

Red Action

ISSUE NO.11

DEFIANCE

MINORS

It is not always easy being a socialist and arguing socialist ideas. Even though most of your friends have at least a vague sympathy for what you say, many of them still seem to harbour this feeling that somehow it hasn't really got anything to do with them. Take cutbacks in the Health Service for example, no one will disagree when you tell them that a hospital closing down is a terrible thing and yet it doesn't really register until they need an operation and can't get one, and most people go quite a few years before they need an operation.

The people of Hertfordshire are right now having their first mass experience of what this vague mysterious thing called spending cuts actually means. The ruling Tory County Council recently announced its intention to scrap the school meals service entirely. Many Councils have been making noises about cutting down and reducing to a cafeteria service but this is the first attempt to do away with it entirely. All that will remain will be an apple and sandwich meals for children from low income families.

UPROAR

The proposal was met with a very healthy uproar from teachers, trade unions and community groups, etc., this caused the Council to take a rain check and they then announced that they would continue the service as long as the dinner ladies and cooks were willing to take a cut in wages and lose their holiday money. They have all been threatened with the sack unless they sign new contracts.

This is nothing more than a shabby piece of man-overing to try and somehow put the blame on them if the service is eventually scrapped.

Fortunately it would appear that this has fooled no one. NUPE, the union involved have been instructing all members to refuse their new contracts and a vigorous and lively campaign has been launched in defence of them and the meals service.

MARCH

A march on county hall attracted the support of thousands and a petition has collected 120,000 signatures which is incidentally more than voted for the tory group in the last council election.

The strength of opposition may yet force them to reconsider their intention of scrapping the meals, but they may well use their ultimatum to the dinner ladies to attempt to sack them all, and hand over the service to private companies. That is why it is important that opposition is geared to not just retaining the service, in any form but to supporting the dinner ladies and cooks as well.

Probably the most sickening part of the whole proposal and the part which tells us the most about the mentality of those involved is the bit about the apple and sandwich lunch for kids from low income families.

FREE MEALS

Some people reading this will have been on free meals themselves when they were at school. Those that weren't will have had friends who were. We either experienced or were able to understand the feeling of humiliation that these kids went through, even though many compassionate teachers tried to hide the fact from the rest of the kids.

Think how much worse that humiliation would be if there were no service at all and only the poor kids had to go and queue up for their magnificent apple and sandwich. The whole reason for free meals is that the parents can't afford to feed them properly so what good is an apple and sandwich anyway?

ANGER

When I think of the people that want to do this — good christians everyone no doubt, with their nice semi-detached homes, comfortable income, nice cars. When I think of how they are willing to subject young defenceless kids to the trauma of humiliation, of how they would be willing to see them live in inadequate diet, I get a ball of anger that ties a knot in the pit of my stomach and surges through me till I want to scream.

I start to dream about the day after the revolution when I will get hold of them and beat them to death with my bare hands.

Unfortunately the day after the revolution will not be about exacting personal revenge, but about beginning to construct a new and better society from what will probably be a chaotic situation. It will require of socialists good order and discipline rather than giving the bastards what they deserve. As I said at the beginning it is not always easy being a socialist.



AND MINERS

The miners strike is one of the most significant pieces of industrial action to have occurred in this country for a long time. Its significance lies in the fact that it is not about higher wages or better working conditions but quite simply about stopping further redundancies in the mining industry. There have been some isolated examples of this sort of action in the Print Unions and most notably the Gardners Engineering strike in 1980/81, but this is the first time that there has been such widespread action in a major industry over such an issue, it is in fact, a pretty poor reflection of how the situation has changed for the working class in this country over the last decade or so.

BOOM

From the end of the Second World War up until the Seventies, capitalism was in a pretty healthy state. Employers profits were rising, and the working class were able to use the trade union tradition that had been forged in the years of class struggle before the war, to wrest better wages and living standards from the bosses. Unemployment was far lower than today and workers not so afraid of the dole queue were far more willing to take them on over these issues.

unstable

But the boom could not and did not last for ever as the capitalist system became more and more unstable, the upper classes and the industrialists looked to the Tory Party to curb the power of the unions politically. Now that the system was not producing enough profits to buy them off.

Edward Heath's government tried to do this in the early seventies with the Industrial Relations Act and were defeated by (1) mass solidarity in support of five

dockers jailed under that act and (2) the miners flying pickets and the solidarity given to them by other unions.

disarray

Today the capitalist system is in even greater disarray and for the ruling class the answer is not to just hold down living standards, but to run down and dismantle whole industries that they consider to be no longer viable.

MAGNIFICENT EXAMPLE

The miners action against this is a magnificent example of working class awareness that is so often sadly lacking today. Many of those on strike are in no immediate danger of losing their jobs, and those that are could accept a thousand pounds redundancy money for every year they've been in in the industry (when you remember that many miners are born to the job it can be appreciated what a temptation this might be) yet they choose to strike and lose their wages not for any financial gains, but to defend the jobs of workmates and the next generation of workers. It is difficult to think of any finer example of working class heroes in this country.

support

The obvious blackspot is the disunity experienced in the first few weeks of the strike and the lack of support

from the "moderate" areas. As this paper goes to press the strike still hangs in the balance.

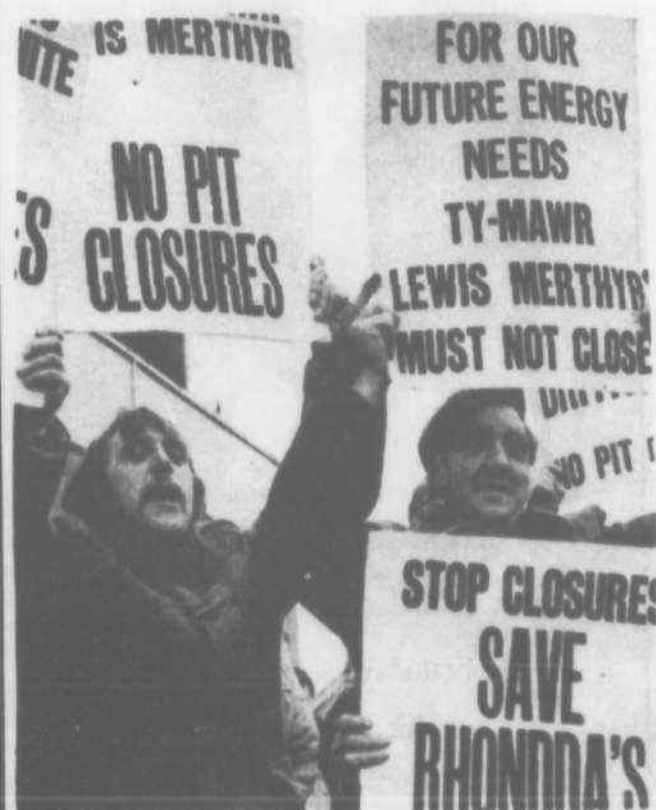
POLICE OVERKILL

In spite of those early setbacks the militant areas have shown magnificent determination and there are hopeful signs that this is beginning to win over the waverers. The massive police overkill operations may also yet backfire on them by exposing to the more cautious miners, the exact role of the State in this dispute. Will they indefinitely keep going into work, past pickets, being rough handled, and sometimes attacked by police outnumbering them 3,4, or even 5 to 1?

assistance

If the miners make the strike solid they then plan to approach other unions for assistance. That will be the time for every working class man, woman and child to nail their colours to the mast and back them in any and every way they ask. The miners have lead the way. They have thrown the argument about greedy workers only being ready to fight for their own gain into the gutter where it belongs.

If/when you come into contact with a striking miner, don't buy him a pint because it isn't enough. Buy his beer all night and you'll be getting somewhere near it.



The articles in Red Action are written by individual members, friends and contacts. They are the sole responsibility of the author or authors and while we would obviously not print anything that was obviously anti-socialist we would not refuse an article just because we didn't agree with every part of it. The views expressed are those of the writer, and it should not be assumed that they are the views of every Red Action member.

THRU' THE POST

SUPERGRASSES AND POLITICAL TRIALS

THE SHOW TRIALS

SUPERGRASS POLICY

In 1980 a policy decision was taken to use people threatened with imprisonment, as key witnesses, or 'supergrasses', to enable supposed 'terrorists' to be convicted. In return the supergrasses were offered immunity from conviction, financial support and a new identity in a foreign country. This policy, the latest in a long list of attempts to criminalise and repress opposition to British rule, was supposed to have started by accident. In fact the initiator was Sir Maurice Oldfield, the ex-MI5 chief.

UNCORROBORATED EVIDENCE

Christopher Black, having served a ten year sentence, and facing a further ten years, made statements which led to 35 convictions, mainly on his uncorroborated evidence. By November 1983, 446 people had been charged on the basis of statements made by 25 supergrasses.

THREE YEARS REMAND

The government and Police secured 60 convictions and kept hundreds more people off the streets on remand. Defendants who are found not guilty have rarely been released. They have been kept in custody on the basis of other supergrass statements. Some have now been on remand for three years, victims of their fifth supergrass.



POLITICAL COURTS

But even this would not necessarily achieve its purpose if it were not for the total political corruption of the Courts in which Judges, Police and Government work hand in glove.

DIPLOCK COURTS

In English Jury trials the Judge must warn the jury that it is dangerous to convict on the uncorroborated evidence of an accomplice. In such situations English juries rarely convict. But in the no-jury Diplock Courts, the Judges formally warn themselves - then ignore their own warning!

EVIDENCE 'MISPLACED'

Crucial evidence is often ignored or double standards operate. For example Collette Breslin, recently in England, reported that her husband, Desmond, (serving 6 years on the word of paid perjurer, Christopher Black) was accused of taking photographs at an I.R.A. roadblock. In fact he was showing cartoon films at a children's club at the time. The police claim that they had taken the camera that had been used from Desmond's house, but they could not produce the camera in court as they had 'misplaced' it.

CONTRADICTIONS

Supergrass McGrady gave evidence that was "contradictory, bizarre and in some respects incredible" according to Lord Chief Justice Lowry, but it nevertheless had "a ring of authen-

ticity" enough to convict three people! According to the Judge, supergrass Bennett "would not have the scruples of perjury if it suited him". Yet his uncorroborated evidence convicted fourteen people. Yet when I.R.A. informer O'Doherty brought evidence against Detective Sergeant McCormick, the Judge thought it "highly dangerous and wrong to convict" on the uncorroborated evidence of some one such as O'Doherty.

STATE INTERESTS

It is clear that which evidence Judges choose to believe, depends simply on their view of state interests. In political trials political interests are paramount. Justice goes out of the window. Lord Gifford Q.C., who examined the supergrass system on behalf of the Cobden Trust, concluded that "there has been considerable injustice and that more will follow if the policy is not changed."

CRIMINALISATION AND REPRESSION

In Britain today, the policy of criminalisation and repression is not an isolated occurrence. It is in fact, becoming a standard method of controlling popular opposition to the Tories. The miners, the N.G.A. pickets, the women of Greenham Common, and Trade Unionists generally are experiencing in their daily lives the meaning of criminalisation.

UNITED FRONT

A general attack requires a general defence, a united front of all the exploited and oppressed. Part of this is to expose the truth about what is going on in Ireland. Part of it is to campaign for, and help to develop, a broad Peace Movement for British withdrawal, which can draw its support from the Trade Unions, the Irish Community and the anti-nuclear Peace Movement. We must fight to build the united front with all those who support, or claim to support British withdrawal, from the Young Liberals, Labour Lefts, C.P., Plaid Cymru and the smaller groupings. It must be built around specifics like the possibility of Hunger Strikes and the August 18th National Demonstration. We must not hesitate to criticise the "doubtful Thomases", the demoralised "downturners" and the sectarians who refuse to support this policy.

Whilst Red Action is only a small group, I hope that you will use your paper to campaign consistently for this approach.

Manny Stevens

Red Action is happy to consider all letters or contributions for publication. Send them to the address at the bottom of the page opposite inside.



Jim Prior.

'he believed Grimley



Gerry Adams

'hedidnt'



Ian Paisley...

'even he didn't'



Jackie Grimley...

...credible witness?

brit army deserter

certified psychopath

child molester

perjurer

would you?

LETTER FROM ROBERT TOHILL - Remand prisoner in Crumlin Rd., jail, Belfast, on the lies of informer Harry Kirkpatrick. 20/2/82

I am writing this letter to you as a concerned member of the British public, who will understand and sympathise with the complete horror and unjust system of the paid perjurer and supergrass system. I feel that it is only people like yourself that can, and hopefully will, help people like myself, to gain what is the basic human right of every member of society, that is our right to freedom when we are innocent.

CASTLEREAGH

I would like to explain my own position and give you as many details as possible. The injustice began in late March 1982, when I was arrested and brought to Castlereagh Holding centre. On my arrival there I was told that myself and several other persons conspired to murder a Mr. Frank Millar. I immediately asked to consult my solicitor as I would be completely denying the charges, false allegations made against me by this person. The police went on to verbally abuse me for several mentally distressing days, hoping I would make an admission of guilt.

PERJURY

When I constantly denied these false allegations, the police went on to offer me large sums of money and a new start in life in any foreign country of my choosing, if in return I would be prepared to stand up in court and perjure myself against certain individuals who they later named and indicated they were "bad boys in the community". They also said that they would school me in such a way that I would be very convincing. I immediately refused simply because I was innocent and did not wish to lie about things I had no idea of whatsoever. After several days of mentally disturbing interrogation, bribes, threats and blackmail, they brought a Mr. J. Goodman into me and he identified me as the person he had named in these crimes. The next day I was charged and remanded in custody at Crumlin Road jail. I would just like to add that during the whole terrifying ordeal in Castlereagh, I pleaded my innocence completely.

BLACKMAIL

After several weeks in prison I applied for bail on humanitarian grounds that I was married, and still am, with a single child who suffers from a terminal illness, Cystic Fibrosis. At the time my child was rushed to the intensive care unit in the Royal Victoria hospital where he underwent a major operation which resulted in the loss of one of his lungs. At this time my wife was also experiencing a nervous breakdown. All the circumstances considered, I was refused bail point blank, which left me feeling disgusted and bitter at the total injustice in my case. This caused me to embark on a hunger strike to prove my innocence. After 8 days of starvation this so called crown witness retracted his statements. He went on to say that he was blackmailed and bullied into jailing innocent men. I was immediately released after eight months of anguish and pain.

KIRKPATRICK

Now exactly eight months later I find myself in the very same position only now it is a man called Harry Kirkpatrick and the offences are different. They are complete lies against me. During my second period in Castlereagh, I was told I would be put down at any cost by the police. I have already spent several months in jail again. I hope by writing this letter people like yourself, who believe in justice for all, will do as much as possible to reverse this terrible and unjust situation.

I would be grateful if you would reply,
Thank you,
Robert Tohill,
1337, H.M. Prison,
Crumlin Road
BELFAST

RED FED

BACKBITING

One of the worst features of the revolutionary Left that strikes anyone coming into socialist politics for the first time, is the way most of the left groups seem to spend more time slugging each other off, or expelling their members, than fighting the real enemy: the Bosses, the Police, the racists, the system etc.

FIGHTBACK?

A small number of revolutionary socialists, individuals, and representatives of some Left groups like Red Action, attended a conference in Bradford in early February. This two day conference explored the possibilities of establishing a loose "Umbrella organisation" to link the various groups and individuals together via shared information and mutual aid where necessary.

The outcome of this conference was the "Socialist Federation", which Red Action and other groups from Bradford, Edinburgh, Manchester, Newcastle and London, along with various individuals have affiliated to.

Many other socialists, black organisations and Left groups have since shown interest in the idea of linking their energies and resources in a loose federation, with the stress on "unity in action" rather than backbiting and armchair chatter.

FOR THE CLASS NOT THE PARTY

Whether the Federation can grow and work depends on the ability of the various Left groups within it to cooperate in a positive and non-sectarian way; always putting (as Red Action seeks to) the needs of the Class before the interests of any Party. It's early days yet and the real tests are yet to come, when the Federation will have to prove its ability to mobilise its component parts in a struggle in the real world outside. So far the signs are promising and we look forward to the day when the Federation will become a fighting force and a symbol of unity.

For more information on the Socialist Federation, write to:
c/o Starry Plough Bookshop
6 Edmund Street
Bradford
Yorkshire

THE WORLD AT WAR

BEST OF BRITISH

Picture Royal Navy gunboats sailing up the Mersey and 80,000 Scousers battling with 30,000 troops and hundreds of police; not fiction but reality on the 13th August 1911, when a mass labour demonstration was attacked by the police and later troops. There were days of urban guerilla warfare as traditional hostilities between Orangemen and Irish Catholics were forgotten in united resistance as strikers were killed by British soldiers. In different cities throughout the country shots were fired and troops with fixed bayonets charged striking demonstrators. Different escalations were seen in Manchester, Hull, Sheffield, Swansea, Glasgow, Bristol, and London. Unofficial strike action spread to North Wales, Derbyshire, Yorkshire, and North Eastern England. A wave of violent disputes spread throughout the Midlands and the Black Country. Pamphlets were distributed to troops such as 'Don't Shoot', explaining working class solidarity rather than defending capitalism. Meanwhile militants were imprisoned under the Incitement to Munity Act, 1797. Dockers, miners, engineers, railwaymen, factory and building workers fought together, although unfortunately not as co-ordinated as they should have been. There was widespread trouble with bosses trying to bring in non-union labour, in the transport industry in London 100,000 people were on strike and there were running gun battles between strikers and blacklegs. Also in 1911, Coronation Year, the strike by Southampton seamen and firemen spread to other ports. Hull was compared to the Paris Commune of 1871 with 'women, half naked and hair streaming, reeling through the streets, smashing and destroying'. Two people were shot dead as troops fired on crowds on the 15th August.

So the myth that unlike other countries, where there is often violent unrest and revolution, the 'British' are far too civilized and it is not in our tradition to fight back can be exposed for what it is by looking at episodes in our history where there has been real class conflict.

militancy

In this era the ruling classes were getting worried, between 1888 and 1910 trade union membership trebled and this number doubled by 1914. From 1910-14, 10 million working days were lost in disputes. Trade unions, unlike today, were a new idea that could grab the imagination of people, especially young people who had been treated like dirt all their lives and had a bitter determination to change things. A new militant feeling was growing, a belief that direct action culminating in a general strike would lead to workers' control of society. Unlike in Russia there was no real Bolshevik party but rather a series of spontaneous acts sometimes connected but often sparked off by regional disputes. Working class women were involved with direct action but also as an independent force in the suffragette movement, providing another aspect to the attack on traditional methods and a contempt for established leadership. The Irish Home Rule problem also contributed to the problems of the realm.

domestic answers in Britain which was part of an international wave of workers revolt in this period. Throughout Europe the picture was the same, even in America the labour movement under the Wobblies (the International Workers of the World) grew to unknown proportions, closing down the whole West Coast Lumber Industry. In South America and Australia there were similar movements, and in Russia revolution became a reality. The years up to the First World War saw such an explosion of anger it is not impossible to suggest that the timing of the war was not coincidental, forcing people into different uniforms and getting them to kill each other instead of uniting together. And killing you is a good way for the state to survive.

censorship

You didn't realize this had happened here? Well, it is no wonder as the state doesn't want you to know, or let it happen again. We do! Let's hope it is more successful next time.

The Next Step

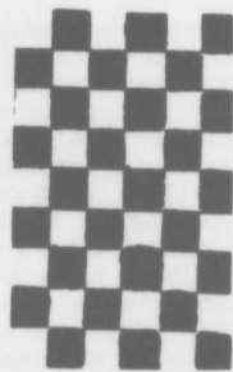
The 'Miners' Next Step' (1911), produced by South Wales miners, is one of the greatest revolutionary documents produced by working people. They realised that the 'revolution was not tomorrow' and therefore concentrated on pre-revolutionary circumstances such as minimum wage levels and a seven hour day, hoping that their efforts may culminate in a general strike and a realisation of some of their aims. There was great inspiration from Larkinism in Ireland where 404 Dublin employers had signed a contract to starve out 20,000 men and women upon whom 80,000 others were dependent. The Dublin lockout of 1913 lasted for months and resulted in the Irish Citizens Army (ICA), organised by James Connolly and described as the world's first Red Army, to protect people from the brutality of the Crown forces, soldiers and police.

Red Clyde

In Scotland militants took independent action in the coalfields and dockyards where they would later proclaim a 'Red Clydeside' and their leader John McLean be acclaimed leader of the Scottish Socialist Republic. It is interesting that domestic problems produced



Connolly IWA and ICA Organiser



Britain's favourite pastime

OLD GLORY

In 1936, Flint, Michigan, in the U.S.A. was a town owned by General Motors. About 120,000 of its 150,000 population depended on the firm. G.M.'s factories employed 45,000 workers for long hours and very low pay. In the town, city officials, newspapers and law courts were all under the company's thumb. G.M.'s boss called this "the happy family of G.M.". The bosses had good reason to be happy in 1936. They had just netted 225 million dollars profit from this employers paradise. Or that's what it looked like - really it was a powder keg.

CONCENTRATION CAMPS

The plants were virtual concentration camps. Job security was non-existent. Hiring and firing was done at will by the foremen. Work was carried out at breakneck speed on body torturing assembly lines in conditions of deafening noise and intense heat. The average wage was 900 dollars a year. This was 600 dollars a year below the minimum recommended by federal government. There was no union fight back.

SIT-IN

On December 30th, 1936, all that changed when the G.M. workers began a sit-in which defied everything that the Bosses threw at it.

The trouble began in Fisher Body Plant No 1, when the bosses tried to shift production to a non-organised shop. Instantly, 1,200 men sealed off the plant. Car bodies were piled up to make barricades, cast-iron sheets with hoses screwed into them covered every window, and wet clothes were held ready for protection against tear gas.

DEMANDS

Next, the vital Fisher Plant No 2 was occupied. Denied access to its supply of chassis, the combine ground to a halt. By January 7th, the union presented

its demands: recognition of the U.A.W., re-instatement of victimised workers, a 30-hour, 5-day week, abolition of piece-work and slowing down of the assembly line.

The occupation was highly organised. A strike committee of five was freely elected and committees were set up to look after various aspects of the strike (food, education, intelligence etc). The plant mass meeting was the supreme decision making body, from which leaders were elected and subject to instant recall.

LAW COURTS

The bosses hated the thought of workers commandeering their property. G.M. chief, Alfred Sloane, told shareholders "the sit-in is revolutionary in its dangers and implications". G.M. went all out to smash the sit-in. First, the law courts were used, but the eviction writs couldn't be delivered. Next, G.M. produced a group of loyal workers, but this also failed.

VIOLENCE

Violence replaced manoeuvring. A large mob of police and scabs attacked Fisher No 2 but were heavily defeated. Troops of the National Guard arrived to be confronted by a picket line of the union's "Women's Battalion" wielding iron bars and pickaxe handles.

With a ruse, the workers added Chevrolet No 9 to the list of occupied plants. Faced with armed workers who were prepared to fight to the death, State Governor Murphy ordered a new show of force by the National Guard. The workers ignored it. With a choice of bloodbath or surrender, G.M. chose the latter. On February 11th... 44 days after the sit-in began, G.M. signed a contract recognising the U.A.W. as the sole bargaining agent in the whole G.M. combine and guaranteeing no victimisations. Victorious, the workers marched out, singing "Solidarity Forever". Flint was now a union town.

EXAMPLE

Flint was a big example to hundreds of thousands of American workers in the late 1930s. The Flint workers had been confronted with lies, witch-hunts, truncheons, guns and spies. They overcame them and won.

Theirs is the kind of ruthlessness the British workers will have to show if they are to prevent the Tories

Theirs is the kind of ruthlessness the British workers will have to show if they are to prevent the Tories from destroying all the gains won in the last four decades.

Writeto

BOX 5,
c/o HOUSMANS
5 CALEDONIAN RD
LONDON N1

c/o Box 87,
Corn Exchange,
Hanging Ditch,
Manchester M4 3BN

NEVER AGAIN!

THE NATIONAL FRONT IS A NAZI FRONT!

in memorium
BLAIR PEACH
murdered by the SPG
23 April 1979

STOP THE NATIONAL FRONT!



RED ACTION IN ACTION

THE EAST IS RED!

It was the last weekend in January and a motley crew of Red Action activists were sitting sipping shandies in a North London pub with faces as long as a Siberian winter. Why, dear reader, you must be asking? Well, the Bloody Sunday Commemoration march had been banned in Sheffield and there we were, armed with beer and mini-buses and nowhere to go. It came to a straight choice between Margate and Brighton, so we went to Colchester. It just so happened there was a Troops Out of Ireland 'Week of Action' at the local university so we decided to give them some Oi/Oi!Up the Reds!support. To cut a long story short (which included getting thrown out of 3 pubs and a disco) it seems our rabble-rousing renditions of Republican songs in the college bar - and a few carefully chosen comments to certain conservative students - suitably worried the Maggie Thatcher Supporters Club. On the Monday the Tories had planned to get the Troops Out Movement banned from the college but for some reason they were rather subdued at the Student Union meeting and failed miserably. Thinking we were angling for an East Anglian ambush they had all the college security guards on 'red'-alert - if only they knew we were weaving our way westwards to bedded bliss. Turn left driver . . .

RADIO GA GA

A few Sunday mornings ago London's airwaves were brightened by the sound of Red Action's first party political broadcast. Mr George O'Reilly (who?) called the L.B.C. phone-in show on behalf of the few Red Action members who were actually conscious at that unearthly hour. Tory M.P. John Carlisle was defending Enoch Powell's latest racist outburst and the governments suggestion that workers should accept cuts in their wages. Mr O'Reilly promptly informed the listeners that "... when Red Action gets to power the only cuts we'll make will be the throats of racist bastards like Enoch Powell and John Carlisle . . ." before he was rudely cut off. Mind you, it's probably just as well, 'cos we didn't know Mr O'Reilly could remember so many rude words at that hour of the morning.

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 or 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

1. Anything read in

Sun

SHEPHERDS BUSH

As your average mole burrowed deeper for the long cold winter ahead, down in Shepherds Bush another kind of 'mole' was stirring - Red Action's very own diminutive pop-star. Various descriptions as 'Oi the Folk Singer', a 'second generation legendary rebel' and a 'right wally', he was playing with himself (I think this should be BY himself - Ed.) at a Troops Out benefit. Singing songs redder than a London bus and catchier than a social disease he played a set of self-penned pearls, like 'Stormtrooper Commuter' and 'Rebel Song', mixed with old standards such as 'I Fought the Law ('till I win!)' and 'Broad Black Brimmer', ending with a dedication to his recently hatched offspring 'Provo Lullaby'. With a few more gigs, and guitar strings, this man could go far. At least as far as the next paragraph . . .

ST PAT'S DAY

A group of Red Action members joined the march on St Patricks day organised by the Irish Solidarity Movement. Despite the disappointingly low turn out, the march did manage to provoke a very good response from the local Irish community.

BLOODY SUNDAY

Red Action were proud to send two of their members to Derry on the weekend of bloody Sunday at the invitation of the Irish Republican Socialist Party to attend a commemoration of two Irish National Liberation volunteers killed in action, the day before the bloody Sunday demo. Unfortunately due to unforeseen developments in Belfast, they did not arrive in Derry in time for the commemoration, but were able to meet up with the Derry IRSP on the demo the next day. As always our warmest thanks and highest regards go out to all of them.



RIGHT STRIP!

On the 9th of March 1984 women from Red Action joined the International Women's Day delegation to the six British Occupies counties of Ireland. Our main activity of the week-end was to join a picket of Armagh gaol where Irish Republican women are incarcerated for opposing the British Occupation of their country.

After the women's delegation in 1983 a campaign was instituted against the use of strip searches as part of a harsh and punitive prison regime.

In November 1982 strip searches were introduced by the new prison governor Thomas Murtagh. Strip searches are performed in all gaols. However the figures produced by Hansard (a record of business in the Houses of Parliament at Westminster) show that women in Armagh are strip searched 2 times more frequently than women prisoners in England and Wales. More screws (prison guards) are involved, arches are carried out with more brutality, sanitary protection of menstruating women has to be removed and sometimes male screws are brought in to 'assist'.

PERSONAL ACCOUNT

The following is part an account from an Irish soner of War (P.O.W.) in Armagh.

"I was brought into the reception room. Eight screws were present. Then the added words 'Right Strip', why I began to undo the tons of my shirt. I loved my clothes, each article taken from me and scrutinised. I knew there was no

need to search me. I had been in custody for over a week . . . Since leaving the house, dragged out shoeless and coatless, by a mixed force of British Troops and R.U.C. (Royal Ulster Constabulary, overwhelmingly recruited from loyalists) . . . I felt a hand slowly moving down the calves of my leg, my flesh crawled. They weren't content to jibe at my naked state, they had to skin search me."

GOING TO COURT

Within the next 48 hours this woman was subject to this treatment 5 times, each time she left the prison it was under joint military/police escort in a steel reinforced van for a 30 second court appearance. Before getting into the van and when leaving it back at the gaol she was strip searched, twice within 20 minutes; in this time she had no contact with the public. Other women have told of threatened rape during interrogation and one woman has actually been awarded an out of court settlement for tech-

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY (well, in fact it was Saturday but anything for a clever headline).

Red Action supported a march in Sheffield (March 3rd) protesting at the banning of the Bloody Sunday march. It was a well supported and well organised march - led by an excellent Republican Flute Band from Glasgow. We were pleased to hear the planned counter-demonstration by the NF was redirected to Wakefield where they were kept waiting at the roadside for 4 hours before being told to go home by the Old Bill. In fact the only thing that could have spoiled an excellent day was our coach breaking down on the way home. Fearing a sudden snow-storm or worse a small party of Red Action heroes went foraging for vital supplies to save our comrades from certain death. Well . . . OK . . . we were looking for a pub, but the tragedy was, after walking miles down the sodding motorway, just as we sighted an inviting hostelry, the relief coach pulled up. Foiled again!

DEB'S DELIGHT

Now then, the 1st March was obviously a date every right minded English person had in their diaries. Yes darlings, it was the Hare and Hounds Ball at the Grosvenor Hotel in London's exclusive Park Lane. As Henrietta and I parked the Rolls outside the Hotel, we were met by a horrendous gathering of ruffians, who jostled us and made scandalous remarks implying we were born out of wedlock. Honestly! Shaken, but with true upper-class dignity, we ran for our lives into the foyer, only to be informed by young Barrington-Smythe that some of the red ruffians had sneaked round the back and "put the boot in" - a most distasteful expression I've heard the servants use at home. I ask you, is nowhere safe anymore?



TOM ATKINSON

On Saturday December the 17th 1983, Tom Atkinson died after a lengthy illness. Tom was a Socialist. He was also a good and generous man. Born into a poor but proud mining community in the North East of England, he strove through his life to apply his Socialist principles. Tom knew there was something better than the poverty he saw all around him and he hated the system which caused it. He had all the strengths and weaknesses of the working class. Sometimes he was impatient, sometimes he felt despair but his belief in Socialism was unshakeable. He could never be bought. He never betrayed his class.

To the very last moment of his life, he showed his concern for humanity. He voiced his deep-felt disgust at the obscenity of anti-semitism, racial hatred, fascism and war. He was a man who left a deep impression on all those who met him. And perhaps what struck those who met him most was his integrity. Truth was important to him and the truth is that he was no great leader. He was just an honest worker ready to talk socialism with all who would listen to him. When he became ill, he was fully aware of the nature of his illness. He faced the inevitability with the courage which was part of his character. Nearly all his life he had fought for the finest cause of all - the liberation of mankind.

Now we must pick up the responsibility where Tom left off. He may be dead but his fighting spirit lives on.



nical loss of virginity while under interrogation.

NO DOUBT

We in Red Action are in no doubt as to the reasons for the use of these practises. To be stripped naked is to be vulnerable and to then even be touched by the very scum you have been incarcerated for opposing is clearly intended to humiliate and degrade and essentially to break the resolve of the prisoner to continue as an Irish Freedom Fighter.

LONG KESH

The women in Armagh and their comrades in Long Kesh have been subject to many such tactics. They have all arrived in prison via internment (imprisonment without trial), confessions extracted by torture, the use of Diplock (non jury) courts and the securing of convictions on the evidence of paid informers. In 1976 their status as P.O.W.s was taken away, we were told that they were now ordinary criminals and were to be treated as such. There is however nothing ordinary about the route which lands them in gaol nor about the treatment they receive there.

FIGHTING BACK

No-one should believe however that Irish P.O.W.s become helpless victims once in prison, they still continue to fight the system even at its most oppressive. Remember the dirty protest, the hunger strikes and the Great Escape, late last year, their courage is an example to us all.

Neither should we feel unable to contribute to this great struggle. In the summer of 1983 when the practice of strip searching first gained some publicity the searches did slacken off for a time. We should take every opportunity to expose what the British ruling class and its lackeys are doing in the name of the British people in the six occupied counties.

VICTORY TO THE IRISH FREEDOM FIGHTERS

A more detailed account of strip searching and its implications can be obtained from the London Armagh Group, c/o 374 Grays Inn Rd, London WC1.

Also Red Action collects money and books to send to Republican Prisoners. If you wish to make contributions please contact us.