

Red Action

Issue 56 35p

WATCHING YOU, WATCHING US!

It was entirely predictable given that a precedent had already been set after Wapping, that the police would demand and be given access to all photographic and video film taken by journalists during the Poll Tax riot in Trafalgar square. This 'evidence' was, the police claimed, vital if they were to first identify, then arrest and prosecute the alleged 'ring leaders'. It was also entirely predictable that while some sections of the media would offer the 'evidence' with unconcealed enthusiasm others like the Guardian or Observer would refuse point blank on principle - until ordered to do so in court. This was an entirely proper protest commented the presiding judge approvingly, as the media in 'a free country' could not automatically be expected to become the "eyes and ears of the police" and in any case they had plenty of video and photographic evidence of their own. The owners, editors and journalists of those publications that contested the order in court may indeed feel that honour has been satisfied, or in any case hope that such a token gesture will be sufficient in future to distinguish their journalists from those of the 'police sheets' such as the Star and the Sun that eagerly volunteered the information. If so, they are liable to be quickly disillusioned. For in the real world it will matter little who is subsequently jailed. Whether the photographic evidence supplied to the prosecution came from the impeccably principled Guardian or the propagandists of the Daily Star on the rabid right. The end result is the same. Both newspapers have supplied material to be sifted through by the police at their leisure; the police have been granted all the evidence which of

course will be used selectively. In the sense that the police will select those photographs that in any subsequent court case only and exclusively are of benefit to the prosecution, similar contradictory evidence that might benefit a defendant can be trimmed, withheld or destroyed. What makes matters worse is the fact that what they the reporters witnessed, was not a clash between pro- and anti-Poll Tax demonstrators, with the police there as the impartial neutral representatives of law and order, it was in fact a battle between the police and the marchers, following an attack on the marchers by the police. Media hacks may in future seek refuge in the 'conspiracy theory' of their own making, that the riot was planned by groups such as Class War, which is laughable, or the SWP which if possible, is even more incredible. However, from eye-witness accounts, and the number of letters which ironically appeared in their own papers, there is some evidence that suggests such a conspiracy did indeed exist, that the riot was carefully planned and orchestrated by 'the enemies of democracy' not belonging to small and timid groups on the left, but instead to a cynical, powerful organisation on the right - the Metropolitan police.

THE MET

1. One hour before any trouble, large numbers of plain clothes police were seen to infiltrate the crowd.
2. The tactics employed outside Downing Street, first splitting the march in two, preventing thousands of people from reaching their destination naturally caused anger and confusion. Those that remonstrated or objected were imply attacked. Curiously,

exactly the same tactic was used in 1984 during a large march in support of the miners with exactly the same result. Riot! Mass arrests! Media hysteria!

3. The police refused point blank, to change the route or the rallying point of the march to Hyde Park which would have avoided the potential 'flash points' such as the S. African Embassy in Trafalgar Square, or Downing Street on the route. Despite the 'rumours' of trouble surfacing in the press, the week before they informed the Anti-Poll Tax Federation that such a request would have to be denied as they required 7 days notice in writing! Perhaps it was just coincidence that in these 'flash point areas' where the police video and cameras were located that the worst violence occurred.

4. It was the police themselves that launched the first violent and unprovoked attack on the up to then completely peaceful crowd in Trafalgar Square. As the Home Secretary admitted in the House of Commons, the entirely legal assembly were not informed by the police that they wished to 'clear the area'. Neither were they at any time ordered or instructed to do so. There was no attempt at any verbal communication at all. So the use of violence or force was not used as a last resort; the police chose that method. It was done intentionally.

5. Despite police claims that the objective was to clear the area, thousands of marchers who had travelled to London from around the country and whose coaches were parked on the Embankment were physically prevented by the police from getting to them, and instead were forced back in the direction of the trouble. All the tube stations in the immediate area, Piccadilly, Charing Cross, Waterloo, Leicester Square and for a radius of a couple of miles around were closed to the public.

6. Large and conspicuous mounds of bricks and masonry had been dumped for no apparent reason on the pavement in the Haymarket. This was the one and only exit-route from the Square chosen by the police for the demonstrators still corralled outside the National Portrait Gallery at about 6.30. The impromptu march which resulted from the evacuation was unescorted by any police at all, so predictably the whole area echoed to the sound of broken glass.

Apologists for the police say that all of this if true was as a result of 'inept policing'. If so, millions of pounds of rate payers money has been wasted in the riot control techniques

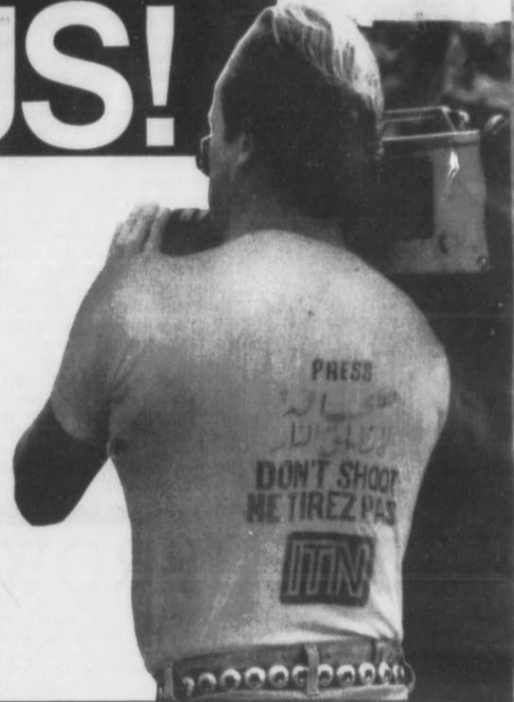
the Met has been perfecting over the past 10 years.

At no time except perhaps for a short period around Trafalgar Square when both the Higgs and Hill offices and the S. African Embassy were on fire did the police 'appear' to have bitten off more than they could comfortably chew - where they were not in complete control of the situation. The repeated charges by mounted and insufficient numbers of riot police were never intended and could not dislodge the 2,000 strong section fighting back. If the intention was not to disperse them, it was only to provoke them. At the very height of the fighting, hundreds of police loitered seemingly unperturbed and unemployed in Whitehall. Everything was obviously under control, everything was evidently going to plan. It is for this reason that the entire media are culpable, because not one paper has to our knowledge sought to answer these questions; the questions themselves have not even been posed.

For them to then calmly hand over all visual evidence to the willing participants, if not the instigators of the riot, to help head-hunt those the police had pushed to a fight on the ground the police prepared and selected beforehand is to accept in advance of any inquiry the police version of events; that not only were they entirely blameless but that they 'acted with restraint'. Presumably they also accept that members of their own profession, journalists from the Daily Mail and Time magazine, victims of police aggression, were either rioting at the time, are secret members of Class War, or that the injuries they suffered were self-inflicted.

Whatever the reason, whether it was due to a natural bias towards the police, self-censorship, or simply a case of collective funk, their response to all police pressure, undoubtedly means that in future, all representatives of the media will be regarded rightly as accomplices or potential accomplices of the police. Because they are prepared to allow others to go to jail to avoid going to jail themselves (the probable result of defying the court) they have finally forfeited the last vestige of either integrity or independence.

On April 9th the Sun in its editorial, asked "why are some newspapers and TV companies reluctant to hand over Trafalgar Square riot pictures to Scotland yard? It is absurd to argue that photographers are in some way neutral



THE PRODUCTION OF A PRESS CARD IN FUTURE MAY HAVE THE VERY OPPOSITE EFFECT TO THE ONE INTENDED

NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK

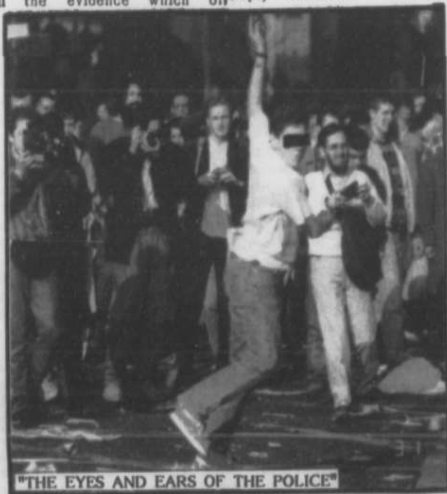
On Saturday April 21st the fascist British National Party held an election meeting at a school in Bethnal Green, East London. This was intended to improve the electoral chances of all 4 candidates they stood in the East End, contesting the local elections. They hoped to consolidate the support for their racist policy that gained national publicity after the success of a pro-white march organised 3 weeks earlier by the grandfather of a white youth, John Stoner, stabbed in a retaliatory attack by young Asians.

The Thursday before the meeting, on April 19, the East London branch of Anti-Fascist Action (AFA) called a public meeting in the area to discuss a strategy and try and co-ordinate an effective response. Though all relevant groups were invited, neither the SWP who instead organised in conjunction with the local Labour party a picket of the school, nor 'Workers against Racism' attended.

In contrast to this passive approach, East London AFA decided to intercept and confront the fascists going to or coming from the meeting. The correctness of this strategy was endorsed by a local teacher, who expressed his support for the tactic of confrontation, purely for the propaganda fall-out that resulted from a similar clash

between the BNP and AFA 3 weeks earlier. On that occasion a group of about 30 fascists were challenged by AFA outside one of their pubs. The majority ran. The ones that stood their ground got wacked. The effect on the young onlookers, some his own pupils, was electric. They talked, he said, of little else all week. The so-called 'hard men' had been run, effortlessly. They couldn't believe it. They had evidently never seen that happen before. In the battle for 'hearts and minds' the first point was scored in the propaganda war. Also, the first indication they had, that in the political sense, 'there were new kids on the block'.

On the day in question, having anticipated the route the fascists would choose, about 50 AFA activists took over 2 pubs adjacent to each other and calmly awaited the arrival of the BNP. By the time they arrived, we had attracted the attention of the local ploit, but who for some reason believed that the local fascists and the welcoming party were all on the same side. Taking advantage of the confusion we allowed them to pass and then fell in behind them. The police looked on benignly. Some fascists looked a little



"THE EYES AND EARS OF THE POLICE"

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IN THE BELLY OF THE BEAST

The ruling classes are often to be found defending their actions in terms of the preservation and promotion of a certain "culture" and "civilised values". There is probably widespread agreement that even within the grotesque inequalities and repression built into any form of capitalism, it is possible to identify some societies that are more "civilised" or "decent" (another favourite word of the liberals) than others. These are societies in which the working class has managed, through its own strength, to extract significant concessions from those who control the sources of wealth and power and where the ruling classes have been able to maintain the illusion of harmony and consensus amongst those they



"Armed bodies of men." Police in armoured riot gear standing by outside Strangeways

rule. It is on the whole better to be a working class person living in Holland or Sweden than Japan or Brazil for example. In basic terms, the rate of exploitation of working class people is lower. How should we judge the degree of "civilisation" in a society or the lack of it? Certainly, most people would agree on two factors. Does the country concerned have a system of welfare that guarantees its least well-off citizens a decent standard of living? Second, to what extent is it a penal society, - one that inflicts harsh or inhuman punishments and uses these forms of punishment on a large scale. Japan for example, despite its idolisation by Thatcherite Tories, has no welfare system and currently incarcerates 250,000 of its population in mental institutions against their will. You thought it was only Russia that did that. It is some indication that the two factors are linked. The further the standards of living of the working class in a society are depressed, the greater the level of state violence required to maintain their submission to the status quo. At certain times of particular stress, the appearance of harmony and co-operation is shattered even in those countries that cherish this form of ideology. The mask of the ruling class slips and beneath, plain for all to see, is the brutality and fury that underpins their power. In the wake of the Strangeways riots, it cannot have escaped the notice of anyone in this country that beneath all the flowery talk of civilisation, decency and the 'partnership' of the capitalist and the worker, the type of

society that the Tories have built in this country over the past decade cannot exist without the form of terrorism that consists in threatening people with long periods of incarceration in the stinking cess pits that are politely named places of reform. Britain now imprisons a higher proportion of its population than Turkey, which is acknowledged as a military dictatorship governed through torture and terror.



In touch with God.



In touch with the Devil.

Conditions in Britain's prisons are medieval. In 1988 overcrowding was so bad that 2,000 prisoners were held in police cells, breaking the government's own laws on the matter. Reading jail currently reports 78% overcrowding. The details of the "stopping out" process are well known. The brutality is also medieval. During the Strangeways riot warders were seen on TV threatening inmates with beatings. If they do that on TV in front of the "liberal" governor, what do they do in the privacy of the jail? Figures from Brixton give an idea. Nine remand prisoners have died in Brixton in the past year. The last to die, Germain Alexander, was found with a fractured spine and his teeth in the back of his throat. No proceedings have been taken against prison

officers. The reason for no action being taken is that their brutality is essential to the functioning of the system as it is to any system that depends on terror and barbarity. These are not of course isolated conditions. It is very hard to riot in a jail and the penalties are terrifying, yet 18 prisons reported riots and disturbances in the wake of the Stangeways events. This follows the sequence of prison riots that have taken place since 1986 at Northye - such as that at Risley last year. It is tempting to think that the present spirit of hate and disgust for Tory policies together with the example of the peoples of Eastern Europe defying their state jailers has penetrated even the barbarity of the prison system. The ideology behind this massive and brutal scale of incarceration is also medieval. Brendan O'Friel the 'liberal' Governor of Strangeways reported at the beginning of the siege that "We are dealing with something of a size and magnitude quite unequalled in our history...an explosion of evil." That explained everything. The prisoners were possessed by the Forces of Satan. He has recently gone further and claimed that

the devil was in the Chapel when the riot started, and revealed that he and his staff averted a "holocaust" on Friday 13th through a "spiritual outpouring". This amounts to an official announcement that one of the nastiest prisons in Europe is in the charge of a raving lunatic. With O'Friel in touch with the devil and Manchester police chief James Anderton speaking to God, it is only a matter of time before the city's water turns to wine and the lame are made to walk. It is good to see top officials holding themselves up to public ridicule in this way, since it prompts reflection on the nature of the institutions they lead. In fact the prisoners have done what any rational society would have done fifty years ago, and demolished the dungeon in which they were kept.

Of course, the prison system is merely a part of an overall system of repression. With the steady increase in the exploitation of the working class in favour of the rich over the past 10 years the apparatus of state violence has had to be brutalised correspondingly. In the front line of state violence are the paramilitary riot police - what Marx termed "armed bodies of men" - without which the state could not exist in a society based on the conflict of contending classes. The most striking use of this form of state violence by the present government occurred during the miners' strike. The government won the battle on that occasion due to the relative isolation of the miners from the rest of the working class. The repressive machinery is to be put to the

test again in a new form of assault upon working class living standards in the shape of the Poll Tax. The government's chosen weapons here are the threat of imprisonment and the bailiffs. Both ultimately depend of course upon the existence of a paramilitary police force without which the threats would have no effect. It is not expected that bailiffs will get very far in robbing pensioners of their goods in working class housing estates without a considerable stiffening of the local constabulary. This time however, they will face the unprecedented resistance of a united working class. It will be interesting to see whether the government chooses to tool up for a fight over the issue or back down. If they choose to fight the Tories will not be relying on the gentle influences of culture and civilisation in collecting the Poll Tax. We will have a first-hand opportunity to experience the realities of state power in a country increasingly divided into rich and poor.



"TOMORROW ALL THINGS FAR AWAY"

Recently a member of Red Action visited East Germany. His report appears below.

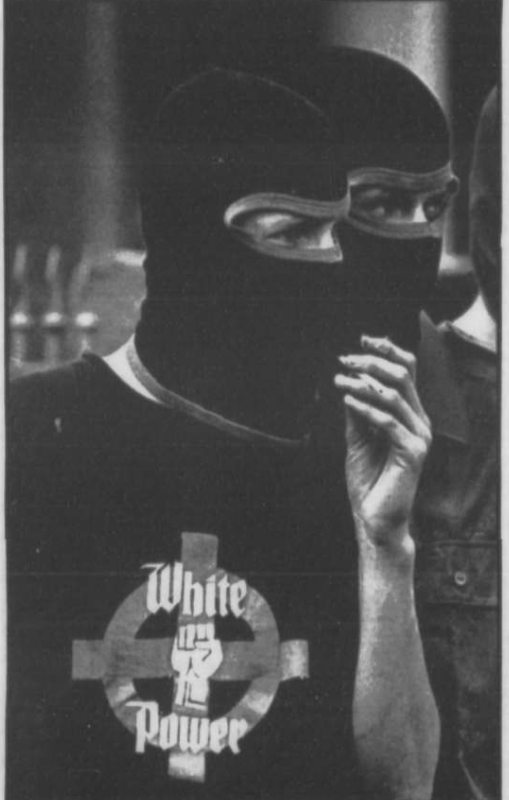
Like many people I had followed the events in Eastern Europe with great interest and I was looking forward to visiting East Germany in early April. I was keen to see whether the media had distorted what had happened and to see how workers had organised themselves. The specific purpose of visiting Rostock was to speak at an anti-fascist meeting in the city and I also hoped to meet with members of the 'New Forum' and the 'United Left' (which consists of 7 groups and is generally regarded as the most left-wing organisation in Eastern Germany). I expected that the people would be poor and that there would be very little in the shops. In addition the articles I had read in the British left press, and especially the Socialist Worker, had given me the impression that groups such as the United Left (UL) were going to fight against the large multi-national companies who are eyeing-up E. Germany (and all of Eastern Europe) for the making of mega-profits. Also, while I expected to see some appearance of fascism, I expected this to be quite small. All of these things turned out to be wrong and what follows is not exactly encouraging!

ORWELL'S 1984
As you enter E. Germany you can see dozens of sentry posts, mounds of barbed wire and now empty watchtowers. As we drive my friend from W. Germany points to the burnt out signs along the road. These signs had once extolled the virtues of equality, liberty and socialism but the watchtowers are a reminder of a country which employed thousands to watch over the workers and keep socialism alive! The woman who we visited described herself as a Christian

Socialist and talked of letters being opened, phones being tapped, homes being visited, relationships being broken and workers being put into prison for the simplest of reasons. The feeling of state surveillance was in her words "all-embracing". It was George Orwell's 1984 and this is why people wanted rid of 'socialism'. It wasn't because people were poor; indeed the shops were full of food and peoples' clothes and accommodation was as good as here in Britain. Furthermore, with a guaranteed job at least no-one was starving or homeless. People were just sick of having their lives dictated and controlled by the hated security police (the Stasi) and the 'socialist state'.

HOPE AND EXPECTATIONS
The original demo in 1989 had brought forth great hopes and expectations that something better was on its way. The original organisers of them have now dropped out of politics altogether and many have gone to W. Germany. My friend, aged 27, estimated that 90% of her friends had gone west. As we walked off to the large offices of the UL and the New Forum I was therefore very uncertain about what I might find. My mate from W. Germany then told me about his attempts to set up a formal meeting with the UL. Two weeks before, he had visited them and asked all 7 organisations involved if they would like to meet and discuss with a British Trade Unionist how workers in Britain organise against all bosses and the multi-nationals. All of them had said no! Great, what am I doing here?
THE NEW FORUM
The offices of the New Forum were big and after introducing ourselves we began informally chatting with 4 of the people there. The oldest person present was now a local

councillor. After about 5 minutes we were interrupted and for the next 30 minutes there was excited chatter about how the New Forum could assist a student to open a shop selling Green products. The value of the Green Party was mentioned



THE "HEAD IN THE SAND POLICY" OF THE EUROPEAN LEFT TO THE ACTIVITIES AND POTENTIAL OF THE FAR RIGHT OVER THE LAST DECADE HAS EVIDENTLY BORNE FRUIT: THE FASCISTS ARE NOW SETTING THE AGENDA IN BOTH FRANCE AND GERMANY
HAVE THE LESSONS BEEN LEARNED OVER HERE?
RE: 'NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK' ARTICLE.

and the councillor promised to get him some workers from the "ranks of the newly unemployed". When this was translated to me I was stunned and quickly left. One thing which we did

discover from visiting the New Forum was that strike action was planned for the following day in protest against the announcement by W. German Chancellor Kohl that when unity came about the East German workers could only expect 1 Deutschmark for every 2 Eastmarks. This directly contradicted his statements during the election period in E. Germany when he promised one for one.

The strike action was planned by the largely discredited official state trade unions. The next day 30,000 strikers demonstrated outside the opening session of the E. German Parliament in Berlin. These extremely contradictory events must leave most workers very confused!

NATIONALISM
Into this confusion there emerges a very strong nationalist feeling. Rostock's walls were plastered with thousands of posters, all in the nationalist colours. The most prominent were those saying JAI (yes....to unity). The design of the posters was exactly the same of those of a 1930s fascist street poster. There were also thousands of posters of one of the smaller parties which offered the slogan: 'Today the Nation - tomorrow all things far away'. My friend also told me that the DSU (Deutsche Sozial Union) whilst not officially declaring themselves to be fascist have used fascists to steward their meetings and demonstrations. The DSU is linked with the Bavarian based Christian Social Union which was led, until his recent death, by ex-Nazi Franz-Josef Strauss.

ANTI-FASCISM
At the anti-fascist meeting about 35 young people turned up and after a short speech about anti-fascism in Britain we got round to discussing the current political developments in East Germany. We had a mock vote and only one person voted for unity. There was a

feeling, however, that it was inevitable and that for them, at least, the most important struggle was going to be stopping the fervent nationalist feelings developing into fascism. Direct links were made with the group and Red Action through Anti-Fascist Action (AFA) will attempt to maintain this link by exchanging information and ideas.

The brief visit to East Germany was depressing. East German workers are in for a big shock when unity comes about, unemployment is predicted to rise to 3 million, food prices will rocket and cheap accommodation will be destroyed. Multi-nationals will make massive profits and already the W. German Government has admitted that ex-members of the Stasi will be welcome in the 'new' police organisation.

IGNORING REALITY
I am also upset at what I have read in the British 'left' press. Articles about organisations such as the United Left and New Forum have been largely uncritical and yet we cannot, as socialists, hide the fact that these organisations are even to the right of Kinnoch! Working class people in Britain are also very wary about what a united Germany would mean and by ignoring the activities of far-right groups and fascists in East Germany the newspapers of the British left are not allowing workers to see the truth about what is happening. This is almost as dangerous as the hysterical reporting of the bourgeois press. So please spare us the bullshit and give us some accurate reporting!
Red Action is in a good position, through its work in AFA, to begin a debate within the working class about the developments in Eastern Europe. In addition there is to be held an anti-fascist conference in East Germany later this year. Red Action and AFA will be invited.

LETTERS

Dear Comrades,
On Tuesday April 17th it was reported in the press that a member of a group called the Irish People's Liberation Organisation had been killed by another republican group. Later in the week another IPLO Volunteer died, this time on active service and his coffin was given (according to the Guardian on 23rd) a guard of honour by his comrades.
Would it be possible for Red Action (Britain's best correspondent on Republican military matters in Ireland) to inform it's readers and myself about the IPLO and also provide more detail about the INLA who we don't seem to here much about these days.

Yours in Struggle
G.Marjotta.

Socialist Party) and militarily by the I.N.L.A. (Irish National Liberation Army) has slowly been attempting to re-establish itself, without repeating the mistakes that almost led to it's demise. The INLA has carried out a limited number of operations, mostly during 1989. Though the R.S.M. is still committed to armed struggle it is widely believed that restrictions have been forced on INLA activity due to the limited availability of weapons at their disposal, and is expected to remain that way until that problem is resolved.
The IPLO have produced to our knowledge, just one piece of literature since their emergence in 1987 a magazine/paper entitled 'Socialist Republican', which never re-emerged after it's first edition. Before the

ation, the IPLO have centred most of their military activity against loyalists, fulfilling speculation that they may well take on the role of a 'Catholic Reaction Force' a nationalist UFF/UVF, gaining support from reactionaries within the Nationalist community. This was demonstrated when the IPLO 'shot-up' a loyalist 'orange-cross' club in response to a similar attack on the Nationalist 'Avenue' bar by Loyalist paramilitaries. There has been recognition from sources as diverse as the Security forces to the Republican movement, that the IPLO have been recruiting both criminal elements and those who have been rejected by the Republican Movement. The future of the IPLO, given the circumstances of it's formation, is certain to be an unstable and uncertain one.
(The history of the INLA, the origins of the 'Feud' and the IPLO etc, is covered in two articles 'Down but not out', and 'A Second Chance' which appeared in issues 36 and 38 of Red Action. Anybody who wants copies of the two articles can get them by sending a S.A.E. to the BM Box no.).

REFUSE AND RESIST

Dear Comrades
Please find enclosed copies of 'Refuse and Resist' as examples of what is being produced against the Poll Tax in Scotland; independent of the established 'left' groups in the Anti-Poll Tax Federation.
I read with interest your front page article on the Poll Tax and would entirely agree with the sentiments expressed within it.
The main block to building genuine community-based anti-poll tax organisations has been the cold hand of the Militant led, and bureaucratically controlled, federations. We believe in working within this body to make it truly reflect the feelings of the Poll Tax refuseniks, and not just the

sterile debates between Militant and the SWP (which is largely an artificial debate anyway). The question of building in local communities and amongst the organised working class are not mutually exclusive questions and should be taken up as part of a two pronged attack on the Tories' Poll Tax.
'Refuse and Resist' would welcome comment, letters and articles on the anti-poll tax struggle from members and supporters of Red Action. Our next issue will contain a strong defence of those arrested and involved in the rioting which followed the London demonstration on March 31st. If you have any comments on these events please forward them to R&R at the above address ASAP.
Yours comradesly
Stevie Lees (for R&R)

All articles, letters and donations to:
Refuse and Resist,
c/o Murray,
31 Leven St.,
Glasgow G41 2JD

CONTROLLING THE STREETS

Dear Red Action
The attack by the Police on the demonstrators at Trafalgar Square showed the need, once again, for all those who describe themselves as socialists and/or Trade Unionists to begin to discuss street tactics. This is especially urgent as the state proposes to step up its attacks against workers who can't or won't pay the Poll Tax. The bailiffs who are sent to steal our hard-earned goods are going to be backed up by a police force ready and willing to fully implement their own form of state punishment.
It is vital that resistance to them is carefully planned. Our experience as militant anti-fascists has shown how the British left has, for the last 10 years, exclusively concerned itself with peaceful and legal protest. Militant's condemnation of demonstrators who fought against the police is simply the other side of the coin to the SWP's app-

roach to fascists; which is to walk away and leave others to deal with them!
Thus in the next few months is it vital that this is ended and that all those involved in their Anti-Poll Tax Unions begin to discuss effective street organisation and tactics. This will form a vital part of the campaign over the next few months as the state steps up its attacks against our communities.

M.M. E.London Red Action

FAR LEFT

Dear Comrades
Thank you for your letter and the publications enclosed. I was quite interested in reading the pamphlet 'We are Red Action' and I found that many criticisms of the SWP/SAG attitude towards anti-fascism are also my own. The German SAG policy totally tails behind the 'out of the movement' line of the SWP, opposing all kinds of anti-fascist mobilisation. While the basis of SAG is predominantly working class, the leadership is exclusively intellectual middle-class. This leadership consists also without exception of Germans, whereas nearly 40% of the membership are immigrants.

After reading your material, I have two particular questions:
1. - as far as I know Red Action supported various attempts at reorganisation amongst former SWP oppositionists. I refer to a meeting in 1986 called 'State Capitalist Forum' where Red Action attended together with the RDG and other groups and an article in 'Republican Worker' cited in 'The Far Left in British Politics'. What is your attitude to these reorganisation campaigns and towards other 'split-offs' from the SWP (for example, RDG, Republican Faction etc)?
I need more time to develop a more comprehensive reply to your theses published in the recent issues of your paper (for example, the Lenin discussion), so please try to answer my questions and promise to keep in contact with you
Yours fraternally
Matthias B Laver, W.Germany.

The SWP have initiated nothing in a decade and are unlikely to do so. The downturn theory was hatched to explain their own impotence and was entirely a reflection of the new conservatism amongst its student base rather than any change in attitude of the working class towards the left. Were it now to develop or adopt a revolutionary strategy in relation to Ireland, for instance, they would be obliged to implement it. More significantly, a "turn to the class" in '89, and the commitment demanded of a membership weaned over the last decade on the course of least resistance and the soft option, could have the effect of provoking a haemorrhage in membership that would reduce it in a relatively short time to near its pre-1968 figures.

The one and only attempt to organise the "spin offs" led to the Socialist Federation which dissolved without trace in approx 1986. Whatever the value of the exercise then there is no point in it now. The RDG has collapsed and Red Action are the least likely on the left to pick up this particular baton.

HYPOCRITES

Dear Comrades
How can Red Action realistically and effectively expand and consolidate their links with the black working class? British society has failed black people in every conceivable way. The worst, most unforgivable hypocrisies have come from the left.
The sincere, practical working-class politics of Red Action means the potential is there to cut through understandable hostility and suspicion to reach black comrades. Success depends on how well it is understood that for the creation of a peaceful socialist society, Race must never be seen as of secondary importance to Class - otherwise complex racist dynamics take over, and, yet again, black people will be betrayed.
Yours Fraternally
C.A., Islington.



Jean Corrigan saluting the coffin of her son Martin, shot by soldiers in Armagh. He belonged to the Irish People's Liberation Organisation.

Since the devastating 'feud' with the IPLO in 1987 which left 13 people dead and 20 seriously injured, the Republican Socialist Movement as represented politically by the IRSP (Irish Republican

'feud', while part of the R.S.M., the individuals who later went on to form the IPLO, always represented the most corrupt and reactionary elements within that movement. Since its form-

WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN... STUPID!

The Hatfield Anti-Poll Tax Union, in which a number of Red Action supporters are involved, stood an Anti-Poll Tax Union candidate in the local elections in May. A number of options were proposed and discussed at a members' meeting, the most popular proving to be the standing of a single candidate in a Tory marginal. Most people were sensitive to the prospect of damaging Labour's precarious hold on the district Council which it currently controls by a majority of one. Other people felt that the Labour party's position on the Poll Tax is a disgrace since they not only propose to do the Tories' dirty work for them in collecting the tax, but also to impose legal penalties upon those who cannot or will not pay. Everyone (the decision was literally unanimous) felt that some form of protest needed to be made through the ballot box and so a single candidate was the selected option. We scored a highly respectable 400 votes, beating the Liberal Democrats who increased their own vote into fourth place. It is certainly the case that had the membership chosen to stand a candidate in a more promising (i.e. Labour held) ward, we would have gained two or even three times as many votes, and at least, have beaten the Tory candidate. It is believed that the Hatfield APTU was the only Union in the country (and in Scotland) to stand in the elections. The reason is not far to seek. The



MESSAGE IS LOUD AND CLEAR. Some of the 900 banner-waving protesters

National organisation, the All-British Federation, is dominated by the Militant Tendency. Militant do deserve serious credit for undertaking the organisation of a national anti-poll tax movement when no-one else, notably the SWP, did. However their fatuous conception of revolutionary action, ie entry into the Labour party and transformation of the country through the votes of parliamentary representatives, leads them to protect at all times a Labour party which not only, as they admit, is busy in eliminating all traces of socialism from its programme (let alone its legislation), but which expends huge resources in the effort to eliminate Militant itself. They are like the man in the joke who mends the fault in the guillotine by which he is to be executed. Militant members

on the County Federation Committee succeeded in passing a resolution not condemning, but 'refusing to endorse' the Hatfield APTU's move. It is Red Action's belief that Militant's position, and anyone who supports them, is profoundly unmarxist. Marx was insistent, particularly after the experience of the revolutionary Paris Commune in 1871, that the working class cannot simply 'take over' the machinery of government it finds existing within the bourgeois state. There were two fundamental reasons for this argument. The first is that a parliamentary system is a purely legislative body, that is, it makes laws but does nothing to put them into practice. Parliaments talk, but they do not work. This requires that there is a huge, inert and reactionary structure within the state (the Civil

Service) which actually does put parliamentary resolutions into practice, and which consequently has enormous, and quite undemocratic powers. The second reason consists in the fact that MPs (and their equivalents in other systems) are a privileged body separated by their function and salaries from the people they supposedly represent. They are therefore not delegates acting on the instructions of the class that elected them as members of that class, but representatives who can act as they please although they are supposed to encapsulate the political will of 60,000 or so people for the five years between elections. As Marx said, they are elected to misrepresent the people.
The Hatfield APTU decided, through its members, to oblige the candidate to act as a delegate and so be bound to act, in all matters, according to the will of the union members as expressed by votes at union meetings. I cannot think of a single instance in which this procedure has been adopted within the British electoral system. It was not perhaps a giant step that would rock Westminster to its foundations. But it is certainly far more principled and democratic than the sad attempts of Militant to turn lead into gold by making the Labour party a vehicle of socialist revolution. We know where such attempts have led in the past and where they will always lead in the future - to the betrayal of working people.

SUPPORT RED ACTION



Red Action is an organisation founded by working class people to work for the furthering of the cause of Socialism. Membership is open to all who accept our political principles and pay a weekly subscription. Every member has an equal vote on all Red Action policy and decisions.

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BM BOX 37-LONDON
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RED ACTION ON MERSEYSIDE

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

P.O. BOX 80
SOUTHPORT
PR8 6BH

ANARCHISM & THE INVISIBLE LEGIONS

For many the term anarchy simply means chaos. The breakdown of law and order! The destruction of private property! Attacks on the police. Against all and any form of authority and control. Complete freedom, complete democracy! Anarchy equals freedom! An argument against any political activity or elections. Against all states! A belief in spontaneity against organised leadership! "What we want is anarchy, the rule of nobody, the responsibility of everyone to nobody but himself", was how Proudhon (an anarchist theoretician) put it.

Above is a mixture of what the media might say about anarchists and what anarchists might say about themselves. It might surprise a lot of people, other than the average Sun reader, to learn that anarchism is in fact a worked out political philosophy distinct and separate from, indeed hostile to, Marxism and revolutionary socialism. And a good thing too many might chorus, after the collapse of the 'Marxist Dictatorships' in eastern Europe.

Anarchists to hijack tax protest

Since the Poll Tax 'riots', anarchists have taken most of the blame, or indeed have been given most of the credit, for turning peaceful demonstrations, according to the media, into orgies of violence. The resulting notoriety has given anarchist ideas and theories a new lease of life. One paper described 'Class War' as being so extreme that they didn't even have leaders? Anarchists glory in that kind of extremism. They like to see themselves as being pure in mind and spirit and their history as being untainted by either compromise or deceit. They pour scorn on the theories, structures and activities of most of the revolutionary left, but then what makes up the far left in Britain makes an easy, not to say inviting, target. As regular readers of Red Action might have noticed we have, to put it mildly, made a few criticisms ourselves, which echo in sentiment at least some of the familiar accusations regularly made against them, by those who march under the black flag. As a result it is not uncommon to see Red Action labelled and dismissed as either 'romantic anarchists', or alternatively, 'anarcho-sindicalists'. Romantic we may be, anarchists we are not. Our flag stays red, it is the conclusions reached by Marx and Engels we use as a guide to action rather than Bakunin and Proudhon, for very good reasons as you will see. In the last 3 issues of the paper, under the title, 'The Dictatorship of the Proletariat' it was alleged that Lenin and

the Bolsheviks understanding of the term was simply wrong. Wrong in principle because it was undemocratic, wrong in practice because their theory was based on a fatal misinterpretation. The Bolsheviks and practically everyone else, with the exception of Rosa Luxemburg believed that the term referred to a special form of government, dictatorial in nature, that would administer power in the workers' state. For Marx and Engels from the beginning to the end of their careers it meant nothing more and nothing less than the rule of the proletariat, the conquest of political power by the working class, and the establishment of a workers state in the immediate post-revolutionary period. For them the term was only ever used in reference to, or as a description of the workers' state itself. One was a synonym for the other. For Marx and Engels it was the same thing.

This time in attempting a historical analysis of the roots of anarchism we are again forced to turn to the question of democracy versus dictatorship. For central to the philosophy of Michael Bakunin, 'the father of anarchism' was the need for some form of dictatorship. Given the anarchists' stated beliefs about freedom of the individual etc he was violently opposed to any party or indeed class dictatorship. Instead he advanced the idea of dictatorship with a new twist - an invisible dictatorship! What many people, presumably anarchists among them fail to understand, is that anarchism denounces most ideally democratic forms of decision making as authoritarian and evil: for the will of the individual must not bow before any outside demand. What do you do when people disagree in an organised society where individuals have to live in concert? Anarchism has no answer. In words it rejects both despotism and any form of democracy. As 'Authoritarian' and gropes for a third alternative. But none is found, just more and more talk about freedom. The real choice before real anarchists has always been this. The safety of high-minded but meaningless rhetoric, or a resort to special forms of an elite dictatorship. In other words there will always 'leaders' - the real question is whether they will be accountable or not. It was Bakunin who inaugurated anarchism as a movement on the basis of the second solution. Indeed, of all advocates of dictatorship on the left, which Marx always vehemently opposed, one of the most virulent cases was Michael Bakunin. To be sure, the libertarian myth of Bakunin's 'yearning' for freedom, still marches across acres of paper, but for the purpose of analysis we must confine ourselves to the facts. In 1848 Bakunin was a revolutionary Pan-Slavist agitator. According to his

theory, Russians and Poles should unite with their fellow Slavs, Croats, Serbs etc to form a single nation. Later he was to lay out his plan for an anarchist 'secret dictatorship' centralised in the hands of one all-powerful dictator in considerable detail. But most of what we know about the stage he had reached in 1848 comes from one of the most interesting documents he penned.

This is the long 'Confession' written at the Czar's behest in the Peter and Paul fortress in 1851. When the text was first published in 1921, attention was fixed on a secondary aspect: the tone of bally-crawling that permeated the production of our hero. Of course the cringing tone was assumed, but it is well established that the idea content of the 'Confession' was by and large a reliable statement of views and as accurate an account of events as Bakunin would have written if free. In one section Bakunin described his plan for an 1848 revolution in Bohemia:

"The revolutionary government with unlimited dictatorial power must sit in Prague...all clubs and journals are manifestations of garrulous anarchy and will also be destroyed, and all will be subjected to a single dictatorial authority". The revolution would be organised by 3 secret societies, unknown to each other, each with a "strict hierarchy and unconditional discipline composed of a small number comprising all the talented, learned, energetic and influential people. Those obeying central direction would

liquidation of the state and bourgeois society by anarchy. "and in order to save the revolution and lead it to a successful conclusion in the very midst of anarchy there is a need of the action of a collective dictatorship of all revolutionists who are not invested with any official power whatever and are all the more effective". Bakunin was the enemy of all official dictatorships - he wanted an unofficial one. He explained that the partisans of open dictatorship will want to reconstitute the state, but we having created anarchy "as invisible pilots amidst the proletariat tempest, we must direct it not by an open power but by a collective dictatorship of the alliance members. An (alliance for social democracy) dictatorship without any badges of office, without titles, without official rights, and all the stronger in that it will have none of the appearances of power."

Bakunin's letter of June 2nd 1870 to Serge Nechayev was discovered and published only in 1986. In it he is much more explicit than before on the organisational end of the scheme. The invisible force is now described as the collective dictatorship of an organisation, the secret dictatorship of the invisible Controllers whom Bakunin had previously called the 'invisible legion'. Imagine yourself in a successful revolution Bakunin invited. "But imagine in the midst of this general anarchy, a secret organisation that has scattered its members in small groups over the whole territory. An organisation which acts everywhere according to a



Marx's mistake was to ignore this intuitive insight, instead favouring the admission of Bakunin's organisation into the International when it pretended to disband its parallel structure (or 'state within a state'). As we have seen Bakunin had worked out a rationale which permitted him to thunder against dictatorship with freedom-loving ardour, keeping his fingers crossed as he told his disciples that his rhetoric only meant official dictatorship.

It was Bakunin's regular pattern to accuse Marx in public of exactly what he, Bakunin, was planning in secret - the difference being of course that his ends were honourable, Bakunin's attacks were in reality unfounded smears characterised by a common mix of anti-semitism and slander. As he denounced the "hatred of Marx and Marxians against us" - "that is exactly the way Germans and especially German Jews combat their opponents" - he accused the "little Jew N. Utin" who was Bakunin's chief opponent in Geneva, of being Marx's agent and of holding dangerous ambitions "both personal and racial", clearly implying a Jewish conspiracy. (Interestingly Proudhon, pre-empting the Nazis and another opponent of Marx, even called for a total extermination of the Jews as a race).

THE REVOLUTIONARY CLASS
Another of Bakunin's theoretical peculiarities that emerged was the role he allotted to the working class. Bakunin was one of the first figures to argue that the vanguard of the revolution would not be found in the working class, but would rely instead on the socially declassed, whom Marx described as the 'lumpen proletariat' ("the most dangerous class" - dangerous to the revolution that is), those who economically have lost their role in society and lead only a marginal existence. In Bakunin's ideology the proletariat in the marxist sense, that is wage earners who work more or less stably, and worse still get paid more or less regularly, are 'bourgeois'. As Bakunin explained in a letter to a supporter why Italy and Spain are the most revolutionary countries, "there exists in Italy what is lacking in other countries: a youth which is ardent, energetic, completely displaced without a career, without a way out, which despite its bourgeois origins is not morally and intellectually exhausted like the bourgeois youth in other countries."

Along with the peasantry who represented 'barbarism' and a contribution from the emigrant Russian aristocracy, they got to make up a marginal class which Bakunin believes can make the revolution. That is, these are the class elements which Bakunin believes can be 'ridden' by a conspiratorial vanguard in order to seize power. Utilization of this restless and fierce (that is unstable and vicious) section of the population was not confined to adventurers like Bakunin, though it was not always acknowledged or theorised. For this class is available in times of recession and is volatile. These two especially attractive features are tempting to ambitious leaders who have neither hope nor desire to move real social forces into motion through a protracted process without

short cuts. Bakuninist rhetoric about abstention from politics etc sounds extremely radical as Marx noted and is "so simple that it can be learned by heart in 5 minutes". All in all this was a theory of a revolutionary class that was indeed destined to go far a half century later with the emergence on its back of fascist dictatorships in Italy, Germany, Spain etc. Of course it was a complete negation of Marx.

INTELLECTUALS
Another one of the central charges laid against Marx by Bakunin was the claim that he intended to set up a "despotic government headed by real or allegedly learned men". Now it might be supposed that a man who gets so indignant at the alleged aim of the Marxists to establish a dictatorship of the intelligentsia is himself free of this detestable ambition. On the contrary, this was the crux of Bakunin's political perspective. While he expected much from his lumpen class, peasants, barbarians and brigands, it was not the canon fodder that was to lead the troops. While the revolutionary masses were to be warned of the bureaucratic dangers of organisation and kept free from such sins, the leaders were to be organised in secret societies of relatively small membership.

"These societies [wrote Bakunin] were to be limited to small numbers of persons, but would include as far as possible all men of talent, knowledge, intelligence, influence, who while obeying a central authority [that is Bakunin himself as a secret chief] would in turn exert a sort of invisible sway over the masses".

At the same time as Bakunin looked to the dictatorship of his declassed intellectuals, he also professed though theoretician himself, to be fiercely anti-intellectual. As early as 1847 when Marx was giving lectures to German workers clubs in Brussels, Bakunin wrote that "Marx was ruining the workers by making theorists of them". These were two sides of the same coin. If the troops were not to be contaminated by being exposed to confusing ideas, if they were to remain sufficiently fierce in a single minded fashion to back the old society to pieces in accordance with the aims of Bakunin, they must at all costs not be over-educated to the point where they might question the General Staff, those "unseen pilots" who were directing the lumpen army in order to remould the world closer to their heart's desire. "A revolutionary", wrote Bakunin, "knows only a single science - destruction". Dictatorial domination for the intelligentsia; anti-intellectualism for the masses; this was the outlook written down and spelled out by the 'libertarians' whose invented smears against Marx inspire political movements like Class War to this day, which is where we came in. In his excellent autobiography, 'Memoirs of a Revolutionary' Victor Serge described the representatives of different political currents that flocked to Russia in 1919 for the Comintern's Second Congress. For most of the Marxist left now 'bolshvised', "the words dictatorship of the proletariat functioned as a magical explanation for them, without



in their turn act invisibly, as it were, on the crowd." That was Bakunin's new twist on the theory of dictatorship, the scheme for a leadership of invisible dictators, here only worked out in embryo. The fact that the Confession belongs to his pre-anarchist period means little, since his earlier conversion was largely an ideological superstructure added to his long held conception of revolution. In fact his later adoption of an anarchist ideology gave his theory additional roots. In 1870 when Bakunin was putting together his 'rule or ruin' drive within the International Working Men's Association, he produced 2 documents where he set forth his aim of dictatorship, both of which were unknown to Marx. The first is the only public document in which he expressed himself candidly. It was sent to Albert Richard of Lyons then a friend and disciple, as a message or manifesto to be read out at a mass meeting in lieu of Bakunin's coming to speak in person. The message called on the audience to proclaim the

common plan. The small groups known by anybody as such have no officially recognised power but they are strong in their ideal, strong also in their clearly recognised purpose among a mass of people struggling without purpose or plan." In this wet dream of invisible power he was not talking merely of the anarchists' own 'invisible organisations' but of a monopoly of organisation, for the function of anarchy was to destroy everybody else's organisation, which was by definition 'authoritarian'. As mentioned before, Marx and everybody else in the International's leadership were unaware of the documents described above and many others of similar import. There were plentiful suspicions based on experience. In 1889 as Bakunin's 'bore from within' operation got underway, Marx remarked in a letter to Engels: "The Russian evidently wants to become dictator of the European working class movement. He had better have a care else he will be officially excommunicated."

it ever occurring to them to ask where this dictator of the proletariat was, what it thought, felt and did... The Social Democrats were notable for their critical spirit and their incomprehension, but were so affected by the revolution's harsh climate that they were incapable of thinking straight. The anarchist delegates with whom I held many discussions had a healthy revision for 'official truths' and the trappings of power and a passionate interest in actual life. But as adherents of an essentially emotional approach to theory, who were ignorant of political economy, and had never faced the problem of power, they found it practically impossible to achieve any theoretical understanding of what was going on. They were excellent comrades, but as another commented, "their theory was for twelve year olds".

Almost exactly the same divisions exist among the left in Britain today, the smug complacency of the bolshevised left, the naivety of the centre and the incomprehension of the anarchists. It is as if for their time has stood still, as if the development of history had been held back, delayed or postponed. Now suddenly the entire world is turning upside down, and yet among the self-proclaimed vanguard of the working class only confusion reigns. Trotskyites are triumphant 'believing' that this finally is Trotsky's prophecy of a workers' revolution to overthrow Stalinism made flesh. A case of wishful thinking that sidesteps reality. The Communist party is rant by division, some proclaiming Gorbachev as their messiah, while the remaining Stalinist rump mutter darkly about the counter-revolution in Eastern Europe.

There is one thing that is crystal clear. The cloistered academic left in Britain and Europe, East and West, marginalised for decades, content for the most part to occupy the position of cheerleaders, dispensing advice and abuse to those centre stage, are finally going to be drawn into the fight themselves. As we in Red Action always suspected, when push comes to shove, no other movement could be so singularly ill-equipped for the role of leadership they had allotted to themselves.

In France it is the far-right of the National Front rather than the far left who claim the right to march on May 1st - workers' day. The left in Germany has been stampeded in the rush for re-unification, with the far-right again setting the agenda.

On the domestic scene things are even worse. After and during the Poll Tax riot in Trafalgar Square, the instinctive reaction of the 2 biggest organisations, both the Socialist Workers Party and Militant, showed not only that they were incapable of offering any leadership, they did not even know which side they were meant to be on. While Militant condemned the violence and offered to name names, a spokesperson for the SWP denied their involvement and appeared at the point of apologising for any offence caused.

If it wasn't completely obvious before then it surely cannot be denied now. Something has gone badly wrong. Still the attitude of the entire



THE SEX PISTOLS: THE "ACCEPTABLE" FACE OF ANARCHISM IN THE 70's.

left from the anarchists to the Stalinists appears to be, why fix something that isn't broken. They are happy with and protective of their icons. Only Red Action it seems is prepared to announce that "the Emperor has no clothes".

On the one hand a group like Class War throws in a few fucks to disguise their real dilettantism and lack of any analysis. At the opposite end of the market, a group called 'The Leninist' react in typical fashion at the suggestion that their idol Lenin might not after all have been infallible: "those great contributors to the rich tapestry of Marxist thought, Red Action, have recently taken up the polemical cudgels against Lenin and the dictatorship of the proletariat" etc (Leninist). They first misrepresent what was being said, and then dismiss it entirely on the basis of a printer's error. Their middle-class indignation, apparently heightened by the fact that they believe that semi-literate ruffians like Red Action should be content to wield only custom made cudgels of a familiar variety, and refrain from trespassing on their theoretical preserve. Their own form of intellectual apartheid perhaps? Well boys, if we had the slightest confidence; if the traditional left had provided the smallest indication that they really knew what they were talking about, then in all probability Red Action, still in embryo form today, would not even exist.

Fact is, as Engels remarked in a letter to Marx, after the collapse of the Paris revolution in 1848 and the ensuing reaction, "The supply of heads [intellectuals] that since '48 were brought over to the proletariat from other classes seems to have totally dried up since then, in all countries. It seems the workers must do it themselves more and more".

Red Action is not a vague academic group, neither is this a vague academic exercise. Over the years in the struggle against fascism and racism, we have been stabbed, slashed and beaten. For us politics is not a hobby. We are not searching for a blueprint or the Holy Grail. We are just after the truth. All other alternatives have been exhausted but no effective substitute has been discovered. We need to know the truth because if we are going to do it by ourselves we need to know what works. The next time our class is pushed into a fight we must be prepared, the next time we will fight. This time we must win. Join us.

VENCEREMOS

Red Action sent the following messages of solidarity to 'Radio Venceremos' the F.M.L.N.'s own radio station, and to the Republican Socialist Movement on their commemoration of the 1916 Easter Rising.

According to the U.S.A. and it's allies in the imperialist West, the recent crumbling of the totalitarian regimes of the 'eastern bloc' has heralded a triumph over the ideology of socialism, and has signalled it's effective end.

However, this theory has been consistently rubbished by the struggles of the oppressed peoples worldwide, from El Salvador to South Africa, from Palestine to Ireland, who have carried on the liberation struggle against massive odds, and for whom socialism represents the only vision that can deliver them from the oppression and poverty that exists today.

Whilst the West, and particularly the U.S.A., point to their massive wealth as proof of the success of capitalism; the people of the third world, upon whose backs their wealth is made, continue to lay down their lives as proof of the rejection of their political, military and economic slavery under U.S.

puppet governments. George Bush, and his various stooges around the world such as Margaret Thatcher, have made much of the invasion of Panama, as a demonstration of their will to ensure 'freedom' and 'democracy' throughout the America's. Apart from their violation of Panama's sovereignty and the breaking of International Law, the U.S.A. has, above all, displayed enormous hypocrisy when it is taken into account it's history of 'propping-up' numerous right-wing dictatorships throughout central and southern America and the endorsement and active support it gives to these regimes and their policies of mass murder and intimidation of all organised political opposition and acceptance of their exclusion from the rigged elections.

Red Action salutes the courage and determination of the F.M.L.N. freedom fighters and the enormous success of their recent offensives against the government and hopes that for the sake of the Salvadorean people that eventual victory is not too far away from the distant future.

To organisations such as ours, who have yet to reach within a million miles of your own level of struggle in both taking on the establishment and winning the heart and minds of the people you remain an everpresent source of inspiration towards the successful conclusion of our own objectives and a proud example to the revolutionary movement worldwide.

VICTORY TO THE F.M.L.N. VICTORY TO THE SALVADOREAN PEOPLE.



A Salvadorean guerrilla keeps watch during a clash with army troops during a nationwide guerrilla offensive in protest against the govts economic plan.

TIOCFADH ÁR LÁ

Dear Comrades, Red Action sends greetings of solidarity to the Republican Socialist Movement and remembers those of your comrades who have fallen in the fight for National Liberation and Socialism, on this, the 74th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising.

As Connolly and the volunteers of the citizens' army who gave their lives all those years ago realised, only the combination of both the nationalist and socialist question can truly provide the basis for the self-emancipation of the Irish working class; this is as true today as it was then.

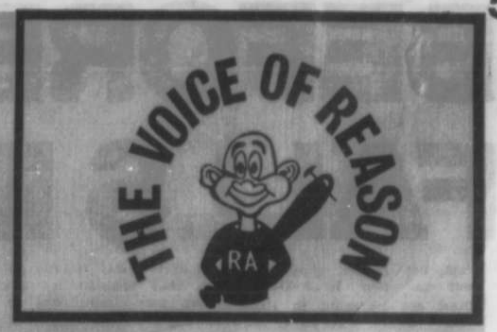
The Republican Socialist movement has suffered much in the present phase of the struggle and many volunteers and activists have lost their lives on hunger-strike, at the hands of the British forces, loyalist fascist murder-gangs and the forces of counter-revolution, yet we realise that many more sacrifices will have to be made if the genuine communist party of Ireland to which you aspire is to be built.

Recent overtures made by certain members of the Republican movement hierarchy reinforce what many of us have always suspected of being fact, that in a negotiated settlement for a British withdrawal and the subsequent formation of a thirty-two county republic, socialism will not be at the top of the agenda, and once again the Irish working class will be subjected to the same poverty, degradation and repression under an Irish government that it has been suffering ever since the formation of the free state. In preventing this betrayal of Connolly's ideals, is where the role of the Republican Socialist movement truly lies.

In our own country the efforts of the so-called solidarity/withdrawal movements has seen nothing more than twenty wasted years of sectarianism, back-biting and infighting that has completely failed to raise the subject of the Irish struggle amongst the British working class. has been characterised by well meaning failures and more often cynical exercises in recruitment by the various left organisations. Although we certainly do not claim to hold all the answers, we believe we are able to learn from these failures and that we can, and indeed must, set about working towards building a genuine solidarity movement in Britain that will at last challenge the status quo; to this end Red Action has dedicated itself.

In recognition of the massive uphill struggle that you face we send you our support, and wish you well in your fight to free your country and build a society that will at last do justice to all of those who have fallen in the fight for freedom.

Victory to the L.N.L.A. Victory to the Irish people Red Action National Council



It seems that a certain leader of that infamous folk-band, the Angelic Upstarts has been having quite an effect on those around him since he started rubbing shoulders with the loony-left.

A comrade of our good friend, a miner in the North-East, has been attending night school, studying politics. During one of the lessons the tutor began talking of the National Front and put it up on the board announcing that they represented the most extreme of right-wing politics. Then he put the Socialist Workers Party up on the other side of the board stating that they represent the most extreme

of left-wing politics. At this point our man in question challenged the tutor saying that there is a group far more left-wing than the S.W.P. called Red Action. The tutor claimed that he had never heard of Red Action but our man was adamant and in the end was asked to come before the class and explain who we are, and in so doing proceeded to recount a large stream of shocking anecdotes, some more extreme than the others. The end result was that by the time our friend had sat down, the letters S.W.P. had been removed from the board and the words 'Red Action' written in their place.

Its not often that Red Action members find themselves at the theatre, however with Christian Action, Research and Education (CARE) holding an anti-abortion rally at the Albert Hall one of our finest detachments were instructed to support the pro-abortion picket.

Frustrated with being denied access to this ticket only bash, some of our members entered the foyer and used the opportunity created by members of the pro-choice picket, twice marching into one door and out through the other, to twice launch sections of the bookstalls into orbit. Pretty sick eh?

By now bored with watching what appeared to be judging by their placards about 150 members of the same revolutionary organisation all crowding with some difficulty behind a single crash barrier. We tried a side door, Hey presto, security was breached and within seconds 15 rather large gentlemen crushed into one of the

private boxes (while 5 female members kept the whole private security firm at bay. Naturally we handed this god-sent opportunity for protest with the dignity we felt that the occasion warranted. After all this was nothing if not a family occasion, opening with "who the fucking hell are you" the all male choir ran through many of the old favourites concluding with a chorus of "We are the Reds".

To his credit Sir Bernard Braine rose to the challenge splendidly. He pointed a quivering finger in our direction covering the first three rows in split he screeched "They are evil people amongst us". I never doubted it for a second Bernie.

Incidentally, just in case your wondering whether our appearance had any connection with Sir Bernard, who according to the tabloids ending up later in the evening in a west-end gutter clutching his privates-No it didnt actually.

Given the renewed controversy over the "right to silence" surrounding the Winchester three and the fit-up of Winston Silcott by the police, Red Action is proud to present dramatic evidence of the value of our own counter-interrogation techniques. The interview in question which was tape recorded happened last year after a five a side game of "get your retaliation in first" between members of neo-nazi Blood and Honour and Red Action supporters. Apparently the bones were pretty cut-up about the result so our hero was invited by

the local plod to help with their enquiries. From the thrilling opening moments the tension never flags as every probing question of the interrogator is brilliantly parried by the dogged heroically, monotonous repetition from the defendant "I wish to remain silent". Highly recommended for beginners and an absolute must for any serious poll tax rioter.

The title "Whatever you say, say nothing". Available on album, cassette or C.D. Forty five minutes of edited highlights, cost £9.99 from 'Shut up yer face productions'



"Terminology can be very important in this struggle - one person's terrorist being another's freedom fighter, and all that.

One Belfastman recently told how his mother, while defending his actions had said: "One things for sure, my sons not a criminal. He's a terrorist, and proud of it".

Taken from 'The Red Spider', a column in the quarterly magazine 'The Captive Voice' entirely written and illustrated by the Republican P.O.W.'s 'The Captive Voice' includes a large range of articles, poems, short stories, cartoons, prison news, and of course, 'The Red Spider'. Available from the P.O.W. Department, 51/53 Falls Road, Belfast at £4.00 (Britain - £3.50 Ireland) for four issues.



BEFORE THE ROOF FALLS IN

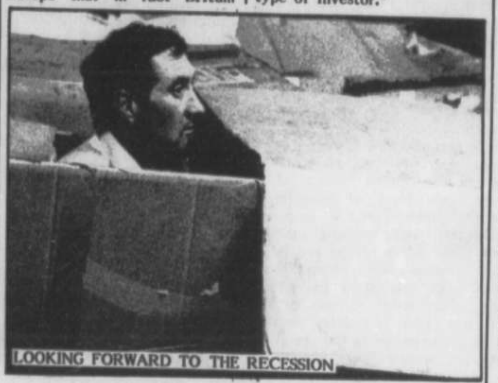
Triumphant clichés that the 'west has won' in Eastern Europe are incessant in the British media. They echo Thatchers pronouncements that 'our values' have been adopted, a theme ordained by many liberal commentators as the liberal truth. Communism is dead, Socialism discredited, the working class in any case has almost vanished, while Capitalism despite all 20th century predictions, hopes and fears is stronger than ever.

HOMELESSNESS

In Britain they are forever telling us 'we never had it so good', and that freedom has been restored; indeed it has as many are finding out, the freedom to sleep under bridges. The image of a home and share owning democracy everyone a capitalist, was the vision of the future touted by rightwing ideologists. After the Thatcher induced recession of the early 80's people of all classes were encouraged to enrich themselves. Growth and progress we were told was infatigable. Many believed them. People were optimistic. Skilled workers were on first name terms with their estate agents. They took out expensive mortgages, and borrowed against the expected rise in the value of house or wage rise the following year. Nationalisation was reversed, and we were all encouraged to buy, at knockdown bargain basement prices, shares in items we already owned, few cared. Greed was good and the system basked in the warm glow of people earning money for nothing. Is it true as they say that you cannot con an honest man? Naturally there were casualties millions of unemployed homelessness doubled, but those in work with homes were encouraged to believe

that work was there for those that wanted it, and in any case there was no alternative. We were not all at the mercy of market forces. Was it not a refreshing challenge, the oldest in the world, the battle for the survival of the fittest. Capitalism was truly in tune with nature. Today at the beginning of a new decade it is being reluctantly acknowledged by some of the same commentators celebrating the triumph of 'our values' in eastern Europe that in fact Britain

as incest and child abuse because a national past-time. Child prostitution is another growth industry. After the stock-market crash in 1987, the working class entrepreneurs fingers scorched, were made aware that dabbling in stockmarkets was rivetting fun, only if you could afford to lose. They retreated, chastened. There was to be no more Sid from British Gas as Lord Young revealed "we are not looking to Sid from British Gas, but to Sidney a superior type of investor."



LOOKING FORWARD TO THE RECESSION

the monetarist flagship is on the brink of recession. Having a headstart on all others with 3 million unemployed, 9 million working people continue to live on or below the Council of Europe's 'poverty threshold', one in four children in poverty, there comes the dawning realization that if indeed the system is in tune with nature, then perhaps it was designed by jackals-for jackals. The writing had been on the wall, for those that wanted to see it, much earlier.

In 1988 Thatcher had declared there is no society, only the family, ironically just

Then inevitably the housing bubble burst, and house prices came down, interest rates went up.

In an attempt to maintain the political loyalty of those she had lured into home ownership, Thatcher has subsidized them to the tune of £7,000,000,000 in mortgage interest relief, an increase last year of 27%. That is £7 billion of real money that could be used to spring the thousands of working class families currently incarcerated in seedy rundown beds and breakfasts.

Instead she is reported to be trying to persuade the Treasury to actually increase

this tax relief in next months budget. By prolonging tax reliefs and not building new council homes the government has aggravated a housing shortage which has made a lot of people much richer through nothing more energetic than sitting in their own homes. It is also clear that the huge increase in the value of peoples homes has helped to wreck the governments counter inflation policy. People borrowed on the security of inflated house value to buy consumer goods, mainly imported, because Thatcher had destroyed the manufacturing base in the early 80's, and when interest rates were raised to try to douse demand, this fuelled inflation further as trade unions positions strengthened by failing unemployment sought to recoup the increased cost of interest rates.

Despite the massive subsidies repossessions still mount and Tory MP's complain that constituents who bought their own council homes are now financially worse off than their neighbours who didn't (to restore the incentive, Tories councils plan rises of over 40% across the south of England). So are we saying that after all the hype about the interconnection between individual freedom and the free market system, capitalism doesn't work. No, exactly the opposite, capitalism is working perfectly.

The only major contradiction is that it is not and was never designed for the role allotted to it by right wing propagandist in the media. The capitalist system has existed in Britain for over 250 years. If the system was designed and intended to benefit the vast majority in society, if the working classes were intended to, become individually wealthy homeowners is everyone a capitalist, then is it not obvious that it would have happened before 1989, the fact is that capitalism is designed only to benefit the few at the top at the expense of the many at the bottom.

of the population; its existence for the few is solely due to its non-existence in the hands of those nine-tenths. You reproach us therefore with intending to do away with a form of property the necessary condition for whose existence is the non-existence of any property for the immense majority of society."

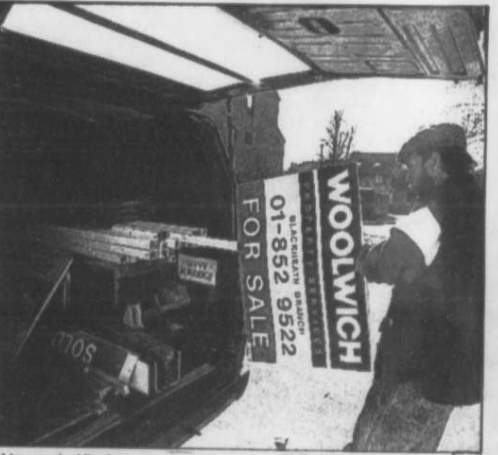
The very same relationship holds true today. Certainly we are better off since 1911, in absolute terms workers living standards have risen, in relative terms, in relation to what has been created by our labour, the vast profits of the capitalists etc our share of the total value has probably fallen.

CAPITALIST NATURE

If capitalism is in tune with nature, the Thatcher subsidy of the new haves (ie those currently in hock to banks and building societies) at the direct expense of the have nots is directly interfering with 'capitalist nature' for the removal of this relief tomorrow would only result in hundreds of thousands



(some estimates put the figure 10 times higher), a necessary human sacrifice to the god of capital. Thatcher may further increase mortgage relief to limit the political damage, or she may try to delay the inevitable at least until after the next



A borrower's obligation to repay the mortgage does not end when the boards go up to signal a repossession

being thrown on to the streets, with the inevitable and unpalatable political consequences.

The path characteristically followed by modern industry Karl Marx wrote takes the form of a cycle (interrupted by smaller oscillations) of periods of average activity production at high pressure, crisis and stagnation. The alternation of boom when the capitalist profit and slump when the poor pay is an essential feature of the capitalist economy, as natural as human beings, inhaling and exhaling. The economic recession now facing us by forcing up unemployment makes it easier for the employers to drive down wages and to compel those workers with jobs to accept worse conditions at work. Crisis then are periods when the capitalist system is re-organised and re-shaped in order to restore the rate of profit to a level, at which investment will take place. Of course this will take place at the expense of the 58,000 families currently 6 months behind with their mortgages

election. she has already prepared the ground during the 'boom', for the inevitable class confrontation ushered in by the slump. As John Pilger pointed out in Guardian recently "Those rights being fought for and restored with democratic zeal in eastern Europe are those under review and in receivership here(?). Habeus corpus, trial by jury, the right to silence and so on, the right to strike, the right to assemble and associate have all been virtually destroyed."

CONTRADICTIONS

Ignoring for the moment the immense contradictions and conflict about to erupt in eastern Europe, western Europe has tens of millions unemployed, while over 800 million starve world-wide. In the U.S. Reagans much heralded policy of "taking governments off the backs of the people" by tax cuts, has in reality meant that 70% of the population actually pay more in real terms. Chile, often compared in monetarist terms to Britain, displays all the usual trappings of the 'economic miracle', new businesses, smart restaurants etc while 60% of the population earn less than they did 10 years ago and unemployment is as high as 30% amongst working class youth. Capitalism cannot be reformed out of existence, it will not wither away or collapse as many once expected of its own accord. It will continue to exist for just about as long as we are prepared to remain its passive victims. It should also be noted that if the far left do not get their act together in time, prove able to present an acceptable Socialist vision of the future then the "radical right" will be only too happy to fill the void.

NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK (CONT)

uneasy, milling over the implications of such rapid recruitment. "Who are they?" "Are they National Front?" one of their number enquired optimistically.

The 150 strong Labour/SWP picket who had allowed themselves to be herded by police behind a 5 foot railing so that they could scream "police protect the fascists" when the reverse was true, shouted "scum, scum, scum" as we passed. About 15 fascists already outside the school were briefly jubilant on the arrival of their reinforcements, now about 80 strong. They began to taunt the picket. "Look at the commies, there aren't enough lamp posts to hang them off" one youth sneered. One particularly perceptive fascist carrying a placard demanding 'Rights for Whites' spotted something unusual about the 'new recruits' now standing in front of him. "But you're black" he spluttered, stating the obvious, in any case the game was up. The 'discussion' that followed was brief, a bemused BNP clearly taking second prize. About a dozen anti-fascists were arrested for hammering home a number of points, while a similar number made off in some haste, presumably to consult a good solicitor. Almost immediately a second gang numbering about 40, and if possible even uglier, turned up. Though our numbers were depleted, the 'anti-fascist picket' remained on their side of the fence, and we stayed on ours. The BNP heavies freed themselves up with a few patriotic favourites, and charged. We stood. They



In the battle for hearts and minds A.F.A. scored first in the propaganda war.

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stopped. We laughed! Later that day they ran through some estates banging on the doors of isolated Asian families screaming "we know where you live!"

The following Thursday, East London AFA were again visibly active in the area distributing thousands of leaflets door to door on the 'white estates' previously accepted by the left as 'fascist strongholds' and by the right simply as their 'manor'.

AFA refuses to accept that any estate in any working class area is the 'natural constituency' of any fascists, no matter what their reputation or tradition. Their 'success' is due to the fact that no 'credible' alternative exists. AFA is committed to creating the space to allow one to develop.

Though AFA was first formed in 1985, it has had a chequered history with much to be proud of, but also accepts that mistakes were made.

In partial recognition of this AFA is now divided into 4 separate regions. Metropolitan AFA has set up a structure of geographical branches that we believe can accommodate unaligned individuals and political groups. Apart from Red Action, two other groups have affiliated, Workers' Power and the anarcho-syndicalists of the Direct Action Movement. Also an encouraging number of individuals. Though a comprehensive strategy is now being worked out, one or two things can be guaranteed: one, our resolve and ambition in this area is unlimited, but most importantly, the 'New Kids on the Block' are here to stay.

HAVES & HAVE NOTS

The figures available conclusively prove that the system has consistently resisted the gravitational pull to redistribute the wealth from the very wealthy at the top to impoverished majority at the bottom. One estimate suggests that the richest five percent of the British population owned 87% of all personal wealth in 1911, only 75% in 1960, but coincidentally their share has been creeping back up since 1979.

Over 150 years ago Karl Marx correctly identified the real relationship between the haves and the have nots. "You are horrified at our intending to do away with private property. But in your existing society, private property is already done away with for nine-tenths

WATCHING YOU

observers. No-one is neutral in the struggle against violence". Intelligent editors would no doubt scramble away from the ethical implications of such a public declaration of partisanship, if only to protect their employees.

The Sun has admitted that their employees are "the willing agents of the state." We the general public should be grateful for this unusual not to say unique display of honesty. Now we know exactly where they stand, they can expect at some future date to discover exactly where we stand. Where the Sun, Sky TV, the Daily Star etc volunteer, others are

conscripted after only the most timid resistance, the end result being in any case the same.

During the battle in Trafalgar Square, there were a number of attacks on TV crews which were carried out by lone individuals and appeared quite spontaneous. There is little doubt that in the future these attacks may lose something of their spontaneity. When this happens there will be no point in them screaming about 'freedom of the press', nor will anything be gained by searching police files for the perpetrators, when they need only look in the mirror to see those ultimately responsible.