

Red Action

YANKEE GO HOME

Issue No 23. May 1986 20p.

HYPOCRISY

The recent American attack on the Libyan capital of Tripoli, must surely rank as one of the most outrageous acts of aggression by a country not actually at war, in living memory. On the feeble excuse that they had evidence (still as yet unseen) of "Libyan involvement" in an attack on a US army base in Berlin, the US government felt justified in sending their bombers over a crowded capital city, killing and maiming dozens, perhaps hundreds, of innocent civilians.

Even in a world fast becoming accustomed to US aggression against small states, a wave of shock and outrage was felt at this act.

This was also the reaction of many people in this country, but for many of them however the greatest shock came when they learnt that the British government had allowed the US to use this country as the base for the attack.

The reaction of most people, was quite rightly one of great indignation and even outrage. Outrage at the government for allowing the US to use this country as if it were some kind of stationary aircraft carrier, and outrage because by doing this, they have greatly increased the risk of revenge attacks against British targets both at home and abroad.

REVENGE

This may not be of concern to Thatcher and her cronies, who are after all, always surrounded by the tightest security wherever they go. But it is certainly of concern to all the rest of us who are not quite so well protected.

And if there are revenge attacks can we be in any

way suprised. Imagine if the position was reversed and a Middle Eastern country had just sent it's planes over one night and bombed London. Imagine the cry for revenge that would go up here.

DOMINANCE

The fact is there was no justification for this raid whatsoever, and certainly no justification for this countries involvement. Even if you leave aside the moral issue, there was no military reason for British involvement. The US could just as easily have carried out the raid from sea or even from the States itself.

Why did they involve this country then? Simple. They knew full well that this act would meet with great opposition around the world, and they were anxious that another country should be seen to be involved, to spread the blame as it were. That country they decided, would be this one.

It is this factor perhaps, that has shocked people in this country the most. To see just how much influence and even dominance, that the US government the US government is able to exercise over this country's affairs. US presence in this country is something that



DEVASTATION IN TRIPOLI HOW THE USA DEFENDS "FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY"

most people have always took for granted. Only now are some of them starting realise the implications of it. Only now are they starting to realise just how much control the cowboys in the Pentagon have over the destinies of all of us.

After Tripoli, how can any sensible person feel happy about the presence of US Cruise missiles in this country. How can anyone now feel totally confident that they won't start firing them

off. The only thing that we can be sure of is that if they did decide to, Thatcher and her crew would be powerless to stop them.

There were quite a few people who felt more than a little bit scared as they listened to the news that Tuesday morning, and perhaps that is not a bad thing. Perhaps now, more people in this country will begin to wake up to the way in which their whole future is becoming more and more dependent on the whims of that bunch of war mad nutters known as the US government.

SYMPATHY

Maybe now some of those who in the past, would have laughed at the antics of groups like the Greenham Common women and CND groups, will look with a bit more sympathy at what they are trying to achieve. Perhaps now a few more people will understand that the very first step toward making this country and indeed the world a safer place for all of us to live, is to end US military presence in this country.

To raise here, a cry heard in many places all over the world in the years since World War Two.

YANKEE GO HOME

"We did what we had to do" cried Reagan, justifying the raid as "legitimate retaliation" for supposed Libyan involvement in an attack on a US army base. A more blatant example of hypocritical double standards it is difficult to imagine. When someone attacks a base full of armed and trained soldiers it is "savage terrorism". When the mightiest military machine in the world bombs innocent civilians, it is justified military action, by the forces of "freedom and democracy".

WHAT MURDERING HYPOCRITICAL BASTARDS

Even if Libyan involvement in the Berlin bomb could be proved, even if all those involved turned out to be Libyan, how does that in any way justify the bombing of a civilian city. What if an American were to kill someone in another country. Would that justify that country's government bomb New York or Washington? No of course not, but that is exactly what the Americans have done.

they had every right to be there.

Just imagine if you can, what the response would be in the US, if a Libyan fleet was to set off to carry out military manoeuvres 3 miles off of the coast of Florida. Christ almighty. They'd have every plane ship and missile that they had blasting them to bits before they were within a thousand miles of the place.

3 miles like hell. Nicaragua is a bit more than three miles from the US, over a thousand in fact. But that doesn't stop the US government claiming the right to interfere in Nicaraguan affairs on the basis that it is "in our back yard".

EXCUSE

In fact, the Berlin bomb was no more than a convenient excuse for the US to carry out action that they had obviously been planning for some time.

LAW + ORDER

Two weeks beforehand, the US sixth fleet had sailed into the bay of Sirtar which goes right into the heart of Libya, and had started to carry out military manoeuvres. Such a move was bound to be seen as a threat by the Libyans and can only have been designed to spark off a confrontation which would no doubt have formed the excuse for US military action.

It would seem that for the US, where other countries are concerned, jurisdiction extends 3 miles off the coast, but their own extends to every part of the globe.

The fact is that whilst claiming to represent the forces of "law and order" against terrorism, the Americans are quite prepared when it suits them to use methods that can only be described as terroristic themselves. It is this hypocrisy that makes their terrorism all the more sickening.

MANOEUVERES

This incident gives us yet another example of the staggering hypocrisy of the US government. When the Libyans complained about the US presence in the bay the pious reply from Washington was that as long as they were at least three miles off of the coast, it was international waters and



HANDS ON HEARTS PARTNERS IN CRIME



AND THE ONES WHO HAVE TO SUFFER IT

YOUNG BLUE BLOODS

A recent report in "The Guardian" from the annual conference of the "Federation of Conservative Students" gave light to some very interesting facts about what is happening in this Tory Party nursery. It described the sweeping victory enjoyed by a group called the Libertarian Faction, who captured every seat in the elections for the executive committee.

The Libertarians are a relatively new grouping. They represent a very strange mixture of extreme right wing politics and lefty sounding jargon - they refer to each other as comrade, and describe their officers as commissars.

UPSURGE

leaving college, the majority of these had settled down to their careers and forgot all about the revolution.

Will the same thing happen with these right wing radicals?

Possibly it will, but it would be wrong to automatically assume it. We must remember that the political situation today has changed a lot from what it was a few years ago. The economic and social crisis is much worse. History shows quite clearly that it is in times such as these, that people begin to lose faith in the traditional parties of the centre and the radical movements of both wings begin to gain momentum.

Possibly, what we are seeing today, is not so much a temporary fad, but the emergence of a political current, which will become



THE SORT OF PEOPLE THAT THEY ARE

in time, part of a new extreme right wing answer to the political upsurges that lay before us. In much the same way as we expect Red Action to be part of the new left movement.

ANALOGY

In fact it is not wrong to draw an analogy between a grouping such as the Libertarian alliance and Red Action. It seems that they like us, have grasped that the issue of Ireland is the central political question in this country today. Like us, they can see that as long as the Irish revolution has not been won the English revolution cannot be fought, and so are as anxious to see it defeated, as we are to see it victorious.

Clearly like Red Action, the Libertarians are representative of, and fiercely partisan towards their class. What a horrible shower of people they must be.

A group such as the Libertarian Faction represent the clearest expression of

one of the clearest expressions of the class enemy that is available to us today. When you think of the amount of working class kids who get drawn into right politics because of simplistic arguments it seems an absolute tragedy that they are so rarely seen out in the real world.

OUT OF THE CLOSET

Surely if those kids could get a good look at the sort of characters that they are politically aligning themselves to, it would do more to put them off than anything that we could say or do.

I suppose that we must just live in hope that the Libs raise their passion and enthusiasm to such heights that they feel moved to come out of their closets, take their politics onto the streets and give us all the opportunity to pay them our respects in time honoured fashion. Oh God what a dream.

"FREEDOM FIGHTERS"

They declare their support for extreme right wing movements such as the Contras who are fighting the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. One of them recently went over there and visited a Contra camp. They have also sent representatives out to South Africa, and they are talking about forming an International Brigade to assist right wing "freedom fighters" around the world.

For many of this faction, Ulster Loyalism is the bedrock of their political commitment. They sent representatives over to the recent bye election campaigns, and during the conference, their parties were held in a Glasgow Ranger's supporters club decorated with recruitment posters for the UDA.

RADICAL

Well it's hardly traditional Conservatism is it, but the question is of course does it have any significance?

Some will be quick to point out that there is actually nothing new about extremism in student politics. It wasn't that many years ago that it seemed that the universities and polytechnics were packed out with left wing radicals, who were just as uncompromising with their politics. Experience showed that within a few years of



ANDY TYRRIE
UDA 'supreme commander'



General Pinochet



P W Botha

AND THE SORT OF PEOPLE THEY ADMIRE

BULLY FOR YOU

Pick up a newspaper any day of the week, and you can bet your life that you will find in it at least one case of a violent attack on someone somewhere. Violence, whether it be another child murdered, another pensioner battered and mugged, or another battle on the terraces, is rarely out of the news these days.

DOMESTIC

There is however, one area of our society in which dozen and perhaps hundreds of violent assaults are taking place every day, and yet you will rarely read about them in the news. Several people die every year from these attacks, and there are numerous cases of broken bones, yet even though in many cases the assailants identity is known to many people they usually go completely unpunished. These attacks that we are talking about are those that occur behind the doors of family homes all over the country. Attacks that are usually referred to as being cases of domestic violence.

TYRANTS

In almost every case, these attacks are carried out by the husband/father on his girlfriend/wife. To get a complete picture of what causes these attacks, you would probably need the services of a psychiatrist, but it seems pretty obvious that social factors are involved. There are noticeably more cases of domestic violence in families on low incomes

Some men turn into tyrants inside the house because they are meek and insignificant outside of it. For some it's a case of frustration. He may work all week in a job he can't stand having to be subservient to a boss he hates. His wife/girlfriend just happens to be the nearest person to lash out at. Drink of course also plays a part. There will be many women anxiously watching the clock approach closing time this Friday and Saturday, wondering what sort of mood he is going to be in when he gets home.

The question that you may ask is Why do women put up with it? Well of course not all of them do, but of those that do there must again be many reasons. Some stay and stick it out for the sake of the kids, reasoning that any home is better than a broken home. Some may be scared of just upping and walking out on the only life that they know, however bad it may be. Some are in such mortal fear of the man that they are afraid to do anything that they think might provoke him. It is not unknown for men to track their wives down to women's refuges and attack them there.

OSTRACISED

One of the worst things of all about the whole syndrome is that people who know about it - neighbours friends etc don't say or do anything about it because they think that it's none of their business. This is absolutely terrible. It isn't something that you can just ignore. Any man who is known to be systematically battering his wife, should at the very least be ostracised by the whole community. Personally I think that he should be dragged out and given a good kicking. If someone was known to be involved in racial attacks, that is what the response of most people would be. I don't see why it should be any different. Cowards like that deserve a dose of their own medicine.

COMMUNITY

Even though as we have seen, there are social factors that contribute to these attacks lets get one thing straight. They in no way form any excuse for them whatsoever. Any man who uses his physical advantage over a woman to systematically assault her is the lowest of the low and deserves to be treated as such.

As socialists we stand for the community caring for all who are weak and vulnerable. Women in this position are certainly that and it is up to socialists in the community to take up the issue and make it a community one.

Regular readers of Red Action will have been following over the last few issues, our coverage of the dispute involving five building workers and the John Laings firm. Unfortunately, we now have to report that that dispute has been lost. This loss was due in no small part to the activities of the full time officials in the men's own union, the Union of Construction Allied Trades and Technicians.

The dispute began some six months ago when the men were sacked from a John Laings site in London, basically because some of them were known as trade union activists in the building industry. The men refused to accept this and began picketing Laing's sites in the London area assisted by other activists.

The success of this action forced Laings to negotiate and eventually an agreement was reached and the men re-instated on a Laings site. Within just a few weeks however, Laings had reneged on the agreement, and the men found themselves locked out again, and straight away resumed picketing. In response to this Laings went to the High court and under the terms of the 1983 Employment Act, they able to get Court injunctions against imposing stringent conditions on the men. Not only were they not allowed to picket any Laings site, they were also not even allowed to address any meeting of people about the dispute.

This was the first time that the employment act had ever been used against named individuals in this way. Courageously, the men decided to defy these injunctions and continue the dispute. It was then that the full time union officials played their dirty role. Not content with not giving the men any effective support they also took it upon themselves to send circulars to delivery firms who'se drivers had been honouring the picket line, telling them that their drivers should cross the line. They also spread blatant lies about the men around the building industry. This blatant treachery, effectively undermined the pickets and it became clear that the lads were not going to win this time. Eventually on the 19th of April they decided to call it a day. We salute them for their courage and their principles.

OUR DAY WILL COME.

Red Action pamphlet

**We are
Red
Action**

A SHORT HISTORY OF RED
ACTION. WHERE DID IT
COME FROM, AND WHY?

30p

First published two years ago, this pamphlet, although slightly out of date now, still gives a good insight into the discussions and events that lead to the formation of Red Action. Available from the box number, price 50p inclusive of postage and packing.

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.

If you support our aims but do not wish to become a member, you can become a supporting member. This does not entitle you to vote, but you will receive:

1. A free subscription to the newspaper.
2. A regular internal newsletter that will keep you informed of what is going on in the organisation.
3. Notification of any Red Action activities in your area.

The cost for this is £10 for one year.

Subscriptions to the paper are still available separately. The cost is £3 pounds for ten issues. Please remember that producing a paper is a very uneconomic business and we are always very grateful for any donations, and especially grateful to anyone who can take extra copies to sell.

PO box 158
Hatfield
Herts

ORDERING THE LAW

"I think from a police point of view that my task in the future, in the ten to fifteen years from now the period during which I shall continue to serve, that basic crime as such - theft, burglary, even violent crime will not be the predominant police feature. What will be the matter of greatest concern to me will be the covert and ultimately overt attempts to overthrow democracy, to subvert the authority of the state and in fact involve themselves in acts of sedition designed to destroy our parliamentary system, and the democratic government of this country".

James Anderton, Chief Constable of Greater Manchester police, on BBC's question time in 1979.

Most people in this country support the existence of the police force. Even some who are quite critical of them, still often qualify this criticism with a statement like "Yes but you have to have them though."

It is a quite understandable reaction really. When you think of some of the things that go on today, young children being abducted and murdered, old age pensioners being battered senseless for a few pounds, then it is not surprising that people see a need for some sort of organisation to protect the weak and vulnerable in society from those who would harm them. No one would argue with that.

VULNERABLE

But does that necessarily mean that we have to have the sort of police force that we have today? It is the belief of militant socialists that we do not. In fact it is our belief that protecting the weak and vulnerable is not even the real reason is our belief that the protection of the weak and vulnerable and prevention of crime are not even the real reasons for the existence of the police force in this country.

Their true role is spelt out very eloquently, and from a very appropriate source in the quotation at the beginning of this article. The primary task of the police force is not the protection of old ladies or young children, or the apprehension of thieves and murderers. It is the defence and maintenance of the political system.

This is something that has become more and more apparent in recent years. As the worsening economic sit-



James Anderton

The law so we are always being told is a neutral institution that treats all in society the same. In fact there are numerous examples to prove that the law like everything else in our society is biased in favour of the rich and powerful. Let's take the fiddling of public money as an example. If a working class person fiddles even one weeks dole he or she invariably ends up in prison. When the rich are collared for non payment of tens and even hundreds of thousands of pounds income tax, they are invited in for a chat and to make an offer of how much they are willing to pay.

There are plenty of other examples in the work-place. If a working class person should ever hit a governor or foreman they are invariably knicked for assault, which can be a very serious charge, but when workers are injured and sometimes even killed because a firm ignores safety regulations, the usual result is a fine somewhere between fifty and two hundred pounds.

How can we really expect it to be any different. Judges are the ones who direct how the law should be interpreted, and they are all unelected members of the upper class. Then the various Chief Constables are the ones who give the police in each area their instructions on how the law is to be interpreted in that area. They are also unelected members of the upper class. What chance have you got.

uation has led to more social unrest, the police have been called on far more often to leave traditional policing duties, and to play an obviously political role.

An obvious example of this was the miner's strike. Thousands of police were always available, sometimes just for the sake of getting one or two scabs into work. Even at pits where there was no scabs and no danger of any trouble, there were still masses of police.

BOOMING CRIME

They weren't there because the rule of law was under threat. They were there because the upper classes wanted to see the strike broken, and used their control over the force, to try and intimidate the miners.

Meanwhile back in the areas from which all of these police had been withdrawn, crime was booming due to the fact that there were no coppers. But this was of no concern to them. As Anderton said "basic crime" is not their main concern.

BULLSHIT

The police force was founded by the bosses in the nineteenth century, to protect them and their riches from the anger of the workers. When you strip away all of the bullshit that's all that they really are today. company police. Of course they have at times served parts of the working class community, when it has suited them, but when it comes to the crunch, their primary task is the one that they were set up for, the protection of the rich, and that task will always take predominance over all others.

As the economic and social system deteriorates even further and the police are pulled more and more into playing that role instead of a traditional policing one, working class people are going to have to more and more be responsible for the protection and policing of their own communities. Now that's a thought for you.



One of the more interesting developments of the last couple of years, has been the dramatic increase in the number of policemen finding themselves in the dock facing criminal charges. As well as the well publicised cases - The Merseyside copper who got seven years for kicking a drunk to death, the five in Holloway nicked for assault - hardly a week goes by, without news of some copper somewhere getting done.

According to the recently formed "Police Complaints Authority" there are at this one time 27 policemen facing criminal charges, as well as nearly 200 facing internal disciplinary proceedings. These sort of figures represent a massive increase on what you would have found not so very long ago. So what has brought this about?

Some would perhaps say that it proves that the police are committing far more offences than they used to. Maybe that is true, but even if it is, it doesn't in actual fact explain the increased figures. If you look at the statistics, you will see that in nearly every case, the charge is some sort of assault against someone in custody.

"RESPECTABLE CITIZENS"

As anyone with first hand experience of the police would be able to testify, this has always been fairly common practice, and has certainly not increased that much in the last couple of years. What has changed, is that until recently, unless you had a coachload of vicars magistrates and other such "respectable citizens" as eye witnesses to the incident, it was impossible to bring any charges against a copper. But now a few at least are being nicked. Why is this?

CLEAN UP

It is obvious that someone high up has taken a decision that more policemen are to be prosecuted but what is the motive behind this?

The police themselves and their supporters, would no doubt claim that this is proof of the integrity of the force. Evidence of the willingness and ability of those in authority to pursue and punish those that step out of line.

But if that were really the case, if the aim of this operation was really some sort of clean up of the police force, then we are entitled to wonder why some

Alive, John Mikelson the only black Hells Angel in Britain, and sixty seven year old Henry Foley a retired pensioner who carried a bus pass wouldn't appear to have a lot in common. They do now Both died while in police custody.

In the case of Mikelson it wasn't just a case of whether he was hit only once as police claimed, or beaten repeatedly as claimed by witnesses but the undeniable fact that he was allowed to lay for over an hour and a half in an unconscious state without any officer summoning medical attention. He never regained consciousness and died from his injuries. Seven police officers have been suspended pending the trial.

The police officer who kicked Henry Foley to death denied any knowledge of how he got his injuries. He was found guilty of manslaughter and got seven years.

It is high time an enquiry was launched to investigate the callous indifference displayed towards the fate of these "unconvicted" detainees, rather than just writing it off as the excesses of one or two officers. Excesses that are all too often explained away by defending barristers, or by inquest verdicts influenced by a less than partial judge or coroner.

When the case does result in a guilty verdict, opportunist politicians are often quick to jump in to deflect criticism by looking suitably solemn and quoting the old "Bad Apple in a barrel" theory, which means that each case is treated as an independent and isolated incident.

It should be remembered that between nineteen seventy and nineteen eighty three, there have been FOUR HUNDRED AND EIGHTY FOUR isolated incidents just like John and Henry's.

ers, that such behaviour will not be tolerated.

Yet in all of these incidents and many others like them, not one copper has been arrested. So what we seem to have is a strange situation whereby on one hand the authorities seem to be trying to stamp out police violence, and on the other hand actively encouraging it. So what is in fact going on?

The answer is quite simple really. The real target of this "purge" is not so much police violence but indiscipline. The real crime that those coppers who have been arrested have committed is not so much that they were violent but that they did it at the wrong time when it was un-authorised.

It is not that the authorities don't want policeman who are violent because they do. But they want them to be violent when they tell them to be. On those occasions each and every copper knows that he can act as violently as they want to with total impunity. There is no way that the authorities will take any action, because having given them because it is they who have told them to do it.

SACRIFICE

When coppers start doing it off of their own bat it is different though. Violence is by character disruptive and if it began to get out of hand it could actually



THE SORT OF IMAGE OF THE POLICE THAT IS FAST FADING FROM MEMORY

begin to affect the discipline and efficiency of the force.

And so it is actually in the authorities interests to sacrifice a few coppers. It enables them to get rid of their most undisciplined elements and at the same time cracks a whip over the heads of the rest. It also helps fool the public that they are doing their best to stamp out police violence.

The unfortunate reality is that all that is really happening is that they are establishing greater control over it. Perhaps the present wave of police arrests might make it a bit less likely that you will get a truncheon over your head for sweet F.A. one Saturday night. Unfortunately if isn't going to make the slightest bit of difference when the riot shields and plastic bullets come out



A BIT MORE LIKE TODAY'S REALITY.

FLYING COLUMN

The Prime Minister, recently referring to a specific area of public spending noted that there had been an eighty five per cent increase in spending plus a four hundred per cent increase in the annual building programme and boasted "I do not believe that there is any comparable area of public expenditure, which has seen such a dramatic increase" Was she referring to education? Public Transport? The National Health Service? No. Give up? It was the prison service of course, and a more appropriate indictment of government policies it is hard to imagine.

Mr Max Hastings, recently appointed as editor of the Daily Telegraph, was quick to re-assure readers that there would be no enthusiasm for the likes of Gay Lib in the columns of his paper. He did however plead for more thoughtful and provocative letters. Sure enough, the following example was recently received and printed, "I am 89 and have a lot of time on my hands. So for the past two winters I have kept a single house fly as he is company. His name is Freddy the Fearless. He too reads the Daily Telegraph. One day he fell into the milk". Thoughtful? Provocative? Yes old Max certainly has a job on his hands.

Through the post

The pages of Red Action are open to anyone to write in about anything that they wish, but please keep the letters as short as possible write to

PO BOX 158
MATTFIELD
HERTS

In 1976, a scare story about an Asian family being housed in a hotel caused headlines such as "Scandal of £600 a week immigrants" (The Sun) and helped to create an atmosphere of racial tension that was exploited by fascist groups. Ten years on, in Leicester recently, a similar scare story has been created by Tory councillors, in an attempt to divert attention away from the Tories disastrous housing policies.

"Home on rates - at £118 a night" was the headline in the local paper the "Leicester Mercury". The story about a local family being housed temporarily in a hotel, even reached some national newspapers, prompted by the fuss kicked up by Tory councillors and a Tory MP. The family just happened to be Asian. The result was a flood of letters from a number of white residents claiming that they were being unfairly treated, or listing their own housing problems, and claiming that the Labour controlled City Council were responsible.

DISCRIMINATE

For the Tories, it was an easy way to divert attention from Leicester's REAL housing crisis - 10,500 people on council house waiting lists, and some 33,000 homes in need of repair (I live in one of them) The family concerned were just another victim of the city's housing problem, but they were presented almost as though they were the cause. The fact that at any one time around 30 people have to be put up in hotels in Leicester, and that the City Council were doing no more than carrying out the duties imposed on them by the Housing and Homeless Persons Act 1977 was completely ignored.

It is not the case (as some appear to believe) that local authorities discriminate in favour of black people. That is illegal under the race Relations Act, yet an amazing number of people in Leicester and other places believe that it's the case.

All that local councils have said, is that they have equal opportunity policies which operate REGARDLESS of a person's race or colour. Certain daily papers would have you believe otherwise.

TAX CUTS

For me and thousands of others in Leicester, the housing problems are caused not by homeless Asians, but by cuts in government support to the local authority. Some £20 million worth, which will now end up as tax cuts for the rich instead.

The housing problem in Britain is not caused by immigrants or any ethnic group. There is no shortage of houses in the UK. You can go all round the country and find houses for sale everywhere. The simple fact is that homes are too expensive for working class people to buy. But rather than point this out, the establishment and it's media prefer to try and set working class people against each other or against councils that are even slightly progressive.

ILLOGICAL

No one should be coned by stories of homeless immigrants being the cause of the housing crisis. Nobody ever talks of immigrants taking cars or stereos or whatever from white people. It's just as illogical to say that they are taking homes.

The workers build the houses and they are taken by the bosses and sold off for profit. Decent housing should be a right for everyone and the only way to get it, is to replace the profit based system with a housing policy based on people's needs. Only by returning homes to the class that builds them will our needs and rights be served.

A. Mercer
Leicester

In a cruel distortion of the advertising slogan for coal, graffiti on a wall in Loyalist East Belfast now reads, according to the Observer "Join the RUC and come home to a real fire". Impish humour I'd call it.

It seems that National Front organiser Joe Pearce can still offer a decent amount of bullshit when required. Interviewed in a London listings magazine recently, he described himself as a "political soldier" who could not be scared by a bunch of "Marxist street thugs" (who they are we could not think). Anyway the man who knows no fear (his words not ours) is currently in the custody of her Majesty in Eastchurch Kent, where he has landed himself a job as the cleaner on the punishment block, an obvious step up from his previous position as editor of the young NF paper "Bulldog". It also means that he is segregated from all the other prisoners, which to us sounds remarkably like being on "Rule 43" which is used to protect prisoners in fear of attack from others.

According to a Harris poll, sixty eight per cent of British people were unhappy with the use of British bases for the U.S. attack on Libya. The government majority on the issue in the House of Commons, was one hundred and nineteen. So much for democracy.

"What right does the US have to murder and massacre people, as a reprisal for the death of a sergeant in a brothel in West Germany"

Nicaraguan Minister for the Interior
Thomas Borge



Red Action has always covered a small number of issues such as Ireland, racism/fascism etc, very well and comprehensively, and many other important issues like womens rights, South Africa, nuclear matters and many other subjects with equal vigor but noticeably less detail. The reason for this is that most of the articles in Red Action, are about issues nearest to the hearts of those that contribute them. This is not unreasonable.

There is one subject however that has never been mentioned in the paper. It's something that other left groups criticise us for, and people frequently lose respect for us when we're witnessed at demos, gigs, parties or where-ever. That subject is Gay rights.

PUBLIC EVENTS

As far as I am aware, there are no gay members of Red Action. Neither are there any vehemently anti-gay members. It is not uncommon though, to hear people in Red Action call each other "queers" or "poofs" quite jovially. If this isn't bad enough, it is often done when strangers are about, at public events and demonstrations.

People I know who are gay, have said to me that they like a lot of what Red Action does and says, but judging by the behaviour of some people selling the paper, they could never actively support it. We are losing potential support because some of us are on occasions behaving just like the "Sun" would like us to. This cannot be excused simply because it is a common attitude among working class people. They've always persecuted homosexuals, I have not done enough to combat these attitudes within the organisation because frankly I'm afraid of being ridiculed in front

of a crowd. God knows how someone who is gay would feel.

So how do we begin to put this right? I doubt if a series of workshops or working committees would be much use, as I doubt if many people would bother to attend. Neither would I as most of them are pretty boring anyway. As I said at the beginning of this letter, there are no rabidly anti-gay members of Red Action despite the attitude that we sometimes convey. I believe that if we stop insulting people without realising it in the way in which we sometimes do at present, we will gain further respect and support. It is possible to support the IRA and fight fascists AND BE GAY.

IMAGE

Sexism, especially this kind of sexism, is devious and just one more weapon of the ruling class against us. People have been sacked from their jobs because of their sexual preferences, and often their union will offer little support, because of the bigotry or inexperience of union officials in this kind of situation. This is a problem we must face and fight, even though it may lose us our "macho" image in some people's eyes. In my view, nothing could be better.

J. Hicks
Weiwyn Garden City

In the past twelve months, there has been an alarming increase in accidents in coal mines, including twenty five fatal accidents. Peter McNestry of the pit supervisors union warned that the accident rate had risen in pits where the Coal Boards new management techniques had emphasised productivity over safety. A certain Mr A. Scargill won't take any pleasure at all from being able to say "I told you so".

In George Orwell's famous book about a vision of the future in a totalitarian state, "Nineteen Eighty Four" Britain is referred to as "Airstrip One". In the light of recent events, this bit of political philosophy appears unerringly and chillingly accurate.

I noticed that Ken Livingstone and his "looney left" friends in the now defunct GLC, were quite rightly given a good slating for throwing money away on days out for thousands of people at festivals, and for financing groups that support the community. They could learn a good lesson from the straight-forward and sensible actions of the Department for the Environment, who spent nineteen thousand pounds on an April fools joke, or the wife of Tory MP Tom Sainsbury who gave seventy nine grand to a Mr Mainwairing - Knight to save him from Satan. It was good to see that the DHSS were also on the ball. During the coldest February for thirty nine years, thirty seven of their four hundred and fifty one offices were still refusing to give out the "exceptional severe weather payments". Meanwhile hospitals filled with pensioners suffering from, and in many cases dying of hypothermia.

And now here's the answer to the star prize quiz that appeared in last month's Red Action. The answer to the question, What two things are pink and furry and cannot move? was as most of you guessed correctly, a pair of cuddly toy flamingos, and not as a few sick minded individuals suggested, Mrs Tebbitts slippers.

WE ARE RED ACTION

Red Action is an organisation founded to work towards the ending of the capitalist system of production, and the establishment of a socialist one.

CAPITALISM: The working class form the overwhelming majority of society. They produce everything, but not for themselves. It becomes the property of the minority upper class. A worker would have to pay many times his/her wages to buy back the goods that they produce in that time. It is legalised robbery. This system also allows the minority to decide what should be sold and when on the basis of their personal profit rather than social need. It is this that allows food to rot in better and beef mountains, while people go hungry, and buildings to stand empty while people are homeless. Capitalism also allows a small minority to own all of the resources and means of production on which we all depend—raw materials, factories, machinery, etc. This means that most people have no say in how these resources are used. Billions of pounds in labour and materials can be, and often are wasted on socially useless projects while people die for the want of medical equipment that could have been produced. Private ownership of these resources also allows the owners to deny to society the use of them as they wish. It is that, that causes people to be unemployed while the machines on which they could be producing the things that they need stand idle.

SOCIALISM: A socialist society will be one that millions of people will be involved in shaping. Therefore no one group of people can say exactly what that society will be like. However, there are certain features that would have to be present in society, before we would consider giving up the struggle for socialism.

PUBLIC OWNERSHIP OF THE MEANS OF PRODUCTION: Only this will create a basis whereby the whole of society can collectively decide how best to employ all of its resources, mechanical and human. In this way wastefulness, whether by the production of socially useless things, or by enforced idleness of machinery or workforce would be eliminated. When all resources are used in useful production instead of just a part of them as at present, the amount of labour required from each individual would be much less than at present. Development of new technology would further reduce the labour requirement. Society will stand on the brink of an era of leisure and plenty that past generations could not even have dreamed of.

CONTROL OF SOCIALIST SOCIETY: In capitalist societies all of the institutions of social control—army police force judiciary—are run and controlled by unelected representatives of the upper classes. The majority of people have no say in their appointment and no control over their actions. We believe that in a truly socialist society the need to police people will eventually die away. Whatever form of social control may be necessary until that stage is reached, all of its representatives will be elected by and subject to dismissal by, the community that they represent.

FREEDOM AND EQUALITY: All of those that contribute to a socialist society will receive equal reward and enjoy equal rights, irrespective of colour, race, sex or creed. All of society's facilities—leisure, education, medical, etc—will be equally available to all. All questions of personal morality—homosexuality, abortion, divorce, etc—will be left to individual choice and free from state interference. There will be freedom of worship for all religions, but no church will be allowed to interfere in state matters.

CLASS STRUGGLE: Real Socialism cannot be achieved through parliament. The Labour Party does not try to end capitalism, merely to give workers a better deal within it. If they did attempt to take real power from the ruling class and give it to the workers, they would suffer the same fate as other parliamentary movements that have tried to do this. The ruling class would use its control over the forces of the state to crush them. To achieve Socialism, a Socialist movement has to be ready to overthrow capitalism by force. The law is made and administered by the upper class and used by them as a weapon in the class struggle. Therefore, a socialist movement has to be prepared to defy the law when necessary. We support the right of national liberation movements around the world to engage in armed struggles to free their countries from oppression by foreign powers. We fully support the revolutionary armies, The Irish Republican Army, and the Irish National Liberation Army in their war against the British state machine which is also the enemy of the British working class. The war in Ireland is caused by the British presence there, which is only maintained by armed force. Only armed force can remove that presence and stop the war.

THE EASTERN BLOC: The Eastern Bloc countries and China, Cuba etc. are used as examples to try and prove socialism to be undesirable. In our view although capitalism has been overthrown in these countries, none of them have succeeded in building a truly socialist society. In some cases this has been because incorrect policies within the new regimes have led them to adopt the wrong policies. In others because the new regimes have inherited such under-developed economies, and because of external pressures beyond their control—threat of American invasion, economic boycott and sanctions etc—there has been neither the political and economic stability nor the economic resources, necessary to begin the construction of a socialist society. We do accept that some of these countries have made significant advances from very primitive beginnings, and may continue to advance as they develop more modern industrial economies.

THE ORGANISATION: The period of capitalist growth and expansion during the 50s and 60s raised working class living standards considerably. Mainly because of this the working class that emerged from that period, showed little interest in revolutionary socialist politics. They became the domain of professional thinkers and intellectuals. A cultural gap had been created between the working class and the left. The organisations that were created by the left in this period, were in nearly every case modelled on the Bolshevik Party in revolutionary Russia. It is a form of organisation in which a small intellectual leadership, wields great authority over a highly disciplined membership. History gives us many examples of how easily in this form of organisation, a corrupt leadership can involve that discipline and authority, merely to maintain its own position of power. Any who question the leadership or the party line that they hand down, are dangerous heretics to be cast out as soon as possible. The organisation eventually becomes one made up entirely of servile and unquestioning members. The atmosphere in such an organisation is one that it totally alien to most working class people. They shun it, causing it to retreat even further into abstract politics. The estrangement between the organisation and the class is complete. Even in organisations where the leadership is not corrupt, the tendency to look back to revolutionary Russia for the solutions to all of today's problems leads to them coming up with answers that have little or no relevance to the working class in Britain today. Seeing the need for a new form of organisation, Red Action was formed in 1981. Its primary aim is to be able to relate revolutionary socialist ideas to working class people, most of whom are cynical if not hostile towards the left. To achieve this the organisation must itself be of the class, in constant and character. It must be able to recognise that the vast majority of workers are not revolutionary, and not expect immediate revolutionary commitment from them. It must show that it does not just talk its politics, but is willing to back them up with action when necessary. It must show that it is principled and consistent in its politics, and not just raise and drop issues when it suits. It must recognise that no leadership is immune from possible corruption, and allow true internal democracy. It must be ready to work with other socialist and progressively minded groups in a non sectarian manner. We recognise that a revolutionary working class party is necessary if capitalism is to be overthrown. We are not that party, but neither are those groups that claim to be. We will work to keep alive a tradition of militant working class action until such time as enough working class militants can be brought together to form that party.