

# Red Action

Issue 50 MARCH '89 20 p

## RICH MAN POOR MAN



WE'VE NEVER HAD IT SO GOOD?

In just one week the Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, has twice demonstrated an appalling ignorance of the 'Queen's English'. First of all she triumphantly announced the birth of a grandson with the words "We are a grandmother". It's hard to know exactly what she meant, though clearly she was borrowing the use of an expression previously seen as the prerogative of a bunch of social security claimants known as the Royal Family.

Later in the same week she was at it again. Commenting on the Economy she claimed "That now we have a higher standard of living than we have ever had". Who do you reckon she is talking about this time? When people generally use the term we they are referring to a group of people with whom they associate or share something in common with. People often refer to their family as we. Perhaps Thatcher was referring to herself and Denis when she said "we have a higher standard of living". That would certainly be true. Denis, a millionaire would certainly have benefitted from Fatty Lawsons extravagant handouts over the past 12 months: 100 millionaires have gained more in tax cuts than the poorest 1 million taxpayers.

Perhaps she was talking about all the people with whom she and Denis have something in common with. That makes sense too. Britain's top 1 percent have seen their unearned income rise by 89% since the last budget. Over the past 10 years the richest 1% have seen their total income rise by 346% as a result of tax cuts, salary and interest

rate rises. For each individual in the top 500,000 or so the windfall over the 10 years averaged £100,000 purely through tax cuts. In the last 12 months they have received more than £20,000 each from cuts in income tax, inheritance tax and capital gains tax - just under £400 per week. Inheritance tax cuts in particular have given the super-rich a massive windfall. The top 200 taxable estates enjoyed a reduction in inheritance tax of £50million whilst the top 1000 estates received a cut of £110 million, that's £110,000 per person. I could go on but you get the picture. No government this century has given so much to so few for so long. Clearly they're the 'we' Thatcher was referring to when she said "we have a higher standard of living than we have ever had". That's all very well, but what about us, the other 51.5 million? Official figures show that money has been diverted from us to them. The majority are subsidising the minority. Since 1979 the "poor" have increasingly been subsidising the rich. In 12 months the top 1% got, in tax cuts, £188,000,000,000, that's £150,000,000 more than the bottom 70%. There has been a widening of the already massive gap between rich and "poor" during the Thatcher years, reversing the trend set in the inter-war years. Due to massive unemployment amongst the unskilled gross earnings for the bottom 10% have increased by 11%, in real terms, since 1979 compared with the 69% increase enjoyed by the top 10%. In his new book on the tax system John Hills calculates

on the basis of the latest official figures for income distribution, that real incomes grew by 7% since 1979 but that the share of the total for the poorest 10 million fell from 6.1% to 5.6%. This suggests that their real income after allowing for all taxes and cash benefits fell by 2% between 1979 and 1985, despite economic growth the poorest were worse off in absolute as well as relative terms". That's bad enough, but the indications are that if "boom" is replaced by recession then things will get even worse and those who have benefitted so little from the 'boom' are going to pay heaviest for the recession. Capitalism, the name of the system we live under, is run by the few for the few. It serves exclusively the interests of the minority over those of the majority. No reforms as advocated by parliamentary socialists can rectify this major, basic contradiction. Raising the dole, building more council houses, putting more money into the NHS will provide only temporary relief, the same problems will re-emerge because the system itself is based, indeed thrives on inequality.

The Right argue (They would wouldn't they?) that as the rich get richer, the poor get richer. Common sense dictates, and the figures prove, that in dividing the nations wealth the greater their 'cut' the less there is left for the rest of us. The more we make, the more they take. The harder we work, the larger their profits. The recent gains by the middle classes and some skilled workers from the last budget have already been eaten up by inflation and high interest rates and the erosion looks likely to continue.

It is not possible to strike a 'fair bargain' between slave and master. There can be no negotiation, there are no half measures, the only real choice is between total slavery or total freedom. If the slave owner imposes a ration cut so that the plantation can survive, if he says that unless the slaves work even harder and longer he cannot survive, this clearly is not in the interests of the slave. But if the slave does not cooperate then the plantation will collapse. Should he worry? If the slaveowning system itself collapses then he will be free and he can replace the old system with a new, fairer system.

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## THE PRIVATISATION —OF TERROR—

Two months ago an obscure junior minister at the British Home Office publicly denounced 'certain solicitors' in the North of Ireland of being 'unduly sympathetic to the IRA'.

Less than 4 weeks later the words of Douglas Hogg the British Minister had found their first target Pat Finucane a lawyer renowned for his competence and a thorn in the side of the British since he represented the hunger strikers in 1981. Only just recently he won a case forcing three RUC men to attend a coroners inquest to answer questions on their involvement in the deaths of three unarmed IRA volunteers in 1982. This was deeply embarrassing to the government as it rekindled the controversy

to insulate the population from any knowledge of the dirty war in Ireland. A book detailing British involvement in 'death squad' style murders in the North and South going back to 1973 by a former 'operative' Major Fred Holroyd, has just been banned under the Official Secrets Act.

The genuine hysteria generated in relation to the programme 'Death on the Rock', which merely investigated killings the State actually claimed responsibility for is not the response of a side that is confident its winning. Despite their best efforts less than 12 months later the whole justification for the killings and the cover up has bit by bit and little by little has almost completely unravelled.

over their previous attempts to suppress the inquiry led by John Stalker that exposed the existence of 'death squads' operating officially or unofficially on behalf of, and in the interests of the British government.

'Officially' Pat Finucane's murder has been claimed by the Ulster Freedom Fighters', a flag of convenience for the still legal UDA. but in reality it was commissioned and sanctioned by the British government.

Hoggs 'pleas' was reminiscent of the famous quote attributed to Henry VIII who in reference to a dissident Thomas A Beckett demanded publicly of his court 'Who will rid me of this troublesome priest'. It was not a direct instruction and after the murder allowed room for 'King Henry' like 'King Tom' to throw up his hands in horror, condemn the assassins and give a plausible denial of responsibility. Later Tom King in denying the link between Hoggs remark and Finucane's death 'Mr Finucane was well known for the work he did and the clients he had.' Crudely translated it means he knew the risks and in any case he had it coming.

Since the shooting three other lawyers have been publicly threatened by the same 'sub-contract murder squad.'

The real significance of this seems to be that Britain now for the first time under the scrutiny of Amnesty International feel they can afford no further damage to its 'image' internationally and has served notice to the legal profession that it will no longer tolerate them meddling in its affairs.

The British army all 30,000, are losing the war; simply because they are not winning it. Further repression, removal of the right to silence approval of more public and private sector assassinations will only convince more and more people that really

is no alternative to the armed struggle.

To maintain 'morale at home' it is more and more necessary

Certainly the most damning evidence so far is that the release of secret documents at the inquest that a senior



Patrick Finucane

Gibraltar police officer perjured himself and that he was directly involved in the murder of Farrell, Savage, McCann. His name is Inspector Joseph Rivaglette.

The official 'story' goes that just before the shootings a police car which happened by chance to be near the garage where the shootings took place let off its siren 'accidentally' or 'to disperse traffic'. The siren alerted the terrorists, so they 'made movements' which looked as they might 'press the button'. They were then shot. When questioned during the Coroners Inquest in Gibraltar, Inspector Rivaglette knew 'nothing at all' about the operation.

Strange you might think that in a colony the size of Gibraltar perhaps 100,000 in all a senior police officer would have been unaware of such a massive operation involving M15, SAS, etc. and nobody thought it worthwhile to inform him.

Confidential documents now in the hands of a Minister of the Irish Republic include the police operations order issued before March 4 naming the officers who would carry out the crucial tasks on the day. Inspector Joseph Rivaglette, the man 'who knew nothing' is named as

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## NO HIDING PLACE

On Tuesday 10th January Anti-Fascist Action, in conjunction with Cable Street Beat, held a press conference to announce the launch of a campaign against the existence of a number of shops in and around Carnaby Street which quite openly sold Nazi propaganda, including records T-shirts and literature.

We pointed out that this naturally attracted neo-Fascists to the area and that in fact Carnaby Street, one of the main tourist attractions in Britain, had become the 'cultural centre' for Fascism in Europe, Australia and even America. Choosing to ignore them is a symptom of weakness rather than strength and can only increase the support for groups like Blood and Honour among white disenfranchised white working class youth in Thatchers Britain. The selling of such openly nazi material would not have found an audience in either '68 or '78, it would have been discouraged by the far right and not have been tolerated by the far left. Their emergence and growth is a result of a general drift towards the right in the past decade. In a sense there real importance is what they symbolise. They stand as symbols of the 70,000 race attacks a year and 43 racist murders since 1981. Should economic conditions deteriorate further these figures demonstrate there exists a vast reservoir of reaction and 'tolerance on which

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Members of the Neo-Nazi 'Blood and Honour' group, referred to by their recent Hosts - Grand Met Breweries - as "ALLEGED FASCISTS".

# REBELS WITHOUT A CAUSE NO HIDING PLACE

CONT.

It was perhaps inevitable that the conclusion of the war in Afghanistan should attract the label "Russia's Vietnam". "Socialist Worker" and the Murdoch press find themselves in rare agreement on this analysis. Of course, despite the smaller scale of conflict there are points of similarity. Both Russia and the U.S. were concerned to support regimes that were not feasible without external intervention; and both super-powers fought the nationalist resistance with equal ruthlessness (although the Russians did not employ napalm, chemical weapons, or area bombing, all of which the U.S. used in Vietnam). While it is essential to maintain a clear analysis of the limitations of progressive forces in the real world, socialists should beware of the temptation to exhibit their own doctrinal purity and idealism by indulging in a total repudiation of existing movements. The stalinist Afghan communist party, the PDPA, its cadres drawn almost exclusively from the state bureaucracy and student population, came to power in an officer-led military coup in 1978. It lacked any broad base of support in either a work-

ing class (a negligible factor in Afghanistan), or the politically backward peasantry. Unsurprisingly, by the end of 1979 the government of the PDPA had lost control of what remained a feudal country, effectively ruled by a warlord/bandit caste exploiting an exceedingly impoverished peasantry. The situation in China during the twenties and thirties where America also extended support to warlord regimes, is perhaps the nearest historical precedent. The Russian invasion was apparently prompted by two main considerations. Its leaders wanted to maintain a friendly, and in the circumstances, progressive government on its borders and above all, to secure a stable country in which pan-Muslim nationalism could be contained. By contrast, America's invasion of Vietnam (and later Cambodia), a country thousands of miles away which represented no intelligible threat, was in support of a government that was unqualified in its corruption and viciousness, and its total dependence on imperialist interests. The contrast therefore is not merely between defensive and aggressive motives, but

## A CAUSE



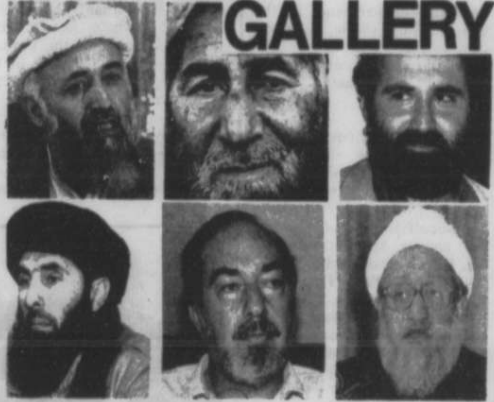
AFGHAN REBELS STANDING BESIDE A PILE OF RUSSIAN SCRAP METAL.

to a significant extent, between progressive forces and those of unmitigated reaction. It is beyond serious question that the Russian decision to invade was nevertheless a profound mistake - a mistake that has cost a million lives and created millions of refugees. Yet the fact that the Russian withdrawal could take place so speedily and in relative order reveals that Soviet imperialism lacks the dimensions of economic exploitation that characterises capitalist intervention. The U.S. could not pull out of Central America so easily, or Britain from N.Ireland. Although to be welcomed as an end to a futile war, it is difficult to see the Russian withdrawal as a victory for socialism worldwide as the SWP for example, believe. The forces of the ultra-right in Afghanistan (admittedly strengthened and united by the war), now look set to gain control of the country - facing the Americans with the novel responsibility for a "mad mullah" regime even more reactionary than that in Iran. These "freedom fighters" as the West calls them, are the men who boast of having thrown acid on the faces and legs of women in the streets of Kabul, and who murdered and tortured the

political opposition to the previous feudal regime. Their private armies now control the largest heroin trade in the world. The profound ethnic, class and religious divisions within the Afghan resistance will in all probability be resolved in a spectacular bloodbath. The contrasts with the experienced and disciplined cadres of Vietnamese nationalism and their astonishingly peaceful post war settlement, and the prospects for Afghanistan, could not be stronger. Having supplied the sophisticated weaponry, there is no indication that the U.S. will now supply economic aid for reconstruction, or that UN forces are waiting in the wings. The U.S. intervention has never aimed at anything else but a bloody and unholy mess. It is undeniable that the political bankruptcy of the Soviet regime, and the nature of Soviet society itself, have been sharply exposed by the assumption that military might could impose a form of "socialism" on a country without the active participation of the people themselves. The history of Russian imperialism since Stalin does not lead us to expect much more, but the apt epitaph, "Russia's Vietnam" is superficial and one that REAL socialists should reject.

## ROGUES

### GALLERY



ABOVE: SOME FEUDAL 'WAR LORDS' WHOSE PRIVATE ARMIES NOW CONTROL THE LARGEST HEROIN TRADE IN THE WORLD.

### THE PRIVATISATION OF TERROR CONT.

the officer actually in charge of two firearms teams of Gibraltar police in the operation against the IRA.

Therefore it can be concluded that the siren did not go off 'accidentally', did not alert McCann and Farrell (as they were aware of the surveillance in any case,) the function of the police car lights flashing and siren blaring towards them was clearly meant to distract them to make the job easier for the assassins approach them from behind. The siren was not a 'accident' or 'to clear traffic' but the signal to launch the attack in which Farrell, McCann and Savage were shot over 30 times in the back and head.

The families have announced that they intend to bring a civil action alleging a 'conspiracy to murder' against the British government.

Pat Finucane would have been the obvious candidate to present the case. For the government, given his track record it would have been a less than appealing prospect. Any solicitor who might replace him will fall under the criterion publicly laid down by the regime of being 'unduly sympathetic to the IRA'. The threat implicit in itself, is characteristic of the tactics developed by many South American Regimes where public announcements are complimented by the activities of private sector death squads.

Prior to the coup in 1973 Chile, because of its 100 year history of parliamentary democracy, was often referred

to as the 'Britain of South America', undoubtedly a more suitable analogy now would be to say that Britain today is fast becoming the Chile of Europe.

### RICH MAN/POOR MAN CONT.

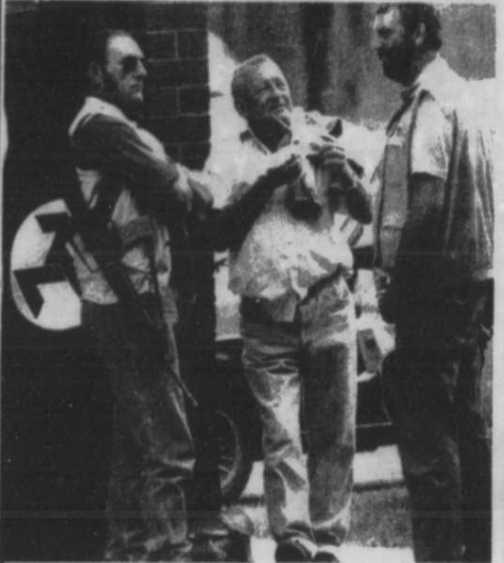
Some of the 3 million currently enjoying 'Booming Britain' - Bet they can't wait for the Recession.



If capitalism, to survive, demands that some workers be thrown out of work, insists that we can no longer afford to house people, can't afford a NHS, proper education etc. If workers demand more "rations" the system will collapse. Why should we worry, it's their fucking system. But who will manage the factories (plantations)? Won't we go hungry some timid soul asks. Why should we, don't we do all the work now in any case. But under the new system only those that work will eat so it is not the worker but the capitalist who faces starvation. Clearly either the slave is free or he is not. Either the system is run in the interests of the majority or it is not. The capitalist

minority will never, cannot ever run the system in the interests of 'them', the majority. Once again it appears capitalism is about to enter a serious crisis. Should we the wage-slaves cooperate, make sacrifices, go hungry, go homeless, to help it survive. We must do exactly the opposite, adopt an active instead of a passive stance, confront them on every issue and so hasten its demise. Then the majority must design and implement a system and run it in our own interests. That system, called socialism, already exists. However the only method by which this transfer of power can take place is, unfortunately, not even on the agenda. Nevertheless we will have our day.

Joe Reilly a Red Action delegate representing A.F.A. told reporters "That to tolerate their existence is to condone the activities it encourages among its clients and customers. A.F.A. are mounting this campaign against the shops in Carnaby Street to put them out of business, but also we hope that the publicity generated will highlight the problem and alert the public, and especially the Labour movement, to the potential threat that fascism represents. Also, because the issue of Blood and Honour is so clear cut, it will provide a challenge for them, and the press, as to where their sympathies lie. That is not to say that if individuals do not attend the picket, or reporters present do not submit a sympathetic article, their sympathies lie with the actions or ideology of the neo-Fascists, but equally clearly their sympathies do not lie with anti-Fascism or with the victims of the attacks. There can be no neutrality. It is in this climate of apathy, insensitivity to the plight of others, and the development of a certain tolerance towards fascism that allows it to flourish. Remember national socialism did not begin with concentration camps and gas-chambers, that was just how it ended. On the 21st of January A.F.A. held its first mass picket at Carnaby Street, it was a huge success. About 200 people, turned up, including a contingent from the press and other national media who clearly expected (hoped for?) a confrontation. They were disappointed. Cutdown was closed and the large mobs of boneheads who usually congregated in the area were nowhere to be seen. The proprietors of the two other shops, when confronted by hundreds of chanting demonstrators, looked distinctly uncomfortable. A successful petition of the other shops was organised calling on Westminster Council to remove them from the area. After about 2 hours we left the area promising to return.



AWB Members 'stewarding' a meeting.

Later the same evening Cable Street Beat organized a gig featuring the "Angelic Upstarts" who Blood and Honour, having smashed up their last gig, swore would never play in London again. Once again it was a fantastic and trouble free success. As Mensi, the lead singer of the Upstarts, pointed out to the packed venue, the bones "are conspicuous by their absence".

The success of the campaign has continued, both shops on either side of the Cutdown, which has closed, are now clean having ceased selling nazi propaganda. A pub called The Store, a well known fascist haunt in the area, has decided to avoid trouble and to close its doors on Saturday after a picket was put on the pub during the week. Many of the regulars immediately left and many more refused to cross the picket line in solidarity.

However it has not been all plain sailing. The pub manager claimed that we were "intimidating" himself and his customers and that barring the fascists would cost him £600 each Saturday from 12 to 2.30. The brewery (Grand Metropolitan) took a similar line, insisting they had never caused any trouble and referring to them as "alleged fascists". The owner of the Merc sent A.F.A. a solicitors letter refuting our claims that he sold fascist material and threatening legal action. Since then we have discovered that he also holds the lease on Cutdown and in all probability owns the new premises from which they now operate in Riding House Street (off Great Portland Street).

Initially the media handled the issue intelligently and sympathetically. Our views were aired on Reportage, BBC2, Night Network, in Time Out and some of the music papers. The first indication that this was beginning to change was when an article in the Independent on Blood and Honour commented that a group called Red Action opposed them, "indeed hounded them". More recently an Evening Standard reporter called Keith Douvkat contacted an A.F.A. representative and inquired if its policy of "harassment" would continue and if it was "justified". He asked about the existence of "red fascists" and later Red Action was mentioned in connection with this. When asked where his own sympathies lay he candidly admitted "that he was neither pro-Fascist nor anti-Fascist".

Let's be perfectly clear about this. There is no middle ground between fascist and anti-fascist. Anti-fascism does not mean pro-left, pro-socialism or pro-communism, it simply means that you are not pro-fascist. There is not middle ground, no room to manoeuvre, on this issue there can be no neutrality. Tolerance to Fascism cannot be allowed. You are either with the anti-Fascists or you are against the anti-Fascists. Blood and Honour adopted the symbol of the A.W.B., the Afrikaaner fascist movement. They wear their hearts on their sleeves. As long as Red Action exists we will try to ensure that they are afforded no tolerance, no hiding place, no sanctuary. Why? Because we are fanatics and zealots? No. Because we, as working class socialists, recognise a potential threat and have learned the lessons of history.



"IN THE FRAME" INSPECTOR Revagliatte - who at the inquest claimed 'I knew nothing' - examines the bodies of Mairéad Farrell and Danny McCann along with the Special Assassiation Squad.

# LETTERS

Dear Comrades

Many thanks for your warm letter, the Beat Review and the printed interview.

Actually I didn't expect it to take up such space but with the exception of a few mistakes you certainly done it justice and despite your limited resources a credit to your efforts.

I am off to Spain today and will be travelling around hitchhiking and hobnobbing around the parts where I was involved during, and after, the war under Franco, in quest of further confirmation of events I am attempting to write about.

I think Beat Review has good potential and should be better known and am all for a breakthrough into the type of rubbish the young people are being dished out today. Beat has a long way to go, particularly when I see the difficulties of getting a 'spot' for such new songs like Larry Shifrons 'Listen To The Voices' and 'Please, Please We Want Guarantees' failing to get into the charts which are dominated by those who can put up the most money. Had I have known about Beat's existence I could have used them in the successful International Social and Dance I arranged in Hammersmith to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of THE LAST PARADE in Barcelona.

Time prevents me from elaborating further as I have to answer a few letters. I expect to be back towards the end of March in time for the screening of the TV film in Dublin.

So, wishing success in your efforts and aspirations I look forward to seeing you in many of the struggles that lay ahead.

Fraternal greetings,  
Bob Doyle

Dear comrades

I am writing to invite you to send a speaker to a "Workers Press" public meeting, on "The Defence of Democratic Rights and the Fight Against the Tory Government". The meeting is on Sunday February 19th, at 3.00pm, at the Edric Hall, Southbank Polytechnic, 103 Borough Road, London SE1.

We have organised the meeting because we believe it is of the utmost urgency to bring together all those who have been drawn in to struggle against the Tory attacks on democratic rights. You can see from the enclosed leaflet the issues we hope to cover. I also enclose a copy of our paper "Workers Press" containing an article by Cliff Slaughter which outlines why, from the Workers Revolutionary Party's point of view, we feel such a meeting is necessary.

Some comrades from the Workers Revolutionary Party came into contact with members of Red Action on the Bloody Sunday march. We felt that whatever political differences we may have, our platform could only be strengthened if it includes a speaker from an organisation like yours which has fought for the working class movement in such a practical manner.

If you are able to send a speaker to the meeting, please contact me at the above address or phone number and let me know.

Yours fraternally  
Simon Pirani

Dear Red Action,

This is a short note thanking your members for attending the 'Troops Out' meeting on November 11th at Conway Hall where Bernadette Devlin was the chief speaker. It is true to say that without your attendance and support the meeting would never have taken place. I was one of the two chief stewards for the evening and I know that the 'Troops Out Movement' did not have enough stewards to have stopped any fascist attack.

As a number of rumours are floating around here are my impressions of the nights events with particular attention on the attack by the fascists. The information about a possible (certain.) attack was given to TOM about a week before. Despite this only 14 people agreed to be stewards. On the evening I saw a number of fascists walking around the area. In addition it could be noted that no coppers were outside the hall yet a number of vansloads were parked not far away. There were numerous paper sellers at the entrance.

I can tell you I was very pleased to see you and Direct Action Members arrive at 7.10pm. At about 7.25pm the first attempt to get into the hall was made by BNP members led by Edmonds. The six of them attempted to bluff their way into the hall and denied they were fascists. However one panicked and turned to run. Naturally they were appropriately dealt with and the two groups of 10 and 30 following up in their place were chased.

The effect of this on some of the paper sellers can only be described as hysteria. One member of the SWP even accused Anti-Fascists of being worse than the fascists. She subsequently accused me of being sexist when I told her to shut up. The very quick arrival of the police (no how did they know about the trouble?) probably saved a large number of fascists from a 'good hiding'. That would have been a good thing but the important thing was that the meeting would now be able to go ahead.

The police insisted that everyone went inside the Hall. I told them that I was the chief steward but this had no effect. Interestingly enough one leading member of TOM later stood talking outside to one copper for about 10 minutes.

After the meeting had started a demonstration of 100 fascists took place. The police after a while dispersed them. I requested that an announcement be made about an escort back to the Tube station. What did we get? A statement about walking back to the tube station together. The escort which was provided did get people back safely to the tube station. Some TOM people however did choose to talk back with a police escort. Others went back in cars.

Subsequent reports on the events have bordered on the ludicrous. Perhaps the most stupid is the claim that violence puts people off attending future meetings. It is as if Red Action and others like myself were responsible for the violence.

The facts are that 100 fascists turned up to wreck a meeting. A number were 'tooled up' with iron bars etc. In such a situation how else can you 'persuade' people that they are not welcome? By telling them to go away. Not bloody likely. (It is also my opinion that the police also knew about the attack as their non-attendance at the meeting hall entrance indicates.)

It really is time that some political activists began to take seriously the activities of the Far Right. This ostrich like view that 'they are no threat' isn't much use to those black people who experience their attacks. It also isn't much use if we intend to continue to raise the issue of the Irish struggle wherever we can.

Mark Metcalf.

# HEADLESS CHICKENS



By pure chance on the morning of the 18th January a Red Action member found himself outside the Church of the Ascension in Hulme, Manchester. That was the morning that over a hundred fully equipped police officers 'snatched' a pyjama clad Viraj Mendis from his sanctuary of the last two years. Within two hours the Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign had called a meeting to discuss their response to this outrage. However it soon became clear that the V.M.D.C. had virtually given up hope of saving Viraj Mendis from deportation. Instead they seemed to be relying on talks with any third country that would be prepared to take him. What surprised many people at this meeting was the fact that the V.M.D.C. seemed to have no contingency plans at all in the event of a raid on the Church. Instead decisions were taken on the spur of the moment, with anyone who happened to be at the meeting allowed to take part in the decision making. It was later disclosed that nine plain clothes police were presented at this emergency meeting. In the resulting confusion the sting was taken out of many positive ideas. Many people's genuine feelings of anger and frustration were dissipated on a series of pointless marches and demonstrations that did little but inconvenience an already hostile public.

I must confess that the phrase running around like

headless chickens came to mind several times over the following weeks. The point being, that without a clear strategy the V.M.D.C. found themselves relying on the benevolence of the State. I would have thought that the experiences of the last two years would have shown them how far that particular course of actions would get them.

However having said that, most of the marches were very well attended considering the amount of time available to mobilise people. Given the mood of those present the potential to create trouble and embarrassment for the authorities was a very real possibility. But despite a lot of threatening noises from the V.M.D.C. these demo's stopped short of confrontation with the police. On one occasion a sitdown protest in the city centre (which for some reason seemed to have no effect on the traffic flow) was hastily abandoned on the strength of a rumour that a squad of mounted police had been seen in the city.

Another march that was intended to finish at Moss Side police station was mysteriously diverted to rally outside the Church. A speaker at this rally just about hit the nail on the head when he stated that "every LEGAL avenue had been explored in our efforts to keep Viraj Mendis in this country". How he then failed to reach the logical conclusion, just about summed up the entire episode.

## RED ACTION ON MERSEYSIDE

If interested in finding out more / getting active in the North West or on Merseyside. There is a grouping of members and supporting members on Merseyside who can be contacted by writing to:

RED ACTION MERSEYSIDE  
P.O. BOX 80  
SOUTHPORT  
PR8 6BH

# WE FOUGHT THE LAW AND - WE WON

Most working class people will be depressingly familiar with experiences of police brutality, conspiracy and perjury. But to illustrate that it is possible to fight judicial injustice, the Hatfield branch of Red Action would like to recount an experience of their own. On New Year's Eve 1987 police were involved in a violent incident in Hatfield town centre, and feeling energetic, they decided to steam into a pub in another area of the town with which they had a sense of grievance (stemming from previous encounters). They began by physically attacking and then ejecting a number of customers from the pub, and ended by being physically thrown out themselves. Despite the speedy arrival of reinforcements they were not able to arrest any of those responsible. One man however, Billy Lacey, (who will be known socially to some London members of Red Action) was later arrested when he attended a nearby hospital for injuries caused by an unprovoked attack by police and their dogs. The police, being upset at receiving a battering and without culprits to show for it, know Billy from incidents in the past and decided the best thing to do would be to charge him with malicious wounding and violent disorder, and fabricate evidence to suit. The case came to trial in February '89. Alarmed at the prospect of Bill's spending years in jail for offences of which he was entirely innocent



PLOD REVISITED  
Members of the campaign inside Hatfield police station after Billy Lacey's acquittal.

a number of people, including members of the Hatfield branch of Red Action, set up a Defence Campaign. A benefit was organised, leaflets and posters printed and distributed in streets and pubs etc., to create public awareness of the corrupt nature of the prosecution and to call for protest against it. A march on Hatfield Magistrates' Court was organised, drawing 150 men, women and kids; a very encouraging start. Flyposting and graffiti activities were undertaken by persons unknown, including slogans on the top of Hatfield's tower block, producing in one instance the now historic legend: "Lacey is innocent". The crucial event was a picket of St. Albans Crown Court on the morning of the opening day of the trial, where the flyposters had also been at work. It is exhilarating to report that on the fourth day, Billy was acquitted of

all major charges and the police case thrown out of court by the jury. Congratulations to them. Post-acquittal festivities included the visit of a delegation to Hatfield Nick, where the police were presented with a 'Billy Lacey is Innocent - Official' posters to replace the original which they had, in a rare display of solidarity, put up behind the Enquiry Desk. The police reaction to the old proverb 'He who laughs last laughs longest' was a curt 'No Comment'. Obviously, it is difficult to gauge exactly the effect of the campaign on the verdict; certainly it had some - we know that the prosecution wanted the jury dismissed on those grounds. The organisers feel that in a case where police prestige was so much at stake, and the decision liable to be a close one, that the campaign's influence was critical. It also had the not negligible

effect of raising the morale of friends, relations etc. One organiser of the campaign who has been involved in nine campaigns of this sort (E.G. Newham 6 and 7, Bradford 12 etc) has seen eight of them end in acquittals, which figure speaks for itself. It is also true to say that without a local group of organised and politically committed people, a campaign of this kind would never have got under way. Mistakes were made, some of them quite elementary; yet as the campaign progressed, so did the competence of the organisers and the enthusiasm of the increasing number of supporters. More important than the making of mistakes is the determination to learn from them, and the knowledge that there now exists in the area the experience and mechanisms with which to respond to similar challenges in the future.

## 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.

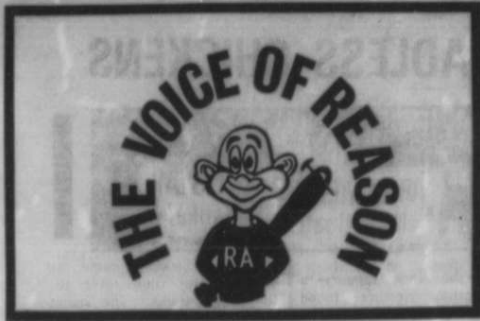
If you support our aims but do not wish to become a member, you can become a supporting member. This does not entitle you to vote, but you will receive.

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.

All cheques and postal orders should be made payable to 'Red Action'.

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# HISTORY LESSON

The left in Britain continue not to take seriously Red Actions constant calls for the need for organised opposition to fascism, despite the serious gains being made by far right/fascist groups internationally, and the number of 'incidents' they are inspiring.

**In Britain** - racially motivated attacks, even by government figures, are reaching epidemic proportions, and even the police force has been forced to officially acknowledge the severity of the problem.

Tory MP for Hillingdon, Terry Dicks recently suggested that black people in Britain should be given ladders to return to Africa and climb up trees. Thatcher refused to condemn this statement.

**Ireland** - The start of this year has seen the most concerted murder campaign by loyalist/fascist death squads in a long time. In only seven weeks they have already murdered five Catholics and one Protestant (shot by mistake), and there have also been over a dozen attempted murders.

**America** - Saturday 18th February former grand wizard of the Ku Klux Klan, David Duke, was elected to the Louisiana State Legislature. Although Duke has abandoned the white sheets and hazi regalia he wore at University two decades ago and publicly disavows racism, the president of the National Association for the Advancement of White People (N.A.A.W.P.) was elected on a ticket of thinly disguised racialism. The man who used to claim that Jews controlled the U.S. government now says he is worried there is "too much Zionist influence on the federal government", and about blacks says that "There's not a black candidate who doesn't seek civil rights for blacks. We are seeking civil rights for whites".

Americans also have the dubious 'pleasure' of switching on their T.V. and being greeted by messages such as "Join the American Nazis and smash Red, Jew and Black power", placed by a group called the White American Skin Heads. Since local government started granting franchises to cable companies they have insisted that public groups and individuals have access to produce their own programmes. Other similar programmes include 'Race and Reason' which can now be seen in more than 55 cities. The show is hosted by a leader of the White American Political Association and former grand dragon in the Klu Klux Klan, Tom Metzger, and shows Metzger talking to like-minded guests on 'racial and free speech issues'.

**West Germany.** In January, 3,000 protestors took to the streets of Berlin to protest at the election of 37 year-old policeman, Bernhard Andres, local chairman of the Right-wing Republican party, to local government. The republicans won eight percent of the vote, after campaigning on an anti-foreigner and patriotic platform, next year they will be able to send two M.P.'s to the West German Parliament. The party's national chairman and ex-S.S. officer Franz Schoenhuber greeted his victory by saying "Today Germans have shown again the need for a democratically purified patriotism".

**South Africa.** As three A.N.C. members, Ebrahim Ismail Ebrahim, Acton Mandla Maseko and Simon Dlada were led away to start long sentences for guerrilla activity their supporters shouted slogans and sang the A.N.C. anthem, Nkosi Sikelel' Africa. In response to this a state prosecutor shouted "Long lewe die A.W.B. (Long live the A.W.B.). A.W.B. stands for the neo-nazi Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging.



Sighting sea gulls in France

**U.S.S.R.** Russia has seen the rise of a 'black-shirt' style group called 'Pamyat' against a background of increasing violence and abuse directed at the Jewish population. Some people are predicting that their numbers will swell with the arrival of disillusioned youth from the war in Afghanistan.

We've relayed just a few incidents here, but here is, of course, the huge success of Jean Marie Le Pen's 'Front National' in France, the extreme right in Israel, reports of racist abuse and attacks in E.Germany, on immigrants from communist countries in Africa, and of course the extreme 'anti-red' murder squads which stretch from the Philippines to half the countries in Latin America. In El Salvador for instance death threats were broadcast on local radio against leftwing politicians and human rights activists by a previously unknown group - the Anti-Communist Extinction Association.

As the global pictures indicate something entirely unpleasant is beginning to develop. The emergence of the purely pacifistic S.O.S. RACISME in France or the "head in the sand" attitude of the left in Britain in response to an epidemic of race attacks estimated to be in the region of 70,000 a year demonstrates that as they have not digested the lessons of history they are condemned to repeat the mistakes of the past.

# UNBALANCED

There could never be any doubt that the continued accusations of left-wing bias in the national T.V. networks being made by Tory figureheads and rightwing press, wouldn't be without consequence. Sure enough a ban has been placed on 'terrorism' and spokesmen of political organisations that support 'terrorism' in Northern Ireland, from speaking on national television.

While enforcing reporting restrictions the next move would of course be to replace those controlling the channels with more 'suitable candidates'; this has started.

Lord Chalfot has been appointed deputy chairman of the Independent Broadcasting Authority.

Among intelligence figures linked with Lord Chalfot (a former Army intelligence officer, journalist and Minister in the 1964 Labour Government) are Mr. Jeremy Wetherall, one of the former officers of MI5's counter-espionage section K5, who later became an employee of Zeus, a private security firm of which Lord Chalfot was a director; and Col. Ronald Wareing, an MI6 agent in Portugal who served with him on the council of the Foreign Affairs Research Institute.

He has taken a prominent part in campaigns against alleged left-wing subversion in the media. He is involved with the Media Monitoring Unit, for which he wrote the foreword to a pamphlet alleging extensive left-wing bias and anti-Americanism in the British media.

He is listed as a supporter of the Committee for a Free Britain, which spent £210,000 during the 1987 election campaign on a series of virulent anti-Labour press advertisements.

Among other groups he is linked with are: The Institute for the Study of Terrorism, which has attacked the African National Congress and sympathised with the South African-backed Renamo movement in Mozambique.

Freedom in Sport, founded in 1981 by right-wing Tory MP Mr. John Carlisle to retain sporting links with South Africa. The Committee for a Free World, a neo-conservative U.S. body formed in 1981 to oppose Marxists in Latin America. On a more light-hearted note it's good to see that the Sun 'newspaper' has decided to do something about the increasing amount of complaints against it.

In its own words it has appointed an independent ombudsman who will "act as an independent referee to hear and settle complaints.

"The ombudsman will have complete power to question journalists and editorial executives over complaints.

"He will then investigate and try to resolve the complaints to everyone's satisfaction. The ombudsman will have the right to order the publication of corrections and his own findings will be published" it said. The Sun's owner Rupert Murdoch said newspapers and journalists had "heavy responsibilities to preserve the freedom we all enjoy by living up to the best traditions of British journalism."

The 'independent' ombudsman? He's Mr. Ken Donlan, managing editor of the Sun and former editor of the News of the World.

## NIGHT THOUGHTS

"This is a very racist country, you find out how racist just by standing here."

Richard Roques, City of London Anti-Apartheid Movement Treasurer, on the 24hr picket of the South African Embassy in Trafalgar Square. (Guardian)

"I hope to daylight that someone has been purging files on this episode."

Computer note sent by Reagan's former National Security Adviser Robert McFarlane, at the time of the 'Irangate' scandal. (Evening Standard)

"The Irish nation is standing still in shock."

Part of the explanation given to Irish journalist Jenny McGeever, over her sacking for breaching Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act in allowing Sinn Fein's Martin McGuinness a 10-second explanation on R.T.E. (Irish T.V.) for the delay in a funeral procession. (Guardian)

"You're European. That means you support the guerrillas. That makes you my enemy."

A drunken U.S. adviser heard talking to a young Danish church worker in El Salvador (Guardian)

"Socialism is filthy, disgusting, perverted. We are the pure." Delegate at the Young Conservatives' Conference. Sieg Heil. (Guardian)

"They (people feeling somewhat superior) Might ponder whether the Ayatollah fingering a writer is all that removed from a politician fingering a solicitor." Gene Kerrigan, Sunday Tribune, 19.2.89

"What kind of democracy do we have in the United Nations when what's left of the old British empire, Great Britain, with 50 million inhabitants, has the right to veto and a national like India, with 750 million inhabitants, has no such prerogative?"

President Fidel Castro, speaking at the opening ceremony of a Havana exhibition marking the achievements of the 30-year old Cuban Revolution (Guardian)

# 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 unselected and unaccountable 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.