

Red Action

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TUC Agrees to Pilot 'Workfare'

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fight back



•The Tories have learnt the lessons of the past - so must we

After years of being shoved to the wall by successive governments, the unemployed are now in danger of being pushed right through it by Thatcher and her cronies. They then face the prospect of having to rebuild the wall for the government, free of charge.

These training places will all last an average of six months. But, as we've learned with other schemes in the past, there will be very little training and even less prospect of a real job at the end of them.

On September 5th the Tory Government is introducing the Employment Training Programme (ETP) which is basically intended to force the unemployed to work for their dole.

There is talk that the ETP will be extended to cover 2 million people within the next 3 years. No doubt all these people will disappear from the unemployment statistics as well, but ETP has far more serious implications than merely artificially lowering the jobless total.

The Tories claim that ETP is voluntary, but as we have all seen in the past, the government definition of the word 'voluntary' is considerably different from dictionary definition. In fact, anyone who refuses to take a place on ETP will be referred to a claimant adjudication and disqualified from unemployment benefit for six months and have any supplementary benefit claimed during that period cut by 40%. In other words work or starve. Some choice.

Other so called training programmes in the past have been used by employers to lower the wages of existing workers, but now ETP employees will have a vast army of cheap labour, within an even lower level of pay for the bosses to exploit. Also as an added bonus for employers, all trainees taken on under ETP are being placed outside existing legislation which provides compensation for injuries or death at work due to employers negligence. Nor will trainee workers be allowed a statement outlining terms and conditions of service.

A total of 620,000 people will be forced onto this training programme with 18-24 year olds and long term unemployed bearing the brunt. The programme is split into 3 sections:

1. Everyone of the 225,000 people aged between 18-24 years old, who have been claiming benefit for between six and twelve months will be guaranteed a place.
2. Of the 480,000 people between the ages of 18-50, 150,000 will be offered a training place.

Now you certainly don't have to be in the genius bracket to figure out, that the outcome of all this will be further erosion of workers wages, living standards and rights. Especially when you take into consideration that Trade Unions will no longer be able to veto schemes where trainees are used as substitutes for staff vacancies.

3. There will also be 170,000 places on community work projects, similar to the present Community Programme. (Unemployed Organiser paper of the UWC).

This latest attack on the working classes was only made possible by the treachery of the TUC who have gone from merely back pedalling to back-stabbing over

the ETP. For the sake of a few derisory concessions (roughly £10 extra a week per trainee forced onto ETP) the TUC have actually agreed to co-operate with this slave labour scheme.

This abject betrayal of both employed and unemployed workers by the TUC when put alongside, the impotence and empty silence blustering of the Labour Party clearly shows once again that real opposition to these savage attacks can only come from within the class itself. It is in the interests of both employed and unemployed not to let the jobless be used as cheap labour. Both must join together not only to fight ETP but to fight all such attacks on the working class.

It is for this reason that Red Action supports the Unemployed Workers Charter (UWC) in their struggle against ETP. The UWC is not only attempting to organise the unemployed in their own movement, but to unite them with rank and file trade unionists and other employed workers in a campaign to smash ETP and any other future attacks on the unemployed.

In their attempt to provide a real alternative to the wishy-washy 'Hands across Britain' type stunts that have in the past proved so futile and pointless, the UWC fully deserve our support in their struggle.



•The unity of employed and unemployed workers is the key to smashing 'Workfare'

INSIDE: 'capital kills' page 1, column 1

'part 2. football & fascism'

On 18th April 50 part-time workers, mostly under the age of 25, at Wythenshawe Agency for Community Services (WACS) went on strike. We went on strike against new contracts of reduction in hours and wages of between £7 and £20 per week. WACS is a Manpower Services Commission funded Community Programme Scheme. After 2 weeks and 4 days of picketing, petitioning, lobbying, collections at other Manchester factories, the strikers mostly TWGU members, decided to exert more pressure on management. On 5th May fifteen strikers occupied the wages and administration offices, also closing off the YTS workshops, forcing 500 YTS workers to gladly take the day off.

From 10am onwards management bussed in painters, gardeners and wood-workers, also employed by WACS but who hadn't been issued new contracts. Not surprisingly they demanded their wages from the strikers who had barricaded the wages department. It was pay day. The strikers however held out as negotiations took place between management and the TWGU. Until this point, management had refused to recognise the TWGU.

The workers bussed in by management became more hostile. A couple of vans of riot police arrived. However WACS rent the building from a community association which supported the strike, and although the building was also a polling station that day, the police did not smash the occupation, instead urging management to come up with a settlement quickly.

At 1.30 the strikers came out of occupation after being offered an improvement. The new agreement meant that those who were to lose £20 and £7 would now lose £7 and £1.70 respectively. This included a slight increase on the hourly rate, not a demand of the strikers.

We were able to claim this as a victory. There was a substantial improvement in the original cut, the TWGU had been recognised, there were no sackings (as threatened at the beginning of the strike) and the other scheme workers have seen us winning something. Incidentally, the gardeners on the scheme had accepted a drastic cut in their wages 2 months earlier. When our union official explained why we had occupied and what had been offered, one gardener said, "But we were cut 2 months ago". The TWGU official replied, "Well, you know what to do".

What is significant about our WACS strike? Community Programme (CP) Scheme Workers, being part-time and temporary, are generally un-unionised. It is extremely rare that new contracts agreed by the MSC have been reversed by strike action. To our knowledge this is the longest strike on a CP scheme.

We believed we were able to win (despite scabbing) because we were right all along that management did not need to make such cuts.

We were determined and highly organised, raising support at other work places. We made demands of TU bureaucrats eg. we fought and won the right to address Manchester's May Day rally after we had been initially refused by the Trades Council Chairman. We sent flying pickets to playgroups, youth clubs and old peoples homes where we work asking them to support us and turn away scabs.

In September these CP Schemes will be bringing in Workfare, or as it is commonly known 'working for your dole'. Undoubtedly the aim of the September changes is to bring down wages generally and organise the long term unemployed into scab labour. The unemployed and under employed must start now to fight the latest threat to the TU movement in the same way our small, but significant, strike did. Recently, TWGU members occupied NACRO offices in St Helens and 'discovered' a document proposing that as a condition of their parole, prisoners should be forced to work for their dole. These labour camps must not be allowed.

The SWP told us to go back from Day one. They claim there is a 'downturn' in the working class, and strikes like ours don't win. Well, Wythenshawe has seen an 'upturn'. Until we all start fighting we will be waiting for the upturn forever. I have written to RA because if you had a branch in Manchester we could have relied on you for support.

We will be on strike again on 15th June as part on the National Day of Action against Workfare and will be lobbying the MSC headquarters in Sheffield with other CP workers and unemployed.

Yours fraternally

BLOOD SWEAT AND TEARS ON THE BOX

The Media has decided that the explosion on Piper Alpha which resulted in the slaughter of 167 members of the working class has been sufficiently exploited and so less than one month on, it is no longer considered to be of public interest.

This will of course be of great relief to the owners of the Occidental who like the other employers in the North Sea would like to get things 'back to normal'. Now that all the hoo-ha has died down what 'getting back to normal' means, is the conditions that created the atrocity will with some superficial changes continue to operate.

This is not simply a prediction by a demented lefty, it is simply a conclusion reached as a result of observing what has happened after similar events in the recent past.

Since the disaster on the Herald of Free Enterprise the management of P40 have not only not adopted the new safety procedures, but have brazenly implemented changes which have greatly decreased the safety of passengers and crew. The sinking of over 1,000 experienced striking crew members has meant that P40 is forced to recruit scab labour totally untrained and unsuited for the specialist type of work. Some of them had been previously sacked by the company for industrial mis-conduct such as alcoholism etc.

Aligned to enforced changes in the rota and working practices meaning a crew working 12 hour shifts has left NUMAST the officers union complaining that there is a shortage of people with adequate training.

They further claim that qualified staff are being hauled in to cover for lack of numbers whenever the Department of Transport has an inspection. Guardian July 22nd.

The fact that this happens and that they are actually warned of the inspection presumably by someone at the Department suggests deep and ingrained corruption. Why are they so arrogant and why are they so confident they can get away with it? One of the main reasons is the way these events are handled by the Media.

In the first place whatever has occurred is presented as a tragedy, a natural disaster. By implication something that would not have been prevented or something which was like 'an act of God' was unavoidable. The human response to any such event is to help, so funds are set up with the tabloids cheerleading the generosity of the public. There is the obligatory visit from Thatcher who traditionally praises the efforts of the police, army and rescue services, a useful public relations plug in these troubled times.

Meanwhile the Media search for clues as to "what went wrong", but only find scapegoats and 'red herrings'. 'Sinister hooligans' were responsible for the fire at Bradford, 'an arsonist' caused the fire at Kings Cross, there was even early speculation that a 'bomb'



safety takes a dive

was the cause of the explosion on Piper Alpha. A spokesman for the company will talk of 'everything humanely possible' being done for the victims of the families. There will be the usual hints of generous compensation settlements.

When the owner of Occidental appeared on the television after the explosion on his oil rig, he promised that the families of all the workers employed by the company would get £100,000 each. He omitted to mention that only 26 of the 167 who died were sub-contract labour, their families of course got nothing. Similarly the Daily Mail revealed on August 1st, that three out of four of the claimants against P40 have not been paid anything 16 months later.

The effect of this indepth coverage and speculation as to the cause never actually reaches a conclusion as to who should be held responsible. Instead it deflects criticism and always avoids pointing the finger at the obviously guilty corporate party.

Last November there was no evidence of editorial scruples. They exploited the proppanda gift of Enniskillen, to the hilt. All the newspapers were unequivocal to their condemnation and treated with open contempt all apologies and excuses. Are the 167 workers any more or less dead? Are the excuses any more or less valid? Are the victims any more or less deserving of justice?

Of course Enniskillen was different. There is a war in Ireland. The violence of the IRA is the violence of the oppressed. The carnage of Zebrugge or Piper Alpha was not a freak accident. Just four months earlier they had been fined a derisory £400 for breaking the safety regulations which led to the death of another worker. This is the grinding systematic violence of the capitalist system, it is the violence of the oppressor.

On issues like this we cannot be impartial. We take sides and so do they. As workers and revolutionaries our interests and sympathies as always lie with the oppressed. Theirs do not.

It is the building industry rather than the oil industry that provides the evidence. Needlessly slaughtered every year in what amounts to corporate mass murder. Thousands are maimed and paralysed. The figures are increasing. Between 1981 and 1985 there have been 739 deaths in the sector of the class-war zone. The Health and Safety Executive estimate that 70% could have been prevented by management. This implies that almost one in three are the responsibility of the workers themselves. This is bureaucratic nonsense as the statistics show that the majority of building sites are now non-union. Sub-contractors provide the labour. Basically the workers have no rights, no sick pay, insurance cover, holiday pay, job security, compensation, no complaints procedure etc. In many cases unskilled workers are required to do skilled jobs such as scaffolding or using cutting machines etc.

Anyone who complains or refuses risks ends up being "finished up".

On many sites management actively encourages workers to adopt 'macho' attitudes to safety procedures.

In a Capitalist Society, Capitalist ideas and arguments hold the greatest currency among workers. The chief priority is to get the job done as quickly as possible, safety takes time and time of course means money.

Under Capitalism an individual worker sells his or hers labour. Capitalists buy that labour. Capitalism therefore regards the worker as a commodity, something to be bought and sold. Nothing more. The only question then is one of price. Naturally the worker wants to

sell his labour for as much as possible the employer is concerned with paying as little as possible. In a non-union world, where the worker is forced to negotiate individually rather than collectively, the employer simply responds to market forces, of supply and demand. If an employer needs workers, wages and safety conditions can be improved, if there is a surplus of labour due to unemployment, wages and conditions suffer. That is why hod carriers in Hull take home £80 while in London because of the building boom the same job pays £170. So much for a fair days work, a fair days pay.

The number of Inspectors in the Health and Safety Executive has declined by 20% since 1980, while the fatal and serious accidents across industry has risen by 40% in the same period. In recent years the four major disasters in Bradford, Kings Cross, Zebrugge and Piper Alpha have occurred in areas where government departments rather than the H.S.E hold the responsibility for safety inspection. After Piper Alpha the Minister for Energy C. Parkinson declared that there was "no conflict of interest" between his department being responsible for both safety and profit. The evidence suggests that he was telling the absolute truth....

One survivor of the oil rig atrocity described it "as working on a time bomb". The department displayed their concern over safety by insisting that the workers be housed in wooden huts on the rig itself. As he said there was no conflict of interest between safety and profit. Capitalism is all about profit ie the profit we pay; the full cost in blood, sweat and tears. To a system that enslaves us, we owe no loyalty, for us the only loyalty that can be regarded as legitimate is loyalty to the class. Such a system cannot be reformed, so it must be dismantled. When to begin? There is no time like the present. The time for RED ACTION.

To everyone's surprise there have been no cries of outrage from the Tories about Channel Four's decision last month to screen A VERY BRITISH COUP

Considering the constant attempts by both the Government and its back benchers to intimidate and muzzle the BBC over everything from the Zircon Film to the Nelson Mandela concert, it has been an inexplicable silence. Surely by now some Tory could have made it to the front page of the Sun to condemn the disgraceful slur on the monarchy. That they would ever get involved in the backing of an army coup?

The reason some right wing Tory didn't is that the Deputy Leader of the Labour Party did. "Fantasy as distinct from a contribution to political thought.....slogans sticking out of the dialogue.....as if the campaign group has supplied diagrams" etc.

Why should 'cuddly Roy' savage the work of a fellow MP Chris Mullin? There are a number of reasons. One; because this well produced drama has managed to get across to the general public the very shallow hold of democracy and freedom in Britain today, in a way that no socialist theoretical tract could have done. I wonder how many people in Britain on Sunday 3rd July went to bed asking themselves if this is really how the establishment works, and if it really is the case that we are only free to elect governments that the White House and MI5 are prepared to tolerate.

Anyone who has read Peter Wright's Spycatcher will know that in the early 1970's senior officers in MI5 became alarmed that Britain was in danger of a left wing takeover and with a complete disregard for the law set out to prevent this. Egged on by the CIA's James Angleton, 30 MI5 officers committed 23 criminal conspiracies and 12 acts of treason. Their objectives were simply to replace Edward Heath as leader of the Tory Party with a reliable right-winger. Second, to replace the Labour leader Wilson with Callaghan and finally to replace the Labour Government with Thatcher's new model Tory Party.

The main link between MI5 and the Tories was Airey Neave (dispatched by an INLA unit in '79) who was Thatcher's campaign manager in her leadership bid against Heath.

Nor was the treasonable activity confined to the intelligence services. During the financial crisis in 1976, whilst Jim Callaghan's government was trying to save itself with a major loan from the IMF. Senior treasury civil servants were on the phone urging the IMF (in which the US has a majority of the votes) to resist granting the loan until even more draconian conditions had been extracted from the Labour Government. Roy Hattersley is aware that to publicly concede the truth about where the real power lies in Britain would mean that the Labour leadership would have to draw up a package of "Harry Perkins" like reforms, to make us more open and accountable democracy simply to retain any credibility with the public.

For a Tory to denounce, would add rather than detract, from its credibility. This is where Hattersley fits in.

This simple perhaps trivial incident helps expose the real role of the Labour Party in the system. The relationship is not as the leadership in their radical moments would have you believe. It is not a contest between the Labour poacher and the Tory game-keeper. It is more like the Tory game-keeper running his masters state with a little help from her/his loyal retriever called Labour.

Obviously, if as a protection against genuine poachers you keep a dog, you don't need to bark yourself.

IF YOU KEEP A DOG

WHY BARK YOURSELF?

WHY BARK YOURSELF?

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

'Thirty of the Leeds group clashed with 100 Bradford City supporters at the towns railway station and they had to be rescued and ushered on to the trains by un-uniformed police. During the fracas an undercover police officer P.C Paul Creeham, known to the gang as "poscher" was the only person arrested'.
'New Statesman'

MORE SENSE AND NONSENSE
AT THE BACK.....

Football fighting fascism

cont...

Curiously the one area of the fans activity at the European Championship in Germany a couple of months ago that would seem to have created the most alarm and offence, which was reported, but was left unexplored was the sight of hundreds of England fans openly displaying fascist sympathies. Was it because it is recognised that they are not the cause but a symptom of a deeper malaise? The Guardian reported, "they sang God save the Queen to a massed Nazi salute" and then sneered, "the English seemed confused about the Nazi matter, on the one hand they sang 'Hitlers gonna gas 'em again' but on the other they wore T Shirts; England on Tour 1914-39-88". But then of course the Brown Shirts were not exactly known for their political sophistication either. Unlike Marxism, fascism is not a science, to be effective or attract recruits it does not have to make actual sense. It is simply a loose Federation of prejudices tenuously linked to a matching set of illusory interests eg, immigration causes unemployment. It is violent by nature, national and not international in character. The basic philosophy is nation versus nation rather than class versus class, so the spectacle of right wing German Youths kicking lumps out of their right wing English counter-parts is for them entirely logical and consistent with their basic beliefs.

This is not to say that Fascists never co-ordinate their activities for mutual advantage. At Chelsea, the 'Headhunters' have over the last three or four years deliberately fostered relations with Loyalist/Fascists who follow Glasgow Rangers. The impact of this collusion has not been explosive but it has been insidious. In the 'shed' at Chelsea, English born hooligans sing the Orange Sash with fervour, sport loyalist tattoos, and express vocal support for the UDA and the UVF. This undoubtedly is due to the connection with Rangers, previously any Irishman whether Loyalist or Republican would have just been regarded as a 'stupid paddy'. Similarly in the last couple of years Scotland has witnessed a dramatic jump in the number of racially inspired attacks where previously it was not regarded as a problem.

What is the secret of their success? It is quite simple, their Propaganda and arguments are not challenged. Revolutionary Socialists, the natural adversary of the fascists are not there to answer questions posed in the complete absence of an alternative view, a counter argument; it is easy for the fascists to appear to have an answer for everything, to present things as if 'their version of the truth is the literal truth'. Many who call themselves Socialists would feel that mixing in this company is beneath them and would argue that this kind of activity is a diversion from the "real stugg-

le". The fascists recognise the weakness of this type of argument and are only encouraged by it. The fascist Left must earn the respect of the working class and second the neo-fascists must learn to respect the Revolutionary Left.

In 1905 Lenin pointed out "We must use every legal opportunity so as not to divorce ourselves from the working masses; we must live their lives and become merely pure propagandists who just have a Revolution some time. Workers will have no respect for people of this sort". We in Red Action have always instinctively understood this.

Last November after an AFA rally against the NF on Remembrance Sunday, a Red Action contingent led 200 anti-fascists back through the 24 hour picket of South Africa House.

The 'Headhunters' arrived on cue, all piss and vinegar but shrank from the opportunity for confrontation, and when challenged fled. Not all, I am happy to say escaped retribution. A few days later, one of their number admitted, in the company of a Red Action contact and that he had never been so frightened in his life. He had been told that Red Action were old men in duffle coats.

At the moment the organised fascists are small in number but as the events in Germany demonstrated the Left are by no means winning the battle for the hearty minds of the working class youth. This is not because Revolutionary Socialist arguments have been rejected, the real crime is that they have not been properly presented.

Racism is not just a moral problem, or a social problem, it is a political problem and specifically a class problem, so ultimately the only solution is a class-based solution. The task is two-fold, first the Revolu-

It will be launched in August September. If interested etc., See next issue for further details.

A benefit last January organised by Red Action for Irish Republican Socialist Prisoners was a great success, raising over £600 for the prisoners. The Welfare Officer of the IRSP came over from Belfast and addressed the audience, urging support for the prisoners appeal, which if you have been reading recent copies of RA I'm sure you will be familiar with. We must also take this opportunity, to thank 'Folk in Hell', once again for donating their services free of charge for that night.

The reason we are mentioning this social in the pages of RA again, is not just so we can blow our own proverbial trumpets, but so we can also kick a few old myths once and for all.

We are always told by other so called left groups, that you will alienate working class people from left-wing politics if you support and present the most militant of causes (eg in Red Action's case support for the armed struggle in Ireland or physical confrontation with fascist). Yet the events of that January Friday night would certainly appear to suggest otherwise. The audience was made up of mainly working class people, most of them not being members of any particular political party and yet, here they were enjoying a very entertaining night and at the same time donating money to INLA prisoners; not the most liberal of causes by anybodys standards. The hall was decked out in posters etc., depicting volunteers involved in the armed struggle, which left all those inside in no doubt as to the cause their money was going to and also, just as importantly a large amount of socialist/republican

SOLIDARITY BEGINS HERE



We may not be in a position to smash the H. Blocks, but we certainly are in a position to do something to ease the plight of those inside them.

material was sold at the bookstall, proving that entertainment and politics can sit in the same room together.

But above all, I think what the evening clearly proves, is that if you take your most militant section of the community, the working class, then they will come to accept them, though admittedly not always with open arms. It is only when, like most of the left groups, you try to disown or hide the most controversial elements of your revolutionary socialist politics, that working class people become suspicious of the left and their ideas. This is why the left find themselves

continually having to pander to the middle classes to gain their support and in turn find themselves watering down their politics to suit.

To-date Red Action are the only political organisation to respond positively to the appeal launched 12 months ago. We therefore challenge those in Britain who call themselves Revolutionary Socialists to either come to the aid of the Revolutionary fighters who languish in the jails of our own ruling class or to stop inventing excuses, (representatives of one of the larger

left wing political groups in Britain dismissed the appeal as "charity") for their own lack of conviction and assume their rightful place in the ranks of the class-collaborators and imperialists in the Labour Party. No doubt many will dismiss this analysis as impertinence coming as it does from a group that many on the left regard as 'out-laws'. First, however, they should consider this definition of international solidarity from a man who knew a thing or two about revolutionary politics: V.I. Lenin. "There is one and only one kind of real internationalism and that is working wholeheartedly for the development of the revolutionary movement and the revolutionary struggle in one's own country and supporting by propaganda sympathy and material aid. This struggle and only this, line in every country without exception".

If you want to find out more about socialist prisoners aid, write to: Red Action P.O Box 158 Hatfield HERTS.

LETTER FROM THE KESH

COMRADES H BLOCK 7 LONG KESH 8.2.88

First of all I will express my comrades and my own appreciation for the support groups interest and help in coping with the myriad of problems faced by Republican Socialist Prisoners and their families and friends. Because the RSM is small it tends to be "forgotten" about when it comes to helping prisoners and their families, which makes your support all the more valuable.

As to us the prisoners, because we are no longer in the spotlight does not mean that things are running nicely in this jail. The prison administration here have adopted the opposite approach towards National and Republican prisoners, to that they employed from 1975 till 1981 namely one of outright confrontation. They now employ the inhumane gradualist approach of gradually and systematically grinding down the prisoners will. This is their aim. Why else do they practise an unfair system for prisoners with the interminate sentences? Denial of a right to compassionate parole for all prisoners. A complete absence of facilities on wings for long term prisoners and a disgraceful lack of facilities for the visits.

The visits in this jail are a hostile environment. How can this be conducive to maintaining family relations. All this in a society we are told regards the family as its basic unit. The only logical conclusion I can come to is that it is an attempt by the British to punish not just the prisoners for resisting their misrule in Ireland, but prisoners families and friends also and by extension the entire people of the six counties.

As always us prisoners will be used by the British and Irish politicians as pawns, political hostages, therefore only those who have our interests uppermost genuinely speak for and represent us as a whole. Those others will use us as political hostages for their own class and party interests.

I hear you are attempting to establish support groups throughout England on a national basis. I wish you all the best and hope you succeed. I want to thank you all as well for sending on the books. Don't forget any books are allowed in, political or novels, men are always looking for novels. Some men don't read political books and the books don't have to be new, second hand ones are allowed.

THE VOICE OF REASON



The Government is under pressure from the CBI employers Federation to conduct a thorough review of Wages Councils which set the minimum levels of pay for about 2.25 million of the lowest paid workers, in a move that could lead to their abolition. In early July 500,000 workers in the Hotel and Catering Industry enjoyed the full benefit. They were granted a 6% rise. In actual cash it amounts to 12p extra an hour. It takes their hourly pay to £2.12 - £1.38 below the Council of Europes recommended decency threshold. Now isn't that something worth fighting to hang on to. Read on, it gets worse.

A recent report by the Low Pay Unit "accuses the government of turning a blind eye to what amounts to a crime wave of illegal under payment".

THE FACTS

1. According to the Unit nearly a quarter of establishments visited by inspectors last year were found to be paying below agreed minimum levels amounting to more than £1.2 million in arrears. £400,000 was never recovered.
2. The number of Inspectors has been cut by more than half since the government came to power in 1979 while the number of social security fraud inspectors has risen dramatically.
3. Firms covered by the Wages Councils can expect to be visited on average only once in 20 years.
4. Only nine prosecutions were brought last year despite 4,443 establishments under paying.
5. Wages set by the Councils average stands at £1 below the Council of Europes decency threshold.
6. 9½ million adult workers earn less than their threshold.
7. Workers under 21 were disqualified from the protection of the wages councils in 1986.
8. The proportion of workers below that decency level has grown from 38% to 46% since 1979.

The Low Pay Unit warns that abolition of the Councils would take us closer to a sweat shop economy 'encouraging a spiral of wage undercutting and inefficient production based on cheap labour'.

In the May edition of the NF paper The Flag, they were still whining on about an incident that happened almost 18 months previously. On 21st February 1987 during an NF by-election meeting in Charlton, South West London; the article describes how in a "heroic battle" pensioners and a "pregnant woman" drove 40 Labour party thugs from the hall. Evidentially not completely happy with the result they made a number of complaints about the police as well, which we will take and assess one by one:

1. NF canvassers were attacked as they went about their work- TRUE
2. An NF candidate was attacked as he leafletted the constituency- TRUE
3. An NF election worker was attacked with a brick as he waited at Charlton Bridge Station- FALSE people who know about these things have informed me that; in fact it was a beer can.
4. A police inspector deliberately let 40 Labour Party thugs into the meeting after being told they had already committed acts of violence.

FALSE- 40 labour party thugs? Do me a favour. In fact the meeting was broken up by a mere 15 members of AFA. On other occasions we have been presented as a 'Jewish hit squad', 'Pink Action' and after an NF march was ambushed in Bury St Edmunds in '86 as '30 red ICF football hooligans' Tch, Tch, credit where credits are due chaps. However one mustn't grumble, considering what they stand for, lying about us is by far their least offensive activity.

Labour Party spokesmen on Red Action: 'Our views on violence for political or social change are the same whether that violence is from the right, left, or centre. As far as we are concerned these people are no different from the National Front if they pursue violent confrontation over the democratic process'.

'The only real street battles the NF has been involved in have been with Red Action'.
Lead singer of the fascist band Skrewdriver.

'We support them unconditionally in the fight against fascism. They are a good bunch of boys and girls'.
Gerry Gable, Editor of the anti-fascist magazine Searchlight. Thanks Gerry. Quotes from an article in the Blitz magazine on Red Action.

FREEDOM - FIGHTER

I'm a socialist definitely and I'm a republican. I believe in a united Ireland, a united socialist Ireland, definitely socialist. Capitalism provides no answer at all for our people and I think that is the Brits main interest in Ireland. I'm oppressed as a woman but also because I'm Irish. Everyone in this country is oppressed and we can't successfully end our oppression as women until we first end the oppression of our country. But I don't think that's the end of it. It happened before when we took a back seat. But women today have gone through too much. No way will they allow that to happen, and I hope I'm alive because I certainly won't allow this to happen. Once we remove the British that isn't it, that is only the beginning."

Mairied Farrell, executed by the British State.

SOLDIER

Mrs Thatcher appears to view the SAS in the manner of Caesar viewing his Pretorian Guard. Her own private army with a prime loyalty to her not, the country. It is reported that she directly controls them and their deployment. As an old soldier I watched Mr Ian Smith doing the same in Rhodesia with the Selous Scouts. Before that conflict was over, they were blowing up the main Salisbury Churches and attributing it to the Zanla/Zipra anti-Christis. Do we have to wait until Westminster Abbey goes up in a puff of smoke before someone in authority addresses our evidence.

Major F.J Holroyd (retired.) Part of the text of the letter the Guardian declined to print.

Death on the Rock. A Journalists view of Gibraltar.

'Perhaps the government thinks that it can get away with no further enquiry beyond a delayed inquest apparently rigged in the army's favour. Perhaps it feels that future embarrassment will be saved by passing a new law to make it a criminal offence for any newspaper even to mention the secret operations of these shadowy bodies. If so, I feel it is making an error of judgement that will have the whole cabinet wishing they had merely shot down an Aer Lingus passenger plane by mistake'.
Auberon Waugh-The Sunday Telegraph.

EYE WITNESS

I looked down as soon as I heard the first shot, I saw a man falling to the ground and another man shooting at him. When I looked again two men were walking along the pavement putting guns into a blue and white bag along with a jacket and what I thought was a passport. They then walked to the end of the road, went around and started walking faster and faster and other men came running. A policeman had got out of a police car on the other side of the road and jumped across the barrier. The two men got into the back of a white car pointing towards town and were driven off. They're getting away the killers are getting away, I thought.
Observer Sunday 13th March 1988.

night thoughts

'One important thing I noticed about the graffiti in Northern Ireland is that the Republican stuff was really advanced politically and intellectually, whereas the loyalists stuff was quite backward, "wogs out" and stuff like that. To anyone whoever says they support the British Occupation of Ireland, you've got to say Loyalism is inextricably linked on the streets of Belfast with racism'.

'It's not good supporting the fight against division in South Africa when you ignore the struggle of the Irish Republicans, in Northern Ireland right on your own doorstep.

Taken from the authorised biography of 'The Housemartins' called, 'Now that's what I call quite good', written by Swift Nick.

Credits, thanks and inspirations included amongst others, The Miners, The Irish Republican Socialist Party, Dennis Skinner, the ANC, PLO, Sandinistas, Sammy my dog, and Red Action...Illustrious company indeed.

The government they would get if the IRA were ever to succeed, would be one of the most brutal regimes the world has ever seen.
Evening Standard- Thursday 4th August 1988.

'People have said they do not want to go back to Victorian sweatshops. Would we not be better if the country was one sweatshop, hard at work instead of having three million unemployed?'.
Peter Thurnham, MP.

'Political toleration is a product of the complacency of the ruling class. When that complacency is disturbed there never was a more bloody-minded set of thugs than the British Ruling Class."

Mr Michael Foot former leader of the Labour Party.

'This is a deeply moral society'.
Rupert Murdoch-owner of the Sun.

'The budget was brilliant, quite the most brilliant we have seen. Brilliant in conception, brilliant in drafting, brilliant in delivery'.
Margaret Thatcher.

'A fish rots from the head down'
Michael Dukakis on Reagans Regime.

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 need of capital and labour cannot ever be reconciled. In other words the quest by the employing classes for greater profit, is in eternal conflict with the demands of the working class for higher wages, shorter hours etc. It is in the obvious interest of the employer to keep wages down as low as possible while it is equally obvious that this does not serve the interests of the majority. The two systems capitalism and socialism cannot co-exist, as they are in constant struggle pulling in opposite directions, each in pursuit of its own goals. A victory for one is necessarily a defeat for the other. This is the major source of conflict in the world today. Capitalism is a system which is based on the private ownership of the means of production. This means that the factories, workplaces, natural resources etc, on which we all depend to produce the necessities of life are the private property of a few individuals, who use them to produce not what is most socially necessary, but whatever will make them the most profit. When it suits them, they are able to close down those productive resources, even though there may be great social need for what could be produced on them. Regardless of how rich a country may be in natural resources, capitalism can never provide equality of wealth due to its own inherent limitations. It is obviously impossible for everybody to become a capitalist (employer) and so to function, the system demands the creation and maintenance of an employing class and a working class, or if you like an upper class and lower class. Propping up this system, are the forces of social control—army, police force, civil service etc—all controlled by totally unelected and un-accountable representatives of the capitalist class.

SOCIALISM It is impossible for us today to say exactly what a socialist system will be like, as when it happens there will be millions of others involved in shaping it. However there are some features that would have to be present in any society, before we would be willing to consider it as socialist.

PUBLIC OWNERSHIP Only when all of the major productive resources and industry are taken into public ownership, will it be possible for the democratic will of the majority to ensure that they are at all times employed in the most socially useful manner. This will result in a massive increase in production and wealth.

CONTROL OF SOCIETY All those who occupy positions of power and authority will be elected by those they represent and subject to recall.

FREEDOM AND EQUALITY All will be expected to contribute to production and all will receive equal reward and have equal rights, irrespective of sex, race or creed. The state will provide adequate facilities to cater for the needs of the elderly, sick, handicapped, nursing mothers etc, who will all receive a full wage. All questions or personal morality will be free from state interference. Abortion and contraception will be legal and provided by the state. There will be freedom of worship for all religion, but no church will be allowed to interfere in state matters.

INTERNATIONALISM The capitalist economic system is linked up internationally, therefore the struggle to overthrow it is a worldwide one. All workers everywhere have the same interests. It is impossible for socialism to exist in isolation in one country, as the power of international capitalism would crush it.

NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD TO SOCIALISM Socialism cannot be achieved through the parliamentary system, because the real power in society lays not with elected MPs but with rich industrialists and the leaders of the armed forces, police judiciary etc. The present structures cannot be reformed they must be overthrown. The Labour Party does not try to end capitalism, but merely give the workers a better deal within it.

UNION STRENGTH. WE SUPPORT ANY PICKET LINE IN DEFENCE OF WORKERS LIVING STANDARDS. We support a strong organised rank and file movement within the unions. Union officials should be supported as long as they represent their members correctly. But rank and file unionists must reserve the right to take action independent of the officials when necessary.

TOTAL OPPOSITION TO RACISM AND FASCISM We opposed any movement or ideology which attempts to divide the working class on grounds of race, sex, or creed. We recognise the need to oppose fascist organisations, both ideologically and physically on the streets.

THE IRISH NATIONAL LIBERATION STRUGGLE AGAINST OUR OWN RULING CLASS We support the right of oppressed people the world over to fight back. We unconditionally support the right of the revolutionary armies The Irish Republican Army, and the Irish National Liberation Army, to engage in armed struggle to free their country from British rule. We draw great inspiration from the principled and courageous manner in which they conduct their struggle, and from the way in which they have integrated cultural and class expression into their political movement.

THE "COMMUNIST" STATES The regimes in countries such as Russia, China Cuba etc, are used as examples to try and prove socialism undesirable. In our view, although these countries have planned economies, they cannot be described as socialist. We contend that socialism cannot be implemented from above by an unaccountable ruling elite. Public ownership, freedom and democracy are all essential features of socialism and in their absence it cannot exist. We support the right of the people in these states to overthrow the leadership and implement socialist policies. At the same time however, we recognise the difficulties that states such as Nicaragua—and others past and present—face, from capitalist backed mercenary armies, military intervention, and economic sabotage, which make immediate transition to a socialist system impossible. While these states remain progressive, we will continue to support them.

THE ORGANISATION Traditionally, the structure of revolutionary socialist groups in this country, has been one where the leadership is made up of a small group of self selected academics and intellectual, who wield absolute authority over the membership. Such a structure fails, firstly because there can be no true democracy in such a set up, and corruption soon sets in, and secondly because those leading the organisation are so far removed from the realities of working class life, it cannot relate properly to that class. A revolutionary socialist organisation must be composed of and led by working class people. It must recognise that no leadership is immune from corruption and be truly democratic in its internal structures. It must be ready to work in a non sectarian manner with other socialist and progressive groups. It must present socialist politics in a manner in which working class people can identify with in their life and their work and their leisure. It must be consistent, principled and above all honest in its politics. Only then will it begin to be able to relate to the working class, most of whom today are cynical if not hostile towards the revolutionary left. We recognise that a revolutionary working class party is necessary if capitalism is to be overthrown. We are not that party, neither are those groups which claim to be it. We will work to keep alive a tradition of working class militancy, until such time as enough militants can be brought together to form that party.