

# RED ACTION

Issue No.70 Spring 1995 — 50p

## TALKING TO THE ENEMY

# IRA CARDS ON TABLE

**M**uch has happened since the IRA declared a ceasefire on August 31st. Republican delegates have, for the first time in 70 years met publicly with British government representatives. Troops have not been seen on the streets of Derry since Christmas, and have recently been removed from the streets of Belfast during daylight hours. A Loyalist ceasefire has been in place since the 13th of October. Two new organisations, the Progressive Unionist Party, and the Unionist Democratic Party representing the interests of the UVF and the UFF respectively, have entered the political arena. Neither have any electoral mandate. PUP have one Belfast councillor. "Our mandate" as one put it: "is the silence of the guns." Irish Taoiseach Albert Reynolds, considered at one time vital to the peace process, has resigned. John Hume, the 'architect', is the forgotten man. Instead Adams/McGuinness hold centre stage. The Newry robbery used by elements in the media to fan the flames of the 'hawks and doves' scenario refused to ignite. Neither did the semtex probably planted by military intelligence in Enniskillen. Coupled with the suspicion that the government is possibly being misinformed by its own intelligence service; such a hawks and doves scenario might well exist, but possibly a little closer to home. It is against this background that the hesitant backward march toward British withdrawal continues.

Britain finally accepted that the IRA ceasefire, if not permanent, has been 'progressively confirmed.' The attempt to exclude Sinn Fein from the economic conference in Belfast in December was overturned following international pressure. The prerequisite for all party talks on the constitutional future of the Six Counties, are according to the British: 'the surrender of arms and explosives by the IRA'. Nobody, including the RUC, accepts this demand as realistic. As Martin McGuinness said on Newsnight: "I am not aware of any conflict in history being settled by one side handing over their weapons." So, if talks are to take place the Republican movement will, metaphorically speaking, be bringing its guns to the negotiating table. Or to be more precise, it will be cards on the table - guns under it.

How does any of this square with the assertion trumpeted by the British Left,



that the IRA had 'surrendered'. "Even Arafat" according to the SWP, "got Gaza, Adams has got nothing!" Given that negotiations had not even begun, and would not do so for another six months, this crowing over the alleged IRA capitulation was to say the least somewhat premature. Stripped to the essentials the argument loses the facade of objectivity and is revealed as merely vindictive and slightly hysterical wishful thinking. Republican capitulation is what the middle class left would have liked to have happened. As a consequence they are loath to accept that the IRA have not only bombed their way to the negotiating table, they have bombed Britain there.

Since probably the early eighties, the war in Ireland had been locked in stalemate. This is a fact acknowledged by all sides. The IRA could not be beaten, but neither could they win. The same applied to the British but they were much happier as long as the situation could be contained "at an acceptable level of violence." So the onus was always on the IRA to break the deadlock. That they recognised that the responsibility lay with them was reflected in a 'com' from a leading provo smuggled out of Crumlin road jail in 1989. He wrote:

"Hoping that this talk of bringing the armed struggle to a conclusion that McGuinness and co. are talking about bears fruit as I've thrown up my hands on at least two occasions. Whether we have the ability to break out of the containment the Brits are imposing on the war I think is crucial to the ultimate success/failure of the

conflict".

To break out of the containment' the IRA recognised they had no option but to up the ante. This they did, and for the first time since the 1970's more troops needed to be drafted into the region. As a complimentary response; military intelligence helped restructure and refurbish loyalist murder gangs. For years almost dormant, the old leadership, small time gangsters primarily concerned with petty racketeering, were ousted and in their place came 'The Joint Loyalist Military Command'. Overnight military intelligence had at their disposal pro-government, efficient but deniable death squads.

The war continued at a brisker pace, with the nationalist population taking the brunt of it. And then the IRA hit the City. Then a year later almost to the day, 'the IRA returned'. Having just recovered, the City was once again devastated in more ways than one. The very existence of the financial services offered by the City, which represents about 20% of GNP, almost as much as the manufacturing industry, was undeniably in serious jeopardy. Not surprisingly, all connected were in severe shock. So much so, that after the Baltic Exchange explosion, the media, normally so adept at exploiting any propaganda value that might accrue from civilian deaths, were so aghast at the financial loss and its implications, that, for over two days of intensive coverage, they barely mentioned the civilian casualties at all. John Major had to go on television to publicly remind them. Of

Bishopsgate, film maker Neil Jordan, who regarded the war in Ireland as futile said "The one bomb which

really shook the heart of the establishment was the one in the City which destroyed the entire fucking area. I think one person died, which is tragic, but maybe that kind of action makes sense."

*There had of course been IRA bombing campaigns before but this time the Army Council knew they had found the underbelly of the beast. And Britain knew they knew. So the establishment 'cried uncle' and from then, initially in secret, negotiations in earnest began.*

Of course the IRA have been to the negotiating table (or nearly there) before. Secret talks between members of the leadership of the IRA, and a number of Protestant clergymen took place in Feakle, Co Clare in 1974. This was to lead to one of the longest and most controversial truces during the IRA's armed struggle. When news of the talks were leaked, a clergymen, Dr Butler, commenting in the Times said: "We were all most impressed with their attitude, with their fairmindedness, and we were so pleased to find that they were talking seriously and deeply and with great conviction and had listened very carefully to what we had to say." This time the IRA are talking directly to the government, and in public, which allows everyone the opportunity for the first time to listen very carefully to what they say. Given the history of British duplicity this is important. A point underlined by Martin McGuinness who recently described his first face to face meeting with the British establishment in 1972 as 'unreal'. This time the negotiations are very real, but as the republican leadership has stressed again and again: "Negotiations are an 'area of struggle...not the end of the struggle". Nor are republicans likely to forget that the last time the IRA met the British over the negotiating table in

# GUNS UNDER IT!

1922, the talks ended in partition of their country and civil war.

*Whether or not the Irish delegation were overawed by the power of the Empire at its zenith or bamboozled by Lloyd George is a moot point, but in any case: "this generation of republicans," Martin McGuinness flatly states, "is not going to be fooled by their fancy diplomatic language."*

So, the question must be asked, if a solution is to be found, who is going to be fooled by the fancy diplomatic language?

Unionism, already divided between the fundamentalism of Paisley and the essential conservatism of Molyneux, is divided again on class lines, with the emergence from the shadows of the political wings of the loyalist paramilitaries. For too long according to the PUP/UFF, the loyalist working class have been manipulated by the "fur coat brigade." In his Guardian column, Edward Pearce insists that having talked with a group of them at length he was "seriously impressed. These are the men" he gushed, "who as adolescents and young men handled explosives for King Billy and went to jail for it, who treated that jail as a university and learned to think themselves into a highly rational moderation." (If Edward Pearce thinks PUP are moderates then who are the extremists?) Nationalists and republicans are predictably less sanguine. They argue that military intelligence has had a controlling influence over the UFF/UVF during the war and so it is to be expected that they retain a similar influence over the political wings during the peace. "There have been consistent rumours that there is a considerable MI5 involvement with elements within the DUP and PUP," according to Gerry Adams. A pamphlet has circulated in Belfast recently accusing David Irvine leading

## Zapatista statement see page 10

Continued page 4

Following routine clashes between police and demonstrators in Hyde Park in the aftermath of the demonstration against the Criminal Justice Bill on Sunday 8th October, the headlines for much of the subsequent week spoke of a 'conspiracy' and the discovery of a 'blueprint for riot'. The right wing press were clearly ecstatic at this 'discovery', for, prior to this, the organisers including a number of Labour MPs were demanding a public inquiry into police behavior, and more importantly, the motive behind the curious tactics adopted on the day.

These included: coaches being moved from the designated pick up points at Park Lane which left people milling around unable to leave the area; sealing all exits from Hyde Park Park Speakers Corner, thus forcing people into Oxford St and denying individuals who wished to avoid the skirmishing the opportunity to do so. And perhaps the most sinister allegation; that the CS canister, which according to reports signalled the beginning of the trouble, was thrown from behind police lines! Interviewed live on the Tuesday evening news, a police representative insisted rather unconvincingly that his men were the victims rather than the perpetrators; police intelligence, he insisted, had 'warned of trouble'. 'If that was indeed the case,' the interviewer inquired, 'why were 1000 officers sent home at 4 o'clock?' Plod mumbled, and looking increasingly shifty, was then handed, live on air, a piece of paper. He was a man transformed. He flourished it triumphantly as if it were a latterday 'Zinoviev letter'. Here was 'the proof' he crowed. He told the interviewer that he had just been handed a copy of a Class War leaflet found at the scene, which he then quoted from liberally. Here, according to him, was the incontrovertible evidence that the march had been '...hi-jacked by extremists.'

Following this revelation, the interview ended, and with any speculation about a public inquiry abandoned the right wing press went on the offensive; "BLUEPRINT FOR RIOT" screamed the headline in the Daily Mail. The Sun and The Daily Telegraph, recognising that the police were off the hook, were equally jubilant.

Needless to say, this account of events was very much at odds with the organisers' and participants' actual experiences. Significantly, only Class War, the left's very own Lee Harvey Oswald, and predictable fall guy for the propaganda smear, saw fit to support the police account. In the Class War paper issue 65, an eye witness account insists: "The police were swamped and we gave them everything, burning bins, sticks, bricks, paving slabs, park bench planks, cans filled with sand, bottles and scaffolding poles.... Sometimes we had them in full flight, the best riot police in the Met were chased away in all directions....we done brilliant. The police with all their equipment and reinforcements simply lost control." Two thousand paramilitary police lost control? Really? Well how then did they regain control? What Class War describe as a 'classic flanking move,' other Anarchist publications readily acknowledge was a deliberate manoeuvre by the police to drive the remaining protesters in the direction of Oxford St. 'Eyewitness' mentions in passing: "Demonstrators in coaches who lobbed missiles onto the cops as

# Daily Mail

As Left blame police, truth about anarchists who planned the violence weeks before

## BLUEPRINT FOR A RIOT



# BIG BOYS RULES OK

they drove by." Presumably they broke their own coach windows first? Class War also insist 'the police took a kicking' and that scaffolding poles and paving slabs were used to good effect but only six police were injured.

According to Class War "Those not on the demo have had to make do with the crap the press have dealt out." And presumably those on the demo are expected to continue to make do with the crap Class War have dealt out! Not least those on charges of riot etc.

The editorial, issue 65: "Class War has been accused by the capitalist press of inciting the riot that followed the recent anti Criminal Justice Bill demo in London. This is not true. We do not have to incite people to hate the police. It comes naturally.... The police, making excuses for getting a kicking, say that we organised the riot. No, even disorganised as we are, we still have the strength to hold the police at bay for hours in the playground of the world's super rich. That's why the police hate Class War so much. Meanwhile, the best criticism the Sun could come up with was the existence of spelling mistakes and bad grammar in our leaflet. But we can't complain, as they managed a fine job of distributing our propaganda to a further three million people, by reproducing our leaflet."

*Distributing 'our' propaganda! Considering that the leaflet in question consisted largely of an explanation on how to throw a brick, has it not dawned on them that if the Sun, Mail and Telegraph, saw fit to reproduce it, this was only because it fitted so precisely with the police version of events: a conspiracy against the police rather than as the organisers had tentatively begun to suggest, a conspiracy by the police and so evidence proving the existence of that leaflet was regarded by the media as the vital part of - their propaganda!*

Neither is it credible

subject to precisely the same modus operandi have all ended in chaos and mutual recrimination. The process is by now familiar: first deny all avenue of escape, exits from park, close tube stations, block off side roads, move coaches etc. Next split the march in two, and attack the section attempting to continue moving forward: on television this now looks like the front of the march attacking police lines. Use insufficient numbers to quell disturbances,

confirming impression of police under pressure, forcing retreats, fierce fighting etc. Finally commander all film footage and photographs of events to study 'evidence', intimidate media and refine techniques. In addition, to the immediate propaganda value the 'riots' are in themselves a firm guarantee of further police powers. Hyde Park 'proved' the need for the Criminal Justice Bill etc. Meanwhile the streets of London are being used as the ideal training ground by the 'Met' in preparation for the 'real' riots of the future.

Let's be clear about something. *Red Action* has no problem with people defending themselves against the police, or attacking the police, and would

certainly be the last to condemn the use of violence in pursuit of political ends. For instance at Trafalgar Square, members of *Red Action* were involved in the thick of the fighting, and indeed led the attack on police protecting South Africa House. However, commending individual courage is totally different from collaborating with the subsequent state version of events, simply for the sake of media notoriety, or so that the forces of anarchism appear as fearsome as advertised.

Having suffered the indignity of being dismissed by the Observer as 'class disagreement' and 'about as threatening as the residents of an average student bar' by another paper, the police riot in Welling in October 1993 provided Class War with the opportunity to bounce back. On this occasion however, the state had other fish to fry. This time *Red Action* and the black nationalist Panther UK were initially pencilled in to play the role of 'outside agitator'. (Though Panther UK have no record of street politics, the rumour that the initial incident at Welling was sparked by a group of six fit black men who then disappeared, may have necessitated their inclusion) On Monday the London Evening Standard duly 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..." However, when afforded the opportunity both organisations vehemently denied the allegation; pinning responsibility firmly on the police. In his book, *'Turning Up the Heat'* Larry O'Hara accepts: "It is hard to disagree with *Red Action's* analysis that the riot was organised by the police, right down to predicting in advance the precise location of the trouble, ensuring that it was there that the police lines would be weakest."

*Once again Class War to the rescue. This time they went a step further. Not only did Class War accept the blame for the police riot; they managed in doing so to accommodate the original state version, by confirming that Red Action and Panther UK were involved - as well!*

"Extremist left wing and anarchist groups who sparked Saturdays riot are now preparing to work

together....Class War, *Red Action* and Panther UK 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...'" (Evening Standard 20/10/1993). By the time *World in Action* got on the case, Anti-Fascist Action were also in the frame as well. Naturally Class War took advantage of this additional opportunity to confirm the police version of events: 'police are the real fascists etc.' Since then, an internal police document which came to light during the trial of an ANL steward arrested at Welling, reveals that 'flawed' police tactics were responsible for the trouble. Interestingly, Scotland Yard continues to maintain that the tactics used were 'appropriate.'

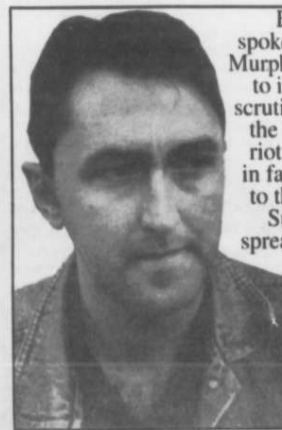
In their own defence Class War might say that in contrast to the mouse like attitude of the Trotskyites when faced with similar allegations, the gung ho defiance exhibited by their spokespersons when challenged by the media raises working class consciousness. And as a consequence this tactic is both necessary and justifiable. Even if any of this were true, serious credibility problems remain. In the first place, there is nothing about Class War custom and practice that politically distinguishes it from Trotskyism in any way, this chestbeating fetish apart. Secondly, their acknowledged craving for publicity takes no account of its objective effect. Even if on the question of motivation Class War is given the benefit of the doubt, and the justification as outlined is accepted at face value, the actual consequence of this play acting can seem time and time again to achieve the opposite to what they might claim was intended. The truth on each occasion would prove far more subversive. Yet, still they persist.

*No doubt, had Class War been in Derry in 1972, would they have felt justified in acknowledging British claims that it was in fact they, rather than the paras, who fired the first shot on the grounds that they were anti-imperialist and anyway the Brits were an occupying army. Lord Widgery would certainly have felt indebted for such a contribution. Had they been in Berlin in 1938, would they also have felt that Goebbels had done their anti-fascist reputation "a big favour" by implying that they had been responsible for setting fire to the Reichstag?*

Call me old fashioned, but the function of the traditional agent provocateur - which required that he do something imaginative in the name of an individual, organisation, or movement that would provide the police with the opportunity to discredit them - still holds nostalgic appeal. Now, due largely to Class War's insatiable headline hunger, this practice has been made largely redundant. Today, the police, rather than planting provocateurs in a crowd to cause an incident, simply walk over and start beating people over the head, trample them with horses, or run them down in vans, confident in the knowledge that in the eyes of the media at least, the Class War propaganda machine can be relied on to exonerate them.

Even on the odd occasion a denial is made, it inevitably carries an air of false modesty: "...they said we organised the whole riot, and the Trafalgar Square riot in 1990. We can't admit to this..." The impression of tongue firmly in cheek, fingers crossed is just as contrived.

Britain is a right wing country. The Criminal Justice Bill is part of an agenda to allow it to move further to the right. The working class are in retreat, and have been for at least a quarter of a century. Bluff and bluster, or wishing and pretending the opposite is the case, is no substitute for a strategy. Class War believe: "Politics must be fun." Well, they've had their fun. The time for joking is long over. The Class War Federation is being used. Either the membership are witlessly unaware, or they are witlessly indifferent. It is incumbent on Class War to come to terms with this reality or disband. From now on, we in Britain must all learn to play by big boy's rules.



Ex-Class War spokesman, Andy Murphy. Subjected to intense media scrutiny following the Trafalgar Sq. riot in 1990, was in fact introduced to the public in a Sunday People spread two weeks earlier.



# Keep the Faith!

Dear Red Action,

Just a few lines to say thanks for your recent support - all of us really appreciated it, and have enjoyed reading the paper that you gave us. We're all still here, despite Home Office claims to the contrary. Still, as the boys South-Side would say, "No-one likes us, we don't care!"

That's all for now, take care and all of us send our best! Keep the faith!

Andy Russell, JAO 233

Whitemoor Jail

Andy Russell and the rest of the Whitemoor escapees have since been moved to Belmarsh Jail, South-East London.

## Free Sion Roberts!

Dear Red Action,

In March 1993 Sion Aubrey Roberts, a Welsh socialist republican, was sentenced to 9 years in jail for allegedly sending explosive devices through the post to various targets, including Tory MPs and police officers.

Sion's co-defendants, Dafydd Gareth Davies and Dewi Pryor Williams (the Gwynedd 3), were found not guilty of conspiring to cause explosions (as was Sion) and released after 15 months on remand.

Sion Roberts was framed. He is the victim of an MI5/police joint operation to criminalise the Welsh tradition of militant republicanism. The MI5 sting operation was aimed at Y Cyfamodwyr, who were targeted for their support for Melbion Glyndwr, the organisation responsible for the arson campaign against Welsh holiday homes. Neither Sion or his co-defendants are members of Melbion Glyndwr.

The trial of Sion Roberts cost more than £1 million. Details of the surveillance operation against Sion revealed in court included the use of 38 MI5 operatives to follow Sion on a Welsh language demo. MI5 admit burgling Sion's flat to plant bugging equipment. Sion believes that it was MI5 who planted explosives in his flat which the police later "found" on his arrest. The "bombs" he is alleged to have sent were believed so dangerous by the police that, instead of the bomb disposal squad, they sent a single WPC to collect them from the sorting office!

As the Welsh socialist republican organisation Cymru Goch puts it, "MI5 has operated in Wales for decades, from spying on Communist activists in the '30s, to CND in the '60s and miners in the '80s". In 1982 the Welsh Socialist Republican Movement was targeted in a similar conspiracy trial, and effectively crushed as a result. 1994 saw the trial of a Colour Party in support of Melbion Glyndwr (including Sion's brother) - this time the trial collapsed. Cymru Goch themselves have endured regular surveillance, interference with their mail and disruption of their election campaigns at the hands of the state. Cymru Goch haven't run for cover as a result. They observe "The state will learn lessons from this farcical show trial. Socialists and patriots in Wales must do the same and ensure that it is politically impossible for the state to lock up activists like this. The state fears a community-based resistance movement more than any 'terrorist'...A significant part of the Welsh population have shown their support for Melbion Glyndwr by sheltering them for 14 years. That's what frightens our bosses - that people denied democracy by the British state will decide enough is enough. Melbion Glyndwr exists because of the crisis facing Welsh workers - a crisis of jobs, housing and colonialism. The Gwynedd 3 were fighting that injustice and we will continue to fight that injustice: Free Sion, a Welsh Political Prisoner."

Letters of support can be sent to Sion at: Roberts BJ3795, HMP Full Sutton, YORK YO4 4TS.

Both Sion and his mother, who has to travel to visit him, need financial support. Send donations and requests for further information to:

Cymru Goch, PO Box 661, Wrecsam, Clwyd, LL11 1QU.

# "Justice and Dignity"

In February 1994, while employed as lecturer at the University of Central Lancashire, Feilim o hAdhmaill was arrested in a car, which was found to contain explosives. He was charged with conspiracy to cause explosions.

When the 'trial' started in October 1994 Feilim refused to recognise the court, arguing that he was a



political hostage and should be treated as such - not tried before a criminal court. He did not challenge any of the 'evidence' presented by the prosecution, and he was sentenced to 25 years.

Feilim sent Red Action the following statement:

I was born in England in 1958, the son of a Belfast father and a Fermanagh mother, who had come to England in search of employment. Soon after my birth my family returned to Ireland, to my father's home community in the Falls Road area of West Belfast. That is where I grew up, went to school, and spent the bulk of my life.

When I was 7 my family moved to a 'mixed' Protestant/Catholic area in North Belfast. It was there that I found out what a Fenian bastard was; I was one! When I was 11 the pogrom of 1969 occurred, and virtually all my Catholic friends in the area were burned out of their homes. Our home was



## More Black Propaganda

Comrades,

You published an article headed "Black Propaganda and Black Flag" in the summer edition of Red Action. In this article you attempt to portray the positions held by Black Flag and by the Anarchist Communist Federation as typical of the anarchist position on Ireland. You rightly accuse both these organisations of having fallen for black propaganda put out by the British establishment in the way they describe the Republican movement.

However in trying to present these organisations as typical of the anarchist line on Ireland you are engaging in some black propaganda yourselves. What you have done in fact is selected the couple of arguments that agree with the particular image of anarchism you wish to present and have ignored others with different positions. A bit like trying to characterise Republicans by the actions of the I.P.L.O.

Anarchist groups have held a wide variety of positions in relation to the war in Ireland, almost as wide, in fact, as those held by Marxist groups. You however ignore such publications as 'The Spirit of Freedom' (Attack International) which offered uncritical support for the Provos, and groups who clearly based the war on the British state such as the Direct Action Movement. You ignore the similar positions held by most other anarchist groups worldwide, the recent Troops Out march in Dublin included not only Irish anarchists, but also anarchists from France, Spain and Italy. You also ignore the positions held by both anarchist groups which currently exist in Ireland itself, Organise and the Workers Solidarity Movement.

The position put forward by the ACF is not typical of an anarchist approach to imperialism. It is in fact a Marxist position, held by many of those groups who identify themselves as council communist. Neither the ACF nor the Council Communists they are influenced by make any bones about the fact that they see their politics as being close to each other in this respect. It is worth noting that in their attitudes to trade unions, anarchism and Leninism, Red Action would also seem to be in this tradition.

Taking Workers Solidarity as an example, almost every issue of the paper has contained an article on the Six Counties which includes the statement that Britain is the cause of the problems. The short political statement that has appeared in every issue of the paper includes "We are opposed to the British state's presence and to partition." They have also published a pamphlet called "Ireland and British Imperialism," which explains how Britain engineered the situation in the Six Counties. It is hard to believe that you could be unaware of these publications. The obvious conclusion being that the selectivity of this article was deliberate.

The reason for this selectivity is presumably found when you refer to "a debate within the anti-fascist movement over what Red Action members would largely perceive to be almost one and the same - loyalism and fascism. The opposition to this perception has emanated from those who would describe themselves as anarchists." It would appear that instead of taking this debate head on you would prefer to avoid it, by suggesting anarchists might as well be in the pay of MI5. Such a method of argument is not new from the left, but it is surprising coming from an organisation that claims to be libertarian. It is in fact the method developed by Leninism to defend the crushing of workers democracy in the USSR by suggesting that all those who opposed them were

and in the Irish language movement. It was a combination of my experiences at community level and my reading which really informed my politics.

It was in Twinbrook that I first met and became friendly with Bobby Sands. His death in 1981 had a profound impact on me, as it had on countless thousands of others. People often accuse republicans of inflicting suffering. They rarely acknowledge that it is republicans and the wider nationalist community in the North who have suffered the most as a result of both the conflict and the war resulting from it. The heartbreak caused by the deaths of the two children in Warrington is no different from that caused by the deaths of Carole Anne Kelly, Julie Livingstone, Majella O'Hare etc etc, and countless others - all children killed in Ireland by British soldiers, none of whom were ever charged with these killings.

I have known many people who have been killed, injured or jailed as a result of the war. No-one can say that I do not want peace in Ireland. I want it for my children, and for my children's children. But I want justice and dignity for them also.

## ATTENTION!

It is apparent from a number of recent complaints that mail to and, on occasion, from Red Action is being interfered with. This is of course not entirely unexpected. Such direct interference has long been a fact of life for Anti-Fascist Action. Apart from the confusion caused by loss of correspondence, there is also an element of demoralisation involved as a result of a subscriber sending money and not receiving any response to related enquiries. Inevitably, if this is not resolved, this results in a loss of goodwill.

It is in order to minimise the disruption caused that we are alerting our readers and supporters. We are also inviting you, from January 1, to send any subscriptions, donations, postal orders, etc, by registered post. In addition to making the possibility of interference more difficult, a claim for compensation can be made against the Post Office, if anything subsequently goes missing.

In one recent case, the mysterious disappearance of fifty books was cleared up almost immediately after a compensation claim for £500 was registered!

For our part, we will ensure that all mail received will be answered by return of post. If you have any complaints, or if you require or wish to relay information concerning fascist or anti-fascist activities, we recommend that you contact Anti-Fascist Action direct on;

061 232 0813.

consciously or unconsciously white guards. AF, Dublin.

DUBLIN RED ACTION REPLY- In reply to your letter there are a number of points that must be addressed.

The most important point is the accusation that Red Action have used 'Leninist' tactics to tarnish the 'Republican' reputation of anarchists in general and the Workers Solidarity Movement in particular. The reality of the positions adopted by groups across the spectrum of anarchist politics to the war in the 6 counties, before the ceasefire, is that there is very little difference between any of them. While the likes of the ACF, Black Flag etc have an extreme pro-British line, those groups you refer to favourably, WSM and DAM, considered the IRA an impediment to the satisfactory resolution of the conflict. To people living in the sectarian statelet under British occupation these perceived differences are just semantics. With the IRA's ceasefire taking effect will we now see the scenario propagated by most of the left as an excuse for not supporting the armed struggle, that of "Working class unity across the sectarian divide"?

It is ironic that anarchists, who see themselves as anti-state, should find themselves lined up in an anti-Republican position with the Trots/Stalinists/Leninists, and ultimately with the state itself. I'm afraid the appearance of a small number of anarchists on a moderate Republican march in Dublin (and the fact that you boast about it in your letter) is a sad reflection of your commitment to helping solve the conflict in the 6 counties on an anti-imperialist basis. Where was your involvement in the many years of hard campaigning against plastic bullets, extradition, strip-searches, shoot-to-kill, etc, etc.

You also accuse Red Action of avoiding debate on issues such as these. You are obviously no stranger to those 'Leninist tactics' you claim to disapprove of. Red Action have published a critique of anarchism in a two page article in Issue xx, comment is made on the activities of anarchists in most issues of the paper, and 'We Are The Reds', carried in every issue, comments on the contradictions of anarchy. Our letters page is open to all. Also, as you well know, Red Action have debated these very issues with your organisation, WSM, at a public forum this year.

In answer to your last point, nowhere in the article does Red Action suggest that anarchists are in the pay of MI5. Quite the opposite. Some of the lunatic fringe, ACF, Black Flag, etc, are willing to do the state's work unpaid. Some of that published would put to shame even the neo-unions of the Workers' Party and their yuppie relations in the Democratic Left. As for the rest of the anarchist factions, their lack of relevance to the working-class and, consequently, their lack of revolutionary potential, would hardly merit state infiltration.

Your eccentric comment that the ACF position on the North is a Marxist position does not even merit a reply.

I think you missed the whole point of the article. It was written by a socialist active in the struggle against imperialism and returning from the occupied 6 counties only to find some armchair anti-imperialist siding with the enemy.

# The American Nightmare...

In 1970 the Black Panther Party were planning for armed struggle and 'total war.' It is now apparent that the planing took place at least a decade too late.

There are at the moment, over one million people behind bars in American jails. Roughly half are black. There are an estimated 25 million Americans of African descent. One in three black males between the ages of 14 and 35 is either in jail, on probation or awaiting trial. Black males in the US are jailed at a rate four times that of a black male in apartheid South Africa. Now, according to the well-publicised leaking of the Republican agenda, having dealt successfully with black men the establishment's next concern is to institutionalise the women and children.

Republicans plans for welfare reform include sending illegitimate children to state orphanages. They argue that by making benefits to single mothers discretionary rather than mandatory, and by suspending all benefit after two years, the savings from these cuts would help pay for the construction of the orphanages; for state sponsored adoption programmes and for communal homes for those mothers and children unable to survive. Roughly one in three US children are born out of wedlock. Two-thirds of US black births are to single mothers. The racial dimension is conspicuous and undeniable. Some critics argue that orphanages are not only cruel but costly. The existing group homes, mainly small, private houses run by charities, say it takes \$100 a day to care for each child. With welfare, the rate works out at about £325 monthly, so the present system is much cheaper. Others argue that no politician could survive 'scenes of wailing mothers separated from toddlers on the television news.' But Republican strategists put their trust in what the liberal intellectual JK Galbraith termed the 'culture of contentment.' Galbraith observed that the majority of those who actually vote in elections are enjoying broadly comfortable lives. Thus, there will be resistance in the voting booths to anything that might impinge on that comfort - including demands for taxes to fund welfare.

The discontented, many of them black, who he says should be rallying to defend welfare, generally do not vote. "The result," Galbraith concludes, "is government that is accommodated not to reality or common need but to the beliefs of the contented who are now the majority of those who vote." Massive voter abstention, 50% and above in some cases, has created the situation, but what lies behind the failure of over half the population to vote?

The explanation is quite simple. Many in Britain tend to think of the Democratic and Republican parties as left-wing and right-wing on European lines. But they're not.

Each is a coalition containing left and right within itself. As a result instead of a left wing party in the US congress, there exists instead a constant and substantial, cross party, conservative, block on ALL progressive reform. Clinton's original plans for universal health care and for welfare

reform - channelling welfare recipients into the workforce - were always more to do with controlling costs than extending peoples rights to a health provision.

During Reagan's reign, described as 'the triumph of upper America' the top fifth of American 'voters' expanded their cut of total household income to 50% after tax, directly at the expense of a 10% reduction in the income of the bottom 10%. Hitherto, a central plank of the American dream was based on the expectation that each generation is guaranteed to be better off than the one before. But now for many, particularly for working class blacks, the reverse is true: each generation faces the prospect of being worse off than the one before. For them the American dream has become the American nightmare. More young blacks go to prison than to college. One third, of all blacks live in conditions that have been described as "some of the worst places in the world to live, worse than Beirut during the civil war". Murder, is the leading cause of death among young black males.

Like Britain the US is in decline. This makes simple straight forward solutions - right wing solutions - attractive. In the '50s' MacCarthyism was the common front against reds under the bed, with communism representing the unifying enemy both within and without. In the absence of a unifying enemy today, America has fractured on class and race lines, between the haves and have-nots, between voters and non-voters, with the urban working class, and in particular the black working class, being targeted by the New Right not as the 'enemy within', but for the New Right's constituency, the all important unifying enemy-without.

Without a vote, without a voice, without rights and ultimately for some without a soul-subhuman. Wide acclaim greeted the publication **The Bell Curve**, by a right wing sociologist, Charles Murray, who argues that blacks are genetically less intelligent than whites and that there is nothing the state can or should do about it, except discourage them from breeding: the implications hardly need elaborating.

An article in the Independent on Sunday, reinforces the point: "The New Right are not against a strong state or even Big Government. They just want the government to stop doing certain big progressive things and start doing big reactionary things. Specifically they want to eradicate welfare and all wealth distribution while increasing state spending on the military, the police and prisons, and state regulation of moral and "value" issues like abortion (no), school prayer (yes), gay rights (yecch!) gun control to be dismantled...and so on".

Is a country where upwards on 50% of the population see no reason to vote a democracy? A Collins dictionary offers two definitions of democracy: 1. 'government by the people or their elected representatives' 2. 'a political or social unit governed ultimately by all its

members.' Well, judged by either criteria America does not qualify. America is no longer a democracy. A recent article in the Guardian acknowledges as much: "America is now so far gone...that the claim of any administration to speak or act on behalf of an American majority can only evoke incredulity or suspicion".

If America is not government by majority rule, then it is government by minority rules; does that mean it is-fascist? Nearly a quarter of a century ago, Black Panther prison leader George Jackson had already concluded that it was, and indeed had been, for quite some time. In his book, **'Blood in My Eye'**, finished just days before his murder in prison, Jackson wrote: "Fascism has established itself in a most disguised and efficient manner in this country." He rejected the idea that fascism is a clone; identical, recognisable and unchanging from one country and from one era to the next. "The nature of fascism, its characteristics and properties, have been in dispute ever since it was first identified as a distinct phenomenon...Whole libraries have been written round the subject. There have

"Historically, it has been proved to have three different faces. One 'out of power' that tends almost to be revolutionary and subversive, anti-capitalist and anti-socialist. One 'in power but not secure' - this is the sensational aspect of fascism that we can see on screen and read in pulp novels, the third face of fascism exists 'in power and securely so', in this phase some dissent may even be allowed".

But only up to a point. In America, "fascism," he maintained, "was in power and securely so...so secure that the leaders allow us the luxury of faint protest. Take protest too far, however, and they will show their other face. Doors will be kicked down in the night and machine-gun fire and buckshot will become the medium of exchange."

The Independent on Sunday article supported the charge but put it more politely: "National politics and acceptable national media operate within a very narrow range by European standard. Traditionally everything outside the centre is allowed free play but no influence." [RA's emphasis] A Democratic campaign manager stated the American reality matter-of-factly, and without embarrassment: "There is now a very simple rule in this business that candidates and supporters and consultants sometimes overlook. The basic rule is, whoever has the money wins and there are very few exceptions".

In other words, democracy still exists - but for the comfortably rich only. A fascist arrangement; not fascist in the conventional sense, of course, which in any case is only crisis



Joe MacCarthy (left) and fellow travellers

political opposition, only brazenly and publicly bicker over proposals to put five million children into orphanages or on the street, with the principle sticking point being cost, fascism is unmasked. To draw a direct comparison here between the Nazi programme of euthanasia for 'unproductive useless eaters' and the American right's agenda cannot be regarded as fanciful or hysterically inappropriate, though given the the parallels a rejection of the comparison might be. As then, it was precisely because the rationale behind the proposal was presented as being ostensibly economic - a practical and indeed humane (rather than vindictive) - measure that it too enjoyed similarly significant popular and professional support.

Between 1960 and 1970 the number in US jails fluctuated at around a quarter of a million, and of that total forty per cent



been a hundred party lines on just exactly what fascism is. We should now be able, after time has somewhat dulled the traumatic exchanges of debate and struggle to analyse fascism objectively - its antecedents, its prime characteristics and its goals [RA's emphasis]". He argued that fascism was not an ideology as such, more a means to an end and so existed in the 'form' that the situation demanded. So fascism had more than one 'form'; and more than one face.

management. The American-model limited democracy is a form of decision making tailored to meet the needs of a far less vulgar, but more stable, elite. And as George Jackson pointed out: "death and prison for all who object - fascism in its final and secure state". If that in a nutshell was the problem, what was the solution? Fascism cannot be reformed so: "The only recourse is an appeal to arms. The corporative state allows for no genuinely free

based on how fascism is structured its social base etc, rather than what it is designed to do! If Jackson's detractors did not 'understand', twenty five years on the black working-class understand only too well. The system has abandoned them, so they have abandoned the system. Stripped of all illusion, they have voted after a fashion - with their feet. Elections and political parties have no significance when all serious candidates are essentially the same and when the representatives of the ruling class

were black. George Jackson could clearly see the writing on the wall. This helps explain why he and the Black Panther Party were busy planning and preparing in the late sixties and early seventies for armed struggle and 'total war'. Surveying the death and wreckage of the Black Panther Party and the civil rights' movement, within the context of today's political landscape, one can only conclude that planning took place, at the very least, a decade too late.

## Front page continued



David Irvine, PUP/MIS?

spokesman for PUP of being an MIS agent and his party of taking Ulster into a united Ireland "progressively". Alec Kerr a senior loyalist, and the alleged commander of the UFF reflects the paranoia emanating from within unionist circles. "I still get the feeling that we're going to be dropped like a hot potato somewhere down the line."

Twenty years ago the Ulster Workers Council brought the Stormont Assembly and any illusions about power sharing to an abrupt end. Ulster said NO! Today all shades of loyalist appears willing, even eager to promote power sharing (an example of 'national moderation') and an internal settlement as THE solution. Too little too late. This

time round nationalists north and south but above all logic says no to Ulster.

According to David Irvine any talk of a Dublin dimension; in other words anything other than an internal settlement is "a recipe for civil war". The use of the expression civil war defines a conflict within rather than between countries. So who does Irvine expect to be at war with? London or Dublin. If it was used in relation to the latter (a civil war between the loyal north and the nationalist south) then, is that not in itself a tacit and freudian acceptance of all that loyalism rejects: the concept of the island of Ireland as a sovereign entity?

In 1922 after protracted negotiations, the Irish people were faced with a British ultimatum, dominion status and peace, or a 32 county republic and - war. They chose peace and got civil war anyway - and partition. Then, Britain wanted Ireland within

the Commonwealth, now they want the north of Ireland out of the UK. So this time around it is loyalists who will be faced with an ultimatum. In the early part of the century faced with the prospect of a united Ireland the slogan of loyalism ran: **'ULSTER WILL FIGHT AND ULSTER WILL BE RIGHT!'** It would have then, but will it now? Rumours in Glasgow indicate that some have already made up their minds. In the last six months the UUV have bought, or bought into half a dozen Glasgow pubs and clubs. Is paranoia laced with pragmatism the doctrine of an organisation ready to fight to the bitter end? I think not. But either way, the balance of forces indicate that in a replay of 1922 it is far more likely to be loyalists rather than republicans who will be forced to digest the bitter pill of betrayal.



# Beyond the Pale

Red Action • PO Box 3355, Dublin 7



## JAMES CONNOLLY The First Socialist Republican

James Connolly was the only important and internationally known theoretician and revolutionary activist to emerge in Ireland and to make an important contribution to the development of Marxist and Republican objectives in his lifetime. His contribution to Marxism spanned two continents and 20 years and his Republicanism left a legacy that has been appropriated by practically all nationalist and socialist groups in Ireland from 1916 to the present day. Groups covering a spectrum from Fianna Fáil to Sinn Féin and embracing the 'extremes' of Stalinism and Trotskyism have and occasionally still do, cite the name of Connolly or invoke the symbolism of the Stary Plough, the workers flag. It is only through highly selective and dishonest interpretations of Connolly's beliefs and activities that he can be honoured to the equally superficial level of a Fianna Fáil honour guard at a historical commemoration and as the icon to be dusted down once a year for a public meeting by 'revolutionary socialist' groups. How or why can one man, a marxist revolutionary and socialist republican, who died 78 years ago provide such a unifying force among all the conservative forces, of both left and right? The reason that such seemingly diverse sections of Irish political life can adopt Connolly as a mascot lies in their total ignorance of the motivation, practise and ideology of Ireland's first Socialist Republican.

The only knowledge that most Irish people have of Connolly is as one of the seven signatories of the 1916 Republican Proclamation and leader of the Irish Citizen Army during the Easter Rising. It is accepted that Connolly was different from the other leaders, that he was a socialist and a trade unionist and had been a founder of the Irish Labour Party in 1912. He was a working class communist from an Irish emigrant family in Edinburgh and organised the 1913 Lockout with Jim Larkin. Most Irish people know that he was the last of the 1916 leaders to be executed, dying of gangrene from his wounds he was tied to a chair to face a British firing squad. Mainstream nationalists revere Connolly as one of the 1916 heroes, now safely buried and not relevant to 1990s Irish liberal democracy. The Labour Party has forgotten that he ever existed. The trade union that he built has recently agreed to erect a monument to this historical figure, no longer of any importance to the labour movement. The socialist sects, operating in the strange twilight world of 'revolutionary socialism', trot out a few selective quotes from Connolly's best known works as proof that they are not ignoring the Irish Marxist.

It may seem incredibly strange that the political factions of the so called 'far left' expend so much time and energy analysing the political development of the Soviet Union from 1917 and making futile attempts to apply the theory and strategies of Lenin, Stalin, Trotsky, or some other Russian ideologue to present day Ireland when Ireland produced a Marxist theoretician of equal ideological standing in that period. Connolly was a near contemporary of Lenin and Trotsky, both had read his writings and he was widely known throughout the socialist movement in the early 20th century.

Connolly applied Marxism to the situation of the Irish working class in the 20th century and wrote the first socialist interpretation of Irish history. He opposed the involvement of the church in political life and fought for the equality of women. He was a key organiser in the 1913 Lockout, the general strike that brought Dublin to a standstill for eight months. In the trade unions he opposed the moderates who sought to restrict discussion to economic 'non political' objectives. He was involved in the Second International and Ireland was one of the few countries in which, at Connolly's insistence, the labour movement refused to support the First World War but adhered to the policy of the International to oppose the Imperialist war effort. He set up Europe's first workers' militia of the 20th century, the Irish Citizen Army, consisting of several hundred armed workers, both men and women, formed to protect strikers from scabs and police during the 1913

strike. Connolly, in combination with other anti British forces, led his tiny army into bloody revolt against imperialism at the height of the First World War, a policy that had been advocated by Lenin. He was the Commandant General of the rebel forces in 1916, directing the fighting from the front lines, described as 'the guiding brain of our resistance' and he died one of the most emotive and heroic deaths of any revolutionary. After his death the Labour Party and the Trade Union movement was taken over by the moderate leaders who had opposed Connolly's socialist objectives and under the leadership of the opportunists any

the British Empire. Connolly engaged in a long debate with William Walker, a leader of the Belfast ILP in which he pointed out the reactionary nature of a reformist 'socialism' which accommodated its ideology to the interests of British Imperialism, Loyalism and the Orange Order. "The Belfast branches of the ILP seem scarcely distinguishable from imperialism, the merging of subjugated peoples in the political system of their conquerors." When the Irish Labour party was founded by the Irish Trade Union Congress in 1912 the opposition to it came from the national-

ists of the North to continued imperialist rule. The advantage to middle class Southern nationalists of cutting off large sections of the organised working class in industrialised Ulster from their natural class allies in the South was not lost on the bourgeois nationalists who feared for their position of class dominance in an independent Ireland with an organised working class that only a year previously had led an eight month long general strike involving 20,000 workers.

Connolly's predictions on the likely development of a partitioned Ireland, both North and South have been proved correct. He recognised that the national issue, in a partitioned Ireland, would be the defining line of cleavage in political debate to the exclusion of what might appear to be more immediate class issues. This is an issue that is still pertinent today, much as some 'socialists' may hope to wish away reality. "In North East Ulster...the question of Home Rule is not a settled question in men's minds, much less is it settled politically, and hence its unsettled character makes it still possible for that question to so possess the minds of the multitudes that all other questions such as wages, hours and conditions of labour, must take a subordinate place and lose their power to attract attention, much less compel action."

Connolly was particularly clear on the political influences that had moulded the unionist working class and he insisted that no concessions be made to sectarianism in the interests of an abstract working class unity. While partition would subject the northern nationalists, "to the rule of a gang who keep up the fires of religious bigotry in order to divide the workers, and make united progress impossible...a mob poisoned by ignorant hatred of everything national and democratic" he explained that sectarianism had been planted and developed among the protestant workers by their class enemies "the fault lies not with the present generation of toilers, but with those pastors and masters who have deceived it and enslaved it in the past - and deceived it in order that they might enslave it. But as no good can come of blaming it, so also no good, but infinite evil, can come of trucking to it. Here the Orange working class are slaves in spirit because they have been reared up among a people whose conditions of servitude were more slavish than their own." The anti sectarian nature of true socialism and republicanism would ensure that workers from a catholic background would not react with an inverted sectarianism because, due to their experiences of oppression, they were aware of the "sense of the criminality of any attempt to impose fetters on others such as we ourselves have worn."

The most often repeated criticism of Connolly from the leftist factions is that he abandoned his belief in internationalism and socialism by joining with Irish nationalists in the 1916 Easter Rising. This interpretation totally flies in the face of historical reality and even contradicts the opinions of Lenin and Trotsky at the time, particularly Lenin's point on the impossibility of a 'pure' socialist revolution. As previously explained, the policy of the International prior to the World War was international proletarian unity and a determination to obstruct any imperialist war by armed force against their own national governments if necessary. When the war did break out only the Irish, Russian and Serbian sections of the International held to this policy, other socialist groups following their respective bourgeois governments. From 1914 onwards, Connolly was following the decided position of the International and the later Zimmerwald international position advocated by Lenin. In his participation in the 1916 Rising Connolly did not unite with the conservative nationalist groups that he had previously savagely criticised for their opposition to working class interests. The Rising was organised and carried out by Republicans who rejected the narrower Home Rule policy, with its inbuilt commitment to partition. The Irish Volunteers had also refused to fight for Britain's interests in the War. They were the most extreme section of a very diverse nationalist movement,

some of the leaders had supported the labour movement during the 1913 Lockout. The Republicans that Connolly joined were the current leadership of the Fenians, the revolutionary separatists that Marx' had supported in the 19th century.

The chronology of the planning of the Rising is often forgotten or conveniently ignored by those uninterested in seeking an explanation for a course of action they then denounce. Since the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 Connolly had argued for an uprising of the working class as an international protest against imperialism and capitalism, stating "We serve neither King nor Kaiser but Ireland". He also believed, echoing Marx and generations of Irish republicans, that "The far flung battle line of England is weakest nearest its heart". Connolly planned to lead the ICA, about 200 strong, into an armed uprising and prepared militarily for this, writing a series of tactical articles on revolutionary warfare. Unknown to him the Supreme Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (the Fenians) had infiltrated and now controlled the Military Council of the Irish Volunteers. The Irish Volunteers had been set up in 1913 as a nationalist defence force in response to the loyalist Ulster Volunteers. However the leadership did not support the idea of an insurrection, wishing to keep the Irish volunteers as a defensive force. Padraic Pearse and other Fenians had taken over from the nominal leadership and were turning the organisation into a force for armed insurrection. This group feared that Connolly would lead the ICA into a rising which would pre-empt their plans and lead to a clamp down on all Republicans. They told Connolly of their plans in January 1916 and asked him to join in their military arrangements. Connolly was immediately sworn into the IRB and was later appointed Commandant General of the united Republican forces, the IRA, in Easter Week.

When Connolly was sentenced to death he asked his daughter Nora for any information about socialist groups abroad and their reaction to the Rising, saying, "They [the socialists] will never understand why I am here, they will all forget that I am an Irishman."

After Connolly's death the leadership of both Trade Union Congress in Ireland and the Labour Party pandered to the anti Republican elements within the Labour movement and refused to adopt a republican policy for fear that it would alienate the Loyalist trade unionists in the North. This unprincipled position also had the effect of turning the Republican working class in the South against a Labour party that ignored the main concern of it's natural membership, especially when it took a stand against the central issue of an Irish Republic during the Civil War. The result of the opportunism of the Labour movement in this period was that even moderate socialist opinions were not openly represented and the working class later supported the populist nationalists of Fianna Fáil, who still hold the allegiance of the majority of the working class in the South.

When he arrived in Ireland in 1896 Connolly had explained the indivisibility of socialist and republican objectives in Ireland "The two currents of revolutionary thought in Ireland, the social and the national, are not antagonistic but complementary." The reason that the leftist factions only pay lip service to the tradition of Connolly rests solely on the fact that they do not agree with, much less put into practice the political theories of Connolly because these conflict with the bourgeois prejudices and anti-Republican distortions at the heart of Trotskyism and Anarchism. Perhaps the most telling statement was made by Nora, Connolly's daughter, in 1978 when she wrote

"I consider the present fight in the North of Ireland the continuation of the Battle for which he died."



hope of the achievement of socialism died in Ireland.

Connolly the Marxist had done all that present day 'revolutionary socialists' advocate or dream of in their wildest fantasies. He adopted all the correct international political positions of his time, combined political and trade union work, wrote and published and sold thousands of revolutionary newspapers.

However it seems that Connolly is not relevant to a discussion on theoretical socialism, he is not up to the standard of the international heroes, Lenin or Trotsky or even Stalin. The reason that Connolly is not relevant is because his position on the partition of Ireland does not correspond with that of the Trotskyite and anarchist sects. Connolly was a Republican who applied the theories of Marx and the lessons of Irish history, in combination with his own experience in many areas of struggle, to the political situation in which he found himself and carried out that policy to it's logical end, to armed revolution against the British state.

The abolition of partition is a prerequisite for the realisation of any socialist objectives in Ireland. When Connolly's position on the north comes up for discussion in Leftist circles a single quotation usually suffices to explain his complex position on a question which has changed little since the early 20th century. The origin of the division of Ireland lies with the veto granted to Ulster loyalists by the British government. Connolly wrote extensively on the Ulster Question but the quotation most often cited is his prophecy that partition would lead to "a carnival of reaction both North and South", and there the matter is quickly dropped by those who realise that any further analysis of his writings would expose their pet theories and put solutions to the problem as the anti-socialist jargon that they are.

Connolly had worked in Belfast as an organiser for the Transport Union and had come into conflict with reactionary unionist elements of the labour movement. This faction, represented by the Independent Labour Party, allied itself with British Imperialism and sought to advance the cause of the Protestant working class within the confines of the Orange establishment. The Independent Labour Party in Belfast, affiliated to the British ILP, opposed the establishment of a separate Irish based Labour Party on the grounds of 'internationalism'. Connolly exposed the imperialism at the base of the 'socialist' unionists who wholeheartedly opposed national liberation in the cause of a spurious imperialist internationalism, a socialism that was defined around the internationalism of

ists, the unionists and the Belfast 'socialists' within the trade union movement. This faction also voted that the Belfast Trades Council leave the Irish Council of Trade Unions. Connolly wrote "As the Orangeman says 'We will not have Home Rule,' so the Belfast dissenters from the position accepted by most socialists in Ireland say 'We will not have an Irish Labour Party.'" So he repeats in the Labour movement the same feelings of hatred and disgust of his catholic brothers and sisters, as his exploiters have instilled into him for their own purposes from infancy." In election campaigns, Walker openly supported the political Union with Britain and stated that Catholics should not be allowed to hold public office. Walker later abandoned the labour movement when offered a political post by the Liberals.

In his political activity Connolly did not ignore or minimise the threat to working class unity represented by groups such as the Belfast ILP but recognised them for what they were, representatives of orangeism and imperialism promoting sectarianism among the protestant working class.

When the proposal to exclude Ulster from the Home Rule Bill first emerged in 1914 Connolly expressed vehement opposition to it from both a socialist and Republican perspective. He recognised that the creation of a divided Ireland would result in the division of the working class and would preclude any united action of the proletariat in both sections of the island. "The effect of such an exclusion [of Ulster] upon Labour in Ireland will be...disastrous. All hopes of uniting the workers, irrespective of religion or old political battle cries will be shattered, and through North and South the issue of Home Rule will still be used to cover the iniquities of the capitalist and landlord class."

From his personal experience of the reactionary nature of unionist 'socialism,' Connolly realised that the only possibility of a strong socialist movement in Ireland lay in total independence from Britain and in the unity in action of the working class both North and South. In an article conveniently ignored by those with a vested interest in promoting an anti-republican agenda, he also wrote that, "The proposal to leave the Home Rule [nationalist] minority at the mercy of an ignorant majority with the evil record of the Orange party is a proposal that should never have been made, and that the establishment of such a scheme should be resisted with armed force if necessary. Personally I entirely agree with those who think so." (RA emphasis)

While attacking the prospect of a sectarian Orange state Connolly also criticised the Home Rule party which had given a commitment to accepting partition "as the price of peace" thus abandoning the nation-

Red Action in Ireland have so far raised £310 for Republican POWs through the sale of Tiofaidh Ár Lá / Celtic T shirts. A limited number of these T shirts are still available from our PO Box number.

Some readers of Red Action will be aware that Red Action has made a number of contributions to the theoretical journal, 'Open Polemic'. Edition of OP number nine declared that Red Action had been banned from its pages. Edition ten reversed the fatwa, allowing that contributions from RA might be accepted if, in the opinion of the editorial board, they were appropriate, innovative, the wind was blowing in the right direction etc. In the same edition, the editorial board declare that:

"Our deliberate curtailing of the Red Action polemic derives from their outright rejection of a democratic centralist vanguard party in favour of a utopian notion of the rule by some mythical, homogeneous proletariat"

As is often the case in these situations, the truth in this formulation is turned precisely upon its head. What is needed, is an analysis which extracts the rational kernel from this formula, and stands it upright. Interestingly, in the same issue, the editorial board also write:

"It is true that the advanced elements with their Marxist-Leninist consciousness may often be in conflict with the intermediate and backward strata...but objectively, the advanced elements are part of the same class. Our objective economic position in relation to the means of production dictates this. Even those comrades, either by circumstances or by choice, that have become removed from the immediate point of production...should not be categorised as non-proletarians...having re-established the proletarian essence of the vanguard party [sic]..."

There you have it: the working class IS 'homogeneous' i.e. the same throughout. Everyone who works for a wage is a 'worker': coppers, screws, DSS snoopers - and comrades removed from the immediate point of production. It is not Red Action who say so, but OP itself. Red Action says the opposite: the working class is NOT homogeneous and lefty elements "removed from the point of production" are not proletarians. It must be said that OP's position on this matter aligns them with virtually the entire British Left. Most discussions on the left in this country refer glibly to the 'workers' (as in 'Workers Hammer', 'Workers Voice', 'Workers News', 'Workers Power' etc) in a way that indicates the working class that they refer to is not an entity in the real world but an abstract, (and therefore homogeneous) ideological concept. It is 'ideological' because it has practical implications for the relationship of the party to the class. It is an (abstract) 'concept' because it is not founded on experience of the actual working class, but on theorising about the class by non-working class elements. No-one should suppose that any of the papers parading their loyalty in this way are actually written by workers for example. After reading leftist polemics calling on the worker masses to do this or that, many working-class activists will feel, returning to their workplaces, pubs or council estates, that much of the left operates in a fantasy land where rhetoric replaces reality. There exists on the one hand this uncritical, ideological concept of the class, which is partnered by a dismissive and arrogant attitude to the real circumstances, condition and members of the class itself. This both reflects and supports the conception of the 'vanguard' party as an authority over

the class. Anyone with personal knowledge of socialist sects will be struck by the fact that these 'workers' parties almost exclusively attract their membership from the lower levels of the administrative and professional classes - what used to be called 'white collar' workers. Today, it might be more accurate to refer to them as petty bourgeois strata caught in the process of proletarianisation. Teachers, social 'workers', health 'workers', local government 'workers': all those occupations on the fringes of the 'professions' that used to offer a genteel refuge for those groups in society who sought a sheltered existence away from the harsh realities of the production line or building site and which now are faced with redundancies, contractual or part-time working, coupled with declining levels of pay and status. The ideological concept of the class is therefore substituted for the reality of a proletarian class base. This concept suggests that the 'worker masses' constitute a homogeneous social 'bloc' (since teachers and production line workers both earn a wage) without a will of its own. Since an empty concept such as the 'masses' has no real content, it follows that the masses can have no real will of their own either. It is obviously much easier to manipulate an abstract concept of the 'worker masses' in the pages of a theoretical journal than to manipulate the actions of real workers in real factories. Petty bourgeois socialist sects are therefore tied into the perpetual paradox of universalist calls to arms ('General Strike Now!') on the one hand, and recriminations when real proletarians take no notice.

The vanguard party proposes that the 'true consciousness' of the proletariat, the will of the class, be found in itself. Since these vanguards or sects uniformly consist of a certain layer of the subprofessional classes (teachers, social or health workers, minor administrative personnel etc.), the blatant class distinctions in role and consciousness between the worker on the factory floor or on a building site and the worker in an office, school or hospital, or then again in a DSS office, police station or prison, are conveniently dismissed.

This is the root of OP's concept of the proletariat as 'homogeneous' (and also the root of OP's 'projection' of this concept onto, of all organisations, Red Action). The central message is that everyone's a worker, or as Alex Callinicos of the SWP puts it: "The implication... is that the proletariat should broadly be identified with the mass of wage labourers".

The question as to the class composition of the socialist sects is correspondingly downgraded. One of the most pressing tasks facing contemporary marxism is the need to rid itself of the petty bourgeois concept of 'the workers' (anyone who earns a wage) and its degenerate relative, 'the masses'. Red Action would propose an analysis along the following lines.

A preliminary distinction can be made between the proletariat and the working class. As a provisional step, the proletariat can be positively defined, as Marx himself defined it, as the class that produces a profit for an employer (more accurately, 'surplus value') under collective conditions of labour. "That labourer alone is productive who produces surplus value for the capitalist, and thus works for the self-expansion of value". This

phrase, the "self-expansion of value" means that the employer gets more work, and so more money, out of the employee than he pays for. The whole of Marxist economics is an elaboration of this principle. This class consists of the direct producers who, crucially, under capitalism, do not own the means of production - factories, machinery, raw materials etc. Marx most frequently terms it, the 'industrial proletariat'. Marx indicates that the productive labourer produces a 'commodity' (product) that is materially separable from the worker: "Labour remains productive so long as it objectifies itself in commodities..." Productive labour produces things, not services. Only in objectified commodity production is the process of alienation fully worked out. Marx is sure that the exploitation of the worker is the crucial issue, in the sense that the value of the commodity produced by the worker is greater than the value he receives back in wages. Simply put: "Only labour which produces capital is productive labour". Yet interpreted one-sidedly, this formula is inadequate. For example, bailiffs can and do produce profit for their employer. Teachers at Eton produce a profit for their employer though a teacher in a state school does not. We would therefore have to say that the bailiff and the teacher at the public school were 'productive labourers' - and so members of the working class - while the teacher at the state school, or health worker in a hospital or an unprivatised dustman were not! Marx is aware of the problem and sometimes suggests that suchlike providers of services rather than commodities are, "pretty nearly productive workers", i.e. not quite. In discussing the case of "a schoolmaster who works for wages along with others" in a "knowledge mongering institution...to increase the money of the entrepreneur who owns it", Marx eventually concedes that he is a 'productive worker'. But he is evidently uneasy about this classification and immediately explains:

"But for the most part, work of this sort has scarcely reached the stage of being subsumed even formally under capital, and essentially belongs to a transitional stage". Workers of this kind reflect pre-capitalist social relations. This thought is developed more resolutely: "They may be entirely neglected, therefore, and can be dealt with under the category of wagemaster that is not at the same time productive labour." (RA's emphasis) Elsewhere, Marx similarly insists that, "Such peripheral phenomena can be ignored when considering capitalist production as a whole." Marx is plainly not comfortable in identifying the schoolteacher with the factory worker, to the extent that he eventually concludes that the schoolmaster be regarded as an unproductive worker. Overall, he once again appears to be saying that it is the production of commodities that, in capitalism, sets the productive worker apart. This interpretation is confirmed in a separate passage: "with the development of the...specifically capitalist mode of production, the real lever of the overall labour process is increasingly not the individual worker. Instead, labour power socially combined and the various competing labour powers which together form the entire production machine participate in very different ways in the immediate process of making commodities..." In place of the 'individual worker', Marx writes of the 'aggregate worker', the collective worker, whose "combined activity results materially in an aggregate product". The proletariat works under the collective conditions that especially characterise capitalism. Marx then, is saying that the production of commodities under collective conditions determines the nature of the workforce that is the particular creation of the capitalist mode of production. As Marx famously remarked, it is this class of workers, the industrial proletariat, that is brought into being by the bourgeoisie, and will also prove to be its "gravedigger". The more general idea of the 'working class' is still less easy to define. Again as a first step, the working class could be defined as those members of society who, not owning the means of production, are compelled to sell their labour (or as Marx insists, 'labour power') in order to live. So defined, the 'working class' is a larger category than the 'proletariat'. Marx used the expressions 'proletariat' and 'working class' in this way. For example, he refers to, "the

Who are the working class everybody who earns a including coppers, screwsnoopers, teacher Red Action - and

# Who F\*\*\*kin Are

industrial proletariat and the agricultural labourers, who together form the majority of the working class". To these must be added, "the part of the working class which has forfeited its condition of existence (the sale of labour power) and vegetates on public aims". He accordingly refers to the 'working classes', directly implying the existence of sub-classes within the class. The 'working class' then, is composed of groups in addition to those immediately identified by Marx's criterion of 'productive' work. A wider definition can be built around a supplementary concept of 'productive' work to include such state employed groups as teachers, health workers, council operatives etc, who, while they do not directly participate in the production of commodities from which, under capitalist conditions, profit (surplus value) is extracted, are nonetheless essential to the fitness for productive tasks of those who do. It is obvious that education to a certain standard, coupled with a certain standard of health, are vital conditions of a labour force within the mode of production developed by mature capitalism. Grounds for the adoption of such an 'extended' definition of productive work is to be found in Marx's own writings. We have seen above, that Marx is uncertain about the relation of certain categories of non-industrial worker to capitalist 'productivity' and exploitation. He elaborates: "As to the purchase of such services as those which train labour power, maintain or modify it etc...thus for example the schoolmaster's service, in so far as it is 'industrially necessary' or useful; the doctor's service in so far as he maintains health and so conserves the source of all values, labour power itself - these are services which yield in return a 'saleable commodity', namely labour power itself, into whose costs of reproduction these services enter". Such strata can be said to constitute the essential 'labour infrastructure' without which the processes of production (= exploitation under capitalism) would be impeded or made impossible. While people occupying the lower levels of these 'professional' groups frequently and rightly claim to be exploited, this exploitation takes a different form from that of the direct producers. They do not directly contribute surplus value to the capitalist system (profits), but surplus labour (i.e. they work long hours for little pay). Marx explains: "It is therefore clear that the labour of the doctor and the schoolmaster does not directly create the fund out of which they are paid, although their labours enter into the production costs of the fund which creates all values whatso-



ever - namely the production costs of labour power". This simultaneously reinforces the community of interests between the proletariat and those who are essential to its reproduction as a productive workforce and equally, the crucial divergence of interests between them. Ultimately, "the material basis of the subsistence, and consequently the existence" of those who support the productive function are provided by the proletariat. Their wages "can only be paid for out of the wages of the productive labourers" or the profits created by those same labourers. Marx is therefore always clear as to the social importance of the distinction between the position of workers who produce surplus value (not necessarily manual workers) and other wage labourers who only support this function. As he succinctly remarks: "Every productive worker is a wage labourer, but not every wage labourer is a productive worker." (contrary to the SWP's Callinicos). The police, P.O.s and some professional groups sell their labour, bargain collectively, do not own the means of production and so on. Yet plainly their interests, social function and ideology are divergent from that of the working class as a whole as well as their relation to the process of production. They



"Workers in uniform?" The look on the miner's face says it all.



...ass? The Left argues that  
...a wage is working class,  
...ews, social workers, DSS  
...ers, squaddies, etc.  
...d Marx - disagree.

# The ing Hell You?



**The function of the capitalist manager is to structure production so as to maximise profit, but this bears no essential relation to the process of production itself. In earlier societies, production was carried out to meet specific individual needs not profit; in a future socialist society, collective need would determine levels of production, entirely replacing the function of 'profit'. In a capitalist society however, the police ultimately exist to enforce the existing system of distribution (ownership); they likewise bear no necessary relation to the process of production. In a socialist society therefore, both the capitalist manager making a profit, and the police guarding it, would be redundant in the production process. The teacher, health or welfare worker would not. It is then possible to refuse to count Mr Plod as a member of the working class, though he may sell his labour, own no property (bourgeois property, ie the means of production), bargain collectively with his employer, etc., because his work is not performed in any necessary relationship to production of commodities.**

The distinction emphasised here is also to be found clearly introduced by Marx. Naturally, he says, some technical forms of supervision and authority are necessary within any conceivable social production process.

*"The supervision and management is naturally required whenever the direct process of production assumes the form of a combined social process, and not of the isolated labour of independent producers. However, it has a double nature".* He then explains this "double nature" further:

*On the one hand, all labour in which many individuals cooperate necessarily requires a commanding will to coordinate and unify the process...This is a productive job, which must be performed in every combined mode of production. On the other hand...this supervision work necessarily arises in all modes of production based on the antithesis between the labourer, as the direct producer, and the owner of the means of production. The greater this antagonism, the greater the role played by supervision. Hence it reaches a peak in the slave system. But it is indispensable also in the capitalist system of production."*

The forms of 'supervision' required within capitalist processes of production thus contain a social component necessitated by the social as distinct from the technical relations of production within capitalism itself. Marx then refers to the change in the nature of this supervision in a socialised system of production:

*"In a co-operative factory the antago-*

*nistic nature of the labour of supervision disappears, because the manager is paid by the labourers instead of representing capital counterposed to them".*

Part of the importance of this extended definition of the 'productive worker' is that it allows us to include in the working class groups such as those in the self-employed trades who produce a profit for their contractor but who may not work or bargain under collective conditions. Such groups will have certain divergent interests from other sections of the class (frequently operating under semi-capitalistic conditions and the illusions which accompany them) yet fundamentally, are situated in objective antagonism to capitalism. Marx illustrates the contradictory pressures on these "anomalous" groups vividly:

*"in line with the dominant mode of production even those kinds of labour which have not been subjugated by capitalism in reality are so in thought...the self-employed worker is his own wage labourer; his own means of production appear to him in his own mind as capital. As his own capitalist he puts himself to work as wage labourer".*

As capitalist and labourer in one person, constantly supervising himself, the self-employed tradesperson, therefore, frequently works harder than the labourer employed by a capitalist firm. Although productive workers, the membership of such groups would lie outside the core proletariat in the sense developed here.

As Marx foresaw, the dynamics of capitalism generate a further problematic strata within the ranks of the working class, situated in functional terms at once within and outside the production process. This is related to capitalism's need of a 'reserve army of labour'. The elements of the working class who are denied work remain productive in this sense; that the level of wages received by those in work is dependent on the numbers of those out of work in the reserve army. The higher the numbers of those seeking work, the lower the general level of wages. The lower the general level of wages, the higher the profit or the level of 'productivity' expressed as the rate of profit (surplus value). As Marx forcefully expresses it, *"the general movements of wages are exclusively regulated by the expansion and contraction of the industrial reserve army..."*

**The police, lawyers, P.O.s and other such groups on the contrary, do not perform this function of raising productivity; they are an essential overhead for the capitalist class as a whole, enabling them to hang on to what they've got. Although they may be wage labourers, their use-value to the capitalist is in relation to the distribution of surplus value, not to its production.**

In the era of Thatcherism and its aftermath, the passages in which Marx outlines the social and economic function of the unemployed have a weight and relevance that does not require further emphasis. But it should be noted that, relying principally on state benefits, the sectional interests of this 'reserve army' and its pauperised sections within the working class, may at certain points, be divergent from the 'socialised' industrial worker or those in self employed trades from whom surplus value is directly extracted and who by and large do not receive these benefits but pay for them in taxes.

Whereas marxists traditionally focus upon the industrial working class as the collectivised representatives of future socialised production, it is plainly possible that the antagonism of the 'surplus population' as defined by capitalism, to the structures of capitalism itself may be stronger in both an objective and subjective sense than that of such relatively 'privileged' sections of the proletariat. The antagonism of the most radically 'dispossessed' class may well be transformed into direct revolutionary attitudes and actions at certain junctures; even in contrast to passive and reformist currents prevailing within other 'privileged' sections of the class. While remaining mindful of Marx's own comments regarding the 'demoralisation' of certain layers of the unemployed, no revolutionary organisation could afford to neglect such a phenomenon.

By contrast, as Marx noted, certain other sections of the working population, although poorly paid and with poor conditions, and so in some senses objec-

tively in antagonism to capitalist conditions, may nonetheless remain reactionary due to their special dependence upon capitalism as a specific mode of production. Those engaged in what Marx terms "luxury trades", as well as domestic servants, doormen, chauffeurs and other sundry purveyors of services to the capitalist class, would be examples, depending upon the direct patronage of the possessing classes. Marx refers contemptuously to *"workers in luxury trades [who] are strongly attached, without knowing it, to the old rubbish".*

The position of those engaged in the provision of services to the capitalist class is more ambiguous still. Marx explains: *"Whenever labour is purchased to be consumed as a use-value, as a service and...not to be incorporated into the capitalist process of production whenever that happens, labour is not productive and the wage labourer is no productive worker. His work is consumed for its use-value, not as creating exchange value, it is consumed unproductively, not productively".*

Where labour does not re-enter the process of reproduction, i.e. the circuit of capital, it emerges in the character of a service exchanged for money in which the element of exploitation is lost; *"in this purchase of services the specific relation of capital and labour is not contained - it is either obliterated or simply absent,"* Marx says.

**Workers in such trades are therefore encouraged to view themselves as the recipients of patronage as opposed to the objects of exploitation. At best, their loyalties will be torn for and against the wealth that they depend upon but do not share. The existence of reactionary forces that appear to be within the working class itself, likewise should not be overlooked.**

Marx is clear that employees who work directly for the capitalist class providing 'luxuries' in exchange for revenue rather than capital, i.e. who are not being hired in order to make a profit, occupy an uncertain and contradictory class

the political organisations that claim to represent it. Overall, the important point is that the concept of the 'working class' that emerges is considerably broader than that of the relatively homogeneous 'proletariat' alone. In addition, and most importantly, it highlights not only the possibility, but the inevitability of secondary antagonisms within the working class itself. The simple unity of the 'proletariat' envisaged in an abstract Marxian analysis of the exploitation of the working class under the conditions of classical capitalism, is split into diverse and contending elements within the overall structure of their antagonism to capital.

**Building workers, the self-employed, factory operatives, health workers, teachers, DSS clerks, the unemployed etc., all have significantly different interests which inevitably manifest themselves in various cultures and ideological elements and in certain circumstances, antagonistically**

One immediate conclusion that can be drawn is that the various groupings on the left will, insofar as they legitimately represent any interests at all, represent the interests of an identifiable layer within the working class as a whole. It is clear that the social basis of the contemporary British Left consists of the sub-professional classes employed within the labour infrastructure (as defined above), increasingly caught in the toils of proletarianisation. A significant subsection of this layer or sub-class has colonised the ideology of 'marxism-leninism' as a vehicle for its resentment and frustration at this process. The suitability of Marxism-leninism for this role is focused in its unique expression of the 'leadership' and 'vanguard' aspirations of a sub-class that in the real conditions of advanced capitalism, faces an inexorable process of proletarianisation in its status and terms of employment. The relative degree of social and economic privilege of these sub-professionals in relation to the core proletariat,

**Horny-handed son of toil, Martin Jaques, contemplating his personal distance from the means of production.**



*position: "the services that the capitalist buys...for their use value are not consumed productively and cannot become factors of capital, any more than the commodities he buys for his personal consumption...they are therefore not productive labour and those who carry them out are not productive workers".*

It is of course, less important to impose a rigid structure of classification upon the sometimes contradictory, fluid and blurred elements within society than to be aware of the main lines of class stratification. It will be obvious that many individuals will find themselves in contradictory or borderline positions; but these marginal individuals have a negligible social weight compared with the direction of the principal social forces by which they are marginalised. As Marx maintains, such cases are "anomalous", "peripheral" or "negligible". The important feature is that there is no adequate, simple unifying concept which applies universally to the broader idea of the working class as a whole.

**This reflects the crucial fact that in practice, there is no perfect community of interests, culture and ideology amongst all those who can plausibly be termed 'the workers'. The working class in fact, for Marx, an aggregate of sub-classes.**

Broadly speaking, these classes comprise (i) the direct producers, (ii) those working within the labour infrastructure supporting the productive function, and (iii) the unemployed related to these groups. Such a conception prepares us for the antagonisms that occur within the struggle of the working class itself - and

is reflected precisely in the ideological superstructure of Marxism-Leninism as the claim to represent a 'higher' or more 'advanced' revolutionary consciousness. On the one hand, resentment against the capitalist forces threatening proletarianisation disposes a significant layer of this essentially petit-bourgeois class to accept a 'revolutionary' ideology (Marxism-Leninism). On the other, its real, material base of social privilege, its revulsion against being irrevocably assimilated into the ranks of the 'working masses' at the point of production, is preserved in the ideological aspect of 'vanguardism'.

The 'working class', the 'working masses' beloved of spurious revolutionary rhetoric, are, to repeat, **not** homogeneous. **Red Action** is therefore able to explain, within an authentic marxist schema, what OP and the Marxist-Leninists cannot. That is, why it is that the working class is divided into 'advanced, intermediate and backward' strata. The answer is, that the relation of each sub-class to the "point of production" differs in a material sense from each other, sometimes antagonistically so. It follows that claims to represent 'the workers' per se, or to speak for 'the masses' need to be further analysed. If the interests of the class as a whole are to be politically represented, then socialist pluralism and the supersession of the ideology and structure of 'vanguard' parties, is a necessity.

# The Smell of Burning Martyrs

Part from a brief period in the 1970s, following the Birmingham pub bombings, the Manchester Martyrs have been commemorated annually since 1867. On Saturday 26 November 1994 the Manchester Martyrs Committee was forced to cancel its commemorative rally in the face of threats from a gang of loyalists/fascists who had turned up to disrupt the meeting.

This humiliation was the inevitable consequence of an act of crass stupidity and sectarianism which took place nearly four years beforehand, when Red Action members and a number of individuals were expelled from the committee. In effect, this decision removed the entire stewarding capacity of the Committee, leaving them defenceless and vulnerable to loyalist/fascist attack.

Prior to the expulsions in January 1991, Red Action had been one of

the Committee's most consistent and practical supporters, offering upon request physical, financial and political support. Ever since the committee was revived in 1984, RA had provided the bulk of the stewarding (and in many years the largest contingent on the march), had donated £800 in 1989 to bring over a Republican Flute Band from Ireland, and defended in principle the right of the Committee to invite without fear of, boycott any individual or organisation who they felt might have something to contribute to breaking the deadlock in Ireland. However, it became increasingly apparent during the years '89/'90 that all was not well within the Committee. The most visible sign of this being the decline in numbers attending the march. The Committee had become virtually isolated, not only from all other left-wing, anti-imperialist and Irish groups, but also from the local Irish community, tradition-

ally the Commemoration's staunchest supporters. Coupled to this falling away of support was the growth of a clique of individuals on the Committee who were both unrepresentative of anybody, and responsible to nobody. This clique ran the Committee like a personal fiefdom and insisted on their total autonomy and independence. Concern over their behaviour was routinely dismissed, resulting in alienation and suspicion. Another concern was the insistence of the Committee on the continued invitation to the IRSP to address the rally, long after it had become obvious that the IRSP had ceased to fulfill any useful role. The inclusion of the IRSP meant the exclusion of Sinn Fein, and while Red Action initially resisted the attempts by Sinn Fein to blackmail the Committee into compliance with SF policy over this issue, it soon became clear that the IRSP were to all intents

and purposes defunct anyway. Therefore the continued invitation to IRSP members was a nonsense based more on the personal friendships of the individuals concerned rather than any political principle. These concerns were increasingly being voiced during 1990, when on the pre-text of an incident between the chair of the Committee and a former member, the "dissident element" were expelled. Those expelled neither took part, witnessed, or were in any way responsible for the incident. Following the expulsions, the decline of both the Commemoration and Committee accelerated at an alarming rate. Over the next three years Red Action, as part of AFA, continued to organise the stewards off the march, to try to intercept fascist mobs coming into the area. On occasion this was successful, but we received neither credit, thanks nor recognition from the march

organisers who were content to let the police steward the march for them. In 1994, in belated recognition of their own incompetence, the Manchester Martyrs Committee folded, only to be re-launched several weeks later by more or less the same people. To all intents and purposes it was the same Committee with the same people, making the same mistakes and using the same shabby methods. A case of "The Martyrs Committee is dead! Long live the Martyrs Committee!" The end result of all these shenanigans was the decision to hold an indoor rally in Longsight rather than a march, which perhaps was a sensible decision, given the drop in support over previous years. In the week prior to the rally, AFA passed on information to the Committee which we had picked up concerning a planned loyalist attack. We also informed them that unfortunately we would be unable to attend as we were committed to attending an AFA mobilisation in Leeds. Therefore they would have to organise their

own security arrangements. This they failed to do, and the rest is history. Subsequently they have attempted to place the blame for the whole fiasco on Red Action and AFA, as if we are somehow honour-bound to defend any daft, half-arsed initiative which might come under threat of fascist attack. In the meantime, while we're busy defending people who don't even acknowledge our existence, we're supposed to turn our backs on AFA members in Leeds! The arrogance of these people is staggering. While AFA have been busy beating the fascists all over the North-West, these people have grown fat and complacent, safe in the knowledge that AFA is doing the fighting for them. It would be preferable that the Manchester Martyrs Committee be laid to rest for a few years, rather than let these losers organise anymore defeats and further besmirch the memory of the Martyrs.

On November 12 AFA turned out in Bloxwich, West Midlands, for the local Trades Council march against racism and fascism. For the past couple of years this event has provided the local fascists with the opportunity to cream support from local opposition to the march, opposition often inspired by the left's constant alarmist attitude to the area.

Contrary to the ANL line that everyone in Bloxwich is either a racist or an out and out fascist, the fact is that Bloxwich is a working-class suburb, like any other in the Midlands. The difference being that Bloxwich is home to one Duane Eddie (we kid you not) Marlow, his brother Stuart, and a band of fascist hangers-on, the majority of whom are barely out of nappies. (Duane, by the way, being the same man who squealed like a pig while debating the pros and cons of militant anti-fascism with comrades at Digbeth coach station.)

Between them, Messrs Marlow and the ANL have created the illusion that Bloxwich is home to the Fourth Reich! This situation is further enhanced by the attitude of the local police and Special Branch, who at best treat Marlow with kid-gloves, or at worst admire him as

## THE GLORIOUS TWELFTH



Duane Eddie; 'Good As Gold', according to the Branch

some sort of local folk-hero. A classic example being a Blood and Honour gig which was re-directed from Bloxwich at the end of October. Though smaller than usual, the police did them the courtesy of

sealing off the entire High Street at 4pm and provided Marlow with a police motorcade over the border into Staffordshire. On such occasions it is common to see the police sharing a laugh and a joke with Marlow. It is little wonder that the residents of Bloxwich feel alienated; on the one hand they are besieged by raving Nazis, if they give credence to the ANL scaremongering, and on the other they are subjected to the attentions of the middle-class left, a left looking for a convenient focal-point.

It was with all this in mind that over fifty militant anti-fascists gathered in the centre of Bloxwich on the morning of the twelfth, the aim of the day being to prove to the community, the left and, most importantly, the fascists, that when confronted by militant anti-fascists these *Aryan Warriors* are not all they're cracked up to be.

The AFA contingent set about visiting watering-holes that Duane Eddie and his Merry Men are known to frequent. The first pub we hit (forgive the pun) was one of Marlow's locals. The landlord greeted

us warmly and asked us if we were there to meet Duane, assuming we were fascists! Our intelligence then led us to the infamous Chimneys public house, as seen on TV picketed by the ANL on a number of occasions, and reputed to have hosted monthly fascist meetings. The AFA crew clashed with fascists just outside the pub, enabling those inside to do a runner and jump the fence to safety, indifferent to their comrades' fate. We soon discovered on entering the pub that Marlow had made a phone call to the police saying "There's a large number of NF (!) in the Chimneys, tooled up with knives, iron bars and CS gas!" Presumably Marlow's paranoia led him to believe that the police would be more likely to react to a fascist gang than to an AFA one.

After one or two further altercations, AFA regrouped in the Queen's Head, near the rally. Word got to the police that the NF were steadily arriving there - and we were soon joined by a Branch man who told us in no uncertain terms that seeing as we were there to meet Duane it was 'no

problem', for if we were all like Duane we were good as gold! He had no qualms about our mock Nazi salutes, and agreed with our mock patriotic overtones! Despite seeing our black and asian comrades, this clever chap never cottoned on. Only after trotting off to talk to Duane did he realise the true identity of the fifty or so 'skinhead types' waiting in a nearby pub. Less friendly on his return, he greeted us with, "You lying fat red!" Next we turned our attentions to The Crown and Sceptre, as scouts had earlier reported a gathering of fascists there, drinking safely out of the way. Local fash, Big Nige, was last seen clambering over the bar and through the back fence. His mates, sporting a variety of Rangers and loyalist regalia, made an equally mad dash through the front.

The fascists were visibly shaken, Marlow was last seen re-emerging on the High Street, hood up, head down, scurrying like a rat. On this crucial day for the fascists AFA controlled the area, which rendered their previously complacent strategy inoperable. *Militant anti-fascism has brought the Bloxwich opposition down to earth with a bump: AFA did more in three hours than the left had done in three years.*

## Best of a Bad Bunch?

"I'd like to thank the James Connolly Association for organising the march and inviting me to speak..."

Richard MacCauley of Sinn Fein speaking at the James Connolly Commemoration, organised by the James Connolly Society (JCS) in October 1994. Did he get it wrong or do Sinn Fein know something we don't?

The 1994 James Connolly Commemoration took place last October and attracted about 600 people, including flute bands and various left-wing groups. Unlike last year's illegal demonstration, Red Action and the Republican Bands Alliance Scotland were not invited by the JCS to help organise and mobilise for the march. Indeed, both organisations were not officially invited to participate until two weeks before the march. In the case of Red Action, considering the increasing liberal stance of the JCS over the last year, it was hardly surprising. The Bands Alliance, however, were manoeuvred out of participation with a series of lies and deceptions orchestrated by the leaders of the JCS, who now appear to favour a less militant agenda. This is in stark contrast to the preparations for the 1993 march.

In February 1993 Red Action contacted the Bands Alliance and the JCS to initiate dialogue about the likely scenario for the Connolly Commemoration. We had already decided, on the evidence of the 1992 ban, which the JCS were unable to overcome, that the key to a successful event would be to secure the support of the Bands Alliance with its numerical strength and militant Republican tradition. The meetings were set up accordingly, with Red Action personnel meeting - in order of priority - with our colleagues from the Bands Alliance on the Saturday. Having secured the support of the Bands Alliance, we then travelled to Edinburgh to meet the JCS and put forward our strategy for a successful - but illegal - James Connolly Commemoration.

problem of being illegal. Red Action was already committed to mobilising its members. Individual members of AFA decided, after the continual threats by loyalists and fascists to disrupt the march, that this was legitimate anti-fascist activity. Some joined Red Action on a coach from London. Others from RA/AFA travelled from Birmingham, Manchester, Dublin, Belfast and locally from Glasgow and Edinburgh. We estimate that of the 200 marchers who finally assembled in Broughton Street that day, more than 80 were members of Red Action and/or AFA; there were about 60 Bands Alliance members and a number of independent Republicans from the Glasgow area. That means that 75% of the march came from outside Edinburgh. If the JCS is as weak numerically and politically as it appears, then it will eventually be sidelined on its own march by the very lefties that it is now cuddling up to. Most of these lefties don't support the march in its current Republican form and seek a compromise that will exclude Republican Bands in the future - that's why they had nothing to do with the march when it was banned in '93 and '94.

But it is not only the left who deserve criticism. Since 1993, the JCS has turned out to be as bereft of original ideas and as prone to double-dealing as the rest of the lefties. It became apparent from an early stage that the JCS is largely a phantom organisation, run undemocratically by less than a handful of individuals. Red Action's mistakes at the meetings held in Edinburgh after the march, which saw us advocating that the JCS alone should have full control of the defence campaign, left them completely unaccountable. We supported this strategy, initially for the best of reasons, as it became obvious that sectarian elements were intent on hijacking the campaign, and we responded to pleas from the JCS to attend the meetings and to support them against such opportunism. However, the strategy of the JCS was never to offer an alternative strategy to what was being argued - it was easier for them to simply stop having meetings and restrict the defendants' campaign to a fundraising effort. Here, again, we allowed the JCS to dictate a part of the campaign that they contributed

little to. Despite almost £3000 being raised by the Glasgow sub-committee, which was made up of Red Action, the Bands Alliance and independent Republicans, those who raised the money had no say in how it was to be used, other than in a general commitment to the paying of fines. There are no details available of whether a surplus existed - or how it was spent - and we had no say in the formation of a political campaign after the march. Basically, as a result of our own misjudgments, we found ourselves supporting the JCS as the "best of a bad bunch", when we should have been broadening the campaign and extending the influence of the militants, as we had originally intended. The goodwill shown by Red Action and the Bands Alliance towards the JCS was never reciprocated. Indeed, the JCS were willing to carve their strongest supporters out of meetings in Glasgow arranged by the Connolly Association and

the LCI (both local groups which did not support the 1993 march) with elements from the Scottish TUC who were looking for ways to further control and take over the commemoration. The truth is that without Red Action and the Bands Alliance there would not have been a James Connolly Commemoration in 1993: legal or illegal. Without the illegal march of '93, there would have been no basis for the legal parade in '94. In 1993 we recognised that the only way to secure the march as a legal event in future years would be to beat

the ban on the streets. We did this and we won. But for the march to continue in its present legal form and continue to have impact requires the input of the militant elements whose involvement in 1993 turned it from a parochial affair into a march with national implications. As the Regional Council Elections showed, the JCS, left by themselves, are prone to borrowing not only the tactics but the language and 'programme' of the Trot Left. Rather than base their campaign on the theme of the march and concentrate their attacks on the establishment party in Scotland, Labour, who as the local council were responsible for the ban on the march, they adopted instead, in the face of Red Action protests, a fantasy programme. A sort of lefty shopping list of worthy causes, (£200 a week minimum wage, etc.) Inevitably, Labour romped home with 3000 votes, the JCS not far behind with 76. At the 1994 rally spokesman Jim Slaven dismissed criticisms of the programme: "We didn't stand to win...everybody knows that. We stood to put over the Republican argument - and we won that." In reality no Republican argument was won, because no Republican argument was ever put!

The JCS is now a mixed bag of ex-flute band members, lefties and Scottish nationalists, who it accommodates on the basis of the lowest common denominator, as opposed to unity-based politics. There is little adherence to the revolutionary principles of James Connolly, and the JCS has continued to pursue a largely (Irish) nationalist agenda, rather than a pro-working-class agenda. The JCS sees Red Action through the eyes of the left and views us as an impediment to achieving their ultimate goal, which now appears to be respectability and acceptance.

If the JCS wants to go 'mainstream' and team up with the rest of the lefties, then that's up to them. There is nothing we can do about it. All we can do is point out to them that in 25 years the left have achieved absolutely nothing in terms of solidarity with the Irish Republican struggle. In a leaflet distributed by Red Action members at last year's march we said:

*"James Connolly's legacy will always have to be fought for - in Scotland and in Ireland. Connolly was a working-class revolutionary. His ideas frighten the bosses here and in Ireland. Not only do we need to continue to fight for the right to commemorate him, we also have to wage an ideological war on all of those opportunists and traitors on the left who claim his ideas as their own!"*



Glasgow RA members parade their august organ - outside Ibrox!



Three months ago when the Irish Republican Army took the courageous decision to cease military operations I jokingly remarked to one of Red Action's editorial board that the name of this column would have to be changed. It could no longer be called *Dispatches from a War Zone* if there was no war. I cannot believe my own naivety. It takes all sides in a conflict to agree to an end in hostilities before the conflict has ended. Three months after the republican movement decided to give the peace process a chance, and two months after the loyalist paramilitaries decided to give the peace process a chance, the armed wing of the British government is still very much alive and kicking. Kicking the shit out of young and old men alike in nationalist areas of the Six Counties! A few weeks ago, when complaints were made against the Parachute Regiment for its apparent reign of terror on the streets of nationalist West Belfast, a British MP was reported in the local unionist-controlled media as saying that these complaints were nothing more than Republican propaganda designed to undermine the Peace Process and that no battalion of the Parachute Regiment was in fact based in Belfast. Either this minister is a complete and utter idiot who is not privy to what regiments are in the Six Counties or he himself believes that he is such a competent liar that the people of West Belfast will concede that the men in purple berets who are dishing out beatings, issuing threats, spitting in our faces, and telling us to "Fuck off, you Irish bastards!" are nothing more than figments of our over-active imaginations.

Many RUC members believe that if the Peace negotiations reach a settlement that they will be out of a job and more than a few have openly boasted that they intend to wreck any settlement which will see them on the dole. The 'impartiality' of the RUC was clearly demonstrated on the New Lodge Road last Monday evening when they attacked a young woman for no reason at all. Twenty-two year old Marguerite Anderson was leaving her home at eight-thirty pm when members of an RUC patrol ran over and began to rough her up. One male member called to a female colleague to join them and also told another member to get a blanket. Fearing further physical assault, Marguerite tried to get back into her house whereupon the female RUC member started screaming abuse and started pulling at Marguerite's coat intending to strip it off her. She was

then pulled forcibly into the house by the RUC who raided the family home for over two and a half hours. Describing the RUC attack as "completely indiscipline" local Sinn Fein councillor Paddy McManus said that the RUC woman appeared to take particular pleasure in assaulting Marguerite, and that "The entire RUC patrol seemed to be making up excuses for raiding the house, taking their lead from the female officer, who seemed totally out of control." This is the face of the RUC seen by nationalists in the Six Counties; the twisted, ugly face of a bigoted sectarian force spewing forth its anti-catholic bigotry while slamming us against walls or landrovers. We never meet that smiling, unarmed, helpful policeman portrayed by the media. To make matters worse, seven hundred members of the infamous DMSU's, responsible for the murders of unarmed Republicans and civilians, among them Sean Downs, have been moved to traffic duties since the IRA ceasefire. This leads to any Republican activist unlucky enough to be stopped by these thugs at a check-point having to watch his car undergo a rigorous examination which leads to many receiving fixed penalty fines for the pettiest of reasons. A taxi driver friend of mine had his PSV licence taken off him because of two small scratches in his car. When it was pointed out to the RUC man that there was a court case pending against a British army footpatrol for causing the scratches he was told, "They should have been fixed by now." Yet another example of the 'understanding police officer.'

The RUC in any guise will never be acceptable to the nationalist people. I have no doubt that the British government would be content just to change the name of the force without changing the root causes of people's mistrust of this force, much the same as the disgraced B-Specials became the disgraced UDR who became the RIR, or when the brutal and inhumane prison Long Kesh became the Maze prison, but it won't wash this time. The nationalist people have the right to demand and expect a truly impartial

police service, dedicated to the service and protection of all the people. The RUC can never meet these qualifications as it was set up to serve a protestant government for a protestant people. It has, since its inception, been a sectarian force dedicated to a sectarian state whose policy of subjugation towards nationalist people is well documented. If there is to be a lasting peace in Ireland then the British must follow the lead of the IRA and the loyalist paramilitaries and take their guns out of Ireland. They must de-militarise our country by taking all the British troops home. They must disarm and disband the discredited RUC and replace it with a police service recruited from, and dedicated to, all sections of the community. Since the IRA ceasefire there have been scores of complaints against the RUC for harassment, sectarian taunts, and verbal and physical abuse, on the streets, at check-points and even in people's own homes. They have continued to carry out house-raids on the slightest pre-text and they are still arresting, detaining and interrogating 'suspects' in the

police service, dedicated to the service and protection of all the people. The RUC can never meet these qualifications as it was set up to serve a protestant government for a protestant people. It has, since its inception, been a sectarian force dedicated to a sectarian state whose policy of subjugation towards nationalist people is well documented. If there is to be a lasting peace in Ireland then the British must follow the lead of the IRA and the loyalist paramilitaries and take their guns out of Ireland. They must de-militarise our country by taking all the British troops home. They must disarm and disband the discredited RUC and replace it with a police service recruited from, and dedicated to, all sections of the community. Since the IRA ceasefire there have been scores of complaints against the RUC for harassment, sectarian taunts, and verbal and physical abuse, on the streets, at check-points and even in people's own homes. They have continued to carry out house-raids on the slightest pre-text and they are still arresting, detaining and interrogating 'suspects' in the

## LEFT-OUT!

The calling of a ceasefire by the Provisional IRA on the 1st of September 1994 caught many on the hop. The British government's paltry response in terms of talking to Sinn Fein, releasing prisoners and demilitarising both the army and the RUC has strengthened those Republicans who opposed the original ceasefire. On Tuesday 3rd January the British secretary of state for Northern Ireland, Patrick Mayhew, said,

"Substantial progress must be made on arms. We want to be sure that to a substantial extent weapons and armaments currently in the hands of the paramilitaries have, by whatever means, become no longer available for use."

This statement is a retreat from the original position that there be no talks until arms were decommissioned. That retreat was in response to pressure from the new Bruton-led coalition in the 26 counties which has recognised the grave difficulties that would be posed to the IRA if it began to disarm this side of cast-iron guarantees from the British that they were in the process of beginning to disengage from Ireland. To strengthen the Adams/McGuinness wing of the Republican movement, the Southern establishment have been sensitive to their position in contrast to Bruton's neo-unionist attitudes whilst in opposition. There are clear divisions in the British government. A section want the bombing campaign in England ended.

It has been bad for business.

Furthermore, the international ramifications of the Irish conflict has damaged British interests abroad and diminished its authority. Its every action in Ireland is now subjected to US scrutiny. It is no longer an 'internal' issue. That section which includes Hurd, Heath and the modernising wing of the Tories is determined to get rid of the 'Irish Question' once and for all.

However, an important section of the British ruling-class, encompassing elements of the intelligence services and the more unionist-orientated Tories, want the war to continue. They are prepared to split the IRA and see a more 'republican' army, without the Provisionals' war-chest, continue a more modest guerilla campaign against them. They are hoping that more militant Republicans, without the political base of Sinn Fein, will emerge and be manipulated into taking up armed struggle again. That way they will discredit the 'peace process', weaken the currently strong nationalist front of the Provos, the SDLP and the current Free-State establishment, and keep their loyalist allies under control, and ready as ever to justify and engage in more sectarian murders of Catholics.

Why should they want the war to continue? Because they are in favour of the Union. They see the 'peace process' as fundamentally weakening the link between the British state and the 6 counties. They see the break up of the Union as the first fatal step towards the break-up of the British state.



Veteran Republican Martin Meehan, who in addition to a broken nose survived a minor heart-attack after an encounter with the 'impartial' RUC.

police service, dedicated to the service and protection of all the people. The RUC can never meet these qualifications as it was set up to serve a protestant government for a protestant people. It has, since its inception, been a sectarian force dedicated to a sectarian state whose policy of subjugation towards nationalist people is well documented.

If there is to be a lasting peace in Ireland then the British must follow the lead of the IRA and the loyalist paramilitaries and take their guns out of Ireland. They must de-militarise our country by taking all the British troops home. They must disarm and disband the discredited RUC and replace it with a police service recruited from, and dedicated to, all sections of the community. Since the IRA ceasefire there have been scores of complaints against the RUC for harassment, sectarian taunts, and verbal and physical abuse, on the streets, at check-points and even in people's own homes. They have continued to carry out house-raids on the slightest pre-text and they are still arresting, detaining and interrogating 'suspects' in the

but also caught were the Irish left. Unable to forge a separate existence of any meaningful status, many have buried themselves inside the Provos, or are now wondering if a split will develop, with the emergence of a more militant Republican group, prepared to adopt a socialist programme.

Such an outlook, whilst understandable, would be disastrous. Marxists within the Republican tradition should know by now that the Left cannot ride the Militarist tiger. No section of the Irish left can provide, nor should try to provide, political respectability for the militarists. The road to socialism will be built not on the backs of the militarists but by, and with the whole-hearted support of, the Irish working-class. That is where the ultimate revolutionary force rests. It is the Left's function to release that force

**Revolutionaries recognize that armed struggle is simply a means of struggle to achieve revolutionary aims. It is a tactical decision whether or not to engage in armed struggle.**

Likewise, it is a tactical decision to engage in a 'peaceful' method of struggle. The Provisional leadership may have reached the correct decision in opting for an end to the armed campaign at this moment in time. It has strengthened their position, weakened the opposition and opened up huge areas for advancing their cause.

However there are those who while agreeing with the peace strategy do not agree with the peace process. Sinn Fein's commitment to multi-national penetration of the Northern economy,

its wholesale acceptance of the American way of politics, and its rapid ditching of anything that smacks of revolutionary politics might have shocked some of its supporters, but it shouldn't have done so. For years socialists outside the Provisionals have been pointing out that the carrying out of armed struggle does not necessarily make you a revolutionary. The Provisionals have always been armed Nationalists who, for recruiting purposes, have used left-wing rhetoric. Working-class activists should support the absence of violence, whilst not creating any illusions that the politics of the Provisionals are about to either deliver a united Ireland or, more importantly from their view of the working-class, a Socialist Republic.

There is a fundamental obligation on those on the left to begin to provide the necessary leadership in this critical time. Peace nor war is not the issue. The fundamental question still remains as it always has done. Who rules Ireland? Who rules our wealth? Our land? Our factories? The people or the money-grabbing imperialists and gombenmen?

The process of the dismantling of the 6 county state has begun. Whether it will be carried on successfully will be decided by the ability of the most progressive forces to re-group and push back onto the political agenda the fundamental questions that affect the everyday affairs of the people in Ireland.

My friend pointed out that had he done so, and had the car been used by an illegal organisation for any reason, he would still be before the court, but on a charge of withholding information. The judge nodded in agreement. First point to my friend. So the NIO man changes tactics. He tells my friend that his injuries, rather than being consistent with a street beating were in fact more consistent with a punishment beating. Everyone stared at the barrister incredulously, including the judge. Was an NIO barrister finally admitting that punishment beatings were necessary, and therefore no claim could be made for compensation?

My friend shot that supposition down by informing the court that he is not even from Belfast, let alone the area where the incident occurred. The judge was still looking strangely at the barrister. Two-nil to my friend. So the NIO played its trump card. "Isn't it true that the police found two rifles, two magazines and ammunition in your home in January 1979?"

"This is correct, your honour," replied my friend. The NIO man sees his

chance to claw back some credibility, and seizes it with gusto. "And isn't it also true that you have been questioned several times at Castlereagh police office since then?" (a reasonable supposition since this bloke had been caught with weapons) "No your honour, that is incorrect," replied my friend. "Oh come now," countered the NIO man, wondering why he didn't get the answer he'd expected. "Are you seriously telling this court that although you were caught and sentenced for having terrorist weapons you have never since been questioned by the police about terrorist incidents?" "That is correct, your honour," came the reply. "I was given a two year suspended sentence for having those weapons, not a sentence given to terrorists. As for being questioned by the police about terrorism, well, if that was the case they would not have allowed me this." The judge was then handed the firearms certificate my friend had produced from his pocket. Game, set and match I said to myself, as the NIO man's adam's apple imitated a yo-yo.

As it happens, I was wrong. The judge said that although he believed he was indeed beaten by a crowd intent on hijacking the car he could not award him compensation against the NIO because he had been involved in terrorism, no matter how slightly (???) He agreed that my friend did have a claim for compensation but since he was caught with guns fifteen years ago he was obviously mixed up with terrorists and wouldn't get compensation. However, if my friend could recognise and name any of those who had beaten him, he could claim again in a civil suit. He did not take into account the fact that the RUC had seen fit to give my friend a licence to own a shotgun and rifle, a courtesy they would not extend to Sinn Fein members when loyalist murder-squads were killing party members and their families. So although the RUC had seen fit to clear my friend of any 'terrorist involvement', when it came to having to pay compensation to the same man for protecting his own property the NIO and judiciary used the old possession charge to save a few shillings. In the process they have hinted at a lack of judgement on the part of the RUC, yet they expect the nationalist community to accept unreservedly the RUC's judgement when it harasses, arrests, tortures and frames our young people. Their double-standards show how openly corrupt the whole judicial system is. This system must be scrapped.

My friend pointed out that had he done so, and had the car been used by an illegal organisation for any reason, he would still be before the court, but on a charge of withholding information. The judge nodded in agreement. First point to my friend. So the NIO man changes tactics. He tells my friend that his injuries, rather than being consistent with a street beating were in fact more consistent with a punishment beating. Everyone stared at the barrister incredulously, including the judge. Was an NIO barrister finally admitting that punishment beatings were necessary, and therefore no claim could be made for compensation?

My friend shot that supposition down by informing the court that he is not even from Belfast, let alone the area where the incident occurred. The judge was still looking strangely at the barrister. Two-nil to my friend. So the NIO played its trump card. "Isn't it true that the police found two rifles, two magazines and ammunition in your home in January 1979?"

"This is correct, your honour," replied my friend. The NIO man sees his



Paddy Mayhew.

For imperialism and partition has distorted Ireland, weakened the strength of the working-classes, expanded the forces of the reactionary clergy over the every day lives of the people and indeed, in James Connolly's memorable phrase, instituted a 'carnival of reaction'.

Only a re-grouped and revolutionary class-based movement, based on the smashing of partition and the creation of a secular socialist Ireland can provide the necessary leadership to transform the opportunities of the current peace process into real and material gains.

**SEAN REID, BELFAST**

# The Peasants are Revolting

On January 1 1994, 2000 guerrillas from the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN) marched into seven towns in the state of Chiapas, occupied the municipal buildings, burned official documents, opened food warehouses to the poor, burned down town halls and set free over 200 prisoners in attacks on four prisons. Fifteen thousand troops, helicopter gunships, artillery and bombers were dispatched to Chiapas to suppress the uprising. On January 14 the Congress of Indigenous and Peasant Peoples met to declare solidarity with the EZLN. By late January the government, PRI, declared a unilateral ceasefire; the Interior Minister was forced to resign. Following talks, the government committed itself to a dramatic increase in spending in the region. In August the EZLN convened the National Democratic Convention, inviting six thousand representatives of Mexican civil society - indigenous community leaders, delegates from shanty towns, etc. After the convention, the Zapatista spokesperson, Subcomandante Marcos, declared that the armed struggle would be put on hold: "We are moving to one side; although we are not going away..." On January 12, 1995, The Guardian's editorial commented: "Even when the Chiapas exploded a year ago, this could still be treated more as a romantic echo of the past peasant rebellions, complete with burros and sombreros, than as a serious warning for the present day." A "serious warning" in November '94, that the EZLN were back, and that the grievances had not been addressed during the ceasefire, was ignored. The collapse of the Mexican Peso, blamed on the "unexpected re-appearance of the Zapatista rebels", has re-focused the world's attention on the region of Chiapas. In November 1994, Subcomandante Marcos outlined the reasons for the renewal of the armed struggle in an open letter to Ernesto Zedillo, President of Mexico.

"Today, and since the 17th of November 1994, I have been given the baton of the supreme command of the rebel forces, and consequently I assume the responsibility of responding to you in the name of all our Army. In this your first speech as the President, you point out your desire to seek negotiations as a way of resolving the conflict and you offer us that road. Mister Zedillo, it is my duty to say to you that we do not believe you. You are part of a system which has arrived at the greatest aberration, resorted to assassination in order to settle its differences as if you were a group of criminals. You do not conduct yourself as a representative of the Nation, you speak with an enormous stain on your word: the stain of the blood of thousands of assassinations, including those which belong to your own political circle, a stain which covers the Institutional Revolutionary Party. Why should we believe in the sincerity of a negotiated solution?"

From the beginning of the presidential assessment, the amount of troops have increased and the reinforcement of a clear disposition to annihilation is evident. From the 14th day of November there are obvious and

continuous intrusions of airplanes, of "Hercules" transports which move men and military supplies to the units used against insurgents on the Guatemalan border. The foreign military "advisors" (and I want to say clearly that they are not Argentinian because these animals have no country) have their pupils prepared. You have now finished, I assume that you are ready. We know the number and location of your troops, your general strategy and a few tactical plans. Unfortunately we can do nothing on political and military terms. We are surrounded militarily and this prevents a military action of any breadth. Our repeated declarations against the increase of your belligerent preparations have only frustrated and bored the Nation.

You should know that I have circulated orders that the totality of the members of the CCRI remain in rearguard in order to guarantee that the political direction of our just cause not be lost. Know as well that, as in January, the military leaders will be at the front of the different units. I will do the same. I have made the necessary preparations so that my successors in the military leadership can assume their responsibilities without major problems in case I should die.

Our major strength is also our major weakness. The support of the civilian population, that which allowed us to grow and become strong, now obliges us to abandon all intents and retreat which does not include them. That is why, for us, there is no backward step. We will fight at the side of the people who in the past have protected us, we will be the shields and guardians of their lives. I know that takes from us all possibility of survival. To confront as a regular army another regular army superior to us in our weapons and personnel, although not in morality, nullifies the possibilities of success. Surrender has been prohibited; the Zapatista leaders who opt for surrender will be decommissioned. However, no matter the result of this war, sooner or later the sacrifice which today appears to be useless and sterile will be compensated in the thunderbolts which light up other skies. The light will come, it is sure, to the deep South and will sparkle in the Mar de Plata, in the Andes, the land of Artigas, Paraguay and all this inverted and absurd pyramid which is Latin America. Strength is not on our side; it has never been on the side of the dispossessed. But the historic logic, the shame and ardor which we feel in our chests and which we call dignity, makes us, the nameless, the true men and women of forever.

In reference to the direct and secret dialogue, in my role as supreme commander of the EZLN I solemnly reject your invitation to a secret negotiation, behind the backs of the nation. You say that after years of war and thousands of deaths and great destruction, you and I will end up negotiating. That it is best to do it now. That war should be avoided. But, which war is to be avoided? The one which we began against your system by making legitimate use of self-defence and rebellion? Or the one which you have made against us since you have been in power and government in these Mexican lands? The war which we want to end is the one waged by the political system behind and above you against us. The war against any democratizing effort, against any desire for justice, against any aspiration for liberty. This is the war which all Mexicans suffer and which must come to an end. Once it ends, the other war, our war, everyone's war will extinguish itself. Useless and sterile it will end by leaving like a nightmare which is healed by the

first light of day. This is the peace we want. Any effort in another direction is a deceit.

You decided to slam the door on the 21st of August and repeat the arrogance of a landslide victory. It so happens that, in history, the doors to peaceful change and violent change, of peace and or war, are inversely linked; when one is closed the other opens. Closing the door to a peaceful transition to democracy opened the heavy gate of war.

The stupidity which has guided your conduct in Chiapas has beaten me back to reality; the system of the party-State is not intelligent. Even more, I see today that this imbecility is inherent to your state of decomposition. Having had the opportunity to deactivate the political knot of the conflict, you not only maintained it, you tightened it and incorporated sectors which were once on the margin in the extremes of polarisation. The deterioration is irreversible; the middle ground has disappeared and the extremes confront themselves demanding the extermination of the other. We have grown by tens of thousands. As I pointed out to you, the supreme government has always taken pertinent measures and taken us out of a problem and made us grow. Instead of risking extinction by political isolation, by a vacuum, the government, with its clumsy local and regional politics, oxygenated a fire which will ultimately consume it.

You must disappear, not just because you represent a historic aberration, a human negation and a cynical cruelty; you should disappear also because you represent an insult to intelligence. You made us possible, you made us grow. We are your other, your siamese opposite. In order for us to disappear you must disappear as well.

We know that our refusal for a dialogue in the conditions which you propose will make a military solution your first choice in future decisions. We do not fear death nor the judgement of history. If in truth the entire country is willing to submit its desires for liberty and democracy, then the clamour for our

annihilation will be gigantic and you will not have to worry. High military commanders say they will annihilate us all in a few hours, days if the weather is bad. Therefore, the stock market may suffer a few days of uncertainty.

If, on the other hand as we believe, the people of Mexico wish to listen to our rebel cry for dignity, then millions of voices will unite with our demands for the three conditions for a dignified peace: democracy, liberty and justice.

You are no longer you. You are the personification of an unjust system, anti-democratic and criminal. We, the "illegals", the "transgressors of the law", the "professionals of violence", the "nameless" ones, are today and always, the hope of everyone.

That is all, Mister Zedillo. I have spoken to you with sincerity, in a way in which I don't believe you have spoken to me. I repeat our demands for



Subcomandante Marcos: 'Surrender has been prohibited'

peace: democracy, liberty and justice for all Mexicans.

As long as these demands remain unresolved there will be war in Mexican territory.

Health and a parachute for that cliff which exists in your tomorrow."

From the Mountains of Southeast Mexico. Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos. Mexico, November of 1994.

At the time of going to press, the EZLN are supporting the opposition leader, Amado Avendano, whose parallel rebel government commands the loyalty of at least three dozen towns in the Chiapas region. Avendano was cheated of election victory by government-led voting fraud.

# Time To Go - home!

"To the prisoners we say we are confident, because we are confident. We are not going to stop until all of you are home." These are the words of Mairead Ni hAdhmaill, wife of Irish Republican POW, Feilim O hAdhmaill, currently serving a 25 year sentence in Britain.

Despite being into the fifth month of the IRA's cessation of operations the British government are still insisting, in the words of British Security Minister, John Wheeler (responding to Saoirse's call for the release of all political prisoners): "Well, I can help them with that. We have no political prisoners."

At the end of any armed conflict it is universally accepted that one of the first issues to be addressed is that of the release of prisoners. During the last 25 years of the conflict 60,000 - one in ten of the nationalist population - have been imprisoned as a result of the war in the North of Ireland. On 1 December 1994, there were 563 Irish political POWs being held in jails throughout Ireland, Britain, Europe and the US. It is those being held outside of Ireland who suffer particular hardship with POWs and families being separated by long distances.

In Britain there are currently over 30 Irish political prisoners being held captive, some of whom have been subjected to severe brutality recently.

Following the escape attempt from Whitemoor jail by five Republican POWs and another

prisoner, Andy Russell, some of them were beaten on a continuous basis for up to five hours afterwards. Gilbert McNamee and Liam McCotter were attacked, resulting in Liam needing 11 stitches in a head wound. Dingus Magee was continuously beaten until he became badly concussed. Andy Russell, the only non-IRA prisoner on the escape attempt, suffered torn ligaments and face injuries in beatings which occurred every 10-20 minutes over a five hour period. Following the attack, he was physically unable to dress himself.

Andy's brother described the attack: "I was prepared for him to be battered a bit but not for anything like what I saw. He can't move one of his arms at all as the ligaments are so badly torn. Both of his eyes have been blackened and in one of them you can't see any white at all, only red. Andy told me he was thrown face down onto a cell floor and held there while his head was yanked back and he was kicked repeatedly in the face."

At the moment, the prisoners (the other two are Peter Sherry and Liam O'Dwyer) are being held at Belmarsh jail in solitary 23-hour lock up, are either left naked or forced to wear blue and yellow 'monkey suits', having to endure oral and strip searches and have refused visits because the authorities are insisting that they are closed visits.

In a further development, Republican POWs held in Full Sutton jail called for an end to the

use of Special Security Units. In a statement received by Red Action, they explained: "The SSUs are not, as some of the newspapers would have their readers believe, five star hotels. They are modern day dungeons of the British prison system where no more than seven or eight prisoners (mostly Republican prisoners) are incarcerated in very claustrophobic conditions at any one time.

"Throughout the years that republican prisoners have been held in SSUs they have, along with non-political prisoners, fought and won concession to try and humanise their incarceration. But we the Republican prisoners now held in Full Sutton's SSU know that the SSUs are inhuman and damaging to our physical and psychological health and have informed the prison administration that we are no longer prepared to tolerate being held in SSUs.

"As from 15.12.94 we have withdrawn all co-operation in running the SSU and we are demanding to be taken out of the SSU and transferred to prisons in Ireland pending our eventual release through amnesty."

The prisoners in Full Sutton have recently been subjected to 23-hour lock-up after being told, without foundation, that a number of incendiary devices had been found: given the complete absence of any media coverage this has probably more to do with the regime figuring out a response to the POWs' demands than an



actual find.

Red Action have attended the various pickets at Belmarsh and the Home Office calling for an end to the brutality and immediate implementation of the Ferrers Report which called for the transfer of Irish prisoners in England back to the six counties to be nearer their families.

We have also pledged our full support pending the formation of Saoirse groups in Britain; in Dublin, where groups have been formed, our members are already active.

Despite the feeling of urgency many of the campaigners feel in bringing about the release of the prisoners, one thing is for sure: the prisoners themselves refuse to be used as bargaining chips in the process of bringing about an agreement. As one POW being held in Britain told a Red Action member recently,

"I know no one who would trade their sentence and condemn future generations to the corrupt state in the North of Ireland".

**BOOK OFFER**

The hunger strike book 'Nor Meekly Serve My Time' has quickly become everyone's book of the year for 1994. It is the moving and powerful story of the H-Block struggle from 1976-81 told through the words of the POWs themselves (RA review issue 69).

Since our last issue, the book has sold like hotcakes and so far we've sold over 80 copies. It is still available to readers at the special price of £6.99 (normal price £9.99) from RA sellers or from the Box numbers, including p&p.

**CARDS**

It is important that we continue to demonstrate our solidarity with the POWs. With this in mind, Red Action has produced a set of cards calling for "Amnesty for Irish Political Prisoners!"

We ask all our readers to send cards to the POWs on their birthdays during the coming year. It is something that can be done with the minimum effort but at the same is well appreciated. Packs of 10 cards are available at £2 from your RA seller or from the Box numbers at £2.50 (include p&p) and included is a full list of Irish POWs held in Britain. (All profits from the sale of cards go to POW welfare).



Brian Campbell and Feilim O'Hagan, editors of the book of the year, 'Nor Meekly Serve My Time'



# Book Reviews...

## Revolution is Illegal

'Turning Up the Heat',  
Larry O'Hara.

The very first thing that needs to be understood when reading this book is to recognise and accept that the author is a conspiracy theorist. That is not to say that his theories are always wrong, but like many of his species he arrives at the conclusion in advance of the evidence. Having arrived at the conclusion first, the motivation for the consequent research is not to establish the veracity of his argument, but simply to verify his initial suspicion, so unhelpful facts are discarded. To illustrate the point one need only examine the chapters concerning Red Action. Therein lies the dissection of the core concern: the MI5 manipulation of groups on both the far-left and the far-right. O'Hara outlines a plausible scenario where, despite, or more accurately, because of the end of the cold war, MI5 'seeks to expand its empire in order to survive'. In the absence of a credible terrorist threat to the state domestically, O'Hara argues it is in MI5's self-interest to create the "links" to make such a threat tangible: "It wouldn't be a question of plucking such links entirely from thin air - the sympathies of Red Action and fascists towards different paramilitary groups in Northern Ireland is well known. There is a world of difference though between a general affinity up to

and including propaganda distribution, and operational links, and it is these that MI5 may well

have set about manufacturing."

Central to this thesis is the circumstances surrounding, and MI5 involvement in, two separate court cases in 1993 involving two different members of Red Action: "Put simply, given that RA have always had a line of militant verbal support for the armed Republican cause, two things need to be explained: why Hayes and indeed Heffernan...should have decided to become operational when they did, and why it had not happened to them (or any other RA members) earlier". O'Hara suggests that "in line with MI5 strategy, they got one or more of their agents within the IRA to suggest the abandoning, or support the removal of, the previous taboo concerning the British far-left...Given that there are very few on the British Left who would consider becoming active on behalf of the IRA/INLA, then picking such people back in England would be a relatively easy task."

This line of argument is sparked by the suppression for thirty-three days of the video stills of suspects taken outside Harrods shortly before an explosion there which was claimed by the IRA. According to O'Hara, MI5 had the video stills suppressed deliberately, because they knew the identity of the suspects shortly after "if not before" the bomb was planted: "The motive for suppression which I favour most, is

that MI5 wanted the suspects to carry out further actions...the more bombs...planted the better it would be." O'Hara's suspicion is that their subsequent activities "may have (despite them not knowing it) fitted into a state agenda as well as an IRA one... what I am saying is that the timing is crucial - why then and not earlier." The problem for O'Hara is that none of the activists to which he refers made statements to the police. Consequently, neither O'Hara or anyone outside the IRA can know when they became operational - so his analysis rests exclusively on when they got caught! The O'Hara rationale is that neither they nor indeed any other 'English leftist' would never become involved in such activity had they not been manipulated by the secret state. So for the author they are - presumed innocent.

However, unable to ignore the evidence entirely he has sought to suggest their 'half-innocence' by concocting a theoretical plea bargain, that they were duped. To this end, he introduces a whole shoal of red herrings including one, which he actually introduces as a "bizarre tale": there was a third person at the house when police arrived, allegedly an Irish Sinn Fein member, who is supposed to have been the person who fired the shots at police. If such a person does exist, and was there doing such things, it beggars belief that they weren't arrested and

charged, raising all sorts of troubling questions." From O'Hara's standpoint it is preferable to invent a mythical third party to which the shooting can then be attributed, rather than wrestle with the uncomfortable reality of the two English-born defendants and the smoking gun? Presumably, an Irish Sinn Fein member is more likely to have tried to kill a copper than any English 'lefty' even if the latter is in the IRA. Or at least that is clearly what O'Hara would like to believe. (The basis for the "bizarre tale" was a report in the Guardian that in addition to the two IRA men charged, a third man was also arrested. The identity of 'the third man'? The poor bastard who lived upstairs and was arrested by mistake.) The subliminal concern throughout is not that these particular IRA/INLA members be proved 'innocent' but that their undeniable organic link to the British left doesn't tarnish the latter's carefully nurtured tradition of essen-

tially harmless eccentricity: "Whatever the specifics of RA's position on Ireland, the persecution of RA is not just a matter for their own members, it has a knock on effect across the extra-parliamentary left... if the overall analysis of MI5 strategy in this book is right, the above are questions of great relevance to all radical activists, not least to prevent their repetition" (RA emphasis).

And: "The reaction by Red Action in their paper to the jailing of Hayes and Taylor, while understandable, is one that is going to secure them continuing, and even escalated, MI5 attention... [and] MI5 will use it to justify targeting anyone in the periphery of Red Action/Anti-Fascist Action as thereby linked to an insurrectionary (ie. terrorist) organisation."

Only from this ultra-liberal standpoint is O'Hara's reaction to this state of affairs "understandable". Red Action and AFA were being targeted years before the incidents to which he refers, 1984 in the case of RA. Any organisation that considers its activities worthwhile recognises that state surveillance goes with the territory. As regards the reaction of Red Action, this was entirely consistent with many similar public statements made prior to events. However, O'Hara clearly regards such consistency as irresponsible. Larry, let me let you in on a secret. Revolutionary activity IS, by definition, irresponsible - revolution is illegal.

The value of this book is that it raises the question studiously ignored by the left of state infiltration and manipulation. For O'Hara, quite correctly, the questions raised throughout are not on the basis of if or maybe but on who, where and when. Recommended with reservations.



Police dismantling IRA Volunteer Patrick Hayes' valiant attempt to improve TV reception on the Isle of Dogs.

## Taking Sides

'Beyond the Troubles'  
Peter Hadden

"Beyond The Troubles" claims to be a "socialist analysis" of the Irish war written from the perspective of a leading member of Militant. Most of the British left has shown itself, when faced with a war between an armed working class community - the nationalist people - and the British state, to be entirely loyal to that state. Militant's track record is worse than most. In the 25 years since a Labour government sent troops onto the streets of Belfast and Derry, Militant have boycotted every initiative called in solidarity with the nationalist community, including the soft left "Time To Go" campaign, and, bizarrely, for a group founded on the belief that the Labour Party was the sole arena for their distinctive brand of "revolutionary politics", the Labour Committee on Ireland. Militant's analysis boils down to this - "sectarian paramilitaries" have divided the working class. Against them, it is the role of the left to argue for "workers' unity". Militant's craven labourism, in and out of the Labour Party, means that its perspective is a reformist one - it sees the state, rather than the real struggles of working class people, as being the vehicle for change. "Working class unity" means unity within the confines of the Labour Party and trade union movement - the "official" movement. With that as his starting point, it's no real surprise that, by the end, Peter Hadden ends up to the right of good old Neil Kinnock who thought "the IRA are a deranged gang of terrorists seeking to indulge their blood lust." Hadden's argument is that while the Brits "deliberately whipped up sectarian rivalries in order to help them keep control of... their oldest and closest colony", the momentum of day to day trade union struggles was a constant force for unity between the nationalist and loyalist communities. He refuses to concede that 'sectarianism' was based on a policy of wedding the protestant working class to the state through material advantage. A 1971 survey of Belfast showed the three areas with highest unemployment

to be those with the highest proportion of Catholics -

Court, Dock and the Falls. In protestant Shankhill, 9.43% were out of work, compared with 19.64% in the Falls. In the Shankhill 34% of households had cars; in the Falls only 17%. A similar survey of Derry concluded, "We are satisfied that... the Unionist councils have used their powers to make appointments in a way which benefited protestants. In the figures available, only 30% of Londonderry's administrative, clerical and technical employees were catholic. Out of the 10 best paid posts only one was held by a catholic."

Add to this the fact that "a protestant state for a protestant peoples" meant the B Specials and later the RUC were almost exclusively protestant, that the average rate of unemployment for catholics was 2.5 times higher than for protestants and that at Short Brothers - the largest employers in the North - 90% of the workforce was protestant and Hadden's quotation from "Belfast Trade Unionist and Socialist" (!!), Paddy Devlin, that "the ordinary working class protestants were only a little better treated than their catholic counterparts" makes no sense at all.

Hadden's refusal to accept that loyalism had any material base leads him to criticise the 1968 Civil Rights movement for failing to take up explicitly the interests of working class protestants. The Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association was formed around the following demands: one person one vote; the remapping of gerrymandered election boundaries; enactment of anti-discriminatory laws; the establishment of government machinery to handle citizens' complaints; a points system for the allocation of public housing; repeal of the Special Powers Act; the disbanding of the B-Specials. It adopted no republican positions. It did not address partition. The left of the NICRA, the People's Democracy students around Michael Farrell and Bernadette (Devlin) McAliskey, called explicitly for protestant workers to join their movement.

The NICRA was entirely reformist. It didn't matter; as Eamonn McCann, then a member of Derry Labour Party

put it, "the transformation of Irish society necessary to implement these reforms is a revolution."

In January 1969, a Belfast to Derry march was ambushed by the RUC at Burntollet Bridge. That night the first barricades went up in the Bogside. In July the Bogside Defence Association was formed to defend homes and lives against RUC and loyalist mobs from the forthcoming Apprentice Boys parade. The parade led to an uprising by the nationalist people of Derry; "Free Derry" was declared and held out for three years. On 14 August 1969 the British army were sent onto the streets of Derry; the nationalist community had fought the orange state to a stalemate; a civil rights movement for reform had brought the six counties to the edge of a revolution. Hadden will have none of this. He sees a reformist movement for democracy as purely "catholic" and sectarian: "When protestant workers listened to the speeches of [Civil Rights leaders] all they could hear was a call for more jobs, more houses, better treatment for catholics." So a demand for an end to discrimination is alienating and sectarian? To call for democracy is to risk driving away protestant workers? This only makes sense as an admission that protestant working class privilege (such as it was) was wedded to the maintenance of discrimination. To recognise this, and then denounce the NICRA, puts you in the pocket of the loyalists. Hadden was happier pre-1968, when his vehicle for working class unity and social change - the Northern Ireland Labour Party, pro-unionist and predominantly protestant - was winning 26% of the vote. The events of 1968-69 were the start of a 25 year war between the nationalist people and the British state. Hadden ended up on the wrong side then; the rest of the book is an exercise in reaction that takes him further and further to the right. He thinks the trade unions and NILP should have set up a "non-sectarian defence force" to "point to ways in which the working class can rely on its own strength." Free Derry - a working class community controlling its own streets in defiance of the state through force of arms becomes not an "example of working class strength" but a

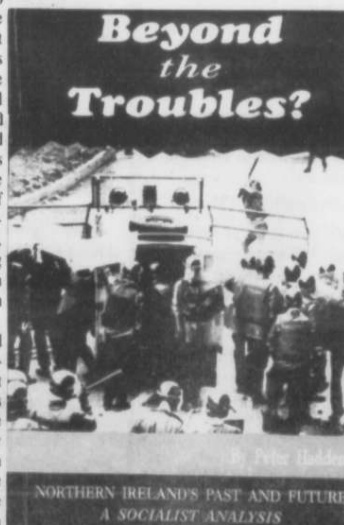
"sectarian" obstacle to it! Apparently the IRA, "does not weaken the state, but gives it the excuse to introduce repressive laws and implement repressive methods which otherwise it would not have got away with." (Presumably in the same way that trade unionists fighting for their jobs gave the Tories an excuse to bring in anti-union laws?) Croppy lie down - it's in your own interests!

The Ulster Workers Council, though "although carried through in a distorted and reactionary manner... had shown the power of the working class. It had demonstrated the superiority of mass struggle over the, by comparison, feeble methods of the Provisionals" - all this written at a time when the loyalist community has failed to organise opposition to Hillsborough or the Downing Street Declaration despite repeated threats to deliver up, "another '74" and at a time when Sinn Fein is meeting the British government's representatives at Stormont!

It gets worse. The "Peace People" (whose campaign was aimed solely at the IRA and failed to criticise the British army when in the year of the Peace Movement's foundation it killed 12 year old Majella O'Hare and 14 year old Brian Stewart) are praised because their demonstration of 30,000 up the Shankhill Road, "had shown what was

possible." In October 1976, Mairead Corrigan and Betty Williams, the effective leadership of the Peace People, issued a statement which showed their attitude to the British state: "We do not equate the vicious and determined terrorism of the republican and loyalist paramilitary organisations with the occasional instances when members of security forces have stepped beyond the law." Hadden makes no criticism of the Peace People's pro-British agenda. We can only assume his silence suggests he shares it.

Militant are the products of the British labour movement and Labour Party. They reflect the sea they swim in - pro-unionist, anti-working class, and in the guise of reformism, pro the military and political agenda of the British state. The nationalist people organised outside of Hadden's labour movement because they were excluded from it by a discrimination that "movement" had never seen fit to challenge. Hadden's "working class unity" rests on the reduction of the struggle for national, democratic and social rights to a narrow trade union agenda which can be negotiated with the Orange state. Of the struggle for political status for POWs, Hadden has this to say: "A labour movement review of the cases of all those convicted of offences arising from the troubles to determine who, in its eyes, is and is not a political prisoner." Given that unionist influence in Northern Irish trade unions has time and again been exerted to prevent discussion of the Irish war by British trade unions, Hadden's solution effectively cedes the right to political activity to the protestant working class alone, and then only to the extent allowed by the British state.



NORTHERN IRELAND'S PAST AND FUTURE  
A SOCIALIST ANALYSIS

In a war you have to take sides. Hadden and his Militant comrades did - against the risen nationalist people. After the attack at Burntollet Bridge and the first battles in the Bogside, the North's then PM Terence O'Neill ranted, "We have heard sufficient for now about civil rights. Let us hear a little about civic responsibility." Hadden probably nodded in agreement.

## IS IT SOMETHING WE SAID?

Anti-Fascist Action is an umbrella organisation formed in 1985, comprising of several extreme left-wing groups whose common ground is their dedication to the advance of a multi-racial communist state and their support for Irish Republicanism. Almost since AFA's conception it has been dominated by the IRA's 'fan club', **Red Action**... It is widely publicised by the anti-fascist magazine, **Searchlight**.

The League of St. George newsletter, **League Sentinel**, Issue No. 25

Last year saw a number of individuals who have links with **Red Action** imprisoned for bombings on the mainland. **Red Action** is a small Marxist group made up of Republicans who were expelled from the SWP in 1982. The MI5 sponsored magazine, **Searchlight**, has continually warned of the Sinn Fein/IRA and **Red Action** connection.

### Ulster Defender, September '94.

In practice however, groups like the RCP are harmless. **Red Action** provide a great contrast, for not only have they uncompromisingly supported the IRA/INLA in general terms, they have also played a key role in anti-fascist street politics for over a decade, and are the mainstay of the group most committed to physical force in the anti-racist arena, **Anti-Fascist Action**. That **Red Action** are, therefore, a group committed, in their terms, to 'doing the business' at 'the rougher end of the political market', encompassing two areas of MI5 concern, anti-fascism and Ireland, makes them an obvious target....

...I regard the throwaway remarks by the authors of this book [NLA - Deadly Divisions] as yet another instance of the state attack on **Red Action**. There is a world of difference between an organisation being subject to heavy MI5 attention and one actually being run by them.

Larry O'Hara,

Turning Up the Heat (see review, page 11)

**Red Action** are another Left group intent on establishing a separate identity. "They're very into being mysterious and underground," Tom [Socialist Organiser] warns. "They're like the people in the French Connection film who keep jumping on and off trains and making phone calls." I met four burly **Red Action** members outside an Islington pub, from here I'm quickly escorted to another pub, probably the only one in North London that's completely empty.

The Big Issue, November '94

An empty pub - how mysterious!

In the late 70s and early 80s some members of the ANL and SWP made the mistake of following such a strategy. Small squads of them would cruise the streets in cars looking for individual nazis or would try to attack individual nazis in their pubs or homes. The results of such an approach were disastrous... In the end those who followed these tactics broke with the SWP and ANL to form groups like **Anti-Fascist Action** and **Red Action**, who abstain from any socialist activity while engaging in a more or less purely clandestine opposition to the nazis.

SWP Pre-Conference Bulletin, No.2, 1994

We have to learn the lessons of the early 1980s when the Nazis also turned to terror. Some anti-nazis spent all their time in small, secret groups obsessed with having fights with Nazis. These people became depoliticised and sometimes anti-working class.

Julie Waterstone, ANL fulltimer, Socialist Worker, 19 November, 1994

No longer content with claiming to be 'the left', SWP trendies will in future be referred to as 'the working class'

White working class football supporters have always been targeted by the racist right. Manchester AFA tries to redress that balance via the United fanzine, **Red Attitude**; crucially such efforts are by AFA members who would be at the football anyway "We're not like Sky TV - here this week, and there next week. There's no point turning up at a club you don't support just to peddle politics".

"The whole reason for the violence is that they [the BNP] want people to stay away to let them do what they want to do...if you don't attack them, they're free to organise politically. But if you attack them they can't do that...that's the relevance of violence, it's not something you want to do."

The Guardian, 25 November, 1994

In **Red Action** no.69 Sean Reid writes, "The attempt to wipe out the movement in 1987 was a classic case of Kitson's anti-insurgency tactics ... At one stroke it removed a dangerous left wing tendency, helped set up a pseudo-gang... and confirmed the IRA as the main protagonists in the struggle."

Which slips down nicely alright; but is it established that the IPLO was a pseudo-gang? Evidence of British state pseudo-gangs is thin on the ground, and if anyone has any on the IPLO I'd be interested to see it.

Robin Ramsay, Lobster 28

About as thin on the ground as a Brit security 'expert' with the ability to spot one.

## Putting your Foot in it

Journalist Paul Foot, genuinely outraged by the continuing right-wing 'Guardian/KGB smear', duly launched a counter-attack from his weekly column in *The Guardian*. Already provoked, an attack in *The Times* on one Arthur Ransome was the last straw.

*The Times* article claimed that Ransome was, "the most important secret source of [Russian] intelligence on British foreign policy" in the years after the 1917 Russian revolution. In addition, Arthur, it transpires, not only talked to Russian intelligence but was, like Richard Gott who recently resigned his position for doing the same thing, a *Guardian* journalist! Foot doesn't deny the allegations but claims that Ransome only became, "an enthusiastic supporter of the Bolshevik revolution...[because] he observed a democracy far richer than anything in the British parliament or American Congress." Foot argues that, far from being "confused" as alleged by *The Times*, Ransome's books and pamphlets: "are a clear concise reportage which describe a social and political system entirely different from the tyranny of the Tsars or of Stalin." If you hadn't guessed it already, Mr Foot is a longstanding and influential member (formally on the Central Committee) of the Socialist Workers Party. The revolution in 1917 was



certainly democratic, but by 1921 Russia was a one-party state. In the same year factions were outlawed within the ruling party thus resulting in, as Trotsky himself was to ruefully admit 15 years later: "a prohibition to think otherwise than in the infallible leaders." So, in the complete absence of any democracy, what, for Foot, does 'a far richer democracy' mean?

Some indication of what richer democracy means to the SWP can be gleaned from an account of the disciplining of a dissident within its own organisation and published in the SWP's own pre-conference bulletin 1994.

### The Case of Comrade Jones.

Comrade Jones wrote a reply to an article by Duncan Hallas, a member of the Central Committee and presumably an 'infallible leader', which he submitted to the *Socialist Review* for publication. As soon as the letter was sent, "a whole number of allegations against Chris arose ..." and shortly afterwards he was expelled, in June 1994. Distraught, he appealed in September and his appeal was rejected. So far, so straightforward. However, contained within the bulletin are the following facts:

### Shoot that Poisoned ARA

Healthy and hearty has been the laughter greeting each new twist in the welcome demise of the collection of cowards known and loathed as the Anti-Racist Alliance (ARA).

Opportunists seeking a well salaried position with any semblance of security are advised to avoid this sinking ship - even the rats are scarping. Pity newly-elected National Secretary Kumar Murshid who predicted the squabbling was over and looked forward with optimism to the future after the ousting of Marc Wadsworth and Ken Livingstone, only to resign four weeks later. What a visionary! In keeping with tradition much of ARA's aggression has been reserved for each other with diatribe aplenty, new chairperson Diane Abbott has made her mark on the events as you would expect:

Abbott on Wadsworth; "an awful man, impossible to work with."

Livingstone on Wadsworth; "a malicious spider"

Wadsworth on Livingstone; evil, lying smearmonger"

Wadsworth on Abbott; "betrayed my trust"

Red Action on ARA; Unprintable in a family newspaper

Many in ARA are anxious to avoid any mention of the huge amounts of money they have absorbed from glib Trade Unions while failing to effect any positive change whatsoever (mortgages and restaurant bills excepted).

That Wadsworth received £25,000 annually proves that being incompetent and wealthy isn't exclusive to the Royal Family.

### Schools Out!

Voice of Reason has long shared the anguish of education chiefs eager to spice up the teaching of science subjects in order to attract prospective students.

We regard with dismay the news that IRA Volunteer Dr Feilim O'Adhmail has had his lectures in sociology and philosophy at the University of Central Lancashire abruptly curtailed. Dr Feilim's knowledge of chemistry was unqualified and not lost on prosecutor Sir Derek Spencer who regarded him as "intelligent and educated." The seventeen kilos of semtex found in his possession more than attest to his knowledge of matters chemical. Sad that the students of this fair land will not benefit from his undoubted mental and practical know-how.

Dr Feilim O'Adhmail has postponed all lectures for the next twenty-five years.

### Dialectic Diarrhoea

The left has its fair share of loonies, none more so than the Spartacist League. It recently advertised a public meeting with the catchy title - "General Strike Rocks Italy; For Workers' Resistance to Smash the Capitalist Offensive. You Can't Stop the Strong State with the Popular Front."

I feel a slogan coming on - Time for a lie-down!

### Plenty of Room at the Inn.

A well advertised meeting of the SWP failed to attract its capacity - far from it. The poor lure of short-arsed big-name Tony Cliff (all bow gracefully three times) failed to put bums on seats.

The caretaker of the venue disclosed to **Red Action** comrades, forty minutes after the publicised starting, while shellshocked organisers waited in vain for the public to arrive, that "Sure, they're wasting their money booking the big hall, it'll be empty."

Given the attendance numbered about forty and included many party hacks, my comrade and I decided to spend out time, in a more fruitful manner at a local hostelry. Laugh - I nearly bought a round!

1 Duncan Hallas sat on the Control Commission which expelled Jones;

2 Hallas also sat on the CC which rejected his appeal;

3 No written statement was given to him outlining reasons for his dismissal;

4 According to a witness: "the reasons given verbally to him ... was different from the one told to me over the phone";

5 The initial allegations against him were dropped as they could not be sustained - "His obstructions in the branch are denied by the majority in the branch";

6 At the appeal the Central Control Commission first heard the case for the expulsion in the absence of the accused;

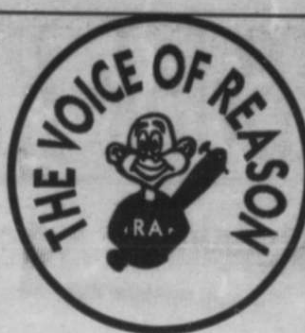
7 The accused was then invited to put his case, but denied any information in relation to what he was being accused of;

8 Witnesses were then heard separately;

9 Comrade Jones "had no way of knowing what [they] told the control commission";

10 Comrade Jones was denied a chance to reply.

No doubt some counter-revolutionary elements who have had the privilege of going through the same process would argue that, in fact, they have done him a huge favour for which he should be eternally grateful. That argument not withstanding, this is not, "a political system entirely different from the tyranny of the Tsars or of Stalin." Indeed,



Uncle Joe could be forgiven a wry chuckle. Though the entire affair is more reminiscent of 'Pythons' than Kafka, the opening lines of 'The Trial' still spring to mind: "Someone must have been telling lies about Joseph K, for one fine morning he was arrested for not doing anything at all." A case of putting your Foot in it?



"The bureaucratic/institutional nightmares created by Kafka were apparently modelled on SWP Central Committee general practice". Discuss.

# WE ARE RED ACTION

The collapse of Soviet communism has signalled the end of an era. Capitalism's golden age was 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 decrees 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 high ground to the opponents of total social change has paralysed the working class internationally.

Sectional division on the left continues to be a comfort to a system which socialism promised to replace. Factions, 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 are still available at £3 for 5 issues.

BM BOX 37, LONDON WC1N 3XX  
PO BOX 83, DUBLIN 7,  
PO BOX 83, SOUTH WEST DO,  
MANCHESTER M15 5NJ  
PO BOX 266, GLASGOW, G42 8EA

Name.....

Address.....

Tel: .....