

OBJECT OF HATE MINERS STRIKE

I got involved because I hated Thatcher and all she represented - her attack on the miners union num, became a focus for many at that period to organise and protest - not unlike Greenham Common or south Africa or clause 28 - perhaps some displacement took shape in a period of growing powerlessness. This is not to diminish the worth of the protest and support. I was initially involved co-organising two miners benefit disco in a curry house and a club down Cardiff docks - 2 very successful nights with guest djs and bands - we raised 1500 quid on the door and through beer. At that time I was part of part of Chapter Filmworkshop and had been using **video** equipment at Chapter Video workshop. Initially the half inch black and white equip was for the preserve of social use - not art making. I had a foot in both camps. There was clear (if artificial) split between those using media to create social change informed by ideology and those wanting to tell stories or experiment with the medium/s. I was also involved as a member of ACTT (NOW BECTU) the only union representing the film and television industry. Initially a campaign to support the miners through fund raising and helping out documenting fund raising events. One example "its not just tea and sandwiches" was as much an opportunity for filmmakers like myself to get on the inside and actually meet miners and their wives. Significant friendships and relationships formed through the process for many people. This led to me making more film work around the valleys and certainly added to my local knowledge as a half welsh boy. Then the NUM banned local (Cardiff) based BBC TV news crews from filming their pickets and demonstrations following some very negative press. This led to the invitation for BECTU volunteers to assist in documenting or film ding and sending to the news rooms key events - such as the sequestration of assets from the NUM headquarters in Pontypridd, of which I was a crew member.

For me personally this evoked a complicated set of feelings. On one hand being part of the 'real world' as a documentarist, supporting a cause I could identify with (my dad comes from a shipbuilding family - my mum - docks and shipping, surely me making me working class enough ?). As a male getting off on the group violence which.... many of the secondary pickets at St Talbot Steelworks (men throwing bricks through / at lorry windscreens (by now with safety grills fitted) driven by privateer scab drivers delivering coal to a (now boycotted) secondary picket. Objects of hate. And at the same time winning colors within a community art clique - nervous and chiding of video art and artists such as myself. I had always been interested in a wide range of contexts for video as a communicator both as artist and filmmaker. I did not have the necessary credentials as a trot or Marxist like many of the slightly older organisers of the tapes. Key people at Chapter Video workshop in Cardiff, would include Terry Dimmock and George Auchtiloney and Chris Rushton. Platform films did most of the co-ordination and distribtution. Many other workshops (mostly backed by

channel 4 through the franchise agreement) contributed in some way. As to the effects? Cash - yes. An alternative view of what was happening – distributed through an emergent network of workshops, video groups and the NUM support groups around the country. Some material did make it to telly. Communication and education between a broad spread of people. And interestingly enough, Kim Howells was also central, employed at that time as a researcher by the NUM at Ponty and keen on building links with the the local media !

I was not central but it had a major influence on my work and indirectly me. Part of a process of political awareness. Perhaps a playground for a bit of nostalgia and romanticism.

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