

Red Action

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BLOODY SUNDAY WHY YOU SHOULD MARCH

Most people in this country have heard of Bloody Sunday, but very few understand the implications of what happened. For most it is just another in a seemingly endless list of violent incidents, which seem to have been occurring in that part of the world for as long as anyone can remember. Just another case of those mad Irish at each other's throats again surely.

This sort of uninformed way of viewing the situation in Ireland, so common in this country and absurd at the best of times, is made even more so in the case of Bloody Sunday. The events that occurred in Derry City on the 30th of January 1972 will go down in history as one of the major incidents to occur in Europe in this century. For those of us who live in Britain especially, they have the most massive implications. To understand why we say that we have to understand exactly what did happen, and to do this we have to look at the recent history of Northern Ireland.

NEW STATE

The Northern Ireland state was formed in 1922, when the British government found itself unable to control any longer, the armed struggle of the Irish people for independence. So they granted independence to the bulk of the country but retained control over six counties in the industrially prosperous North East which formed the new state. This area contained a majority population of Protestant people, who fearful of the influence which the Catholic Church would wield in an independent Ireland, wished to remain British.

To seal the allegiance of these people, the British government allowed them to set up a State machine of their own choice. This was soon totally dominated by the fanatically anti-Catholic Orange Order, and practiced the most blatant and unashamed discrimination against Catholics in every aspect of life - housing, employment, education etc. Even in areas where there was a majority Catholic population, rigged election boundaries, ensured a permanent Protestant majority on the local councils. Presiding over this state, was an almost totally Protestant armed police force and special reserve.

For fifty years this blatant unjust state of affairs existed, and then in the mid sixties, a popular wave of

movements for reform known as the Civil Rights Movement swept the Western World.

The situation in N. Ireland made it fertile ground for such a movement, and there was soon a thriving Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association. The reactionary Orange administration fearful that any reform would be a threat to their total control over the state, reacted by using the state forces to club marchers and demonstrators off of the streets, and whipped the Loyalist street gangs up into a frenzy which led to many pogroms on Catholic areas, with thousands of people being burnt out of or forced to leave their homes.

The Police and Specials also took to raiding Catholic areas, attacking people and destroying property, until when in August 1969, they tried to get into the Catholic Bogside area and were met with barricades and petrol bombs. For three days and nights the battle raged. Public sympathy for the defenders in the South of Ireland forced the Irish government to move Irish troops up to the border area near Derry, to provide a field hospital for the wounded. This provoked a frenzied reaction from the Loyalists. Ireland was moving close to the brink of Civil War.

It was this situation which caused the British government to suspend the N. Ireland Parliament, institute direct control from Westminster, withdraw the R.U.C. and Specials and send in British troops to restore order and keep the peace. For a brief time, there was a honeymoon period, with many Catholics looking upon the troops as their protectors against the hated R.U.C. and Specials, especially as their arrival was accompanied by some minor reforms by which the British government scrapped some of the more blatantly unjust features of the N. Irish state. However, it soon became clear that the role of the Army, far from heralding major changes, was to protect and uphold the state.



Waiting for you. How long before we see scenes like this on the streets of this country.

The events of the sixties had also revitalised the militant Republican Movement, which had been dwindling until it was almost obsolete. The I.R.A., inactive for some years now re-emerged to wage an increasingly successful campaign aimed at forcing Britain to withdraw from Ireland. In an effort to defeat this campaign, the British government decided to intern all of those it suspected of being involved. And so on 9th August 1971, in a dawn raid involving thousands of British troops and accompanied by much brutality, hundreds of men were dragged off from their homes to prison, to be held without charge or trial.

ANGER

If the raid had caused anger in the Catholic/Nationalist community, when news of the treatment being meted out to the internees began to leak out, it caused absolute outrage. Many of them had been subjected to various forms of torture, including being deprived of food and sleep, being hooded and blindfolded for days on end, being made to run barefoot over broken glass or sit on pointed stakes and being subjected to electronic "White noise"

Although all marches and demonstrations had been banned on August 9th, several protest rallies and marches were called, one on Christmas Day 71 being attended by two Westminster M.P.s. The next one was to be held in Derry on Sunday 30th January 72, and would march from the Bogside to the City Centre.

The crowd on the day was many thousands strong, and

was made up of all sections of the community, young, old men, women and children. As they made their way to the edge of the Bogside area, they found their exit blocked by a large force of the First Battalion of the Parachute Regiment. A few of the younger marchers became involved in stone throwing at the troops, but the vast bulk were standing listening to the speakers at an impromptu meeting.

Suddenly without any warning at all, the Paras started firing indiscriminately into the crowd, and then at those fleeing. Thirteen people were killed (another died later from his wounds) most of them shot in the back trying to get away. They even opened fire on those trying to reach the wounded.

The Paras Commander Lieut-Colonel Derek Wilford (who was later awarded the O.B.E.) at first tried to claim that the troops had been fired on first. However dozens of impartial witnesses, including foreign journalists came forward to say that they had heard no firing whatsoever before the Paras opened fire. The Coroner at the inquest on the victims, described the Paras action as "Sheer unadulterated murder."

Opinion as to why the Army acted as they did differs. Some hold out that it was an attempt to draw the Derry I.R.A. out of the Bogside into open conflict, where the superior forces of the British would almost certainly have destroyed them. Others say that it was simply to punish those taking part in an illegal demonstration.

STANDING TALL

The recent uprising by prisoners in Barlinnie jail in Scotland, in protest against the beating up of a prisoner Sammy Ralston, by the screws, was a courageous and defiant act. Barlinnie is known as one of the worst jails in the country, in terms of both conditions, and of brutality by the screws. Anyone who has ever read Jimmy Boyle's book "A Sense of Freedom" will have a good idea of what the screws can be like there.

TOOK OVER

Yet in spite of all this and the fact that they are armed with truncheons and riot gear etc, the prisoners managed to beat them back taking several of them prisoner (see how they like it for a change) and took over complete control of B wing which they held for almost a week. Throughout the protest they made demands for an investigation into brutality by screws within the prison.

All of the men who took part in the protest knew full well, that when they finally did end

the protest, they faced not only disciplinary proceedings and certain loss of remission but also probable retaliation from the screws. So as one of their conditions for ending it, they demanded independent medical inspections as soon as it was over. All the time that the screws were held hostage, they were well treated and unharmed.

Finally, after a number of their demands had been met including the broadcasting of a statement over Radio Glasgow, they agreed to end the protest, and after going out on the roof for one last burst of "We shall overcome" they came down. We salute their bravery and courage

Whatever the real reason was, it doesn't really matter. What does matter is that the British state showed itself capable when it felt it necessary, of indiscriminately ordering troops to open fire on a dense crowd of men women and children. The order to fire must have come from somewhere high up. Trained disciplined troops such as the Paras don't just suddenly open fire for no reason.

This is why we say that the events of Bloody Sunday have such massive implications for us in this country. If the British state is ready to act in such a way then, then we can have absolutely no reason for supposing that that wouldn't be willing to do exactly the same here if they thought it necessary. We have already seen them adopt

in this country so many of the methods and tactics which they perfected in Ireland - riot shields plastic bullets etc - how long before we are mourning a British Bloody Sunday.

MARCH

Fifteen years on, we march to remember the victims of Bloody Sunday. It is a march which all who would claim to oppose such a murderous act should support. Only by marching can we show to the world that not everyone in Britain approves of or is indifferent to the atrocities carried out in their name, and at the same time show the British state that like the people of Derry, we will not be intimidated from marching in support of what is right. We will be there. Will you?

**BLOODY SUNDAY
COMMEMORATION
SATURDAY 31st
JANUARY
Assemble
1pm Carlisle Street
Sheffield**

Transport to this event is being organised from many parts of the country. For details write to the Committee for British withdrawal from Ireland, Box 353, London NW5 4NH, or contact the Red Action Box number.



One of the fourteen victims of Bloody Sunday. Murdered by the British state.

EXTREMISTS OR REALISTS

Question. What is it that unites Neil Kinnock and his fellow thinkers in the Parliamentary Labour Party, with such figures as Margaret Thatcher, Ronald Reagan and a host of other blatant right wing reactionaries? Answer. The contempt and hatred which they hold, for those whom they describe as political "extremists". By this term they basically mean all of those who like Red Action, support the idea that a real and fundamental change in society cannot be achieved through the Parliamentary system, but only through forceful action by the working class, ie revolution.

For Kinnock and other such "Socialist" figures, talk of revolution is something which is totally out of date. Perhaps it may have applied in the last century, when working people had no rights, no vote and trade unions were illegal etc, and all of the institutions which controlled society were the sole preserve of the upper classes. But today they argue, we have a free democratic system which allows every adult to vote and stand for Parliament themselves if they wish. In this situation they say, it is possible to change society by winning people to your ideas, gaining a majority in Parliament, and using it to enact new policies peacefully by consent. To bring about change through reform rather than revolution. Those who talk about revolution in this day and age, are they tell us, either romantic dreamers or rent-a-mob thugs, out for trouble just for the sake of it, and that is why the revolutionary left is such a tiny and insignificant force today.

CAUSES

Well we certainly wouldn't try and deny the lack of influence which the revolutionary left wields today. However as we discussed in issue No. 27 of Red Action - and which we don't have the space to go over again here - this has been caused by certain social and political factors which have not always applied before, and more to the point won't always apply in the future. There will almost certainly in the not too distant future, come a time when the revolutionary left is far more powerful and influential than it is today.

However to return to the point in question, when reformist socialists tell us to put our faith in the Parliamentary system, we are entitled to ask of them that why is it then, that after seven Labour governments being elected - four of them in the

last twenty four years - all supposedly committed to building a socialist society, we are still today no nearer to that society than we ever were.

The answer to this question is really quite simple. The reason why reformist socialist governments have always failed, and will always continue to fail, is because of the fundamental mistake which reformists make, in their assessment of where the real power in society lays. They believe it is in the hands of MPs in Parliament. In fact the real power in our society today, is wielded by super rich industrialists and businessmen, and their friends and representatives who, totally unelected, run all of the powerful institutions which have so much control over our lives - Police Force, Army, Civil Service, Legal System etc.

These people have the power to shape and change the policies of any government, whatever its political leanings, and also if they wish, to defy it completely.

There are many examples to prove this. For instance in the way in which the Labour government of Harold Wilson, was forced by the International Monetary Fund, to implement anti socialist policies such as cuts in the Health Service and a freeze on wage rises, as a condition of being granted a loan which they desperately needed to avert an economic crisis. Here we can see one of the first weaknesses of reformism. The way in which reformists, because they are committed to working within the system, so easily find themselves forced to act contrary to their supposed aims, in order to defend that system.

An example of how easily the upper classes can just defy the wishes of an elected government, was seen quite clearly during a strike by Ulster Unionists in 1974. Then the Wilson government (again)



The end of the Parliamentary road to socialism in Chile. When the government of Allende, was overthrown by a right wing coup led by General Pinochet (inset) tens of thousands of socialists and other progressives were thrown into cages such as the one above. Many of them were never seen again.

ordered the Army to man essential services and break the strike. The Senior Officers simply refused to carry out the orders. Apparently Wilson himself only learned of this, minutes before he was due to go on television and make a speech about how the strike was being broken, and was forced to tear up his planned speech and hastily concoct another. So much for the authority of the elected leader of the country.

POWER

What these examples show us quite clearly, is that the upper classes when they are so inclined, have the power to do just about anything they want, without any recourse to Parliament, no matter who has a majority there. Look at the way during miner's strike, the Police just more or less made up the law as they went along, restricting freedom of movement and arbitrarily bringing in all sorts of measures which were previously unheard of. And of course when these measures were challenged in the Courts, unelected upper class Judges backed them every time. What would a Labour government have done about that? What could they have done? Sack all the Police and Judges? How could they have? They are committed to working within the system and so have to keep the system's institutions intact.

The most ominous example of the impotence of reformist politics seen in recent times, and one which we should all remember, was in

1972 in Chile. Here, a left wing government led by a self proclaimed Marxist named Salvador Allende, was elected to power, and set about trying to carry out the programme on which they had been elected. Because he was committed to reforming Chilean capitalism through his Parliamentary majority, rather than overthrowing it, Allende refused to take the revolutionary step of arming those who supported him. The capitalists and right wing Army Generals bided their time and when they were ready staged an armed coup in which Allende and tens of thousands of other socialists and progressives were slaughtered, and established a fascist type dictatorship.

So ended Chile's experience of the reformist road to socialism, and in it we can see the fatal weakness in the reformists argument. They assume that because they have rejected the concept of class struggle as being obsolete, then the capitalist class have also done so. They delude themselves that because they themselves are willing to bow to the moral authority of a democratic majority, then the upper class will also do so, and be willing to hand over power peacefully

FORCE

As we have seen nothing could be further from the truth. The upper class will when it feels threatened, respond with whatever form or level of force it feels is necessary in order to defend its power, and it has plenty at its command. The only way to defeat this is by using a greater force back. This can only be supplied by a militant revolutionary movement.

The efforts of reformism to try and avoid this simple truth, to try and kid itself that the upper class will be willing to just hand over power because a majority of people have on a particular occasion voted in a particular way, is about as sensible as sending a group of generals without any army to back them up, to negotiate with an armed enemy force. It's obvious that they will end up either backing down, as with the Wilson government, or go under as Allende did.

Reformists try and point to the gains which were made for the working class in the years after the Second World War - rising living standards, establishment of the Health Service etc - as evidence that reformism works. But even though reformism is quick to claim the credit for these gains, the real reason that they were achieved was simply because the capitalist system was in such a healthy state in those years, the ruling class could afford to dish out the goodies. It suited them. It meant that people were in general, satisfied with the state of society, so

NORTH OF WATFORD

A recent story in the Daily Mirror revealed that of all the jobs lost in the seven years since the Tories came to power a staggering 96% of them have been in the north of the country. It went on to fiercely attack the government for this unfair distribution of poverty. What was noticeable however, was that they didn't actually make any suggestion as to how this state of affairs could be altered. This is not really surprising, for the direct cause of this situation (and many other things) is something which the Daily Mirror supports just as much as the Tories. That is the private ownership of the means of production, or as it is more commonly referred to the free enterprise system. And it is only by its abolition that we will begin to solve all of the many social problems it causes

If society allows a few individuals to own and control all the major industries that are so vital to the whole of society and to operate them not on the basis of the greatest social need, but simply on what makes them the greatest personal profit, then how can we be surprised if they should start to use that control in a way that is to the detriment of all or part of society. How can we be surprised if they start to shut industries down, if for some particular reason, there is not enough profit to be made at that time, for them to bother keeping them open. How can we be surprised or shocked, at the sight of industries and resources being allowed to stand idle, while poverty stricken unemployed people, are crying out for the goods that they could be producing. It is the insane result of an insane system.

The only answer is for society to take over all of the major socially necessary industries and natural resources, and operate them on the basis of what is needed by society. In such a situation, first and foremost, all people will be entitled to an equal share of what is produced at all times. It will be up to society to provide the means and opportunity to make sure that everyone contributes to production. If a situation did arise where the product of one particular industry was no longer needed by society, then obviously there would be no reason why those people involved in that industry, should not still receive a full share of what is produced, until such time as society provides them with alternative employment. In such a system, there will be no such thing as the regional deprivation which we see today. For in such a situation, the work will go to the people, and not the people have to go looking for the work



Only by bringing all of the major industries and productive resources under public control, will we be able to prevent the obscene spectacle of them standing idle, while people are crying out for the goods that could be produced on them.

there was little social unrest, and they could quietly get on with their task of making massive profits, without having to resort to the more ruthless methods of social control seen in other societies

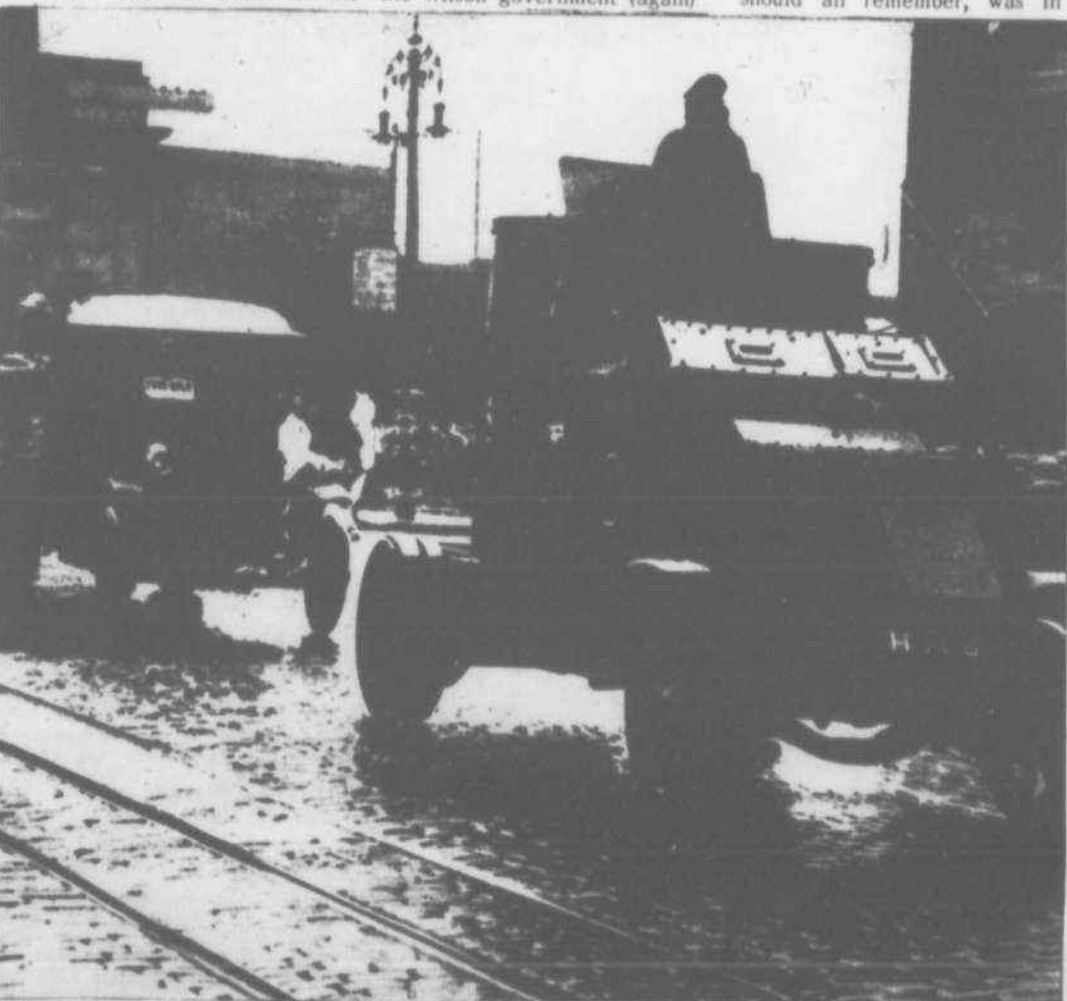
Today however the system is in an ever worsening mess, and the ruling class are clawing back the gains which were made, slashing public services like the Health Service, and forcing down working class living standards. In the face of this attack, reformism has been found to be totally incapable of defending those gains which it claims to be responsible for initiating. Remember it was the last Labour government and not the Tories who were responsible for starting off the cuts in the Health Service. The social unrest which this situation is beginning to cause, is forcing the ruling class more and more to adopt less benevolent methods of social control - riot police C.S. gas, plastic bullets etc. It is a process which will undoubtedly intensify as the state of the capitalist system gets worse and worse. The indignant protests which the reformists will no doubt make in the face of this will count for nothing. Why should the ruling class listen to them, when they have nothing with which to back up their demands. The only time the ruling class ever listen to reformism, is when it suits their purpose.

When the Kinnocks and Thatchers of this world, be-

rate groups like Red Action for our extremism they are in fact belying their own traditions. The English Parliamentary system which they tell us we should trust in, and use to bring about change in society, was itself established in the seventeenth century, not by any sort of negotiation or reform, but by the armed action of the extremists of that time, the Parliamentarians, who had to physically wrest power from the monarchy, which like all ruling classes will always, cling on to it until it was taken this way. The Parliamentarians then incidentally, found it necessary to cut off the King's head. Hardly what you would describe as moderate politics.

Similarly Ronald Reagan, always so quick to denounce extremism and what he describes as terrorism, should remember that his own American state, which he likes to look on as the bastion of freedom and all that is good in the world, was only established by the action of American freedom fighters, who had to take up arms in order to free their country from the oppressive rule of Britain.

The English Parliamentarians and the American freedom fighters acted as they did because they knew full well the reality that reformists try to deny today. No ruling class ever gives up power until it is forced to by those wishing to take it.



Armoured cars on the streets of Britain during the General Strike in 1926, showing how the British ruling class, if it felt threatened enough, would be willing to act in exactly the same way as the Chilean one.

THE STATE OF TERROR

Fifty years ago in this country, Jewish people were commonly represented as being greedy unshaven nasties with hooked noses, who spent all their time manipulating the purse strings of European economies. The Jewish experience in World War Two however, made caricaturing of them in this way unpalatable to anyone, aside from the sort of morons who fill the ranks of the National Front. It is striking however, that the same sort of caricature does still appear in our society, in news stories and political cartoons etc, only today it is identified with "Oil rich Sheiks" or "Arab terrorists". By contrast, the Jewish state of Israel is presented as a bright modern state, fighting for its plucky little life against hordes of Arab bandits and psychos. What is the reason for this transformation? Is this new image a true one?

Zionism, the movement for a Jewish national state in Palestine, began around the turn of the century, when no more than 5% of the population were Jews owning 1% of the land. Claiming that they were on a mission from God, Jews began a massive immigration into Palestine, becoming 30% of the population by 1936. Racist western governments barred Jews from entry into their own countries thus encouraging Zionism. As a Palestine Liberation Organisation spokesman was to say

"We are not against the Jews. We are against Israel and Zionism. We do not understand anti-semitism. That is European.

ZIONISM

The Zionists however, formed a segregationist state from the beginning, with businesses, schools, hospitals etc for Jews only. Palestine had been a British Mandate (colony with a fancy name) since 1919, and the British government turned down the Arabs' proposals for equality of all citizens in a democratic state. In consequence, the Arab population staged a general strike which was crushed by Jewish scab labour and 30,000 British troops. 15,000 Jews were armed by the British as "Policemen". Over 100 Arabs were hanged, 1,000 killed in clashes, and 5,000 interned in concentration camps.

Rather ironically, after World War Two, the Zionists turned on the British themselves, in a savage "terrorist" campaign. The leaders of the paramilitary organisations who led this campaign which killed hundreds of British servicemen, later became the Israeli statesmen who are today the friends of western governments. In 1948, wishing to

replace British influence with its own, the American government rigged a United Nations ballot, which gave most of Palestine to the Zionists.

With 100,000 armed men, the new state of Israel set out to empty the rest of Palestine of its Arab population, through a policy of calculated terror. Hundreds of defenceless Arab villages were attacked. In one alone, at Dier Yasin, 250 men women and children were butchered. 700,000 Arab civilians fled across the new borders, into poverty stricken countries whose economies could not possibly absorb them.

At first the Palestinians were able to fight back only on a tiny scale (the P.L.O. was not even formed until 1965) but even these tiny efforts were enough to provoke the most massive retaliation from the Israelis. For example when 3 Israeli generals were killed by a grenade, a specialist terror squad massacred all of the inhabitants of the Arab village of Qibya. Such actions became commonplace in succeeding years, and this policy culminated in the expansionist war against Lebanon in 1982, when supposedly in retaliation for an assassination attempt on an Israeli ambassador in London,

the Israelis bombarded the residential areas of the Lebanese capital Beirut, in an action which resulted in tens of thousands of Arab casualties.

These constant military campaigns against the neighbouring Arab states, could not possibly be supported by the disastrous Israeli economy. The U.S. pays. In 1982 U.S. aid to Israel amounted to 1,000 dollars for every person in Israel, and it has steadily increased since.

They do this for two reasons. Firstly because Israel is useful as a paid agent to carry out western policies which are too unpleasant to be acknowledged openly. Thus Israel has become the main supplier of U.S. weaponry to South Africa, Southern and Central American dictators and groups like the Contras. Secondly, because since the fall of the Shah of Iran Israel is the only reliable policeman of western policy in the highly strategic area of the Middle East.

As long as this continues to be the case, Israel will no doubt continue in its role as the number one terror state in the world, with the full backing of Western governments.



David Ben Gurion Israel's first Prime Minister proclaims the State of Israel in 1948.

THE SETTING SUN

At this time of the year, when we hear about people being awarded things like the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in the New Year's Honours list, did it ever strike you as all being a bit stupid because there isn't any British Empire left - except of course for Northern Ireland, and that hopefully, will soon be remedied

The days of Britain's imperial past stretch back hundreds of years. Early British monarchs attempted to control the native populations in the more far flung parts of the British Isles, first by aggression, which only drove them into the more inhospitable parts, and later on by coercion and acts of union ie Great Britain.

EMPIRE

When later on it came to building an international empire, Britain was given a head start by the greater military and industrial power it gained, by virtue of the fact that the industrial revolution occurred here.

The Union Jack was carried to the four corners of the earth and an empire was built on which the sun never set. In the process millions of people were killed, countless civilisations destroyed and whole races reduced to servile status, all to line the pockets of a few British capitalists. The blood soaked Union Jack, was looked upon with hatred by the colonised peoples, and ill founded pride by the British people, who were largely ignorant of, or didn't care about, the horror which was their empire. The destruction of the home based economies of the colonies, and the resultant poverty and deprivation which this brought to the native populations, made it easy for the British government to recruit many



of them into colonial regiments to be used to subdue other native peoples in other parts of the world, this representing perhaps the most tragic feature of all in the history of the empire.

DECLINE

The last fifty years have seen the long awaited decline of the British Empire. The U.S.A. has overtaken it, using economic and cultural, rather than purely political imperialism, to rule people's lives while at the same time robbing them blind. Today, as the sun does finally set on the Empire, it is interesting to look back and note the power and influence which Britain once had. It can be seen from the list below, the citizens of which are still eligible to vote in British elections.

Anguilla, Antigua, Australia, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, Botswana, British Antarctic Territory, Canada, Cayman Islands, Cyprus, Dominica, Falkland Islands, Fiji, Gambia, Ghana, Gibraltar, Guyana, Hong Kong, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Kiribati, Lesotho, Malawi, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius, Monserrat, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Navis, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pitcairn Islands, St. Christopher and Nevis, St. Helens, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and Grenadines, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tonga, Tanzania, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, Virgin Islands, West Samoa, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

THROUGH THE POST

NEW GROUPING

To Red Action.

The deep crisis facing the left demands that Marxists begin to re-examine their views free from sectarian back-biting. In this spirit, a number of socialists from different organisations including the Socialist Workers Party, the Revolutionary Democratic Group, Red Action, Socialist Federation, as well as non-aligned Marxists, met to discuss their experience. Following a very useful exchange of views, it was agreed to found "The State Capitalist Forum". The forum will be open to all revolutionary Marxists who consider the Soviet Union to be State Capitalist. Its aims are

1. To seek to promote a greater awareness of the nature of State capitalism
2. To facilitate discussion on practical activity and promote joint work
3. To facilitate greater political clarity and unity amongst revolutionary Marxists.
4. Produce a discussion bulletin.

For anyone wishing to join the forum, the fee is £2 or £1 if unwaged. Please write to

Box 43, First of May bookshop
43 Candlemaker Row
Edinburgh

WRITE OR WRONG

Red Action

I've been buying your paper for some time now, but up until now I haven't had £10 to spare to become a supporting member (feeble excuse) Anyway here is my £10, unless the P.O. nick it, write back soon. Dave, London

P.S. What was that about a ripple of panic at the Remembrance Day march. The majority of people at the back fucking shit themselves and legged it at the mere sight of the fascists. You also stated that no-one was hit. Well some friends of mine got a few lumps, and I had to defend myself with a banner that somebody dropped. I know it's not very nice to report that the majority of people ran away. But it's the truth, and you really should be reporting the truth, not just your version of it. Anyway hope to hear from you soon.

RED ACTION REPLY We are happy to print this letter, because we couldn't agree more with the sentiments of the writer. Of course it is absolutely vital that a revolutionary socialist newspaper at all times strives to tell the truth. The fact is we thought we were. Several of our members were on the scene referred to almost immediately the incident had occurred, and not one of us saw or heard of anyone actually being harmed in any way. Obviously on this occasion we were wrong, and for that we apologise. We can assure you that as a group which has spent the last few years, trying to alert an often complacent left to the dangers of the fascists, we would certainly under no circumstances ever try to falsely play down the threat they pose.

SKIN COMPLAINT

I've been a skinhead for about six years now, and I'm proud of it. I've also been a dedicated anti-fascist for about six years and I'm proud of that too. So why do me and my mates, many of whom aren't skins, get treated with the same sort of contempt and prejudice by many of our "fellow anti-fascists, as the right usually reserve for Blacks and Asians.

"Thug", "Yob", "Bootboy", I've heard it all. So what. It's the thugs yobs and bootboys that kick shit out of the Front. O.K., so not everyone's cut out to be a fighter, no shame in that. But why expect us to do it then piss all over us.

I've travelled to loads of Anti Fascist Action demos, and on a couple of occasions have been muttered at to "get away from me you bloody skinhead". This from people who I've travelled to help out. To possibly get my head kicked in or arrested all on their behalf. Thanks a bundle.

On the Cable Street march, a few of my mates came down to hear a speaker tell us that local Asians had been attacked by "Racists" and "Skinheads". Racist skinheads O.K., but lefties saying that all skinheads are racist, is just as bad as the Front saying that all blacks are pimps junkies or muggers.

Just because we like a drink, are a bit boisterous and like a good crack, doesn't



The pages of Red Action are open for anyone to express their views on whatever they wish. Write to P.O. Box 158, Hatfield, Herts. Please keep your letters as brief as possible.

make us any the less dedicated an anti-fascist as some I.L.E.A. teacher from Islington. If the anti-fascist struggle had been left to them, we'd all have been in the cattle trucks off to the death camps years ago.

But then it's easier for lots of people to put a skinhead face onto racism and say "it's them not us" rather than look at their own thoughts and prejudices. If all skinheads are racist - get rid of the skins and there's no problem. By turning your backs on white working class kids, you're pushing them into the Nazi's arms. Middle class prejudice against white working class kids, and patronising attitudes towards black ones should have no place in the anti-fascist movement. Anyone who holds them should be given a loud and clear fuck off.

Tim
Under 5s

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

NEWS FROM NOWHERE

Tory M.P. Neil Hamilton, was awarded £20,000 in libel damages from the B.B.C after a programme which alleged fascist infiltration of the Tory Party, and which triggered off all the bull-shit about left wing bias in the media. The programme had accused Hamilton of involvement in an anti-semitic pressure group called Tory Action, of speaking at a conference of the Italian fascist organisation M.S.I., and among other things, of giving a Nazi salute while on a trip to Germany in 1963.

One of the reasons that the B.B.C. governors intervened and ordered a retraction, which cost them in all £500,000, was that Hamilton had persuaded ten Tory M.P.s, to sign a statement swearing that they had never seen neither him nor his co-defendant in the case Gerald Howarth (whose mother Mary incidentally helped to found the National Front) give a Nazi salute at any time on the trip. In October last year, in an article in the Sunday Times for which he was paid £10,000, Howarth admitted that he did give what he termed as "a little salute" With his £20,000 from the libel case, that adds up to a handy profit of £30,000. Who says crime doesn't pay.

Incidentally, one of the ten signatories, Tory M.P. Geoff Palmer, shocked radio listeners recently by including a Nazi marching song amongst his top thirty favourite songs. He explained that it was chosen "for the catchy tune, not the lyrics." Who could possibly believe anything else.

A rare insight into what makes a Tory tick, was provided recently by an interview in the Guardian with Kenneth Baker in which he claimed to hate "indifference, bigotry and fanaticism" and to love "England, it's landscape and it's language" I notice that one factor which he omits to mention is the people of England, though perhaps it is appropriate that a Tory should show total indifference towards those who have to suffer the consequences of the bigoted policies which he and the rest of the government fanatically pursue. Of all the un-attractive traits which go to make up a typical Tory, hypocrisy is undoubtedly both the most common and the most repulsive.

While many of the countries trade unions seem to be going to the dogs, at least the voters in the National Union of Students seem to have come to their senses. In a recent poll for a committee post at the N.U.S. conference in Blackpool, up-and-coming Conservative Phillip Malcolm looked set to win. Until that was, a Dalek rolled in declaring "I am superior to all humans, vote for me" And thirty two of them did, leaving the Dalek, operated by delegate Adam Gilchrist the winner, beating the Tory by six votes. Mr. Malcolm was less than pleased, and said afterwards "It just shows what a joke the N.U.S. is." Just sounds like sour grapes to me.

Since the Tories came to power in 1979, the basis on which unemployment figures are calculated, has been changed 16 times, resulting in the official total falling by 400,000.

Just what is going on? Has there been a sudden shortage of Irish Nationalists or something? What is making me wonder this, is the amount of cases that have come to light in the media recently, of the brutality and humiliation that is being dished out by British squaddies to young recruits. Twenty four men in the 3rd Battalion of the Royal Green Jackets have gone absent without leave in the last year alone. Among them were Paul Cummins and Leon Rose, who claimed in sworn statements that "initiation ceremonies, included setting young soldiers alight, battering them with high pressure hoses, urinating upon them and spraying them with C.S. gas while they are crammed into tiny wire cages. (see picture on this page)

They also claimed that one youth quit the army, after being dangled from a window and having a vacuum nozzle forced onto his genitals, and that the Green Jackets regularly fought gang warfare with other regiments, vandalised property in the garrison town and terrorised the local people. Cummins said, "I think they're on the verge of mutiny" Similar claims have been made about other British bases around the globe.

On another occasion involving different regiments, four young soldiers collapsed - one later died - when they were made to run three and a half miles in wet suits, on one of the hottest days of the year, and seventeen year old Lee Richardson, was shot in the hand, when he was forced to hold a beer can while Corporals George Christian and Frank Thomson shot at it with an air rifle.

A catalogue which perhaps gives you some idea of the pathetic bully boy mentality, which the Irish people have to endure stomping around their streets every day.



This picture was found on the Royal Green Jackets platoon notice board, and shows the cage into which young recruits are forced.

On November the 27th, Anthony Lecomber was found guilty at the Old Bailey, on five counts of possessing and making explosives. When detectives raided his home, they found an arsenal of ten home-made grenades, seven detonators, two petrol bombs, three lumps of explosive material, five integrated circuit timing devices, mercury tilt switches and chemicals for making explosives. The grenades were examined by an expert, who commented that he would like a wall between him and it when it went off. One witness said that Lecomber had shown him the timing devices and said that the targets were "Blacks in general, reds and provos." Lecomber joined the National Front in 1980, and later on became a body-guard of John Tyndall, leader of the neo-Nazi British National Party.

Passing a sentence of three years, the Judge said "I accept that you are not a terrorist, nor were you acting on behalf of some extreme political group" Not surprisingly, Lecomber replied "Thank you sir."

On November the 25th, Clinton Donaldson, an accounts clerk and community worker, confessed that he had thrown rocks at the police in self defence, after two rocks had been hurled at him during a clash between residents and police, on a housing estate in North London. He got five years. Incidentally Mr. Donaldson is black. Draw your own conclusions.

A recently de-classified top secret report from the U.S. State Department reads "We have about 50% of the worlds wealth, but only 0.3% of it's population..... In this situation, we cannot fail to be the object of envy and resentment. Our real task in the coming period, is to devise a pattern of relationships which will permit us to maintain this position of disparity, without positive detriment to our national security. To do so we will have to dispense with all sentimentality and day dreaming, and out attention will have to be fixed everywhere on our immediate national objectives. We need not deceive ourselves that we can afford today, the luxury of altruism (working for the good of others) and world benefaction."

It continues "We should cease to talk about vague and unreal objectives such as human rights, the raising of living standards and democratization. The day is not far off when we are going to have to deal in straight power concepts. The less we are then hampered by idealistic slogans the better."

Sounds to me like we could be in for a lot of trouble. Think about it.

"Young women like you must be nice to our policemen. If you had switched on the charm, you'd probably have got away with just a caution. It's been done by other ladies I know."

This was the advice which seventy year old Judge Anthony Goodall gave to teacher Wendy Birch, when she appeared at Exeter Crown Court, to appeal against convictions and fines for motoring offences. Ms Birch was understandably less than amused with the Judge's comments, but were they perhaps just the senile warblings of an old man? Surly the British Bobby for instance wouldn't approve of such comments? Wrong

Police Federation Chairman Leslie Curtis supported the Judge saying "I imagine many Police Officers would agree with his comments. I do, and I don't care what feminists think. If women can use a bit of female cunning then I'm all for it, and I'm sure many of my colleagues would agree. That's what the British Police force is all about."

I wonder what they might have said if Ms Birch had "switched on the charm" and then been raped? She was "asking for it" perhaps, or maybe it was "contributory negligence."

For every £1 given to African famine relief in 1985, the west took back £2 in debt repayments.

Quotes of the month

"Greed is all right by the way. I want you to know that you can be greedy and still feel good about yourself."

The words of mega-capitalist Ivan Binsky, just a year before he admitted extensive fraud in Stock Exchange dealings, and was fined a hundred million dollars, estimated to be less than half of his personal fortune. In return he grassed on all of his own friends and business associates. His book, in which he outlines the legal reasons for his meteoric rise to fame and riches ie discipline, long hours, hard work, has been withdrawn by the publishers.

"We would seriously like to invite her to our club. After all, we are situated only fifty yards from where she used to live and we are catering for this generation the way her father catered for his some time back. The only difference is that we are catering for the generation with time on their hands, a lot of time on their hands. She could become an honorary member because she does provide us with most of our customers" The owner of the local snooker hall in Grantham. I wonder who he could be referring to.

"Nobody with a conscience votes Conservative anyway"
Norman Tebbit

"You do not make the poor rich by making the rich poor."
Chancellor Nigel Lawson 6/1/87.

"Full of Communists and Roman Catholics"
Democratic Unionist leader the Reverend Ian Paisley, describing the European Parliament in Strasbourg, which includes Margaret Thatcher whose speech he temporarily halted.

"Seeking redress for libel is only open to those who can afford it. It is expensive, uncertain and not covered by the provisions of legal aid..... It is a law which can only be invoked by rich men and women, or by wealthy corporations..... Those who do not have financial resources of their own, or the backing of their employers, have to grin and bear any assassination of their character..... A law which is not available to all is not a just law."

Millionaire publisher Robert Maxwell, after a victory in court over the magazine Private Eye, whom he had accused of libel.

"As the years go by, I see an ever increasing number of them, swirling around in a human cesspit of their own making"

Greater Manchester's Chief Constable James Anderton, giving his views on homosexuals, prostitutes and the promiscuous. Ah the sweet voice of moderation.

During the riots in 1981, the Police claimed that the widespread coverage by newspapers and T.V., of the disturbances in Brixton involving mainly black youths, was responsible for similar attacks on the Police in areas where there was no visible ethnic involvement. They referred to this phenomenon as "Copy cat violence" thus avoiding the unpalatable conclusion that the white working class didn't have much reason to love the Police either.

On the 8th of December 1986, a fourteen minute sequence about the use of plastic bullets by the security forces in Northern Ireland, was cut from a programme by the Independent Broadcasting Authority, on the grounds that it may have led to public disorder.

As the Police are the only ones with access to this type of weapon, this may have been an unintentional slip. I prefer to believe that it is a rare and welcome example of left wing bias in the media.

The health gap between the rich and the poor, grew sharply in the first four years of Conservative government, according to official figures published this month. For the first time since 1911, the crucial detailed analysis of deaths in the different social classes has been omitted from the report. This and other official reports published in recent, paint a vivid picture of the effects which Tory policies have had upon British society. Amongst other things, they show that

More than 19 million people (one in three) people are living on or just below the poverty line, including a third of all children. This number rose by 5 million between the years 1979 to 1983 and represent the worst poverty figures this century.

Between 1979 and 1984, Britain lost 196 hospitals with a total of 17025 beds, 3051 community doctors, 20,000 ancillary staff and 35 hospital schools.

The lowest paid manual workers in Britain, are now relatively worse off than they were 100 years ago. In 1866, the bottom fifth of the population, earned 69% of the national average wage. Last year, the bottom fifth earned 65% of the average.

The post war trend towards greater equality and wealth has been halted and may even have been reversed since 1979, according to inland revenue statistics. They show that since the war, the wealth of the top 1% of society in homes stocks and shares, dropped steadily until in 1980 it reached 20% of the total. In 1981 however, it edged up to 21% and remained.

WE ARE RED ACTION

Red Action is an organization 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 are lost, 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 this, 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, material and human. In this way socialists, whether by the production of socially useful things, or by enforced discipline of machines or workers 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 even dreamed of.

CONTROL OF SOCIALIST SOCIETY: In capitalist society all of the institutions of society control—array police, judiciary—are run and controlled by un-elected representatives of the upper classes. The majority of people have no say in their government and so control over their actions. We believe that in a truly socialist society the need to police people will eventually disappear. Whatever form of social control may be necessary until that stage is reached, all of it 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—health, 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 fate of 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 struggle to free their countries from oppression by foreign powers. We fully support the revolutionary struggle. The Irish Republican Army, and the Irish National Liberation Army in their war against the British state machine which is the enemy of the British working class. The war in Ireland is caused by the British propping class, which is only maintained by armed force. Only armed force can remove that propping 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 unachievable. 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 while the new regimes have had 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—loss of American trade, 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 19th and 20th 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 reality every one controlled by the Intellectual Party in revolutionary fronts. It is a form of organisation in which a small intellectual leadership, while great authority over a highly disciplined membership. History gives us many examples of how easily in this form of organisation, a corrupt leadership can invade that discipline and authority, merely to maintain its own position of power. Any who question the leadership or the party line that they head 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 don't like it, and it is not their own. It is an organisation in which the form of today's problems leads them to seek the wrong solutions. History gives us many examples of how easily in this form of organisation, a corrupt leadership can invade that discipline and authority, merely to maintain its own position of power. Any who question the leadership or the party line that they head 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. 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