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CENSORSHIP : IRELAND
SPANISH REVOLUTION

CLASS WAR

Readmitted to AFA

ON 31 MAY 1986, a delegate meeting of Anti-Fascist Action considered a report of the actual evidence that Class War has fascist connections, and promptly lifted the suspension of Class War from the organization. The meeting also accepted a recommendation that any such allegations against an AFA affiliate in future should be investigated *immediately*, 'so that months of doubt, bad feeling, and suspicion can be avoided'.

Class War was suspended from AFA in October 1985, following two articles by David Rose in *The Guardian*, alleging that Class War was more or less a front organization for the National Front. Most of the information for these articles came from the anti-fascist journal *Searchlight*. Class War's suspension was ratified at the National AFA Conference in February, by a two-thirds majority (about 170 for to 80 against), and some 70 delegates and observers walked out talking of a 'witch-hunt'. The conference then set up a commission of enquiry, consisting of Geoff Robinson and John Penney, to consider the evidence and recommend whether or not Class War should be expelled.

The nine allegations against Class War, and (in brief summary) the findings, are

1. *Leading members of CW had been members of the National Front.*
No evidence.
2. *CW allowed racist and sexist articles to*

appear in its publications.

The *Guardian* articles quoted from a piece written by a 15-year-old in the CW publication *Angry*, '... the anti-white sentiments of the Caucasian guilt-ridden middle-class extreme left, constantly bombarding us with dogmas about the rights of coloured immigrants'. AFA would have to judge how seriously to treat CW's proclamation of its spotless anti-racist credentials. But there is no evidence of any pattern of racist articles; this is the only example.

3. *CW members have been overheard to make racist remarks.*
No evidence.

4. *CW acted as police agents provocateurs on demonstrations.*

Some of their actions may have been tactically inadvisable, but there is no evidence they were acting under police instruction.

5. *CW members made Nazi salutes on demonstrations.*

Sarcastically, not as a show of fascist sympathies.

6. *CW tolerated an NF presence on events like Stop the City.*

The evidence the NF were there is only in an NF publication. No evidence CW knew about it or would have tolerated it.

7. *Racist fanzines were distributed from CW premises.*

CW uses, but does not control, premises in Wapping shared by many. A racist fanzine was distributed there but had nothing to do with CW.

8. *CW members or supporters harrassed, burgled, and racially abused premises and personnel of the African Refugees Housing Action Group.*

Before the house was allocated to ARHAG it had been squatted by young people who included peripheral supporters of CW. The squatters were evicted and squabbled with the tenants; they would have squabbled whoever the tenants were. CW protests that their readers would never go in for racial abuse, but CW's anarchism and anti-racism were less clearly stated then than they have been recently, and they cannot be sure what their periphery was doing. Now CW has published its manifesto, peripheral racists will soon drift off.

9. *CW members were involved in attacks on the Mushroom bookshop in Nottingham.*

The quarrel at Mushroom bookshop has nothing to do with this enquiry.

In sum there are a few criticisms of Class War, but the group and publication which comes really badly out of the investigation is *Searchlight*.

Searchlight gave the naive David Rose the material for his articles, then took a leading role in attacks on Class War at AFA delegate meetings and the AFA conference. But when asked to supply evidence to a formally constituted enquiry, they came up with nothing at all. The report says, 'We are bemused by *Searchlight*'s role in this affair.'

