

Red Action

ISSUE NO 9

RESISTANCE

HOME

On Friday the 24 Sept 1982, eight Asian youths were arrested and charged with "threatening behaviour" and "actual bodily harm".

In the weeks preceding the arrests there had been an increase in racist activity in the Newham area. Activity centering on verbal and physical attacks on Asian school-children. When informed of these attacks the local constabulary showed little interest, prompting a group of older Asian youths to escort the children home after school.

ATTACKED

On the 24 of Sept. one such escort was attacked by a group of white men. The Asians put up a fight, but were soon surrounded by a large number of policemen (who conveniently happened to be nearby). The Asians were arrested, while the white men were allowed to walk away. While in police custody the youths were treated to the customary racial abuse and physical violence. One youth was hospitalised for several days.

SUPPORT

The arrests brought large local and political support for the "Newham Eight", and as a result of this support the police added the additional charge of "conspiring to harm persons unknown".

Nazis attack school children and old people from minority communities, not those who can and will retaliate. They crawl around after dark and scribble their fascist rubbish on their victim's walls. Where are these "brave" men when a left-wing demo is taking place? Occasionally they can be seen cowering in local pubs!!

NEWHAM 8

There is a lesson to be learnt from the Newham Eight. They got together against the Nazis, ready to

defend the members of their community, who, for what ever reason, are unable to defend themselves from racist attacks. Although there are groups up and down the country, able and willing to defend their communities, their efforts are hampered by lack of communication and support. Through better organisation larger and stronger groups can prevent racist attacks.

VIOLENCE

The police seem unable or unwilling to take this task on themselves. These racist attacks are glorified in the media. Local and occasionally national press carry stories of Asian families kept prisoner in their own homes by constant abuse and violence from the Nazis. We get the impression that the press is sympathetic to the plight of these families, but if it wanted to be truly helpful it would carry stories like that of the Newham Eight and Bradford Twelve, showing that members of the communities are no longer cowering in the corner but are coming out and making a stand against the fascists. If the press were to report that self-defence was being taken up, it would go under headlines like "Black Youths Riot on Streets Again". The press like the police are controlled by the powerful and the rich, in whose interest it is for the working and minority classes to be divided, weak and above all fighting amongst ourselves when we should be united. We must forget the artificial problems created by the ruling class, to keep us continually at each others throats. We must unite with those using self defence against the mercenaries of the rich (ie the police and Nazis). And we must remember that strength comes through unity.

ORGANISATION

The much documented escalation of racist attacks requires of the black and asian youth their organisation independantly into an effective source of protection. It also forces into our heads the overriding importance of the political side to such activity. The state possessed of the means of violence can imprison and demoralise. The police can be relied upon to harass, abuse, mount indiscriminate arrests and bullshit in court. We must develop in such a way that the victims are minimised. No one should criticise the spontaneity of people confronted with intolerable violence. But from the experience of that spontaneity we need to get a lot more tight. And people must know "why" as well as "who?" when? and where?" In Ireland the youths of Derry and Belfast have confronted the British Army with near military precision. They have not merely been a lower level part of the "troubles" but with the heightened political awareness of the nationalist community in general, they themselves are both an active and essential part of the political struggle against the British state. We have much to learn from their example.

UNITY

Red Action feels the utmost unity with the actions of the Newham 8. As a revolutionary socialist's organisation representing a long tradition of direct action against fascists we are acutely aware of the "cost" of principled and consistent resistance. The self-organisation of black and asian people is not something that can be initiated and led by white lefties, least of all the pacifists and "professional revolutionaries" of the teacher and social worker bracket. A unity of thought and action will be forged in time but it will not be made by the verbal of the middle-class leftie.

RESPECT

As an essentially white working class organisation we can't promise heaven. The subtleties of racism and sexism are powerful and no one does not exhibit them. What we can do is say that where we have moved jointly, a solid respect exists both ways. And it is at the level of real co-operation, not self appointed leadership, that a unity of purposeful action emerges.

AWAY

"I helped make Mexico safe for American oil interests in 1914. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National Bank boys to collect revenue in. I helped purify Nicaragua. . . I brought light to the Dominican Republic for American sugar interests in 1916. I helped make Honduras right for American fruit companies."

Major-General Smedley Butler - US Marines

This statement clearly shows that the United States is involved in the Central American region, not to save the people from the Communist hordes, but to protect American interests. The USA cares little what political system operates in these countries - especially about whether it has any democratic qualities - as long as it serves the social and economic interests of the USA.

ONSLAUGHT

Economic, political and military aid goes to those countries who show concern for the needs of American business. The result of this is a bitter onslaught by dictatorships towards their own people, who would upset business by demanding more wages and better conditions. Business is profiting from torture of dissidents, murder of worker and peasant organisers, or of priests working with the poor.

CONTROL

It is the loss of complete economic control, and the fear of revolution which worries the rich and powerful in the USA. So they seek ways to repress the people. And to convince their own electorate to support this policy, Reagan and his cronies use an old Vietnam trick - hiding military escalation behind a facade of talking "peace" and "democracy".

VIETNAM

Fortunately, at the moment Reagan has not the popular support to engage in an all-out war in the region; the memories of America's defeat in Vietnam are still very strong. Even the American people can see that it is nonsense to suggest that Communists, Marxists and other assorted Pinkos are going to wade across the Rio Grande and invade the USA.

SUPPORT

When representatives of the El Salvadoran guerrillas, the FMLN, toured American factories and workplaces last year, they were greeted with cheers and encouragement; workers gave the freedom-fighters both political and financial support to further their struggle.

REPRESS

The USA has found a way to control and repress the people of Central America - that is THE USE OF FEAR. Right-wing death squads roam the streets, breeding terror and killing anyone they suspect of opposing such unjust regimes. The majority of people must either live without hope, or rebel. People are now in open rebellion after years and years of torture and oppression.

MILITARY

This is what's happening in El Salvador. For 162 years, the country has been ruled by the iron fist of the land-owners and their allies in the military. They have carved up the land for their own benefit; 8% of the population own 50% of the national income, 20,000 farms, (owned mainly by the 8%) occupy 75% of the land; many peasants have had their land stolen from them, which means that 65% of the working population have had to become seasonal labourers.

ELECTIONS

Obviously there is a need to change all this, but there is no peaceful way. The recent elections in El Salvador were a sham; left-wing parties refused to stand for fear of their supporters being attacked by the military, and so the fascist ARENA party swindled its way into power. Peaceful protest against this was met by massacres - strikes were broken up and strikers shot.

People soon realised that their only option was armed struggle.

RESOURCES

The USA is the greatest economic power in the world; a small country like Nicaragua cannot be seen as a military threat, so why is the American government so worried? The new government of Nicaragua and the freedom-fighters in El Salvador, and others like them represent a revolutionary movement; the US government is terrified that it will eventually sweep America. For example, Nicaragua has embarked on a massive health and literacy programme since its revolution in 1979. As one freedom fighter put it: "Yesterday I picked up a gun; today I pick up a book . . . What's the difference?" This shows how society can improve, even when resources are limited. No wonder the USA is worried; they are the world's most advanced industrial nation, and still 25% of their population (almost 50 million people) live below the poverty line.



The US government is scared to death of the revolutions in Cuba, Nicaragua and Grenada, and the uprisings in El Salvador. The courage and bravery of the oppressed people is an example to us all. Reagan may momentarily destabilise Nicaragua and halt the struggle in El Salvador; but the workers and peasants will continue to rebel, and the US will be faced with another Vietnam. **Up the FMLN!!!**



'COMMUNITY POLICING'

RED ACTION IN ACTION

CHAPEL MARKET

Not again! The NF have got about as much suss as a lobotomized lemming. When will they realize they're not wanted in Islington. Fifty anti-nazis (including an excellent turn-out of Class War combatants) turned up on Saturday morning (24th Sept) to challenge the NF who had been seen selling their squalid little rag there recently. The Warriors Of The White Race had a little look and scuttled back to the pub. Always eager for a lively debate Red Action went to the fascists' pub but the gov'nor wouldn't serve us - so we left without being able to have a full discussion with our 'racial comrades'. Anyway, lads, all we wanted to say was "fuck off".

RUDE BOYS OUTA JAIL

The highlight of our year, apart from the English football team thrashing Denmark (eh? what d'you mean they lost? leave it out!) was the acquittal of 3 Red Action supporters on charges of giving Ian Anderson (leading NF member) some ABH. Anderson, you are a liar and a snivelling little grass.

IRISH SOLIDARITY

You could tell there was an Irish march on the 1st October 'cos it was pouring with rain. It was the sort of day that you want to go on a march round London about as much as you'd fancy finding Steptoe's false teeth in your pint. Anyway, a good Red Action turn out went on the Irish Solidarity Movement (ISM) march. One particularly unpleasant opponent was reminded that despite the Health Service waiting lists emergency cases were always admitted without delay. A Red Action member addressed the rally at the end of the march and stated our unequivocal... unequivocal... whole-hearted support for the Irish struggle. The following day Red Action helped steward the ISM conference. The highlight of the conference was a speech by the mother of an Irish prisoner of war being held in an English jail.

NEWHAM 8

A strong Red Action contingent went on the Newham 8 demo on Sept. 24th. (The Newham 8 are young Asians who got nicked for defending themselves against racist attacks). We were delighted to see our old "friend" Ian Anderson (editor of National Front News) looking so much "healthier" than the last time we met. Sadly he and his pals, who looked like they were on a day out from Rampton, scuttled away before we could renew our "acquaintance". We wish the Newham 8 all the best in their court case.

BELFAST

About 40 Red Action supporters went to Belfast in early August. The hospitality we were shown by the people looking after us and the friendliness of the people we met in the pubs and clubs made a real impression on all of us. We went on the march to commemorate the introduction of internment. The size of the march and the support it got on the way shows just how much support the Republican Movement really has. As we marched past the British army fort in Andersonstown 2 skinheads climbed up the outside and planted the tricolour on the top. Fucking great! Red Action also took part in a video being made for the Republican Movement along with Troops Out Movement and Noraid (American supporters of the Republican Movement).

Anyone coming with us next year should be more careful than one of our 'comrades' who picked up a bottle and had a mouthful of what he thought was going to be beer! Nothing like a drop of 2 star, eh?

ANTI SOCIAL EVENING

Red Action went public (well, we'll go anywhere given half a chance) in July with a meeting on Ireland to build support for our trip to Belfast in August. After the meeting there was a simply sooper-doooper concert thingy with those awfully nice chaps the Anti-Social Workers. The evening was spoiled slightly by some of those ruffians from Red Action who sang some rather loud songs.

HERE COMES THE STORK

Congratulations to the "young" Red Action couple who are expecting a nipper in the New Year. Now that's what we call ACTION!

SEASIDE SPECIAL

A van load of soviet agents - sorry, I mean Red Action supporters - went to the Labour Party Conference in Brighton. We were heading for Scotland but we must have taken a wrong turning. No. In fact we were stewarding a Labour Committee on Ireland meeting. A Sinn Fein delegation, including Gerry Adams MP, were speaking at the meeting and drew an audience of nearly 1000. We hope the Labour Committee on Ireland manage to improve the Labour Party's disgraceful record on Ireland. Perhaps they should start by sending that foul-mouthed bigot Don Concannon MP (Labour Spokesman on Northern Ireland) something nice for Christmas, like a bomb.

THE TIMES THEY ARE A CHANGING

(NO RED ACTION, NO COMMENT)

Nice to see the "top peoples" paper - The Times - has finally realized where true genius can be found. In the Times Diary (Sept. 30th) they quoted a humorous little passage from this very same column. Initially we were going to sue for breach of copyright, but, on reflection, seeing as how the poor bastards know fuck all about the real world we've decided to send them Red Action on a regular basis. Well, they've got to learn from somewhere.

TOTTENHAM HOTSPOT

The National Front decided to hold a rally in Tottenham. By coincidence Red Action were also in Tottenham. Red Action didn't like the National Front. We met in the olde sit down lager shoppe, next to where the Front were meeting, to have a couple of shandies. A couple of Fronters had the same idea. A couple of Fronters changed their ideas rather quickly. 100 anti-nazis gathered outside the pub. 6 nazis walked past shouting abuse. Another brilliant manoeuvre from Red Action with a hop, skip, and jumped the bastards.

FEMALE TROUBLE

Contrary to popular belief not all member of Red Action have willies and bover boots; a lot of us are slightly different (but we won't be going into that now.) Red Action women have been meeting irregularly for several months. If you want to find out just how different we are, write to the P.O. box and mark it "RAW".

Pacifists may not apply.

B.N.P. MARCH

The thirteenth of August was the day that the British National Party decided to show their colours in London. Unfortunately for them they encountered a group of "trendy lefties" and surprisingly the elite group came out second best. We are all glad to note that a certain Mr Tyndall's nose is well on the way to recovery.

WE ARE RED ACTION

Red Action was formed in late 1981 when some working class socialists had finally had enough of being used then abused by liberals on the so-called revolutionary left. We believe that working class people have the power and ability to run their own lives. That goes for Red Action as well. We can organise and educate ourselves as Red Workers without any interference from middle class intellectuals.

Since our formation we have concentrated on fighting the fascists and supporting the Irish Nationalist struggle against the British ruling class. This is because we feel that most of the Left won't work in these areas as they can't get members out of them.

We intend to avoid at all costs, becoming like the other left groups; we are not a revolutionary party although it is not an impossibility that we might form a Party in the future.

The key thing for us is that we build a movement within the working class which has revolution as its aim. This movement must be rooted in the working class because only we as working class people have the power to sweep the Boss Class off the face of the earth. We will use any means at our disposal to further this aim. We do not reject any ideas, strategies or tactics just because we didn't think of them ourselves.

We believe that socialism belongs to the working class, and that while it is true that an organisation must be able to give a lead to the class, it must also be able to reflect the spirit and consciousness of the class.

We in Red Action will strive to this end. To justify our existence to the most critical and cynical audience of all - the working class, and present socialist politics in a way that identifies with them in their work and their leisure.

We are not puritan socialists, and are certainly not afraid to enjoy ourselves and celebrate all that is positive in working class culture.

WE ARE FOR

1. A working class organisation inspired and directed by working class people
2. United action between socialist groups FOR THE CLASS NOT THE PARTY
3. The Irish National liberation struggle against our own British ruling class
4. Total opposition to fascist organisations
5. Union strength - we support any picket line - in defence of workers living standards.
6. Opposition to all prejudice which divides workers, white against black, men against women.
7. Killing the lie that the "Communist states" are socialist.
8. Young peoples fight to determine their own future.

RED ACTION IS AGAINST

1. Anything read in the Daily Express!

THE IRISH IN MANCHESTER

Irish immigration in the years of famine, particularly between 1845 and 1947, changed from a relatively small trickle into a rushing river of desperation. Those that could not afford the fare to the New World took the steamship across the Irish Sea to the fast industrializing England. The Irish, like the Black and Asian Immigrants of today, brought with them an alien set of customs, an alien language and suspect religion. A desire to "be with ones own" combined with this Irishness and made for a 'ghettoisation' of the immigrant Irish in the poor districts of urban sprawl.

INVASION

This Irish "invasion" terrified contemporary social commentators. The Irish were derided as inferior, sub-human, undermining the standards of the English Labourer, unclean, drunken, lazy, depreciating the wages and conditions of the worker proper, and with being the actual cause of urban squalor. Manchester in the mid-19th Century had a substantial Irish population and because it did, attention was directed towards their condition which could be assumed general to the Irish immigrant in Britain. A Mr. J.R. Kay writing at the time, attributed to the Irish the degeneration of housing stock and insanitary conditions; "buildings erected in Little Ireland, in Irish Town and in some other of the worst parts of Manchester, almost entirely owe their existence to the immigration of the Irish." Similarly, Faucher in his study "Manchester in 1844" asserted that Irish immigration "has inflicted a deadly blow upon the health and comfort of the working class in Manchester. "This 'reasoned'

racism was by no means the crazed ravings of the 'few, but enjoyed general currency and status as "fact". Even Engels, friend of Mr. K. Marx could say of the Irish: "only a physically degenerate race, robbed of all humanity, degraded, reduced morally and physically to bestiality could feel comfortably at home." It was clear as day to the Irish why they could tolerate the squalor and low wages of manual work. They were a people whose country had been ravaged by famine forced by an indifferent British State to immigrate or starve. Where towns were not planned, and massive immigration of the Irish made for a great demand for cheap accommodation, in these circumstances landlords had a freehand to construct poor and inadequate buildings ignoring sanitary requirements. In the stampede from starvation overcrowding was inevitable. Up to a dozen people could be found crammed into one room or cellar. It did the landlord good that the attention of "public opinion" was on the unclean Irish rather than themselves and their exploitative activities.

FENIANISM

Amid the squalid and often disease ridden buildings of Manchester the Irish maintained their Irishness at every level. In a hostile environment they remained physically, culturally, religiously and politically separate. The Irish language was as well, in notable use. It was this separateness of the Irish, their orientation to Ireland, that produced Irish Nationalists rather than working class Socialists. This does need some qualification. The Chartist Movement was a source of some unity between

British and Irish worker, but only temporary. More lasting was the combination of Irish navvies and weavers beginning a long-standing tradition of trade union militancy and leadership. Yet the overwhelming concern of the Irish was Nationhood and Fenianism, and it found fertile soil in the Manchester Irish. 1865 saw the failure of an ill-planned up-rising in Ireland, lacking in funds and weapons. In Manchester two Fenian leaders were arrested for robbery; Kelly and Deasy. While they were being transported to the City Jail forty Fenian comrades ambushed the van and Kelly and Deasy were freed. During the ambush a policeman was killed and in the aftermath three Irishmen Allen, Larkin and O'Brien were executed for his murder. Five thousand attended the latter's funeral. It does the Irish in Britain a power of good to be reminded of the experience of the early years of immi-

grant settlement and the many doors that remained closed; clearly stating "No Irish" and this, right up to our recent history. Indeed the notion contained in the "JAK" cartoon in the Evening News depicting the whole Irish race as a bunch of murdering loones had long had its institutionalised representation in the Prevention of Terrorism Act. We need to be reminded of the struggle endured by earlier generations of Irish immigrants, because another immigrant grouping or groupings are now undergoing the same struggle against Brit. racism. In that struggle the rest of us will stand firmly against British attempts to isolate and dehumanize the black people. They are here because the Brits invaded Ireland and turned its economy towards its own ends. Such was the experience of the black people thereafter. It's all one struggle.



'LAW AND ORDER'