

# RED ACTION

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## PRIME SUSPECTS

### ANTI-FASCIST MILITANTS SLIP MI5 NET IN OPERATION BLACKSHIRT BLUNDER!



Above: A group of casualties identified by MI5 to the media as Red Action members. Not so!

In December 1992 *Red Action* (issue 64), revealed the existence of **Operation Blackshirt**. This is a state security run operation, designed to isolate and criminalise anti-fascist militants. The events surrounding the Welling March on the 16th of October, prove that this operation is ongoing, and, has intensified. On February 4th 1994 police released video footage some filmed secretly and 80 photographs, and asked the public to "Identify the ringleaders". However, only four months earlier the police themselves had confidently identified the ringleaders, via the media to the public. Then, significant arrests were expected within days, with swoops planned on the homes of the ringleaders of two hardcore militant organisations, *Red Action* and *Panther UK*. Unlike the Trafalgar Square riot when a rogues gallery was published within days, this time simply being involved wasn't sufficient provocation for a dawn raid. To qualify

initially it appears it was necessary to have been rated - a prime suspect - not as a result of, but in advance of the riot. That seems to be the explanation for the delay. In an attempt to justify 'the biggest intelligence operation ever' police had the 'arduous' task of trawling through 50 hours of video footage in an attempt to match the film of prime suspects videoed before the march, against footage of troublemakers videoed and photographed during the riot. Gradually it dawned on the security services that they had blundered. Somehow, the named ringleaders had slipped the net. Following the October 16th fiasco, the media made many references to the Poll Tax riots. The principle allegation being, that the riot was planned. And indeed it was. As was the Trafalgar Square extravaganza. And the police planned it. And did so meticulously. (See *Red Action*, no. 56). For Welling, the established modus

operandi was copied, to the letter. "...rarely can a riot have been so perfectly forecast; both sides knew exactly what was going to happen, precisely where it would happen and give or take ten minutes at what time..." (Evening Standard (ES) 18/10/93.) The media were alerted only days before to the possibility of trouble by un-named "extremists". The "flashpoint", was selected by the police and surveillance cameras duly erected. This is entirely sensible. You don't need cameras at some point where there will be no trouble. Neither do you want trouble, at some other place where there is no camera. The exact location of the "flashpoint", was also advertised on TV, that Friday night, just for good measure. In addition to its expectation, the riot, must be controlled. Controlled, to look like a riot that is. This requires that police appear outnumbered, and under sustained attack. The illusion can be created by the deployment of insufficient officers to quell the 'disturbance'. (At Trafalgar Square during the height of the riot, hundreds of police could be seen lounging around their carriers in Whitehall, drinking coffee.) On the day in question, the 16th, all exits from the route of the march were blocked by police in full riot gear. There were on the day, 3000 police in reserve - "tucked away behind almost every street corner". (ES.) Every street corner that is, EXCEPT, at the designated flash point. The junction of Wickham Lane and Lodge Hill. Here, "as the marchers approached, all that stood between them and the route to the BNP bookshop was A LINE, of police officers in everyday uniform". Clearly no show of force that might act as a deterrent, a final effort to appease the conspirators perhaps? Once the trouble, combusted, 'some sticks were thrown' this police cordon strategically placed to prevent 'a massacre' looked a little vulnerable. As the 'Standard' reported it, breathlessly, "...the situation looked desperate. As

commander Blenkin stood by the church, a support group commander ran up to him: "For God's sake, sir, my lads are being pestered there. You've got to bring more forward..." etc.

The Sunday papers were quick to draw comparison between ARA's peaceful approach and the ANL's violent initiative. The same day Paul Wilkinson ITN's resident expert on terrorism, was invited to comment, on a programme on Radio Four. He too praised ARA, and, all but exonerated the ANL. According to him the event had been hijacked. A group called *Red Action* were mentioned. Castigated in the Sunday tabloids, for causing the violence, by Monday in a more reflective mood, media analysis suggested they the ANL may in fact have been its victim. "Infiltrators", it was decided were to blame. There was talk of 'IRA style balaclavas'. In the same week, *Red Action* were mentioned in connection 'with low level terrorism'. According to one newspaper, 'when Julie Waterston chief steward of the Welling march was told of one notorious group, said by Special Branch to have been involved, she said, "My God, I wish they had told US!" Other papers picked up the theme: 'police are adamant that the march was infiltrated and groups such as *Red Action* and *Panther UK* are said to have turned up'. Once the tail was firmly pinned on the donkey there was a full hue and cry. The London Evening Standard reported...

"Police were today planning a series of swoops on the homes of ring leaders of the militant groups behind the worst violence on the streets of London since the Poll Tax riots."

It went on to reveal that this was 'the biggest intelligence operation carried out by police for a demo, with undercover work carried out by MI5 and Special Branch'.

For the first time special police units used sophisticated video cameras

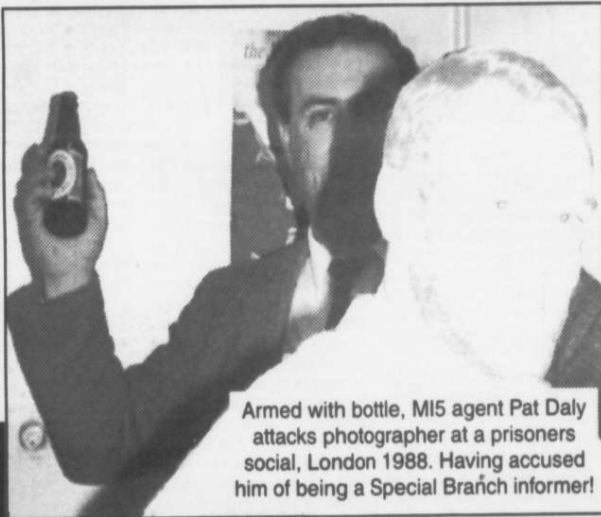


Above: 'when Julie Waterston chief steward of the Welling march was told of one notorious group, said by Special Branch to have been involved, she said, "My God, I wish they had told US!"

capable of isolating the faces of individual rioters. These are now being cross matched with footage taken before the violence flared. The two man video team focused on individuals, with one officer recording a sound track detailing clothing worn...the most significant arrests are to come in the next few days including a hard core of extremists involved in two militant organisations *Panther UK* and *Red Action*'. This admission that 'Individuals' were videoed BEFORE the violence, unwittingly revealed the 'sting' like nature of the operation. It means that the violence was planned, and two that specific individuals were targeted in advance, to take the rap for it. Astonishingly, only two days later the same paper could confirm that the conspiracy, at least the version they wanted to promote did indeed exist. The final piece in the jigsaw. In a full page article it announced:

INDIVIDUAL LEFT-WING EXTREMIST GROUPS ARE PLANNING TO UNITE AND... MORE FEARSOME RIOTS MAY FOLLOW

'...Extremist Left-wing and anarchist groups who sparked Saturday's riot are now preparing to work together for the first time, ... at Welling, groups like *Class War*, *Red Action*, and *Panther* CONTINUED ON BACK PAGE.



Armed with bottle, MI5 agent Pat Daly attacks photographer at a prisoners social, London 1988. Having accused him of being a Special Branch informer!

## WHERE FOR ART THOU ROMEO?

On 16th December 1993 Liam Heffernan and Martin McMonagle were found guilty on charges of conspiracy to cause explosions, conspiracy to steal explosives and possession of a loaded firearm. The trial lasted for three weeks, under maximum security, with witnesses appearing from both MI5 and the Special Branch. Both men were found guilty, Liam received a sentence of twenty three years, Martin twenty five years. The two men were accused of being part of a three man INLA Active Service Unit (ASU) despatched to England to steal explosives for a consequent mainland bombing campaign. The explosives were to be stolen from the Westberry quarry in Somerset, the site of their arrest in early February 93 by over forty armed officers concealed in and around the quarry. The third man escaped. After initial confusion it became known that they had been set up by a fourth man, the teams' intelligence officer and MI5 agent Pat Daly. MI5 had been in control of the operation right from its inception. It became known that the INLA were after explosives and considering raiding an English quarry. MI5 chose Westberry. They provided Daly with maps and photographs of the quarry that were passed onto the INLA. The quarry had not contained explosives for several years; MI5 provided explosives. The team would need industrial cutting gear to open the explosives container; MI5 provided that (and indeed took it back and repaired

it when it turned out to be faulty). On arrival in England the team would need a car and a safe house; again MI5 provided both. The car and the house were cleaned by a scene-of-crime officer prior to their use by the team, ensuring good forensic evidence could be obtained. The home came with hidden extras; bugs in the four main rooms. Pat Daly had been recruited by the Special Branch as a tout in 1974. At that time he was an active member of the Official IRA, involved in fund-raising, specifically armed robberies and collection of the Officials unofficial building tax, the Lump. His partner during this period was Jim Flynn, later executed by the INLA for his part in the killing of INLA Chief of Staff Seamus Costello. Daly was arrested for terrorist related activities and during his brief detention agreed to become an informer. His first registered payment was a bottle of Scotch! His last registered payment in late '93 was a re-settlement package worth £400,000, including a bonus of £40,000 if Liam and Martin received what MI5 described as "good custodial sentences". Daly didn't consider himself a 'paid informant', he preferred to refer to himself as an "agent", who received "personal reimbursements". He was, in his own words "very proud of what I do...to be part of a team that had saved hundreds and hundreds of lives". His handlers records reveal a different picture, that of an alcoholic, money-grab-

bing, aggressive and often irrational tout. He may have thought he was James Bond, but he was definitely more George Lazenby than Sean Connery. Daly first came to prominence in December 1984. After the collapse of the Officials, he had been tasked to infiltrate the IRSP. He had joined the IRSP support group TOM (Troops Out Movement) and the IBRG (Irish in Britain Representation Group), all of whom he informed upon. His touting was responsible for the arrest of Jordan and Grimes on 24th December 1984, captured in the vicinity of a bomb and a mercury tilt-switch. Allegedly, the bomb had been intended for retired SAS Colonel Batey, who had received a certain amount of attention when one of his foot-patrols accidentally wandered into the twenty six counties. Daly had been the intelligence officer for the INLA operation, driving the unit to Batey's house on several occasions, and even driving them into the countryside to test-fire a weapon. All of this was done with the consent, knowledge and guidance of Special Branch. Law, at the time, did not dictate that the Security Services had to disclose their sources or informers, so Daly remained hidden behind his operational code-name, Romeo. Despite this, Daly did not remain beyond suspicion, either from the republican movement

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DAVE

When I joined the Socialist Workers Party in 1983 it seemed the logical thing to do. I was an active member of a blue collar union, and I had come to realise through my own experience that neither the trade unions nor the Labour Party had anything to offer my class in its long term struggle against capitalism. I had become a revolutionary and joined what appeared to be the only party that fitted my bill: it did not look towards Russia for its inspiration and it claimed to put the working class at the centre of its politics.

It was the following year, with the advent of the miners' strike that I had my first disagreement of any significance with the party. The disagreement was significant because it affected activity, rather than being a fine political point. I believed that to supplement the mass picketing that the NUM were involved in, it would have been useful to have some covert activity, based on the burning of coal stocks and the attacking of police transport. I did not suggest such squads that would be needed for such a task should replace mass picketing, although my position was caricatured as such.

I should have realised at the time that the caricature of my position indicated a weakness in theirs - an inability to counter my argument with a properly thought out reply. Looking back it was clear that we would inevitably have differences of approach. What should not have been inevitable was the dishonesty that my arguments were countered.

Over the years the differences would crop up quite frequently. At various times I was labelled 'squaddist', 'workerist' or just tagged as 'argumentative'. The labels were always invented by an academic intellectual and then used by comrades who had read nothing outside of SWP publications and simply deferred to their political 'superiors'.

The label 'workerist' was possibly the most pathetic. I was given this by Leninist epigones simply because I wanted more of the party's energy and resources put into recruiting workers to the organisation instead of the ludicrous situation where priority was put on recruiting students. This seemed ridiculous to me, not because I was anti-student as some of these hypocrites claimed but because a workers party needed to contain considerably more blue collar and unskilled members than the SW did before it could justify that name. My being labelled as a 'workerist' was another example of the dishonesty of their disagreement with my position.

The party, while espousing the centrality of the working class, actually avoided excessive contact with the class because of the 'down turn'. Instead, since it was easier to recruit students they sent us to the colleges to do our recruiting. Paradoxically they claimed it was harder to this than it was to recruit workers!

In the meantime I had to be politically isolated from other members of my branch. This was usually done by the caricaturing of any position I held. Because I had no formal education beyond 'O' levels my arguments did not carry the same weight amongst the learned comrades as those of the college lecturer who was the driving force behind the attempts to isolate me. A further irony to this was the fact that I was one of the most erudite members of the branch, the other comrades getting

their politics exclusively from SW publications. I remained in the SWP for seven years despite the fact that every year some differences between myself and the organisation would crop up. Some of these differences appeared to be minor ones. Put together they amounted to the fact that as a free-thinking socialist of unskilled working class origins, I did not fit into the framework of a party that in effect talked more politics than it enacted.

The party was slow in reacting to the miners' strike, the poll tax campaign and the growth of fascism: it contains a social snobbery that results in a position that says theatre has a cultural value, but working class sports do not; its obsession with paper sales and membership figures mean that it is not, in fact, a revolutionary party but a party that must remain within the law to accommodate its growth and paper sales.

Eventually there had to be a parting of the ways. Having grudgingly accepted the party line regarding the miners' strike and having operated independently of the party during the poll tax campaign, I could not possibly accept their indifference to the growing street activity of the British National Party.

Long before the relaunch of the Anti-Nazi League, members of the SWP were being physically attacked and hospitalised by fascists. The party made no attempt to let other comrades know of the attacks. Consequently, no security measures were taken and more paper sales attacked. When I tried to inform members of the dangers I was told the fascists were not a serious threat, there was no increase in activity and no response was required. When I turned up to confront the fascists with non-party comrades I was ridiculed for macho posturing by people whose skulls I had probably helped save.

The party's dishonesty over the increased activity of organised fascists was matched by the bureaucratic manner in which the ANL was eventually relaunched. There are no branches and therefore no voices to be heard other than those of the SWP top table. The organisation is kept deliberately tight because of the fear of losing members. People join the ANL and the SWP to fight fascism and then discover that the party is not prepared to do so unless it can result in increased membership.

With Red Action a genuine working class organisation, based on activity, to the left of the party, the SWP are aware that if they do not keep a tight grip then members will run with an organisation that is prepared to fight the fascists. Individuals already peel away from the SW to run with Red Action or AFA for specific events and if the SW do not deliver on action this trend may well continue with long term results.

With no real activity outside of college recruitment it is the wider implications of the foregoing that led me to join Red Action rather than drop out of politics altogether as is usually the case with working class people who have done a stint

in the SWP. Because of its reliance on academic intellectuals and its obsession with the Leninist idea of a vanguard party, the SWP is no longer capable of ever

becoming a revolutionary party. Tony Cliff's desire to mould the party as Lenin did the Bolsheviks means that the ideal of a workers party led by workers is off the agenda. Lenin's bastardisation of Marx has been completed by Cliff. Red Action's desire to retrieve Marx from the Leninists and neo-trotskyists is the result of the fact that it is a genuine working class organisation: of the class, by the class, for the class. Its origins and social composition means that it is not capable of the same weak-kneed approach to militant activity that characterises the SWP. Because its entire organisation is class-based Red Action is also safe from the dogmatic approach to politics that is shared by the entire left. This means in real terms that because we are of the class in leadership and membership we feel the moves in the class unlike the dilettante lecturers who know us from books and third-hand conversations.



**If the SWP is the socialist alternative to the Labour Party, then Red Action is the revolutionary alternative to the SWP**

PAUL

I've been at various times a member of the SWP. Firstly from 1986 to 1989 and then at the time of the Gulf War in 1990-91. The final straw came for me during the Gulf War. I resented very much the dishonesty being displayed by the SWP leadership to the many young members joining at that time. I distinctly remember the party's supposed 'hard man' Chris Bambery saying that the Iraqi army would be able to handle the allies easily and that militarily the conflict would be no "cake walk" for the Americans.

On another occasion the then West London district organiser, Maddy Cooper, stood up and announced that the SWP was no longer a sect but was the party of the working class and that period (early 1991) could be "our 1916" ie. a pre-revolutionary situation. When I voiced my concerns over this sort of ultra-optimism I was treated as some sort of heretic. I left the party in mid-1991 but last year got involved in the Anti-Nazi League but quickly got disillusioned as being stuck behind police barriers and waving those stupid 'lollipops' wasn't my idea of effectively fighting fascism.

The only exciting event during my time in the ANL was when I was part of a group of activists who 'accidentally' stumbled upon a coach load of northern BNP boneheads who were stuck in a traffic jam on the Grosvenor Road on the bank of the Thames opposite

the SWP. This occurred just after a counter-demonstration against the BNP's anti-Irish march in April last year. The aforementioned Chris Bambery led a group of around 100 SWP/ANL members away from the site of the counter-demo and through some backstreets (in true 'squaddist' fashion!) to confront the Nazis at Pimlico underground station. When we 'stumbled' upon the coach the majority of the ANL, including Bambery, stayed on the pavement in waving their 'lollipops'. Only about 10 people attacked the coach and a few windows were broken. The skinheads didn't look that perturbed. Given the fact that the riot cops were stuck in the same traffic jam half a mile down the road and that it was a full 10 minutes before they reached us a lot more damage could have been done. I was all for hauling the skins off the coach and throwing them in the Thames!

MICK

Although joining the SWP around eight years after several of the founding members of RA did so, I felt that many of my experiences were similar to those detailed in the pamphlet, "We Are Red Action". Initially, the SWP seemed to have all the answers. You'd look forward to reading the paper every week and using it to engage in arguments with those who held your old 'reformist' views. There was a sense of having a better understanding of all political issues, even compared with other 'revolutionary' parties. Many of the 'comrades' prided themselves on being committed revolutionaries and although early on I was impressed by their ability to chum out a perspective on the Sandinistas, I learnt more about their revolutionary credentials in their reaction to a two minute speech I made on a place not a safe 8,000 miles away, but just across the Irish sea.

I began to question my involvement in the SWP on three related matters. The attitude of deference displayed by the membership to the Central Committee, and something that was given in the opposite direction, the perspective of the downturn and the view that "there is no class in the revolutionary party". The first matter was clearly illustrated when the weekly meetings were held. The person selected to be the speaker would be pointed to the relevant pamphlet or book written by a member of the Central Committee. A 'good member' of the SWP is the one who has acquainted themselves with most of these pamphlets. Any difficult questions put to the speaker by the public would be answered on the spot by these 'good members'. Most sickening was their attempt to climb the party ladder by energetically intervening with the party line anytime the leadership graced

us with their presence. On the second matter I have often heard the view expressed from the SWP that "there is no class in the revolutionary party". Surely they meant, "There's no working class?" The party was full of contradictions that they thought didn't matter. Contradictions would be evident in the name given to the majority of their branch structure - The Socialist Workers Student Society. The SWP has always orientated itself towards students but never more so than in the '80s after the perspective of the 'Downturn' had been accepted as if written in a tablet of stone.

They would never accept that their lack of working class members may well have had much to do with their lack of any influence in the politics of the working class and thus causing their celebrated 'downturn' and the election of the Thatcher government. Surely workers in struggle are beginning to question analyses of politics given to them by middle class people and don't want to be told by academics and students as to how they can "win the struggle". The SWP say they are a revolutionary party and thus aim to lead the workers into socialist revolution. This will definitely involve armed confrontation with the state. An important eye-opener for me was the amount of time they devoted to matters that will really test the quality and resolve of their membership - matters such as fascism and Ireland.

At a students union meeting on Ireland I put forward the not unreasonable suggestion that perhaps two undercover British agents, having driven speedily into a funeral cortege for people who were killed during a loyalist attack on a previous funeral, deserved what they got - summary execution. You expect to get abuse from Tory students present - you don't expect the 'revolutionary vanguard' to visibly squirm in front of you, abstain on the subsequent vote to expel you from the meeting for "intimidation" and then threaten to expel you if you could not "maintain your revolutionary discipline" in future!

Further, on the question of Ireland I began to read a book called "A History of the Irish Working Class" and was struck by the fact that Marx had lectured in support of Fenianism three days after an explosion in London when "Londoners were still thirsty for fenian blood." How many of the SWP would turn up to such a meeting these days? I bought a copy of the "Starry Plough" (paper of the IRSP) which solicited the support of all British 'revolutionary movements' (two groups replied, one of which was Red Action) concerning speaking rights where Sinn Fein speakers were present. This made me aware not only of the esteem in which the SWP held armed Irish revolutionaries but also of the qualities of Red Action, who up until then, I had been reliably informed, were just a bunch of red fascists who drove around in a van with pick-axe handles looking for the National Front.



**"the Iraqi army would be able to handle the allies easily and that militarily the conflict would be no "cake walk" for the Americans."**



**"Sieg Heil ... and now he's a British councillor"** railed the Daily Mirror. **"Votes, fists and boots for the BNP"** bemoaned the Evening Standard. On Thursday 16 September 1993 1480 voters in the Isle of Dogs cast their vote for Derek Beackon and gave the "British people" their first fascist councillor since the '70s.

Beackon declared that "The British people are no longer prepared to be treated as second class citizens in their own country."

Prominent MPs immediately moved to condemn the BNP as a "thoroughly nasty party" and "not a party that honest or responsible people could support". The parties of the political mainstream rushed to shed any semblance of responsibility for the BNP's success. The alienation of a substantial number of white working class people from their governmental status quo was someone else's fault. It couldn't be theirs.

In the run up to the election, the Liberal Democrats issued a leaflet asking voters what benefit could be reaped from a £175,000 grant to a Bangladeshi youth group. Another complained of Labour's attempts to send a £30,000 donation to help victims of the Bangladesh flood disaster. Labour played the race card too. Further, it issued bogus canvassing returns to suggest a BNP victory as a means of undermining the Liberal vote. Instead, as one local councillor put it, "they gave the impression that a BNP vote would not be a wasted vote, and they boosted the BNP's standing. It was a cynical tactic that went horribly wrong."

When anyone got round to asking them, most Islanders argued that they'd only voted BNP as a protest against local housing policies. That working class people in Tower Hamlets should want to protest about the shitholes they're expected to live in seems to have stunned the left/liberal "intelligentsia", yet Tower Hamlets council itself admits that 44% of its housing stock is "unsatisfactory". A quarter of all households lack at least one basic amenity - inside toilet, hot water etc. To compound this, unemployment in the borough stands at one in four. TB - a disease which thrives on poverty - has an incidence of six times the average of England and Wales. A third of Eastenders have a household income of less than £4,500. From a rotting tower block in the Isle of Dogs you can look out and see Canary Wharf, where docklands development soaks up money like a sponge.

Tower Hamlets became a Liberal council because of local disgust at the corruption and injustice of decades of Labour administration. The Isle of Dogs remained a Labour stronghold partly because of the rottenness and incompetence of the Liberals. Eventually, a third force entered the arena to harness the discontent with the parties of the political establishment. Sadly, this force was the BNP. For all their protestations, this is

probably a relief for the Liberal Democrats and Labour. Instead of having to come up with answers for the appalling poverty of the borough, they can denounce Islanders as "racist" or "backward" - not "honest or responsible" - and so ignore their legitimate grievances. For Islanders who thought that by voting BNP they'd rattle the cages of the Establishment, they'll learn the hard way that Beackon et al don't really give a flying fuck for their housing problems.

For the remnants of the revolutionary left and the (ever fragmented) anti-fascist movement, it looks like a disaster. To reverse a defeat it is first necessary to understand the causes of defeat. For that to happen, the left is going to have to sacrifice a whole herd of fat, lazy, sacred cows.

Most of the left see the BNP as an army of racist thugs, skinheads with misspelt Skrewdriver tattoos. Refusing to take the ideas of the far-right seriously allows the left to escape the responsibility of having to challenge those ideas either ideologically or head on.

That the BNP have actively courted the traditional constituency of the revolutionary left - white working class youth; those most demoralised and stripped of opportunity by the Thatcher/Major years - has caused the left little or no concern. That the courtship would one day be consummated should therefore have come as no surprise.

The BNP has succeeded in presenting themselves as a radical alternative to the ills of capitalist society. The failure of a left constituted almost entirely from outside the working class has left the radicalism of the right unchallenged by an equivalent political force on the far left.

The BNP's statement of political objectives, "A New Way Forward" says, "We fight, not just against chaos, but against powerful vested interests, whose profiteers fear and hate us for the challenge we pose to their position in the rotting corpse of the old order." To those of us "on the left" and therefore "in the know" it's obvious that the BNP represent, far from a challenge to the "old order", its final line of defence. So why should, in the Isle of Dogs, 1480 working class people think the BNP have something to offer them? "A New Way Forward" talks of the "failure of the whole political system, rooted in institutions which have long outlived their usefulness to the nation." To working class people faced with the reality of mass unemployment, poor housing etc this "failure" is tangible in a way not

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or the press. The Observer newspaper printed an article claiming that Jordan had been set up by a Special Branch informer working within the Jordan/Grimes/Daly team. Jordan and Grimes both went to prison. Daly DIDN'T. He faced an INLA court martial, but with the help of his advisers and the 'CV' of the Official IRA activities that they provided, he managed to bluff it out. By 1989 Daly had been transferred from Special Branch to MIS. In October 1989 he was sent to Ireland, tasked with gaining intelligence on the IRSP/INLA (whilst describing this part of Daly's cover, the prosecution barrister in the Mc Monagle/Heffernan case blundered, stating that "in late '89 Daly was moved back, I'm sorry, moved back to Galway.") Daly and MIS could not admit that Daly had been sent to Ireland, because it would contravene international law. Over the following months Daly became increasingly frustrated at his inability to make any contact with the Republican Socialist Movement, his handlers described him at this stage as "champing at the bit", "desperate to do the business". Eventually contact was made, and using his branch provided intelligence, persuaded the INLA to take on the operation. So, in February 1992, three INLA men were despatched to England. They were photographed as they passed through the docks. When they reached the safehouse their every word was recorded. The only person who visited was an MIS agent, who took them on a couple of initial reconnoitres of the quarry. When they were arrested, in what the police described as "a premature end to the operation" (ie: Martin stumbled upon a camouflaged copper, necessitating their arrests), Daly began a process of disinformation, creating

# THE WRITING ON THE WALL



grasped by the left, which exists removed from that reality. Every mainstream party defends a political system which has been seen to fail; the BNP are the first party many - young working class kids particularly - have seen who ajinct that system and b) look capable of mounting a challenge to it.

Part of the reason why the BNP have a base within our class is simply because they've actively sought that base. In an article in British Nationalist analysing their performance in the 1992 general election, BNP leader John Tyndall wrote, "It has always been my belief that the step necessary for a socialist to become a nationalist is no greater than, if indeed as great as, that necessary for a conservative to reach the same position ... the gulf separating us from the mass of traditional Labour followers is no bigger in reality than that separating us from traditional Tories."

Tyndall goes on to talk of Labour's "soggy centre dominated by bourgeois internationalists with whom its traditional 'working class' constituency will feel little in common. Working class people tired of the clapped out slogans of the class war" will be "looking for an alternative political home". What Tyndall has recognised and what the Labour-loyal left has failed to grasp is that their "socialism" on offer to the working class has always had a "nationalist" colouration. From a Labour party which offered import controls and wage freezes, the Prevention of Terrorism Act and the Commonwealth Immigration Act, to a party like the BNP, which calls for the protection of British industry, an end to immigration and for a "government of national

unity" isn't such a great leap. As Oswald Mosley put it in 1938, "If you love your country you are a national, and if you love our people you are a socialist."

In any case, on one level the BNP are no more or less reactionary than many of the supposedly "democratic", "respectable" alternatives.

"The Establishment parties like to dismiss us as extremists - yet BNP policies are already being put into practice in one form or another by democratic governments all over the Western world. Repatriation of immigrants is taking place at this very moment in countries such as Germany, France and Greece. Strict import controls are already in force in countries such as Japan and Korea." (British Nationalist August 1993)

The standard left definition of fascism is, in a distortion of the classical Marxist position, characterised as "brutal bourgeois terror". Fascism is a movement of the "petty bourgeoisie". In the words of one left group, Workers Power, the raw materials for fascism are "the masses of the petty bourgeoisie caught, as in a vice, between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie." As a sociological snapshot of fascism's base in Nazi Germany at the time of its ascension to power, this is reasonably accurate, but it fails to account for fascism's characteristic as a mass movement and one which is capable of attracting the allegiance of sections of the working class.

In 1930 Leon Trotsky wrote of fascism, "If the Communist Party is the party of revolutionary hope, then fascism, as a mass movement, is the party of counter-revolutionary despair ... counter-revolutionary despair embraced the petty bourgeois mass with such force that it drew behind it many

sections of the proletariat." To recognise the cause of this "counter-revolutionary despair" within sections of our class today would, for the fake revolutionary left, mean to admit its own redundancy. Politics, in the last analysis, is about force. For working class people sick to their guts of the miseries of capitalism and seeking a positive alternative, the left doesn't exist except as some bizarre creature that crawls off the University campus to try the occasional estate sale. Tyndall and the BNP recognise a reality the left has chosen to deny. "The electors ... favour the big battalions because the big battalions alone are seen to count. We must concentrate single mindedly on building up our forces to the stage at which we can be numbered among the big battalions." (Where We Go From Here)

And again: "The psychological importance of the strength factor cannot be stated with enough emphasis. Mr and Mrs Average Joe Public, before they will support something, want to feel assured that it is a real force." (British Nationalist Feb/March 1992)

Whether the "revolutionary left" recognises the "strength factor" or not, they're incapable of meeting its test. And therein is the crux of the problem. The "revolutionary socialist alternative" to the BNP will have to be built by working class socialists from scratch, in combat with the BNP. On one level, the vote for the BNP in the Isle of Dogs is a refracted, distorted signal of class consciousness. A recognition that the "system" doesn't work. But in the absence of a force from the left, "race and nation" replace class, "revolutionary hope" is replaced by "counter-revolutionary despair".

(As a historical example writ large, Mussolini, the Duce of fascism, began his political life as a revolutionary Marxist, declaring, "We cannot conceive of a patriotic socialism. Socialism is truly a panhuman and universal nature." At the advent of World War I he cried, "In case of war, instead of hurrying to the frontier we will unleash rebellion at home." Faced with the vacillations of the Italian Socialist Party running counter to his desire to "make history, not endure it", Mussolini emerged from the war as a declared enemy of the working class, of the bourgeois state, "and the socialist one". In his writings, which chart the confused course of his movement from Marxism to fascism, Mussolini gives us an accurate

portrayal of the development of fascist consciousness within the working class: "Fascism breaks forth irrepressibly in every corner of Italy, while the proletariat, nauseated, disillusioned, massacred, begins to disband." Within our class, fascism represent precisely the "disbanding" of the class as a class for itself.)

For too long the fake left has peddled a sham socialism. The left has, rightly, been quick to blame the Labour Party for its discrediting of the "ideal" of socialism, but it has failed to mention its own hanging on to the coat tails of Labour for years. When white working class people say they feel like second class citizens, one reason is because, instead of championing the rights of all working people - white, black and Asian - to decent homes, health, jobs etc, in defiance of Labour's shadowing of Tory policy - the left has championed a bankrupt municipal socialism which, in the guise of Equal Opportunities, has presided over the equal distribution of disadvantage and despair within our class.

The "Leninist" left, meanwhile, shares its contempt for our class with the fascists. The Spanish fascist Primo De Rivera speaks of "revolution" as "a task of the minority whose first steps will not be understood by the majority" in a manner directly comparable with Lenin's conception of "organisation of the revolutionaries must consist first and foremost of people who make revolutionary activity their profession." (What is To Be Done)

If the potential for fascism is to be stifled then it has to be replaced by a revolutionary socialist alternative that springs from within our class, that promotes, in Engel's words, "the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority in the interests of the immense majority."

The strength of the working class base of fascism is a mirror image of the weakness of the left on the same terrain.

In the 1930s, the growth of fascism within the East End was choked by the refusal of rank and file communists and socialists to allow them control of the streets. It was combatted also by socialists being seen to offer a positive alternative to the politics of the fascists:

"... We organised the tenants movement of East London so that in street after street Jews and Gentiles worked together. We insisted ... that it had got to be done in the fascist areas." (Phil Piratin - ex-communicant councillor - interviewed 1991)

The victory of Derek Beackon on 16 September 1993 should have made clear to all concerned the real degree of impotence of the "revolutionary left" in the face of the anger and despair of the class it purports to represent. Unless the reasons for that impotence are recognised and the lessons learned, Beackon will only be the first of many.

a smokescreen that allowed his family to be moved to comparative safety. There has to be a certain amount of speculation about why exactly the police described the arrests as "premature". Were the arrests the desired result or were they after something more final and more spectacular? If the men were to be arrested at the quarry, why bother to fill the sealed explosives container with explosives and detonators? It makes no sense unless the outcome was to be the summary execution of Liam and Martin. As well as the thirty three armed Avon and Somerset officers, there were also seven armed Metropolitan police officers at the quarry, with a separate commanding officer. Their role has never been clearly defined, but their positions at the quarry in conjunction with the other evidence suggests that they may have been the frustrated executioners. It must be remembered that at this period MIS were in conflict with the Special Branch over the issue of who should control anti-terrorism. If Liam and Martin had been regrettably shot dead at the scene MIS, as overall controllers of the operation, could have grabbed international headlines ("Dangerous INLA fanatics, armed with handguns and explosives"), and made a definitive gesture, a real show of strength to Whitehall, the media and the British public. The eventual trial did gain a lot of publicity, but that was nine months after the event, and to a lot of people was just so much paper. Three dead terrorists would have been immediate and tangible proof of MIS's commitment, ability and effectiveness in the war against terrorism. Another benefit of the execution for MIS is that it would not have precipitated the unwelcome and expensive exposure of Daly as an agent provocateur. During the Heffernan/McMonagle trial Daly, MIS and the crown all denied that Daly was an agent provocateur (the dictionary defini-

tion being a secret agent who provokes people to commit illegal acts and so to be discredited or liable to punishment), despite the overwhelming evidence that he was. Daly and MIS had stimulated activity in what was an essentially moribund organisation, bankrupt politically and financially. Without Daly, the operation would not have taken place. None of this, however, represented any kind of defence of the accused. Under English law entrapment and the use of agents provocateur is quite legitimate. MIS had acted illegally by placing an agent in the Republic of Ireland, but the judge ruled that to be irrelevant and inadmissible to the jury. The outcome was that two more (young) men have been "lived-off". They can expect to receive little or no political or financial support from their organisations. The IRSP no longer exists, it has neither opened its offices nor produced a paper in over four years. Republican Socialist Prisoners Aid (the IRSP equivalent of Green Cross) is also dead; Red Action and a handful of Republican Socialist individuals contribute funds directly to certain Republican Socialist Movement prisoners and their families. The continued existence of the INLA may be in doubt. It is broke, short of ordinance and has been ripped apart by touts. Very serious implications can be drawn from the disturbing revelation that when Daly was offered a place on the Army Council (the INLA's governing body), MIS felt that they could afford to turn it down. The 1987 internal feud was fought over Ta Power's insistence on "the primacy of politics"; the principle that the military struggle must be subordinate to the political struggle/ing. In Ireland, and indeed in any revolutionary situation, people with ideology but without guns will be regarded as liberals. Equally, people with guns but without ideology will be regarded as bandits

# Beyond the Pale

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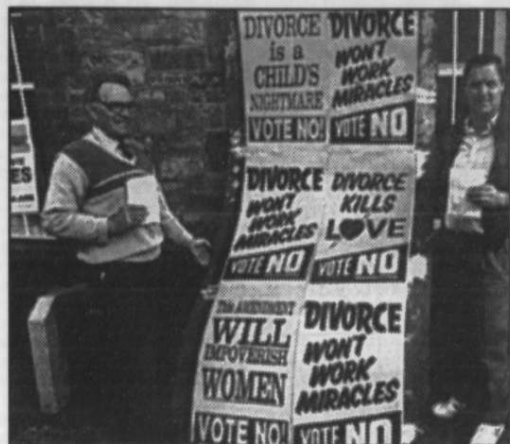
## SODOMY & THE LASH!

### In the Heat of Battle

The campaign to stop the nazi David Irving speaking in Ireland produced an unprecedented unity on the Irish Left. Apart from the SWM and their front organisation the ANL most of the Irish Left were involved in the "Stop Irving Campaign". Unfortunately this paper unity was never put to the practical test. It's one thing to agree to the implementation of the "No Platform For Fascists" stance of the campaign and another thing to actually physically ensure that there is no free speech for fascists. Most likely it would, as usual, have been left to a small element within the campaign to "look after that area".

The invitations to Irving to speak in colleges in Dublin and Cork were withdrawn when college authorities insisted on a huge financial outlay for security due, to quote a Garda spokesman, to "threats of violence from elements within the opposition groups". The SWM/ANL disassociated themselves from the threats of violence, claiming that peaceful protest would suffice in stopping Irving speaking. Experience has shown that empty slogans and endless press conferences will not stop the fascists.

We may yet get a chance to see how this unity holds up "in the heat of battle" as a new umbrella campaign, was formed out of the Stop Irving Campaign to organise any actions against visiting fascists or attempts at fascist organisation in Ireland. This new campaign is called Irish Anti Fascist Alliance (Irish AFA).



With the success of the anti-divorce campaign in 1986, church influence in political affairs may have peaked. But today middle-class self-flagellation about alienating protestants has a similar political purpose.

One of the favourite arguments of the Southern liberal establishment in relation to the Six Counties revolves around the claim that northern Protestants will not be 'coerced' into a United Ireland but that it might be possible to coax them towards a better relationship with the South through the implementation of more enlightened social legislation in the 26 Counties. This disingenuous theory has been doing the rounds for many years now and is often backed up with other spurious debates about Articles 2 and 3 of the Southern Constitution. It is a favourite hobby horse of the 'Just Society' school of thought among bourgeois liberals and their allies in the centre and on the soft left.

No socialist could argue that the attitude of the 26 County state in relation to women's rights, civil liberties, sexual freedom, divorce, etc. has been in any way progressive. This has everything to do with the stranglehold of the Catholic Church over the development and implementation of state policy in the area of what is laughingly called 'morality and ethics'. While Bishops go into hysterics about contraception they are very rarely heard to utter a word about corruption in business or criticism of the Golden Circle cartel that effectively controls the Irish economy in both the public and private sector.

Church bashing has become a popular sport among 'liberals' in the South and is now akin to shooting fish in a barrel. The recent exposure of the scandal of the Magdalens women has done a lot of damage to the 'caring' image of the Catholic church and has revealed an ugly residue of 20th Century Irish morality. The Magdalens were the outcast women of Irish society who were locked up in convents for life for the crime of getting pregnant outside of marriage. This barbaric system was the accepted method of dealing with unmarried mothers and illegitimacy until the early 1970s. Recently 130 bodies of Magdalens women were exhumed from their graves in a Dublin convent, cremated and buried in a mass grave without their relatives being informed. The graveyard had been sold by a profit hungry church to recoup some of the losses it incurred after the collapse of Guinness Peat Aviation, the convent in question had invested in stocks and shares before the company collapsed.

Allied with the Bishop Casey scandal, the Abortion debate and the reactionary attitude of the Catholic Church on social ques-



the Civil State should be used to enforce religious conformity, a doctrine identical to that of the Catholic Church in the South.

The DUP and the more 'moderate' Official Unionist Party ran the viciously homophobic 'Save Ulster from Sodomy' campaign in the 80's. This was a failed attempt to prevent the introduction in Ulster of British Laws legalising homosexual acts between consenting adults. Many conservative Catholics informally supported the campaign and signed Free Presbyterian petitions on the issue. Last April the youth wing of the Official Unionist Party,

allied with the Conservative Party and fundamentalist Christian groups instigated a violently homophobic campaign against gay students in Belfast's Queens University. A motion attacking Gay rights was passed by the union council which denied lesbian, gay and bisexual students representation in the college. Contrast this with a statement from the Pope last year when he



Defiant UVF killer Robert Knight, determined to save Ulster from sodomy

said "Discrimination on the basis of homosexual tendencies is not unjust".

The anti-abortion campaign in the North has the support of most major political parties. The DUP has been instrumental in preventing the extension of the 1967 Abortion Act, which applies in the rest of Britain, to Northern Ireland. Not surprisingly the total exclusion of abortion from Ireland is also a central policy of the Catholic church. When the first Brook Clinic, providing sex education and contraception advice to young people, was set up in Belfast two years ago the broad front of groups who opposed it included the Catholic Church, the DUP, the SDLP and SPUC.

A similar level of hypocrisy emerges in relation to the DUP's strong opposition to divorce. Despite the fact that the Unionists claim their undying loyalty to the British state they refuse to accept one of its most basic civil liberties.

In the 1970's a prominent member of the DUP and religious acolyte of Paisley was William McGrath. McGrath was a founder of the Loyalist Tara paramilitary group. He believed that the Protestants of Northern Ireland were the 'lost tribe of Israel' and that the Catholic Church should be declared an illegal organisation. He was also a notorious child abuser at the

Kincora Boys Home and was eventually jailed for child rape and buggery. Paisley was aware of McGrath's activities and the horrific events at Kincora but operated a decade long cover up before the scandal was eventually revealed by journalists. So much for the moral code of the DUP.

The conflict in the six counties is not of religious origin and neither is it's present manifestation. The Free Presbyterian Church is a mirror image of the Catholic Church. They share a belief in the sanctity of the family and censorship of liberal social and sexual ideas. Their common fundamentalism extends to the repression of other religious ideas in the interests of their own sectarian brands of Christianity and the implementation of these sectarian beliefs in the Civil Law of the State. Their greatest fear is the dilution of their social and political power through the spread of secularist or socialist ideas.

The media in the 26 counties, dominated as it is by the neo-unionist political ideology of the liberal middle class, uses the existence of the war in the north to peddle the myth that it is Republicanism that has created the current situation. The unstated assumption being that the war can only be ended by the elimination of the resistance of the nationalist people and a return to some form of Stormont rule, albeit with a devolved or power sharing tinge. This tiny minority, whom see themselves as 'opinion formers', argue at all opportunities that 'concessions' must be made to the Unionists. These concessions usually take the form of amendments to the Irish constitution with the aim of making it's provisions more attractive to the Unionists. The falsity of this theory has already been proven. In November 1971 Paisley said that if the special position accorded to the Catholic Church was removed from the Irish Constitution this would lead better relations with the South and to "good neighbourliness in the highest possible sense". In 1972 a referendum in the 26 counties removed the superior status accorded to the Catholic Church, by which time Paisley, having come under fire from even more extreme loyalists, dropped his 'conciliatory' approach to the South. Nevertheless the argument for constitutional changes to appease unionists is consistently trotted out by the Southern establishment, most notably by Fine Gael during the 1986 Divorce Referendum. Rather than argue for divorce on the basis of civil liberties and the need for progressive social legislation in the South the government instead presented it as a liberal issue likely to make Northern Unionists more amenable to better relations with the 26 Counties.

Even secular protestants who accept divorce, contraception, gay rights, etc. are opposed to unity with the south because of their political allegiance to Unionism, not due to the lack of progressive social legislation in the South.

The leaders of Unionism in the North have built their political ideology on their own self-preservation as a class and have convinced the majority of working class protestants that they are under threat from the South. The desire of the loyalists to retain

the Union with Britain is not due to religion but to the economic advantages to themselves of this link. Working class protestants were, and are, induced to be loyal to the Union through the granting of minor, but important, economic advantages over Catholic workers. The level of unemployment in Northern Ireland is directly related to this fact, in 1985 Catholic unemployment, at 35%, was two and a half times higher than in the protestant community. In the same year only 46% of Catholic males aged 19-24 were working, compared to 64% of protestants.

The media constantly portrays Republicans and nationalists as the source of political intransigence in the North, the origin and history of the Unionist state prior to 1969 is conveniently ignored. Anyone expressing the fact that the Northern Ireland statelet was founded on the bigotry and intolerance of loyalism and that Unionist politicians wish to return to this situation is deemed to be a 'nationalist' and therefore beyond the pale of respectable opinion. Recently the media engaged in much criticism of Gerry Adams for carrying the coffin of an IRA Volunteer but no comment was made on the presence of the Chair of the Official Unionist Party and Southern media darling Christopher Mc Gimpsey at a UVF funeral.

Middle class soul searching and self flagellation about alienating protestants does have a political purpose. This group would prefer to accept a unity of slightly less bigoted Catholic and Protestants in

the hope that such a development would result in greater political power for their social group at the expense of the advancement of socialism and the working class. The fact that the liberal middle class in the South can substitute a sympathy for the political representatives of extreme right protestant fundamentalism in place of the hated Catholic version once again exposes them as the reactionary force that they are.

The antics of the soft left in relation to the northern conflict is directly in line with that of the 'liberal' media. While putting forward what they claim are 'progressive' or even 'socialist' arguments on the North these self-proclaimed revolutionary groups are merely promoting the same agenda as the liberals and the establishment. While theoretically claiming to support the oppressed Nationalist population in the Six Counties the soft left refuses to identify Loyalism as the source of the conflict and engages in debates and campaigns which condemn 'sectarianism on both sides'.

Proof of this can be seen in the participation of 'socialist' groups in establishment promoted and pointless charades such as "a minute's silence for peace" and petitions to the trade union movement to end sectarian killings. The fact that the soft left in the South unquestioningly follow the middle class orthodoxy in relation to Northern politics merely exposes their bourgeois origins and pretensions.

### PROVO FRONT?



Connolly, Larkin & Wolfe Tone

The 80th Commemoration of the 1913 Lockout, initiated by Red Action, was all but ignored by those who you would think would have the most to celebrate. The majority of Trade Unions, with some notable exceptions, made absolutely no input to the Commemoration. Special mention must go to SIPTU, the biggest Irish Union, who, although formed out of an amalgamation of the two unions founded by Big Jim Larkin, informed us that they couldn't be of assistance due to the fact that they were on holiday for the whole month of August!

Another example of the sad state of the Unions in Ireland was that in spite of libellous comments directed at the Government, the employers, etc., made at the public meetings organised by the Commemoration Committee and in the pamphlet produced to commemorate the Lockout, the only threat of legal action came from the chairperson of the Irish Congress Of Trade Unions Youth Committee Rhonda Donaghy. Ms Donaghy threatened legal action over the inclusion of her name as one of the sponsors of the Commemoration campaign even though she had previously given her permission to this. Rhonda's problem seemed to be that she considered the Commemoration committee a "Provo front" despite the Stickies and other anti Republican elements being involved. Rhonda, of course, has been nowhere to be seen during the eight month long strike for Union recognition at Pat the Baker.

# THE ITALIAN CONNEXION

The common perception of contemporary fascism is that it is directed against 'immigrants', in particular, black immigrants. Anti-fascist work by white activists is accordingly interpreted as a form of solidarity - whites stand alongside blacks as a matter of 'moral principle', rather than as a response to a common threat. With the BNP launching almost weekly attacks on targets from the ANL/SWP, this view, along with the ANL/SWP itself, is beginning to take a hammering. Those the fascists perceive as "reds" are clearly being targeted in order to supplement the traditional diet of fascist bigotry - blacks and gays. But this is not the whole story. Red Action has consistently maintained that, once it attains a certain level of momentum, organised fascism targets the entire working class.

It is in Italy that this fundamental anti-working class process can be most closely observed. Italian anti-semitism was a late and strictly limited development within the fascist state. In 1930-31, new legislation was passed that actually strengthened the legal status of the Jewish community. Only in the summer of 1938, some 16 years after Mussolini's takeover of the state, did anti-semitic legislation in the style of Nazi Germany make it on to the statute books.

While Mussolini's fascist state certainly depended on imperialist and racist values in its attempt to build a Mediterranean and East African empire, racism in the sense of violence directed against an indigenous minority population therefore, played no significant part in the initial mobilisation of the fascist terror gangs. The essential class dynamics of fascism in Italy are not masked, as in Germany, by the built in ideological scapegoating of a racial minority. The Italian Communist leader during these years, Antonio Gramsci, isolated the social base and tactics of fascism:

*"It is the petty bourgeoisie, especially in the country areas, which provides the force for fascism. It is the petty bourgeoisie which has armed itself and organised itself militarily, before the proletariat and against the proletariat."*

Typically, the fascist movement found most of its supporters amongst the small manufacturing interests, white collar workers, in highly skilled workmen and supervisory staff and in the 'floating population' of those who found only occasional work.

True to its ideological character as a petty bourgeois 'cross-class' collaborationist movement, the Italian fascists paraded elements of a 'workerist' ideology. The fascist programme referred to 'the creation of national technical councils of labour, industry, transportation etc., elected by the entire profession or trade.'

The name given to this conception of all elements in production - workers, technicians and bosses organised jointly in legislative councils directing each branch of industry - was 'corporatism'. All these interests, in theory, were identified with the same 'corporation' and were supposed to work in harmony within it.

In character with its emphasis on the essential identity of all class interests, fascism could even claim, as in the Italian fascist 'Handbook' that: *"Fascism is not opposed to socialism in itself, but to its theoretical and practical degeneration...the fascist corporations have no prejudices regarding a system of production. As between capitalism and communism, they prefer whatever system guarantees the most abundant production..."* Mussolini could assure the Italian worker that: *"Nobody can dream of driving the*

*working masses back to less favourable working and living conditions..."*

On the eve of the 'March on Rome', the fascists proclaimed that: *"Labour has nothing to fear from the fascist power...its just rights will be loyally guaranteed."*

Fascism systematically adopted bastardised forms of the organisational methods and culture developed over decades by the workers' movement itself. Fascist variants of the flags, emblems, marches, insignia and salutes associated with the 'red' workers made their appearance; the traditional areas of revolutionary assembly, bars, the street, public spaces, were taken over, and secure 'zones of influence' were established by the fascists, in a way that suggested that they too, had an authentic 'proletarian' identity. Fascism's 'proletarian mask' was an important element in its infiltration of Italian society, especially in the militant working class cities of the industrial north where fascism was forced, in the short term, to adopt a 'collaborationist' rather than terroristic strategy.

The reality behind the proletarian mask was rather different. In the turbulent conditions of the class struggle following the end of the war in 1918, the 'Factory councils' - elected workers' committees - involving some half million industrial workers in the north of Italy, led a series of strikes and workplace occupations. These in turn developed into effective worker management of particular industries, including the giant Fiat concern. The movement culminated in a (defeated) general strike in April 1920, and a widespread series of factory occupations in September. The weak liberal government lacked the power to intervene immediately and decisively. A second 'soviet' revolution along the lines of Russia in 1917 seemed possible. Fatally, the Italian workers' parties (principally the Italian Socialist Party, the PSI) failed to develop an aggressive strategy which would have moved the crisis out of the workplaces and against the state. Eventually the socialists and trade union leaders accepted a return to the capitalist status quo in return for promises from the liberal administration of legislation that would regularise a system of 'workers control'. The legislation, even in a diluted form, was never passed.

This series of strikes and occupations became known as the 'biennio rosso' (the 'red years' 1919-21). Outraged by the irresolution of the state, and panicked by the manifestations of worker militancy, anti-labour militias blossomed in reaction. In addition to Mussolini's own 'Combat Fasci' (combat groups), there were a whole basket-full of rival fascist or proto-fascist gangs trading under various names: the 'Association of Italian Nationalists' (ANI) with its paramilitary wing, the 'Sempre Pronti', the 'Anti-Bolshevik League', the 'Fasci for Social Education', 'Italy Redeemed' etc. Gramsci summarised:

*"The Fasci de combattimento emerged, in the aftermath of the [first] world war, with the petty bourgeois character of the various war-veteran's associations which appeared in that period. Because of their character of determined opposition to the socialist movement...the fasci won the support of the capitalists and the authorities." These were reinforced by the members of the 'Arditi', the war volunteer 'commandos' who formed an aggressive and highly reactionary association of some 20,000 on the lines of the German Frei Corps. Despite the coalition of*

fascist forces under Mussolini collecting no more than a minute vote in the Milan elections of November 1919 (0.5%), they began to act as the storm troops of the various anti-labour associations and the interests behind them, and eventually developed solid bases in almost all the main Italian cities.

Mussolini encouraged every group or 'fascio' to set up its own 'action squad'. At first, their interventions were isolated and on a relatively small scale. Their first action was to burn down the offices of the socialist paper, 'Avanti!' (for which Mussolini had once worked). Workers' marches and demonstrations were attacked in a number of Italian towns and cities by well organised groups of twenty or thirty 'Arditi', armed with clubs, knives and hand grenades. The 'Arditi' made up in aggression and military style organisation what they lacked in numbers. In Milan for example, in April 1919, a large workers march formed after a socialist meeting, was attacked as it entered the centre of the city by a small group of armed fascists. The march was not organised for self defence, hesitated, and finally was forced to retreat. When the Italian parliament opened in December 1919 socialist deputies were battered by fascist squads as they left the building. At this time, Mussolini's organisation numbered no more than 31 'fasci' or branches, and a total of 870 members. In July 1920, the Rome offices of 'Avanti'

directly state sponsored force with an ostensibly 'independent' organisation:

*"There must be added an idealistic militia organised by the most expert, courageous, strong and aggressive amongst us. This militia must be capable of both military resistance and political action...Local actions, with a view to subduing the insolence of the most subversive centres, will be an excellent school for our militia and will at the same time serve to demoralise and crush the enemy..."*

The value to the state of having such 'deniable' and ideological auxiliaries in its struggle against working class militancy hardly needs stressing. Their value has been proved time and again in various settings - from setting racist agendas in contemporary Germany to the terrorising of the nationalist population in northern Ireland.

The state was not the only powerful ally of the new fascist terror gangs. Despite the defeat of the workers' occupation of the factories in the autumn of 1920, huge funds found their way to Mussolini's fascists from the large industrialists who had seen their capital threatened by expropriation, and landowners disturbed by the new levels of militancy amongst the agrarian poor. 'Revolutionary action squadrons' were formed with the new money funding purchases of arms for the recently enrolled class officers, unemployed middle class

with an attack in Bologna, centre of the 'Red Leagues'. On November 21, 1920, the day after the Socialist party had scored a significant win in the local elections, the black shirted fascist squads stormed the town hall with the socialists inside. One right-winger was killed. It later transpired that he was killed by a fascist gunman and police informer who was also arrested for the subsequent killing of a woman socialist. He was released by the police on both occasions. Fascist 'retaliation' raged throughout Italy. From the beginning of 1921 labour exchanges, co-operative workers' associations, offices of the workers' press were attacked in Trieste, Modena, Florence and other centres. The attacks were organised with military precision; relatively small numbers would infiltrate far larger numbers, launch surprise attacks and quickly clear the scene.

On the occasions where the fascists suffered a reverse, they returned to attack individual worker militants.

Gramsci testified soon after the formation of the PCI in January 1921, to the effectiveness of the fascist tactics:

*"What has been most surprising, in the cities that have fallen prey to the fascists, has been the absence of any spirit of initiative among the mass of workers. In these cities, all revolutionary energy was concentrated in the offices of the Chamber of Labour. Once the Chamber of Labour was hit,*

and confrontational tactics of the fascist gangs.

In all these actions, the fascist squads depended on the benevolent 'neutrality' of the police and army. The police actively recruited on behalf of the squads amongst the criminalised 'lumpen' population of the cities, promising immunity from charges and further arrests. Applications for firearms were invariably granted to pro-fascist elements and rigorously denied to workers and peasants. The police remained on the sidelines as fascist units attacked red demonstrations, marches and buildings. Only when the red forces resisted, did the police move in - to arrest the anti-fascists.

The Italian fascist deputy, Balbo, later recalled how on one of these occasions he informed the local police chief that the fascist squadrons required immediate transportation to neighbouring towns. The police laid on a fleet of lorries, including their own vehicles! Balbo and his men immediately set off on a 24 hour tour of the region, torching all the local centres of labour organisation. Gramsci summarised the situation:

*"The fascists have been able to carry on their activities only because tens of thousands of functionaries of the State, especially in the public security forces and in the judiciary, have become their moral and material accomplices."*

He also explained how their interests were interlinked:

*"These functionaries know that their impunity and their careers are closely linked to the fortunes of the fascist organisation, and they therefore have every interest in supporting fascism in whatever attempt it may make to consolidate its political position."*

In the courts, anti-fascists invariably received the heaviest sentences available, while the few fascists who managed to get themselves arrested were set free with ludicrous fines. As one leading fascist militant, Umberto Bianchelli, recalled in his 'Memoirs of a Fascist': *"Fascism, it must be confessed, developed and almost had a free hand because we found amongst the functionaries of the police Italian hearts who rejoiced to see us come to the rescue. They vie with each other in helping the fasci."*

The army too, was an important factor behind the street dominance of the fascists. The army Chief of Staff, General Badoglio, sent a circular to all the commanders of each military district ordering that demobilised officers should be sent to the most important fascist centres where they would direct the operations of the terror gangs. Gramsci describes the process:

*"In July, the War Ministry...began the demobilisation of some 60,000 officers...the demobilised officers kept four-fifths of their pay, and for the most part were sent to the key political centres, under an obligation to join the Fasci di combattimento."*

Guns and ammunition, together with other military material, found their way to the fascist squads. Again, the collusion was barely covered up. The fascist squads based in Trent broke a strike in open cooperation with units of the local infantry company. In Bolzano, the officers of the 232nd Infantry actually founded their own 'fascio'.

Fascist actions began to adopt a grander scale. The town of Grosseto, run by a socialist council, was terrorised by fascist gangs drawn from the entire region; many workers were killed and wounded, and a whole range of buildings destroyed, including the



were trashed. By this time, when it had become apparent that they were following the same agenda, the 'Arditi' and a number of other anti-labour militias merged with Mussolini's fascists.

State agencies also put their names down on the agenda. A colonel within the Italian War Ministry - a 'military expert in civil war' - was commissioned to survey the political scene and report with a 'detailed plan for an anti-socialist offensive'. He advocated the recruitment of a 25,000 strong anti-labour militia, but advised that it would be vital to supplement this

youth and students who flocked to the fascist cause. The first actions of the terror squads were directed against workers in the countryside as being more isolated and fragmented than their counterparts in the cities. Headed by the sons of the large land owners, who supplied the arms and transport, the 'Action Squadrons' carried out terrorist actions against 'red' villages. It was at this time, in the autumn and winter of 1920, that 'squadristo' gained true political momentum. Having gained experience in these early agrarian skirmishes, the main offensive began

the working class was decapitated and became incapable of any action."

He saw clearly who benefited: *"The ruthless offensive against the class organisms of the proletariat benefited the capitalists, who in the course of a year saw the entire machinery of struggle of the socialist trade unions break up and lose all efficacy..."* In the same year, Gramsci added, *"the great Socialist Party...has completely disintegrated."* The bureaucratic and traditional left, including the newly hatched PCI, were paralysed by the aggressive

# ECTION

Chamber of Labour and a socialist print shop. Viterbo, another socialist stronghold was attacked by fascists from Perugia, Orvieto and Rome. In this case, the workers organised the town's defence, and repulsed the fascists. At Treviso, the pattern of destruction was repeated. Gramsci wrote at the time (the summer of 1921) that:

"The events of Grosseto, Viterbo and Treviso are the initial phase of a new and definitive development of fascism. Punitive expeditions by small bands are giving way to actions by veritable army units..."

The structure of the fascist forces were now co-ordinately rationalised. Mussolini constituted his movement into the 'National Fascist Party' in 1921. By November of the same year, organised by another senior army officer, General Gandolfi, the fascist squads were effectively amalgamated into overtly para-military groups. The leading fighting units, the 'principi' were formed into sections, cohorts and legions with their own uniform. Auxiliary tasks were given to a second, reserve force, the 'Traini'. It was now possible to undertake systematic occupations of red areas. Malaparte recorded that:

"Thousands of armed men, sometimes fifteen or twenty thousand, poured into a city or the villages, brought in rapidly in trucks from one province to another."

Labour exchanges, cooperative headquarters and workers' papers were once again the objects of attack. By August 1922, these squads had succeeded in taking over the socialist controlled city halls in Milan and Leghorn. The offices of Avanti in Milan, and Lavoro in Genoa were burnt to the ground. In Genoa, the port, former stronghold of the dock workers' cooperatives was occupied. In a little over two years, the main workers' organisations and power centres had been softened up to a degree that made the official hand over of state power to Mussolini's fascists a possibility. In October 1922, the theatrical 'March on Rome' saw Mussolini appointed as head of state.

During this period, which saw the enormous potential of the workers' councils movement and the peasant takeovers of land battered into submission by the semi-state auxiliaries of the fascist gangs, the socialist parties and union leaders refused to answer the fascist threat in kind. The union paper, the 'Battaglia Sindacale' assured its readers:

"Fascism cannot in any case be conquered in an armed struggle but only in a legal struggle."

In October 1921, Gramsci analysed the part the trade unions and the anarcho-syndicalists had played in the opposition to what he termed the fascist led "capitalist offensive":

"Trade union organisation, whether it had a reformist, anarchist or syndicalist label, had brought about the emergence of a whole hierarchy of greater and lesser leaders whose best known characteristics were vanity, a mania for wielding uncontrolled power and unrestrained demagoguery. The most ridiculous and absurd role in this whole comedy was played by the anarchists. The more they shrieked at authoritarianism, the more authoritarian they were. The more they howled about wanting freedom, autonomy and spontaneous initiative, the more they sacrificed the real will of the broad masses and the sponta-

neous flowering of their libertarian tendencies."

The socialist deputy Matteotti, later to be murdered by the fascists, made the following statement in March 1921:

"We must not let ourselves be provoked, for even cowardice is a duty, an act of heroism."

Being themselves integrated into

Antonio Gramsci, framed by Mussolini's fascist courts after his activities in the workers' movement in Turin, he was kept mostly in solitary confinement and died in prison.



the state apparatus, the socialists had a number of opportunities to arm their own supporters. They consistently refused the offers, pleading, in the words of one historian, that "it was the duty of the state to protect the citizen against the armed attacks of other citizens" - even when the state openly condoned, provisioned and facilitated these attacks.

In the Italian parliament, the openly reformist socialist leader Turati pleaded with Mussolini: "let us really disarm!". They enthusiastically supported the offer of the liberal prime minister, Bonomi, to organise the "reconciliation" of fascists and socialists. Gramsci, in an article entitled "The Two Fascisms" wrote how the urban, petty bourgeois wing of the fascist forces would always "necessarily orientate itself towards collaboration with the socialists". The same tendencies can be seen in contemporary fascism. There is a 'socialist' wing within fascism that seeks to reconcile centre/right 'labourism' with fascist forms of organisation. Correspondingly, 'socialists' of the centre and right will always negotiate or share platforms with fascist interests in preference to entering into open conflict with them. In particular, they will unite with the fascists against genuinely revolutionary currents within the workers' movement.

The complicity of bureaucratic labour interests and fascism was repeated in Germany, and should not surprise anyone today. The socialists signed a solemn 'peace pact' ('patto di pacificazione') with Mussolini's fascists in August 1921. As Gramsci commented, the peace pact, "could not but cause the movement of proletarian resurgence to stagnate, and could not but bring about a reorganisation of the reactionary elements and a new strategy on their part."

Fascist attacks continued more or less as before, and then intensified. The socialists continued to urge the government to neutralise the fascist gangs by mass arrests and the forcible dissolution of armed centres. The authorities did indeed launch a number of raids in response to this demand. Predictably, the police raids were exclusively directed against workers' organisations and the 'Peoples Houses' (Casas del popolo) with the result that a few arms available to militant

workers were confiscated. Turati's call to "really disarm" had now been put into practice, but only by the left, and by courtesy of the police. This manoeuvre disarmed not only the militant opponents of fascism; it disarmed the most bitter rivals of the reformist socialists themselves. Many socialist controlled councils thereafter worked in harmony with the leaders of the local fascist gangs, particularly in 'red' areas where outright fascist terrorism was rejected in favour of collaborationist tactics. It is small comfort to record that many of the socialist leaders who sat down to negotiate with the fascists were later persecuted mercilessly once the Mussolini regime had been installed. The socialists and the union bureaucracy were never to be

'Lenin' and 'Trotsky' squads, a 'Tolstoy' squad, and a group which called itself "Nothing to lose". In other areas, a single unit was formed consisting of revolutionaries of all tendencies. Gramsci described the movement, and "the great enthusiasm with which the first appearances of the Arditi del popolo were greeted", in contrast to "social democratic pacifism [which] only benefits the fascist movement". As he wrote a few months later:

"It is true that socialists too...took part in the creation of the first nuclei of the Arditi del popolo. It is nevertheless certain that the lightning spread with which the initiative spread was not the result of a general plan prepared by the Socialist Party, but was simply due to the generalised state of mind of the country - the desire to rise up in arms which was smouldering among the broad masses."

The organisation was immediately denounced and bad mouthed by the left. Its leaders were accused of being police spies (though no evidence then or since has ever emerged of any police or state penetration). The socialist paper Avanti, soon to be smashed by the action of the fascist terror gangs, reported in July 1921, that: "The Arditi del popolo perhaps has the illusion that it can dam up the armed movement of the reaction..."

As an alternative to 'arditismo' (squadism), the Socialist Party, in signing the 'peace pact' with the fascists, announcing that it was happy to take the opportunity of "repudiating the organisation and acts of the Arditi del popolo", declaring that the Socialist Party was completely "separate from the organisations and work of the Arditi del popolo".

The Communists were at first equivocal. In July 1921, Gramsci wrote:

"Are the communists opposed to the Arditi del popolo movement? On the contrary: they want the arming of the proletariat, the creation of an armed proletarian force which is capable of defeating the bourgeoisie..."

Yet imprisoned within the centralism and ideological constraints of the PCI apparatus, he stopped short of outright endorsement. Despite Gramsci's initial guarded enthusiasm, the Communists too, were soon alleging that the 'Arditi del popolo' contained "doubtful elements" lacking class consciousness". Only the ideologically pure could be permitted to fight the fascists.

Despite the numbers of communists involved in its original formation, the communist leadership soon perceived a threat to their own authority. Although verbally committed to a violent response to fascist provocations the Party ordered their members to leave the organisation, threatening "the most severe proscriptions" against those who refused. The Communists formed separate "Communist Squadrons" of their own, calling for anti-fascist unity behind the communists.

In obedience to party discipline, Gramsci appears to have gone along with this line, at least in public. His real attitude at the time is spelt out in a speech he gave to the Party's Lyon Congress in January, 1926.

"[all] tactics which induce the masses to passivity are to be condemned. But precisely this occurred in 1921-2, as a result of the party leadership's attitude on the question of the Arditi del popolo. That tactic, even if on the one hand it corresponded to the need to prevent the party members from being controlled by a leadership that was not the party's leadership, on the other hand served to disqualify a mass movement which had started from below and which could have been exploited by us politically."

(RA's emphasis) Gramsci thus acknowledged that the 'Arditi del popolo' represented a real movement of the class, which although it inevitably took the initial form of 'squadrist' actions, presented the opportunity to build a genuine mass movement dedicated to confrontational activity with the fascists and the interests they fought for. He con-

cludes that the Communist party's actual policy, of demanding 'mass' action under their own leadership in the crucial period 1921-22, "only led to passivity and inaction".

These "theoretical" lessons can be read directly in the actual events leading to the fascist seizure of power in Italy. Disowned and obstructed by the two principal proletarian parties, the Arditi del popolo became a real force in only a few towns. By the autumn of 1921, ostracised by the left, its numbers had dwindled to around 5,000. In isolated squads, 'arditismo' could only provide a temporary answer to the fascist/capitalist offensive.

The backing of capitalist interests and the state for the fascist terror gangs would in the long run prove decisive. Yet had its militant policies of direct action been adopted by the supporters of the 'revolutionary' parties (the PSI gained over 1.5 million votes in 1921), the fascist gangs and their state allies could have been effectively confronted.

In Parma for example, in August 1922, a couple of months before the fascist takeover, the working class population of the city, under the leadership of the Arditi del popolo, succeeded in battering a military-style attack by several thousand fascists due to the fact, as emphasised by one historian, that the defence was also "conducted according to military methods". As it was, wherever the fascist squadrons attacked a particular 'red' locality in the absence of opposition organised by the Arditi del popolo, they encountered only fragmented and directionless resistance.

For appearances' sake however, the left had to seem to be doing something, however marginal to the real situation. In the wake of a fascist 'punitive expeditions' against red centres, left politicians steadfastly refused to call for counterattacks and insisted that the homes of known fascists were to be respected. Instead, they called for "general protest strikes" designed to force the authorities to talk with them. The discussions that followed degenerated to the levels of black farce. The same authorities that the left pleaded with to stop the fascist attacks were involved up to the hilt in intimidating and encouraging the very same attacks. Moreover, the only group to profit from the strikes were the fascists themselves. They seized the opportunity to protect the scabs who worked through the protests, and to target and attack those who joined. A united front consisting of the leaders of the principal trades unions, the 'Alleanza del lavoro' (Workers Alliance), called for anti-fascist demonstrations on 1 May, 1922. The government banned any marches, so the organisers contented themselves with a number of rallies instead. Large numbers of workers turned out, without being organised for any offensive, or as Gramsci complained, even any defensive action.

The strength of the workers' movement, especially in the northern industrial areas of Italy was shown even after the fascist takeover, by the continued resistance and underground organisation of anti-fascist groups in these areas. Even after some twenty years of fascist rule, the re-emergence of the anti-fascist forces in the partisan movement that swept through Italy in the latter stages of the war, demonstrates the existence of the vast offensive potential within the Italian working class in the years 1920-22.

At the end of July 1922, as the culmination of their strategy, the left reformists called a nationwide general strike. A number of partial 'general' strikes having failed, it was concluded that a full blast general strike must be the solution. The strike was not designed to hit directly at the fascists - how could it unless reinforced by simultaneous direct action? - but in order to exert pressure upon the

Wannabe Mayor of Rome: Gianfranco Fini, boss of the fascist MSI. Formed by Mussolini disciples immediately after the war.



constitutional authorities. The object in fact, was to defend the bourgeois republic. The minor disasters of the partial 'general' strikes were magnified into a catastrophe for the labour movement. Once again, faced with no opposition, the fascist organisations mobilised middle class scabs to run essential services and established their mastery of the streets in all the major towns and cities. The strike was smashed, the strikers themselves demoralised and the fascists finally assured that no independent movement of the working class was capable of standing against them. In Mussolini's words:

"If the three secretaries of the Alliance of Labour had been three of the most fanatical fascists, they could not have rendered a greater service to the cause of Italian fascism."

When the total inadequacy of their tactics became undeniable, the left simply adopted the ostrich position - 'Fascist threat? We see no fascist threat'. The PSI insisted that the fascist menace was minimal, due to its poor level of representation in parliament! At the end of July 1922, the PSI's leader, Turati, went to the King to "remind him that he is the supreme defender of the Constitution", and beg him not to do a deal with the fascists. The communists, led by Bordigha, justified their position by insisting that all forms of bourgeois government were as bad as each other, whether 'democratic' or fascist. They argued that the advance of fascism would lead to the exposure of the socialists as props of the bourgeois regime, and to the mass defection of their supporters to the communists themselves.

In 1922, Bordigha was still insisting, at the party's second Congress, that since the fascists were in essence no different from the other bourgeois parties, they would inevitably form a coalition of the usual centre right kind. To his credit, Gramsci from the beginning had appreciated that in reality, the fascists represented a threat of a qualitatively new kind. In place of capitalism stabilised through the mechanisms of bourgeois democracy, he saw that the fascists fought for the stabilisation of capitalism through the elimination of the mechanisms of democracy. On the very eve of the fascist's 'March on Rome' - the takeover of power - the secretary of the PCI issued a statement claiming that "the March on Rome will never take place."

The next day, Mussolini was the new head of the government. Italy was about to become the first avowedly 'totalitarian' state in history.

What is most striking in the fascist's rise to power in these years, is its sheer speed. In January 1921, the delegates to the PSI conference, forced by the new fascist threat to relocate, thought it unnecessary, or perhaps distasteful, to mention the fact. In October 1922, they formed the government. The existing parallels between the fascist's strategy today on the one hand, and the response of the conservative left and its fellow travellers in the 'monitoring projects', 'community associations', petty bourgeois media-orientated alliances etc. hardly need underlining. It is as if the history of fascism had never been written. But as Gramsci despairingly remarked: "history teaches, but it has no pupils."

When Thomas Begley, a 23 year old IRA volunteer, carried a bomb into Frizzell's fish shop on Belfast's Shankhill Road on Saturday 23 October 1993 neither he nor the other volunteers with him imagined that the device would explode prematurely killing 10 innocent people and injuring many more. When the smoke cleared, Thomas Begley lay among the dead.

Many people will say that Thomas 'Bootsy' Begley can hardly be called an innocent victim, but if Thomas and his comrades had got clear of the area none of those who were so tragically caught in the blast would have died. The target of Thomas's Active Service Unit was a meeting of the leadership of the UDA/UFF and their political counterparts the UDP who were meeting in the UDA headquarters above Frizzell's shop. Among those attending the meeting was Johnny 'Mad Dog' Adair, a known UFF psychopath who has openly boasted to the British press of being personally responsible for the murders of 12 'taigs' (a derogatory protestant word for innocent catholics) and that the murder gang which he heads could claim responsibility for the deaths of eight other 'taigs'.

It is believed by many people, thanks to the British controlled media, that the sectarian massacre of innocent catholics in the aftermath of the Shankhill tragedy is only the reaction of a beleaguered protestant people under sectarian siege from the IRA. The truth is quite the reverse. Up to the end of October, UFF and UVF murder gangs had been responsible for the slaughter of 41 innocent catholics, they were also responsible for injuring many more in at least 73 further murder bids and had launched 31 petrol bomb and arson attacks.

The Republican movement prior to the Shankhill tragedy were engaged in peace talks with 'democratic' nationalist politicians (the only talks taking place in the six counties since the Unionist veto of all talks where there were catholic representatives or members of the 26 Counties government).

The Shankhill Road bombing was taken on by the Belfast Brigade IRA only after repeated calls by a frightened and beleaguered catholic populace had urged them to stem the UDA/UFF/UVF murder campaign which has been in operation since Brian Nelson, loyalist murderer/MIS spy and gun-runner supplied the death squads with a consignment of automatic weapons, rocket launchers and ammunition from South Africa with the knowledge and blessing of his British Intelligence masters.

The IRA and INLA have always had a policy of not being drawn into a sectarian war. To enter into sectarian engagement would in no way benefit the IRA or INLA. It would however benefit the British war machine greatly. They could sit back and let the protestant and catholic working class slaughter each other and when enough of the people they see as thorns in their side have been removed they can step back in between both sides with the 'justification' that they are only peacekeepers between warring factions. This war is a war of liberation, to win self-determination for the Irish people, protestant, catholic and dissenter alike. There are a lot of people at home and abroad who, thanks to state-run media and censorship, believe that there is already a sectarian war raging here. Figures released of those killed here, protestant and catholic, makes no mention of the fact that the majority of those killed by the IRA were not killed for their religion but because they were members of the British army of occupation or of the UDR/RRF or RUC/RUC Reserve, members of an armed militia infamous for the harassment, threatening, beating and in many cases murder of the Catholic populace. Many others

killed by the IRA were a back-up to this militia, the leaders and members of loyalist death squads. No one benefits from civilian casualties but the enemy. The IRA has the most to lose when it kills civilians as the might of state propaganda can be levelled at them by a media which allows no recourse for explanation. No one can condone the deliberate bombing of a civilian target, but the Shankhill Road bombing was neither deliberate or aimed at civilians. Those who were meeting above Frizzell's shop were not innocent civilians. They were the men who planned and carried out murderous attacks on innocent catholic civilians. No one on the Falls celebrated the Shankhill deaths. We have all suffered our losses in this conflict, we all know how to grieve and we would not wish that grief on anyone.

There is a weariness in Ireland. I am war weary, the Irish people are war weary, Thomas Begley was war weary when he died at the age of 23. We all want to see peace. At 'Bootsy' Begley's graveside it was said that he too longed for peace, a just and lasting peace and not the peace of the vanquished. The Unionists have always had the majority here and prior to 1968 and the emergence of the Civil Rights Movement they ran their state in a bigoted and sectarian manner. It was a state modelled on South Africa's apartheid system with catholics being the downtrodden. Unfortunately, the present day Unionist leadership would have this system back again tomorrow, hence their reluctance to talk to anyone but themselves.

When it emerged that John Hume, the SDLP leader, was talking to Gerry Adams, the Sinn Fein leader, the loyalists began listening to Messrs Paisley, Molyneux and company and believed there would be a united Ireland by the end of the week and they'd all be butchered in their beds. The unionists used the talks to justify their myth of a pan-nationalist front (a myth also used by the UFF/UVF to justify their murder campaign). It is well to remember that nothing of what had been spoken of at the Hume/Adams meeting was known but the very fact that they were meeting at all was enough for the Unionists to whip up hysteria, suspicion and sectarian bigotry. It was always at times like this in the past that Unionists played their 'Orange Card' to get government backing. In the past it has mostly been political, backing the government on certain issues and the British government reciprocating when necessary. Today, however, the Unionists have embarrassed and bloodied the Tory government's noses so many times that their orange card does not wield the power it once did, but there are many cards in the deck.

Even before the Hume/Adams talks had begun Paisley had been decrying 'secret talks' between the Tory government and the IRA. We had people like John Taylor not only excusing

# dispatches from a war zone

## WAR WEARY



Allowing for a brief diplomatic pause after the Downing Street declaration, for the Brit controlled death squads it's back to the business of stifling taigs. Man on right standing jauntily sports a British Army issue SA80 rifle.

loyalist attacks but spurring them on with phrases such as "... when the bombs start going off in Dublin, as they do in Belfast and London, then they will understand..." Small wonder then that the UFF/UVF attacks on catholics intensified. We even had Hugh Annesly, the RUC Chief Constable, go onto television and tell us that although loyalist attacks had intensified considerably the IRA remained the main enemy and that loyalist terrorism was only reactive to IRA attacks.

With the loyalist murders, murder bids and arson attacks increasing so too did the allegations of loyalist/security force collusion. How come there was a heavy police/military presence in an area prior to loyalist attack? On one occasion the New Bansomley area of Belfast had been under virtual seige for three days while the RUC/British Army searched for IRA arms. When they eventually pulled out of the area having found one pistol and a few rounds of ammunition it was only a matter of hours before the murder squad appeared to attack two taxi drivers in the same area. After this attack, the gunmen's car drove past a heavily-manned and fortified police station the occupants of which could hardly have failed to hear the gunfire which happened 200 yards from them.

The collusion theories gained momentum when a British soldier on mobile patrol in Ardoyne opened fire indiscriminately on mourners outside Thomas Begley's home. One civilian was wounded and others treated for shock when for no apparent reason the soldier cut loose with two bursts from his automatic rifle. A confrontation with this and other patrols was only averted by Sinn

Fein representatives who appealed for calm. If there is indeed collusion and all the evidence points to it, what is the reason for it? Could it be that John Major and his government have no real interest in peace in Ireland? One has only to look at how many MPs are present in chambers during any of Thursday's 'Northern Ireland Question Time'. Apart from the Irish MPs, members of the Northern Ireland Office and a few opposition members the place is empty.

When John Hume called for the British government to respond quickly to the Hume/Adams initiative on Thursday 21 October, Patrick Mayhew feigned ignorance of what Hume and Adams had been discussing. In Cyprus John Major accused Adams of blackmail because he also had called for a response. Major's remark was based on a deliberate misrepresentation of what the Sinn Fein president had said about how the IRA would respond to a positive British attitude to the initiative.

Commenting on the British attitude Gerry Adams said: "The British government has been less than truthful in its response to the Irish peace initiative. It is my understanding that both Mr Major and Mr Mayhew are fully aware of the substance of my discussions with John Hume. They have chosen to play politics with this initiative. This is shameful given the intensity of the tragedy of this conflict for the people in Ireland. It is especially shameful because it appears that the only possible reason for the British refusal to respond is Major's dependency on the Unionists and the Tory government's wish to cling to power."

"Patrick Mayhew has been less than honest on other issues also. If his government is not prepared to accept the olive branch which was offered to it then John Major and Patrick Mayhew should end their hypocrisy, do the decent thing and say so."

Responding to Major's 'blackmail' accusation Sinn Fein's Ard Chomhairle member Martin McGuinness said: "John Hume and Gerry Adams are seeking a total cessation of all violence. It is obvious that a positive response to their initiative from the British government would transform the situation. Rather than grasp this opportunity, Mr Major, in his rejection of Gerry Adams' appeal, has chosen to mislead the public and to obstruct and block the Irish peace initiative. Contrary to Major's comments this initiative is not an attempt at 'blackmail'. It seeks to address the underlying causes and suggests a process which can secure a demilitarisation of the situation, leading to a lasting peace. That is the only dividend this initiative seeks. Peace is the Sinn Fein goal. John Major has set his face against this. His position is indefensible."

The British government's response to the peace initiative was for the House of Commons Procedures Committee discussing the setting up of a Select Committee on Northern Ireland. This has been a Unionist demand for years and is seen as a further integration of the Six Counties into the British state. British Labour MPs complained that this move was very much 'part of the deal' the government has struck with the Official Unionists in July to secure their votes in Westminster. The exclusion order served on Gerry Adams by the Home Secretary on 18 October for an indefinite period is also part of that deal. Sinn Fein Party Chairperson Tom Hartley said that the pro-

posal to set up the committee was "clear evidence of the squalid deal struck between Major and unionists at the time of the Maastricht vote. Quite obviously the British government is not serious about peace. Major has engineered a sordid little deal with the unionists to ensure his survival and that of his party. In return the unionists are given greater influence in how Britain runs this economic slump it seeks to elevate to the status of a nation. Mr Major has evidently put peace in Ireland in hock to unionist votes at Westminster. This is not the way forward. It cannot bring peace. The Irish peace initiative holds out the first real hope for peace in two and a half decades of British failure. The British government should grasp this opportunity."

People would do well to remember at this stage that it has been unionist intransigence that has wrecked every attempt at talks since this conflict started. Yet when the olive branch is offered the British government dismisses it and goes out of its way to appease unionism. Ian Paisley and his cohorts have taken every opportunity to attack John Hume for meeting with Gerry Adams. They say that by talking to a spokesperson for 'terrorists' John Hume is every bit as bad as the IRA. But it wasn't too many years ago that the big man himself was consorting with paramilitaries. As Joe Hendon of the SDLP points out, "The last 20 years have been littered with examples of certain unionist politicians dealing directly with loyalist paramilitaries. From the workers strike of the seventies to the present day. It wasn't too long ago that the so-called Third Force was parading on the hillside waving firearms certificates alongside elected representatives."

It was messrs Paisley, Robinson etc who were responsible for the setting up of the Third Force. Right from the offset Ian, Peter and other DUP members could be seen strutting around at Third Force gatherings wearing their red berets. Not long afterwards these same red berets were quickly whipped off and hidden as three Third Force members (one a member of the UDR) were caught red-handed trying to sell British armaments secrets to the South African Intelligence Services in return for weapons. So much for loyalty. The DUP are well aware of who is responsible for the murders of catholics. There have been many calls for the unionist politicians to meet the loyalist paramilitaries and get them to call a halt to their murder campaign. They refuse to do so. Instead, by their silence and lack of condemnation of loyalist murders they give the gunmen the go ahead and they sit back with their smug, we warned you, grins on their faces. If however they decided to stage another of their civil disobedience campaigns they would sit down with Johnny Adair in a minute. As I said earlier the people are war weary. There was a massive turnout at four marches in support of the Hume/Adams which initiative is at present the only 100% initiative which contains the potential to move towards peace. It is also the only Irish initiative. Continued refusal by the British to consider it and respond to it will merely indicate their hypocrisy as they continue to portray themselves as the 'peacekeepers' in the Irish conflict. Mayhew's unilateral declaration in response to the Adams propaganda coup to push ahead with the Unionist agenda makes a mockery of the Downing Street Declaration and their claim to be neutral and have no selfish interest in Ireland. The tragedy is that all the people of the Six Counties are paying with their lives the price of this hypocrisy.

M Collins Belfast.

Volunteer Thomas 'Bootsy' Begley



tude Gerry Adams said: "The British government has been less than truthful in its response to the Irish peace initiative. It is my understanding that both Mr Major and Mr Mayhew are fully aware of the substance of my discussions with John Hume. They have chosen to play politics with this initiative. This is shameful given the intensity of the tragedy of this conflict for the people in Ireland. It is especially shameful because it appears that the only possible reason for the British refusal to respond is Major's dependency on the Unionists and the Tory government's wish to cling to power."



Some readers of *Red Action* will be aware that members of RA have contributed a number of articles to the journal 'Open Polemic' (OP).

OP was founded by a group of shell-shocked Stalinists after the fall of the communist empires in Russia and Eastern Europe. The political regimes they had devoted their lives to defending lay in ruins. The workers, supposedly the 'ruling class' within these regimes, didn't lift a finger to save them.

The Open Polemic project was a product of this demoralisation. Due to the allegedly 'anti-sectarian' nature of the organisation, much of its business had to be conducted in public. In this way, the history of OP provides a rare opportunity to see the inner workings of the 'democratic centralist' structure favoured by Stalinist, Leninist and Trotskyist organisations of all complexions. OP's opening edition, like a penitent sinner, acknowledged the need for the 'fundamentals' of Marxism-Leninism, "to be subject to assessment and elaboration." The general brief of the journal was to contribute to the formation of a 'Party of a New Type' by means of:

"the integration of the revolutionary movement...through the publication of theoretical elaborations that sharpen the polemic around contemporary revolutionary questions."

The editorial board emphasised its independence pledging,

"[OP] will not intervene in the movement in any way other than by facilitating theoretical and political discussion across the movement."

The editorial board of OP believed that in "marked contrast" to other organisations, its own,

"approach to the integration of the revolutionary movement is essentially non-exclusive, precisely because it is not attempting to...pre-judge which organisations, groups or individuals are revolutionary..."

All OP wanted to do, was to "distinguish the revolutionary from the reformist". Brave words. OP has indeed succeeded in distinguishing revolutionaries from reformists - but hardly in the sense which its editorialising envisaged. So far from founding "a party of a new type", the editors have failed even to establish a journal of a new type.

*Red Action's* contributions to the project - always conceived as being in the nature of a Trojan horse, or as it turned out, a boisterous cuckoo in the Stalinist nest - began as a response to a long keynote article of immense condescension by one Jan Wachla. Wachla is a founding member of the OP project. To Wachla's credit, the article concentrated on isolating Ireland as the key issue facing British revolutionaries:

"for white communists living in Britain this [revolutionary] bloodying can only be possible through integrating ourselves fully into the anti-imperialist struggle of the Irish revolutionary nationalists."

Irish revolutionary democracy, Wachla continues, is "the major political force in the proletarian revolution in Britain." Wachla condemns the ideologically orientated 'Proletarian' group (now defunct) for missing, "the first vital step on the revolutionary road in this country - that of confronting - in reality - the British state and its imperialist occupation of Ireland." As a consequence, "its bright middle class activists...inevitably fell prey to quirky personality squabbles."

# CUCKOO IN THE NEST

He compares the downfall of 'Proletarian' to *Red Action* - RA being the polar opposite, in Wachla's view, of the 'Proletarian' approach.

"It is ironic that an organisation that has the least respect for the Leninist concept of the party of a new type has perhaps made the greatest progress in raising the 'revolutionary consciousness' of its members. The organisation I refer to goes by the name of *Red Action*, an apt name perhaps when one considers *Red Action's* preoccupation of getting 'stuck in' to fascist groups."

Wachla goes on to dismiss RA's "theoretical denunciations" of Leninism in a manner typical of the snobbishness of this type of bumpunctious middle class 'Marxist':

"*Red Action* seems content to 'wallow' on the fringes of the first stage of cognitive development with little apparent interest in raising themselves to a theoretical plane..."

How far Wachla has raised himself on the theoretical plane, plebeian readers are supposed to infer from the supposedly pretentious title of the piece: 'experimenta est optima rerum magistra'. Wachla's proclaimed intention to address the "class of advanced workers", presumably refers to the advanced Latin class.

On the other hand, Wachla

the basis of revolutionary praxis."

Yet: "For all their denunciations of Leninism...it is the comrades of *Red Action* that seem less preoccupied with these outmoded agendas. To the revolutionary left it must be said: By our jail sentences so shall we be judged."

Without endorsing the romantic flourish of Wachla's clarion call, (the point is to stay out of jail as far as possible) there is certainly more truth in it than not. Of all revolutionary organisations currently on the British left, *Red Action* could be content with judgements made on such a basis.

Wachla makes the pertinent comment: "Yet not one of Britain's revolutionary vanguards can boast that it has...even one of its comrades rotting in a British jail for the 'crime' of opposing the British occupation of Ireland."

Wachla should check his facts.

Wachla's smug complacency as self-appointed guardian of the flame of 'scientific socialism' [sic] blinds him to the almost comic aptness of his analysis of 'Proletarian's' failings to the situation of OP itself. Wachla chides 'Proletarian' for "placing consciousness before matter", for "failing to confront - in reality - the British state". And what do

never tire of divorcing themselves from the content of Leninism have also seriously engaged the issues of the communist movement in a healthy Leninist spirit...the editorial board has continued to publish their contributions as a way of sharpening our own communist understanding of the key relation between party and class".

But with the first shockwaves of the communist collapse having died away, Mr Hyde was becoming restless; the old Stalinist reflexes were preparing to lash out.

In edition no.1 of OP, the editorial board had reassured its readers of the purity of its intentions in merely,

"stimulating a demand from the members of the various [communist] organisations for an honest polemic between those organisations...we have no pretensions to forming yet another organisation from this project."

In edition no.8, Open Polemic says that it has now formed an "Association of Communists for Revolutionary Unity" (ACRU). What a turn-up. OP complains:

"the deeply fragmented state of the revolutionary movement into a plethora of hostile fragments, each with its own centralist discipline, loomed large concerning a working constitution for the Association."

In their founding statement,

formal democracy, we can only sympathise and say look elsewhere."

Bloody hell, they don't care do they?

The bankruptcy of the Leninist and Stalinist traditions being so complete, no amount of subjective hand-wringing, breast-beating etc., as to the necessity of openness, unity and so on in the wake of the traumatic collapse of existing Stalinism, could defeat the objective logic of vanguard organisation and structure. OP say they have no intention of forming a new organisation. But they do. OP say they have no intention of suppressing the democratic element within a 'democratic centralist' structure. But they do. They could do no other.

Specific organisational structures are not neutral as between competing social forces. They incorporate social dynamics which first stultify, then defeat, and all inconsistent subjective intentions of the individuals within them. Even the sincere ones. That is why Marx famously insisted that the institutions of bourgeois democracy must be 'smashed'; not taken over. The ideological and historical essence of Stalinist structures being authoritarian, sectarian and centralist, the intentions of individuals who stand outside them, dissolve like spring snow once they go back inside.

Regrettably for those already dizzy from this ideological merry-go-round, the turnabouts don't stop there. The editorial board also announced in OP no.8, that contributions from *Red Action*, despite their 'healthy Leninist spirit' would no longer be accepted. *Red Action* possessed the best track record of any of the contributors, both in respect of the number of articles submitted, including the only contribution on Ireland, and the quantity of the discussion generated in response. Why, after seven issues, the last six of which were dominated by *Red Action* contributions, and discussions around the agenda set by *Red Action*, was the decree of exile imposed? Precisely because the cuckoo got too big for the nest. It was taking over. RA replied in full to every attempt to repress its insistence on the indispensability of Marxist principles, even in a journal avowedly hostile to its politics. In announcing their 'suspension' of further *Red Action* articles, OP omit to tell its readers that two RA contributions, contrary to publicly declared editorial policy, have already been suppressed. The editors of OP loftily claim that *Red Action* have "opted out" from the dispute. Bollocks. We was pushed.

Ostensibly, OP maintains that RA are now revealed as 'utopians'. So why is RA now, in the opinion of OP, 'utopian'? Because RA's contributions were increasingly orientated around the political principles of Marx himself. For the 'marxist-leninists' this is heresy. *Red Action* apart, contributors to OP almost never talk about or quote Marx - always Lenin. The Marxist 'dictatorship of the proletariat' and the Leninist party dictatorship, are two completely different things.

The reason OP itself gives for its charge of 'utopianism' reveals this very dilemma. They continue: "Revolution in the 20th century becomes not just a matter of mobilising the working class against capitalism, but rather of defeating the imperialist

ideology of social democracy within the working class. Lenin was in a position to grasp this new reality, whereas Marx was not."

For OP, Marx was living in a 'simpler' world than Lenin. The implication (whether fully realised by OP or not) is that since Lenin lived in a more complex world, Leninist thought is also more complex than 'simple' Marxism.

Marx if anything, actually says the opposite: class divisions (though not the 'world') become 'simpler' with the development of capitalism, not the reverse. Marx refers to the "simplification of class antagonisms" that work to, "reduce the whole of society to the simple opposition between a class of capitalists and a class of propertyless workers."

This tendency, Marx felt, would eventually lead to "the development of the naked conflict between capital and labour."

Second, any organisation that can claim that Marx was "unaware" of the divisions and 'imperialist ideology' of the working class, disqualifies itself as marxist. A short selection of key passages from both Marx and Engels serves to kick this particular 'simplification' into touch. How well this analysis of 'imperialist ideology within the working class' has stood the course of time hardly needs emphasising.

Take this from Engels: "the English proletariat is actually becoming more and more bourgeois...For a nation that exploits the whole world this is of course to a certain extent justifiable."

For in these imperialist conditions, English workers "gaily share the least of England's monopoly of the world market and the colonies."

These features, so bluntly and sharply stated, are the precise developments that the 'scientific socialists' of OP blithely declare Marx to have been "unaware of".

What underlies OP's egregiously mistaken allegation, is the presupposition that the dictatorship of the proletariat has to be exercised over the 'imperialist' working class itself! It is a presupposition shared by all the 34 varieties (OP's figure) of marxist-leninist or 'democratic centralist' group. For if the working class itself is an 'imperialist' class, then it too, must be crushed alongside the imperialist bourgeoisie by the substitute proletarians in the party vanguard. In this way the ideological proletarians become, as history conclusively demonstrates, the actual enemy of real proletarians. The fact that the emancipation of the working class, reactionary sections and all, must be the work of the workers themselves, is totally submerged.

Finally, OP itself has recognised that *Red Action* are at the sharp end of virtually every violent confrontation with the state and fascism that ever occurs in this country. The contrast between the passive leninism of the outfit and its allies, and the active non-leninism of *Red Action*, was becoming too embarrassing. Yet the editorial board accuses *Red Action* of being 'utopian', while the Stalinist crew which will continue to pounce about in the pages of any future editions of Open Polemic, are - what? The very idea of calling Wachla and the rest, revolutionary activists demonstrates the topsy-turvy world of these 'marxist-leninists'.



The real reason for the suppression of *Red Action* is very simple and familiar to regular readers of RA. The Marxist dictatorship of the Proletariat and the Leninist party dictatorship are two completely different things!

feels able to enthusiastically patronise *Red Action's* "practical activities on the streets of Britain that makes their organisation of particular significance." Wachla concludes: "Despite their avowed contempt for Leninism, organisations like *Red Action* have the potential to produce comrades that will be amongst the first in this country to come to a profound understanding of Lenin's revolutionary practice - far more likely than Proletarian's esoteric scholars."

This is the crux of the matter. Would the pressures generated by practical activities in confrontation with the state and the fascist enemies of the working class push *Red Action* in a Leninist direction, as Wachla theorises? Or could it be that this revolutionary practice would push the organisation in the opposite direction?

Wachla contends that: "Nowhere can it be said that British revolutionary organisations have seized upon the question of British imperialism's bloody role in Ireland as

we read in the Op leaflet reproduced in edition (no.8)? "The political struggle of *Open Polemic* has been first and foremost, of a theoretical nature..."

First and last, more like it. This already amounts to a sufficient condemnation of the 'Open Polemic' project. Worse was to come. Despite the characteristically self-congratulatory, liberal tone of pronouncements such as this:

"The *Journal Open Polemic* is at the service of the movement, its columns open to all those organisations with the courage and integrity to advance and defend their ideological and political positions before the movement - as a whole"

there remained the deep, deep suspicion that a Stalinist outfit such as OP would always, sooner or later, revert to type.

For a while, the liberal Dr Jekyll appeared to be in control of his demonic alter ego, the Stalinist Mr Hyde. Soothing words were still being uttered in OP no.5: "Ironically *Red Action*, who

the scientific socialists of OP proclaimed its continuing support for "the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism". First amongst these principles, OP listed "the political and organisational principle of democratic centralism."

In OP no.8, they ask what "what form of organisation is best suited" to the new "Association" they had declared they would never form. OP answers: "Quite clearly, not a democratic centralist one". Having chided other Stalinist and Leninist organisations for being,

"prone in varying degrees, to an authoritarian stress on centralism at the expense of inner party democracy"

in OP no.8, the same editorial board disarmingly informs us that,

"We toyed [!] with various models of 'participatory democracy'...[but] The solution that kept presenting itself [!] was centralism without apology."

Democratic centralism would be a (quote) "luxury". "For those who howl for more

# CUCKOO IN THE NEST (Continued)

## Wachla & Stanley Respond to Red Action

In responding to my article 'Bureaucracy in Context', in which I stated that "We need to recognise that the dictatorship of the proletariat can take a variety of democratic or even totalitarian forms", G O'Halloran of Red Action posed the question 'who is to determine when in the "revolutionary interest" it has become necessary to substitute totalitarianism for democracy?' My dear G. Except for a state of emergency or war, such a course is not formally decided. A state of totalitarianism is decided upon by those who introduce it, in response to an actual or perceived threat to the existing society, with that actuality or perception being accepted by substantial sections of the ruling class. In effect, the political rule of the economically dominant class is then exercised through, and controlled by, these self-promoted representatives of that class. To recognise such a possibility under socialism, is not to advocate that, inevitably, 'at some unforeseen point', a state of totalitarianism must be imposed by anyone. Any socialist state can be forced by the constant activity

of international counter revolution into a retreat on the democratic as well as the economic front, but it is not, as O'Halloran asserts - 'the retreat signals that the counter revolution has begun'. It is the offensive of counter revolution that forces the retreat, a retreat that, if it is not arrested when objective conditions permit, might well end in disaster and the victory of counter revolution and imperialism. The dictatorship of the class in any class society, including socialist, involves a state with powers of coercion. It always raises the question as to how the class can exercise control over the state and, in the case of socialism, how the state can be dissembled for socialism's transcendence into communism. Socialist democracy represents the struggle for that final victory of socialism. The inner democracy of the revolutionary party and its democratic interrelationship with the class counterposes against the imposition of a totalitarian state by leaders who imagine that they are preordained to determine the "revolutionary interest".  
John Stanley

## The Reply Leninists Could Not Answer and Dare Not Print

The essence of Bourgeois rule is minority rule in pursuit of minority interests, so it is entirely logical that when in jeopardy it suspends democratic conditions which at every moment help hostile classes to victory and so gives birth to the dictatorial form inherent in its own content.

Fundamental to the theory of fascism is the belief that the contradiction between the economic sphere and the political sphere should be rationalised.

On the 22nd January 1932 Hitler made one of his most decisive political speeches to magnates at the Industrial Club in Dusseldorf. His speech dealt at some length with a number of familiar nazi themes; the incompatibility of parliamentary democracy and an organised independent workers movement, and the unavoidable necessity of the "plebian" solution to the political and economic problems of the Bourgeois, however distasteful this might be to the exponents of the more genteel forms of political struggle.

"It must be admitted that in the economic sphere, from the start, in all branches men are not of equal value or of equal importance, and once this is admitted it is madness to say: in the economic sphere there are undoubtedly differences in value, but that is not true in the political sphere. It is absurd to build up economic life on the conceptions of achievement of the value of personality, while in the political sphere you deny this authority and thrust in its place the law of the greatest number. DEMOCRACY!...It is absurd to allow the principle to hold good in one sphere-the sphere of economic life and leadership-and to refuse to acknowledge its vitality in the sphere of politics. Communism is analogous to democracy in the political sphere."

Rationalisation between the economic and the political is not of course exclusive to fascism but is also fundamental to Marxism.

### POLAR OPPOSITES

For Fascism the hierarchy that exists in industry should correspond with a similar hierarchy in the political sphere while for Marxism the democratic principle that exists in the political arena should be carried over into the economic arena. Capitalism maintains that it is the individual personalities who control the means of production that create the wealth while Communism insists that it is the mass of the workers who produce the wealth that should control the means of production. In theory and practice the ends and means are polar

opposites, though the antagonists might possibly agree that workers control in the economic arena is the complementary equivalent to democratic control in the political arena.

In John Stanley's article 'Bureaucracy in Context' in issue one and in his reply to me in issue three, he seeks to justify the need on occasion to marry the two, by employing the means of Fascism to achieve the ends of Communism.

To paraphrase Stanley, he asks us to accept that 'the rule of the working class economically, can take a totalitarian form politically.'

The fundamental mistake underlying the Stanley formula is the belief that instead of the class content of the workers state determining the appropriate political form, the appropriate political form in the shape of party dictatorship determines the class character.

For all orthodox Leninists the dictatorial form (ie: the party) has immediate primacy over working class rule, indeed they maintain that the existence of the former is the condition for the latter.

In 1924 Josef Stalin explained why:

"The proletariat needs to achieve the dictatorship, it needs it still more to maintain the dictatorship to consolidate and expand it in order to achieve the complete victory of Socialism...to maintain and expand means creating among the proletarian masses a cementing force and a bulwark against the corrosive influences of the petty Bourgeois elements and petty Bourgeois habits; it means helping the masses of the proletarians to educate themselves as a force capable of abolishing classes and of preparing the conditions for the organisation of Socialist production. But it is impossible to accomplish all this without a party which is strong by reason of its solidarity and discipline".

Not only must the party re-educate the petty bourgeois, to enable them to overcome their bourgeois habits and traditions, but also to exorcise petty-bourgeois prejudices from amongst the proletarians. A remarkable responsibility for any party, particularly one, two years after a revolution was made up almost entirely of elements recruited from outside the working

class! If the middle classes feel qualified to play school master to the working classes, this, is in itself, only evidence of the party's failure to eliminate upper class arrogance amongst its middle classes. After all who is it to educate the educators? Still for the disciples of Bolshevism be they Trots or Marxist/Leninists the traditional rallying cry has always been "My party wrong or right", which is justified by their belief that the party makes the revolution, even when all history ever demonstrates, is that the revolution makes the party.

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### SPECIAL MACHINERY

As Lenin pointed out, "Whoever in the least weakens the iron discipline of the party of the proletariat (especially during its dictatorship) actually aids the Bourgeois against the proletariat." So, once it is accepted that the inter-

ests of the party have primacy over the interests of the class, then regardless of its objective performance, despite the fact that its theory does not serve its practice, and its practice does not serve the working class the authority of the party will at all times be defended and forgiven as the manifestation of the "lesser evil." If the working class is only regarded by the revolutionary elite as a class to be ridden to power, then such a relationship is both appropriate and intellectually precise, but if it is accepted, that the revolutionary trigger is contained only within this class, the revolutionary class, then the projection is both reactionary and bizarre. To paraphrase Herr Hitler,

"It is absurd to build up economic achievement, of the value of CLASS, while in the political sphere you deny this authority and thrust in its place the law of the fewest numbers - DICTATORSHIP...it is absurd to allow the principle to hold good in one sphere -the sphere of economic life and leadership-and to refuse to acknowledge its vitality in the sphere of politics..."

According to the conventional Stalinist/Leninist/Trotskyist rationale the retreat on all fronts economic and democratic toward the sanctuary of Totalitarianism is deemed to be the customary prerogative of any vigilant ruling class. The "special machinery" of

repression is held in reserve, and only employed when substantial sections of the ruling class (ie party) consider it absolutely necessary. This special organ of terror, is then wielded in a robust and possibly last ditch defence of the existing social order. Stanley points out that the dictatorship of the class in any society (including Socialist) involves a state with powers of coercion. The Bourgeois state is the instrument of oppression of the working class the Socialist state of the Bourgeois. As Stanley presents it, the Socialist State is only the Capitalist State stood

on its head. This is to accept Lenin's vindication of the Bolsheviks and to miss the point entirely.

In countering an attack from the reformist Kautsky who pointed out the contradictions apparent in minority socialist rule Lenin retorted

"If we argue in a liberal way, we must say the majority decides, the minority submits. Nothing need be said about the class character of the state in general...A majority is a majority and a minority is a minority. This is exactly how Kautsky argues."

Following along the same line of argument he leapt rather than stepped over the abyss.

"The ancient state was essentially a dictatorship of the slave owners? did the dictatorship abolish democracy among and for the slave owners. Everybody knows that it did not."

This was Lenin's model for a class dictatorship which at the same time was a class democracy, a democracy for the ruling class only. But this model concerned a case where the ruling class was a minority of the people. Ruling in the interests of the minority. By adopting this as the government model for the dictatorship of the proletariat, Lenin 'forgot' that this was precisely the respect in which a workers state was to be, indeed had to be different from all previous ruling classes. Of the Bolshevik dictatorship Rosa Luxembourg said "At bottom then it is a clique affair-A dictatorship to be sure, but not a dictatorship of the proletariat, but only the dictatorship of a handful of politicians, that is a dictatorship in the Bourgeois sense."

Bourgeois dictatorship, is an extension of minority rule. As a consequence the extinction of democracy for the majority,

The essence of working class rule, is the interests of majority over minority. In order to first secure its emancipation, and then guarantee its dominion, it is compelled to introduce direct representative democracy, the precise opposite. Therefore proletarian dictatorship, which means the total extinction of bourgeois rule, is only achieved by the extension of democracy TO the majority. Communism is the polar opposite to fascism. Proletarian rule is in FORM and content the absolute antithesis of the dictatorship of the bourgeois.

### COMPLETE NEGATION

In contradistinction the Stanley blueprint insists the old ruling class must obviously be expropriated economically, but to guard against "disaster and the victory of counter revolution" the new ruling class will continue to be exploited economically - and may in addition have to be expropriated politically!

His reasoning is as follows, if the revolutionary elite design to play midwife

and deliver democracy, they are entitled, indeed obliged to reverse this process should they consider it corresponds with "the revolutionary interest."

Stalin again explains: "The revolution can vanquish the Bourgeois, can overthrow its power without the dictatorship of the proletariat. But the revolution will be unable to crush the resistance of the Bourgeois to maintain its victory and to push forward to the final victory of Socialism unless at a certain stage in its development it creates a special organ in the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat as its principle mainstay."

Within this formula the working class can play the decisive role in making the revolution but the party must play the decisive role in sustaining the revolution.

Clearly for the good of society the Bourgeois must be overthrown by the working class and equally for the good of the revolution the working class must be overthrown by the party. On this point Stanley prevaricates

"To recognise such a possibility...is not to advocate that it is inevitable, but it may of course be forced into such a retreat on the democratic as well as economic fronts by the constant activity of counter revolution".

Laid bare the prescription for the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat for the transition from capitalism to socialism is idiotic; the self rule of the direct producers must be superseded by a covenant that ensures its political ascendancy in name at the cost of perpetuating its social slavery-a complete negation.

### SQUEAMISH DILETTANTES

For the orthodox left the importance of Marx's phrase "the dictatorship of the proletariat," is not related to the social content of the state or the class character of political power, but to specific governmental forms, dictatorial ones which would have to be implemented by a particular gov-

ernment. The conclusion implicit or explicit is that such a dictatorship could be exercised or wielded only by the revolutionary party that had conquered power, and instituted the revolutionary government. This delusion constantly resurfaces, in the form of an obligatory and insufferable conceit. A consequence and a condition of the zealous devotion to some distinct and fastidious, sectarian crotchets.

Thereafter their assessment on whether the rule of the vanguard is over "A socialist state," "A degenerated workers state," or "State capitalism," a situation where the working class are deprived of all political power, cannot be determined by the hegemony of the proletariat which was Marx's sole criterion. Instead their judgement is reduced to an infinite debate and 'concern' over the purity of motive of the individual personalities who occupied positions of power within the political elite.

It is the greatest irony that the conventional understanding of the phrase dictatorship of the proletariat which has been employed since 1917 as the watchword for lusty revolutionary endeavour, the litmus test, to root out the dilettantes and the squeamish, due to being loaded with a special autocratic meaning, is when unravelled a concept entirely Bourgeois in origin.

In the same way that class content governs the form of authority appropriate to its political rule, the form itself, whether expansive or repressive provides the clearest guide to the class character of the state and the dominant class within it. Marx pointed out that

"The class making a revolution appears from the very start...not as a class but as the representative of the whole of society; it appears as the whole mass of society confronting the one ruling class...Every new class therefore, achieves its hegemony only on a broader basis than that of the class ruling previously..."

Because the ascendancy of the Bourgeois could not survive the introduction of direct representative democracy, this is precisely the condition by which proletarian authority is made secure. The singular objective of revolutionary marxism then is the establishment of unlimited democracy. That is the self-rule of the producers, WITHOUT qualification. Without qualification means that there is no privileged position demarcated, within the proletarian dictatorship, for either the revolutionary party or indeed the revolutionary class. So, in contrast to the necessary revision of Marx by the apologists for Bolshevism, Red Action stands by the literal meaning of the dictatorship of the proletariat ie:

the authority of the working class can only be exercised through the self-government of the producers. To use the scenario of counter-revolution and the exigencies of civil war, as Stanley does to justify the ditching of the foremost principle, is an attempt to conceal the nature of the imposition. Party dictatorship is not the upshot of a decision to the retreat taken by the class (in the face of a counter revolutionary offensive) but is instead, the result of a decision to retreat from the working class taken by the party!



# Book Reviews...

## DIVIDED WE STAND

Eurofascism by Chris Bambery  
International Socialism (SWP)

International Socialism, the quarterly journal of the SWP devotes its lead article (76 pages) to a dissection of what it calls EURO-Fascism. As might be expected it is characterised by so many contradictions from chapter to chapter, and from theory to practice, that it is hard to know where, in reviewing it, to begin. For instance, Bambery states in the introduction that some 'anti racists tie themselves into the kinds of activities which their backers among the liberal sections of the bourgeois are willing to tolerate. Activities like sending post cards to John Major, that sponsors like the Commission for Racial Equality might tolerate perhaps? The Popular Front parties argued for state bans to stop the fascists' (an ANL tactic) but Bambery notes approvingly that Trotsky argued for 'working class militias'. The activities of the 'squadist' *Toujours Prets Pour Servir* (TPPS) set up inside the Socialist Party in 1935, he describes as "...excellent..." (Bambery quotes Trotsky smugly, "the TPPS disappeared without trace ... because its leadership was a technical not a political leadership..."). The only purpose in making this an issue, is to suggest the two are incompatible. Logic and our own experience suggest the reverse.) Yet, throughout the book no opportunity is lost to condemn 'squadism' "for substituting the action of a dedicated minority for that of the masses". The article eulogises the united front, but as yet the SWP has failed to even publicly acknowledge the existence of AFA. Bambery notes on page 51, the 'characteristic capacity' of fascist organisations to grow overnight. For instance from February 1934 to the middle of 1936 the membership of the French paramilitary organisation, *Criox de Feu*, jumped from 50,000 to 450,000 in just eighteen months. Nevertheless, on page 58 he concludes inexplicably, that though Le Pen's National Front has precisely the same figure as the *Criox de Feu* in 1934, "and *Le Pens* overall vote is already greater than Hitler's in 1928" - "the prospects for [French] anti-fascists... are good!"

As an insight into how to fight fascism, it is frankly useless. It's primary function, it seems, is to help the SWP cadre refine and clarify their thinking on the subject. Nothing wrong with that of course, if the intention is to enlighten, but in this case the purpose is to deceive. So that, rather than being an analysis as one might expect, it is in fact a work of propaganda. And for sheer dishonesty it takes some beating. The reason is also obvious, the anticipated failure of the ANL strategy and the return as a consequence of the spectre of 'squadism', not only as practised by AFA, but its return to popularity WITHIN the SWP. The article is designed to show that there is no alternative to the SWP strategy, and that to even countenance any deviation plays into the hands of the fascists, and so is both criminal and, by design or default, counter revolutionary. For

Trotskyism of course, Stalin, and stalinism is still the great Satan. So stalinism is introduced to add moral clout to the argument, i.e. that all organised self defence leads to squadism, and that squadism is, or leads to, stalinism. Pivotal to Bambery's argument is that Stalinism and squadism are not antipodes but twins! Under a chapter entitled 'The Tactics of Stalinism', he pursues this point. "It is often argued that physical confrontation is the key to successfully fighting the fascists... [in Germany] the problem was not lack of street fighting it was the KPD's dead end political strategy." Fair enough. Bambery also concedes that the Comintern dictated KPD policy, and Stalin dictated to the Comintern. "Stalin's concern was not with stopping the Nazis but with the economic development of Russia." In other words any communist anti-fascist strategy, was automatically subordinate to Russian foreign policy towards Germany. Revolution in Germany would have destroyed the economic and political infrastructure of Russia's principal trading partner. The survival of Russian communism was therefore dependent on the survival of German capitalism. So from Stalin's viewpoint fascism was preferable to communism if it guaranteed the survival of Russia's trading partner. A performance, to be repeated in Spain later in the decade. Bambery doesn't make this point, instead he stresses that lack of working class unity led to fascism and that squadism was the principle obstacle to this unity. He neglects to mention that even the reformist SPD, had its own paramilitary organisation the *Reichsbanner*. In a breakdown of the 509 incidents of recorded political violence in Bavaria in 1931, the *Reichsbanner*/SPD are accredited with initiating 165, half as many again as the communists on 117. The Nazis topped the poll with 213. Admittedly, Bavaria was an exception, but if communist aggression was to be surrendered as part of a pact with the SDP, as he infers, what purpose unity? United we fall? Also in making this argument Bambery, a self confessed 'Tro', makes no attempt to disguise that his sympathies are unapologetically with the stalinist leadership. Rather than with the de facto anti-stalinist rank and file. He feels no need, for according to the SWP's analysis, the mutiny of the street fighters was not a rejection of stalinism, but its embodiment. The working class streetfighters were, you see, more stalinist than the stalinists. The leadership were more sinned against than sinned. So in backing the lesser evil the SWP do so with an easy conscience.

After the KPD daily raised the slogan 'hit the fascists where ever you meet them' in 1930, the Red Front fighters carried the fight into the streets. But this raised 'political problems' according to Bambery. (Up till then presumably everything had been hunky dory?) As early as May 1930, the leadership in

Berlin had to censure the RFB locals for 'left sectarian tendencies'... "The leadership complained of a militarist mentality... there were complaints that RFB fighters played 'wild west' with their guns, ...there were reports of bullying within the RFB...etc." Bambery notes with evident relish that there were "constant problems with these squadists who glorified a 'laddish' lifestyle". (No prizes for guessing who he has in mind here) When in 1931, the leadership tried to modify its line, "some squadists even went over to the SA..." In one instance RFB fighters invited SA men into their tavern to join them for beers at Christmas... Bambery clearly regards it as most unfortunate that these attempts "to modify the line" were half hearted. Even the Stalinist leadership were eventually "forced to admit failure... the fight against fascism was now reduced not just simply to the minority of workers grouped around the Communist Party but to the young 'hardmen'..." "Squadism", Bambery concludes "reinforced the blind alley politics of the KPD. It substituted the action of a dedicated minority for that of the masses". So there you have the SWP's analysis in a nutshell. The battle of the streets was not a direct response to the way conditions 'of mass unemployment affected the possibilities of working class action.' It was not a response to the type of politics that caused KPD daily *Die Rote Fahne* to headline, "as a strike movement", a half hour break by 180 workers. It was not because political strikes were no easier to organise than economic ones. It was not a rejection of the 'dead end' politics that led a KPD conference in 1932, to suggest dropping the term Anti-Fascist Action and replacing it with United Action "so as not to alienate Nazi workers". It was not a working class response to fascist aggression. It was not a working class revolt in the face of the leadership capitulation. It was not a de facto rejection of Stalinism. It certainly was not because that up until 1929, the blind alley politics of the Stalinist leadership, dismissed the Nazis as 'a few isolated fanatics'. It was not because at an early stage the left did not confront it physically, and later proved unable to confront it politically. It was not that the Nazis were allowed to set the political agenda. No. It was none of the above. It was exclusively down to a small minority who 'glorified a laddish lifestyle' and who in the process, ruined it for everybody else. In essence this is the corruption at the heart of Bambery's argument, which have resonance needs to confuse the symptom, indeed the remedy, with the disease. Rather than squadism being accepted as a rational response to a condition of apathy and demoralisation; squadism is reproached for being the cause of it. This is not an example of revisionism for its own sake for judging by the current ANL strategy, of all the stalinist tactics judged to be failures, it is clearly only in reference to 'squadism', that they really mean never again. Like all true liberals they refuse to accept that the proper course of action, might not necessarily be either nice or legal. Indeed the opposite, is often the case.

## AT WAR WITH RED ACTION

At War with Society by Tim Hepple  
A Searchlight Publication



Funnily enough, Searchlight mole Tim Hepple's account of his life as a fascist and later, having turned, as an infiltrator inside the BNP is a ringing endorsement of precisely those [squadist] politics the conservative Left reject. Indeed his contempt for the former is palpable, surviving it appears his transition from fascist to anti-fascist. Such was his alienation, that even after his conversion, and operating as a mole, he discovered "he had become quite immune to violence, particularly against left-wingers...all the attacks I got involved in were against brain dead Marxists like the SWP who needed to have some sense kicked into them." In other words business as usual. Given his personal experience as a fascist this is hardly surprising. He describes one incident, when in an effort to re-ingratiate himself with the BNP, he opted for a "suicide method of agitation", a publicly announced, single handed (and successful) attempt to disrupt a Sheffield University student union meeting, held to discuss a Troops Out motion. "I turned up to find 200 screaming students and the 57 varieties of Trotskyism blocking the hall entrance... to stop me getting in... to my delight the reds had taken the bait". After causing complete chaos and enjoying himself thoroughly, the union president then "crawled out to tell me that my action had made the union meeting inoperative as all the potential voters were outside the hall... shouting slogans..." After this series, of, as he describes them "comic events", he concluded that the "left were pathetic weaklings". And so decided to give fascism and the BNP in particular, "one last go". If this response is not atypical, and its not ("Our patrols made various sorties, across the city by the principal streets to the sound of the fascist youth song but without ever meeting resistance...I am convinced they [the socialists] will never make a revolution". Arpinati local black-shirt leader, Bologna, May Day 1920. Euro fascism: The Lessons from the past and current tasks Chris Bambery) then similar left initiatives serve as nothing less than recruiting sergeants for the BNP. Ironically this is just the type of 'mass action', the SWP would have approved, and indeed might have organ-

ised. The antithesis to squadism, and of course effective anti-fascism. Hepple also mentions in passing the result of another attack on a Troops Out meeting, that all ended rather differently. The BNP/UDA/NF, had all joined forces to smash a TOM meeting in London to be addressed by Bernadette McAliskey. Ever security conscious, TOM had assembled a grand total of - six stewards! The BNP/Loyalists numbered about a hundred. AFA stewards, who had not been invited by the organisers, but had been tipped off inadvertently by a now prominent C18 activist, intercepted a BNP contingent enroute to the hall. In the resulting fracas, Edmonds, Morse, Beackon and Lecomber (who took second prize in a later engagement) were all hospitalised. Hepple reports that "Edmonds and Morse looked rather strange. Morse had a black eye and a broken arm whilst Edmonds had a bruised face. Apparently they had cocked up an attack on a republican meeting and suffered the consequences". Hepple also mentions that "photos of the injured parties appeared in a later issue of *British Nationalist*". (This in itself deserves a mention because TOM maintained afterwards that talk of a fascist attack was 'a lie', and even though it was a publicly admitted disaster by the BNP and the UDA, was the lead story in *The St Pancras Chronicle* which spoke of 'running battles and a dozen arrests'. To this day, they [TOM] insist it was all 'an AFA invention'. There must be a moral in here some place?). Hepple also mentions another couple of incidents which have not been publicly accredited. The National Action Party, which Hepple describes "as small but nasty and noisy", was conceived by BNP activist Eddy Morrison in about 1985... "the party collapsed after a group of members [inaugural] meeting in [Kensington] London were ambushed by anti fascists [RED ACTION] and seen off". [our brackets]

Another attack by "unknown assailants" led to the early retirement of BNP "golden boy" Steve Tyler who according to Hepple "oozed respectability was relatively polite well dressed and intelligent". Tyler met his personal 'Waterloo' and was, according to Hepple, "badly beaten while gormlessly standing around Surrey Quays tube station". Jim White, Tyler's election agent who was also left unconscious after the clash with AFA militants, is held responsible by Hepple for dismissing his [Hepple's] warnings - as 'paranoia'. Hepple admits to hating White who he describes variously as "a vicious bastard... a nauseating specimen... and total scum". Appropriately I suppose, White's subsequent view of Red Action mirrors Hepple's view of White. In one particular tirade against "mick bastards,

papist scum and the white division in Ulster". Hepple notes that "White's worst words were left for Red Action, who always come up in BNP conversation. The worst of the lot, total scum. When you bump into them, you know it's a fight for survival; some of them are even skinheads!" Nor is this obsession exclusive to White. Hepple himself admits that faced with the prospect of confronting the aforementioned left him feeling, "distinctly uneasy". The occasion was the trial, at Southwark Crown Court of Edmonds, Lecomber, Blezzard, and four AFA activists, following clashes in Brick Lane in 1991. All six, were charged with violent disorder and affray. About a dozen heavies were considered sufficient to escort Edmonds to court. Hepple comments that "I didn't really know what to expect, but if any of the stories about RED ACTION were true, I felt we were a bit undermined... We were on the verge of falling asleep outside the courtroom when the first group of left wingers turned up. These were not physically impressive, consisting of various people brandishing copies of crap papers like 'The Leninist', *Marvellous*, we thought just a rabble of wimpy reds. The next moment the smiles turned to horror as quite a different group of around twenty large characters lumed up. I found this rather amusing to say the least, but I was also rather worried. I remembered that none of these guys would really know that I was really on their side. I don't know if this was the much feared RED ACTION, but I suppose that it was. This was the only time I saw the BNP thugs terrified. They all looked pale and worried and were muttering on about the need for reinforcements..." No further comment necessary.

Quite apart from a unique insight into fascist thinking and psychology, 'At War with Society' also provides an interesting guide to contemporary fascist analysis. Hepple offers the view that in his opinion, "it is in local elections where the BNP can do most damage..." After Beackon's election the perceived wisdom is that this was due entirely to 'special' conditions. Not so according to Hepple. Even in the mid 80's "Edmonds was able to truthfully claim that on one South London estate he could sell a copy of *British Nationalist* to one in three households. This is still true today throughout South and East London..." Long before Paddy Ashdown's series of enquiries, the Liberals in East London were universally known by the BNP as 'London's secret racist party'. Assuming the local electorate share this knowledge, and in the event of the Liberals cleaning up their act the beneficiaries would be the far-right rather than the left. For as Hepple recalls, Edmonds and Morse never tired of repeating the same idea, "They hate Labour, Tim, believe me they hate Labour..." And the ANL's appeal to the white working class? - THE TORIES ARE THE REAL ENEMY! As Sean Conroy, might say, "Shutting rong der shurley!"

## REVIEWS

Since the mid eighties the SWP's reputation for direct confrontation on the streets has not been matched by reality. A number of groups have taken on the SWP's mantle and Red Action is one of the most prominent. It was set up in 1981 by a small caucus expelled from the SWP for organising gangs to attack National Front members. Their methods were so violent that even the SWP did not want to know them.

**Who's Who In The New Politics Of Violence. Evening Standard - 20th October 1993**

Red Action believes in fighting fascist organisations and supporting Irish Republicanism - to which end members have been recruited to help in low level terrorist activities...its members are almost indistinguishable from the far Right, favouring crew cuts, bomber jackets and heavy boots: The message is unsuitable violence can change society.

**Who's Who In The New Politics Of Violence. Evening Standard - 20th October 1993**

Formed in 1985 as a legitimate protest group by Unmesh Desai of the Newham Monitoring Project (NMP) to oppose far Right groups, but has been hijacked by activists from Red Action. The new style AFA has appalled NMP which has condemned its "intensely paranoid almost paramilitary tactics".

**Who's Who In The New Politics Of Violence. Evening Standard - 20th October 1993**

Anti-Fascist Action also known as Red Action also known as The James Connolly Society, organised an attack on an Orange Parade on 19th June, when ten of these nutters were injured prior to being arrested. SMASH IRA MURDER GANG...SMASH AFA...SMASH THE JAMES CONNOLLY SOCIETY...SMASH THE UNEMPLOYED WORKERS CENTRE...VICTORY TO THE ULSTER LOYALISTS

**Red Hand (Loyalist Prisoners Welfare Association) Issue 22 Airdrie**

I bought a range of papers for Edmonds and Morse to read back at HQ. Red Action would them up the most, with Class War and Socialist Worker vying for second place.

**Searchlight mole Tim Hepple: At War With Society**

White's worst words were left for Red Action, who always came up in BNP conversation, "The worst of the lot, total scum. When you bump into them, you know its a fight for survival; some of them are even skinheads!"

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Marvellous, we thought just a rabble of wimpy reds. The next moment the smiles turned to looks of horror as quite a different group of around twenty large characters turned up. I don't know whether or not this was the much feared Red Action but I suppose that it was. This was the only time I saw the BNP thugs terrified. They all looked pale and worried and were muttering on about the need for reinforcements.

**Searchlight mole Tim Hepple: At War With Society**

Soccer supporters are being conned into backing the IRA by buying a sick "fan" magazine. The £1 magazine, produced by a London-based paramilitary group called Red Action, prints terrorist propaganda alongside football chat stories. Red Action- blamed for two bombings on London's Underground - boast they have given £400 of its profits to "Irish Republican POW's" - convicted terrorists in jail.

**News of the World - January 30 1994  
(Issue No. 8 of 'Tioctaidh ar La' fanzine now available form Glasgow P.O. Box)**

# A THREE CORNERED FIGHT

The function of militant anti-fascism is as previously stated to separate those who want to fight from those that do not.

A confrontational attitude to fascism is aligned, to or derivative of, an equally confrontational attitude to the capitalist state. In contrast the likes of Searchlight, ARA or ANL, regard the state as a potential ally. The ANL's reason for being is to make this potential a reality. The strategy behind the Welling march was to bring pressure to bear on the appropriate authorities, to do something. Talk of 'ripping the building apart brick by brick' was intended to be taken metaphorically rather than literally. Paul Holborow, when challenged, dismissed the phrase as 'nothing more than rhetorical flourish'. Some anarchists like Class War no strangers to rhetoric themselves, adopt the polar position. Unlike Searchlight/ARA/ANL, the 'State' is the problem rather than the solution. For them the fascists, and the state are one and the same. The police are simply better organised. As they explain it, the fascist party and the police not only serve a similar function, but are in fact the same opponent! "For most people their experience of fascism is not the BNP it is the police..." (World in Action, 5.11.93) In strategic terms, they refuse to acknowledge the operational independence of the police, or the political independence of the BNP. For them it is all terror and violence. For them fascism and parliamentary democracy are the same thing; "...we cannot distinguish between them..." (Class War issue 61).

As defined by much of the left; anti-racism = anti-fascism. And anti-fascism = ARA, or the ANL + State v BNP. The alternative version might see it as, State + BNP v Class

## PRIME SUSPECTS

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE  
UK, were each working to their own agenda. Now they have agreed to bury their factional differences, and unite for what one activist called, "a ruck that will make Welling look like a tea party..." The spokesperson for the mythical alliance was it later transpired, a member of Class War. In a follow up World in Action 'exposé', which was no more than a televisual rerun of the piece in the Evening Standard, a Class War spokesman put up his hands to the violence, and justified attacks on the police.

"For most people the police are the organised fascists..." etc. As on the previous occasion after Trafalgar Square, with the media desperate for a scapegoat, this outfit, again, seemed more than willing to play the allotted 'Lee Harvey' role; of patsy. Confidently pencilled in as scapegoats in 1990, before the event, three years later (in accord with the MO) they apparently pencil themselves in, this time as Judas goats after it.

No Red Action houses were raided. The Standard scoop on the sloop, proved over confident. The 'gotcha type', celebration was premature. At the time when Red Action were according to M15, attacking the police, Red Action were in fact involved in a confrontation with C18 some distance away in Abbey Wood. We had an alibi. In addition, the massive fifty hours of video footage proved the innocence of the individuals targeted, if only by default. If you're not on it, you weren't in it!

The motivation for this skulduggery seems clear. The liberal establishment is split between the ANL and ARA. While all are agreed that what is needed is a united all encompassing anti-racist movement, on the lines of the French SOS Racisme, opinion is divided as to who represents the most suitable vehicle. A vehicle that is to channel all popular protest peacefully and properly back towards resolution by parliament. The 16th of October was chosen as a kind of showdown. Rival marches were planned for the same day. The biggest and best supported march would be adjudged the winner. The winner thereafter accepted as the sole legitimate representative of the anti racist anti-fascist tradition. If judged by that criteria

about, the ANL would have come out a clear winner. Except there was a 'riot'. So as far as the liberals were concerned all bets were off. At least until after the stewards inquiry. Certainly the anti racist movement needed to be a



Liberal Establishment divided: Ken Livingstone, left, condemns the ANL, whose leading supporters include Peter Hain, right.

broad church, but not one so broad as to be open to manipulation by extremists. ARA while proving itself sufficiently conservative in one regard, also showed it didn't have the pulling power of its slightly more radical rival. It was also clear that whoever was eventually publicly endorsed couldn't prosper with critics to its left, who might profit from disillusionment with its failure. Therein lay the dilemma. For this is of course as true for the ANL, as it is for ARA. So instead of dismissing ARA or condemning the ANL out of hand, bets were hedged.

ARA though holding the high moral ground, by following the tradition, according to a Times editorial of, 'the Jarrow march rather than the Gordon riots', lacked street credibility. So numbers marching behind its banner were dutifully, boosted in press reporters from a generous 3500 in the Times on Monday, to 5000 by the same evening. By Wednesday the figure was 10,000 ('ES'). (Original estimates put the figure at between 1000 and 1500.)

Elaborate, maybe? But the militants need to be taken out of the picture for two reasons. The leadership of the anti-fascist movement is still up for grabs. As long as the militant tradition exists it would be foolhardy to be seen to offer sponsorship. But if the liberal establishment don't provide leadership, then someone else will. Possibly the same dubious elements that "seek to subvert capitalism and the established order", the Times warned

about. And as the same editorial pointed out, support for the BNP does represent "a very real but mostly unarticulated concern about racial issues". As long as the militants are rampant these issues cannot be addressed. The issues cannot

the FN but it was still a "wonderful" achievement. And it represented the unity the Left here clamour after. AFA it appears is the only obstacle. Everyone else appears to agree on the fundamentals. If AFA cannot be ostracised, and isolated politically, then the Times offers a solution.

"Last month the police arrested 57 suspected BNP members believed to be planning the disruption of a demonstration. Equally firm pre-emptive action is clearly needed to stop the militant troublemakers hijacking future protests, even if this means restricting rights of free assembly in a handful of cases"

And of course today in France the 'concern on racial issues is indeed being articulated. Immigration Zero is the watchword for the 90's. The minister who coined the phrase is, coincidentally, the same Raymond Barre who instigated the clampdown on the 'extremists' in the 80's. Fascism by stealth. The Times editorial concluded approvingly, "the remarks made by Paul Condon the Metropolitan commissioner...suggest that he has an admirable grasp of the problem." Fortunately, so do we.

## WE ARE RED ACTION

The collapse of Soviet communism has signalled the end of an era. Capitalism's golden age defined by the economic and political certainties of the Cold War, has turned to crisis. As a discipline on the entire working class, mass unemployment is restored as a permanent condition. As capitalism expanded, many reforms such as nationalisation, implemented to serve the needs of capital, also served the needs of society. As capitalism contracts, deindustrialisation and the return to the principal of privatisation in health, public transport, housing and education sustains the profits of the wealthy directly at society's expense. In the short term, open conflict within and between classes is certain. Ultimately, the choice faced will be government without consent or social revolution.

Leninism, which decreases the interests of the working class are subordinate to the will of one revolutionary party, is the decisive influence on the far left. An apologist for the authoritarian state, it advertises the lie that dictatorship (ie minority rule) can be progressive. This betrayal mocks the theory and practice of Marx and Engels and any notion of independent working class initiative. The surrender of the political ground to the opponents of total social change has paralysed the working class internationally.

Sectionarian division on the left continues to be a comfort to a system which socialism promised to replace. Factious, whose immaculate programmes for party dictatorship result in the pursuit of goals exclusive to themselves, contribute nothing to the real movement of the working class, except to help delay its political renaissance. In all essentials reactionary, they are the socialists of the previous generation.

Anarchism, which claims to be a libertarian alternative to Leninism, could never work. Anarchism means the principled opposition to the exercise of any authority. Accordingly, even the most perfect democracy would be regarded by anarchism as authoritarian as it means the imposition of a social decision by a majority on a minority. The answer to bureaucratic authority is democratic authority, not the abolition of authority.

We must start afresh.

In every country the working class possesses one striking advantage over the capitalists - numbers. However, numbers without unity and unity without organisation is free of political advantage. The purpose of a revolutionary working class organisation is to raise the working class to the position of the ruling class. To transfer political power from the minority to the majority.

Unconditional democracy is the sole political form through which the aspirations of the majority can then be exercised and made secure. A revolutionary organisation must always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole. It must be working class in instinct, composition and orientation. It must be built in a democratic manner from the bottom up, rather than by decree from the top down. Direct democratic control by working people over their own organisations is the necessary preparation for the future rule of working people over their own countries.

## WE ARE THE REDS!

Supporting membership for a year is £5. Make cheque/p.o. out to Red Action. You will receive a subscription to the paper, a regular newsletter and notification of RA activities. Subscription to the paper is still available at £3 for 5 issues.

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