

RED ACTION (SCOTLAND)

GOVAN - IWCA TERRITORY?

Events in Govan where there has been a battle over the labour candidate for the area - between labour lefty, Mike Watson and millionaire Muslim, Mohammed Sarwar - have focused national attention on the seat. With Sarwar's candidacy being hailed as potentially creating the first Muslim MP in Britain, this could be the perfect launch pad for the IWCA in Scotland.

The constituency is very mixed with a predominantly Asian (Pakistani) community around Pollockshields and Cessnock and, by way of contrast, the deprived, predominantly white, scheme of Penilee at the other end of the constituency (an area where Sheridan and Militant were literally run out of, by the BNP a couple of years ago). Central Govan itself boasts two republican flute bands and three of the strongest loyalist pubs in the city. Add to that, the fact that Rangers' Ibrox Park is also in the constituency (the only regular public sale of fascist literature takes place here) and it provides a pretty strong argument for the IWCA (Scotland) to cut it's teeth here. Add to all of this the fact that the seat has twice in the last 25 years gone in by-elections to the SNP (Labour won it back at the last general election) it has practically every nuance possible. The only thing that Govan doesn't have is a working class alternative to the careerists that have fed off the area for years.

The Scottish National Party will undoubtedly gain from Labour's apparent U-turn on Devolution and will be the biggest threat to labour retaining the seat. The situation could be further complicated if the BNP decide to stand. The possibility cannot be ruled out given the mileage that they might get from an anti-Sarwar campaign in a constituency that is assured of national media attention. With two fascist organisers resident in the area, the presence at Ibrox and loyalist sympathisers, even a token candidate is a possibility. Whilst this is a scenario that we do not hope for, it would only add weight to the arguments of the IWCA.

Govan's neighbouring constituency is Sheridan's 'Militant stronghold' of Pollock. Apart from having the potential of providing us with light relief during the campaign, some well planned, 'cross-border raids' in terms of propaganda runs (stickers and posters) might prove fruitful. Not only will we have the potential of cutting the *New Labour* vote, we might even manage to affect the *Militant Labour* vote as well! At any rate, the last thing that Militant will expect is an alternative from the IWCA aimed at working class people.

It may be that the IWCA will have to pick particular areas like Penilee and Central Govan as the key areas to contest (politically, rather than electorally) and initial plans to poster and sticker the area in a 'test run' are under way. Red Action will also have to sound out our contacts among the local republicans as this is a project that requires strong local input - politically and physically, where necessary. They will also have the necessary local knowledge of the issues that most affect their community. In fact, the input of particular members of the local community will be crucial to the success or failure of any campaign. If they don't weigh-in there may be no point in us weighing-in either!

Submitted to IWCA (Scotland) for discussion by Red Action