

TOTTENHAM 3 DENIED "RIGHT TO APPEAL"

On 12th December, Judges of the Court of Appeal announced the state's decision not to grant leave of appeal to Mark Braithwaite, Engin Raghup and Winston Silcott - the three hostages taken in response to the death of PC Blakelock. They described their convictions as "safe" - in other words the state feels the response to their show trial has been so pathetic that it does not need to stage another legal drama, as they had to do in the case of the Birmingham 6 (6 Irish hostages taken with equal disregard to evidence to intimidate the Irish working class).

The imprisonment of the Tottenham 3 was the high-point of the repression unleashed on the Broadwater Farm community following their outrage at the police murder of Cynthia Jarrett, and resistance to police invasion. This uprising in October 1985 followed quickly on the heels of similar insurrections in Brixton and Handsworth during the previous fortnight. The use of firearms and the death of PC Blakelock showed a new confidence amongst the inner city working class - and particularly amongst black youth. The state knew that unless they moved in with force, they would face major confrontations across the country. Broadwater Farm then underwent a state of siege - benefit giroes were not delivered, homes were smashed open, clothes stolen, both children and adults kidnapped. Broadwater Farm was isolated through police terror. IT WAS A POLITICAL NECESSITY THAT SOME PEOPLE WERE CONVICTED FOR THE DEATH OF PC BLAKELOCK.

The state could not admit that a policeman had been killed without a "guilty party" being found. Justice and legal procedure are merely the dramatisation of the exercise of state power. It is clear that the Tottenham 3 are innocent, victimised for reasons of convenience. However, even if the police had found some people directly involved in Blakelock's death, this would mean that we would have to redouble our efforts to gain their release.

The media hysteria built up around the Tottenham 3, and Winston Silcott in particular, has direct parallels with the nation-wide manhunt for Harry Roberts in 1966. Harry, with two other men, had been planning to rob a rent collector, when they were stopped by the police. They killed three policemen. The other two were soon arrested but for three months Harry Roberts evaded arrest. Hundreds of police and even the army were mobilised, his face was plastered over the front pages of the national press and a businessman offered a fleet of aircraft to help in this national emergency. The boss class is always scared when we discover that policemen know how to die. They don't feel safe.

The framing of Braithwaite, Silcott, and Raghup along with the use of death squads in Gibraltar and elsewhere shows how ruthless they can be. We will only secure the release of the Tottenham 3 and the other hostages of the British state when our actions make them sufficiently frightened of the consequences of not releasing them.

For more information about the Tottenham 3, write to Tottenham 3 are Innocent Campaign, 71 Golborne Road, London W10 for the information package (enclose SAE + donation). A booklet about Harry Roberts is available from: Box 4, 52 Call lane, Leeds LS1 6DT.



ACID COMMENT

In the last couple of months the "acid house" scene has eclipsed even "lager louts" and football hooligans as the media's favourite Threat to Civilisation As We Know It. From all the talk about "Crazed Acid House Mobs" and "Drugged Disco Parties", it would seem that the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse are about to descend on humanity dressed in bandanas and Smiley tee-shirts.

The reality is, of course, quite banal. "Acid House" is simply a popular fashionable type of dance music

based on the "House" sounds that emerged from the Chicago black and gay scenes a couple of years ago. And yes, just like some people in all sorts of nightclubs, homes and workplaces, some people at Acid parties take drugs.

HANG THE DJ.

At first glance, the commandeering of empty warehouses and factories in order to have a good time might seem subversive. But the motive is very different from the 1986 New Year's Eve party in plush Bishop's Avenue, London, when hundreds of party-goers invaded a millionaire's empty house to see the New Year in (smashing it up in the process). Most "Warehouse parties" are run by DJs looking for cheap premises to run profitable nightclubs in. The exclusivity of the word-of-mouth invitations, and the minor risks of being in illegal premises, all add to the excitement. But behind this veneer of radicalism is the same indifference to the punters' safety as that which sank the "Herald of Free Enterprise" at Zeebrugge and destroyed the Piper Alpha oil-rig and part of King's Cross tube-station. In the search for profit, the provision of sufficient exits, fire precautions etc., play no part. Like for the other illicit Thatcherites in the drug-dealing world, profit is the name of the game for these free-market entrepreneurs.

COPPERS IN THE HOUSE

The fuss about "Acid House" subculture has got little to do with any real or imaginary threat it poses to anybody. What this "moral panic" (and others about under-age drinking, rural violence, etc.) is all about is creating an atmosphere in which more law-and-order measures can be presented as necessary to deal with the "threat" and therefore as legitimate. In this way it is hoped to win support for such measures as increased video surveillance of town centres, compulsory identity cards (whose computer-readable strips would allow a cop who stopped you to know more than just your identity), and perhaps a widespread use of electronic tagging (i.e. a selective curfew).

The police, for whom all unofficial gatherings of large numbers of people pose a "problem" of "control", have not been slow to use their powers to crack down on "Acid House" parties. On the weekend of November 4th/5th, for instance, police raided three such parties in London, Kent and Essex. When police with dogs broke up a party in a derelict house in Sevenoaks, party-goers were attacked with truncheons, torches and an iron bar. Fortunately this vicious assault --described by somebody there as being "just like an SAS raid"-- was met with resistance and several policemen were injured, one needing ten stitches to a head wound.

Meanwhile in the trendier parts of clubland, interest in Acid House is already on the wane. We can be sure though that new shock-horror threats to civilisation will be invented and identified as suitable cases for treatment -- as quickly as fashions change.

THE RED MENACE

NO.1

FEBRUARY 1989

FREE

DEMOLISH FORTRESS BRITAIN !

At dawn on Wednesday 18th January police sledgehammered their way into the Church of the Ascension in Manchester and arrested Viraj Mendis. Viraj had spent two years in sanctuary attempting to avoid being deported; 48 hours after his arrest he had been expelled from Britain, put on a plane to Sri Lanka and an uncertain future.

From the publicity this case received you might think that all this was an unusual occurrence -- in fact last year 700 people were deported from the UK. The only difference was that a campaign had made Viraj Mendis virtually into a household name and won him considerable support, as was shown by the fact that 2000 people marched to Manchester police-station on the night of his arrest.

Viraj's deportation does however signal the start of a further acceleration in the harassment of "immigrants" in Britain. Having made an example of Viraj -- himself an anti-deportation activist -- thousands of others now face being dragged from their beds and put on planes to the other side of the world. For some this could mean a return to arrest, torture and death in "their" native country; for the "lucky" ones the psychological torture of being forcibly separated from their friends, family and chosen home.

"GO OUT AND WHACK THEM"

Those waiting for the knock on the door include Kabul Khan, camping in a Birmingham mosque with his family after escaping from immigration officials who want to deport him to Pakistan. They include the 50 or so people hiding in a network of safe-houses run by the "Underground Railway" of helpers. They include 8000 would-be refugees waiting in Britain and up to 250,000 people labelled by the State as "illegal immigrants". According to a source within the Immigration service, "Everything had to wait until Mendis was out of the country. Now the word is to go out and whack them. It is going to be like Mendis -- snatched and deported within 48 hours." (The Observer, 22/1/89). Anyone harbouring "illegals" could face 6 months in jail or a £2,000 fine.

The Immigration authorities share computer records with the police, and their job is obviously being made much easier by the general increase in State surveillance and information gathering. For instance, the Poll Tax registration process will give the State a comprehensive list of exactly who lives at what address. Benefit claimants have to produce ID at Social Security offices if they or any members of their family have come to live in the UK in the past 5 years. Immigration offices have unlimited powers of detention without trial, and those not immediately deported may be kept in detention centres such as Harmondsworth (near Heathrow) and Latchmere House in Richmond (where detainees are locked in their cells for 18 out of 24 hours).

A CLIMATE OF FEAR

The immigration crackdown is calculated to create a climate of fear amongst those without the correct passport. Working on the fringe of the economy in sweatshops, building sites etc., run by both black and white bosses, people know that to draw attention to themselves would only invite further trouble. Complain too loudly and deportation is only a phone-call away.

Immigration controls in general are used in an attempt to isolate black people from the rest of the working class. Controls define immigrants as a "problem" which needs to be "regulated", and in Britain and elsewhere "immigrant" is used to mean "black", and all black people are treated as immigrants. By encouraging racism our rulers hope to stop the struggles of one section of our class (e.g. the inner city riots where young black people played a leading rôle) from spreading to the rest of us.

Furthermore by accusing immigrants of "swamping" Britain (as Thatcher did in 1979), or of being "a burden on the welfare State", they hope to reinforce a British national identity, along with a loyalist working class who believe they share a common interest with their exploiters in defence of national culture and the national economy. This is the old myth of us all being in the same boat.

FORTRESS EUROPE

All of this is not due simply to "nasty Tories". Labour governments have acted in exactly the same way, rushing through the 1968 immigration Act, for instance, to keep Kenyan Asians out of the country. It's the same story too in the rest of the world -- witness the treatment of Turkish workers in West Germany, or North Africans in France, where a "Communist" Party-controlled local council sent in bulldozers to destroy immigrants' hostels. In Western Europe as a whole there are moves towards a common immigration policy for all countries, leading up to the erection of a *Fortress Europe* in 1992 that will be more difficult than ever to enter from outside.

FOR A WORLD WITHOUT FRONTIERS!

The State cynically distinguishes between genuine political refugees with a "well-founded fear of persecution" and illegal immigrants who have entered the country for economic or other reasons. This division between "worthy" and "unworthy" immigrants (or claimants, or AIDS victims....) has to be rejected outright. It is only in this twisted world, where humanity is imprisoned by the frontiers of nation-States, that somebody could be called upon to justify making their home on one part of the planet rather than another.

In deporting Viraj Mendis the State has demonstrated that it means business. Against the naked power of sledgehammers and dawn raids, prayers and petitions will be worse than useless. Instead we need to begin discussing ways of organising our own counter-power of collective resistance.



NEW READERS START
HERE

Rioting in Miami, fiddling the dole, strikes in Poland, hating your boss—these are all expressions of the class struggle. The basis of this struggle is the fact that capitalism, which exists in every country on the planet, can only continue to exist at the expense of the needs of the overwhelming majority of the world's population: the proletariat. By proletariat we don't just mean workers with jobs; we also mean prisoners, domestic labourers (e.g. housewives), the unemployed, uprooted ex-peasants etc.

The struggles of our class against poverty, repression, deteriorating working conditions etc. are all that is blocking the efforts of our rulers to impose more of these things. And crucially it is through the spreading and linking up of these struggles that the possibility emerges of a worldwide revolution that will bury capitalism (wage labour, buying and selling, the state etc.) and replace it with communism—a world human community where things will be produced for need not profit.

In the pages of "The Red Menace" (and of course within the struggles we are personally involved in) we want to contribute to this communist movement by encouraging such things as the co-ordination of different struggles and the self-organisation of our class outside of the control of unions and political parties (including the so-called "revolutionary" parties).

We are not the only people with such a perspective, and in producing "The Red Menace" we hope to increase communication, discussion, the spread of information and generally stimulate joint activity between all those genuinely fighting against this world.

We don't want people to just read "The Red Menace". We want to encourage them to make their own contribution to some of the tasks outlined above. If you are involved in any struggles, we would like to hear your accounts of them. Please send us any leaflets, pamphlets, magazines etc. you produce. If you wish to receive "The Red Menace" regularly (we hope to bring it out on a monthly basis) drop us a line. Better still take a bundle to distribute to your friends, workmates, on picket lines, demos and so on. As RM is a free newsletter, we are relying on DONATIONS! (please make cheques payable to A. Hurst).

Write to:
BM WILD,
LONDON WC1N 3XX

Change the bosses' smugness into fear!

- SNECMA strikers 1988

Last year's elections in France failed to smother the working class discontent with political promises. Whilst the TV pundits played games with swingometers, the French working class has been pushing forward its own interests against those of all the political factions.

One of the most significant strikes of last year was the one at the three SNECMA nationalized aeronautics plants in the spring. The strike, which continued throughout the presidential elections, began at the Gennervilliers factory on March 16th at the initiative of workers in the steel foundry. By March 23rd, against the advice of the unions, the strike had spread to the factories at Villaroche and Corbeil—making a total of over 12,000 workers on strike.

As has been shown in the British nurses' regrading dispute the bosses are very keen to divide workers by giving larger pay increases to some people than to others. The SNECMA workers were determined not to fall into this trap and put forward as their central demand: "a 1500 francs a month a rise for all" (about £150).

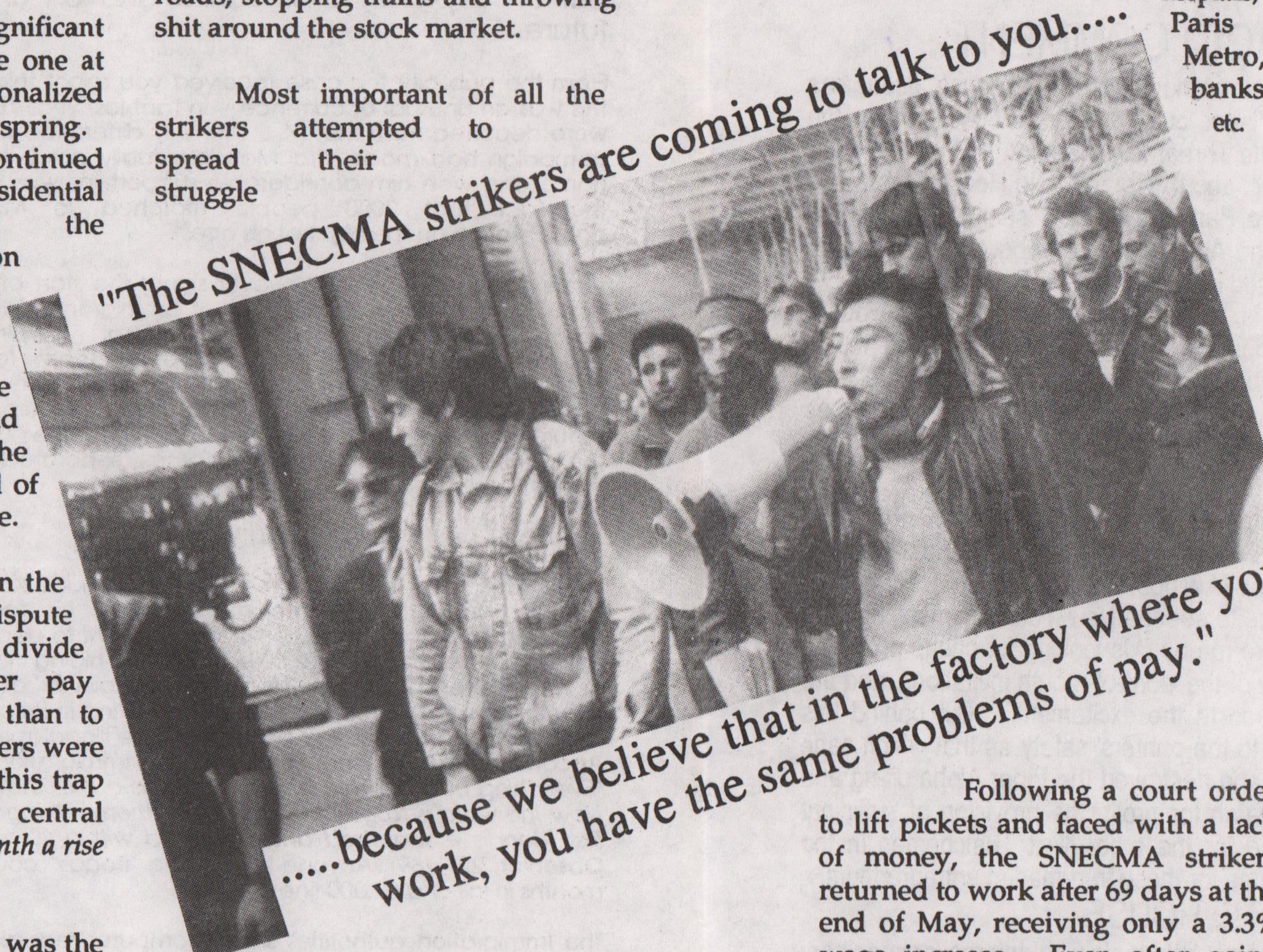
From the very start it was the strikers themselves who controlled the running of the strike, not the unions: "In each factory, every day there is held a general assembly of all the workers, union members or not, and militants from all currents, all united in the same will: to do everything to win, for 1500 francs. This assembly decides sovereignly the actions to be taken and the path of the movement... a Co-ordinating Committee of strikers, including members of various organisations and non-members, has been set up to co-ordinate and unify all the factories on strike." (All quotes are from the strikers own leaflets.)

In contrast to the traditional

union-led passive stay-at-home strike, large numbers of strikers were active in the movement, mounting permanent 24-hour pickets of the factories, producing daily newsheets and leaflets, and generally making their presence felt through such actions as blocking roads, stopping trains and throwing shit around the stock market.

Most important of all the strikers attempted to spread their struggle

visited steel workers and others at Air France, Air Inter, Citroën Aulnay, Dassault St Cloud etc. Contact was also made with workers who participated in SNECMA demonstrations, including some from the Post Office, railways, hospitals, Paris Metro, banks, etc.



"The SNECMA strikers are coming to talk to you....."

.....because we believe that in the factory where you work, you have the same problems of pay."

to other groups of workers.

Realizing that "the best defence is attack" and announcing that "we will not allow ourselves to be shut up in our own workplace" large delegations of a hundred, five hundred or even a thousand strikers went to talk directly to other groups of workers to explain why they were striking and to encourage them to join the struggle: "workers in other firms we come to talk to you because we see more and more clearly that our interests and your interests are linked, that we cannot defend them separately each on our own account, that we will win together or lose together". SNECMA strikers

Following a court order to lift pickets and faced with a lack of money, the SNECMA strikers returned to work after 69 days at the end of May, receiving only a 3.3% wage increase. Even after going back however workers continued to meet in their assemblies and to take action—on June 9th they occupied the lobby of a radio station to spread "just and correct information" about their strike.

Although SNECMA strikers didn't manage to build a mass strike movement around their own strike, they no doubt contributed to the "autumn of discontent" that later developed, notably amongst workers they had developed contacts with, such as transport workers, postal workers and healthworkers.

The actions of some of the later French strikers have further confirmed that workers have to organise their own fightback, not the unions. The largest union federation, CGT, has been mainly used by the French "Communist" Party to regain some of the ground it has lost in recent years. On the other hand, while only 4% of nurses belong to unions, they played a major part in the autumn strike wave—on September 29th 90% of Paris nurses and at least 80% of those in the provinces staged an unprecedented national strike.

In November transport workers in Paris walked out demanding better pay and conditions; some railway maintenance depots were occupied by strikers. At the beginning of December prime minister Rocard responded by calling in the army to try and break the strike, with hundreds of military lorries being used to replace strikebound buses and trains.

Any illusions about the election of a "socialist" administration having anything to offer the working class have been swiftly shattered.

The recent unofficial strike movements in Italy, in which workers organised themselves in non-union "cobas" (Comitati di Base) are the subject of an interesting pamphlet by David Brown: *The Cobas - Italy 1986-8: a new rank and file movement*. It is available from Echanges et Mouvement, BM Box 91, London WC1N 3XX.

A postal worker in Britain has written a pamphlet: *Sorting out the recent national post strike* (30p + large SAE from Action Group for Workers' Unity, c/o TURC, Markhouse Road School Complex, Markhouse Road, London E17.)

Reviews

The existence and activity of revolutionaries in Britain before the end of World War II has been either ignored or distorted in the various histories of the period written by apologists for the "Communist" Party and the Labour Party. Several books have recently become available which give us a clearer picture of our predecessors in this country.

Mark Shipway's *Anti-Parliamentary Communism - the movement for workers' councils in Britain 1917-45* (Macmillan, 1988) focuses on Sylvia Pankhurst and the Workers' Dreadnought group, the Glasgow-based Anti-Parliamentary Communist Federation, and the groups centred around the anarcho-communist Guy Aldred.

While the "Communist" Party of Great Britain attempted to affiliate to the Labour Party, the Dreadnought group (later named the Communist Workers Party) opposed all parliamentary action and supported the struggles of the unemployed against the Labour-controlled Poplar Board of Guardians. While the CPGB became a mouthpiece for the interests of the Russian state, they printed articles which accused the "Communist" International of being "bound up with the capitalism which is being newly introduced into Russia" (although in fact capitalism had never really been destroyed in Russia).

After Workers' Dreadnought stopped appearing in June 1924 the APCF and Aldred remained active, eventually going on to oppose the Second World War. As an article in the Word (paper of Aldred's United Socialist Movement) put it: "It makes no difference to the effect of a bomb whether it is dropped with the hatred of a Fascist Dictator or the love and kisses of a Democratic Prime Minister... In every case it is the workers who are killed". *Class War on the Home Front* (Wildcat, 1986), a pamphlet consisting of APCF articles from this period is available from BM Cat, London WC1N 3XX for £1.50.

Come Dungeons Dark- the life and times of Guy Aldred, Glasgow anarchist (Luath Press, Barr, Ayrshire, KA26 9TN, 1988, £6.95) is a biography of Aldred written by John Caldwell, a fellow member of the USM, including an account of his various spells in prison.

Meanwhile *For Communism*, a book written by Aldred in 1935 has just been reprinted. It is an account of the state of the communist movement at that time which exposes the role of leninism and the Third International in attacking the revolutionary proletarian movement. Available for £2.00 + 40p postage from Unpopular Books, Box 15, 136 King'sland High Road, London E8 2NS.

Subversion are organising a conference in Spring 1989 on "The importance of the market and bureaucracy for capitalism and its enemies". As part of the preparation, *Discussion Paper No.1* outlining why the USSR is capitalist and always has been has been published. Send a blank cheque or P.O. for 50p to Box W, c/o Raven Press, 75 Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 2BU.