



SOLIDARITY WITH COMMUNIST LEAGUE



Last Thursday, 28 June, the French cabinet met in special session and issued an order 'dissolving' the Communist League, French Section of the Fourth International, along with the fascist organisation, *Ordre Nouveau*.

This attack on the League came exactly one week after the massive anti-fascist demonstration of 21 June in the centre of Paris had erupted into violent clashes between police and demonstrators. The purpose of the demonstration was to prevent the fascist organisation *Ordre Nouveau* from holding a public meeting on the question of immigration. This meeting, the latest attempt by the fascists to gain some popular support for their movement, was part of a blatantly racist campaign.

The authorities insisted on giving the meeting their full protection, and this made a confrontation between police and anti-fascists inevitable. After a long experience of the collaboration between police and armed fascist bands in attacking counter-demonstrators, the anti-fascists came fully equipped for combat and generally fared well in the fighting. In a very dramatic reversal of the usual toll of injuries, some 70 policemen were hospitalised after the demonstration.

There is widespread feeling throughout the police force that they were deliberately set up by

Since the banning of the Communist League by the French government on 28 June a massive campaign of defence has developed throughout the French working class movement.

The day after the government's 'order of dissolution' was issued, a meeting was convened of the Council for the Defence of Rights — a united front grouping together twenty of the most important trade union and left-wing political groups in France, including the Communist Party, the Socialist Party, and the two main trade union federations. These organisations decided to sponsor a mass meeting in protest at the banning of the League, to take place in Paris on 4 July.

Public statements denouncing the Government's action and calling for the ending of the ban have been made by every important workers' organisation.

the authorities to act as a trap for the extreme left, and to give the Government an excuse for the repression of the League. There were far too many 'accidents', 'mistakes', and 'failures of communication' to be coincidental. As the leading French daily *Le Monde* said: 'Everything happened just as if it was hoped that the police would suffer a harsh defeat of the sort that might make them alter their conception of public order.' When Minister of the Interior Marcellin visited injured policemen in hospital after the demonstration one of them greeted him by saying: 'You see before you, Mr. Minister, a victim of your policies.'

UNITED LEFT BACKS LEAGUE

The Communist Party issued a statement protesting against what they described as a 'grave precedent for freedom and democratic rights.'

The Socialist Party termed the attack on the League 'a new blow against democratic freedoms' and described the simultaneous banning of *Ordre Nouveau* as 'having as its only aim to deceive public opinion'; they stressed the need 'to bring together, as quickly as possible, all the working class and democratic organisations.'

The executive commission of the Communist-

Part of the crowd of 7000 who made up the Paris region election rally of the Communist League, held in the Paris Sports Palace last February.

Almost seven hours after the end of the demonstration, police raided the Paris headquarters of the League without a warrant, on the absurd pretext of being in direct pursuit of law-breakers. They immediately commenced to wreck the premises, on the pretext of carrying out a 'search'. They found a number of purely defensive weapons, of the type which any workers' organisation in France would require to protect itself from the rising volume of armed fascist attacks that have been taking place recently. Apart from those, their only 'discovery' was two guns, which an unknown man had brought to the headquarters a few days before, one of World War I vintage, found in an open cupboard.

On this pretext all 25 members of the League found in the headquarters were taken into custody, 14 later being charged with offences

against the weapons law. One, Pierre Rousset, is still being held in custody.

On the day following the 'dissolution', 12 members of the League Central Committee were arrested and their homes searched. Eleven of these were later released after questioning, but Alain Krivine, League candidate against De Gaulle in the 1969 Presidential election, is still in custody at the time of writing. He is being charged under France's infamous 'anti-rioters law', which allows the organisers of a demonstration to be held responsible for the actions of any of the participants on the demonstration.

Government's Fig Leaf

No one has been fooled by the government's attempt to cover its repressive drive with the fig-leaf of the ban on *Ordre Nouveau*. The long history of official encouragement and cooperation with the fascists leaves no doubt that *Ordre Nouveau* will be permitted to reform under another name, as they did after their predecessor *Occident* was banned in 1969. It is only the militants of the Communist League who are being hounded by the police after the events of 21 June.

The entire French left has commented on the 'false symmetry' of the government's action — that is, they are not at all prepared to see the anti-fascist demonstrators, defenders of the working class movement, treated in the same manner as the racist and anti-semitic rabble of the fascist groups.

International Solidarity

A massive campaign in defence of the League is under way throughout France. All the major organisations of the left, and the main trade union bodies, have come out against the government ban, and are demanding the release of Alain Krivine and Pierre Rousset.

This question is one of concern not only to the French workers' movement, but to the working-class of all countries. The world strategy of the capitalist ruling class in this period of growing economic and social crisis inevitably takes on more and more the character of open repression. West Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, Italy and Great Britain have all seen important steps in this direction in the recent past. Similarly, the revival of the fascist bands is taking place in many capitalist countries. The working class movement must fight back against fascism and capitalist repression wherever and whenever it occurs. International solidarity will be an essential part of making this an effective and victorious struggle.

Brian Stocock

the fascist movement *Ordre Nouveau* should not fool anyone. Freedom is indivisible. The dissolution of an organisation of the extreme left is a new threat for all the organisations of the opposition.'

A joint statement by the three trade unions who represent the state radio and television employees protested against 'the lying fashion in which the Communist League was portrayed on the television news programmes of 28 June.'

Meanwhile, international action in defence of the League is getting underway. The Japanese section of the Fourth International has already occupied the French embassy, and similar displays of support are planned in many countries.

It appears that the Pompidou regime and the French ruling class may have bitten off more than it can chew. With a united defence campaign of the French left, and a mass movement of international solidarity, behind it the Communist League cannot fail to win.

COMMUNIST LEAGUE - CAPITAL AT BAY

by JAMES MARSHALL

The Communist League was formed in the aftermath of the May 1968 General Strike in France. It rapidly developed to become the most important revolutionary organisation in France. During the spring of this year, it was able to lead movements of hundreds of thousands. Its political impact on French society has reached such a point that the French bourgeoisie has been preparing to act against it for some time. The recent clash with *Ordre Nouveau* merely provided the pretext.

The keystone of the Communist League's politics has always been an understanding that the development of the revolutionary movement in any country is only part of an international process. For this reason the League has always been in the fore of all mobilisations on international questions in France. It has led the Indochina Solidarity Front and a whole series of actions on questions such as the Burgos trials of anti-Franco Basque nationalists in Spain. This is in addition to its work in aiding the construction of sections of the Fourth International not only in Europe but also in Asia, Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe. This help was acknowledged at the last Congress of the League when messages of solidarity were received from revolutionary organisations on every continent.

Mass Mobilisations

Since Alain Krivine's campaign in the 1969 Presidential election, the first revolutionary intervention on a national scale in a European election since the 1930's, the League has led actions against militarism, the police, a revolutionary electoral and propaganda campaign independent of the reformist Communist Party-Socialist party 'Union of the Left,' and on every other key political question facing the French working class movement.

The high point of its activity was the demonstration of 200,000, very largely mobilised due to the work of the League, that took place after the killing of a young revolutionary militant, Pierre Overney, by a Renault Security guard. The size of this action stunned not only the French ruling class, but also the French Communist Party, which had previously described the revolutionary left as a 'small handful of wreckers.'

Working Class Base

The key task which the Communist League has always set for itself is the construction of a base of support within the working class movement. But it has always understood the need to do this on a *political*, not just a trade union, foundation. It has centred its activity around the need to set up elected strike committees and workers self defence during strikes, and around campaigns for union democracy and to mobilise mass support for isolated groups of workers in struggle. In this way it has tried to prepare the ground so that the next big upsurge of working class struggle will be able to overcome the principal weakness of May/June '68 - the failure of mass working class elected bodies to appear which could both organise resistance to the state and enable the working class to democratically decide the way forward. It was this weakness which allowed the French Communist Party to head off the movement and divert it into reformist channels.

The successes gained by the League in the trade union field was reflected in the recent trade union conference of the League, attended by 800 militants who assessed the progress of the workers struggle in France and also the enormous developments on a European scale. The leadership of the CFTD, the

second biggest trade union federation in France, was forced to devote large parts of its recent conference to discussing the positions of the League, some of which received as much as 20% of the votes cast.

National Political Impact

The national political impact of the League was brought to a new height this spring in the enormous movement against the recently adopted harsh laws on conscription. This represented by far the biggest social movement in France since 1968. On April 2nd there were a total of 216 demonstrations in France, with more than 300,000 demonstrating in Paris and the provinces. The opening of the new French Parliament was greeted by a demonstration of over 100,000 in Paris alone. The whole movement was organised through democratically elected strike committees - a vast step forward on 1968. This movement was openly acknowledged by all to be under the political leadership of the League. The capitalist press reported the statements of the League every day. Even the Communist leadership of the CGT, the main trade union organisation in France, was forced to approach the League for a joint meeting on the way forward for the movement. This must represent one of the first occasions in which the leaders of a mass Stalinist organisation have been forced to approach Trotskyists for joint activity in such an upsurge.

It is these developments which have opened up the possibility that, for the first time in Europe since the 1920s, a real mass revolutionary party with a base in the working class might come into existence. It is this which has led the French capitalist class to open up its attack on the League.

WHY THE MINISTER UNDERSTANDS FASCISM

The French Minister of the Interior (Home Secretary) whose order banned the Communist League, has himself a very interesting history. He started his career under the pro-Nazi Vichy government and taught at the 'Institute for Corporatist Studies' - the 'corporate state' being a key part of fascism's official theory. He openly supported the racist and anti-semitic policies of Petain's regime and was officially decorated by the Vichy regime for his services.

This was followed, after the war, by a spell as Secretary to Minister of the Interior, Jules Moch - remembered in France for his use of police to break strikes. During the 50's he was a critic of De Gaulle from the right. In May '68, French Prime Minister, Pompidou, welcomed him with open arms and entrusted him with the post of Minister of the Interior - which involves control over the French police force, including the notorious CRS riot police. Now he could defend 'the moral values of the West: family, work, the nation and order'. This is to be done by strengthening the police force and by drawing upon the services of notorious reactionaries. Among his more notable statements is 'We must end attacks on what makes our country strong and stable: the police, the army, public power.'

Having let loose the cops against the anti-Franco Basque militants, against workers striking at factories like Peugeot, Caterpillar, Lip, to mention only a few examples, his aim is now to smash the revolutionary vanguard by banning the Communist League. 'France must smash the revolutionaries, not suffer them' is another saying that has been attributed to him.



Armed Ordre Nouveau marshals during the 1971 meeting in the Paris Sports Palace.

ORDRE NOUVEAU RIGHT ARM OF FRENCH CAPITALISM

Ordre Nouveau is the largest fascist organisation in France. It grew out of the pro-Nazi Occident ('The West') after the latter was banned in 1969.

In the aftermath of the upheavals of May/June '68, the French state authorities became aware of the need to root the revolutionaries out of their base in the universities and colleges. At the same time they were aware that any direct attack by the state would only serve to strengthen the support of the mass of students for the left. Their answer was to encourage the development of fascist groups within the student movement, and to turn a blind eye to physical assaults by these groups on revolutionaries and left wing organisations.

Armed Attacks

However the radicalisation that had taken place among students during May/June meant that the traditional support for the right-wing among students had declined immensely, while the left was both stronger and more willing to fight back. As a result the fascists quickly turned their attention from leafletting to launching armed attacks on colleges known for their left-wing sympathies.

One such attack was launched against a Paris college in May 1969 by Occident. The raiding party faced a determined defensive response from the college students. The raiders were forced to retreat, but as they were being

driven out one of their number tossed a live hand grenade, which exploded blowing off the hand of one young anti-fascist militant. It was this incident which forced the authorities to order the dissolution of Occident, but there was no attempt to identify and prosecute those responsible for the raid and its consequences.

Ordre Nouveau

In 1970, Ordre Nouveau was created by the supporters of the former Occident. Support and financial backing was received from various reactionary quarters including two major French banks.

The government also provided cover for the re-

organisation of the fascists, giving their public functions regular police protection. In March 1971 Ordre Nouveau made a bid to broaden its support by organising a mass meeting in the Paris Sports Palace. Despite massive police protection, the meeting drew a crowd of only 2000, compared with a counter demonstration of 7000. Armed Ordre Nouveau marshals cooperated closely with the Paris riot police in attacking and beating counter demonstrators.

During the recent elections Ordre Nouveau formed the 'National Front' to try and unite all the various right-wing elements in order to have the maximum impact in the election. This body had only limited success, however, and has since fallen apart.

Racist Campaign

The latest attempt of the fascists to whip up some popular enthusiasm for their cause has been the launching of a campaign against 'runaway immigration.' Marked by racist propaganda familiar to anyone who has seen the material of the National Front in Britain (with whom Ordre Nouveau consider themselves in solidarity), this campaign produced a number of very nasty attacks on immigrant workers, particularly in smaller provincial towns.

This upsurge of fascist activity has coincided with a number of armed attacks by fascist bands on groups of striking workers, such as the Peugeot workers during April.

Defend the Communist League

In general, the traditional workers' organisations have failed to take any effective initiatives against the fascist organisations. It has fallen to the Communist League to agitate for the setting up of workers self defence against the fascist attacks and, in alliance with other groups of the 'ultra-left', to campaign against the public activities of the fascists.

The fascist bands are seen by French big business and the French state as playing an important part in their strategy to weaken the working class movement. That is one of the major reasons why they have dealt with the Communist League in such a prompt and ruthless fashion. The defence of the Communist League is the defence of the whole French working class movement against the deprivations of fascism and the capitalist repressive machine.

Chris Ballfour

LEAGUE EXPLAINS ACTIONS

The following are the central points made by Alain Krivine, a leading member of the former Communist League, in the course of a press conference held in the League's Paris headquarters on 25 June, shortly after the premises had been raided by the police. Four days after this press conference Krivine himself was arrested and charged with responsibility for the incidents that occurred during the anti-fascist demonstration. He is still being held without bail.

Let us begin by setting the record straight: we are not in favour of 'urban guerilla warfare', the rural variety or any other sort. We don't believe that it is possible to take power by knocking off policemen one-by-one with molotov cocktails. It won't be 5000, 10,000 or even 100,000 demonstrators who will make the revolution. We employ violence as a minority when we are forced to do so and when we are certain such actions will be understood by the masses... Only the action of the masses can put a stop to the fascist bands. Similarly, only the mobilisation of the mass of workers can successfully drive back the attacks of the police and fascist bands against strike pickets.

RESPONSIBILITIES

But we must live up to our responsibilities: fascism must be crushed while it's still in its infancy, before it's too late. We may be young, but we have a better memory than our elders. We do not want a repetition of what happened in the 1930's. There has always been the same reactions to fascism in the past: 'they're not dangerous, there's plenty of time to take action, etc.'... and then one fine day it's too late. No freedom of speech for racists and anti-semites! Since none of the traditional working-class and democratic organisations will face up to their responsibilities the revolutionaries have had to do it. We made June 21 a test, a national warning. We showed the way.

What took place was the fault of the authorities: they allowed the Nazi meeting to take place and provided it with protection. They deliberately made their police into targets as the protectors of Ordre Nouveau. The state-

ment of Marcellin [French Home secretary] at Vannes, before the meeting, testifies to the fact that he was setting a trap, using the police as guinea-pigs. The entire press has pointed to the close collaboration of the police and the Ordre Nouveau marshals, both before and after the meeting.

A DETERMINED RESPONSE

Ordre Nouveau is a tiny Nazi group, but it feeds off the development of fascist currents in the state and the police force. The armed bands of capitalism may be legal (the police, the army) or illegal (when the former are no longer adequate). The purpose of all fascist groups is to attack and weaken the working class and revolutionary organisations. There are no 'democratic' responses which can adequately deal with such armed attacks. It is necessary to organise to defend ourselves, although this can only be completely successful with the mobilisation and involvement of the masses.

Racist and anti-semitic campaigns spread very rapidly and in a hysterical fashion. Take the examples of Grasse where a real witch-hunt against immigrant workers took place, of Nice where Ordre Nouveau try to deny the revolutionaries any freedom of expression, of the Paris suburbs where several Arab cafes have been physically attacked over the past few days, or of the Communist Party offices which have been similarly attacked... All this demands an immediate and determined response.

It is essential to broaden the struggle: we are not going to play 'war games' with Ordre

Nouveau... We have set an example. It is the duty of workers' organisations to follow our initiative by organising united action of all anti-fascists, without any exclusions. In this spirit we urgently appeal to all working-class and democratic organisations...

THE RAID

In relation to the raid on our headquarters I have four points to make:

1. Who decided upon this operation? Why was a sentence removed from the second edition of *Le Monde* - that which stated that the appropriate authority was not aware of the raid? Who, which officials, which section of the police occupied the headquarters of the Communist League?

2. Was there a warrant? No. Was the raid carried out on the pretext of being in pursuit of a law-breaker? Yes. But why did it take place 6½ hours after the end of the demonstration? This excuse could no longer apply then.

3. The raid was conducted out of the sight of all those who were present in the building. Pierre Rousset demanded to be allowed to observe the search. The reply of the police was to remove his trousers and lock him up in a small room.

4. Is the taking of hostages provided for in the holy writ of the law? 25 comrades were arrested, 14 charged for the sole 'crime' of being present in the headquarters at the time of the raid... The cops didn't for a single moment act in a legal manner. They smashed everything, even trampling on books. It was like a scene from the film 'Fahrenheit 451'.

WEAPONS

About the weapons. It is not our political policy to stockpile these. We are not preparing for guerilla warfare at the moment, that would be absurd at the present time. The reason for

their presence is simple. These weapons were brought to us ten days ago by someone we did not know. Was this a provocation or just irresponsibility? Those who received these guns were afraid they might fall into a trap if they tried to dispose of them immediately. They could have been seized the moment they were taken out of the headquarters. They decided to wait: this was irresponsible but it happened.

These two guns (one of which dates from the 1914 war!) were not hidden. Far from it, they were found in an unlocked cupboard. We consider this question to be a minor one. All organisations face such situations at one time or another (the Communist Party, the Socialist Party and ourselves)... The first to have been surprised must have been Pierre Rousset. As for the molotov cocktails, we do have a few for the defence of the centre, which was attacked... by Ordre Nouveau just a month ago. The rest of our defensive supplies are just bottles of water and iron bars, that's all. Here again, all organisations keep such material in their offices.

FREE PIERRE ROUSSET

Pierre Rousset no longer takes part in any demonstrations (nor even in the selling of *Rouge*, for which one can also be arrested) since he received an 8-month suspended sentence. That's why he remained in the headquarters that night. His arrest is an example of the 'taking of hostages'. We demand his immediate freedom. We will launch a big campaign to get it.

The 25 comrades arrested by the police and the 14 kept in custody were the object of many racist, anti-semitic and fascist insults on the part of the police.

We are starting a big fund raising campaign to pay for the damage to the headquarters and to develop the anti-fascist campaign. We are calling on the journalists to correct the bias of the press campaign against the League.

The press campaign launched by the authorities after the 21 June demonstration requires a response and explanation on our part.

In particular, it appears that everything was done to unite the police in opposition to the demonstrators; perhaps with the intention of preparing a future vigorous repression of revolutionary militants and the whole workers' movement. That is why we are publicly addressing ourselves to you.

After the 21st you vehemently denounced the violence and provocative action of the demonstrators. At this time, we would like to remind you of a previous incident: that of the meeting held by Ordre Nouveau on 9 March 1971 at the Sports Palace, a meeting which also produced clashes between counter-demonstrators and the police.

On that occasion you protested against the fact that the fascists had been allowed to openly arm themselves and turn the Sports Palace into an armed stronghold. Did the authorities take account of this previous incident? Not at all. Throughout the entire morning of 21 June the would-be fascists were left in peace to build up their arsenal in the Mutualité meeting hall. That is why we were forced to seize one of their vehicles ourselves and search it... without causing any damage whatsoever.

In 1971 you also protested against the use of police, alongside helmeted Ordre Nouveau marshals, to beat and club isolated demonstrators. On this occasion the fascists turned up in groups with their equipment, under protection of the police, and left at midnight in a similar manner, escorted by the police as far as their headquarters. Everyone who witnessed the meeting will corroborate this. What does this cooperation of the police with the fascists signify?

The fact of the matter is that the deliberate collaboration of the police officials with the fascists was at least as glaring, if not more so, than in 1971. That is why we are surprised by the different stance you have taken.

Why do you think that on this occasion it is only a matter of 'guaranteeing freedom of speech' and why do you vehemently denounce 'the provocateurs and professional demagogues who practise wanton violence against servants of the state who are only carrying out their duty within the framework of our institutions'?

There can only be two explanations. Either

The following is an open letter written by the Communist League to Gerard Monatte, Secretary of the Independent Federation of Police Trade Unions. The Independent Federation numbers about 80% of the total French police force in its ranks. The much smaller police unions affiliated to the Communist-led CGT and the Socialist Party influenced CFDT have both issued statements assigning the main responsibility for what happened on 21 June to the authorities, although criticising the demonstrators at the same time.

OPEN LETTER TO THE POLICE

you really believe that it is a matter of defending free speech, an opinion you share with Chief of Police Lenoir: you think that the meeting was simply ideological in character, and was not likely to 'disturb public order.'

This is false. We are dealing with a campaign to influence public feeling in an openly racist and anti-semitic direction. Something with this character is intolerable, and illegal even by the standards of capitalist law which the police are supposed to uphold. Only a few days ago, militants of Ordre Nouveau from Nice carried out such a campaign in Grasse. This consciously and deliberately helped to spark off racist incidents, such as we have not seen for a long time, and came very close to causing the lynching of a North African worker.

On the other hand, the Independent Federa-

tion of which you are secretary, may have been motivated by the fact that this time the damages were greater, the balance of suffering less favourable, on the side of the police. But you and your colleagues should ask yourselves about the attitude and the responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior and Police Headquarters.

First of all, by their open collaboration with the fascists they wore out the patience of the demonstrators. Secondly, on several occasions police cars or individual policemen found themselves isolated along the route of the march. This happened so often that one must ask if they were not being used cynically as bait in the hope of setting off serious incidents.

Attacks on two police vehicles... have been exploited by the sensationalist press. The driver of the first car, perhaps panic-stricken,

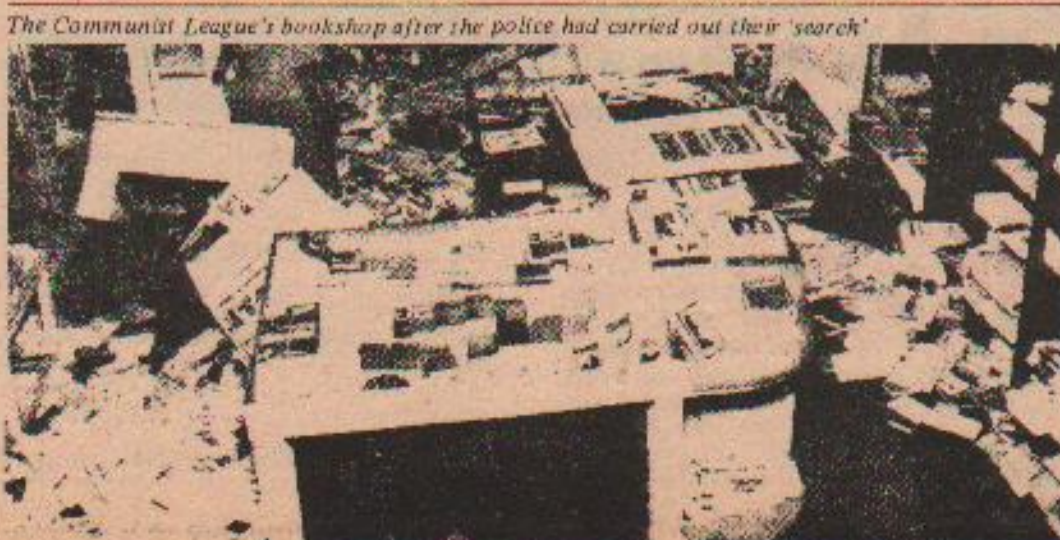
drove into the demonstration scattering the crowd, one demonstrator suffering serious injury to his legs. The other car turned up at the head of the march, which could be seen approaching from the distance; that is, he had plenty of time to get away. This car was attacked, and the police in it badly burned. But many eye witnesses can confirm that it was the marshals from the demonstration who rushed to the aid of the police, even when one of them drew his pistol in panic.

It seems to us that the authorities responsible deliberately placed the police in exposed positions and exploited the incidents that resulted to create a witch-hunt atmosphere against the revolutionaries. At a time when the authorities are using Ordre Nouveau against the revolutionary groups, (the bosses' union of the CFT against strikers, they are also attempting to strengthen the fascist currents within the police.

Things must be spelled out. We clashed with policemen who were engaged in physically protecting a fascist meeting. We are not among those who believe that the police force can be reformed... We believe that the police is an instrument of repression created by the capitalist class for its own use. As a result we think that the police by its very nature must support the bosses against the workers, and protect fascists against revolutionaries. But we don't hold each individual policeman responsible for the role of the police as a whole. There are among them the sons of workers, small farmers, shopkeepers, who have joined the police not out of choice, but because they were driven to it through unemployment. The authorities are today counting on the fact that the indignation of the police will better prepare them to intervene against the workers...

Finally, in summation, two questions. Do you think it is a normal state of affairs that you are required to protect fascists and intervene against strikers who are fighting for better wages and working conditions? Do you not think that those who disfigured Richard Deshayes and are still unpunished to this day, those who in increasing numbers toss live grenades into crowds of demonstrators, those who beat and murder in the police stations or those who use their jobs as a cover for white slave trafficking and drug smuggling, are primarily responsible for the discredit of the police?

Political Bureau of the Communist League



DEFEND THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE

On June 28th, 1973, the French government, after a special cabinet meeting, announced the dissolution of the Communist League, the French section of the Fourth International, and prepared to prosecute its leaders in a 'special Court for State Security.' This is one of the few instances since June 1968 that a revolutionary organisation has been declared illegal. As such it constitutes the opening of a new attack on the revolutionary movement as a whole and reflects the gravity of the social and political crisis which is confronting the French ruling class.

The attack on the Communist League comes on the heels of the latter's combative opposition to the French fascist organisation Ordre Nouveau (New Order). This organisation attempted to hold a mass meeting in the centre of Paris to mobilise support for an openly racist campaign directed against immigrant workers. The Communist League was vital in ensuring a vigorous counter-demonstration in the course of which the police openly appeared as the defenders of the Ordre Nouveau. At the end of the day nearly seven hundred fascists, dressed in black uniforms and black helmets were escorted by armed policemen in their black uniforms and riot shields to a place of safety. This is the first time since 1934 that the French police has come to the aid of the fascists in such a blatant way. Ordre Nouveau has, over the last year, been particularly active not only in hounding and planning attacks on immigrant workers, but also in serving as strikebreakers for the French bosses by openly attacking picket lines.

The International Marxist Group, the British section of the Fourth International, salutes the militants of the dissolved Communist League and congratulates them for their initiatives against the fascists. The rise of a new extreme-right is not simply a French phenomenon. It is a process which is taking place in a number of countries in capitalist Europe and is a result of the growing instability of the capitalist system on both an economic and political level.

As such it has to be seen in the light of the increasing repression and attacks on democratic rights which the bourgeois governments themselves are launching throughout Europe. The banning of a Maoist group in Brandt's Germany, the new laws against immigrants in social-democratic Sweden, the legal harassment of strikers in Britain together with the role of the army in Northern Ireland, the rise of the MSI in Italy, repression in Switzerland, are all pointers to the growth of the strong state in a period of capitalist decay.

In this situation the attack of the French government on the Communist League does not come as a surprise. For the last two years the growth of the Communist League as the largest and most powerful organisation of the revolutionary left in Western Europe has been worrying the French bourgeoisie. The role of the Communist League, earlier this spring, in the massive mobilisations of school students against the army and its actions in defending these mobilisations against the fascists is public knowledge. It was only a matter of time before the Gaullist regime intervened. The fact that they have acted against the French section of the Fourth International because of the latter's initiatives against a fascist organisation is an indication whose importance will not be lost on the working class movement in France. Already protests are pouring in from many quarters.

The action cannot be allowed to go unchallenged. The IMG appeals to all working class organisations (including the Labour and Communist Parties) to support a campaign in this country to get the ban on the Communist League lifted. We call, in particular, on all socialists and revolutionary organisations to join in our actions on this question which include a picket of the French Embassy this weekend, a public meeting in the following week and a demonstration on Saturday 7th July.

International Marxist Group, British Section of the Fourth International - 29 June 1973

POMPIDOU: OPEN LETTER

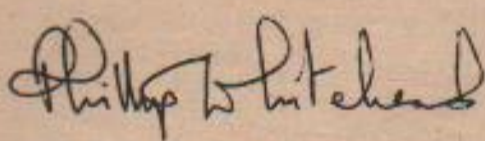
To:
M. Georges Pompidou,
President,
Republic of France,
Paris.

Dear M. President,

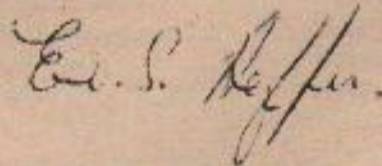
We are writing to you to protest against the action of your government in "dissolving" the Communist League.

While many of us would not agree either with the politics or the actions of the Communist League, we should like to point out that the working class movement in Europe cannot afford to be neutral on the question of racism or fascism. It has suffered too much in the recent past in a number of countries of Europe at the hands of fascism to ignore the danger.

We would therefore like to associate ourselves with the Socialist and Communist Parties, the C.G.T. and the C.F.D.T. and all other defenders of civil liberties in France, and urge you most strongly to withdraw the ban imposed on the Communist League.



Phillip Whitehead, MP for Derby North



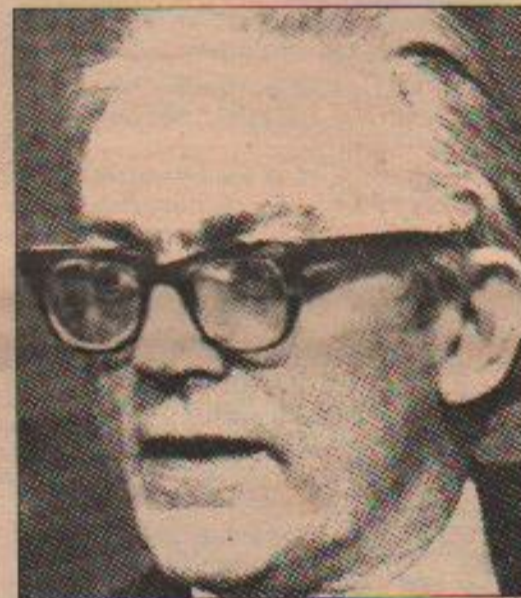
Eric Heffer, MP for Liverpool, Walton



Norman Atkinson, MP for Tottenham

Michael Foot, MP for Ebbw Vale

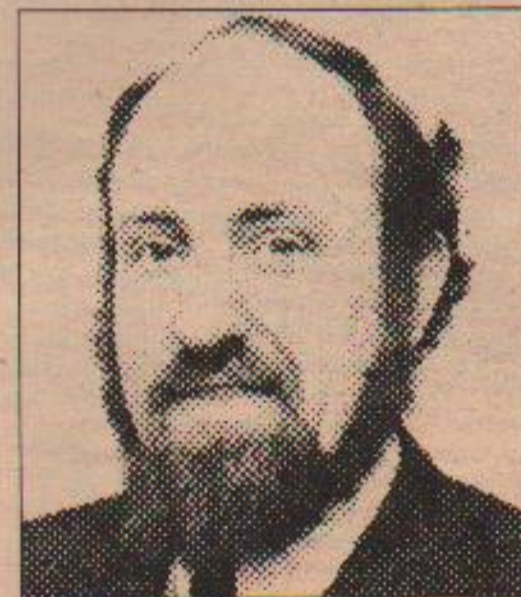
Frank Alloun, MP for Salford



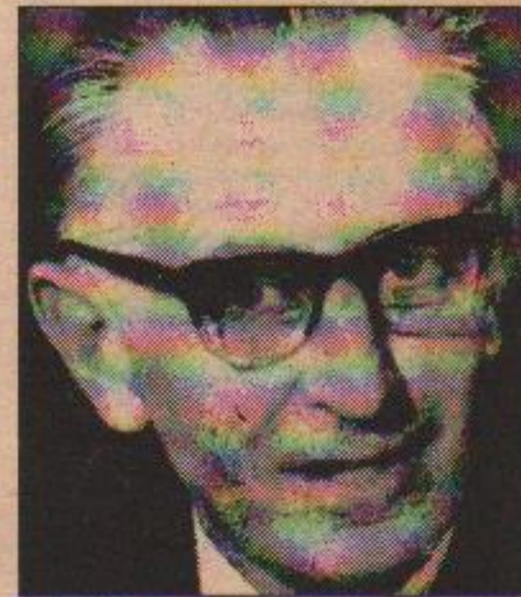
Michael Foot



Eric Heffer



Phillip Whitehead



Frank Alloun

DEFENCE CAMPAIGN

We would like to urge militants from all parts of the country to take an active part in the defence of the Communist League. Actions will be taking place in every area.

I am interested in participating in the defence of the Communist League.

Name
Address

Telephone

I enclose £ _____ to aid the international defence campaign.

Send to: I.M.G., 182 Pentonville Rd., London N.1