

Red Action

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BETRAYAL

When a young 15 year old boy dies it is a tragedy for his family and friends. When the boy was attacked and murdered because he was black, it is a tragedy for all of us. When that murder results in anger from the community and that anger is wasted and dissipated by a gaggle of groups based in the race relations industry and in the so-called 'revolutionary left', the tragedy is compounded. When a campaign launched after the murder is betrayed by opportunists and self-seekers, then the tragedy is complete.

incompetent, to the cynical manipulators of the 'radical' groupings. These ranged from the SWP, Militant and the National Black Caucus to GACARA - the Greenwich Action Committee Against Race Attacks.)

Immediately after the stabbing, meetings were attended not only by the usual 'lefties' but by real people who felt real and intense anger and wanted to channel that anger towards the fascist British National Party (BNP). Unfortunately their meetings were taken over and run by bureaucrats who seemed more interested in maintaining their positions as community leaders and spokespersons (for whom, one wonders?) than in providing a direction for the anger. A demonstration was called for 27 April which was well attended and militant. The campaign justifiably felt pleased with themselves for the success. Unfortunately, that was as far as their plans seemed to go; they had no vision of a way forward for the campaign; primarily because they had no objectives and no strategies beyond the march. When the BNP responded by announcing their own march for the same route, rallying at the point where Rolan Adams

was initially attacked the campaign was ready to fall into disarray. AFA delegates supported all meetings called to plan a counter-demonstration. We consistently stated that the objective of the counter



Rolan Adams, aged 15, murdered by the right, betrayed by the left.

demonstration should be to pay more than lip service to the 'no platform for racists' tenet that all claimed to support. We argued that this principle should be put into practice, that the object should be to prevent the BNP either from rallying or marching. If this could not be achieved, then they should be caused as much disruption and trouble as possible. This was the only principled position that could

be taken, and was the position that AFA argued for. The discussion towards reaching this objective involved a high degree of rhetoric stating the lengths to which individuals and groups would go to ensure that the fascist march was a failure. This was unanimously agreed prior to 25th May.

When the 25th May arrived, it was a different story. All the grand statements which suggested that 'now is the time to make a stand' came to nothing. It seems that the 'organisers' of the anti-fascist counter demonstration assumed that no principled objectives need be met, no thought need be given as to what difference the demonstration was to make to the fascists and racists on Thamesmead. The arguments put forward by AFA were dismissed and the rhetoric used by other militant groups and individuals in the campaign forgotten.

It was agreed that a sound system mounted on flat bed truck would move to, and rally people at the point where the fascists were to assemble. It was also agreed that the only reason for the demonstration to move would be to take over

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The rest of the fascist security arrives after anti-fascists had already been and gone. Never mind chaps, don't get too downhearted, and remember "Always look on the bright side of life..."

KENSINGTON

On the 25th May, Kensington Library booked for a neo-nazi rally at 7pm was squatted by over a hundred Anti-Fascists at 6pm.

As the elderly Moseleyites filed in, they were introduced to the audience by the chair who also provided a brief resume of their political careers, some spanning over 50 years.

The crowd clearly enjoying the spectacle sang "Always look on the bright side of life". The organisers put their heads in their hands in despair.

Later on in the evening as the Anti-Fascists filed out, there were a series of clashes with enraged and humiliated nazis outside the hall.

When the police arrived from a nearby police station, seventeen people, all anti-fascists were arrested.

A month later police informed sixteen people that they did not intend to pursue the matter further. One of the seventeen has been charged with "conspiracy to cause grievous bodily harm with persons unknown" and two lesser offences.

Almost three months after the event another anti-fascist was charged separately with incitement to violence.

Both the time lapse, the curious nature of the charges themselves, the individuals actually selected, clearly indicates that the neo-nazis are not the only ones outraged by the confrontational strategy adopted by the militant anti-fascists.

All the allegations are denied, and the charges will be vigorously contested.

THE RENDEVOUS

Earlier in the day a contingent of Anti-Fascist Action stewards clashed with a twenty-five strong group of British Movement supporter, in a pub near Abbot Wood Station, prior to the BNP march in Thamesmead.

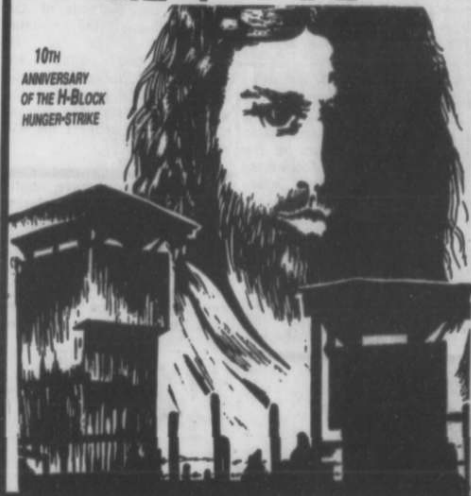
The incident occurred when both parties unwittingly chose the same pub for a rendezvous.

As the anti-fascists filtered into the pub through a single door (the only available exit) the fascists realising they were trapped and would shortly be out-numbered seized the initiative by launching a frenzied and vicious attack armed with glasses, bottles, chairs and tables. A brief but bloody battle ensued before the anti-fascists withdrew. When the dust settled the B.M. were back in control of the now devastated pub, but had suffered a number of casualties with one of four of their number requiring medical treatment according to police. The police who witnessed the entire incident, but chose not to intervene, closed the pub, (with the fascists still in residence and also another pub nearby). There were no arrests. Ambulances called to the scene were outside the pub, treating and comforting the injured inside for fifteen minutes before departing with those requiring more extensive treatment.

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Remembered with Pride

10th ANNIVERSARY OF THE H-BLOCK HUNGER-STRIKE



On Friday 28 July, Republican Socialist Prisoners Aid organised a commemorative social in Hammersmith, London, along the same lines as a similar event put on by Red Action in Glasgow. As in Glasgow, the social was organised for two purposes: to commemorate the deaths of the ten '81 hunger strikers and raise money for today's Irish Republican and Republican Socialist prisoners. Despite police harassment and

what basically amounted to being a boycott by just about every left and 'Irish' group in London bar Red Action, the Leninist and members of the IFM and individual Republicans, well over 100 people turned out to show their support. The event, considering the aforementioned problems, was very successful, with £680 being raised for the two Irish political prisoner welfare organisations, Green Cross

Prisoners Aid (INLA), with part of the money coming from a raffle which included amongst its prizes art and craftwork from prisoners in Long Kesh and Portlaoise jails. Other money came from the political bookstall.

The event was addressed by three speakers, the first being Annette from the Justice for Dessie Ellis Campaign, who outlined Dessie's plight and the details and implications of the case against him.

Next was Pete, who spoke for the supporters of Nick Mullen (see Red Action Issue 54). Nick is on hunger strike at the time of writing because of the lack of response by the Irish government to Nick's protest at his illegal deportation and the circumstances surrounding his 'trial'.

After asking the audience to stand for the H-block Martyrs Roll of Honour, Andy Richards gave the main oration, reprinted here in full:

Ten Years ago, Bobby Sands and nine of his IRA and INLA comrades died on hunger strike within the walls of Long Kesh prison in northern Ireland, in pursuit of five basic demands - the right to wear their own clothing, no prison work, the right to free association, restoration of full remission and access to visits, parcels and recreational/educational facilities.

The hunger strikes were the culmination of five long years of struggle by Republican prisoners against the ending in 1976 of the Special Category

Political Status by the then Labour government and the introduction of the policy of criminalisation.

As a result of the ultimate sacrifices made by the ten men, the British authorities eventually gave in to almost all of the prisoners' demands, and the policy of criminalisation was effectively smashed.

Another hugely significant result of the hunger strikes was the election of Bobby Sands to the British parliament during his fast, and the subsequent emergence of the Republican movement as an electoral force within the six counties.

Today however, the armed conflict in Ireland goes on, with the inevitable result that many Republican men and women are still being imprisoned. As the Public Relations Officer, Republican Prisoners Crumlin Road Jail, northern Ireland pointed out in An Phoblacht/Republican News (23.5.91):

"Recently the ANC in its dispute with the racist apartheid regime, pointed out that it had 1,300 political prisoners in South Africa. I would like to point out that as of April 1991, there were 612 Nationalist and Republican political prisoners. Five Hundred in the six counties, 70 in the twenty-six counties and the rest overseas.

I'd like to draw your attention to the contrast: South Africa has twice as many political prisoners but from a population

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BULLET ... BACK OF THE HEAD FOR THE USE OF!



Police in an armoured vehicle watch over an Inkatha rally held in Katsheung township. Six people were killed after the "peace" rally attended by 3000.

On the 13th of June, a former South African Defence Force Major, Nico Basson, admitted at a press conference in Johannesburg what the left had long suspected: that the violence by the Inkatha movement in the black townships was orchestrated, directed and controlled by the South African government.

Mr Basson explained that the SADF had realised some years ago that the key to power lay not in military might but in the manipulation of public perceptions.

The destabilising of Angola and Mozambique and the destruction of their economies through support for UNITA and RENAMO helped convey the impression to the world that black left-wing rule did not work. The same tactics, which had previously been employed externally, were, as Mr Basson explained, now being employed within S African borders. In the same way that RENAMO and UNITA were employed to communicate a message, so the killers were sent to wage war in the townships around Johannesburg in the past ten months.

Felix Ndimele, a former sergeant in Five Reconnaissance, a 'Special Forces' regiment, has admitted that his regiment carried out one of the most notorious of the township massacres in which 26 commuters were killed and 137 injured on a Soweto bound train in September 1990. The first message was to destroy the moral of the ANC by exposing the myth of armed cadres in the townships together with its organisational capacity.

Secondly, the aim has been to bolster Mangosuthu Buthelezi's conservative Zulu party, Inkatha.

"Just to get their name known and fixed in the public consciousness has been enough"

said Mr Basson.

However, with the naive or enthusiastic cooperation of the international media, this 'scam' has met with unforeseen success.

Thirdly, the intention was through the violence to split the black population along tribal lines and to create tension between the two biggest ethnic groups, the Zulu and the Xhosa.

Who can doubt that the strategy has worked to perfection and at a negligible

cost to the regime - merely the lives of 10,000 blacks. Generally the international media has wittingly or unwittingly collaborated with the regime in the venture. They have imposed the 'African disease' of tribalism as a diagnosis of S Africa's ills - ignoring the fact that in most cases it has been Zulus killing other Zulus. In Natal, one of the principal killing grounds, it is generally a rural-urban conflict, initiated by rural Inkatha Zulus against urban ANC supporting Zulus.

Secondly, the impression has been conveyed that the black population is divided along tribal lines, Zulu/Inkatha and Xhosa/ANC, roughly on a 50-50 basis. In other words, a battle for ascendancy among warring tribes of roughly equal size and support. This has been a major though unexpected spinoff from the initial propaganda campaign by the SADF.

A recent survey by the S African government funded Human Sciences Research Council, exposed this particular myth, putting Inkatha's support nationally at only 1% (!) to the ANC's 53%, while the ruling National Party registered support in the mid-twenties.

Thirdly, the credibility of the ANC has been almost entirely undermined by their inability to protect their own constituency against the sectarian attacks and apparently 'motiveless' terror. (Why the ANC is unprepared and unable is indeed another story)

The by-product is that the instigators of the violence are also the principal beneficiaries, being cast in the role of mediator, protector and 'honest broker'. As with any other gangsters, when the SADF/Inkatha offer you their protection, what they principally promise is protection from themselves.

Twelve days later, on the 25th of June, from another of the world's 'trouble spots' came a similar admission. The Israeli army admitted at a press conference that it too has been using undercover squads to apprehend or shoot suspects in the West bank and Gaza and were compared by several Israeli officers speaking anonymously, to undercover SAS detachments in the north of Ireland. The role of the squads as agent provocateurs has also come under scrutiny as there have been cases of

undercover men hurling fire-bombs at Israeli motorists, or driving Israeli cars up and down roads to attract stone throwers who were then shot or captured. It was also established that these operatives had successfully infiltrated Palestinian groups controlling the Intifada, taken part in various operations including the killing of suspected collaborators. Incidentally, providing a source of tremendous confusion and demoralisation within the Palestinian community.

One day later, the Israeli answer to Inkatha was launched; a moderate (pro-Israeli) rival to the PLO emerged from obscurity calling itself the Palestinian National Unity party. At a press conference which received wide publicity from an enthusiastic Israeli media, (matched only by cynicism from the Palestinians) it called for recognition of the Jewish State, its pre-1967 border and an end to armed struggle (this at a time when that particular option is once again under discussion). The similarities in approach by the various security services is not a coincidence nor is it exclusive to 'trouble spots' such as Soweto, Gaza or West Belfast.

The theory being implemented is the art of counter insurgency, special operations, torture, provocations, manipulation of fake dissident resistance groups which act to discredit the genuine National liberation forces, psychological operations which are rationalised by being organised around two inter-connected objectives; the re-conquest of the population and the isolation and subsequent destruction of the armed resistance. As Nico Basson acknowledged, the officers who now run the SADF have "delved into textbooks of counter-insurgency" and military and political control. The textbooks discovered by the SADF are the same ones read by the Israeli's and the same ones used by the British, or to be more explicit, written by the British.

It was acknowledged counter-insurgency expert Gen Major Frank Kitson who defined the diverse missions that counter-insurgency should undertake:

"Although with an eye to world opinion and the need to retain the allegiance of the people, no more force than is necessary for containing the situation should be used, conditions can be made reasonably uncomfortable for the population as a whole, in order to provide an incentive for a return to normal life and to act as a deterrent towards a resumption of the campaign. Having once succeeded in providing a breathing space by these means, it is important to do these things quickly. The first is to implement the promised concessions so as to avoid allegations of bad faith, which may enable the subversive leadership to regain control over sections of the population. The second is to discover and neutralise the genuine subversive element. The third is to associate as many of the prominent members of the population, especially those who have been engaged in non-violent action with the government. The last technique is known in America as co-operation and is described by messrs Hoch and Schoenbach as 'drowning the revolution in baby's milk'"

Frank Kitson was a military intelligence officer in Kenya from 1953 - 1955, a company commander in Malaya in 1957,

a second in command of a battalion in Cyprus from 1962 - 1964.

Such were the experiences he had in mind in 1970 whilst completing his counter-guerrilla manual before taking command of the 39th brigade in the north of Ireland. Kenya and Malaya had features in common with Indo-China; Cyprus on the contrary was essentially an urban insurrectional battlefield. Yet from the jungle to the towns, the same guidelines presided.

The fore-runner to RENAMO and UNITA were the 'pseudo-gangs' set up and run by Kitson in Kenya. These pseudo-gangs were groups of loyalist Kenyans in the shape of mobile columns, not only to track down Kenyatta's Land Freedom Army, but also to perpetrate acts to discredit them. Later techniques, first developed in Asia and Africa were employed closer to home in Europe.

Pseudo-gangs in Cyprus were called 'Q-gangs' who carried out missions to exacerbate tension and clashes between Turks and Greeks in the island, so justifying the British presence. Again as in S Africa today, what was first used against the enemy without, was later and is currently being used against the 'enemy within'.

In December 1971, in the Lisburn HQ, counter insurgency experts and officers in charge of the security forces in the north of Ireland attempted to draw up a balance sheet of operations against the IRA.

A strategy was adopted though Kitson himself favoured a more delicate approach. It declared that the situation had developed to such a point that in order to isolate the IRA it would be necessary to spark off a split within its ranks; initiate a peace-force movement; ensure selective arrests of Republican cadres; set up pseudo-gangs loyalist and republican; to be involved in infiltration of diverse groups; manipulating loyalist camps and orchestrating a campaign of assassinations that would terrorise the population



Eddie Fullerton, elected Sinn Fein councillor, executed with a 'bullet in the back of the head'. The PRACTICAL reality of Kitson's THEORY.

(mainly through SAS and other specialist units); wage a massive psychological war to discredit the IRA and in the short term try and split them between left and right, doves and hawks, north and South, military and political axis. Due to the failure and collapse of other alternatives this strategy was first adopted only partially, has been developed and refined and adopted totally.

It is in that context that the Brooke initiative should be judged. Prior to the talks the loyalist gangs went on the rampage with multiple killings in Tyrone and Armagh reminiscent of a pattern in the early 70s. As Republican News pointed out, "an important by-product of such killings is to create a sense of hopelessness and despair in the Nationalist camp and to pressgang them into accepting any settlement which will stop the killings. The loyalist cease fire which was announced in the last days before the Brooke talks began has a similar logic to it; it fitted into the immediate aims of the British and Unionist politicians to present the IRA as the problem, and put pressure on the IRA to end its campaign."

The Ulster Defence

From Kitson to Brooke.
Basic theory and the reality of practice.



"THE THEORY BEING IMPLEMENTED IS THE ART OF COUNTER INSURGENCY, SPECIAL OPERATIONS, TORTURE, PROVOCATIONS, MANIPULATION OF FAKE DISSIDENT RESISTANCE GROUPS WHICH ACT TO DISCREDIT THE GENUINE NATIONAL LIBERATION FORCES, PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS WHICH ARE RATIONALISED BY BEING ORGANISED AROUND TWO INTER-CONNECTED OBJECTIVES; THE RE-CONQUEST OF THE POPULATION AND THE ISOLATION AND SUBSEQUENT DESTRUCTION OF THE ARMED RESISTANCE".

Association, by far the largest loyalist militia, although formally independent, owes much of their training and supply of intelligence to the British and especially the RUC and UDR with whom, as various court cases have demonstrated, they often share dual membership.

Despite a high degree of infiltration and manipulation, loyalist groups still retain a high degree of independence. Exactly how much can be judged by the manner in which assassination campaigns have been switched on and off.

ON: In 1972, when there were 125 civilian victims of 'motiveless' murders, with about 40 assassinations in July. Though 90% of the victims were Catholics according to RUC figures, this does not mean that all the others were protestants, or had been killed by the IRA. The killings contributed significantly to the international perception of a 'tribal' war between religious fanatics, with the aim of discrediting the resistance movement and to re-establish the Brit presence as the 'neutral party' and the only guarantee of stability. Having recovered sufficient propaganda lost during the cease-fire, Bloody Sunday and the concession of political status to Republican prisoners after a hunger strike, they confidently presented 'Operation Motorman' designed to smash Republican 'no-go' areas as the solution to the violence.

ON during attempts to criminalise the Republican movement, and OFF again in 1976 when the UDA and the UVF offered their support to the 'peace movement'. ON again in 1980 during the pre-hunger strike campaign for the restoration of political status, and the selective assassination against public activists of the National H-Block Committee which undermined the inter-dependence of the SAS and loyalist units.

ON and OFF again in 1991 to give a sense of urgency and importance to the Brooke initiative and to present the IRA to the international community as the only one committed to armed struggle

and as a consequence, responsible for any future violence.

Then as now the vast majority of sectarian or 'motiveless' murders were instigated or carried out directly by the SAS or under their supervision, or by armed groups recruited among the loyalist population which operate independently but under strategic British army control. In 1981, an intelligence officer of the UDA in Derry turned out to be of military intelligence supplying info on local Republicans and feeding a hit-list. In June 1991 five UDA men, among them UDA West Belfast leader Tommy Little, appeared for trial in connection with leaked crown forces documents. During the trial it was revealed that the UDAs main intelligence officer, Brian Neilson, was in fact a British agent. Neilson was responsible for keeping British intelligence "regularly and routinely" informed of people being targeted by loyalist hit-squads.

Power lies not in military might but in the perceptions of the people. The population is the key to the entire struggle. What the various security services acknowledge by their choice of tactics is that it is the population itself which is doing the struggling. As a consequence the state is not at war with the terrorists of the ANC/PLO/IRA. It is at war with its own population. The level of repression in each case is tailored to meet the level of resistance. While some of the methods of the insurgents and the counter insurgents appear to be similar, their aims are different. The aim of the revolutionary is to subvert the will of the state; the aim of the state is to subvert the will of the people.

Israeli intelligence has admitted successfully infiltrating the underground movement. Taking part in various operations including the killing of suspected collaborators. 400 have been killed since 1987, spreading confusion and despair in the Palestinian community.



LETTERS

INFORMER

A Chairde

In the June/July issue of Red Action, you had a late item concerning the sentencing of Danny Morrison and his comrades for allegedly falsely imprisoning a self-confessed police informer, Sandy Lynch. While giving evidence in court, Lynch made a statement saying that he had no intentions of going supergrass and that his sole intention was to jail those who allegedly hurt him. All very noble, I'm sure, but what of the countless numbers of INLA/IRA volunteers who have served, and who are serving sentences for being caught with weapons or who were on operations which had been shopped by Lynch to his RUC masters. Lynch himself has admitted working for the RUC for seven years and high ranking security sources have

other country willing to have them. England refused to take any supergrasses after Joe Bennet, a loyalist who gave evidence against 16 former comrades, was caught robbing a Post office in England with a handgun supplied to him by the RUC. The offer of a new country, new identity and plenty of spending money must be very tempting to someone caught on an operation whose only other option is prison. Hardly surprising then, that by late 1984 there was a total of 27 supergrasses, 20 nationalist and 7 loyalist, who between them put 477 people behind bars. This is more people than were initially interned in August 1971.

What was even less surprising was that almost all those fingered by supergrasses walked free on appeal, but not before serving from one to 5 years behind bars despite their

were branded for what they were - bare-faced liars. It was no wonder then, that Sandy Lynch's paymasters ordered him to distance himself from the supergrass system and the stigma attached to it. By claiming that he was no supergrass Lynch was not, as he was implying, trying to keep anyone out of trouble but himself. In fact, he himself stated in court that there was no need to name names as anyone he ever worked with or used was known to his masters.

The whole charade was designed to portray Lynch as some sort of James Bond figure who went into the IRA at the request of the RUC Special Branch, a man who was sick of the violence and who only wanted to live in peace. If this were so, why did he attempt to blow the head off a man he believed to be an informer with a shotgun? This doesn't strike me as the work of a non-violent, peaceable man. In fact a lot of things strike me as odd about Sandy Lynch. He said he started working for the Special Branch in 1983 because they had threatened to set him up by supplying information to a loyalist murder squad. Well, if Lynch was so worried about Loyalist hitmen, why, after he married, did he move into a street which was predominantly loyalist? I have visited Sandy Lynch's house on many occasions. He had the steel security gate on the stairs and bullet proof glass behind the windows of his house and a crossbow which was always primed beside his bed; but when I visited his house one July, the whole street he lived in was festooned with Union Jacks, Ulster flags and loyalist bunting. Why did he decide to live in this place and commute every day to North Belfast where he was an IRA member? Lynch is another success story for the RUC. Through him they have managed to put away another batch of Republican activists and for a while the IRA will be in disarray, but Lynch should take into consideration that the Irish nation as a whole despise traitors with a venom unmatched by any other country in the world. The IRA are a tough, resilient bunch of dedicated men and women, who have learned to bounce back against all the adversity thrown at them over this past 20 years. Sandy Lynch's case will be no different. I expect measures will be taken within the Republican movement to ensure that there will be no repetition, no more Sandy Lynch's. It is the families of those put away by Lynch's sell-out who will suffer the most. It is they who will have to do without their loved ones for the next lot of years. It is they and their friends and relations who will forever remember and despise Sandy Lynch and his sort. As for Lynch himself, he has lost his family and friends. The only ones he can rely on now are the RUC and he has outlasted his usefulness to them; what now? He will spend the rest of his life looking over his shoulder. Every time he sees a strange face or hears an Irish accent he might remember the disgrace and the shame he bought on his family.

is Mise
M Collins Belfast.



Sandy Lynch who informed on both his IRA and INLA comrades. (insert right) Father, Billy and Sister, Jackie bearing the shame and disgrace of an informers family. (insert left) Sinn Fein's Danny Morrison, now imprisoned, a victim of Lynch's activities.

publicly admitted that, "he was the best informer ever recruited". I'm sure he didn't earn this dubious title without getting many of his former comrades jailed, operations disrupted and weapons seized. I suppose it was luck rather than design that no volunteers were killed while on operations shopped by Lynch. I doubt very much whether Lynch made his 'not a supergrass' statement of his own volition. I'm pretty sure that in making this statement he was once more carrying out the bidding of his paymasters, who did not want the trial of Morrison and his comrades to be viewed by the public as yet another supergrass trial - a system of trials which came about in 1981 where the only evidence against the accused were comrades who the RUC called 'turned terrorists'. For turning against their former comrades, super-grasses were offered vast amounts of money, new identities and sent to S Africa, Canada or any

innocence. At these appeals almost all the supergrasses and their evidence were discredited. Men who turned supergrass were actually competing with one another. In one case, Robert McAllister, a self-confessed member of the INLA fingered 13 of his comrades. Among those he implicated was Harry Kirkpatrick who decided he wanted to go supergrass himself. He confessed to 5 killings and implicated 26 comrades with the inevitable result that Kirkpatrick was adopted and McAllister was thrown to the wolves - he is currently serving life imprisonment in Long Kesh. It wasn't long then before even the most blinkered person in the world grasped that these people would sell their own mothers to get their hands on the money and other benefits and to stay out of prison themselves. At the appeals of those implicated, almost all the supergrasses were labelled unreliable and unconvincing and

DESSIE ELLIS

and the,
IRISH ANTI-EXTRADITION CAMPAIGN.



A Chairde

The IAEC is a strange campaign because it differs from other campaigns as it contains many battles within one war. Whereas most campaigns over the years have centred around one issue such as divorce, abortion rights etc, anti-extradition is an issue which has its highs, lows, victories and defeats.

At the moment it is totally chaotic. The main reason for this is the loss of direction after the extradition of Dessie Ellis last year. This was an important case because he was a southerner, and therefore the public in the Free State would object more strongly than if he were a northerner. This may sound diabolical but that's the apathy in the Free state.

That the Ellis case was a classic case with all the consequences of a hunger strike and a chance to mobilise Irish public opinion is clear. Sadly, that chance was lost. The reasons being the inability to build on the genuine anger among Irish people at the prospect of Ellis' extradition and the failure to focus the blame and pressure squarely where it lay, on the Fianna Fail gov't.

It is still believed by the leadership of Sinn Fein that by not hassling the grass root membership of Fianna Fail, these same people will

join with Sinn Fein in some mythical alliance against the British. Well, they won't. They will not even stand on the same side of the road as them. I, when once questioning the parentage of a copper (was it animal or human) was told by a provo to "Watch your mouth, the Fianna Failers might get upset."

Sinn Fein, at the time of the last Presidential campaign which co-incided with the closing stages of the Ellis appeal, swallowed the F.F. line that if their candidate became President Dessie Ellis would be looked after. This play, when the outcome of the appeal seemed doomed to fail, coupled with the statement by the Irish Justice Minister that the Ellis case was out of his hands because it's "purely a judicial matter" was the kind of shit put out to create a breathing space for the Irish Government as they went about collaborating with the British. This is what Sinn Fein accepted.

The night of Dessie's actual removal from Irish soil to a British jail coincided with a Ireland v England soccer match. With large crowds in Dublin already, a high tension march through Dublin took place. People were angry that a hunger striker would be extradited, too weak to walk, to face a biased British system. Anything that represented the

people who sanctioned this extradition was liable to be attacked, confrontation with the coppers seemed inevitable. This was the opportunity for people to demonstrate their anger. Alas, Sinn Fein had other ideas. Their plan was to turn the march away from confrontation with the state and to indulge in irrelevant speeches. A peaceful protest was their misguided aim. Thankfully, their efforts to halt the rank and file were in vain. People broke through the cordon, marching in protest as they should. Unfortunately, by the time the angry crowds reached government buildings, coppers had been mobilised. The delay caused by Sinn Fein inaction had given the state plenty of time to react. A later attempt by the SWM (Irish SWP) also failed, mainly due to their naive approach to violence.

Red Action Dublin has been involved in the IAEC for a long time. Our local branch is one of the most active in Dublin. We are well respected, mainly due to our ability to be critical of our own faults as well as those of others, rather than just blindly accepting the approach set down by others. We have developed a local base, mainly through hard work, which has gained support for the anti-extradition policy.

To rebuild the campaign will be hard work. The main impetus to this would be the release of Dessie Ellis. Other prisoners may be served with their extradition warrants, all must be supported in their bid to defeat these. The campaign can be supported in Britain by making people aware of the plight of Irish political prisoners who face a hostile judicial system if extradited. The pressure must be kept up continually, both at home in Ireland and abroad.

EXTRADITION OF POLITICAL PRISONERS MUST BE STOPPED
is Mise
Dublin Red Action.

claim to be THE party, but now that 'seems to have changed.

Recruitment is central and political involvement is determined by the potential for recruitment. Something which was interesting and unorthodox in the form of the I.S. and even the early SWP has turned into another ready made vanguard waiting patiently for the Working Class to see sense.

Although I find your bracketing of Lenin and Trotsky with Stalin frankly absurd I find alot of your politics interesting and would appreciate it if you could provide me with more in-depth information of your ideas.

Your Fraternally
Jeff Baxter
Plymouth.

Reply
Red Action does not simplistically bracket Lenin and Trotsky with Stalin, as Stalin led the counter revolution in Russia which did not overthrow the Communist Party but was organised within the Communist Party which instead overthrew the workers state.

However, before Stalin could use a bastardised Marxism as it's formal political basis, that Marxism had to be ground up, re-hashed, re-processed and warped into something entirely different. The Bolshevik leadership did not cause Stalinism, which was due to social and economic factors, but the theories they advanced to justify the tactics they deemed necessary to retain power laid the theoretical groundwork, which by separating in theory and practise the concept of the workers state from the control of the working class from below, later facilitated the development of the counter revolution led by Stalin.

SWP (1)

Dear Comrades

On the 25th May, the SWP along with other left-wing organisations and black groups called for members, supporters and the general public to demonstrate in Thamesmead to oppose a 'wogs out' march by the BNP. I, along with many others, was greatly disappointed by the outcome of the day.

The anti-fascist contingent numbered well over 1,000 and the possibility of a lesson in humiliation seemed very real for the 150 nazis who turned up. Unfortunately we will only be able to dream about what might have been because the amassed ranks of the left (with the notable exceptions being Red Action, A.F.A., a number of local residents and a few SWPers) were a shambles. The counter demonstration was taken

in the opposite direction to the fascists who were then able to parade down the road, flags flying. Many of us feel that it is not enough just to wave banners and march up the road like the Grand Old Duke Of York.

These odious creatures cannot be allowed to peddle their moronic rubbish, and therefore must be confronted physically whenever and wherever possible. On this Saturday we failed to do this. They can now rightly claim that they were able to march and we cannot claim to have stopped them. This left many local people feeling angry and, on the day let down by us. Ultimately we failed to deliver our promise to 'unite and fight'.

Yours,
Calvin Headman
Hatfield.



Black Youth - arrived showing no confidence in the police, - departed showing no confidence in the left.

SWP (2)

Dear RA
I recently left the Socialist Workers Party because I became convinced that the SWP was less than my idea of what a revolutionary organisation should be about. I don't have any horror stories about nasty Leninist authoritarianism, but when an organisation of 6,000 members like the SWP claims "We are the left" (Chris Bamberg at the Socialism for students weekend) then something is wrong.

The SWP used to say that they wouldn't like the rest of the Trotskyist movement,

THE BOLSHEVIK EXPERIMENT

1917

A number of recent articles in Red Action have concentrated on articulating an 'instinctive' repudiation of the fetishistic and scriptural attitudes inherent in the contemporary left's fixation with the early history of Soviet Russia and its leaders.

The fundamental issue is this: Red Action regards the construction of contemporary Marxist groups upon a Bolshevik (or Leninist or Trotskyist) model as a profound mistake and as the principal reason for the failure to build a mass socialist organisation within advanced capitalist societies.

The essential question for any analysis of the Russian Revolution therefore becomes: to what extent did the Bolsheviks succeed in establishing a workers' state in the conditions of Russia in 1917 and after, and in what ways did they fail to do so?

The position of Red Action is a revisionist one in terms of the traditional left - that the dictatorship of the Bolshevik party had ceased to represent a 'dictatorship of the proletariat' in any marxist sense shortly after the end of the civil war i.e. while Lenin himself was still the leading personality and theoretician amongst the Bolshevik leaders.

This implies that the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 succeeded in establishing a form of workers' state in the sense that the industrial proletariat and semi-proletarian peasantry established effective forms of political direction and control of an economy that remained fundamentally capitalist, and that the revolution itself was the result of a genuine mass proletarian movement. But increasingly, the problems raised by the necessity of a "transition period" before communist forms of apparatus and control could be introduced replaced the impetus of the revolutionary upsurge of 1917. Lenin later summed up the position and its difficulties in this way: "Before the revolution and even after it, we thought: Either revolution breaks out in the other countries, immediately, or at least very quickly, or we must perish. Notwithstanding this conviction, we did all we possibly could to preserve the Soviet system under all circumstances, come what may, because we knew that we were working not only for ourselves but also for the international revolution."

It will be argued that although the Bolshevik party did not actively usurp the 'dictatorship' of the proletariat, it assumed increasingly authoritarian powers as the proletariat disintegrated under the pressure of the civil war. This process continued to the point where the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' became the mask for the totalitarian role of the Bolshevik party, which itself came to represent the interests of non-proletarian, bureaucratic class forces.

The systematic slide in Bolshevik ideology away from democratic or even libertarian forms towards bureaucratic and totalitarian forms reflects this change in the balance of forces. This 'slide' can be traced in both economic and political forms of control. The principal limitation of the regime of October 1917 as a model of socialist society is immediately apparent: the impossibility of sustained socialist construction, of the extreme difficulty in implementing revolutionary political forms, under conditions of extreme material and cultural deprivation. In the classic formulation of Marx:

"defects are inevitable in the first phase of communist society as it is when it has just emerged after prolonged birth pangs from capitalist society. Right can never be higher than the economic structure of society and the cultural development thereby determined." Understandably, the revolutionary enthusiasm of the Bolshevik leaders in 1917 tended to sweep such reservations aside. Immediately prior to the October revolution, Lenin wrote a pamphlet entitled, "Can the Bolsheviks retain State Power?" in which he confidently outlines the manner in which "the majority of the working people" will take hold of a new form of control and administration. As he proclaimed in November 1917, "Creative activity at the grass roots is the basic factor of the new public life...Socialism cannot be decreed from above. Its spirit rejects the mechanical, bureaucratic approach; living creative socialism is the product of the masses themselves." This programme of political control by working people is only slightly qualified a few months later: "Soviet power is nothing but an organisational form of the

dictatorship of the proletariat...which raises to a new democracy and to independent participation in the administration of the state tens upon tens of millions of working and exploited people, who by their own experience learn to regard the disciplined and class-conscious vanguard of the proletariat as their most reliable leader."

By contrast, the Constituent Assembly, the parliament elected along the lines of bourgeois, formal democracy, represented the interests of classes opposed to the proletariat and the revolutionary democracy of the soviets. Its dissolution was welcomed both by the anarchists and the Left SRs (a political group representing the poorer sections of the peasantry). In the factories, the situation was paralleled, with autonomous local factory committees (supported by the anarchists) in dispute with the authority of the trade unions. The Bolsheviks proposed in place of workers' management or direct ownership of their factories, workers' 'control', "the strictest and countrywide accounting and control of production and distribution of goods." This could be compatible with capitalist ownership. Lenin described the situation in this way:

"When we say: 'workers' control', always juxtaposing this slogan to dictatorship of the proletariat, always putting it immediately after the latter, we thereby explain what kind of state we mean. The state is the organ of class domination." As increasingly came to be the case, the libertarian accents of "State and Revolution" became overlaid with progressively tighter, more paradoxical qualifications. By the summer of 1920, he was insisting that "absolute centralisation and rigorous discipline in the proletariat are an essential condition of victory over the bourgeoisie." This most fundamental of issues, the "discipline" of labour, was stressed in stronger and stronger terms. On the fourth anniversary of the revolution, Lenin explained how: "We expected...to be able to organise the state production and the state distribution of products on communist lines in a small peasant country directly as ordered by the proletarian state. Experience has proved that we were wrong. It appears that a number of transitional stages

were necessary - state capitalism and socialism - in order to prepare...for the transition to communism." "Taylorism", the American system of work intensification which Lenin had described in 1914 as "man's enslavement to the machine" became an instrument of soviet practice; the German war-time system of state capitalism was declared to be the precondition of socialist advance, praised as "something centralised, calculated, controlled and socialised." Even in 1918 there were instances of strikers being imprisoned for the duration of a strike; other strikers were deprived of their wages. With the intensification of labour began the intensification of terror. At first, the objectives of the revolutionary terror were well defined: "We must...terrorise! the capitalists, i.e. must make them feel the omnipotence of the proletarian state and give

the civil war in this way: "The demobilisation of the Red Army of five million played no small role in the formation of the bureaucracy. The victorious commanders assumed leading posts in the local soviets, in the economy, in education, and they persistently introduced everywhere that regime which ensured success in the civil war. Thus on all sides the masses were pushed away

time of the 1917 revolution, the overtly counter-revolutionary elements, the Kadets and the right-SRs, were swiftly repressed. The Kadets were banned immediately. The right SRs, representing the more prosperous sections of the peasantry, were barred from the Soviets in June 1918, together with Menshevik representatives. Shortly afterwards, the left element within the SRs (the peasant



up all idea of actively resisting it." But by the beginning of 1920, Lenin was instructing the political police, the Cheka, to direct "revolutionary coercion" against "the unstable and wavering elements among the masses themselves". Once again, the motive power behind this transition was undoubtedly the appalling material conditions introduced by the civil war which beginning in 1918, extended to the end of 1920. The civil war developed into a desperate affair in which the Bolshevik regime came to the very brink of being overthrown. Production levels were devastated - down to 10% or 20% of pre-war production - a medieval standard of living. In retrospect, Trotsky summed up the political consequences of

gradually from actual participation in the leadership of the country." To this it is worth adding that Trotsky himself was the leading advocate of a thoroughgoing militarisation of labour. In March 1920 he was demanding that: "Militarisation is unthinkable without the militarisation of the trades unions as such, without the establishment of a regime in which every worker feels himself a soldier of labour, who cannot dispose of himself freely.... Who looks after this? The trades unions. This is the militarisation of the working class." Hand in hand with these developments within society and the economy, went the progressive elimination of political pluralism. Of the leading parties existing at the

party) launched a revolt against the Bolsheviks with whom they had previously shared the government. The revolt failed and the left-SRs disintegrated. The Mensheviks however, were re-legalised and through 1919/20 made a vocal defence of labour rights and the independence of trade unions within the soviet institutions. The events of the winter and spring of 1920/21 saw the end of Bolshevik toleration and the Mensheviks as a political force were finally eliminated.

It is these events, the strikes of the winter of 1920/21, the Kronstadt rebellion, and the political reaction of the Bolshevik party coupled with the economic reaction constituted by the 'turn to the peasantry' in the New

THE PRACTICE OF REVOLUTION

The analysis of historical events such as that as the Russian revolution obviously does not take place in a vacuum. It directly reflects the contemporary practices and orientation of revolutionary socialist groups today. Often principles and prejudices swim more clearly to the surface in historical judgements, given their relatively settled perspectives, than those relating to immediate issues. For example, the SWP claims to practice "democratic centralism" and believe that the emancipation of the working class must be the work of the working class itself. Yet their analysis of post-revolutionary Russia fatally undermines these claims. In the SWP pamphlet, "Russia: How the Revolution was lost", Chris Harman defends the development of the monolithic Bolshevik political apparatus in these terms: "In all this, the Bolsheviks had no choice. They could not give up power just because the class they represented had dissolved itself while fighting to defend that power. Nor could they tolerate the propagation of ideas that undermined the basis of its power - precisely because the working class itself no longer existed as an agency collectively organised so as to be able to determine its own interests." It is worth taking a deep breath and dwelling upon the

principles and attitudes that lie behind Harman's use of "just because" here. He says that "just because" no working class exists, this is no reason for a non-proletarian Bolshevik party to renounce the power that it exercises precisely in the name of the working class. Yet the whole of marxism is based on the premise that the self-emancipation of the working class is uniquely the process in which socialism will come into being. The SWP says that "just because" the working class doesn't exist at a certain juncture, that is no reason why the dictatorship ruling in its name should not proceed to construct a socialist society! This is a quite deliberate and considered formulation. Tony Cliff repeats it in the second volume of his work on Trotsky: "[The Bolsheviks] could not give up power just because the class they represented had largely vanished while fighting to defend that power." This makes no more sense than if a party were to claim that its right to rule was founded on the support of a democratic majority but that this right was not affected by the fact that at a certain juncture it did not have the support of a majority. Cliff senses the difficulty, putting it in a nutshell: "There was a dictatorship of the proletariat, even though the proletariat had disintegrated."

In the third volume of his biography of Lenin, he adds a condescending gloss to this affront to reason: "Of course, to the vulgar materialist it sounds impossible to have a dictatorship of the proletariat without the proletariat, like the smile of the Cheshire cat without the cat itself." For people who are still not reassured, he explains that the ideological superstructure never reflects the material base directly. "Ideas have their own momentum." This is true up to a point. Yet although ideological forces may have material effects, it is an entirely different matter to assert that the "momentum of ideas" can be introduced to legitimise the rule of a certain group in place of a class. The SWP proposes that in place of a politically active and cohesive working class, operating its political control through open and democratic mechanisms, it is possible to substitute ideas and their "momentum". And in this instance, who possesses those ideas and the "momentum" which pushes them on? The Bolshevik party. Even when the momentum of these ideas conflicts with the momentum and interests of remaining proletarian elements, they alone legitimise power - so the SWP analysis supports the Bolshevik repression of rank and file worker resistance and the creation of the totalitarian monolithic state. As Cliff

later adds, the revolutionary party could not abdicate its power, "even when it discovered that it could not rule according to its own principles." So even the revolutionary momentum of ideas (or principles) is overruled by the simple right of the Bolshevik party to rule given its victory in 1917. This is Trotsky's concept of the Bolshevik party's "revolutionary birthright", which in essence is no more than an assertion that in this case 'might is right', with an added idealist twist. The notion of the legitimacy of an ideological force, an idealism, independent of and even on occasion opposed to, the material existence and expressions of the class on which it is supposedly based, is a sub-marxist distortion. It is a measure of the SWP's own distortion of the idea of a workers' state, of the marxist concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat, that its ideological leaders have to resort to such a transparent piece of mysticism. It adds nothing to the legitimacy of such manoeuvres that they can be traced to Lenin himself: "The dictatorship of the proletariat cannot be exercised through an organisation embracing the whole of that class, because in all capitalist countries...it can only be exercised by a vanguard that has absorbed the revolutionary energy of the class."

The mysticism of this process of "absorption" of revolutionary energies cannot disguise the latent anti-democratic, anti-class potential of the formulation. Neither absorbing "revolutionary energy" nor acting as the (non-proletarian) material embodiment of "Ideological momentum" is a process than can acceptably replace the operation of revolutionary democracy. What does this analysis by the SWP ideologists reveal about the nature of the SWP today? Clearly, that they believe themselves to be in sole possession of the "revolutionary energy" and "Ideological momentum" that the class lacks; that this constitutes a "birthright" in virtue of which they would be entitled to exercise power (never mind that this is not likely to happen) not only in place of the class they claim to represent, but if necessary, in opposition to that class. In a word, they believe in the revolutionary birthright of the party, the SWP, not the revolutionary birthright of the class. This is the ultimate foundation of the centralist authoritarianism of the SWP leadership and its opportunist politics.

BOLSHEVIK EXPERIMENT

-1921

Economic Policy, which marks the crucial stage of the disintegration of the soviet 'dictatorship of the proletariat' in a marxist sense. The split between the working class and its declared vanguard, the Bolshevik party, developed into a decisive and entrenched break.

Inspired in part by severe food shortages, the previous strongholds of Bolshevik support, in the factories of Moscow and Petrograd, took strike action against the regime, calling for the restoration of political and civil rights. The Bolshevik administration declared martial law, forbidding political assemblies and instituting a curfew. Force was used against the striking workers and when this proved insufficient, certain concessions were made. The strike wave had finished by the beginning of March, only to be replaced by an even greater threat. The sailors of the Kronstadt fortress, formerly the 'pride and glory of the revolution' (Trotsky), staged an armed insurrection - which was severely and forcibly suppressed. The principal demand of the Kronstadt rebels was for an end to the Bolshevik monopoly of power and the restoration of rights to left socialist parties, anarchists and the trade unions.

In Lenin's own analysis, the Kronstadt events were: "like a flash of lightning which threw more of a glare upon reality than anything else." The reality they reveal is of a regime which has broken away from its base in mass political consciousness. Again, it is important to be clear that this repression of previously revolutionary elements was preceded by the partial disintegration of the proletariat itself as the levels of industrial production collapsed.

Bukharin, a member of the 'Left Communists' referred to this 'disintegration' as early as March 1918. Three years later, Lenin himself admitted that the proletariat had been "largely decimated" owing to "extreme want and hardship". A few months later, in October 1921, he concluded that "the industrial proletariat...has ceased to exist as a proletariat" and "has disappeared". In brute figures, the collapse of industrial production in Russia during the civil war had caused the number of industrial workers to fall by nearly 60% by 1921, from just over 3 million in 1917, to 11 million. Moreover, the turnover of labour meant that a significant proportion of these workers were former petty bourgeois elements. The ideology and tactics of the Bolsheviks clearly reflected this shift in social forces. Already in the spring of 1918, Lenin was reinforcing the distinction between politically advanced and reactionary sections within the proletariat, insisting that:

"prolonged and persistent efforts must be exerted by the best and most class-conscious workers and peasants in order to...bring the people on to the proper path of steady and disciplined labour." By 1920 this had developed into Zinoviev's declaration that:

"every class conscious worker must realise that the dictatorship of the working class can only be realised through the dictatorship of its

vanguard, that is, through the communist party." Lenin claimed that "since 1905 the Bolshevik party had merged" with the entire revolutionary proletariat. The concept of a distinct party apparatus which has nonetheless "merged" with the entire proletariat (or the entire "revolutionary" element) evidently conflicts with Marx's own statements concerning the "self-emancipation" of the class. Shlyapnikov, a prominent leader of the Workers' Opposition group aptly summarised the position when at the 11th Party Congress in 1922 he observed, "[Lenin] said yesterday that the proletariat as a class did not exist in Russia. Permit me to congratulate you on being the vanguard of a non-existent class."

Debate and even factions within the Bolshevik party, in contrast to the limited opposition tolerated from non-party sources, continued to be very lively right through the civil war. But again, the collision with former rank and file supporters of the party in the winter and spring of 1921, proved a decisive turning point. Opposition to the leadership within the Bolshevik party concentrated around two groups, the 'Democratic Centralists' and the 'Workers' Opposition'. The Democratic Centralist group was largely intellectual in character and protested against "bureaucratic and authoritarian" centralism, warning against the development of a "bureaucratic dictatorship".

The Workers' Opposition group were more firmly attached to proletarian elements, particularly within the trade unions. It gained considerable support within the rank and file of the Bolshevik party. The principal leader of the Workers' Opposition, Alexandra Kollontai, outlined and defended their position in a widely read pamphlet, "The Workers' Opposition". The main function of the Opposition was to express concern that:

"during these three years of revolution, the economic situation of the working class, of those who work in factories and mills, has not only not been improved, but has become more unbearable." Kollontai identified the basis of the controversy as this: "shall we achieve communism through the workers, or over their heads by the hands of soviet officials?" The problem was posed as a choice between a, "bureaucratic state system or a system of wide practical self-activity of the working masses."

She again identified the bureaucracy as the fundamental threat to the workers' state: "Bureaucracy is a direct negation of mass self-activity. Whoever therefore accepts the principle of involving the masses in active participation as a basis for the new system of the workers' republic cannot look for good and bad sides in bureaucracy. He must openly and resolutely reject this useless system."

For the bureaucracy to be defeated, it would be necessary to "expel from the party all non-proletarian elements. The stronger the Soviet authority becomes, the greater the number of middle class...elements joining the party. The elimination of these elements must be complete and thorough." Again the objective situation

illustrates the reality behind Kollontai's demand.

By 1919 only 11% of party members were workers; 53% were government officials; 27% were in the army.

It is possible that the syndicalist-tinged programme of the Workers' Opposition would not have proved feasible in practice, that the weakness of the proletariat would have proved too great, that some non-Marxist reliance on pure worker 'spontaneity' can be detected. Yet Lenin's own position, particularly in 'State and Revolution' was once aligned closely to that of the Opposition itself. At the time of the 1917 revolution he wrote with enthusiasm of "the bold, conscientious, universal move to hand over administrative work to proletarians and semi-proletarians". Yet again, by the spring of 1918, a subtle shift has taken place:

"The more resolutely we now have to stand for a ruthlessly firm government...for the dictatorship of individuals in definite processes of work...the more varied must be the forms and methods of control from below in order...repeatedly and tirelessly to weed out bureaucracy." Yet by 1922, addressing the Eleventh Party Congress, Lenin confessed that these proposed forms of control were inoperative,

"If we take that huge bureaucratic machine...we must ask, who is directing whom? I doubt very much whether it can be said that the communists are directing that machine. To tell the truth, they are not directing, they are being directed."

Objective facts once more bear out the observation. The number of soviet officials rose from 100,000 in 1918 to nearly 8 million by the end of 1920. This testifies to a greater distortion than Lenin owned up to in his famous formula, that "ours is not a workers' state, but a workers' state with a bureaucratic twist to it." Whether or not the programme of proletarianisation and workers' management proposed by the Workers' Opposition would have proved possible to implement in practice, the fact is that the Bolshevik strategy of party control, party dictatorship and political direction of the non-proletarian bureaucracy and political apparatus had by the end of the civil war, proved a comprehensive failure.

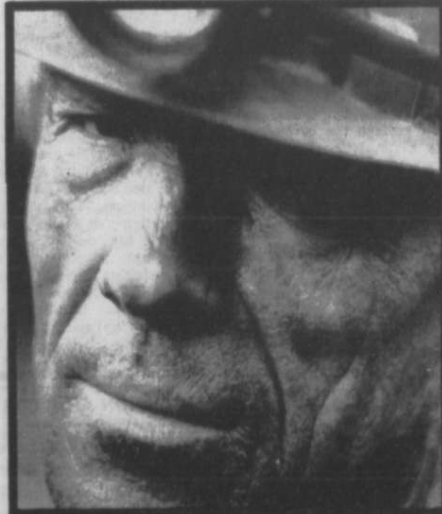
Yet to the end of his life, Lenin stuck to the formula of a dictatorship of the proletariat exercised, in the place of the politically coherent and active proletariat, by the Bolshevik party. He never ceased proposing ever more refined bureaucratic solutions to the problem of the bureaucracy. His pet idea was the creation of a new, ultra class-conscious bureaucracy to oversee the bureaucracy as a whole, the

Workers and Peasants Inspectorate (Rabkrin). This would then become "the model for our entire state apparatus." The Inspectorate proved an abject failure. Trotsky records that in his last conversation with him, Lenin "spoke of the terrible growth of bureaucratism in our Soviet apparatus". To remedy this, "He proposed to create a special commission of the Central Committee..." The bankruptcy of this approach, the creation of a committee to check the proliferation of other committees, is painfully obvious. Trotsky himself was foursquare behind the drive towards a bureaucracy headed by a monolithic political machinery. In 1923, he was declaring that:

"We are the only party in the country and in the period of the dictatorship it could not be otherwise." Trotsky later attempted to justify the elimination of factions (although simultaneously claiming that "the history of Bolshevism is the history of the struggle of factions") by claiming that "the forbidding of factions was regarded as an exceptional measure to be abandoned at the first serious improvement in the situation." Yet once the ban on factions introduced at the Party Congress of 1921 in response to the challenges from proletarian or semi-proletarian forces outside the party, and the opposition groups within the party was in place, the entrenchment of the party leadership and its attendant bureaucracy was guaranteed. In marxist terms, it is inconceivable that a closed, non-proletarian, bureaucratic system would decide that circumstances were ripe for a circumscription of its own power. The Trotsky of 1936 could see this:

"The prohibition of factions ended in a prohibition to think otherwise than in the infallible leaders." Lenin's own part in the repression was a vigorous one; he concluded, "factionalism of any kind is harmful and impermissible". Victor Serge noted the inevitable consequence of such an attitude:

"With the disappearance of political debates between parties representing different social interests through the various shades of their opinion, soviet institutions...now function in a vacuum." Serge correctly emphasises that to regard 'the proletariat' or 'the working class' as undifferentiated by partially conflicting social interests or 'shades of opinion' is to reduce the revolutionary class to a blank abstraction - an abstraction whose counterpart is, logically, the monolithic party organisation. Existing in a 'vacuum' of the kind Serge describes, only the interests of the bureaucracy itself can prevail and the state moves irresistibly from "bureaucratic centralism" to a form of bureaucratic totalitarianism.



"DOES THE WORKERS STATE EXIST TO BE USED BY THE PEOPLE, OR DO THE PEOPLE EXIST TO BE USED BY THE WORKERS STATE?"

This process is once again mirrored in the systematic transition from the libertarian tones of Lenin's 'State and Revolution', to the authoritarianism of his later assertions. Already in 1918, he is talking of the necessity of the dictatorship of individuals as the "channel, the expression, the vehicle" of "the dictatorship of the revolutionary classes", and insists that there is "absolutely no contradiction in principle between socialist democracy and the exercise of dictatorial powers by individuals." In order to guarantee the conditions of socialism it is necessary that "thousands subordinate their will to the will of one." The people must "unquestioningly obey the single will of the leaders of labour." To achieve this, "We must learn to combine the 'public meeting' democracy of the working people...with iron discipline while at work, with unquestioning obedience to the will of a single person, the soviet leader while at work." The tone of a totalitarian ideology is unmistakable. Lenin, it is true, at this stage has in mind industrial rather than political authority.

Yet it is equally plain that according to any marxist analysis, the two are finally indissoluble. By the time of the pamphlet, "Left Wing Communism - an Infantile Disorder" appeared in 1920, the authoritarianism has developed an explicitly political dimension. He declares that any attempt to oppose the dictatorship of the party to the dictatorship of the class "testifies to incredibly and hopelessly muddled thinking". Talk of proletarian state power "from below" opposed to "from above", "the dictatorship of the masses" is dismissed as "ridiculous and childish nonsense". The class dictatorship is now explicitly conducted "under the leadership of the party". This form of collective dictatorship is not very far from a prescription for the personal Stalinist dictatorship that within a very few years was to replace it. Only much later could Trotsky point out that,

"All past historical experience, wholly negative, demands of the workers at least and first of all an implacable distrust of all privileged and uncontrolled guardians."

This was as true in 1921 (or before) as it was on the eve of the Stalinist show trials when Trotsky finally drew the lesson. Moreover, in the immediate aftermath of the revolution he declared:

"If after taking power we are incapable of realising our own programme, then we ought to go to the soldiers and workers and declare ourselves bankrupt."

During the course of the civil war, he evidently changed his mind in the same manner as Lenin changed his. In 1921 he could argue, "What is indispensable is the awareness...of the revolutionary birthright of the party, which is obliged to maintain its dictatorship in spite of the temporary wavering in the spontaneous moods of the masses, in spite of the vacillation even in the working classes. This awareness is for us the indispensable unifying element."

This could hardly state more explicitly that the rights and authority ("the birthright") of the party ought to dominate those of the class.

The "self-emancipation" of the working class has finally slipped out of sight. Although acknowledging that the Bolshevik revolution was "the salvation of the honour of international socialism", Rosa Luxemburg identifies the principal mistake of the Bolshevik's progressive and

systematic delimitation of revolutionary democracy in this way:

"The danger begins only when [the Bolshevik leaders] make a virtue of necessity and want to freeze into a complete theoretical system all the tactics forced upon them by these fatal circumstances."

Yet even this does not adequately define the real danger, seeming to imply that the mistake somehow lies in overlaying an acceptable practice with an unacceptable theory. The fatal error is prior to theory, in the divorce of party from class and the supremacy in practice of party interests over and in place of those of the class.

Engel's analysis in his "Peasant War in Germany", is far more pointed than that of Luxemburg here: "The worst thing that can befall the leader of an extreme party, is to be compelled to take over a government in an epoch when the movement is not yet ripe for the domination of the class he represents...he is compelled to represent not his party nor his class, but the class for whom the conditions are ripe for domination. In the interests of the movement itself, he is compelled to defend the interests of an alien class, and to feed his own class with phrases and promises, with the assertion that the interests of that alien class are their own interests. Whoever puts himself in that awkward position is irrevocably lost."

With the failure of communist revolutions in the developed West to come to the aid of Soviet Russia, the 'weakest link' in the capitalist chain, the prospects for the establishment of a socialist regime in Russia itself were fatally diminished by the time of the end of the civil war. As Lenin's wife, Krupskaya remarked in 1928, "If [Lenin] were still alive, he would probably already be in prison." Trotsky, surveying the future in 1927 as a member of the "Left Opposition", wrote, "A whole series of five year plans will leave us far from the level of the advanced countries of the West. What will be happening in the capitalist world during this time?...If you admit the possibility of its flourishing anew for a period of decades, then talk of socialism in our country is pitiable nonsense. Then it will be necessary to say that we were mistaken in our appraisal of the whole epoch as an epoch of capitalist decay.

Then the Soviet Republic will prove to have been the second experiment in proletarian dictatorship since the Paris Commune, broader and more fruitful, but only an experiment..."

Over fifty years on, we can recognise that the analysis Trotsky here offers only to reject it, was in fact the correct one. The model of the Bolshevik party, as it developed in the years following the revolution represents an experimental socialism; an experiment conducted in the specific conditions of post-Tsarist Russia, not an iconic organisation to be replicated in contemporary political practice. It is vital for the future of revolutionary socialism that the implications of this analysis are accepted; that no special pleading for the Bolshevik elimination of workers' democracy and the progressive substitution of a monolithic and totalitarian bureaucracy is tolerated, and the lessons of the Bolshevik "experiment" are thoroughly learned.

Three lessons are paramount yet still to be widely accepted - the necessity of unconditional democracy within the revolutionary organisation, the commitment to socialist political pluralism, and the supreme importance of the class composition of the organisations themselves.

By: F. Gordon

BEATING THE FASCISTS

In the last issue of Red Action, a report was promised on developments regarding the formation of a Hertfordshire-wide Anti-fascist group. Here it is.

HERTS

Following a highly successful mobilisation against a National Front local election meeting in the area (see last edition) Red Action members in Hatfield decided that it was high time that anti-fascist activity in the region was co-ordinated in the form of a dedicated anti-fascist organisation. The initial meeting was enthusiastically attended by an excellent turnout of anti-fascists from around the county.

It was first of all agreed that the correct strategy in opposing racist activities was to be based upon both ideological and physical confrontation.

Following the arrest of a number of anti-fascists during the disruption of the National Front's election campaign in Hemel Hempstead, a defence campaign was formed. Of the four people charged with various offences, one was acquitted on all counts, and the other three acquitted on the main charges of assault and assault on the police. The remaining charges of threatening behaviour were accepted by the magistrates. A benefit is to be arranged to help pay fines and costs, in addition to an appeal to interested organisations and individuals. Incidentally, our style of electioneering evidently impressed the local electorate far more than the campaigning of the fascists - their candidate received 18 votes, presumably including his own.

are now better organised, in the shape of the BNP, than they have been for some years."

He is confident however, that "revolutionaries can certainly mobilise more active support than the fascists can". It depends on how you define 'active' support. Against perhaps 150 fascists in Thamesmead recently, the anti-fascist coalition called out over 1,000 people. Of these, little over 100 actively attacked the fascists; the rest actively walked in the opposite direction - including incidentally, the SWP. Many of these no doubt, went home satisfied that the fascists will be demoralised by the fact that they would have lost a vote had there been one. The fact remains that despite the high levels of tokenistic support, these 'revolutionaries' made sure they were nowhere to be seen when it mattered. There is absolutely no doubt that the fascists entered a situation in Thamesmead where they could have been flattened and emerged with increased confidence and authority. Equally, there is no doubt that many sincere anti-fascists emerged disillusioned, angry and frustrated. Whenever the next confrontation on this scale takes place, the odds will have shifted in favour of the fascists.

Molyneux makes his position clear (and of course, he is representative of a whole strata of left orthodoxy) when he describes the present level of fascist activity as consisting of "no more than a hard core of extremely isolated fanatics" with a corresponding danger of revolutionaries "becoming obsessed with pointless fascist hunting". It is open to debate whether those in black or

a climate and a zone where casual and opportunistic racism becomes acceptable and establishes itself.

Nonetheless Molyneux

concludes that "At the moment the overall fascist threat is not of the size and strength to justify or even make viable a general national response on the lines of the Anti-Nazi League." In reality, all this argument amounts to is that while fascists are not strong enough to begin systematic harassment of socialists their racist activities should be ignored. Only when they are sufficiently organised to confront white lefties and their organisations head on, do the alarm bells sound. No wonder the distance between militant blacks and Asians on the one hand, and the predominantly white left on the other, is so great. Now, left to their own devices, the fascists have reorganised to the point where left-wing ostriches with their heads in the sand are having their areas kicked. Expect a reorientation of attitudes shortly.

One fine instance of this process has emerged through contacts that have been made with a group of anti-fascists in an area immediately outside our region, in the Milton Keynes area. This followed a fascist organised attack on three Asian workers leaving their workplace. An axe was one of the weapons used. Staged photographs of BNP members mounting vigilante patrols against 'perverts' [some mistake surely - ed.] have appeared in the local press which underlines the confidence the fascists have been allowed to develop.

In themselves, such contacts as have been made are a very encouraging sign and perhaps the beginning of real inter-regional co-operation. However, it unfortunately appears to be the case that a group of fascists belonging to the BNP have been allowed to establish a regular presence in the town. Local socialists allowed the situation to develop to the point where a BNP paper sale complete with flourishes of the Union Jack has been held in the town centre for over a year. BNP posters and stickers are plastered everywhere, with until recently, little response. Local BNPers will have noticed Red Action and AFA stickers now deface their work. A Herts AFA delegation was sent to join local anti-fascists in a takeover of the BNP pitch on a recent Saturday - the BNP laid low. However, the following week it was reported that they had returned in some numbers, preventing local anti-fascists from holding their own counter demonstration. This is clearly an unsatisfactory state of affairs and Herts AFA have pledged their continued support. Red Action's position is that effective action against the fascists can only take place through the development of a national network of AFA branches in which all anti-fascists are democratically represented and develop collective strategies. And so, we do not think that it is a good idea to wait until the fascists are a bit better organised.

As John Molyneux also recognises in his article, "If the fascists are allowed to gain a mass base unhindered... this can be very dangerous. They can grow to the point where it becomes extremely difficult to sweep them off the streets and halt their momentum." This is precisely what is being allowed to happen in one town in our own area - and it happened under the noses of socialists who until recently would doubtless have argued in

the same vein. Whatever the reason, the recession or the weather, it is probably not the only place in Britain that it is happening. However, if our own experiences are typical, the potential for concerted and effective anti-fascist organisation to counter the undoubted upsurge in the activities of the fascists themselves, is undoubtedly there. Isolated, sporadic and to put it bluntly feeble counter measures, will not be effective against the considerable threat that the fascists currently represent. Red Action therefore appeals to all interested anti-fascists to contact the one organisation which has already proved its effectiveness in combatting this menace - Anti-Fascist Action.

Details of how to contact AFA are given below.

Anti FASCIST ACTION

Anti-Fascist Action has produced a booklet introducing potential members to the organisation. Priced £1, it is attractively and professionally designed. It is available either from: Searchlight or from AFA, 184 Uxal, London WC1N 3XX. AFA is also planning to publish a regular magazine.

MANCHESTER

On Saturday June 15th, the National Front had threatened to rally on the steps outside Manchester Town Hall after the council had denied them the use of a meeting room inside, which they had booked using a false name. This would have been the first 'public' appearance by a fascist organisation in Manchester for over 8 years.

The week prior to June 15th saw the usual antics and manoeuvres by the SWP and Militant, with both organisations deciding that on the day they would be holding their own counter demonstrations separate from the one called by AFA.

On the day itself good sense prevailed, and despite the confusion most people managed to end up in the right place outside the Town Hall, and the spot where the NF was due to rally was instead occupied by 250-300 anti-fascists. Keeping a somewhat lower profile was a 30-40 strong AFA stewards group, who after ensuring the immediate area was safe from attack, made their way to the NF's redirection point at Victoria Station. However the advantage of surprise was lost with the arrival of the rest of the anti-fascist picket, complete with obligatory police escort. Having led the police to Victoria Station, the SWP and their cohorts then left after 20 minutes to parade around the city centre in ever decreasing and pointless

circles. Within 20 minutes of their departure, several fascists arrived at the station and despite the police presence, were given a warmer reception than they had been expecting and had to leave the area at a rapid pace.

It quickly became obvious that although the NF weren't meeting at the Town Hall, they were, with police cooperation, meeting somewhere else. AFA, bolstered by the best elements from the anti-fascist picket, maintained a presence in the town centre for the rest of the day, but could find no further trace of the fascists. It was later discovered that NF had in fact booked a room at a small hotel in Wythenshawe, about six miles from the city centre and less than a minute from the motorway. While it is clear that the NF never intended to rally outside the Town Hall, what is clear is that they were neither the confidence, nor local support to depend on anyway. While anti-fascists cannot claim that the day was a success, we did at least manage to increase our influence in the area. The NF on the other hand, having been forced to hold their meeting in secret, under a false name in the sticks, with several supporters being chased and attacked in the city centre, cannot claim even that.

Contact: Manchester Red Action PO Box 57 Manchester M20 8WG

GLASGOW

CONTACT: GLASGOW AFA BOX 266 GLASGOW G1 5RX

Sixty people attended Glasgow AFA's first public meeting in Denistown at the end of June. Denistown is an area which has a large loyalist presence and, as a result, has become a target area for BNP recruitment. One of the so-called "BNP Glasgow Four" (recently released after 12 months for an attack on an SWP meeting) comes from the area and is the BNP's youth organiser. Despite his nickname, Ian Macmillan wasn't so 'crazy' on the night of the meeting. He made a fast exit from the area and persuaded the 25 boneheads and other assortments of the master race who had been mobilised to 'smash the reds' that the only smashing that night would have been their own heads on the pavement. BNP scouts were lucky to escape at one point with one young lad having very brown trousers after venturing too close to the stewards outside the meeting to show off his knifed inside, the meeting was addressed by speakers from London AFA, Scottish Anti-Racist Movement, and a Spanish Civil War veteran. The general mood of the meeting was in agreement with AFA's position that the fascists have to be challenged in areas like Denistown, of the likely outcome will be that large sections of working class youth will be lost to them, and in turn, the activities of the left will be threatened. There will have to be a sustained anti-fascist presence in the area which continues the ideological and physical confrontation of the BNP! Denistown has only seen the beginning of a campaign to firmly establish No-Go areas for the BNP in Glasgow.

About 25 new contacts for AFA signed up on the night in contrast with AFA's militant activity, the SWP

paper sale in the city centre on the same weekend became the target for the fascists, who took photos of the paper sellers and gave out leaflets around them to no response! Not surprisingly, the reaction of SWP members to this was to blame AFA and Red Action "squads" for whipping up the fascists in an area where, according to their local comrades, "there is no significant fascist activity". Given that the SWP members who live in Denistown are political commuters (i.e. they commute out of the area to engage in political activity) we questioned which particular orifice they were talking out of! Even more despicable is the suggestion by the SWP that AFA deliberately left up fascist graffiti in order to perpetuate 'a myth of a BNP presence' - why don't these people drop the pretence and simply accuse AFA of being responsible for the graffiti? The truth is of course that the SWP have no real interest in orientating their largely

student membership to militant anti-fascist activity because their 'revolutionary' politics would quickly be exposed as the real 'myth'! Instead they relied upon the age-old arguments against confrontational anti-fascist politics which amount to lies and smears against RA and others on the left. They not only lack political ideas and credibility, they seem to be lacking in honesty as well! Militant also ignored the public meeting despite being involved in recent mobilisations against fascists in Glasgow and Dundee. We know that the sectarianism which exists towards AFA from the leadership of both the SWP and Militant does not extend to the whole membership, and we would urge individuals in these organisations who agree in principle with AFA's politics to join us in the campaign to rid Scotland of the Nazi BNP. With the general election drawing nearer and the plans by the BNP to stand candidates north of the border (including John Tyndall, BNP fuhrer, in Edinburgh according to the Sunday Express 7.7.81) it is of paramount importance that the most militant anti-fascists from all organisations on the left are united in repelling and countering the fascist threat in Scotland.



Dockers in 1968, present a petition in support of Enoch Powell. In 1991, the latent racism that still exists is demonstrated by the estimated 70,000 race attacks that occur each year. The response of the so-called revolutionary left to the epidemic, when not simply indifferent is both incompetent and inadequate.

In Hatfield, we have already held a widely publicised social in the name of Anti-Fascist Action - despite blood-curdling threats from the fascists to disrupt the event, on the actual night, not a mouse squeaked. In the immediate area the fascists appear to have an organised presence in only one town with smaller, less visible branches elsewhere. Nonetheless a disturbing but predictable trend has recently become evident in a number of systematic attacks upon left paper sellers in a neighbouring area. This appears to fit in with developments on a national scale. The left is beginning to wake up to the problem. John Molyneux recognised recently in 'Socialist Worker' "Working in the fascist's favour is the fact that they

Asian communities actually on the receiving end of the tuggery dished out by "extremely isolated" bands of racists would agree that the effort involved in eliminating them was wasted. They may even feel, in such places as Tower Hamlets or Bethnal Green, that it is they, not the fascists, who are isolated. What cannot be denied is that years of ignoring fascists selling their papers at the other end of the street ('I see no fascists') and announcing that not enough black or Asian people are being attacked or living in terror for the left to organise against it ('the fascists are isolated') have produced their predictable consequences. The fascists will never be isolated where they are seen to be unopposed - on the contrary, they create



'Crazy' Mc Millan with BNP boss John Tyndall

RED ACTION ARTICLES

All signed articles are that persons own view, and may not necessarily reflect Red Action decided policy.

LIBERTY OR DEATH

Slave Rebellion of Haiti-1791

This year sees the 200th anniversary of one of the most remarkable revolutionary episodes in history is also one of the least well known - the fight of the black Haitian slave population for freedom and independence during the years following the French Revolution of 1789.

From 1791 to 1804, slave armies defeated military forces sent by the Spanish, French and British - the most advanced armies of the time. They did this under the leadership of black officers and a black, ex-slave leader - Toussaint L'Ouverture. Haiti was first called by the Spanish 'Hispaniola', later, by the French as San Domingo. The first Spanish settlement centred itself with looting the island of its precious metals and eliminating the native inhabitants. During the 17th century, the French occupied the western third of the island (modern Haiti) and began the cultivation of settled plantations. Plantations required slaves, and by 1700 the slave population numbered around 20,000. By 1750 this figure had increased to 250,000 and by the eve of the revolution, had doubled to half a million. By 1790, Haiti was the most productive colony the world had yet seen, out-producing the whole of North America in a number of primary commodities. The maritime cities of France became enormously rich on the proceeds. Whole industries within France depended on this single colony.

Naturally, there was a price to be paid for this prosperity, and it was paid by the slaves.

Owing to the rate at which African labour was worked to death, 40,000 had to be imported every year. This meant that the majority of the slave population was African born - and bitterly resentful of the slavery to which they had been introduced. For many years, escaped slaves formed maroon communities, numbering several thousand in total, forming a permanent example and a threat to the white slave owners. Working in the quasi-factory conditions of the plantation, many of the slaves were in a condition resembling that of a modern proletariat rather than a European peasantry. The owners of course reacted to the threat such a labour force represented with ferocious hatred and fear. Fanatically institutionalised colour prejudice replaced the earlier code that governed relations between black and white as the economic imperatives grew more stringent. Eventually there came to be no less than 128 classifications of the colour of those born to mixed parentages and complex regulations enforced with regard to the various shades.

News of the 1789 revolution in France with its watchwords of freedom and liberty was the signal for a new phase of agitation and discontent.

Finally a slave called Boukman gave the signal for revolt almost exactly 200 years ago, on a stormy night on August 1791 and 100,000 slaves in the northern provinces began the destruction of the system they hated.

Condition of virtual chaos ensued as the contending groups endeavoured to slaughter each other. The slave population sometimes found themselves fighting with the Mulatto (mixed race) class against the whites and sometimes against both. Throughout the conflict, the intermediate Mulatto class,

often propertied and themselves owners of slaves, would find themselves torn between the hatred of the whites for all 'men of colour' and the need to defend their interests as property owners against the slaves. Free blacks found themselves in a similar position.

In both cases, the ties of property and status were the crucial ones: the bond of property consistently proved decisive over the bonds of colour or ideology.

After four months, of insurrection a kind of military stalemate was reached. To the bewilderment of the masses they led, the leaders of the slaves, including Toussaint (a relatively privileged 'house' rather than plantation slave), came to terms with the French. Nonetheless, an experienced and capable army had already been fashioned from the undisciplined mass of ex-slaves.

The stalemate ended with the dispatch of 6,000 troops from France to restore the colonial order. The whites and the mulattoes came to terms. Yet at this apparently decisive point, the whites divided amongst themselves along the lines of the revolution in France itself. Revolutionaries fought Royalists: the Revolutionaries won. The black revolutionaries, however, had been given a vital breathing space. On the verge of defeat, they were offered arms and assistance by the rival colonial power in the island - Spain. Toussaint took

the help offered to him, but maintained his independence of the Spanish. The white counter-revolutionary elements, some 10,000, fled for the American colonies, never to return.

The British, sensing the weakening position of the French and a prime colony for the taking, landed troops of their own. By the beginning of 1794, large areas of San Domingo were under British control. It was a crucial moment: for once in possession of San Domingo, Britain would be restored as a power in the New World and additionally would be poised to become the most enthusiastic exponent of the slave trade instead of an advocate for its abolition. San Domingo in French hands guaranteed British opposition to the slave trade; it then became a trade that steadily added to French, not British, prosperity. At this point however, a vital intervention occurred within France itself. The National Convention, under pressure from the revolutionary people of Paris, declared slavery in all French colonies, abolished. The former slaves of San Domingo now had a tangible and direct interest for which to fight: their own liberty. No one doubted that the British and the Spanish were fighting for the restoration of slavery.

The armies under Toussaint became ever more powerful; and although the British government continued for three years to throw men and money into the fight against those they termed 'bandits', it eventually resulted in the worst defeat of the British army in colonial history. Black armies fought not only the British, but armies formed by French slave owners and mulattoes, who remained doggedly pro-British. Yet by the end of 1796 the British had effectively lost, having suffered 80,000 casualties. At the end of 1798, the British evacuated the island. Toussaint quickly eliminated the danger presented by the mulattoes and turned his attention to the Spanish. The Spanish troops were routed, and in January 1800, the

Spanish Governor formally handed over the colony. After 10 years of war the colony was devastated. Only 10,000 remained of 30,000 whites; the free mulattoes had been reduced from 40,000 to 30,000. Possibly one-third of the 500,000 blacks had died. Yet Toussaint emerged as the undisputed master of San Domingo, at the head of a disciplined and unchallenged army. He made himself military dictator, albeit with what began as the overwhelming support of the ex-slave population. San Domingo became virtually independent of France. The mulattoes and the old free blacks resented the new balance of power, but for the moment could do nothing to alter it.

Although having fought with such determination against the colonising forces of Britain and France, Toussaint was aware of the danger of an independent Haiti reverting to

Toussaint's power base within the island had itself begun to erode. The most radical sections of the black population and their leaders, including the ex-slave general Dessalines, mistrusted Toussaint's policy of reconciliation. To them it looked like a conspiracy to restore the old supremacy of the whites. There is no evidence that Toussaint would ever have countenanced the restoration of slavery; yet it is apparent that he believed that France could be accepted as a partner in a prosperous but free colony. Bonaparte had other ideas; women who had relationships with black men were to be deported to France, all blacks above the rank of captain in the army were to be replaced by whites. When the French force landed, whites, the former free blacks and the mulatto petty bourgeoisie rallied to them. Confrontation between the French and black armies soon

without them, local leaders organised a guerrilla war of astonishing proficiency against the seasoned French troops. The French commander wrote home:

"We have in Europe a false idea of the country in which we fight and the men whom we fight against..."

Dessalines escaped an attempt to capture him, and prepared to lead the insurrection. Of the 34,000 men the French had at the beginning of the campaign, 24,000 were dead, 8,000 incapacitated through illness and only 2,000 remained capable of fighting. The majority of the mulattoes however, especially the wealthier elements, stuck with the French. But now the black masses had experienced and determined military leadership. Bonaparte sent 20,000 reinforcements, along with a new commander. His first move was to announce the immediate reintroduction of slavery and to organise the extermination of the mulattoes and the confiscation of their property, friend and foe alike. Once again, the mulattoes changed allegiance. The war now, for the first time, had all the appearance of a race war, black and mulatto against the French. Yet, as throughout the conflict, the real issue was based on the struggle of classes, the enslavers and the enslaved. The war became a war of frank extermination with the aim of slaughtering the rebels and replacing them with labour brought directly from Africa which knew nothing of the revolutionary slogans of freedom and equality. The French attempted to terrorise the blacks with the most barbarous tortures and mass executions. The civil population continued to resist, and with more determination than before. All cultivated areas were burnt to the ground to prevent them being of use to the French. Dessalines responded to the French barbarities in kind. The terrorists were terrorised. As Bonaparte prepared to send massive new armaments to the island, the war between Britain and France was renewed. The

French forces in San Domingo were isolated and soon penned within a few coastal towns. Rather than face the black and mulatto armies, the French capitulated to the British. Of the total of 60,000 who had sailed from France to restore slavery to San Domingo, virtually all had been killed - the rest were to rot in English prisons.

On December 1803, the final Declaration of Independence was read and the new state of Haiti was born. The next year, Dessalines had himself crowned Emperor. The remaining white proprietors were allowed to retain their property. Unfortunately they also retained their sympathies for the counter-revolution and slavery, and when a fresh French naval squadron appeared, the population massacred them. British and American whites were spared along with the skilled workmen and priests. Only the destruction of the French fleet at Trafalgar prevented the dispatch of a further French expedition - so prized and valuable a possession had the colony been. The resultant economic isolation, coupled with the devastation wrought by the war, meant that Haiti remained ruined economically for many years to come.

Yet a free black nation had been formed by the labours and courage of the former slaves themselves: the institution of slavery and the ideologies and rationalisations that buttressed it had received a fatal blow. Instead of being the passive objects of oppression, the Haitian slaves had demonstrated their capacity to assert, in the most courageous and inspired fashion, their own ideals and to make their own history.

The activities of the 'humanitarians' and abolitionists that we hear so much about are entirely peripheral to this gigantic struggle. CLR James, who wrote what is still the classic account of the black war of independence, observed:

"The national struggle against Bonaparte in Spain, the burning of Moscow by the Russians that fills the histories of the period, were anticipated and excelled by the blacks and mulattoes of the island of San Domingo. For self-sacrifice and heroism, the men, women and children who drove out the French stand second to no fighters for independence in any place or time."



patterns of small-scale, pre-capitalist production. He therefore carefully avoided a complete break with the civilisation of the former slave owners. The slave trade itself was allowed to continue; but all Africans once landed in San Domingo automatically became free men. Whites continued to retain wealth and certain positions of power. Race prejudice, free of the economic pressures that caused it to flourish, began to disappear with amazing rapidity. With so many black ex-slaves occupying the very highest positions in the country, it could no longer be sustained. Production levels rose to levels comparable to those of pre-revolutionary times with astonishing speed.

The maritime bourgeoisie within France itself however, could not for long forget the fabulous profits they had formerly extracted from the slave colony as it was. The new Emperor of France, Napoleon, a personal hater of blacks, decided that the old colonial order was essential to the power of France and determined to restore it. In 1801, the largest expedition that had ever sailed from France, 20,000 men under France's finest officers, set sail for San Domingo.

became an open war; even fiercer than those of the 10 year War of Independence. The French armies suffered enormous losses and were comprehensively outfought. Yet Toussaint still preferred to keep negotiations open with the French and despite the demoralisation of the French forces, he and the other black leaders agreed to a peace. Only Dessalines remained clear that the fight had to be fought to a conclusion. Toussaint himself was treacherously taken captive by the French and deported to a remote prison in France where he soon perished of hunger and cold. His last words as he was put on board the ship to France as a prisoner were:

"In overthrowing me, you have cut down in San Domingo only the trunk of the tree of liberty. It will spring up again by the roots, for they are numerous and deep."

In May 1802, the French bourgeoisie openly declared their hand: slavery was to be reintroduced in all the colonies. As soon as the news reached the black population in San Domingo, an insurrection broke out. At first, the leaders of the ex-slave armies refused to move. Even



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BETRAYAL -contd-

any point that the fascists were attempting to gain. It was agreed that any movement of the demonstration would be towards the fascists and not away from them. In reality what happened was that the sound system and the rally were set some distance from the fascist rallying point. Why was the plan abandoned?

Various organisations promised mass mobilisations and stewards. On the day itself, there was no evidence of either stewards or demonstrators on the logical routes, including those to and from the local stations, that both fascists and anti-fascists would take to reach Thamesmead, despite there being a large group of BNP and other fascists at Abbey Wood. It was only our intervention which highlighted and removed the fascist threat from that area. Why were there no stewards there to hold the area for the protection of counter demonstrators? Where was the concern for those who were to be participants in the anti-fascist rally? Why were both these stations ceded to the fascists so early on in the day?

Shortly before the BNP march started the counter demonstration formed up and marched to the place of Roland Adams' murder, directly away from the fascists. No sooner was the anti-fascist march out of sight than the BNP march was spotted. Why was the primary objective of the day abandoned? Who had the right to betray those who are subject to violent racist abuse?

Whoever took these decisions was responsible for the fascists' success. Whoever was responsible should be in the dock facing charges, not those who were arrested whilst actually opposing fascism, or those who anger and frustration, deliberately built up by the organisers' pre-demo rhetoric and obvious hyperbole, was vented, uselessly, on the forces of the state. Scouts were sent to the main body of demonstrators to ask for assistance when the BNP march appeared. Needless to say, the appeals were ignored.

Anti-Fascist Action together with some of the better elements from the main

demonstration attempted to disrupt the fascist march. We were unsuccessful in stopping it, but managed to disrupt it and force it to be turned short of its objective. Not only had the hijackers of the anti-fascists abandoned all attempts at a principled opposition, not only had they betrayed the trust of the militant protestors, but they also abandoned their rallying point, their vehicles, their sound system - and their credibility - to the fascists.

The speeches at the rally provide the final denunciation of the counter demonstration and illustrate the toywom mentality of those involved. It was declared that the fascists who had been defeated on the day and that the anti-fascist rally had been a success. How can this demo marching away from the fascists be considered a success?

Following the inappropriately named counter demonstration, no attempt was made to support those unfortunate enough to be arrested on the day, by either locating photographs or identifying witnesses to arrest. They were abandoned to the tender mercies of the state. At the next meeting called by the campaign AFA presented two documents (both of which are available from AFA) for discussion and adoption. These were discussed on 20th June. These papers were the only ones seen at any meeting of the Roland Adams Family Campaign. One contained a proposal and a set of objectives for the future of the campaign, the other contained a critique of the May 25th counter demonstration.

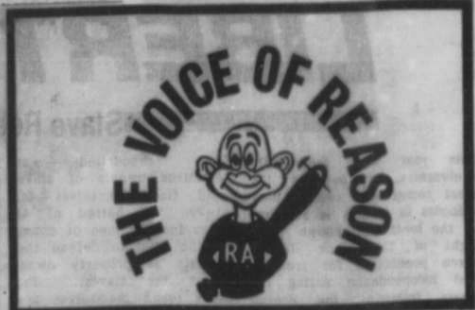
The conduct of the meeting was such that the proposal and objectives were ignored and the critique discussed at some length with individuals and groups taking closed defensive positions on any criticism they identified as pertaining to themselves. It was apparent that certain groups were operating from a hidden agenda devised to take control of the campaign, just as the 25th May demonstration was hijacked to meet a hidden agenda. The discussion culminated in AFA being

accused of being a racist organisation composed of individual racists. This is an allegation obviously not founded in truth. As a consequence we left the meeting some 15 minutes before it was due to end. We take no pleasure in noting that our prediction to the campaign, that if the fascists were allowed to gain a foothold in one area of south-east London, they will gather confidence and strength and become a growing problem and menace. It is with regret that AFA observes that this prediction has been borne out; the mischievous and violent election campaign in Peckham this July being the latest example of the progression of the fascist BNP. The fascists have also succeeded in organising an unopposed march in neighbouring Camberwell.

If nothing else, history teaches us that this cancer has to be dealt with as early as possible and as completely as possible.

Anti-Fascist Action has supported such initiatives before and will continue to do so. How long must it be before a principled opposition to the fascists can be set up? How long before the deceit of some of the left is overcome - we feel that it is long past time.

AFA encourage all and any individuals or groups to contact us so that we can work together in a non-sectarian, principled manner in the fight against fascism.



BUSHELL IN THE BOX

(Headline and picture from the Sun newspaper.)



Red and board... Gary prepares to get his head down with the dossier

According to a mole deep inside Fortress Wapping, Sun columnist Gary Bushell, was recently involved in an incident which left him nursing a variety of serious injuries. True to form, the Sun management deny any such incident took place, explaining his absence by insisting the injuries sustained resulted from a fall at his home. However judging from the damage reported done; three broken ribs, broken ankle, facial injuries and a possible broken nose, it would appear 'Gal', fell about repeatedly and for a considerable length of time. Bushell, a one time left-wing activist once insisted, during an interview in 1985 that "I have a lot of respect for Red Action 'cos they're out their doing it. I don't necessarily agree with them all the way...etc" seems to have come full circle. Doing a piece in the Sun on the unemployed and homeless in London earlier this year, he was photographed in the company of a certain Terry Blackman, who for the benefit of the notoriously glib Sun readership was presented as white, unemployed and homeless. In reality Terry Blackman lives with his parents in Croydon and is also London organiser for the National Front. Bushell's former friends are legion criss-crossing the complete political spectrum from the far right to the far-left and back again, so the identity of the perpetrators or the 'lads most likely', has so far even baffled those, who after similar incidents usually feature near the top of the 'usual suspects list' themselves. However one thing seems clear should they feel the need to return, 'BUSHELL IN THE BOX' may become his permanent address.

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REMEMBERED WITH PRIDE (contd.)



of 26 million. Republican prisoners are predominantly drawn from a population of 500,000. You can see the huge difference. We have a much higher proportion of political prisoners. Not only the prisoners but also their families need constant support and help. There are very few members of the nationalist community who do not know a prisoner or a prisoner's family. I call on everyone to give support and help.

It is for the two reasons mentioned above, to commemorate the deaths of the 10 1981 hunger strikers and to raise funds for today's Republican prisoners and their families as well as to draw attention to their plight, that Republican Socialist Prisoners Aid has organised this benefit social this evening and we thank everyone for attending. Tiocfaidh ar lal

Glasgow Commemoration

One hundred people attended a Red Action benefit social for the IRA and INLA POWs and in commemoration of the Republican Hunger strike of 1981.

The Bridgeton Republican flute band played 2 rousing sets, as did the Irish folk band, the Blarney Pilgrims. A speaker from the Republican Bands Alliance expressed their support, thanked RA for organising the event, and stressed the need to raise physical and moral support for all Republican prisoners.

Partly in recognition of our efforts to raise support for Republican prisoners, Glasgow RA members were invited to join the newly formed Glasgow Hunger Strike commemoration committee which is planning a major public meeting, social and march through Glasgow city centre on September 6th and 7th. We have already pledged that the proceeds of our next social (to be held in August) will be split entirely between prisoners organisations and the Hunger Strike committee in order to help them finance this major event. Glasgow RA also intend building support for the Hunger Strike committee's activities by holding a public meeting and film show about the 1981 Hunger Strike and its significance today. This is



Demonstrator on this years Belfast Internment commemoration, sporting an R.A. sticker.

planned for late August.

Edinburgh

Over 1,000 people attended this year's annual James Connolly commemoration march despite a media campaign to get the march banned and a

loyalist/fascist counter demo of 200!

The commemoration was particularly important because of the 75th anniversary of the Easter Rising and the crucial role that Edinburgh-born James Connolly and the Irish Citizen's Army played in this historic event.

Speakers, who included 'An Phoblacht's' editor, stressed the importance of Connolly's role in shaping Irish history and the relevance of his ideas today.

What is particularly refreshing about this march is its solidly working class composition. Unlike many so-called Irish solidarity marches elsewhere in Britain, the Connolly committee, along with the Republican Bands Alliance, have the support of ordinary working class people with a genuine will to do something over here that makes a difference over there. If the rest of the left in Britain took a leaf out of their book, we would be somewhere nearer building a genuine solidarity movement with the Irish struggle.

In Edinburgh and in Glasgow on the parade which took place beforehand, Red Action members were besieged by people asking for our 'FOR THE IRA AGAINST THE COMMON ENEMY' stickers. There was also an excellent response to an AFA leaflet which was distributed.



Black and Tan



A conversation overheard, during the recent visit of a Red Action delegation to Belfast for the 1991 Internment/Hunger-Strike commemoration.

Two R.A. members, stand and watch as a mobile patrol, an Army jeep with two squaddies survey the public through the sights of their rifles from a hatch in the roof, flanked by two RUC land-rovers arrogantly sweeps past.

"Look at those Brit bastards" remarks one, "Yeah", replies the other, "Givin' it the big-un' just because they've got a sun roof"!!!

CONGRATULATIONS

To David, an AFA prisoner who received parole for September, and also to Nessan Quinlivan, Pearse McAuley and Martin Foran who left prison without Parole!