

Red Action

ISSUE NO. 17

APRIL
MAY

YOU ARE BEING

ROBBED

The ending of the miner's strike has been followed in a matter of weeks by the government attempting to implement change, and what they describe as progress, in another large and until recently, a nationalised industry, the GPO. As with the miners, this can be seen as a direct result of their policy towards the breaking up of all large nationalised industries, the closing down of the least profitable parts of them, and the selling off of the remaining parts to their friends in big business.

The word the Tories use to describe this is privatisation. They say that what they are doing is giving the public a chance to have a stake in such concerns as the GPO.

RUBBISH

Even the most cursory look at what is really happening reveals that this is complete rubbish and hypocrisy. A nationalised industry is already in public ownership. What the Tories are in fact doing, is taking off of the public that of which they own, and offering it back for sale to them. There is a far better word to describe that than privatisation, and that word is *theft*.

What this theft leads to, as we are starting to see in the case of the Post Office, is the erosion of the standards and practices of work that have been established in the industry over long years, as the new owners attempt to make the industry more profitable.

Let us look once again at what has been happening in the coal industry. A year ago, the coal industry was one that could have been described as large and spread out over the whole country, with greatly varying rates of profitability, cost effectiveness, and a large and very well organised Trade Union. An industry such as that, is not one that is the most attractive sort of proposition to an investor.

PROPOSITION

Today after the strike, the government is now in the position to be able to start closing down whichever parts of the industry which it wishes. This will further weaken the power of the NUM, already hampered by the bitterness of the splits and disputes during the strike. The coal industry will today, look a far more attractive proposition to the private investor than it did a year ago.



GREEDY EYES ON SOCIETY'S ASSETS

Knowing the Tories' commitment to privatisation as we do, it would be naive to think anything else than that this is their long term plan for the coal industry, and that one of the main reasons they fought the NUM with such determination was to put themselves in the position to be able to streamline the industry in preparation for this.

As Arthur Scargill and the NUM executive warned all along, their aim will now be to close dozens of the less profitable pits, and there can be little doubt that those left will soon be on offer to the private investor and speculator.

Of course we must remember that speculators and Tories are one and the same thing. When a Tory government sells a national asset to the speculator it is selling it to their friends, associates and relations.

Those that now find themselves in possession of this industry,

which the government has gone to so much trouble to make as profitable as possible for them, also have the added bonus that they find themselves in private possession of the entire solid fuel reserve of large national economy. This of course is a very favourable position to be in, when it comes to say putting up the price that society pays for this fuel. Of course if society cannot pay more for the fuel that it needs to run its economy, then it can always be exported and sold elsewhere where the profits are greater. This of course would seriously damage the British economy, but such are the laws of free enterprise.

This is the reality behind so called privatisation. Beneath the veneer of respectability, it is no more than a con trick whereby a small group of people steal from a whole society one of its most valuable assets. You are being robbed, right now this very minute.

DON'T FORGET THEM NOW

This is the first issue of Red Action to be published since the ending of the miner's strike and we take this, the first opportunity that we have had to pay tribute to their gallant and selfless struggle. The men women and children that took part in this struggle are poor in pocket now. But in time they will realise that they are rich in the knowledge that they took part in a struggle that will be honoured and admired by working class people for generations to come.

The fact that victory was not achieved was in no way the fault of the miners themselves. If the strike could have been won by courage and determination alone, it would have been won a long time ago. The striking miner's have nothing to be ashamed about. The same cannot be said of many others among the working class and it's so called representatives, who when it came to their chance to do something to help the miners, ran behind whatever excuse they could find.

The likes of Kinnoch and Willis will be forever remembered by the miner's for the spinelessness.

The most tragic factor about the eventual outcome of the strike is the fate of the six hundred miners that were dismissed and have not been reinstated. Incredibly they are still being denied the benefits that they are entitled to on the grounds that they are still in dispute.

FUNDS

It is absolutely vital that these people, who were after all among the bravest and most determined of the strikers, should not be left in the lurch. Already the move to impose a levy of all working miners to raise funds for them has been defeated. No doubt many miners will still contribute, but those that have recently returned, will still be suffering severe financial hardship for some time to come and there is no way that it should be left up to them alone. Where ever possible, miner's support groups should try and keep some sort of group together and continue to raise funds for the dismissed men.

This is especially important as there will be people who would be willing to give, but may not be sure how to do so, now that there are no bucket collections.

In Red Action, we intend to continue levying those of our members that are working. If anyone reading this would like to contribute to this cause but does not know how to, you can send your contribution to us, and we will ensure that it is sent to the right place.

The miner's fought their titanic battle not for their own personal gain. They fought it for the whole of the working class. You, me, every single one of us. All have them have paid dearly for this and some have paid very dearly indeed. WE MUST NOT FORGET THEM NOW.



OVER 600
DISMISSED

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

WHY DID THEY LOSE ?

THE BITTER END

It is no coincidence that one of the few unions which does manage to maintain its traditional militancy is the miners union who's members come from traditional working class communities that have changed little over the years.

The miner's strike was without any doubt the most significant political event in this country since the end of the second world war. For the Tories it was the first time since they had been elected in 1979, that both the leadership and the majority of the membership of a major union, had been equally determined to resist their plans to alter the society that we live in. After a long line of easy victories over the likes of the steel workers, health workers, GCHQ etc. at last a group of workers that had some real industrial clout were putting up a fight.

As we now know, that fight was lost, in spite of the struggle that was put up, which in terms of bravery and sacrifice, can only be described as heroic. This could lead to some people, especially those that supported the strike and invested their energy and commitment to it, to become demoralised. This would achieve nothing, and indeed would add to the government's victory. What we should be doing now, is analysing what happened in the strike and why, and learning the lessons of it for the future.

ANY COST

So why did the miners lose instead of winning. Firstly we have to remember that once the government, having provoked the strike in the first place, decided to see it out, and not go for a settlement, they would be willing to pay just about any price, no matter what it cost the economy of the country, just so that they would not be seen to be defeated.

The economic cost of the strike has been estimated at some SIX BILLION POUNDS. That's getting on for something like a thousand pounds for every family in the country. Think of how many families there must be in this country that have never even seen that sort of money at one go, and you get some idea what this cost means.

If the miner's and their leaders made any mistakes in their strategy, it was in not realising that Margaret Thatcher would have taken the whole country into bankruptcy, rather than admit defeat by Arthur Scargill.

You may ask then, what was the point of going on strike at all? If the government was so determined to beat them, was there any way that the miners could have one.

The answer to this is yes, they could have won. They could have won if they had had one thing that was lacking right from the start of the strike, and without which it was ultimately doomed, and that was the real support of the rest of the working class.

It is a plain fact that if the miners had received adequate support from other sections of the organised working class the strike would almost certainly have had a different outcome. The Tories were no doubt aware of this and gambled that this support would not be forthcoming. They were right. From the very start of the strike, the attitude of the working class towards it was one of enthusiastic and committed support from a minority, alongside indifference and apathy from the majority.

SUPPORT

This was seen in nearly all the different levels of supportive action. Whether on the streets collecting money and watching 90 per cent of people walk by without a second glance, or in the potentially far more significant instances where militants and quite a few of the not so few militants, attempted to initiate some sort of supportive industrial action, the response was the same. Apart from a few successes such as train drivers and seamen refusing to move coal measure which the government were able to get



THATCHER! DETERMINED

round, all moves to involve those groups such as the power workers, who's intervention could have had such a dramatically quiet effect on the situation, floundered on the refusal of the majority to take action on the miner's behalf.

The most tragic example of this was the abortive Dockers strike. The decision by the government to use scab labour to unload ore for the Ravenscraig steelworks, gave dockers the perfect excuse to come to the miner's aid. Yet in spite of calls from dock union leaders to strike, and in spite of the efforts of rank and file militants who travelled the length and breadth of the country attempting to put some muscle into the strike call, large numbers of them refused to budge.

We would be deluding ourselves if we were to come to any other conclusion than that the main reason for the defeat of the miners was that the majority of the working class, were proved to be lacking even one tenth of their courage and steadfastness.

USELESS

So what sort of conclusion can we draw from the strike. The first thing we should remember is to avoid becoming too despondent about the outcome. Of course it was an important fight, the loss of which is going to have serious implications for all of us, but we must remember that it was NOT the final battle to build a socialist society. The miner's fight for the right to work, correct as it was, was as long as we are in a capitalist society, ultimately no more than a fight for the right to be robbed and exploited. There will be other battles in the years to come, the results of which will be more far reaching than the miner's strike.

We can also say that the strike showed quite clearly that the steady disintegration of the official labour movement and the TUC as effective and dynamic forces must be very near completion. We have already spoken elsewhere as to why we believe that there was a lack of support for the miners amongst so many of the working class, but

that still left a very significant minority that were totally behind them.

The efforts of the labour and union leaders to try and organise this support effectively was with a few honourable exceptions, nothing short of pathetic.

A perfect example of this was the Christmas Appeal fund. That was launched with a great blaze of publicity and fanfare. The aim, so the organisers claimed was to give every striking miner the same one hundred pounds Christmas bonus as the Coal Board were offering to the miners that returned to work. This would have required raising some £10m, a not altogether impossible task you might think, from a movement that claims around 10m members.

The final total was well under half a million pounds, or less than 5 pence for every trade union member. Niel Kinnock, who earlier on in the strike had talked about raising a 50p weekly levy of Labour party members (and that was the last anyone heard about that) could not even organise his own party to raise a pound a head. In fact a large part of the already pitiful sum, was raised by celebrities such as Wham and The Clash performing free.

From the grand aim of a hundred pounds each, what the miners actually received was one turkey each. That pathetic gesture, just about sums up what the TUC and Labour party did for the miners.

ORGANISE

This of course is meant in no way to belittle the considerable achievement of those individual trade union and labour party members that worked long and hard in their support groups and raised thousands and thousands of pounds. But what we have to ask is, how much more could have been achieved if that sort of energy and commitment, had been mirrored by those that had the power to organise a far higher level of support than the average rank and file member had in his/her power to organise.

The miners strike showed quite clearly that if the working class relies on the official Labour movement to fight its battles for it, it has no chance of winning whatsoever.

If we accept that lack of support from the rest of the working class was one of the main reasons for the defeat of the miners, then the obvious question that we have to ask ourselves is why? Why didn't the rest of the class come to their aid in a battle, in which victory would have been a victory for all of them. On this occasion, we cannot even say that the support was there, but it was sold out by the union leadership. Lorry drivers crossed picket lines in spite of instructions from the union not to do so. The national dock strike over the government moving coal through the docks, was defeated not only by the union leadership selling out, but by the refusal of some rank and file dockers to support the union's strike call.

Most trade union leaders have a very good track record of selling out their members interests when it comes to the crunch, but on this occasion the unwillingness of so many trade unionists, to actually do something positive to assist the miners, meant that the crunch never came. Why?

The most obvious answer to this is that the majority of workers, however sympathetic they may have felt towards the strike, did not see the fight, as their fight as well. They saw it as a fight by the miners against the government, and not as one by the working class as a whole. In short, they lacked class identity or class consciousness.

This lack of consciousness has not always existed. Back in 1926 what started off as a miner's strike, ended up as a general strike of the whole working class (on that occasion the workers were betrayed by their leaders). Even as recently as 1972 and 74 when the last and victorious miner's strikes occurred victory was in no small part due to solidarity action by other workers. In the same period, a situation that threatened to turn into something approaching a general strike, forced the release of 5 dockers who had been jailed under anti trade union legislation. Can you imagine that today.

SO WHERE HAS ALL THE SOLIDARITY GONE.

Trying to answer this question, and more importantly trying to find a remedy for the situation, is something that occupies the thoughts of all of those on the revolutionary left that understand this situation.

Some, it has to be admitted, do not understand it. They believe that the working class in this country is just as militant as it has ever been, and that all that is holding them back from mass militant action, is the treacherous actions of the Labour and trade union leadership.

Only someone that had no grasp of the working class today could hold this view, and indeed most of those that do, are upper class intellectual socialists that have had very little contact ever, with the real working class.

CHANGE

Others have a better grasp of reality, and can see that the working class today are not the same as the more militant and class conscious working class of yesterday. They explain the change by what they refer to as a political "downturn". Very basically, what they mean by this, is that because of prevailing political circumstances, i.e., high unemployment, very right wing government etc., the working class has temporarily lost a lot of its will to fight. For example in times of high unemployment someone who has a job is going to be pleased enough about that, without worrying so much about fighting for higher wages, especially when he/she knows that the government will strongly resist higher wage demands.

So does the "downturn" fully explain the lack of fight in the working class today. Is that a sufficient explanation of why there were only a minority of workers who were willing to give the miners some real support.

In fact it does not. Although the "downturn" theory does explain some of the reasons for the change in attitude of the working class it ignores the most crucial factor of all. That is the gradual change that has been occurring in those that have grown up in this

What all of this means basically, is that for various reasons there are large sections of the working class today, that do not feel the instinctive loyalty towards the traditional organisations of the class that their parents did. That does not mean that there is no dissatisfaction with society and capitalism, but it is not always expressed in the traditional way.

That is why we in Red Action do not confine our political activities to the more traditional areas. That is why we go out and sell our papers at gigs and football matches, and try to get in contact with those rebellious sections of the working class that have never really come into contact with trade unions and trade councils.

That does not mean that we reject activity in these areas, far from it. But it does mean that we feel that activity in these areas needs to be complemented by activities around the cultural expression of the working class.

Great examples of this sort of activity, were the campaigns, such as Rock against Racism, the Anti Nazi Leagues, and the Right to Work Campaign, a few years ago. These sort of campaigns succeeded in making links with those sections of the working class that had been missed by the Labour movement and by doing so was able to show them the value of the movement and to introduce them to activity in it.

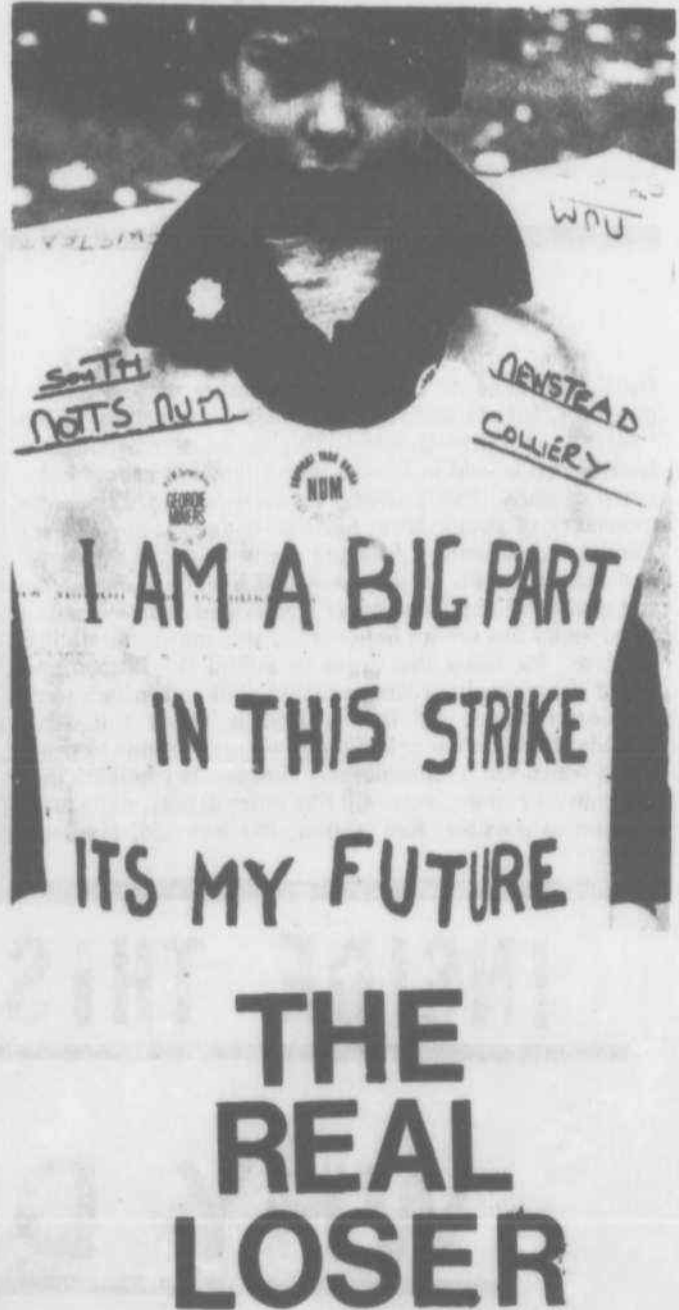
There is a crying need for such campaigns today, especially for something such as the Right To Work Campaign, with the steady rise in the number of young unemployed that have never had any contact with a trade union.

When Red Action is a large enough organisation, we will attempt to rebuild movements such as this.

POWERLESS

The traditional Labour movement was found to be antiquated and powerless during the miners strike. It has to be rebuilt from the bottom upwards. To do this will need the involvement of these considerable sections of the working class that reject it, partly because of its powerlessness and antiquity.

I just wonder how much more difficult the police and government would have found it to control the strike, if they had been faced with the riots of 1981, and an all out bombing campaign by the IRA at the time



KINNOCK

ACHIEVED



WILLIS

NOTHING

Flying column

Sir Kenneth Newman, commissioner of the Metropolitan Police said recently that the Royal Ulster Constabulary are "an inspiration to other forces in the United Kingdom". Taken literally, this would mean plastic bullets being fired at pickets, institutionalised torture and the death penalty for car theft. During the miner's strike the Met were repeatedly singled out by miners and their families, for their excessive brutality. For Sir Kenneth, former head of the RUC, I suppose that it is at least a step in the right direction. While church leaders and the like have been wringing their hands over the massive erosion of civil liberties that has resulted from the police operation during the strike, and have been wondering how to control the police, some miners seem to have hit on a novel solution. This blunt advice as reported in the Guardian, was offered to the police, by one group of pickets at the end of the strike. "Why don't you fuck off to Ireland and get yourselves blown up".

The Queen is setting an example to British workers by accepting a pay rise below the level of inflation. She is to get an increase of just 4 per cent (£154,000) in her allowance from the civil list. This will boost her earnings from the state to over FOUR MILLION POUNDS A YEAR.

As reported in News of the World, 24th March, 1985.

Ian MacGregor's public gloating that the miners would be made to pay for their "subversion" shortly after sending them a letter calling for reconciliation in the industry, seems to be a classic case of schizophrenia. The warning signs were there during the summer, when shortly after expressing concern over Scargill's sanity, he appeared on television with a paper bag over his head. The next time he feels the need to hide his "public" face he could do us all a favour and use a plastic bag instead.

Consider the following description of the Falklands War.

"What precisely did we get out of this war, except a warm glow, the experience of feeling good and a roll of honour. It was a collective piece of retarded adolescence... the most discreditable immoral and improper episode in British post war history, a gamble not worth taking, a war fought for reasons of amour propre mingled with electoral considerations... pathetic... a pantomime war in which men had their faces burned off... what have we done to be drawn into such folly and death, and still be proud of it.

Is this a Red Action Editorial? NO. It's Edward Pearce, parliamentary writer for the Daily Telegraph. Couldn't have put it better myself.

JUST A FEW ROTTEN APPLES

1
Robert Lindsay, aged 29, was jailed for three months and ordered to pay £250 compensation for punching Mrs Cathleen Jones, aged 70 in the face in a dispute over a cab.

2
Three men on a pub crawl beat up a deaf street trader in Smithfield, Manchester. They left their victim cut and bruised, his socks and shoes were ripped off, his glasses smashed and his hearing aid wallet and watch was missing.

3
Peter Waterton, aged 24, was jailed for six months suspended for two years after he drove his Rover car on to the pavement in front of two youths. He leapt out and without provocation punched one of them.

These scenes are sadly familiar and are enacted on the streets every day. Mindless violence by mindless morons. They appear to be a law unto themselves. Preying on the weak and old and the underprivileged. What is the solution? Stiffer sentences? Bring back the birch? Re-introduction of the death penalty? More police on the streets? The answer is hardly the last one. All of those involved in these incidents were police officers. All have either resigned or been kicked out of the force.

Ironically, the hacks in the press seem to have become victims of their own propaganda over the years. They seemed genuinely shocked by the depth of support among the locals for the IRA mortar attack at Newry police station. The Guardian reported locals shouting abuse and "Up the Provos" at police searching the rubble. The Evening Standard noted the "chilling aspect" that shops and pubs seemed to be doing good business, minutes after the attack. The Mirror spoke of the callousness of locals "openly celebrating the IRA's victory". Quite fittingly it was left to the top people's paper the Sunday Times to keep its head amidst all the hysteria, and to stick ostrich like to the traditional method of reporting IRA attacks. It confidently reported that the attack had been "roundly condemned by most of the town, three quarters of whom are Catholics".

West European Governments are expressing dismay at Britain's reluctance to support a United Nations convention, that declares torture to be an international crime. Not surprising really, Britain holds the unenviable record of being the only country in Europe to be accused before the Human Rights Commission twice for torturing people (Cyprus and Northern Ireland). They are fully aware that any investigation or the interrogation methods currently employed would ensure a British hat-trick.

"People keep talking about unemployment. Why not talk about the people in work. There are more of them anyway."
Prince Philip on Newsnight, 22nd February, 1985.

The following article was sent to us by a Red Action supporter in Norwich. It is an interview with Gary Bushell, who until recently was the features editor on the music newspaper "Sounds". Bushell gained some notoriety in the press and on the left, when an album that he had been responsible for compiling, featured an organiser of the openly Nazi British Movement on the front cover. He has always claimed that this was done without his permission, and that his political sympathies are firmly with the left. We print the article, not only because we know that many of our readers take a keen interest in the music world, but also because many of the points raised in it give us a chance to explain our politics more clearly, and perhaps clear up one or two misconceptions.

INTERVIEWER I hear that you respect Red Action?

GARY BUSHELL Well I recently went to a miner's benefit organised by Red Action, where the Newtown Neurotics played like heroes. I have a lot of respect for Red Action 'cos there out there doing it. I don't necessarily agree with them all the way, but I'm not going to split hairs about their policy on Ireland when on the important issues of the day, like the miner's strike they work like demons, while to my internal disgust the "organising committee" collapse through apathy and avarice. Red Action are working class blokes and women arguing and fighting for socialism, and that can only be healthy.

You still write freelance for Sounds. What else are you up to?

I've written three music books and I may be launching a new mag. I hope so. I need it and the music press needs it.

You're a great believer in pop and politics?

Yeah, but bands don't have to sing political songs to make political statements. The Style Council playing for the miner's, means more than a hundred songs with the correct political line being heard by two people and a dog in Hampstead.

You're a bit of an anti social worker type?

Yeah, they are basically anti working class people. These middle class tossers, more than any other group are responsible for the low standing of socialist ideas among working class people.

Do you think that the miners can win?

I hope to God that they do. The miner's strike will settle the history of this country for the next decade at least. If the vanguard of the working class gets smashed by Thatcher, then it's juntasville UK on the cards.

I'm glad to hear that the street-sussed fanzine "Hard as nails" are taking over future Oi LPs.

Yeah, but Oi was always a worthwhile movement. You look at places like Glasgow and the scene is still thriving with the "League of Labour Skins" and it's become socialist protest music. Oi produced some great records, and that attitude of having a laugh and having a say was right and will continue to thrive in music.

Don't you think that England is just a name for a piece of land, a football team and some proud traditions, otherwise you play into the hands of the right?

No I really feel that the left slip up on patriotism. I love this country and it's working class traditions. There are a lot of things in British culture to be proud of that have nothing to do with the ruling class institutions like the Royals, Lords and the Sun.

What do you think of pop writers, and why did you decide to leave the music press as a full-time writer?

I left 'cos it's not what it used to be. It's pretty dire now to be honest. It's gone downhill and the sales figures reflect that. All the papers have lost their touch with the streets, their sense of humour, their bollocks. Maybe it's a sign of the times. Nothing to get excited about. No good punk, no two tone. What worries me though is that there are few working class socialist pop writers coming through, and I really hate all those fossils who get stuck in the music press still in it in their thirties. They should bloody well get out and make way for youngsters.

You got labelled as a "fick, ferocious fugg" and rubished as Mr Nasty by the powers that be. Was it just that you were too real for them?

Yeah, I've been a socialist as far back as I can remember and my uncle fought in the Spanish civil war on the republican side. If I'd really been a Nazi when the Tory media tried to stitch me up, I'd have been thrown out of my house. As for the other music papers sniping, most of them are a bunch of out of touch wets who don't recognise that they're a load of options between trendy mug, and mindless thug. Between 78 and 81, I was out there doing four gigs a week earning a living, while they were fobbing us off with armchair theories.

You also think Liberals misunderstand what macho is about?

Yeah, they misdefine it as bullying, brutality and bigotry. Properly understood, it's about honour, loyalty, courage, strength and endurance—as exhibited by the miner's, the Viet Cong, and the Russian Red Army circa 1917/18.

What's your attitude to feminism?

Well, men and women are different, and both are superior in one way or another. But treating women as second class citizens is not on. Never.

Any funny stories from your life?

Well I started this band the Gonads for a piss take because there are so many bullshitters in the music business. They didn't really exist, and I would ask people if they had heard them. Some would be honest and say no, but some would say that they'd seen them, and they were brilliant.

Then there was the time I was hospitalised by a brick from my own side after we'd stopped the Front marching through Lewisham. But really, Selwyn Gummer is the funniest political story I can think of.

Danny O'Brien of Red Action comments on some of the points raised.

The reason that we decided to comment on this interview is not because we think that some great "heresy" has been committed! In fact the

ROCK ON

opposite is the case. From the answers given, there is no doubt that Gary is what most people would describe as a left wing socialist, and I would not disagree with that.

We are well aware that those that agree entirely with the ideas of the revolutionary left constitute only a very small part of the working class at this time. But that does not stop us believing in those ideas, and it does not stop us defending those ideas, and that is why we take this opportunity to give our opinion on some of the points that Gary himself has raised.

For instance at the very beginning of the article, Gary mentions about "not splitting hairs on Ireland". Presumably by this he means that he does not entirely agree with us on Ireland. Well we have written articles many and long in this paper in the past, explaining why we feel as we do about Ireland, and it would be impossible to go over it all again in one article, so I will make just one point. Later on in the interview, when referring to the characteristics of honour, loyalty, courage, strength and endurance, Gary mentions along with others, the Viet Cong, and rightly attributes these qualities to them, and presumably indicates his support for their struggle.

The question that I ask, is in what way do the Viet Cong then, differ from the Republican movement in Ireland today?

Both took up arms as the only way to rid their country of a hated and brutal foreign oppressor that came to their country with no justification to torture and kill the native people.

DIFFERENCE

The only difference between the Viet Cong, and the IRA/INLA is that the Viet Cong at least had the benefit of the fact, that there were enough people in the States who cared enough, to build a large and successful campaign against the war, which may well have ultimately had some small bearing on the decision to withdraw.

In Britain, to its eternal shame, the overwhelming majority of people just turn their backs, on the crimes that are being perpetrated in their name.

No let's take another point on which he was slightly critical of the left. Patriotism. He talks about loving this country and its working class traditions, and about there being much to be proud of, that has nothing to do with upper class institutions. Again he has actually



supplied our answer himself, when he specifically says it's "working class traditions". That is the crucial factor. It is the class that he, and we as well, are proud of. If you take Britain, or any other country for that matter, as a whole, then you have to include the upper class as well. The same upper class that send working class people off to get slaughtered in wars that are fought to defend upper class interests, that cold bloodedly cut back the NHS and kill people while they bask in the safety of their BUPA schemes. The same upper class that will happily consign British workers to the misery of life on the dole, if they think that they can get more for their investments overseas (no patriotic scruples there).

We don't hate this country. What we hate is the fact that it is owned and run by people like that, and as long as it is, you will not find us running around saying what a wonderful place it is, because the fact is it isn't.

When the day comes that we are trying to build a socialist republic in this part of the world, there will be one-one who will be more loyal to it than us.

When we are building a socialist republic in this country, no one will be more loyal to it than us.

Finally we would like to thank Gary and the interviewer for taking the trouble to send it to us. Our comments should not be taken as an attempt to slag him off because they aren't. Several of our members know him well and are well aware that he has the courage of his convictions. Our comments are fraternal one. Debate is the lifeblood of socialism.

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.

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JUNTASVILLE U.K. ?



RED ACTION IN ACTION

LONDON

Red Action members and supporters in London, attended the counter demo to a proposed NF march in Lambeth recently. The 100 strong, mainly skinhead NF crowd skulked around London Bridge Station for an hour, before travelling by train to Dartford, Kent, where they held a meeting. With the NF searching frantically for a cause to rally around at the moment, Ian Anderson the Front chairman appeared to miss a perfect opportunity. When addressing his audience he stuck to the tired old formula of "Asians nicking your homes, nicking your jobs etc., which hardly seems to raise a decent siege hell these days. Considering the content of his audience he could have, with a little more initiative and imagination, raised them to heights of fury, simply by announcing for instance that "Asians are sniffing your glue". Under a banner like this he could have had the legions marching on Southhall in the morning. Obviously not leadership material

AS SOON AS THE SUN COMES OUT

A sizeable RA contingent attended the march organised by the South East region of the TUC in London shortly before the end of the strike, which ended in a tentative riot. In Whitehall the crowd taking advantage of the good weather refused to move into Trafalgar Square until two arrested miners had been released. The police quickly siezed upon this opportunity to further polish up their crowd control techniques, so well learned on the picket lines. The result was inevitable with over 100 arrests. Reports soon reached this office that large numbers of Red Action papers were seen scattered about the area, and sure enough a number of miscreants were to report in with their slips of paper, charges ranging from drunk and disorderly, to actual bodily harm on the police. They should be warned that the consequences of these actions will be nothing to what they will suffer unless all of the lost papers are paid for.

WE ARE RED ACTION

Red Action was formed in 1981 when a number of working class socialists were expelled from the organisation that they had belonged to. Various reasons were given for this, but it all seemed to boil down to the intellectual leadership showing their distaste for the raucous manners, and undisciplined behaviour of their working class members. We believe that we can organise ourselves as red workers on our own, without any interference from middle class intellectuals. We intend to avoid at all costs, becoming like so many other left groups, with their patronizing attitude towards the working class. We reject the idea that a socialist organisation, has the right to demand unquestioning obedience from its members at all times. Discipline when necessary must be based on respect for, and trust in, those making the decisions, and not blind servile obedience. We believe that socialism belongs to the working class, and that a socialist organisation, while it must be able to give a lead to the class, must also be able to reflect the spirit and consciousness of the class. We in Red Action will strive to this end. To justify our existence before the most cynical audience of all - the working class - and present socialist politics in a way that they can identify with, in their life, their work, and their leisure. We draw great inspiration from the Republican movement in Ireland, from the courageous and principled manner in which they conduct their struggle, and from the way that they have integrated class and cultural expression into their political movement. We unconditionally support the right of their revolutionary armies, the Irish Republican Army, and the Irish National Liberation Army, to engage in armed struggle to free their country from British Rule. We will work in co-operation with all and any groups that support the same aims as us. We do not reject any ideas tactics or strategies just because we did not think of them ourselves.

WE ARE FOR

1. A working class organisation inspired and directed by working class people
2. United action between socialist groups FOR THE CLASS NOT THE PARTY
3. The Irish National liberation struggle against our own British ruling class
4. Total opposition to fascist organisations
5. Union strength - we support any picket line - in defence of workers living standards.
6. Opposition to all prejudice which divides workers, white against black, men against women.
7. Killing the lie that the "Communist states" are socialist.
8. Young peoples fight to determine their own future.

RED ACTION IS AGAINST

Anything read in



LEICESTER

Red Action members and supporters, travelled on the coaches organised by Sinn Fien to attend the annual Bloody Sunday commemoration. The fascists had threatened to disrupt the march and on the way we did run into (and despite rapid instructions to the driver, not over) a number of them at Watford Gap service area, who attacked and damaged the coach behind us. There was some feeling that would should have taken some immediate revenge for this. However, bearing in mind that the most important part of the whole exercise was to get to Leicester, we complied with the requests of the march organisers to remain on the coach. Possibly it was this "victory" that gave the front the confidence to put in an appearance at our National meeting (see next article). In Leicester, the commemoration concluded with what was in effect a march in defiance of a ban to Leicester prison, where several Republican POWs are incarcerated. Incidentally, the Front counter demo never materialised. The representatives of the white race spent the day loitering around Gartee prison several miles away. For an organisation suffering a crisis of leadership, this won't have earned the organiser many Brownie points.

WELCOME

Red Action's National meeting was held in London. Due to the fact that the meeting had been well advertised it is gratifying to report a number of new faces turned up, unfortunately not all of them appeared to be entirely into the spirit of things and eventually some had to be asked to leave. (See report elsewhere in this edition). Anyway we did eventually manage to get down to the business that we had come for, and a wide range of issues were discussed, and several decisions taken. Among these were a commitment towards a monthly paper as soon as possible, and a commitment to encouraging all members to try and orientate their activity more towards their own localities, and try to build local branches. A full report on the meeting will be available to all members and supporting members in the next edition of the internal newsletter.

Red Action statement

On Saturday the 19th February, a Red Action national meeting took place at Caxton House in London. In line with our normal policy, the date and venue was publicised, in order that sympathisers that we are not in direct contact with may be encouraged to attend. We were aware that by publicising the meeting we did open it up to the risk of being attacked by political opponents, and the wisdom of doing so was seriously discussed, but the general feeling was (1) Attack was unlikely (2) We would be able to handle it, if it did happen.

In fact a group of fascists, not great in number, but well armed, did turn up. Due to complacency and bad security arrangements on our part, they were able to get inside the building, before any of us knew about it, and very nearly had the opportunity to inflict damage upon some of those present. Fortunately the situation was very quickly brought under control, and it is unlikely that the intruders concerned, will be so keen to turn up to a Red Action meeting another time.

However, we have to admit that we were very nearly caught napping. Our complacency was possibly based on the fact that in the past, we have never found the fascists too difficult to handle, and they have never before attacked a Red Action initiative. We are quick learners. We will not be found wanting in this respect again, and security will be much better organised at all future events.

At the present it will still be our policy to advertise all of our political initiatives, and we are confident that we can handle any difficulties that arise. Hopefully, a greater security awareness will render the more "extreme" measures required in this case unnecessary in future. This situation will be kept under review as we do not have to particularly want to have to go through too much trouble when the meeting is the object of the exercise.

We have no wish or desire to be drawn into any kind of running battle with the NF or anyone else for that matter, as we have much better things to do with our time and energy. However we will do whatever we may have to do, to defend every single one of our members AT ALL TIMES.

Disunited KINGDOM

Red Action's support for the Irish republican movement has been often enough mentioned in this paper for everyone to be quite aware of it. However, the Irish struggle is not the only example of people trying to rid themselves of unwanted interference by the British government in their affairs. Both Scotland and Wales have a long tradition of struggle for self determination and socialism. The Scottish Republican Socialist Party, and the Welsh Republican Socialist movement both have members who are today, tried and imprisoned under the prevention of terrorism act.

Historically the independence of both nations has been eroded since the union to the English Crown, of Wales in 1536, and Scotland in 1603. The results of this have been that their economies have declined to a critically low level. The growth of British capitalism led to the industrialisation of some areas which then became more anglicised. Meanwhile the rural areas retained their local identity far more.

The theory of divide and rule, setting two sections of the community against each other to maintain control can be seen in the antagonism between North and South Wales, and the highlands and lowlands of Scotland.

The parallel with Ireland and the war in Ulster could not be more obvious.

RADICAL

Scottish and Welsh workers have often been in the forefront of radical socialist activity. The history of syndicalist South Wales, and the Red Clyde show that workers of those areas have always been ready to fight for their rights as workers as well as nationalists. The Welsh and Scottish vote was largely responsible for the formation and early success of the Labour Party, and remains a mainstay of Labour's social base.

In general elections, Scotland and Wales both have a Labour majority in contrast to the Conservative majority in England, yet, Westminster still rules all of Great Britain.

SOCIALISM

However, the erosion of the industrial base, the closing down of pits, steelmills, shipyards and factories has shown the working class of these parts, that they cannot depend on the British Trade unions or Labour Party to do anything for their welfare. Consequently a rejection of British socialism, rather than socialism itself, has produced a resurgence of interest in the works of James Connolly and John Maclean, on the connection between the struggle for nationalism and socialism.

Maclean was, and is Scotland's most famous republican socialist. He was active during the time of the Red Clyde in the early nineteen hundreds when the Clydeside workers came very near to an open revolt against the state. The level of his prestige can be measured by the fact that Lenin the leader of the Russian Revolution and the international revolutionary movement, made him the leader of the first short lived Scottish Soviet ent.

Maclean served many prison sentences for his activities, and as a result of these his health suffered and he died a young man.

Connolly was a worker's leader in Ireland and was later one of the leaders of the Easter Rising in 1916. He was wounded during this and captured by the British, sentenced to death, he could not stand because of his wounds, and was strapped into a chair and shot.

Today the struggle for independence is again forcing those that engage in this struggle unavoidably towards force, as the ONLY way to achieve that right.

In 1962, Liverpool's water council seeking a new supply, decided to flood the Tryweryn Valley and displace the Welsh speaking communities that lived there. This led to raids on the dam site, attempts to blow it up, and saw the emergence of the Free Wales Army. In 1969, two young Welshmen were blown up attempting to plant explosives on the railway track carry Prince Charles to his investiture as Prince of Wales.

More recently in 1980 the burning down of many second "holiday" homes owned by British people in Wales, led to a police Operation fire which was a blatant misuse of their powers. This has led to the radicalisation of many bitter Welsh republicans.

In 1860, ninety per cent of Welsh people spoke their own language. Today the number is twenty per cent. It took a hunger strike by Gwynlor Evans to force the government to make the fourth channel a Welsh speaking one.

In Scotland there has been seen recently the emergence of the Scottish National Liberation Army. Although this is still limited in its operations, there are at present several Scottish Republican socialists in jail on explosives and incendiary charges.

Although the republican movements in Scotland and Wales are not widespread at this time, as socialists we give them full support in their struggle, for what is a basic right for all people. The right to form your own national identity, free from foreign domination, be it military or economic. Their enemy, the British capitalist state, is our enemy as well. Their freedom is our freedom, and we all take our example from the Irish Republican struggle.

As John Maclean said: "It is better to die for our own class, than for the class which has robbed, ruled, hated and despised us".

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.

