this isn't actually the case. Most certainly there is nothing that union leaders would like better than to have all of their members happy and content, earning good money in good conditions. But the point is, the only way you can achieve such a situation is to fight for it, and in general, the leadership of the Trades Union movement, as it stands today, is totally incapable of organising and leading such a fight.

REASON

It was the same when the government first announced it's plans to withdraw the right to join a union, for workers at G.C.H.Q. All sorts of action was threatened by the leaders of various unions, but in the end, the only action that was taken, came from the workers themselves, without any lead at all.

And so with a few obvious exceptions (most notably in the case of the miner's strike) we see the same story, time and time again with every

To find the reason for this, we have to look at the nature of Trade Unions today, and the role of the leadership within them.

The unions of today, bear little resemblance, to those militant groups of exploited poverty stricken workers, who gave birth to the Trade Union Movement. The large unions today are multi million pound corporations and are run as such. They have their own large properties worth millions of pounds, and massive investments, in various financial concerns. These corporations are run by staffs of full

CONTINUED ON PAGE TWO



WORKERS IN DISPUTE DITCHED BY THE TRADES UNION LEADERS. SADLY AN ALL TOO COMMON SIGHT

MESSIAH OF WHAT

Earlier this year, a black American by the name of Louis Farrakan was banned from entering this country. This event passed unnoticed by most people in this country, most of whom have never heard of him. In America however, Farrakan is far from being unknown.

Farrakan is in fact a black fundamentalist religious preacher. However any similarity between him and other more traditional religious preachers ends there. For Farrakans religious teachings are mixed in with a brand of militant black separatism, and virulent anti-semitism. This message, he delivers to packed mass rallies of fanatical followers up and down the country.

Perched up high upon a stage, surrounded by a paramilitary style bodyguard, Farrakan whips his audiences up into a frenzy with his fiery rhetoric. The blacks are the chosen people. They must separate themselves from the rest of society. He calls for separate cities, industries, hospitals and farms for black people. In fact for total black separatism. Alongside this he pours out hatred and contempt for the Jewish religion. The Jews are "Agents of the Devil". One of his more memorable comments in this vein was that "Hitler was a wickedly great man".

There is little doubt that Farrakan's creed is beginning to strike a chord amongst certain sections of black American society. At a rally in Los Angeles, he attracted 15,000, in Washington 20,000, while in Madison Square Garden in New York, over 25,000 fanatical followers turned out to greet him.

SUPRISE

It is no great surprise that many black people can find hope and inspiration in a creed such as Farrakan's. For the past hundreds of years, in fact ever since black and white civilisations first met, the story for black people, has been one of subjugation and oppression. As the white industrial nations sent their armies into the lands to conquer and plunder whole civilisations and cultures were wiped out, and their people enslaved and scattered to the four corners of the earth. This genocide was justified by the assertion that black people were "barbaric savages" who had to be "Christianised" and "Civilised". The legacy of this contemptuous racism is all around us today. Throughout all of western civilisation, the descendants of those enslaved people suffer still from the callous indifference and racist attitudes of white society and institutions. Proportionately black people suffer far more

from social evils such as bad housing and educational facilities, unemployment etc, than do white people. Thousands of their people languish in prisons. Small wonder that when someone comes along promising to lead you out of all this into a "Promised land" there are many willing to listen.

SUPPORT

As socialists, we fully support the right of black people as an oppressed minority group, to organise amongst themselves to improve their living standards, or defend their communities or whatever. However, at the same time, we also have to say that the ideas of people such as Louis Farrakan do not hold the long term answer, to so many of the problems faced by black people today. Whilst it is certainly true that it is racism which causes black people to suffer the economic problems of society much more than white people, it is not racism which actually causes those problems in the first place. They are caused by the economic system under which that society operates. By capitalism. Unemployment, bad housing, poverty etc are all inevitable products of the capitalist system, and any attempt to solve those problems merely by changing the racial composition of society without attacking the system, is doomed to failure.

This of course is exactly the argument that we have always used against white racists, who try and blame the presence of black people in this country for the existence of economic problems. As we quite rightly point out to them, back in the 1920s and 30s when there were hardly any black people in this country, there was even greater poverty and unemployment than there is today. Economic problems are caused by economics, and not by the colour of people's skins.



LOUIS FARRAKAN JUST ANOTHER RELIGIOUS WAFFLER

And of course the argument applies just the same the other way round. Even if Farrakan and his followers were able to achieve their dream, and escape to all black cities serviced and supplied by all black industries, unless there was a fundamental change in the economic nature of that society - something they've never mentioned - they would soon find that there were still black people destitute, or scratching a meagre living doing shitty jobs. The only difference would be that it would be black people that were employing them. There would still be black people languishing in the jails. But it would be black people who put them there.

In the dream cities of Louis Farrakan, those who suffer the worst from the evils of our society today, the black working class, may well be spared from having white society observe them in their suffering. But they would suffer it just the same.

INCAPABLE

In the final analysis, Louis Farrakan has no real answers for anyone. He is a religious zealot, and like all religious zealots of whatever creed, he is incapable of a sober analysis of economic and political problems, to find their true causes and solutions.

That is why like all zealots he prefers to rely on fanaticism, to attract those who are confused, desperate and easily manipulated to his cause, and whip them up into a frenzy of devotion. It is the way in which he diverts attention from the fact that in the cold light of day, he doesn't have any answers to anything.

It also explains why he has found it expedient, to use the oldest trick of demagogues throughout history, and offer his hysterical followers a scapegoat to vent their wrath on. How sad that the race which today probably suffers the most from racism, should produce a movement which turns upon those who have suffered most from it through out history.



One of the things that first draws many people into becoming a political activist, is a feeling of anger. An anger at many of the great injustices that exist in our society, and a genuine desire to want to do something to change things. And so you decide to become involved in political activity, for the first time, and at this stage most people throw themselves into it with massive enthusiasm and commitment.

With the passing of time however, this gut feeling tends to wane a bit. It's not that you are any less aware of the injustices in society. In fact it's the opposite. You are more aware because you have learnt more about them. It's just that you have argued and been involved in activities around them so many times, that it has become to a certain extent routine. You are not moved or angered in quite the same way as you were in the early days of your personal crusade against the injustices of the capitalist system. You have become hardened to it.

Every once in a while though, you will come across a situation, that will arouse your anger and rage every bit as high as it was in the early days of your political activities. Such an experience occurred to me, on this years Red Action trip to Belfast.

Two years ago, on the same trip, I first met a man who I shall call Bob. At the time he had just been released from prison. When he was seventeen of eighteen, he had been involved in robbery to raise funds for the republican movement, during the course of which a policeman was shot. He ended up getting twelve years, three of which he served on the blanket protest. This meant that for those three years, he was locked in a single cell for twenty three hours every day, with no clothes on, no reading material or radio, and not even a mattress to lay on.

LONDON

When he left prison, he joined the Irish Republican Socialist Party, and occasionally spoke as a representative of them at political meetings. Once, when he came to London to speak, I met him and he came up to my home town and we had a night out in my local and he met a few of my friends, and we just generally had a good night out as you do when a friend from afar visits you.

After a while Bob found himself becoming disenchanted with some political developments within his organisation. Perhaps he was also beginning to feel the unbelievable pressure that republican activists in Ireland have to suffer. Anyway about a year ago he left the movement.

So there he was. Still only in his twenties. Probably somewhat disillusioned with a political struggle for which he had already sacrificed a third of his life, scratching out a living in an area where unemployment runs at over fifty per cent, getting a few days work here and there,

at fifteen pounds a day less tax. Not surprisingly perhaps, he decided to follow the path taken by so many young people in his position and come to London.

So him and a friend came over. He got himself a job and somewhere to live, and before long was doing alright for himself. Earning a few bob, going out with a local girl, perhaps catching up on a few of the things which he had missed out on. (Think of all the things that you did in the years from your late teens to your mid twenties, and try and imagine having them all blotted out.)

RAID

Then one morning a few months ago, he awoke to find his flat surrounded by armed police. He was arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, and held for seven days. There was no suggestion that he was involved in any illegal activities - in all his time in Britain he had not even contacted any political associate - but he was deemed to be an "undesirable" and at the end of his seven days, he was served with an exclusion order. This is a clause in the P.T.A., which allows the government to deport anyone from the North of Ireland, back to there from mainland Britain WITHOUT GIVING ANY REASON WHATSOEVER. If they so much as set foot back on the British mainland, even without committing any offence, they can get five years.

If ever the reality of the fact that it is one thing to read and know about injustice but a totally different thing to experience or understand it was brought home to some one, it was brought home to me by this story. Of course I knew about the existence of the P.T.A. and knew that it was an unjust piece of legislation used to oppress and intimidate not only republicans, but all Irish people. But somehow, I suppose just like many others, I had never truly understood the way in which it is used to disrupt and wreck people's lives.



DEMONSTRATING AGAINST THE P.T.A.

CONTINUED

FROM PAGE ONE

Another Cop Out

time workers, and managers many of whom have never even worked in the industry they are supposed to be representing, but entered full time union beauracracy as a career. These people often end up on the decision making bodies of the union, the Executive Councils.

Whilst these bodies do of course take an interest in the affairs of their grass roots members, by far the biggest day to day pressure on them is to ensure the smooth operation and well being, of the multi million pound corporations. Industrial action and strikes can be very damaging to this. Firstly members contributions so vital to finance it all are cut off, and then if the action should clash with the law in any way, there is always the possibility that all their funds could be sequestered as has recently happened to the printers and miners. Union leaders are also very scared by the fact that during strikes, many rank and

and file unionists, start to use initiative and think and act themselves independent of the leadership. A terrifying prospect for the leaders of a movement built on the passive support of it's members.

For all of these reasons, most union leaders fear strikes nearly as much as the bosses. Of course they will make loud noises and threaten industrial action when they are under attack, because it's the only weapon that they have. But time and time again, when the crunch comes they are afraid to use that weapon, the only exceptions being those rare occasions when a union executive does act in a principled and honourable manner - as with the miners - or when the pressure from the membership is so great that they have to be seen to do something, as with the printers.

And so time and time again they back down from any sort of real action, preferring to

rely on negotiation. This might have worked during the fifties and sixties, when the capitalist system was booming economically, and it could afford to hand out the goodies. But today the system is in a mess, and not only can it not afford to hand out any more goodies, it also has to start to claw back some of those it has given out.

CLASS WAR

That is why we have the sort of Tory Party that we have today, totally committed to naked class warfare and prepared to use any weapon they have in that war. On their side, they have the media, the law, massive resources etc. The working class have nothing but their power to organise together. That however, is a very powerful weapon. The trouble is, the ones who are supposed to be the generals are afraid to use it.

I'M AN UPSTART

When the following interview was submitted for publication, there was some debate over whether some parts of it might be offensive to some people. It was decided to print it as it was, and allow a Red Action member to comment on it.

The Angelic Upstarts, were one of the best bands to emerge from the Punk explosion of 1977. They became one of Oi's top bands and picked up a large skinhead following. Their Goerdie roots and down to earth socialism is well expressed in their music. Their singer "Mensi" has ventured into poetry, with poems like "Heath's Lament" about the 1972 miner's strike, and Goerdie's wife, about a sacked miner. The band have moved into reggae, pop and folk, without losing punk's cutting edge. Several of Red Action's own angelic upstarts, journeyed up to North London on a wet and windy August night to find out more.

R.A. You've always put yourselves over as a socialist band, but in the south at least you've had a regular fascist following. Why is this, and what do you think of them.

MENSI. I think that they see in me, something that they'd like to be. Sometimes they come for the row and some enjoy the songs. Some of them know the words to some songs I've wrote and they're Nazis. When "England" came out it had all the pros, there's nothing wrong with a bit of pride. A lot of young right wing kids are into criminal tendency, like our song "Police Oppression, but they don't realise that they're heading for a police state.

R.A. Do you think that songs such as "England" and "White Riot" get taken the wrong way by sections of the audience? Do you think that they pick up on lyrics like "Kids on the Street" and "Thin Red Line".

MENSI. I'd like to think that they pick up on lyrics, especially "Thin Red Line". If you can't understand "White Riot" there's something wrong with the standard of education. Fucking hell I wanna riot. "England" could be taken the wrong way, but you've only got to talk to us to see what we're about.

R.A. By being and staying a working class socialist band do you think you're alienated, unlike say the "Redskins" who've compromised to reach a larger audience?

MENSI. It's nowt, just means that you're popular. I'm not the housewives choice, you've got to face facts. I'm doing it now on the scale we had in 1977-79, but in different countries. To be popular you've got to say what's popular. There's a certain part of us that's not for sale. You'll never be like Rod Stewart, so make yourself a cunt cos it'll never happen. You've got to hang on to your ideals. After all these years I'm still the same. You've got to be realistic. I begrudge Rod Stewart, but I just do ten smaller gigs to his big one, and I enjoy it. Isn't that better? Band Aid made me sick. I admire the thought behind it, but it was just a popstar promotion. If all of them popstars didn't exist, they wouldn't starve in the first place. There's people like Oxfam who campaign for years but don't get knighted.

R.A. Are you involved in politics outside of the band?

MENSI. I'd use to have loved to have been in the Labour Party, but after the miner's strike I'm what you call a non combatant. At least Thatcher's honest. She says "I hate the cunts, and I'm gonna piss all over them", while Kinnock says "I'm a big time socialist" but he's a bigger cunt. My father always voted Labour, but last time he went out of his way not to. I feel well out of place. I prided myself on being a Labour man but not now. The Daily Mirror, a paper that says it's Labour is shit. At least the Sun is honest. You know it lies.

R.A. Right from your first single "The Murder of Liddle Towers" (a song about a man kicked to death by the police after being arrested for being drunk) to newer stuff like "Brighton Bomb", you've spoken out about injustice in society. Does this create hassle for the band. I know that after "Liddle" you got lots of shit from the police.?

MENSI. It still happens up North. Brian Hayes our guitarist is Irish. We went to football at Sunderland, went into the paddock, and the old Bill clocked us, came up behind us, and started digging us saying "Open your mouth now". Two of them went up to the inspector at the back, and said "We can't wind them up enough". Brian says he's never seen them in his life. The coppers hadn't but the inspector knew us. They wanted us to start. I told the crowd what was happening, and put my arms up in the air and said "I'm doing nothing". At half time they threw my brother out. I went up to them and said "Where's my brother?". They just looked at me so we went out. They just try to wind us up. It still happens.

R.A. You've worked in the pits, and have done songs such as "King Coal", and "Nottingham Slag" about the pits, what do you think about scabs, Scargill and the aftermath of the strike?

MENSI. I've always thought, and still do, that Scargill was the finest Union man. I don't know about Watt Tyler, I've never met him. There were loads of Notts lads on strike. The U.D.M. will have to come back to the N.U.M., as they did when Spencer did it in 1926. Miners who worked in Notts came from all over the country with jobs offered. It was all planned.

R.A. You were one of the pillars of "Oi" (a musical trend that emerged just after "Punk Rock") What do you think about Gary Bushell (a music writer heavily involved in the Oi scene) scabbing for the Sun?

MENSI. He's a scab in every respect. He's never spoken to me since he scabbed. He says "I've got no-one to answer to, I'm looking after my family". But that's exactly what scabs say. It's the same with every strike with every family. At one point we were real close. I thought he was like a secret agent against the Sun, but it never came. He phoned me up when he first scabbed, but I wasn't in. I'm glad I wasn't. I could not speak to him, cos I felt so close to him. I don't know how Sounds have the nerve to print his name. If this was the war, he'd be hung.

R.A. You've said that Tony Benn should be Prime Minister. Do you think that he or anyone, can pull Britain out of the shit that it's in?

MENSI. Tony Benn takes a lot of stick because he speaks the truth. I really admire Ken Livingstone, but he's shit out a bit. The only man I really admire is Scargill. He won't compromise himself. He wants to help the miners.

R.A. What do you think of bands similar to yourselves musically and politically, like "The Neurotics" or "Red London"?

MENSI. I like all sorts of bands, especially those deep into the lyrics. I like Red London. Patty is a great singer, they could have gone a lot further. The Neurotics? I don't know. I was a bit suspicious cos one of them wore dark glasses.

R.A. What about "Skrewdriver" (National Front band)

MENSI. Shocking. I went to a Skrewdriver gig about three years ago. I walked in and the atmosphere was filthy. I had half a pint and left. I should have stayed, because the singer Ian Stewart, had on a German helmet that was too big, with a plastic bag in it to make it fit. It slid down his face during a song, and nearly suffocated the stupid bastard. You've got to feel sorry for Ian, cos he wanted to be a star, but couldn't because he's a dick. They should make a T.V. series, cos he's a better comedian than Dustin Gee. He's a dick.

R.A. Do the rest of the band your political sentiments?

MENSI. I've got to be honest Half of them are happy as long as they get a drink. Brian will back up anything that I've said.

R.A. Do any of them write lyrics?

MENSI. I think that that's my job. It's not that they can't, they just don't.

R.A. What do you think that the Upstarts best achievement was, and what would you like it to be?

MENSI. I think the best achievement in the world was being a pain in the arse. We've had two articles in the Police Gazette, one about "Liddle" and the other about violence at gigs. Stanley Bailey, the Chief Constable of Northumbria even said that we were "Less than animals".

The Upstarts have a long list of releases. Among the best are the "Two Million Voices" album, which has got to be an all time great, a good variety of style, with what must be about the best account of today's Britain put to music, "The Reason Why" album, more in a pop vein but again with lyrics that strike right into the heart, and including a couple of songs not to be missed, "Women in disguise" and "Solidarity". Also look out for the singles "The Murder of Liddle Towers", "Never ad Nothing" "Out of Control" and "Brighton Bomb", the front cover of which shows a limbless Thatcher sitting on a stick of Brighton rock, pumping blood all over the place. Not to be missed. Anyway thanks to Mensi and the Upstarts and all the best to them. Oi Oi.

MARCH PAST

Fifty years ago, in 1936, fascism was on the march all over Europe. In Germany Hitler was in power, in Italy Mussolini, in Spain a civil war was soon to end in the establishment of yet another fascist power. In Britain also, there was a fascist movement that aspired to putting this country under the reign of the jackboot. It was called the British Union of Fascists. Its leader and would be fuhrer, was a man named Oswald Mosley.

Mosley attempted to organise his movement around traditional fascist tactics ie use physical force to intimidate your opponents off the streets. These tactics were resisted by the anti fascist movement, particularly in the east end, where the fascists tried to intimidate the large Jewish community.

Eventually after many fierce and sometimes bloody clashes Mosley announced his intention to take a march of fascists right through the east end. Immediately, the anti fascist movement announced it's intention to stop this march, and adopted slogan made famous by the anti fascist forces, in the Spanish civil war "THEY SHALL NOT PASS" The scene was set for what was to become one of the most famous political events in the recent history of this country. The Battle of Cable Street.

On the 4th of October, the day of Mosley's proposed march an estimated one hundred thousand anti fascists turned out to oppose him. His march never got anywhere near where it was meant to go, and the battle as such was fought between the anti fascists and the police, who were trying to clear a way through for the fascists. It was a massive and most welcome victory for the anti fascist movement at a very difficult time.

This year sees the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Cable Street, and to commemorate this event, Anti Fascist Action are organising a march through the scene of the battle. It is particularly apt to commemorate such an event, at a time such as this, when racial violence and attacks are on the increase particularly in the area of the east end. We urge everyone to attend this event. The final details of the march are not yet available but will be shortly. Keep that weekend free, and make sure that we do pass.



OSWALD MOSLEY. HE DID NOT PASS

VIEWPOINT

It is a fact that there are a number of people, men and women in the socialist movement, who find the use of the word cunt sexist and offensive. Equally, there are a number of men and women who don't. Personally, I have never really been able to understand, why one particular swearword should be any more offensive to someone than any other. Most women that I am closest to politically do not make a big issue out of the use of the word. But I am aware that many of them aren't totally happy about it. The crucial point, is that it is obviously an issue, and if you are producing a socialist paper, you have to take that into account. It's not so much a case of your own personal opinion of the rights or wrongs of it, but one of respect for those who do find it offensive. A socialist paper must always aspire to the highest standards and try to avoid anything that may be offensive to any particular section of the socialist movement. I don't think that the article on this page can be held to come into that category. It is a direct quotation of someone using language used by millions of people men and women. It would be different say if it was a Red Action editorial. However having printed it, I think that it is right that we show that we are aware that it is an issue. If any readers have any comments to make on this issue we will be glad to print them. Swear-words will not be censored.

Red Action pamphlet

We are Red Action

A SHORT HISTORY OF RED ACTION. WHERE DID IT COME FROM, AND WHY?

30p

First published two years ago, this pamphlet, although slightly out of date now, still gives a good insight into the discussions and events that lead to the formation of Red Action. Available from the box number, price 50p inclusive of postage and packing.

SUPPORT RED ACTION



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

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

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

The cost for this is £10 for one year.

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

PO box 158
Hatfield
Herts

NEWS FROM NOWHERE

"If everyone got off their arse and did the sort of job Frank did the other night, the country would be in a good shape". Bruno's manager Terry Lawless, speaking soon after the Bruno/Witherspoon fight. Even if he got everyone to agree to being punched in the head by a large black man, how does he imagine that that would help the economy. Poor old Tell. Brain damage by proxy.

Who says the N.H.S. is up the creek, and our social priorities are wrong. Only last month, an old lady on holiday in a remote part of Scotland, was rushed by helicopter to a hospital more than a hundred miles away, after merely complaining of a constriction in her throat. This event was featured as the lead item on the news (six minutes) and included archive footage of a former emergency, and of the old dear's 80th birthday party. That's all very well for the Queen mother, but because of the sort of system we live under, we are told that we couldn't possibly afford to extend even a tiny percentage of the consideration and publicity, to the hundreds of old ladies of a similar age, who are condemned to die of hypothermia this winter. Caring capitalism?

RED ACTION IN ACTION

In July sixty members of Anti Fascist Action, half of them Red Action supporters, travelled to Bury Saint Edmunds, to oppose a proposed National Front March. From the point of view of the fascists, the whole thing was a disaster, with the "race warriors" taking second place in a number of skirmishes before and after the march, which was itself completely disrupted at one stage, when a Red Action led ambush in a narrow side street, caused the police to rush forward, leaving the back of the march unprotected. The resulting free for all lasted a couple of minutes, during which time the N.F. lost a banner, and a lot of their previous arrogance. Nine anti-fascists were arrested, and charged with public order offences. The day ended on a high note, when while under police escort to the edge of town, we came upon a member of the Front's National Directorate, and a few of his lackeys on foot. As we swept past, to the utter astonishment of the local "plod" one of the political soldiers was felled by a cheeky denim clad arm, swinging a blunt instrument. The motorised "cudgel carrier" then sped off, hotly pursued by an outraged Old Bill, leaving current N.F. chairman Nick Griffin holding his hands in the air, as if appealing for divine intervention. Apart from the ritual condemnation of the days events in the local press by the N.F. and the Labour Party, there was in stark contrast, a private endorsement from a veteran anti-fascist, who actually lost members of his family in the Concentration camps, and was himself arrested on the demo, who described the attitude and tactics of the anti-fascists as "inspiring". Sufficient vindication for anyone, I would have imagined.

Once again, Red Action sent a delegation to attend the annual anti-internment demonstration in Belfast. It again proved to be an invaluable experience, especially for the first time visitors, as in just one weekend, the striking visual evidence, destroys many of the myths created by the media, and a well oiled propaganda machine, that has over the last seventeen years, tried to justify and defend the existence of what is basically a British army of occupation in Ireland. Apart from the march itself, which was declared illegal from the start, the special rapport that exists between the I.R.A. and the local people, was vividly illustrated in a club in West Belfast, by the surprise appearance of two armed and uniformed "provos". The audience listened intently, as the obviously young volunteer, thanked them for their support over the past year, and spoke of the I.R.A.'s determination to "broaden the struggle. The effect on the crowd was electric, and they had to be repeatedly warned not to voice their approval, in case it alerted the security forces who were outside. Even then the crowd could still barely control their enthusiasm, until the so called "terrorists" had safely left. Passing an army fort one evening, a Red Action contingent were amazed, when in a complete reversal of roles, they were taunted and stoned by the soldiers and R.U.C. men inside screamed out such asides as "English bastard", "What are you doing over here" and "Get back to your own country" cries quite often heard in this part of the world, but not usually from such a quarter. Given this evidence, it is easy to see how in their briefing on the situation, some of the subtleties of the conflict, may well have been lost in the translation.

Red Action members and supporters who did not travel to Belfast, attended an anti-internment march in London, organised by the Irish Freedom Movement, to help ensure the safety of the Republican Flute Bands, who had come from Scotland. There were no major incidents, though one Red Action supporter was arrested when renewing a "nodding" acquaintance with a prominent member of the National Front Directorate.

A large turn out of Red Action supporters at the Arsenal v Celtic game ensured a highly successful paper sale, with over 90 copies sold.

There is a myth, fondly perpetrated by Ulster Loyalists which goes something like this. "Time and again, the Northern Irish have proved their loyalty to Britain. In two World Wars, they fought with bravery and distinction. Southern Ireland on the other hand, took no part in World War Two, when the "free" nations fought the Nazis". I hate to disillusion anyone, but that is all bull-shit. Here are the facts. Thousands more Irishmen from the Republic, volunteered to fight the Nazis, in alliance with their historical enemy, than those from the North. Of the twelve Victoria Crosses awarded to Irishmen, all the recipients were either from the Republic, or to Northerners from the Nationalist side of the sectarian divide. Incidentally, of the 1,348 Victoria Crosses ever awarded, 167 went to Irishmen. The ungrateful bastards. After all Britain did for them.

The Prime Minister suffers from a rare condition called "Dupuy Treens Contracture" which recently forced her to have an operation on her hand. According to St. Mary's hospital, it is often associated with drinking alcohol and, wait for it, mental disorder. Dr Ian Paisley, whose whole political life has been devoted to working alongside the mentally unstable, offered a second opinion. "The hand that signed the Anglo Irish Agreement has been paralysed" he said "This is a sign from God". Who could argue?

Just like Bobby Charlton, who reckoned that hooligans should be birched, because jail was no deterrent as it was often "better than where they came from" Norman Tebbit also recently came out with a real gem. "These days it is not unusual, for people to take jobs that leave themselves worse off than they would have been on benefit". I don't suppose that improving housing, or improving working conditions would help alleviate either problem.

"The great secret in life, is to choose the right people to help you do the job. I hope I shall get better and better at it, if I'm not completely half witted". Prince Charles. Well Chas, life can be amazingly cruel sometimes. You inherited your wealth and social position, and many experts believe that intelligence may also be hereditary. Unlucky.

Sir Raymond Ligo, the Chief Executive of British Aerospace, recently called for tax relief for those employing domestic servants. Just think, perhaps we'll all be able to afford one then.

According to figures from the Child Poverty Action Group, on the morning after the 1986 budget, the Duke of Westminster, was some 600 MILLION pounds better off because of tax changes. I bet he wasn't rushing around stocking up on fags before it either.

Finally for the benefit of those in the know who will appreciate it, I offer you a quote from the Guardian newspaper dated the 4/8/86 which reads, "O'Farrell doesn't dispute that individual members may commit crimes, but he says that there is no organised activity" What's this you ask? Another supergrass. Is the bastard spilling the beans on us. Fear not, they are merely the words of Michael O'Farrell, President of the Oakland California Branch of the Hells Angels, speaking recently to a reporter from the Los Angeles Times. He gets about doesn't he.

Through the post

Dear Red Action

I am writing to add some comments to the letter about Red Wedge printed in the last issue. Red Wedge believes that a Labour victory is vital at the next election, but I believe that this is naive. After 7 Labour governments since the party's formation, what have we got to show for it. A few minor concessions at most. Eating the same old Tory shit, but with a bit more sugar on top. To be fair, there are some committed socialists of one sort or another in the Labour Party. But I still see it as the left wing of the Tory Party.

Time and again they've sold us down the river. Maybe Red Wedge can put pressure on these people they've elected to follow their promises through. Maybe, but I doubt it. Kinnoek keeps swinging righter and righter, and is expelling more and more socialists from the Party. So why does he support Red Wedge? Perhaps he feels that a bunch of kids (many not old enough to vote) poststars and comedians count for nothing but voting fodder and headlines. Once their votes are cast, he won't worry about them.

Do Red Action and Red Wedge have anything in common? I think that Red Wedge's heavy accent on culture, is definitely in line with what Red Action has been saying since its formation. Working class culture is a perfect medium for putting across politics as something relevant, and not as something owned by trendy lefty shitheads.

However, Red Wedge should try and steer clear of the trap other lefty music campaigns have fallen into, of putting the accent too much on Reggae, Asian and wight on wadical bands. Red Wedge wants to come onto the streets, why not from them? Hopefully, it will use its resources locally, putting on local bands and building support at the grass roots, rather than relying on big tours. After all, 20 small gigs, could add up to 1 style council show, and the rewards of the work put into 20 communities is more valuable than 1 summer gig where everyone wears a vote Labour badge.



Red Wedge has approached Anti Fascist Action, with a view to putting on gigs. I would hope that Red Action would take a very active role in this. Our tour for the miners was played mainly by punk and skinhead bands, the sort of bands other left groups wouldn't put on. But we proved that taking music not from the students union, but from the streets needn't be a failure, and a considerable sum was raised.

Red Action has a good deal of respect, in areas of the music scene which the left either neglect, ignore or slag off. We still sell papers and go to gigs, and interest in our politics is always strong.

I would hope that A.F.A./Red Wedge gigs, would include bands such as this, and not just reggae and African jazz bands. Although Black, Asian or whatever culture should be included in any anti racist movement, I think we should push at the white working class audience. After all, who makes up the N.F. troops in this country. Why not try and take away their potential supporters before they get into dodgy politics. The Front are already making some headway, with Rock against Communism, and the racially pure (?) Skrewdriver.

This is something that Red Wedge and A.F.A. will have to consider, I am confident though, that with Red Action's involvement, we can pull off something as successful and exciting as our miner's tour.

Whilst I still hold doubts about Red Wedge's aims being achieved, I see no harm in socialists pushing broad issues which we all agree on anyway as Richard Edwards would say "inna unity style"

Tim
Red Action
Under Fives

WE ARE RED ACTION

Red Action is an organisation founded to work towards the ending of the capitalist system of production, and the establishment of a socialist one.

CAPITALISM: The working class form the overwhelming majority of society. They produce everything, but not for themselves. It becomes the property of the minority upper class. A worker would have to pay many times his/her wages to buy back the goods that they produce in that time. It is legalised robbery. This system also allows the minority to decide what should be sold and when on the basis of their personal profit rather than social need. It is this that allows food to rot in butter and beef mountains, while people go hungry, and buildings to stand empty while people are homeless. Capitalism also allows a small minority to own all of the resources and means of production on which we all depend—raw resources, tools, machinery, etc. This means that most people have no say in how these resources are used. Billions of pounds in labour and materials can be, and often are wasted on socially useless projects while people die for the want of medical equipment that could have been produced. Private ownership of these resources also allows the owners to deny to society the use of them as they wish. It is this, that causes people to be unemployed while the machines on which they could be producing the things that they need stand idle.

SOCIALISM: A socialist society will be one that millions of people will be involved in shaping. Therefore no one group of people can say exactly what that society will be like. However, there are certain features that would have to be present in society, before we would consider giving up the struggle for socialism.

PUBLIC OWNERSHIP OF THE MEANS OF PRODUCTION: Only this will create a basis whereby the whole of society can collectively decide how best to employ all of its resources, mechanical and human. In this way wastefulness, whether by the production of socially useless things, or by enforced idleness of machines or work force would be eliminated. When all resources are used in useful production instead of just a part of them as at present, the amount of labour required from each individual would be much less than at present. Development of new technology would further reduce the labour requirement. Society will stand on the brink of an era of leisure and plenty that past generations could not even have dreamed of.

CONTROL OF SOCIALIST SOCIETY: In capitalist society all of the institutions of social control—army police force judiciary—are run and controlled by unelected representatives of the upper classes. The majority of people have no say in their appointment and no control over their away. Whatever form of social control may be necessary until that stage is reached, all of its representatives will be elected by and subject to dismissal by, the community that they represent.

FREEDOM AND EQUALITY: All of those that contribute to a socialist society will receive equal leisure, education, medical, etc.—will be equally available to all. All of society's facilities—morality—homosexuality, abortion, divorce, etc.—will be left to individual choice and free from state interference. There will be freedom of worship for all religions, but no church will be allowed to interfere in state matters.

CLASS STRUGGLE: Real Socialism cannot be achieved through parliament. The Labour Party does not try to end capitalism, merely to give workers a better deal within it. If they did attempt to take real power from the ruling class and give it to the workers, they would suffer the same fate as other parliamentary movements that have tried to do this. The ruling class would use its control over the forces of the state to crush them. To achieve Socialism, a Socialist movement has to be ready to overthrow capitalism by force. The law is made and administered by the upper class and used by them as a weapon in the class struggle. Therefore, a socialist movement has to be prepared to defy the law when necessary. We support the right of national liberation movements around the world to engage in armed struggles to free their countries from imperialist domination. We fully support the revolutionary armies. The Irish Republican Army, and the Irish National Liberation Army in their war against the British state machine which is the enemy of the British working class. The war in Ireland is caused by the British presence there, which is only maintained by armed force. Only armed force can remove that presence and stop the war.

THE EASTERN BLOC: The Eastern Bloc countries and China, Cuba etc. are used as examples to try and prove socialism to be undesirable. In our view although capitalism has been overthrown in these countries, none of them have succeeded in building a truly socialist society. In some cases this has been because incorrect policies within the new socialist society. In some cases policies. In others because the new regimes have inherited such under-developed economies, and because of external pressures beyond their control—threat of American invasion, economic boycott and sanctions etc.—there has been neither the political and economic stability nor the economic resources, necessary to begin the construction of a socialist society. We do accept that some of these countries have made significant advances from very primitive beginnings, and may continue to advance as they develop more modern industrial economies.

THE ORGANISATION: The period of capitalist growth and expansion during the 50s and 60s raised working class living standards considerably. Mainly because of this the working class that emerged from that period, showed little interest in revolutionary socialist politics. They became the domain of professional thinkers and intellectuals. A cultural gap had been created between the working class and the left. The organisations that were created by the left in this period, were in organisations in which a small intellectual leadership, wielded great authority over a highly disciplined membership. History gives us many examples of how easily in this form of organisation, a corrupt leadership can involve that discipline and authority, merely to maintain its own position of power. Any who question the leadership or the party line that they hand down, are dangerous heretics to be cast out as soon as possible. The organisations eventually become one made up entirely of servile and unquestioning members. The atmosphere in such an organisation is one that is totally alien to most working class people. They thus sit, causing it to retreat even further into abstract politics. The strangeness between the organisation and the class is complete. Even in organisations where the leadership is not corrupt, the tendency to look back to revolutionary Russia for the solutions to all of today's problems leads to them coming up with new forms of organisation. Red Action was formed in 1981. Its primary aim is to be able to relate revolutionary socialist ideas to working class people, most of whom are cynical if not hostile towards the left. To achieve this the organisation must itself be of the class, in content and character. It must be able to recognise that the vast majority of workers are not revolutionary, and respect immediate revolutionary commitment from them. It must show that it does not just talk its politics, but is willing to back them up with action when necessary. It must show that it is principled and consistent in its politics, and not just raise and drop issues when it suits. It must recognise that no leadership is immune from possible corruption, and allow true internal democratic. It must be ready to work with other socialist and progressively minded groups in a non sectarian manner. We recognise that a revolutionary working class party is necessary if capitalism is to be overthrown. We are not that party, but neither are those groups that claim to be. We will work to help give a tradition of militant working class action until such time as enough working class militants can be brought together to form that party.