

Red Action

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SO SPITEFULL

The Tories are very fond of telling people that they are a caring Government. They are a Government that believes in freedom, in setting people free from the unwanted interference of the state into their affairs. In cutting back on wasteful and unnecessary Government spending, thus reducing the amount that they have to raise in taxes and freeing people from the burden of high taxation. However, over the last six years, a growing number of people have been finding out for themselves exactly how caring this Government is. They have been finding out exactly how much freedom, Government spending cuts is giving them.

Those years have been a succession of penny pinching and spiteful measures by the Government which while raising very little in terms of overall Government income, will have placed heavy burdens in those sections of society, which are the least well placed to cope with them.

Measures such as the abolition of earnings related benefit for the unemployed which by its very nature hits out at the lowest income bracket. Then they decided to tax the dole and so hit the very same people again. These are just a couple of many measures that have been specifically aimed at the most vulnerable members of society.

Now however, they have come up with one which for its callous lack of any sympathy or regard for the plight of one of the worst placed groups in our society, must rank as one of the most cruel vindictive measures applied by any Government this century.

MOVE

It is the recent change to the supplementary benefit system, whereby, a person under the age of twenty six who lives in bed and breakfast accommodation, can only receive benefit for a certain period of time in one area, after which they have to move to another area before they can claim benefit again. The period of time for which they can receive benefit varies in different areas, from eight weeks in a city area, right down to as little as a fortnight in coastal areas.

The implications of this for young people without a permanent address are quite staggering. Because single persons council accommodation, is so difficult to obtain—between five and twenty five years according to which part of the country you are in—for many people, bed and breakfast accommodation is the only alternative to the streets.

Now, if you are one of these people and you are unemployed, and if you happen to be under twenty six you are now forced every few weeks to uproot yourself and move to another area, just so that you can get your dole. Apart from the massive inconvenience of having to move, you have now of course made yourself homeless again. But because supplementary benefit is not paid to people without an address you cannot make a new claim until you have found somewhere to live. But how can you find somewhere to live without money.

COST

For anyone that has ever claimed supplementary benefit and has experienced the time and aggravation that it can take, just try and imagine trying to do it in a new area which may be totally strange to you, whilst trying to find somewhere to live, and all on last weeks dole check.

It is in a word, IMPOSSIBLE. The reason that the Government have given for implementing this measure, is that there are too many young people leaving home to live in bed and breakfast accommodation, who could still be living at home with their parents. This

costs more because people who live in rented accommodation receive their rent on top of their flat rate benefit. Those that live with their parents receive just the flat rate of subsistence level (the Government assuming that these parents will be willing to support them).

NOWHERE

Now of course there are some kids that leave home for no real other reason, than they want a bit of adventure, and who's parents would be happy to see them home, and no doubt now they very soon will be. But what about the thousands of kids that don't have any home to return to. Orphan kids, kids from broken homes, kids who's parents won't take them back. All of the many young people who just quite simply, for whatever reason DON'T HAVE ANYWHERE TO GO.

They are being turned into modern urban nomads, being forced to drift from area to area, just to try and get enough to put some food in their mouth, and a roof over their head. This is not an exaggeration. We are not in the habit of using exaggeration or hysteria in this paper. It is nothing less that a step back to the days of the poor laws in the last century. When the poor and destitute would receive only so much assistance in one area before they had to tramp off to another parish.

Many of the kids who are in a position to be hit by this law, are in that position because they have already had a rough time in life in one way or another. A lot of them will be loners with no family and few friends, now what little bit of security they have is being taken



Thousands of Young People now face the streets

away from them. It's being taken away by well dressed, well educated nicely spoken, and very, very wealthy people, so that they can dish out even more wealth to themselves in greater tax cuts—in the high income bracket of course

SPITEFUL

That is the reality of the caring Tory Government, the Government of freedom. Behind their plush veneer there is no more that there is in gangsters and racketeers. Like them, they prey on the weak and disadvantaged for their own benefit.

They are callous and savage people. They deserve anything that they get.



No Problems for this family

THINGS TO COME

The recent announcement by British Rail that they intend to axe five thousand jobs will come as no surprise to those that followed informed comment during the miners strike. Time after time, miners, other trade unionists, and left publications warned that if the miners were defeated, it would be a green light for every employer to step up their campaign to implement redundancies and bring in new working practices.

Now already in the few weeks since the ending of the strike what have we seen. Attempts by management to bring new working practices into the Post Office. The announcement that the whole of British Gas is to be sold off to private investors. The Coal Board announcing pit closures almost weekly, already having forgotten the closure procedure that they agreed with the pit deputies union NACODS just a few months before.

STRIKE

The most galling part of it all is to see the NACODS leaders now talking about a ballot for strike action. They had an 80 PER CENT vote for strike action during the miners' strike, and everyone was screaming at them to come out and make the strike total. If they had, it could have made all the difference, but they backed off in the face of Coal Board assurances that they would submit all and any proposed pit closures to joint procedures.

Anyone could have told them that the Coal Board would have promised them anything to stop them coming out at that time, and that equally should they defeat the miners those promises would not

take that Government on, on your own.

Perhaps many teachers would not have been willing to support action if they thought they were being used to bolster the miner's strike who knows. But it was certainly worth a try.

What this does show is that trade union leaders with a very few exceptions, have no idea whatsoever of how to form a strategy for struggle. They will lead a struggle if they are pushed into it, but have no idea of how to plan ahead and choose the best time, and the best ground on which to fight a struggle.

It's a small wonder that some activists are starting to become disillusioned. Perhaps if some of those people begin to look for new answers and look towards the revolutionary left then in the long run it may not be a bad thing.

be worth the paper that they were printed on. Even if they did manage to get their members now and it is a lot less likely than it was six months ago, what chance have they got of getting the miners' to support them right now.

It's a similar case with the teachers. Justifiable and applaudable as their action is, what is the point of standing back for a whole year while one of the most industrially strong unions fights a bitter struggle with the government and then as soon as they have been defeated, stepping in and trying to

In the last issue of Red Action we talked about intention of continuing to raise money for miners' that had been sacked and those that were in prison. Subsequent to this we have now been informed that a National Organisation of Miners Prisoners and supporters has been formed. This has been formed to work around three issues (1) to provide finance for sacked and jailed miners'. (2) To campaign for the reinstatement of those sacked and to support the hundreds that are still awaiting trial. (3) To carry on the struggle against pit closures. Further information about the campaign can be obtained from room 506 in Camden Town Hall, London N1, phone 278 4444 ext 2827. Donations should be sent to 74 The Crescent, Duescroft, Doncaster, South Yorks. We urge all of our readers to support this campaign.

Inside this issue:

TERRORISM OR SOCIALIST ACTION

A Red Action Feature

RED ACTION IN ACTION

Red Action members and associates attended the anti fascist picket called to demonstrate against the National Fronts "Albert Mariner Memorial March". The demo although small in numbers was lively and enthusiastic and was still larger than the very small Front turnout. In the circumstances contact was very difficult indeed, but we do hear that some was made. A certain Mr Brady is apparently looking for a very good tailor. One thing positive that did come out of it was an agreement between various groups, on the need for, and a commitment to work towards, some sort of meeting or conference to re-launch a grass roots anti-fascist movement. Watch this space.

Disturbing reports have reached the Red Action office of mysterious individuals in the Brighton area of the country, attacking and damaging police cars while shouting out the name of our own August organisation. We of course abhor and deplore actions of this kind and totally disown them. Could this be a plot by Conservative infiltrators to discredit us in the eyes of the electorate in the run up to the next election.

Red Action members attended both of the recent demonstrations in Newham, call in support of the Asian youths that have been arrested for defending themselves from racist attacks. Both of the demonstrations ended in somewhat chaotic order, when ballroom dancing broke out between the marchers and our old friend, plod.

Starting date for the trial is the last week in May. Mass pickets of the court will be held every Monday.

Flying column

"She can lead the Tory Party, because she reminds the average public schoolboy of childhood fantasies, matron and enigmatic Miss Floggie. You know, long patent leather boots, a whip and a black corset."

Dennis Healey describing Margaret Thatcher in Penthouse.

"Jokes about the Jews, are told by Jews. They are an expression of international cultural solidarity and they are very often clever. The sheer stupidity of both the Irish joke and the character described, flatters the reader into a belief that there are others who are a lot like himself, who may be even more limited intellectually."

Edmund Leach, Anthropologist.

P.S. Between 1977 and 1979 Futura sold 485,000 copies of the official Irish Joke Book. It must mean something.

Thatcher's recent ricket in confusing Malaysia with Indonesia, sounds more like the senile waffling that is associated with her cowboy chum Bonzo Reagan. There have however, been other occasions when her mind, such as it is has wandered. After the 1978 Cup Final, which she attended, she was asked which player had most impressed her. Trevor Whymark she replied promptly, having anticipated the question. Unfortunately for both he and her, Whymark had missed the final through injury. On a foreign trip she once told a reporter that you too have problems with unemployment in the US. At the time she was in Ottawa. More recently she referred to Dublin born Bob "Band Aid" Geldof as a Brit with true grit. In January of this year at a reception in Downing Street, she spent much of the evening discussing her plans for celebrating VD day. Does this perhaps mean that she intends to create a new public holiday in honour of the millions out of work. After all I'm sure that she would agree that unemployment is a social disease.

On the 15th of April, most of the papers reported that a planned visit by Princess Anne to a Yorkshire pit village had met with a less than enthusiastic response with almost 90 per cent of the tickets left unsold. Could this be the end of the monarchy? The Guardian quoted a Mr Ken Moulds, a local NUM rep. who stated that the miners were still deep in debt and after being on strike for a year and seeing something of the establishment most miners are not enamoured with it. The Mirror quoted the same source but merely said that the lack of response was because the miners were broke. Different strokes for different folks.

There are probably 20,000 teenagers for whom a place is available on a training scheme with good job prospects to follow, who chose to stay at home. It is one of the figures that I detest. They have become the victims of left wing propaganda and accusations that YTS is simply providing cheap labour. They don't go anywhere, they stay at home and play tapes or hang around discos.

Employment secretary, Tom King, commenting in the unwillingness of some young people to go to work for twenty five pounds a week, NB Tom King's wage, twenty five thousand a year before fringe benefits, directorships etc.

President Bonzo Reagan recently appeared in front of an audience of 600 guests at a fund-raising dinner for the victims of the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua. He hugged and kissed a pretty dark haired eight year old refugee to symbolise US determination to protect the weak from "communist aggression" in Central America. Unfortunately for him, some "traitorous pinko commie faggots" in the media discovered the fact that the child had actually been born in the US, where her wealthy banker parents lived for the last 15 years. The picture of him cradling an imposter seems a much more appropriate symbol for the policies he pursues in the area anyway.

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

Anything read in

THE Sun

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE FEDERATION OF CONSERVATIVE STUDENTS

The picture adjoining this article is from a pamphlet published by a couple of members of your federation, some of whom we are told sport "hang Nelson Mandela" badges, encourage links with UDA supporters, and were responsible for an attack on a CND float at Brighton this year.

Amid accusations of neo facism from the press you say that you only say in public what other members of the Tory party say in private. This we can well believe, we have no illusions about the wets in the Tory party. Your vocal support for various far right causes had attracted our attention and we can assure you that having learned the historical lessons of Germany in the thirties we do not waste our time in theoretical debate with facists. The methods that we employ are both practical and effective, as your fellow travellers in the National Front could testify.

We can assure you that if your future behaviour does not improve dramatically then sooner or later some of you will discover what a good spanking means in the rougher end in the political market if you get our drift.

TRAVELLING RIGHTS

Travelling people or gypsies, are a group who's situation in our society is all too often ignored. Widely discriminated against, and cast in the role as dirty thieving people wherever they go, they are often overlooked even by such bodies as race relations organisations, or ethnic minority monitoring groups. They live on the edges of our towns and cities, and often on the edge of our society, maintaining a way of life that goes back centuries. Victims in the past they remain an easily identifiable target on the lowest rung of the ladder of respectability.

It is often forgotten, especially in the recent euphoria of VE Day celebrations that together with the Jews, gypsies were one of the most persecuted minorities in Nazi Europe. Tens of thousands of them died in numerous concentration camps.

BIGOTRY

many of the travellers in this country are descended from Irish families, who were victims of evictions by British landlords and governments in the past.

Modern day bigotry and intolerance, are based on age old prejudices. Signs saying "No Travellers" still exist in pubs around the country, in our supposedly modern and enlightened society.

In the late sixties government legislation was passed which stated that sites should be provided for travelling families, but only in "designated areas". At the same time it became an offence to park a caravan or trailer in certain areas, for example over two thirds of the London area. What this means in

effect is that in large parts of the country people who are doing no more than trying to live the only style of life which they know, are committing an imprisonable offence.

All travellers want is the right to determine their own lives, a right which should be everybody's. They should be given official sites with decent facilities where they can organise themselves in whichever way they please. They recognise that there are some elements among them who may be troublesome to others, but as one of them said to a non traveller haven't you got them amongst yourselves?

CO-OPERATION

Some sites do exist where travellers and local people have worked together in co-operation. Where teachers have welcomed gypsy children instead of shunning

them. In the areas where these sites are, aggravation has been kept to a minimum. It shows what can be achieved, but unfortunately, they are the exception rather than the rule.

SITE

In London there are at least six hundred families roaming from one temporary site to another, with many more in other parts of the country. In the borough of Hackney there is not one permanent site. Whilst some temporary sites are necessary to allow flexibility, there is a pressing need for many more permanent sites, in all parts of the country.

An adoption of a non harassment policy by councils and authorities would also go a long way towards helping these people enjoy a better life than they do today.

THIS IS ASIF.

He lives in Ethiopia
in total poverty.
He gets hardly any
food to eat...



TOUGH
LUCK
ASIF!