

Red Action

Issue No. 20. December '85 20p

DISUNITED NATION

ALIVE AND KICKING

One of the more remarkable features about our society today, is the amount of totally stupid ideas that some people believe in. You know the sort of thing, the Queen is born biologically different from other people, or the Pope cannot make a mistake. We've all heard of these and other just like them. As well as these obviously stupid ideas however, are others which are just as wrong but are not so obviously so, and which are often wholly or partly believed by many serious thinking people. Of these, one of the most common is the idea that the economic interests of every one of us, are tied up in what usually referred to as the national economy. The idea that we can only do well, if the country is doing well.

It's not really surprising that this idea is so commonly held. It is after all being constantly impressed upon us. If sterling should happen to rise against some other currency, it will be reported on the news as if it is some sort of achievement by all of us. Similarly if a British firm should land a large contract overseas, we are told what a great boost this is for "our" economy, the implication being that we are all going to benefit by it. Another feature of this sort of view of society of course, and one which should perhaps tell us a little bit more about the true thinking about it, is the way in which it is often invoked to try and convince working class people to accept cuts in their living standards. How often do we hear politicians telling us that we should lower wage demands "for the good of the national economy" because "the country can't afford it".

PRINCIPLE

The principle on which this line of thought rests is the idea that all of us in this country have the same stake in the "national economy". Even though some start obviously better off than others, we still all have exactly the same interest in seeing the country do well in International economics, because if it does then we all rich and poor alike will be better off, and if it doesn't then we all suffer. It is in the interests of all of us to pull together for the benefit of our common interest, to be a "United Nation".

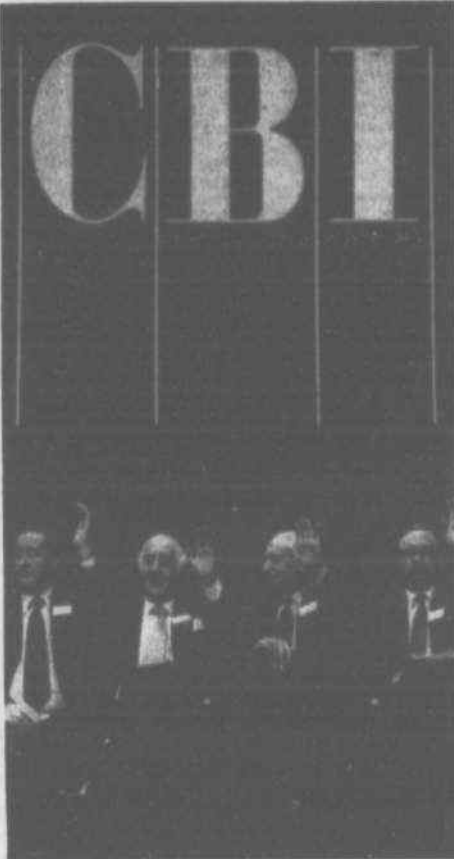
This is the picture that is painted for us by the establishment through their control of the media. In actual fact it is complete rubbish. The society in which we live today, is anything but

"united". Any idea that all of the people in this country have the same vested interest in the prosperity of the "National Economy" is just so much bullshit.

GAIN

When people talk about a "National Economy" they are not talking about anything that is in any sense owned by all of us. They are in fact talking about the larger British companies who in the course of their business are involved in imports and exports. It is the success or otherwise of these companies in trying to outwheel and deal, the companies of other trading nations, which decides whether the newsman tells us that "we" - meaning British firms - are doing well or badly. But the point is, who gains from it all. If British companies make record profits from overseas dealing, what do you and I gain from it. The answer of course is very little is anything. The ones who gain from it are those who are already rich enough to own shares in those companies less than ten percent of the population.

In the last five years over two million people have joined the ranks of the permanently unemployed. Their standard of living has dropped from wage level to dole level, a considerable drop. People in government and business tell us that this is caused by economic recession. "The recession is to blame. There's nothing we can do about it. We just have to all tighten our belts until things pick up again. If you pick up, a newspaper any day of the week and turn to the financial page, you will see various companies reporting their profits, usually up on the previous year, of tens and often hundreds of MILLIONS OF POUNDS. This has been happening all through the years of recession.



THE ONLY ONES TO BENEFIT.

While workers the world over have been tightening their belts, rich capitalists the world over have still been gorging themselves till their belts are at bursting point.

This is not to say that there is no recession. There is and it is caused by the inadequacy of the capitalist system itself. The point is that if the capitalist recession, it is the workers who almost exclusively have to bear all of the suffering and make all of the sacrifices. For the rich, recession is something to read about in the papers that they own.

MYTH

The myth that there is some sort of national economic interest that unites the rich and poor of a country is nothing more than a con trick upon the working classes. It seeks to make them believe that somehow their interest lays in seeing their boss make larger profits rather than in fighting him/her to improve their own living standards.

The myth of the "United Nation" tries to cover up the plain and undeniable fact that our society today is divided into two classes whose interests are permanently and totally opposed to each other. Those two classes are the employers and the employed, the upper class and the working class. The upper classes prosper only according to how well they exploit the working class, and the workers according to how well they organise to snatch some back. The one can only prosper at the expense of the other.

INTEREST

Working class people have no real interest in the prosperity of the capitalist class of their own or any other country. Indeed it is more likely to work against their interests as the more prosperous a capitalist class is the better it will be able to resist any industrial action that the workers may engage in. The myth of the "United Nation" is fostered and encouraged for no other reason than that millions of people who can hardly afford to pay their rent and eat properly, will sit in front of their telly and think that they must be well off because exports have risen, or the pounds doing well. It is there to try and mask the fact that the only true long term interest of working class people everywhere, lays in struggle against the capitalist class of their own and every other country to wrest back everything that they can from them, and ultimately destroy the capitalist system itself.

Regular readers of Red Action will be forgiven if they had been wondering whether they were ever going to see another issue. This in fact is the first issue for some four months. It will also be noticeable that the type used in this issue, is of a lesser quality than in previous issues, and also that the price has been raised to 20p. We feel that perhaps we should explain why these changes have occurred, and why this issue has been so long delayed.

Some time ago, the membership of Red Action took a decision that we needed a monthly paper, and that we would attempt to publish one as soon as was practicable. The thing which governs how often it is practical to publish a paper is quite simply money. The economic reality of printing and publishing means that there is no way that you can pay for the cost of a newspaper with what you recover from sales. To break even, you would have to charge a ridiculously high price. This is just as true of all of the big national, dailies and weeklys, as it is of a publication such as ours.

COST

However these papers of course have a means making up the loss between production costs and sales returns, the revenue that they get from advertising. This option has never been open to us. The only way in which we can make it up is through our own funds. For a tiny organisation such as Red Action with no financial resources, this is a heavy burden and is the reason why up until now we have never managed to publish more than once every two months. Quite simply we could not afford to bring it out any more often.

In fact the only reason that we were able to afford it that often, was that we had a friend employed in the printing trade, who was able to undertake to get our type-setting done for us very cheaply, through the back door as it were. Type-setting is where you have your type done on an expensive sophisticated machine which makes it much smaller, neater and easier to read.

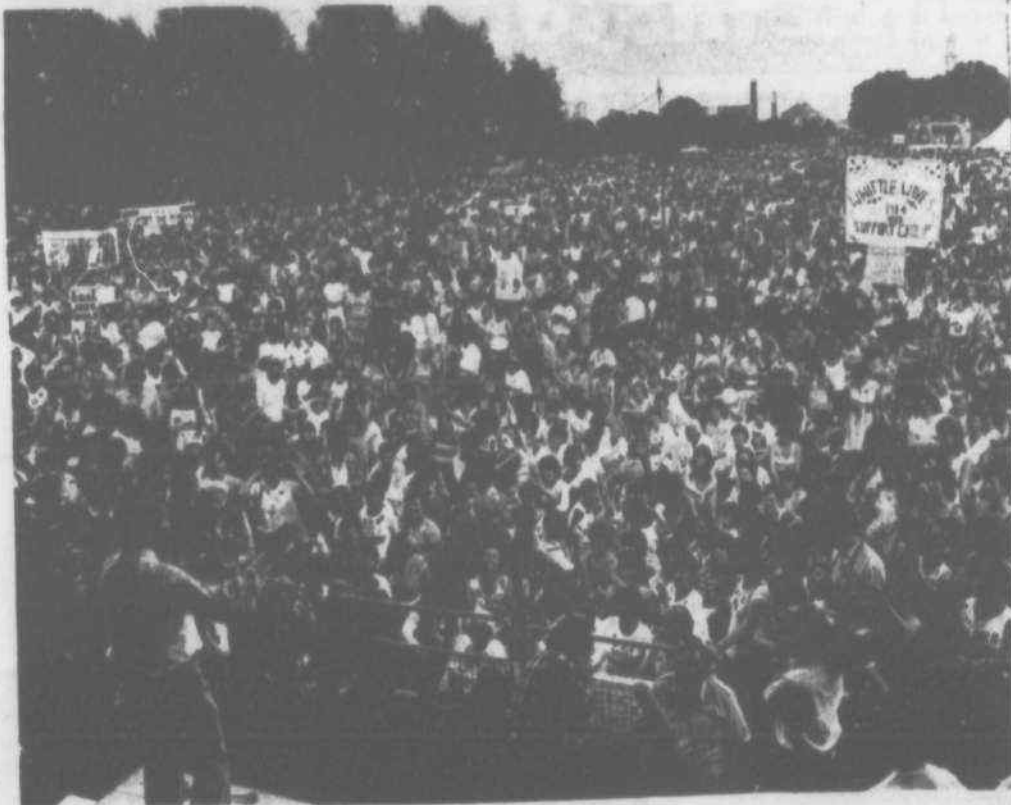
Recently however, he had to inform us that due to pressure of work, he would no longer be able to undertake to get it done for us. Now this put us into something of a dilemma. If we were to start using an ordinary typewriter it would have meant such a drop in quality that we didn't really want to consider it. But if we were to revert to using professional type-setters, the considerable extra costs involved, would have meant that far from moving towards our aim of a monthly paper, we may have even been forced in the other direction, into bringing it out less often. This we were also loath to consider.

OPTION

There was one other option and that was, to get enough money together to buy for ourselves a machine which would give us a type-face of suitable quality. This is what we have done. The one which we have bought while not giving a type as good as that which we previously enjoyed, still gives one which we hope readers will find acceptable.

However even this lesser machine still did not come cheaply. In all we had to raise a sum well into four figures and that is why there has been no Red Action for a while. Because it has taken every penny that we have been able to raise in that time, to pay for the new machine. We have also been faced with a considerable rise in printing costs and with these added on to all the other extra costs, it was felt that we really had little option, but to reluctantly raise the price of the paper.

Now that we have finally got it all sorted out, we hope that we can in the new year, start to bring our paper out on a regular monthly basis. Please remember that it will still make a considerable net loss, and we are always grateful for all and any financial assistance that we get from you our readers.



AND THE ONLY WAY TO GET ANYTHING BACK.

AID PARADE

One of the more surprising trends to have emerged in 1985, has been the great rush - especially amongst the rich and famous - to enter into all sorts of activities on behalf of others less fortunate than themselves. I refer of course, to the seemingly endless succession of "Aid" events, it all began of course last Christmas with "Band Aid" and their somewhat ambitious call to "Feed the World". This was to culminate in the massively celebrated "Live Aid" show, the success of which was to prompt the appearance of "Aid" shows of every description. Even the world of high fashion got in on the act with "Fashion Aid" Thames TV devoted a whole 24 hour "Telethon" programme to raising money for deprived children.

Now events such as these can often provoke extremely opposite opinions as to their merits. On one hand, you have those who see in them nothing but the milk of human kindness. Another more cynical view is that events such as these, are little more than publicity, jamborees, for rich well fed superstars to publicly display their questionable "concern" for the poor of the world.

WHORTHWHILE

In all probability, there are those who's interest in these events centres more around themselves than it does around the starving in Africa. Yet even with this in mind it would be wrong to dismiss them completely. The desire and willingness to help those less fortunate than yourself is still a worthwhile aim, even when it is dressed up in all of the hype and bull shit that surrounds the "Aid" bashes.

Red Action as a movement is always quick to point out the superiority of imperfect action over perfect theory in the political sense. By the same standard we would have to accept, that at this moment in time, Live Aid, for all of it's imperfections, is doing more to actually feed hungry people, than any

amount of our "perfect" ideas.

And yet even after admitting this, we can still be critical of Live Aid. We can quite fairly criticise for the way that they (1) Mislead people into thinking that problems such as famine and poverty can be solved by charity, and (2) The way in which they divert attention away from those who are really responsible.

For example, the "Live Aid show at Wembley, reputedly raised some 50 million pounds for charity. This sounds great, until you remember that while everyone was dancing away to the music, surplus grain - that is grain which cannot be sold and for which there is no practical use - to the value of THREE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY FIVE MILLION POUNDS was laying useless in British storehouses.

That was only one year surplus. It will be repeated again and again year after year. What use is a one off concert, however well organised, in the face of this. By all means organise a concert to get thousands of people together, and make them aware of the plight of the hungry. But instead of just giving them a night of music, how much better



to take the opportunity to hammer home facts like this and arouse their anger. How much better, if instead of just watching everyone go their own way at the end of the night, you tried to organise them into mass demonstrations outside of the storehouses, to call on the government to send the grain where it could be of some use.

WHO KNOWS, IT MIGHT EVEN HAVE EMBARRASSED THEM ENOUGH TO HAVE HAD SOME EFFECT.

Another good example of how these events take, the onus away from the guilty, was seen during Thames TV's 24 hour "telethon" for deprived children. You had comedian Lenny Henry taking the viewers around all of these youth clubs and projects for disabled kids, telling us what a good job they do. He then added almost as an afterthought, "but of course places like this have been very badly hit by government cutbacks, so it's up to us to make sure, that they get enough, so that they can keep doing their good work".

Well why the hell should it be up to "us"? Why the hell should working class people, many of whom get barely enough to get by on themselves, be made to feel that somehow it is their responsibility?

It is the government who are responsible for the fact that so many services find themselves faced with the prospect of having to close down. The same government that was able to instantly find BILLIONS of pounds when it came to fighting the Falklands war, and making sure that the miner's strike was defeated, but then claims

poverty when it comes to finding a few thousands needed to keep open a home for spastic kids.

Lenny Henry and others, no doubt mean well, but they would be far better off, using the platform that their fame brings them, to shout out to people just exactly what the Tories are doing to the social services of this country than they do, by trying, to emotionally blackmail some poor old age pensioner into sending their last five or ten pounds.

That is why in the final analysis, you won't find many socialist militants going overboard about "Live Aid" or any of them. Because in one way, they are actually doing Thatcher's work for her. Ever since she has been in power, she has been trying to convince people that we must get away from the idea that services and health etc are the states responsibility. She would no doubt be delighted, to next year scrap the National Health Service and to leave the medical care of all those not covered by BUPA in the hands of a benevolent scheme funded by concerts organised by Bob Geldof.

TREND

In a year, maybe two, "Live Aid" will be just another, finished trend. But there will still be millions of hungry people, and food to feed, them will still go to waste. No rock concert however big, will ever change that. The only thing that will is a total restructuring of the economic system. That is why we say quite unashamedly, that the only real hope for ever, being able to "Feed the world" is in the ideas and actions of socialists, and the world wide socialist republic that they will one day found.

BOOK 'EM IN

A Red Action member recently received a letter from, someone that he had met on one of our previous trips to Belfast. Unfortunately the letter came from Crumlin Road jail as the person in question has been arrested in one of the recent supergrass roundups. One of the points raised in the letter was the total lack of any decent reading material, or as he puts it himself "it's a strict choice between Xavier Hollander and J.T. Edson". Anyone unfortunate enough to have experience of the British prison system will know exactly what he means. He also points out what a waste of opportunity it is because "with 23 hours a day in the cell, it's an opportunity to get my head to some much needed serious political reading. There's plenty of us in here who could do with it.

LEARNING

It is often correctly pointed out, that throughout history prisons have been the "universities of revolution". Many great and famous revolutionaries, finding themselves faced with the enforced idleness of prison, have used the time to learn the lessons contained in the writings of other revolutionaries, and in doing so equip themselves better for future struggles.

Now many of you reading this article, especially those that have been active on the left for some time, will in the course of that activity, have accumulated a large collection of books, pamphlets etc etc. Many of these probably haven't even been read for years. They are doing no good to anyone. Well now is your chance to put them to some constructive use. Give them to us, and we will assure you that they will end up in the Crumlin Rd jail, for the enjoyment and benefit of some dedicated revolutionaries.

CONTRIBUTE

So start gathering them now. Not only purely political stuff, anything that is a decent read. Historical fiction and novels etc. Show your solidarity and support for the revolutionary freedom fighters of Ireland, and know that in a small way, you are contributing to the strengthening of the revolutionary movement in this corner of the world. Send them to us as soon as possible or if the postage is too expensive, get in touch with us and we will arrange to have them collected. Get cracking now.



THE FOOD OF THE REVOLUTION

A DIFFERENT HUNGER

A different hunger is a book written by A. Sivanandan. No doubt many of you reading this will never have heard of him. In fact he is director of the Institute of Race Relations and in the sixties, was responsible for removing it from the hands of the liberals and moderates who had previously controlled it. Today, although he is renowned in the black sections of the revolutionary movement, he is little known outside of these and intellectual circles.

Sivanandan himself while certainly an intellectual is equally certainly no liberal as a reading of his book clearly shows. The first chapter entitled "From Resistance to Rebellion", tells the story of black people's, struggles in Britain, from the end of the second world war up to the riots/rebellions of 1981. It shows how leading black militants, have modelled themselves on lessons learnt from third world struggles. It also shows how both tory and Labour governments, have used migrant black labour when the economy has needed them, and then passed racist legislation when it hasn't.

Another chapter, which looks at the strike by the mainly Asian workforce, at the Grunwick film processing plant in 1977, shows how racism operates in the trade union movement.

Other parts of the book give a wider understanding

of how capitalism in Britain creates a climate for racism to take root in the working class. How in fact the state encourages working class people to divide and turn against each other, so as to exploit them again and, again finding new lies and tactics at each turn. It shows how the Labour Party has as much to be ashamed of in the case of black people, as it does in the case of Ireland. As far as the Irish and black people are concerned, they have been no better than the Tories.

Most of all, the book, shows that there is more to combatting racism, than physically confronting fascists on the streets. We all have to confront racism wherever it appears - at work in the, on the football terraces. Sivanandan shows how that racism is part and parcel of all the institutions of the modern state.

A Different Hunger by A. Sivanandan. Published by Pluto press £3.95p.

LOCK-OUT

On Friday 18th of October seven building workers, all members of the building union UCATT were sacked from a building site in Surbiton operated by the John Laing building group. They were sacked because they had attempted to organise, on site, for the most basic conditions of employment, and because some of them were known trade union activists. They were also blacklisted which means that their names and insurance numbers are put on a list of known militants kept by all of the large building employers, making it extremely difficult for them to find work in the future.

However these men are not taking it laying down. They have organised to fight back, and the dispute has been made official by the union. They have also spread the dispute to other John Laing sites at Surbiton, Hammersmith and Earls Court. The pickets at these sites are now beginning to achieve no small measure of success. At the Tooting and Surbiton sites the majority of site deliveries have been stopped, and at Earls Court, deliveries of concrete, so vital to the continued running of a large building site, have been severely disrupted.

ASSISTANCE

If this can be maintained, there is every chance that these men can win this dispute, but to keep it up, there are two things that they need above all others. The first is assistance with picketing. It is quite obvious that there is no way that seven of them can possibly cover four building sites so widely spread apart. They need help, and have been getting it, but more is still needed. The other thing that they need is financial assistance. This they have also been receiving from sources such as collections at other sites and factories, and from student unions. But again more is always needed. Seven families take a hell of a lot of feeding.

If you can help these men in any way then get in touch with them. Their address is THE LOCK OUT COMMITTEE, C/O 135 HAYWARD GARDENS, LONDON SW15. (tel 789 8283) These few men have courageously stood up to fight against one of the largest building employers in the country. It is up to other workers to see that they are not left on their own against them.

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.

Also available: Red Action badges and T-shirts. Badges, 20p each. T-shirts, £3.50. When ordering please state, whether, small, medium or large.

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

ANTI FASCIST ACTION

In July of this year, some 250 people attended a conference held at the Conway Hall in London. The conference had been organised by a number of groups involved in anti racist and anti fascist activity, with the aim of trying to begin, to rebuild the sort of united anti fascist movement that had been missing since the demise of the Anti Nazi League. The growing need for such a movement, was a point stressed by several speakers, especially in a situation such as today, when we are witnessing an ever increasing level of racial harassment and attacks, including firebombings which have killed people. These attacks are certainly inspired by, and quite possibly the active work of, supporters of the fascist movement in this country.

At the end of the meeting it was agreed by most of those present that there did seem to be some basis for future unity, and the following resolution was put to, and accepted by the conference.

"This conference sees the need to build an Anti Fascist Front, of groups willing to combat fascist activity in this country. We see the need to oppose racism, and fascism, physically on the streets, and ideologically. We support the right of ethnic minority groups, and groups under threat, to organise for their physical self defence, and see the need for us, to organise in their support. This grouping should be organised on non-sectarian and democratic lines, with equal representation for all groups involved".

The next step taken was to organise a smaller meeting consisting of two representatives from each group to discuss and plan for the future development of the grouping. This "delegate meeting" decided that the grouping would be called "Anti Fascist Action". It also decided to elect a smaller "steer-

ing committee" of eight people, to deal with the day to day running of the group.

Since then Anti Fascist Action has organised its first political mobilisation. This was on the 10th November and was a counter demonstration to the National Front's Remembrance Day march from Bressendon Place in Victoria, to the Cenotaph. It was decided that the AFA demonstration would rally in Bressendon Place the same place where the Front were intending to gather but some time before them. The intention was to at worst, disrupt their plans a bit and at best, perhaps even stop them marching. As the AFA meeting place and time had been publicly advertised, a number of stewards met earlier, and travelled to Bressendon Place together, to ensure that there was sufficient numbers to repel any possible attack.

The wisdom of this move was soon proved. Shortly after they arrived, a group of, fascists who had quite obviously planned to stage some sort of attack, appeared at the end of the road. Probably noticing that there were police present, they then approached the anti fascists,

but stopped a few yards away and just stood there uttering threats. The police moved them on. The view of the AFA stewards was that our first aim should be to remain occupying the area in which the Front had declared their intention to assemble. As the day wore on it became quite clear that we could hope to do little more than that. The AFA turn out of about three hundred, while quite good for a first mobilisation was still dwarfed by the surprisingly high Front turn-out, variously reported as being between twelve and fifteen hundred. More than enough.

FUTURE

As far as the future of Anti Fascist Action is concerned, it does appear that the potential to begin to rebuild a broad based, anti fascist movement does exist. The amount of interest and response from groups, all around the country has been surprisingly high, and has covered all shades of left wing opinion. One of the most encouraging things about the Bressendon Place mobilisation, was the number of different and diverse political groupings that were involved, always a healthy sign.

That is not to say that there are no potential difficulties ahead. The bringing together under one umbrella of groups from different political backgrounds is, never a simple task. There has been one decision taken that we in Red Action strongly disagree with, and that was



a decision taken by the steering committee, and supported by a delegate meeting to refuse the affiliation of one particular group. The reasons given for this were certain allegations against this group. We consider, that (1) these allegations are unproved, and therefore it was wrong to take any action on the basis of, them and (2) neither the steering, nor the delegate meeting were empowered by the conference, to act in this way.

IMPORTANT

We believe that it is very important for the healthy future development of Anti Fascist Action, that a full conference is called as soon as possible, to hopefully reverse this decision, and to define more clearly the powers of the representative bodies.

NATIONAL MEETING

On Saturday the 2nd of November, a Red Action national meeting was held in London. National meetings are where we try and bring together all of our members and supporters from around country, to discuss Red Action's development and progress and to make the decisions that will affect its political direction and future.

The meeting was not as well attended as we might have hoped and was noticeably composed mostly of those from the Southeast and London. However this was probably more the fault of ourselves than those absent. We agreed that in future we would need to be better organised and make sure that all members and supporters everywhere were kept fully informed of all arrangements in good enough time to ensure their attendance.

ted that the paper was now being sold in over thirty different towns and cities. This was welcomed as a sign of good progress. The meeting was also given a report of the developments that should enable us to launch Red Action as a monthly publication. This was also seen as a welcome and necessary step forward.

The content and style of the paper was then discussed. Several speakers raised the point that Red Action had managed to establish a unique style of writing, that managed to combine political integrity with humour and honesty without becoming sensationalist or patronising, a fate that so often befalls left wing publications. It was strongly stressed that this is something that we must strive to maintain at all costs.

On that point the morning session was concluded. The afternoon session opened by a guest speaker from the Laings lock our strike committee who told us the story of their dispute. A collection was then held for the strikers.

Following this the meeting went on to discuss Anti-Fascist Action, on which a report appears elsewhere in this paper. This was then followed by the election or re-election of all Red Action officers.

EXPERIENCE

The general feeling was that the meeting had been a very worthwhile exercise. Although, as already stated, the attendance was possibly a bit lower than it might have been, it was good to see new faces from the Lancaster and Nottingham areas, the latter of which have now formed a new Red Action branch. The level of political experience evident was noticeably higher than in previous times and is obviously the reward for much effort over the last four years. The level of confidence was also high and this coupled with the recent behind the scenes developments would suggest that Red Action have every reason to view the future with optimism. (A full report of this meeting will be available to all members and supporters in the next issue of the Red Action newsletter.)

DISCUSSION

The early part of the meeting concentrated on discussing the political situation today and how a group such as Red Action could best relate to it. A view put forward and unopposed was that we are now in a period where as the political weaknesses of the larger more established far left groups become more and more apparent, more small "splinter" groups such as Red Action will be appearing. At least three such groups have formed in the last two or three years. In this situation the speaker maintained, the most important thing was to strive to try and achieve unity in action. The emergence of Anti Fascist Action was given as an example of what could be achieved by this form of activity.

The next issue discussed was Red Action's own development. It was generally accepted that Red Action had now reached a stage where we should be looking to build groups of members and supporters all around the country. One speaker pointed out that it was time that we defined and articulated our own political positions much more clearly. This would greatly help us develop more widely. The meeting agreed that we would publish a pamphlet entitled "The Politics of Red Action" as soon as possible.

Moving into discussion on Red Action's newspaper, the view was put forward that while the appearance of a pamphlet was a welcome step forward the main means of building Red Action nationally would still be the newspaper. The national newspaper organiser repor-

USED AND ABUSED

There's one thing that you have to say about the British establishment, and that is they certainly love a hero. The latest recipient of the star treatment, is former Private David Jones. He is the soldier who survived a terrible burning, during the bombing of the "Sir Galahad" during the Falkland's war. Now up to operations later and still hideously scarred, he has fought his way back to a level of fitness, and in recognition of his tenacity, he was recently named as one of Britain's seven "Men of the Year".

As you would expect the press had a field day with this story, and he was very soon featured in all of the papers, with guest appearances on TV programmes such as "Wogan" soon to follow.

At the same time, there was another story concerning wounded soldiers, which didn't receive quite the same level of publicity. This one concerned some of the Royal Green Jackets, who were wounded and crippled in an IRA bomb blast in Hyde Park four years ago.

CELEBRITIES

At that time these men were also celebrities, with all of the usual tributes to their bravery, and even a personal visit while in hospital from Margaret Thatcher. However the reason that they are in the news this time, is because they are complaining that they haven't been receiving disablement benefits due to them.

In fact this story tells us much about true attitude of Thatcher and her friends towards those that they send to do their dirty work for them. Glowing praise in the newspapers, and hospital bedside visits may be all very well as far as keeping up the public image and recruitment figures goes, but in reality they are nothing but the basest hypocrisy. The concern of Thatcher and her friends for their minions, extends only as far as to how they can best use them to attain their political ends.

Over 200 servicemen's lives could have been saved, and numerous injuries avoided, if the government had negotiated the settlement

that was a distinct possibility before the sinking of the Argentinian ship "Belgrano".

But Thatcher and her friends were determined to force an armed settlement because they wanted to bask in the reflected glory of armed conquest. Safely back in England 6,000 miles away from the blood and fire Thatcher preened herself and Sun Journalists in comfortable offices wrote their bloodthirsty editorials while young working class men were being blown to bits to boost their egos.

In reality, Thatcher and her kind care no more about the fate of their lackeys than we do. They are nothing more than tools, usefull bits of machinery, used while useful, and then thrown away when broken or worn out.

THE TRAGEDY IS THAT SO MANY WORKING CLASS KIDS FALL FOR IT.



NO FREE STATE

Without doubt, one of the most courageous and inspiring stories of 1985, has been the series of uprisings by black African people, against the racist government of South Africa, and the Apartheid system that it operates. Daily, until the banning, of the international press from the area of trouble, our television screens were filled with pictures of unarmed black people, many of them no more than school children, defiantly fighting back in any way that they can, against one of the most heavily armed and brutal state forces in the world. It is a struggle that, has seen hundreds of them killed, and many more imprisoned.

REPRESSION

Even faced with all of these disadvantages, the force of the rebellion has been such as to shake the stability of the South African state to the very core. Faced with this, the S.A. government has responded with the only methods it understands. Brutality and repression, followed by more brutality and repression. Some of the powers given to the police under the state of emergency declared in October, seem scarcely believable. One section gives them the power to arrest anyone at any time whether they have committed any offence or not. Another states that no policeman can be brought to trial, for any alleged offence against a black person. This is quite simply a licence for the police to kill with impunity, and they have not been slow to take advantage of it.

In the face of this blatant suppression of even the most elementary human and civil rights, other Western governments of a supposedly more "liberal" nature, have been forced to come out with strong condemnations of the S.African government. In all of these countries, there have been strong calls for economic sanctions to be imposed.

The British government has strongly resisted this call. Sanctions they argue, will in fact harm black people more than they help them, by hitting the firms that employ them. They also argue that the imposition of sanctions would stiffen the resistance of the S.African government to reforms.

The most simple answer to question of who would suffer by sanctions is to look at S.Africa, and see who it is, who are actually calling for them. It is of course the black people themselves. They are quite aware that the limited hardship that some of them might suffer as a result of sanctions, counts for nothing when measured against the overall suffering of black people caused by the Apartheid system, and they will support anything and they will support anything that attacks it.

INVESTMENTS

In fact the sanctions that are being asked for are very limited ones and would not have a massive effect on the S.African economy, but the British government is still unwilling to apply them. The reason is not very difficult to find. Britain has +11 billion pounds invested in S.Africa and annual exports there total +1.2 billion. There are 250,000 jobs riding on these investments, and there are 300,000 potential immigrants, entitled to enter Britain if the regime there is toppled. It is this which makes Thatcher so desperate to overstate any reforms in S.Africa, and to join in with Botha in calling for the preservation of law and order. Because the British government too, are terrified of the forces by which Apartheid is being made to crack.



BARCLAYS BANK ONE OF SOUTH AFRICA'S BIGGEST INVESTORS

We might not be able to watch it on the telly, but the mass struggle against tyranny and racism in S. Africa is unstoppable and will deliver victory sooner or later. When it does, it will have little to do with the sanctions of western governments and everything to do with the revolutionary struggle of black African revolutionaries.

THE FLYING COLUMN

The shock and outrage of the press after the allegations of torture by the defendants in the recent Spy Trial deserves closer examination. Typical of the reaction was the pious Guardian editorial which anguished over "extremely disquieting details" about the treatment of the accused and the reasons for them signing confessions. Just what we would expect from the fair minded liberal Guardian but somewhat different from their reaction to allegations of similar treatment being dished out by the British Army to suspects in Ireland back in 1971. The Guardian editorial then proclaimed that "vigorous and tough interrogation must go on... Discomfort of the kind recalled in the report, leaving no physical damage, cannot be measured against the number of lives which will be lost if the security forces do not get a continuing flow of information. Some of the victims of this "vigorous and tough interrogation" none of whom were subsequently convicted of any offence, were left with permanent physical damage, and by 1978 the government had had to pay out over two hundred thousand pounds in compensation to fourteen of them.

"I'm not really a political advisor, any government that relied on me for political advice would not be in power for long". A quote in 1982 from Lord Young, recently appointed Employment Secretary. Let's hope that it's a self fulfilling prophecy.

Insurance companies, most of whom make five figure donations to the Tories are among those who stand to gain most from the government's plans to abolish the State Earnings Related Pension Scheme. The day that the green paper on this issue was published, insurance company shares rose sharply on the Stock Exchange. Mind you that's probably just coincidence.

Gareth Pierce a solicitor who represented some of the miners cleared of riot charges arising from incidents during the strike recently claimed in a national newspaper, that film taken at the "Battle of Orgreave" and seen by millions on the news had been tampered with before it was shown. She claimed that film of miners stoning police who were charging them on horseback had been shown in reverse order to make it appear that the miners were the aggressors, thus justifying the police "retaliation". Is this what they mean by editorial freedom.

The Health Minister Mr Kenneth Clarke was recently booted off of the stage during the World Congress of Mental Health when he very unthinkingly referred to a constant heckler as a "crackpot".

RED ACTION IN ACTION

Red Action played a full role in helping to organise the Anti Fascist conference in London, which laid the foundation for the formation of Anti Fascist Action. In response to information received that the fascists were mobilising in order to try and smash the conference, a large stewarding operation was organised in which Red Action was well represented. In the event their services were not required as the 30 or so that the fascists managed to mobilise were stopped by the police from getting near the hall, which in view of the highly successful turnout there was probably very fortunate for them. Thus deterred, about half of the fascists made their way to Kings Cross Station where they hoped to pick off a group that they knew would be returning from the conference in that direction. Unfortunately for them our information was again in front of them, and they suddenly found themselves confronted by a group of anti fascists three or four times their number. Faced with this situation, they not surprisingly made a very quick retreat.

Red Action members in London organised a benefit gig to raise money for the National Organisation of Miners in Prison and supporters. This is an organisation founded to campaign on behalf, and care for the interests, of all the miners who are now in prison as a result of the strike. Not surprisingly, they have received little publicity or support from the higher echelons of the Labour movement. The gig featuring the Neurotics was a great success over two hundred pounds being raised after expenses. The address of N.O.M.P.A.S. is 5 Caledonian Road, Kings Cross, London N1 9DX.

A social held in the "Chieftan" pub in Welwyn Garden city raised over three hundred pounds for Red Action funds. Our warmest thanks to all those who attended a very enjoyable evening, with special thanks to the "ferrets" who organised, the whole thing. Nice one.

Red Action members and supporters travelled to Kent to attend a bank holiday festival organised by the Kent area NUM, under the title "Mines not missiles". This was only the second year that this event had been organised, and if it continues it may well become one of the more enjoyable political events in this country.

Red Action members and supporters travelled to Belfast to participate in the annual anti internment commemoration. This is a large republican demonstration held every year, on the anniversary of the night in 1971, when British troops descended upon nationalist areas in Belfast and Derry, arrested 342 men and held them for months without charge or trial. As always the trip was an enjoyable and eye-opening experience. Our warmest thanks to the members of the Irish Republican Socialist Party for their hospitality.

A recent suggestion by education "mandarins" that it might be a good idea if the school leaving age was lowered, from sixteen to fourteen was quickly dropped. However it serves as a good indication of the way in which they are currently thinking. Witness this quote from a similar source. "There has to be selection because we are beginning to create aspirations which society cannot match... If we have a highly educated and idle population, we may possibly anticipate more serious social conflict. People must be educated once more to know their place". Apart from the fact that this is no more than a blatant call for the reversing of the social and economic progress of the last forty years, it also shows quite clearly what they really think about the prospects of economic recovery.

Enoch Powell Unionist MP for South Down in Ireland, is well known for his opinion that immigrants are responsible for all of Britain's problems and that the solution is to repatriate them all to their "countries of origin". I wonder does this mean that he would be prepared to endorse a similar solution to the problems of his own constituency?

The people who know about these things have sent in a report about a "nostalgic Confrontation" at a market in North London. Apparently a group of anti fascists local to the area came across a member of the National Front directorate who was conducting a street paper sale with a dozen others, mostly skinheads. He asked the price of the paper. "15p" came the treacherous reply. He then enquired about a back issue, which reputedly contained "hurtful and disparaging" remarks about a certain political organisation. The fascist merely twitched and again croaked "15p". However this novel low key approach could not last and sure enough the inevitable fracas ensued, only to be prematurely terminated, by the impending arrival of the federales. Next time though no more Mr Nice Guy.

ROUGH JUSTICE

A recent "World in Action" programme on ITV raised some grave doubts about the evidence used to convict six supposed "IRA" men, for the Birmingham pub bombings in 1975. The programme showed how forensic tests used to prove that the men had handled explosives could have achieved exactly the same results if they had handled perfectly innocent substances. It also offered strong evidence to show that statements made by the men, which along with the tests formed the basis of the case against them, had been extracted by police brutality.

These revelations will come as no surprise to anyone who has taken any interest in Irish affairs in recent years. In this, the IRA have repeatedly stated that not only the Birmingham six, but also eleven other people convicted of "IRA" offences, are totally innocent and have no connection at all with the IRA. These include the four people convicted for the bombing of the Hare and Hounds pub in Guildford and also the Maguire family, who allegedly ran a bomb factory in their home.

These statements should not be taken lightly. The IRA are well aware that as a guerilla army they are entirely dependent for their survival on the trust and support of the community from which they come. In order to maintain this trust they have to be honest at all times, even admitting actions that might bring discredit to them. In this way they know that people will believe them when they deny those things which are attributed to them but which they are not responsible for.

For this reason, it is extremely unlikely that they would lie about the innocence of these people. Some of them were convicted, in

the same way as the Birmingham six by dubious forensic evidence. In the case of the Maguire family this was made even more bizarre by the fact that the "expert" who conducted the test had no previous experience in this field, and that he destroyed the evidence afterwards thereby stopping anyone else from being able to test his results and conclusions. Four members of the Maguire family were given sentences of up to fourteen years imprisonment.

In the case of the Guildford pub bombing the injustice was made even more blatant by the fact that another group of people, the IRA unit captured in the Balcombe Street siege, gave an account of the operation detailed enough to prove their involvement.

All of these people were victims. Victims of the hysteria which the IRA's campaigns caused, and of the desperation of the legal system to find any convenient scapegoat to blame for them. Their continued presence in jail is a daily testimony to the injustice of the supposedly wonderful British legal system.



A Red Action member approached by a collector from "One World" charity put his hand in his pocket and then appearing to hesitate enquired "I've read that some of the money from these collections goes towards buying guns for the blacks in South Africa, is that true?" "Absolutely not sir" replied the collector, confidently rattling his tin. "Too bad" said the Red Action member declining his outstretched hand "that's what they need."

The government wants to abolish wage councils so that low paid workers can be forced to take even lower wages. This they believe, will somehow encourage employers to employ more people. Is this in fact the case. I quote. "Where you have no party of bargaining, the good employer is undercut by the bad and the bad by the worse. Where these conditions prevail, you have not a condition of progress, but a condition of progressive degeneration. Is this a quote from Marx, Lenin? A Red Action editorial perhaps? No, just Winston "We'll fight them on the beaches" Churchill.

Riding on the crest of the anti commie anti foreigner wave tapped by the success of Rambo, Sylvester Stallone's opponent in Rocky 4 is not surprisingly a Russian. The belated patriotic mumbling of Stallone is a bit hard to swallow when you consider that during the Vietnam war he opted, quite understandably, to spend his time teaching in a private girls school in Switzerland. By the way, when you saw the first extreme close up of Rambo's oiled and pulsating arm what did you think it was. I was wrong as well, but it still seems an appropriate description of the star of the movie.

In 1979 Margaret Thatcher succeeded in giving a lot of people the impression that she intended cutting taxes and that was one of the main reasons why she was elected. However, according to the latest calculations of the Institute of Fiscal (money to you and me) studies, only 6% of the population are actually better off as a result of tax and benefit changes, and they tend to be those who were richest to start with. 87% are undeniably worse off. The reality of the Tory tax policy, is that it assumes that the rich work harder if they are paid more, but the poor work harder if they are paid less.

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 feudal 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 butter 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 machines or workforce would be eliminated. When all resources are used in social 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 society all of the institutions of social control—army, police, 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—labour, 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 politics within the new regimes have led them to adopt the wrong politics. 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 ruled 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 invade 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 content 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-sectional 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 these 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.