

# Red Action

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**The problem ?  
Millions fooled by the lies of capitalism.**

**The answer?  
Build an uncompromising unashamed.**

## SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

1986 draws to its close, amidst much speculation that 1987 will be the year of the next general election in this country. If this should be the case, there will be many fervently hoping, that this will see the end of the most viciously anti-working class government in living memory. Seven years of Tory rule have certainly left their mark on this country. Whether you are one of the two million or so who have joined the dole queue in that time, one of those waiting in the ever increasing queues for treatment from the ever shrinking health service, a victim of one many other areas of spending cuts or whatever. There cannot be that many people in the country today, who are not in some way worse off because of the policies pursued by the Tories.

We cannot really be in any way suprised that the Tories have acted as they have. In fact all they are doing is being true to their politics, which is to defend and further the interests of the upper class, and of course the only way in which they can do this, is to take off the working class. But what is perhaps more suprising, is the way in which so many people who stand to lose through Toryism actually support them. At the last two elections, literally millions of working class people must have voted Tory, in order for them to get the majorities they did. Even today, with the effects which this has had on our society becoming more and more clear all the time, the Tories are still matching the other parties for popularity, according to all the opinion polls.

The reason for this is quite simple. It is because they have managed to convince many many people, that even though the policies they pur-

sue may have unpleasant consequences, they have to pursue them, because there is no other alternative.

The Health Service and other services have to be cut back on they say, because the wealth doesn't exist to keep them running at the level they used to. For the same reason wages must be kept down. Unemployment is caused by international economic factors beyond the governments control. Legislation is needed to curb the powers of trade unions otherwise they will disrupt society. The police need greater powers and armaments, if they are to be able to control violent crime.

All of these are basic Tory arguments, which millions believe to be true. Yet they are basically rubbish. The fact that there may be an international crisis at big business level, would have absolutely no effect on the unemployment situation in this country, if those workers

who find themselves unemployed, were to simply take over all of the factories, workplaces and machinery left standing empty and idle by their owners, and use them to create the wealth which could not only raise their own standards of living, but also pay to maintain health and other services as well. Similarly, if you were to look in the Financial sections of the newspapers, and see the record profits being reported by so many companies, you would realise that the idea that society can't afford any wage rises for those who are working, is also nonsense.

### NONSENSE

In fact most Tory arguments, when you look at them with any sort of questioning eye, can be seen to be nonsense, yet as we have already said, so many people accept them. Why? Partly because of Tory influence over the media, which has such a great influence on so many people's outlook, but also because that which most people understand to be the opposite of the Tories, ie the Labour Party, never comes out with any truly opposite viewpoint to Tory ideas.

When do we ever hear Labour spokesmen/women calling on people to occupy factories to relieve unemployment, or to defy unjust laws to make them unworkable. Very rarely if ever. Apologists say that

this is because Labour's first priority is to get themselves elected, and radical or "extremist" politics will alienate to many voters. But then perhaps the reason that so many people don't identify with radical politics, is because no movement which has the ear of millions like the Labour Party has, has ever tried to win them over to radical politics.

In fact experience has shown us time and time again how ordinary working class people can be won over to support very radical political positions. Thus we saw in the miners strike, how whole communities came out in active support of them. Similar examples are seen time and time again, in situations such as occupations against the closure of hospitals, or trespassing on the site of proposed nuclear waste dumps, where ordinary otherwise law abiding people see the need to support a radical or "extremist" political position.

### ALTERNATIVE

What we can see from all of this, is that the idea that "ordinary" people would never support the sort of policies which would give a clear alternative and challenge to Tory ideology, is essentially a false one. The real reason why the Labour Party always ultimately backs off from supporting calls for takeover of property, defiance of the law etc, is because such calls challenge the very existence of the capitalist state, and no matter how many radical noises certain individual members may sometimes make, the Labour Party is firmly committed to solving the problems of the capitalist



Thatcher and the Tories. The butchers of the welfare state

system, rather than challenging the existence of it.

And that in a nutshell, is why they find it impossible to come up with policies which are a clear and total challenge to the Tories. Because they like them, are committed to maintaining and working within the capitalist system. They are supposedly a socialist movement, and yet in reality, they are afraid to argue socialist politics. And so the Tories are left with a free field in the ideological war, to pull the ideas of the "silent majority" further and further to the right. As they do, the Labour Party can only respond by themselves moving further and further right with them, defending their tradition by remaining always a few degrees to the left of the Tories where-ever that may be. When you have two parties, of which the only real difference between them, is that one is quite honest about what it is, while the other tries to pretend to be something different, it can be no great surprise if most people choose the honest one.

For those of us with long enough memories, the real proof of the basic lack of difference between Labour and Tories, was seen during past Labour governments. Time and time again, we watched them acting in just the same way as the Tories do, with incomes policies, trade union legislation etc and

never forget that it was a Labour government which started the cuts in the Health Service which the Tories are continuing so enthusiastically. By acting in such a way, they both disillusion many socialists, and besmirch the name of socialism itself.

### HONEST

The most honest thing that the Labour Party have done in many a long day, was earlier this year when they dropped the Red Flag as their emblem. They were never entitled to use it anyway. Perhaps this, along with other traditions which they have dropped means that they have now gone that far to the right that they are starting to consider whether or not they should stop trying to even claim that they are a socialist movement.

If this should be the case, then perhaps a few more of those who do believe in the ideas of socialism, will begin to look outside of the Labour Party for the means of realising their ideals. If this should be the case then all well and good. The revolutionary left in this country has been a tiny fringe movement for too long. It's about time that we started to come in from the cold.

Hand over that Red Flag. You may be ashamed of it, but we're certainly not.



But would Kinnock and Co. who seem to spend all of their time trying to prove how left wing they aren't be any better. Hand over that Red Flag. Stick to your roses.

**Inside this issue.**

## BEATING THE FASCISTS

**A look at the struggle against  
fascism in pre war Germany**

# BEATING THE FASCISTS

Many books have been written on the history of the Third Reich. The activities of the Nazis after they came to power - the persecution of Jews, Gypsies, Homosexuals, Communists and Trade Unionists etc, have all been well documented. What is not so well known, is the story of how they actually came to power and what was done to try and stop them, in the Weimar Republic which existed in Germany until Hitler came to power. One book which does look at this period is one which took six years to write, costs £24, and is entitled "Beating the Fascists". For those who may not be totally familiar with Red Action's politics, let me say that a literal interpretation of the title is something which we would heartily endorse.

## STREET FIGHTERS

The book analyses the policy of the Communist Party towards the anti-fascist struggle, and it's use of para-military street fighters to implement those policies. In doing so, it destroys a commonly held assumption that every German was a fascist. Concentrating on Berlin where a fierce battle for control of the streets was waged, it explores in depth the reasons why the Communists lost that battle and were ultimately destroyed.

It is of particular interest to anti-fascists today, partly because of the re-emergence and electoral success of fascist groups on the continent, but more importantly because of the way in which it shows us the dangers in the attitude of indifference which many on the left in this country adopt towards fascist groups here, and their increasing links and co-operation, both with the far right of the Tory Party, and more ominously, with the loyalist death squads of the Ulster Defence Association and the Ulster Volunteer Force.

## WEIMAR REPUBLIC

To fully understand how constitutional politics became to a large extent peripheral to the vicious conflict waged for "control of the streets" in the period before the Nazis came to power, it is necessary to understand the nature of the Weimar Republic, which was founded in 1918, and ended when Hitler was appointed Chancellor in January 1933.

Though both of these events were bloodless in themselves, violence both large scale and individual, was endemic to life in the Weimar Republic. From 1919 to 1923, there were four insurrections led successively by the left and the right, including Hitler's "Beer Hall Putsch" in 1923. All were easily suppressed.

After 1924, even though a viable threat to the government did not emerge, the streets became the arena where political activity was conducted.

The groups most involved in this kind of fighting, were the para-military auxiliaries of the various parties, which in membership and conception formed a bridge between the



A section of the German Communist Party militia in the 1930s, just before Hitler came to power. The German C.P. was the largest and best organised in the whole of Europe. But the mistaken policies of its leadership allowed the Nazis to walk into power practically unopposed.

insurrectionary movements of the 1920s and later developments. The most important of these were the Storm Troopers or Brown Shirts of the Nazis, the Reichbanner of the Social Democrats, the Red Front Fighters League of the Communists and a broad based movement called coincidentally, Anti Fascist Action. Within these groups, were organised small cohesive mobile units.

The violence between the opposing groups was brutal, and involved the breaking up of opponents meetings and attacks on their taverns and headquarters, and spontaneous clashes which broke out between them.

## BROWN SHIRTS

In March 1927, five or six hundred Brown Shirts returning by train from a meeting outside Berlin, confronted a carriage load of Red Fighters League members. There ensued a bloody battle, which developed into a general melee when the train pulled into the station where members of both groups were waiting to meet it. The result as reported by a Storm Trooper was

"All over the car, lie splinters of glass, pools of blood, bits of wood and over two hundred stones. The first to be pulled out is the Communist Councillor, Paul Hoppman - his face a shapeless bloody mass - one of the actual wire pullers you can't get otherwise. He got his just deserts"

In 1928, the Berlin Storm Troopers (S.A.) had eight hundred members organised in nineteen sectors, compared to about eleven thousand R.F.L. members. That year also saw the opening in Berlin, of an S.A. tavern which combined as a Club House, Soup Kitchen and Fortress, and reflected the character of the Nazi assault on the "Red" working class neighbourhoods. By 1932 they had twenty two thousand members

During the period 1924-29 the casualty figures provided by the parties, display evidence of a persistent war of attrition. The fascists claimed thirty killed and over twelve hundred wounded by communists in 1928-29 alone. Communist sources claimed ninety two fascists killed (excluding police) and two hundred and thirty nine wounded.

## UNEMPLOYMENT

On the economic front, re-organization of the major industries in 1925-26, resulted in massive unemployment with all but a minority of highly skilled workers becoming dispensable. The government of the aptly named Centre Party, was unable to secure a majority for its attempts to restrict the wages and bene-

fits of working people and the unemployed, in line with its de-inflationary policies. President Hindenburg then dissolved Parliament, and imposed the policy by decree.

## RADICALS GAIN

In the general election of 1930, the only parties to gain were the Nazis - who rejected anything to do with Marxism - and the Communists, reflecting the disillusionment of the population with the traditional Parliamentary Parties, who had lost a lot of influence through the continuing use of Presidential Decree. Thereafter, the radical parties embarked on a struggle to win over the disaffected sections of the population, which led to a big increase in the street clashes between them.

The Communists, whose strength lay in the working class areas of Berlin, organised their street fighters on a parochial basis, and their propaganda often classed the Nazis as invaders. They also recruited from the "cliques" or street gangs, who showed a certain aptitude for this kind of political work. The groups were largely made up of the male unemployed, though there is evidence of some involvement of women. For instance in 1931, sixteen women were arrested for throwing chairs from the gallery during a Nazi meeting, and a year earlier, a witness account told how

"women, obviously Communists, sat in the gallery with large numbers of ash trays, waiting for the right moment to aim them at the Nazis below"

## FLEXIBLE APPROACH

Even though the street fighters were largely unemployed, the Communist Party theoreticians failed to digest the growing significance of life outside of the factories, as a basis for working class action. Their orthodox Marxist view, saw the point of production - ie the workplace as the basis on which the capitalist system rested, and therefore as the principal arena for class struggle. Their failure to adapt to a more flexible approach in view of the massive growth of the unemployed, has to be singled out as one of a number of critical mistakes.

The Nazis on the other hand faced no such dilemma. Operating outside of the factories, independent of both state and employer, and openly appealing to emotions and illusory interests, they deliberately campaigned to organise the unemployed. Their strategy was outlined as early as 1926 by a Berlin organiser who said

"This represents nothing less than the first attempt to press forward little by little, into the sharpest and most important bulwarks of Communist domination. To undermine them and soften them up. Berlin N.S. almost without exception, devote their energies to the conquest of the German workers."

The overwhelming social fact of these years was unemployment. In 1929 this stood at thirteen percent of trade union members. In two years, this had rocketed to thirty three percent and by

1932 to forty three percent. Hardship was not confined to the unemployed, as employers in a better position than ever pushed down wages. With strikes appearing futile, fewer workers struck for shorter periods.

This seriously undermined the Communist's traditional area of agitation and recruitment. Likewise, participation in Communist led hunger strikes for example, demanded of the unemployed considerable sacrifice, as they often ended in confrontation with the police, and with little certainty of material return. The question being asked of the Communist Party, was what could it offer the unemployed once it had sought them out? It was a question to which the Nazis had some ready answers.

## RELIEF

In some areas they were able due to their good relationship with businessmen, to establish their own labour exchanges, to provide jobs for members. More common was the provision of on the spot relief in the form of food and shelter in its soup kitchens and canteens, and above all in the S.A. taverns that doubled as dormitories. Communist attempts to imitate these schemes floundered through lack of funds, although they did manage to arrange some "cashless" shopping trips to supplement their welfare, and the use of physical force to prevent evictions. The first reported case of this came in 1931, when after a direct call from the Communist Party, some three hundred men occupied the whole building. In 1932, action against high rents, evictions and confiscations, was written into the functions of Anti Fascist Action.

The foundation for Communist tactics, in the period leading up to 1933, were the decisions taken at the sixth Congress on the Communist International, held in 1928, at which Stalin recognised that the weakening of Social Democracy, was the key preventing a reconciliation between France and Germany, something which the Soviet Union had every reason to fear. Thus the theory of "Social Fascism" was born, for pragmatic rather than revolutionary reasons.

## UNITED FRONT

It meant that the Communists aimed to win the support of the working class, with the creation of a "United Front from Below" This meant exposing the corrupt and reformist nature of the Social Democratic leadership, and so separate them from their own rank and file. One line of propaganda which they used for this aim, was to remind people of the link between the police force of Social Democrats when they had been in power, and the Nazis, who never appeared en masse in red working class districts, without police protection. The events of May 1st 1933, when Communist workers clashed with Social Democratic police, lent considerable weight to this theory. Thirty people were killed, none of them police.

The use of the same word, fascism, to describe both the

repressive system and the violent party, and the refusal to admit that they were distinct in practice, made an identification of the two in the minds of the membership all too easy. It was above all this "fight on two fronts" one to discredit the leadership of the Social Democrats, and two the physical fight against the Nazis, in which the Communist Party exhausted both its strength and its credibility.

As late as the summer of 1929, the Communist leadership refused to take seriously the rise of the Nazis, and still considered that the most likely ally of the police against themselves, was the Reichbanner of the Social Democrats.

## REAL ENEMY

A change happened after the appearance for the first time, of sixty thousand uniformed Storm Troopers at a rally in Nuremberg, which was accompanied by bitter fighting between them and units of the Reichbanner. Though the Communist leader now at last recognised the real enemy, the headlines in their paper "Beat the Fascists and the Social Democrats" showed that they retained the ability for self delusion.

Later that month, Nazis on their way to a rally, met with a violent reception from Communist "squads" stationed around the area. The Communist leadership expressed their warm approval by adopting the slogan "Hit the fascists wherever you meet them" This new resolution did not last long, and the following period is characterised by violent and almost schizophrenic changes in strategy.

The elections of 1930, confirmed the popularity of the Nazis when they secured twice as many votes as in 1928, and took second place in the Parliament with a hundred and seven seats. The Social Democrats were still the largest party, with the Communists third with seventy seven seats.

## ALLIES OR ENEMIES

The belated recognition that the Nazis were a mass movement, led the Communist leadership to conclude that the Nazi rank and file must be distinguished from the "hard core" and that random attacks on individual Nazis could prove counter productive. Communist activity continued to alternate between trying to win the Nazis over, and beating them back, and tended to overlook their fundamental character as the class enemy, and tried to treat the rank and file as potential allies.

Meanwhile, the battle for the streets became more intensified. Fifteen people killed when Nazi demonstrators, units of Anti Fascist Action and police clashed in Hamburg. The Communist leadership, continually worried about the legality of the party, issued a resolution condemning "Individual terror" which they defined as "Individual acts against individual fascists" and re-affirmed its support for "Mass terror" ie strikes etc, which they could not deliver. Not surprisingly, this caused feelings of confusion and betrayal amongst the rank and file, summed up by one Red Front leader, who was quoted as saying

"If the party won't lead the fight against fascism, we'll just join the Nazis"

The Communist Youth pointed out that it had been they who had carried out the mass of illegal work without grousing, and that the best defence was "Not only mass struggle, but also individual terror"

"We don't care" said one "for the idea that if we are murdered by S.A. men, a small part of the working class will carry out a half hour protest, which only makes the Nazis laugh for having got off so lightly"

The resolution did little to stop the fighting, and it was reported that several Communist Members of Parliament, had proposed that the Red Front Fighters be disbanded, in order to put an end to the embarrassing indiscipline of its members.

## DEFEAT

As late as May 1933, the Communist leadership was still explaining to anyone who was still listening that

"Our motto now as ever, is not through individual terror, but only through mass terror will we go forward" The rest you know.

What then of the political parallels today. Capitalism is once again in a crisis, with all the usual repercussions for the working class. Mass unemployment, a repressive government, which by introducing racist laws, hopes to steal support from the parties of the far right, and tentatively suggest that Nationalism may be the answer to the problem. We have apologists for the fascist regime in South Africa, and support and understanding expressed to the leaders of right wing para-military movements in Northern Ireland, by members of both the government, and the opposition Labour Party. In France you have the emergence of Jean Marie Le Pen's Front National, which enjoys the electoral support of ten to twelve percent of French voters, and has sixty five thousand members. In Austria, a man against whom there is considerable evidence of involvement in Nazi war crimes, was recently elected President, and the anti-semitic Freedom Party gained ten percent of the vote.

In Italy, the M.S.I. Party formed by a former Officer of Mussolini, has seats in both the Italian and European Parliaments. Spain saw three hundred thousand fascists turn out to celebrate Franco's birthday. Turkey has both the Grey Wolves and the National Action Party, who between them have around two hundred thousand members, and before the military takeover held fifteen seats in the Turkish Parliament. Finally West Germany has a slowly growing membership of neo-Nazi groups which today stands at about twenty five thousand, and the two main weekly Nazi newspapers, sell about a hundred thousand copies each.

## A THREAT ?

All this is not to say that the fascists are on the march. They are not even limbering up yet. But they do exist, and pretending that they don't is hardly to be recommended as a strategy. What should be done? The answer to this question was given by someone in Germany, not long after the Nazis had gained power, who said

"The only thing which could have stopped our movement, was if in the early days when we were small and weak, our opponents had understood our aims and intentions, and had smashed us with the utmost determination"

The voice of this opinion? A certain Mr. A. Hitler. Sounds like good advice to me.



Can we afford to ignore the growing links between the British Fascist movement, and para-militaries in other countries.



Hitler, Franco and Mussolini. Of these three Fascist dictators of the 30s, Franco's rise to power, was the only one which was seriously resisted by socialist and left wing movements.

# INNOCENT AND CONDEMNED

As 1987 begins, 11 people will be beginning the 13th year of life sentences which they are serving, for acts of which they are almost certainly totally innocent. They are the 3 men and 1 woman convicted for bombing pubs in Guildford and Woolwich, the 6 men convicted of pub bombings in Birmingham, and a woman convicted of bombing a coach carrying British soldiers along the M62 Motorway.

All of them were arrested at the time of the I.R.A. bombing campaign in this country during the mid 1970s. In nearly every case, the only real evidence offered against them at their trial, were statements which they had signed whilst in police custody soon after their arrest. All of those who did sign have claimed from the very start that they only did so after suffering long periods of beating and intimidation at the hands of the police, which had totally terrorised and demoralised them making them willing to do anything which their tormentors told them to do.

## INSPECTIONS

Whilst in police custody, none of the accused were allowed medical inspections which could have proved that they had been beaten as they claimed, in which case the statements which they had made would have been in-admissible as evidence. The only other evidence offered, were the results of forensic tests, which sought to prove that two of the Birmingham Six, had at some time handled explosives. These tests have since been totally discredited, by further tests carried out several independent authorities - including a former Home Office Chief Inspector of Explosives Dr. Hugh Black - which have proved that in the tests used on the defendants, similar results could have been obtained if they had been handling a wide variety of

perfectly innocent objects, including paint, laquer, varnish and playing cards. (The two in question had both been playing cards shortly before their arrest.)

Also convicted around the same time as these people, were the Maguire family, a middle aged couple and their teenage children, who are now free after being convicted of running a bomb factory in their home, on the same now discredited forensic evidence. Another victim was Guiseppi Conlon, an elderly man who only came to this country to visit his son (one of the Guildford 4) was arrested at the port, and again on the basis of nothing more than tests of his hands, now proved to be totally untrustworthy was convicted and sentenced to 14 years in prison. He has since died there.

All of these people were victims. Victims of the panic and hysteria which swept the establishment in this country during the I.R.A. campaign. Desperate to be seen to be doing something, they were pulling in anyone who in their eyes was a suspect for being involved in some way. In many cases, this meant no more than the fact that some one was Irish.

When the results of these inaccurate tests led them to believe that they had got hold of people who had actually been handling explosives, and therefore must be involved on some way, they were quite willing to use any method, including violence and

perjury, to ensure that they got the evidence necessary to secure a conviction in court.

The fact that the I.R.A. themselves, who usually always acknowledge their members when they are captured, maintained right from the start that these particular individuals had nothing whatsoever to do with their movement was ignored. In the case of the Guildford 4, an I.R.A. unit captured later, admitted full responsibility for the 2 bombings which they were supposed to have carried out, and backed this claim up with full details of how they had carried them out. The Guildford 4 were not even allowed to introduce this evidence at their appeal.

## CAMPAIGNS

In the cases of the Guildford 4 and Birmingham 6, long years of campaigning to prove their innocence, both by the prisoners and by friends and supporters outside have at last started to achieve some progress. In the last 12 months, 3 of the major television channels have produced documentary enquiries into one or other of the cases, which have publicly highlighted the tenuous and discredited nature of the evidence on which their convictions rest, and uncovered much new evidence supporting their claims (including in the case of the Birmingham 6, tracking down 3 people who have admitted responsibility) Many figures from the establishment, including several Tory M.P.s - hardly noted for their sympathy towards the Irish Republican Movement, have now joined the calls for a re-trial at the very least.

And yet in spite of the fact that millions of people

have known seen for themselves how a terrible injustice has almost certainly been done to these people, still they languish in jail, with seemingly no immediate prospect of the authorities doing anything about it.

The reason for this is not very hard to find, and can be seen quite clearly in the words of former Lord Chief Justice Lord Denning, who in 1980 dismissed an attempt by the Birmingham 6 to sue the police for assaulting them whilst they were in custody with the words.

## INJUSTICE

"If the six men win, it will mean that the police were guilty of perjury, that they were guilty of violence, that the confessions were involuntary and were improperly admitted in evidence, and that the convictions were erroneous. That would mean that the Home Secretary would have either to recommend that they be pardoned or he would have to remit the case to the court of appeal. This is such an appalling vista that every sensible person in the land would say it cannot be right that these actions should go any further. They should be struck out."



John Walker



Bill Power



Gerry Hunter



Paddy Hill



Dick McKenny



Hugh Callaghan

THE BIRMINGHAM SIX. INNOCENT MEN, WHO HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT THEY WILL REMAIN IN JAIL UNTIL THEY DIE

## NEWS AND VIEWS

Norman Tebbit recently attempted to alert the nation to the danger of left wing "bias" within the B.B.C. Specifically he referred to pictures which had been shown of the victims of the U.S. terror raid on Libya. Just how ridiculous these accusations are can be gathered from the fact that all B.B.C. employees are screened by M.I.5, and that nearly all of its top executives, are actually former members of the intelligence services themselves.

Yet attacks such as Tebbit's might still serve to obscure the massive "cover ups" performed every day, by the news organisations of western countries. Consider the case of perhaps the biggest "news" story of recent years. The famine in Ethiopia.

## MEDIA

At first sight, the media, and particularly the B.B.C. seem to emerge with considerable credit. A lot of publicity, a lot of money raised, and the government jostled into taking some action, when it would really rather have done nothing at all. However the real nature of the news organisations involvement in the affair is less obvious.

For months before the story broke, journalists had been begged by relief agencies operating in Ethiopia, to publicise conditions there while there was still time to prevent deaths through starvation on an enormous scale.

At that time however, actual mortality rates were not high enough for editors to consider them as "making news" and none of the journalists operating in Ethiopia were interested. They wanted only political stories, which showed the self styled Marxist regime in the country, judged to be unfriendly to the west, in a bad light. The only story given major publicity in this period appeared in the Sunday Times, alleging that food to Ethiopia had been directly diverted to Russia. Naturally it made a big impression, and discouraged further aid. It was based on the flimsiest of evidence and wasn't even checked. A U.S. enquiry later proved it to be totally untrue.

It was only the threat of an I.T.V. documentary, to be screened in October of 1984 which spurred the B.B.C. to rush out their own report and pinch their rival's glory. They rushed out a team and just managed to squeeze in their report, via satellite, a

few hours before the I.T.V. programme went out. A great media scoop.

Except for the fact that had a report been screened months earlier, hundreds of thousands of lives may have been saved. But while the Royal Family is headline news every day, the saving of countless lives is not considered news at all. Except of course when millions of people queue up to die in camps all at once in conveniently photographic despair. Then it is conceded, something urgent must be done to stop your rival getting the story out first.

## GOVERNMENTS

This sort of behaviour by the news agencies is no accident or mistake. The governments of both Thatcher and Reagan, consistently refuse to provide aid to Africa in the form of development aid, which would perhaps enable the people to develop methods of feeding themselves permanently and prevent future famines. If they did this, it would threaten the control which European and American food producers, exercise over the International food markets. And so, as one American relief official explained in May 1985

"We can only give American food to people sitting on their ass. You keep people alive only to starve."

The most the news organisations of these governments ever wish to do, is publicise the plight of the dying, and the need to give them food for a while. This draws attention from the real responsibilities of the Western States. You wouldn't guess from the tone of T.V. and newspaper reports that African States actually pay back twice as much in interest to Western banks, as they receive in various dubious forms of aid.

The whole exercise serves to give people the impression that something is being done about disasters for which no one - except possibly left Third World governments - can be held responsible for, and that their governments are generous, big-hearted and cuddly. "Bias" is perhaps not quite a strong enough word. It is the most cynical piece of manipulation imaginable.



Information or manipulation?

If you look at those words closely, you can see that what he is in fact saying is that if the men were able to prove their case, it would mean having to admit that such an injustice had been done, and one which would bring such discredit onto the legal system, that it is better to stop them now before they have the chance to prove it. For the likes of Lord Denning, it is better that innocent people should remain in jail, than it is that the law should run the risk of being forced to admit that it has acted unjustly or corruptly.

And so for these people the ordeal goes on, serving some of the longest sentences

in British legal history. As far as the Birmingham 6 are concerned. They have been unofficially informed that they will never be released.

To be arrested for something that you haven't done is bad enough, but at least you would console yourself that it will be alright when they realise that it wasn't you. To then be tortured in the way that these people were and charged with such serious offences would be absolutely terrifying, but you would force yourself to believe that surely, they must believe you when it comes to trial. To then get convicted there, and sentenced to life imprisonment, is a nightmare beyond comprehension.

We should also not forget, the number of unshamed and unrepentant Republican prisoners of war, who are held in various prisons throughout Britain. Our thoughts go to them, especially at this time of the year, and we urge all of our readers to send Christmas and New Years greetings to as many as they can. The full list is below.

## REPUBLICAN PRISONERS OF WAR

<b>LONG LARTIN</b> HM Prison Long Lartin, South Littleton, Evesham, Worcs, WR11 5TZ	<b>ALBANY</b> HM Prison Albany, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5RG	<b>MULL</b> HM Prison Hedon Rd, Hull, Humberside
LIAM BAKER: 20-year sentence, 464984 JAMES BENNETT: 20-year sentence, 464989 EDDIE BUTLER: Life sentence, 338637 ROBERT CUNNINGHAM: 20-year sentence, 131877 GERRY CUNNINGHAM: 20-year sentence, 132016 JOHN McCOMB: 17-year sentence, B51715 ANDY MULRYAN: 20-year sentence, 461576 PATRICK MULRYAN: 20-year sentence, 461575	VINCE DONNELLY: Life sentence, 274064 HARRY DUGGAN: Life sentence, 338638 BILLY GRIMES: SEAN HAYES: 20-year sentence, 341418 STEPHEN NORDONE: Life sentence 758663	ROY WALSH: Life sentence, 119083
<b>PARKHURST</b> HM Prison Parkhurst, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5NX	<b>GARTREE</b> HM Prison Gartree, Leicester Rd, Market Harborough, Leics, LE16 7RP	<b>DURHAM</b> HM Prison Durham, Old Elvert Street, Durham
NOEL GIBSON: Life sentence 879225 PATRICK HACKETT: 20-year sentence, 342603 TOMMY QUIGLEY: Life sentence 69204 PETER SHERRY: Life sentence, B75880	ROBERT CAMPBELL: 10-year sentence, B32954 RONNIE McCARTNEY: Life sentence, 463799 JOE O'CONNELL: Life sentence, 338635	MARTINA ANDERSON: Life sentence, D25134 ELLA O'DWYER: Life sentence, D25135
<b>WAKEFIELD</b> HM Prison Love Lane, Wakefield, W Yorks. WF2 9AG	<b>FRANKLAND</b> HM Prison Finchale Ave, Brasside, Durham	<b>INNOCENT MEN AND WOMEN FRAMED BY THE BRITISH POLICE:</b>
HUGH DOHERTY: Life sentence, 338636 SEAN KINSELLA: Life sentence, 758661 CON McFADDEN: 20-year sentence, 130662 PAUL NORNEY: Life sentence, 863532 NATALINO VELLA: 15-year sentence, B71644	WILLIAM ARMSTRONG: Life sentence, 119087 MARTIN BRADY: Life sentence, 119087 BRENDAN DOWD: Life sentence, 758662 PAUL HOLMES: Life sentence, 119034 EDDIE O'NEILL: 20-year sentence, 135722	CAROLE RICHARDSON: 290719, HM Prison Systol, Wiltshire, Cheshire PATRICK ARMSTRONG: HM Prison Gartree PAUL HILL: 462778 HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs GERARD CONLON: 462779, HM Prison Long Lartin JUDITH WARD, HM Prison Durham HUGH CALLAGHAN, 509499, HM Prison Gartree JOHN WALKER, 509494, HM Prison, Long Lartin BILLY POWER, 509498, HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs GERARD HUNTER, 509495, HM Prison Frankland RICHARD McILKENNY, 509498, HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs PADDY HILL, 509496, HM Prison Gartree
<b>LEICESTER</b> HM Prison Welford Rd, Leicester, LE2 7AJ	PAUL KAVANAGH: Life sentence, 1888 BRIAN KEENAN: 21-year sentence, B26380 GERRY McDONNELL: Life sentence, B75882 PATRICK McGEE: Life sentence, B75881	They are all serving life and in the case of Carole Richardson, indefinite detention.

## 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

In order to be able to see the truth or otherwise behind Norman Tebbit's claims of left wing bias at the B.B.C., this column decided to conduct its own investigation, and we have made the astonishing discovery that in fact the I.T.N. is even more left wing than the B.B.C. Our research showed that up to 1983, the B.B.C. had banned cut or censored no less than twenty two of its own programmes, plays and documentaries, which they considered showed Britain's role in Ireland in an unfavourable light, while over at I.T.N they managed only a miserable twenty.

No doubt Tebbit, who hates any form of public ownership, would claim that all that this proves is that the B.B.C. made two more of those sort of programmes in the first place.

"Terrorists by their choice of methods are not warriors, but criminals and should be treated as such" declared Douglas Hurd at a European Convention to combat terrorism held in France.

You might be a bit more impressed by his and the French governments sincerity if it wasn't for the fact that the French Secret Service had bombed the Green Peace organisation's boat the "Rainbow Warrior" killing one of the crew in the process, and if you were ignorant of the fact that the British government refused to allow Amnesty International, the human rights organisation, the opportunity to conduct an investigation into an alleged "shoot to kill" policy, by the by the S.A.S. in Ireland.

Given that the S.A.S. and the I.R.A. employ similar methods, what then is the essential difference between them? Well, the former kill for money and the latter from conviction. Make up your own mind as to who the real criminals are.

A document published by Conservative Central Office, states that, "Labour has developed approaches which are far more sophisticated than the crude anti-police, anti-capitalist stereotypes of the past" and goes on to warn that if the Labour Party won a majority at the next election, two thirds of it's M.P.s would be on the left, with up to sixty revolutionary Marxists in their midst.

With all due respect to the writers of this document, the Labour Party has been crudely pro-capitalist and pro-police for many years past, and as for the revolutionary Marxists, they are easily distinguishable. They are the ones who are able to sing the second verse of the Red Flag at the Party Conference.

38 year old Police Chief Inspector Gavin O'Brien had some explaining to do in court recently, after being stopped by store detectives outside a branch of Marks and Spencer at Worthing Sussex recently, and found to have a number of items of ladies underwear and make up kits in his possession. His explanation was that he had brought the goods previously and was trying to exchange them. He was convicted and fined £100.

In another incident, two Police sergeants have been suspended after a fight broke out between them, at the smart Goddard Arms Hotel in Swindon, during a Halloween party. The reason for the fight? Corruption in the force? The changing role of the Police in society? Actually it was an argument over who should buy the next round.

# RED ACTION IN ACTION

Once again Red Action members travelled from London and the South East, to attend the annual Manchester Martyr's March, held to commemorate the execution of three Irish Republicans in Manchester in 1867. This event, which was abandoned in the mid-seventies due to the level of anti-Irish hostility following the I.R.A.s bombing campaign at that time, is now going from strength to strength, and is one of the main events on the Republican calendar in Britain.

This year, it was a particularly colourful affair, with lots of different banners, and no less than seven Scottish Republican flute bands. Despite reports in the press of running battles, the Loyalist/N.F. counter demo, was particularly feeble, the most prominent contingent being a number of Liverpoolian Les Dawson lookalikes, both male and female, who danced in the puddles, brandished their Union Jack umbrellas, and hurled incomprehensible abuse at the marchers.

At moments like this, when you have the chance to study the opposition, it sometimes causes you to reflect on the evolutionary development of the human race, and you sadly realise that we still have a long way to go.

Red Action, one of the founding groups within Anti Fascist Action, played a significant role in the planning and publicising and organising of the A.F.A. march and rally on Remembrance Sunday. The turn out was encouraging - some estimates putting it as high as two thousand - from all over the country. The march, and the laying of an A.F.A. wreath at the Cenotaph, was to remind people that there are still people becoming victims of fascism today, and to bring the existence of A.F.A. to a wider audience, through the coverage it would get through the press and the media. The appearance of about seventy fascist "casuals" at the back of the march just as it was setting off, sent a ripple of panic through that section, but by the time the stewards arrived, about thirty seconds later, the fascists had vanished, leaving no more than a line of flustered and panicky police as evidence of their existence. Nobody was hit.

After the rally, during which some criticisms were made of the march organisers by some sections of the crowd (see article on this page) the stewards provided a safe escort through Central London to a safe dispersal point, for all those who wished it. For one group of by now frustrated stewards, the day ended on a cheery note, when they clashed with a party of "bone heads" in a fast food restaurant. In the midst of the battle, one A.F.A. member, attempting to grab a chair to defend himself, was astonished to hear one customer sitting at the table, inform him that that seat was taken. Amidst the ketchup and the flying french fries, the fascists came to a predictably sticky end.

# ANTI FASCIST ACTION

The march and rally organised by Anti Fascist Action on Remembrance Sunday, differed from the A.F.A. mobilisation the previous year, and from traditional Anti-Fascist mobilisations, in that it did not set out to directly confront the Fascist march, but concentrated instead on its own march/rally. The reasons for this were as follows.

Firstly because A.F.A. is still a new and relatively new movement, as yet capable of mobilising only limited numbers the chances at this stage of an A.F.A. led demo actually being able to physically disrupt a Fascist Remembrance Day march, especially with the sort of massive police presence you have on such a day, are extremely slim. An attempt to do so is far more likely to end up in a situation where you have small groups of anti-fascists wandering around in ever decreasing numbers and ever increasing confusion, until they are finally hemmed into some little back alley somewhere by the police, and marched off later on without even having seen the Fascist march. This is exactly what happened with the majority of anti-fascist demonstrators last year.

In the light of this experience, it was decided within A.F.A. that this year it would concentrate on its own march, aimed at generating enough publicity to put A.F.A. on the map as it were. This intention was openly discussed, in all of the meetings which took place beforehand to organise the days events, and to which all groups who intended participating were welcome to attend and state their point of view. No one at any of these meetings, raised any objection to the idea of a march and rally.

Calling a demonstration of this nature, placed certain responsibilities on A.F.A., the most obvious of which was being able to ensure that all who wished to attend it, were able to do so, and leave afterwards, without any threat to their physical safety. To ensure this, a stewarding operation involving several groups within A.F.A. was organised. The first phase of this, was to ensure that a large number of Stewards arrived at the publicised assembly point, some time before the advertised time, to forestall any attempts by fascists to pick off early arrivers whilst they were few in number. The need for this was shown, when mobile scouts reported back that there was indeed at least one group of fascists in the area. In the event this group made no move, presumably because they also had scouts, who reported back on the number of A.F.A. stewards present.

The march itself, apart from one minor hiccup, went off smoothly. At the rally immediately afterwards, a rumour went around the crowd, that the picket of the South African Embassy in Trafalgar Square, had been attacked by fascists. This prompted a section of the crowd, to start to shout down and heckle the speakers, with calls for the whole crowd to immediately return to Trafalgar Square. This call was resisted by most A.F.A. groups present, including Red Action. The hecklers then, with loud shouts of how they were the "Real Anti-Fascists" led a section of the crowd on an impromptu march back to Trafalgar Square.

This column would like to congratulate Captain Mark Phillips, on his tremendous display of driving skills. The good Captain was demonstrating a ten day old Land Rover, worth sixteen thousand pounds to potential buyers, when he managed to turn it over, injuring one of his passengers, and causing five thousand pounds worth of damage. This is in fact his sixth crash in thirteen years, during which time he's also been twice fined for speeding. Brrm brrm.

"In prison, I found widespread sympathy for the Nationalist cause, from both officers and inmates. The warders were always borrowing the political papers that friends were sending in to me, and they were always doing the rounds of the other wings." Ian Stuart of the National Front Directorate.

If I belonged to a political movement that attracted the support of turnkeys and screws, the last thing I'd want to do was boast about it.

Mozambique's President Machel, was killed last month in a mysterious plane crash in South Africa. What caused the crash? The South African Government, furiously denying any responsibility, suggested a number of possible explanations including "poor weather conditions" "obselete instruments" "the pilot was drunk" and many others, until finally perhaps perhaps the most likely one from Dennis Worrall, South African Ambassador to this country "When Machel's plane was shot down..... I mean when the crash happened."

It is often said in boxing circles, that "the best fighter is a hungry fighter" Britain's nearest geographical neighbours France, hold one European title, whilst Britain has five European and two world champions. A perhaps revealing comment on the social state of this country.

Highly rated musician and songwriter Billy Bragg, talking recently to a music paper about the short spell he spent in Her Majesty's services, commented

"There's two things not to be in the army. One's a Catholic and the other's Black. We were stuck in Catterick Barracks when the Brixton riots started. They were just itching to get down there. They've had all the training they need in Northern Ireland. They're just a glorified heavy duty Police Force. One of our corporals was in the British Movement, another used to get a "hard on" every time he heard gunfire."

And whilst on the subject of music, Mike Peters of the band "The Alarm" commenting on some of the audience who he spoke to at a recent "Redskins" gig he attended, said

"and just because I didn't necessarily agree with them, they really got a bit manic" But then just to confirm what you really knew all along, continued "I still don't think that there's any need for that. You can have a rational discussion. Some of the people there were really nice, and a lot of them were from the Red Action groups. They were quite interested to know what my views were and sell me their magazine."

Well that's the sort of sweet and lovable group of boys and girls we are.

As far as we in Red Action are concerned, we totally defend our decision to stay with the rally. Even if the rumour about an attack on the picket was true - and there was no way of knowing at that stage if it was - Nothing could possibly be achieved at that point by setting out on a march of some two miles back to Trafalgar Square. As well as this, what about the large number of people there, many of whom had come from all over the country, who couldn't, or perhaps didn't want to go suddenly charging off looking for a street battle? The elderly people who were there, the small number of disabled, and those who would perhaps just admit to not being street fighters. Should those people have just been left there on their own, while all the adventurers rushed off to do their own thing. The first and overriding duty of A.F.A. on that day, was to ensure the physical safety of all of those on it's own march. Against the rumour of some possible fascist activity a couple of miles away, you had the absolute certainty that a large number of fascists, knew exactly where an A.F.A. rally was taking place, and the general direction in which most of those who had attended it, would have to travel when they left. In such a situation, a "real anti fascist doesn't just run off down the road shouting his/her head off. He/she does the job they have taken on, which on this occasion was to ensure that all of those who had attended the A.F.A. mobilisation, had safe conduct away from an area of possible danger.

Apparently, many of those who did go back to Trafalgar Square, found themselves confronted by large numbers of fascists, and there were some reports that a couple of anti-fascists were stabbed. If this is the case, those individuals who were doing all of the shouting at the rally, stirring up a lot of people many of them young and inexperienced, bear a heavy responsibility. Perhaps when they have been involved in some serious anti-fascist activity, they will realise that it isn't something to just be gone into on a whim, but a very serious and potentially deadly business, which needs a lot of organisation, and preferably a lot of experience. Whilst it can often be very misleading to try and judge people on appearances, I would have to say that the individuals who were making all the noise on this particular occasion, did not strike me as the sort of people to strike fear into the hearts of, or be any match tactically or physically, for the street-wise working class gangs of the National Front. Red Action does not claim to be a political movement which has all the answers. We are quite aware that we are inexperienced and politically weak in some areas. However street awareness is not one of those weaknesses. We would humbly suggest that when it comes to this particular area of political activity, people would do well to listen to our advice.

# WE ARE RED ACTION

Red Action is an organization 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 this way. 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 better and better quantities, 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 materials, factories, 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 that, 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 so exactly what that society will be like. However, there are certain features that would have to be present in society, before we could 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, scientific and human. In this way waterfalls, whether by the production of socially useful things, or by refused billions of machines or workdays would be eliminated. If we all resources are used to useful production instead of just a part of them so as to prevent 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 society control—army police force judiciary—are run and controlled by selected representatives of the upper classes. The majority of people have no say in their appointments and no control over the actions. We believe that in a truly socialist society the need to police people will eventually die away. Whatever form of social control may be necessary until that stage is reached, all of it 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 reward and enjoy equal rights, irrespective of colour, race, sex or creed. All of society's facilities—housing, education, medical, etc—will be equally available to all. All questions of personal morality—homosexuality, abortion, divorce, etc—will be left to individual choice and free 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 struggle to free their countries from oppression by foreign powers. 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 also 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 internal politics within the new regimes have led them to adopt the wrong 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 nuclear arms 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 nearly every case modelled on the Bolshevik Party in revolutionary Russia. It is a form of organisation in which a small intellectual leadership, with great authority over a highly disciplined membership. History gives us many examples of how easily in this form of organisation, a corrupt leadership can invade 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 enemies to be cast out as soon as possible. The organisation eventually becomes one made up entirely of sycophants and obedient members. The emergence in such an organisation is one that it totally alien to most working class people. They do not want it to exist, and it is a further alien abstract politics. The arrangement 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 answers that have little or no relevance to the working class in Britain today. Seeing the need for a new form 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 organisations 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 not expect 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 able and drop down when it suits. It must recognise that no leadership is immune from possible corruption, and allow true internal democracy. It must be ready to work with other socialist and progressively minded groups in a non exclusive manner. We recognise that a revolutionary working class party is necessary if capitalism is to be overthrown. We do not think that party, but neither do we think that class to be. We will work to help give a revolutionary working class party the conditions that it needs so that working class militants can be brought together to form that party.