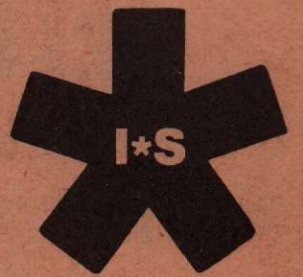


Socialist Worker



FOR WORKERS CONTROL AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM

MASS STRIKES AND MARCHES HIT ITALY



By NORAH CARLIN

EVEN THE BRITISH press, for which Italy is normally a land of comic opera and holidays, has been forced to turn its attention to events there in the last two weeks.

A nation-wide wave of strikes and mass demonstrations followed the shooting of two agricultural labourers, striking for higher wages, at Avola in Sicily on Monday, December 2.

Is Italy on the verge of a crisis like the one which shook France in May and June?

The events are not isolated or sudden. In the last year Italy has had a wave of strikes and demonstrations with roots in both working-class and student discontent.

The national economy is prospering, with a high export growth rate and a favourable balance of trade, which builds up currency reserves and benefits speculators and financiers.

CORRUPTION

But wages have been firmly held down to enable this to take place, the social services are in a state of neglect, corruption and inefficiency in government are as widespread as ever, and the still-promised educational reforms have failed to materialise.

One-day general strikes, as on November 14, have been called by the three trade union federations (Communist, Catholic and social-democrat) against the inadequacy of the social services, particularly the miserable pension schemes.

More significantly, strikes in particular industries and factories throughout the country have been becoming more militant, such as the northern textile workers' strike which occupied a factory last summer, or the link-up between Pirelli tyre workers in Milan and Turin who have cut productivity to a third in support of their wage claim.

CLASHED

The strikers have also been becoming more violent. Avola was the second occasion in a week that the Sicilian police clashed with demonstrating workers. At Palermo on November 26 they broke up 400 metalworkers striking for higher pay.

The armed police (carabinieri) have also been used freely against the student movement, which has grown in size and militancy since the occupation of Turin university a year ago and the wide spread demonstrations before and during the crisis in France.

Increasingly disillusioned with the parliamentary politics of the Socialist and Communist parties, the students have as yet no clear Left-wing leadership. There are many Maoist and anarchist groups, and a hippy tendency of recent growth—enough for the Communist Party to dissociate itself firmly from 'student extremism'.

The most important recent development is the attraction of high school pupils into the movement. Their city-wide strike in Rome on December 3 followed the surrounding of an occupied school by armed police on November 19, and

To back page

ROME: 50,000 workers and students marched last week for higher wages.

PANIC IN HIGH PLACES

CALL FOR 'NATIONAL' GOVERNMENT TO HAMMER TRADE UNIONS

WHY THE PANIC?

To read the national press in the last few days you would think we were back in 1931, when the financial crisis wrecked the Labour government and Ramsay MacDonald formed a 'National' government with the Tories.

'The government', said The Times on Monday, 'has the smell of Weimar about it', referring to the collapse of parliamentary democracy in Germany in the 1930s and the rise of the Nazis.

Rumours

Every other newspaper joined in the crisis chorus, headlining rumours of Wilson's resignation, more devaluation and further cuts in the standard of living.

The Times' editor called urgently for a coalition government that would get to grips with 'industrial anarchy' and student revolt.

Sir Leslie O'Brien, Governor of the Bank of England, referred to the £14m fall in National Savings last week as 'frankly disastrous'. And a bitter squabble has developed between Labour Cabinet Ministers and their former friends in the City of London.

Socialists can be excused if they feel surprised by these outbursts. In almost every area of British capitalism, the alarmist talk seems to have no relevance to reality.

The Labour government, acting on the instructions of the city which it now attacks, has given immeasurable service to British capitalism over the last four years.

The Incomes Policy with its blanket wage freeze in the last six months of 1966.

The encouragement of industrial monopolies resulting in 100 giant mergers with total

assets of £200m in the first nine months of 1968 (a third more than in 1967).

The drive for productivity and the slashing of social services.

All these measures are paying off handsomely.

Profits are rising sharply. Let the Financial Times of December 2 speak for itself:

'Profits of industrial companies reporting in November showed an increase of 29.7 per cent compared with the previous year.

This rise is well above that of 17.6 per cent recorded for October and gives a combined rise for the two months of 23.5 per cent. The growth rate of profits is now back at the level reached at the last peak in the third and fourth quarters of 1964.

The steady improvement in profits over the year reflects the increasing benefit of devaluation since company reports include a longer period since devaluation. The reports of companies during November covered on average a period of nine months since devaluation.

Of the leading companies reporting in November, Fisons had a profits rise of 39.7 per cent, Plessey up to 19.5 per cent and Tube Investments up 7.1 per cent, while the profits of Rootes Motors were about £10m, compared with a loss in the previous year.

Excluding the results of these companies, profits of the remainder rose by 21.6 per



WILSON Resignation rumour

cent showing that the current performances of most UK industrial companies is good.

The half-hearted dividend freeze has been abandoned. Dividends of industrial companies rose by 6.2 per cent in November compared with the same month last year.

Improved

There was a similar rise of 4.9 per cent in October. Both rises exceed the 3½ per cent 'ceiling' imposed by the government.

It is the workers who have paid out in lost wages, lost school places for their children, lost pension increases, in prescription charges, and in harder effort to meet 'obligations' under productivity deals. The morale and strength of the British ruling class should now be enormously improved.

Both in profitability and in productivity it is now better

equipped to compete with its main competitors abroad.

So why the uproar in the City and the panic in the editorial offices of The Times, a paper that speaks for an important section of the ruling class?

One reason is that they have had an uneasy eye on Europe since the mass strikes in France in May and June. The French workers and students dispelled 20 years of complacency in a single week, and since May the word revolution has been back in the political dictionary.

Now Italy has erupted in huge strikes and demonstrations. In such an atmosphere, reminded each day of their own vulnerability, sections of the ruling class are seeing the spectre of revolution.

Socialists should not be carried away by hysteria. Hard-earned wage increases and social benefits can too easily be abandoned in the rush to defend a mythical 'national interest'.

The immediate struggles against productivity agreements, job evaluation, wage freeze, rent increases and the like must not be abandoned.

There should be reason, not panic, on the Left: the case for a planned society based on workers' control of industry and the expropriation of the parasitic employing class has never been more relevant.

Although the underlying economic situation in each capitalist country is not too unhealthy for their respective

ruling classes, there is instability and vicious competition between them, expressed in the present financial crisis.

The general revamping of capitalism in the last few years has also led to great political instability. This has reached a level in Britain where sections of the ruling class are almost losing confidence in their ability to govern.

Hysteria

They want a coalition government with its consequent mystifying effects—its appeals to patriotism, to the national interest and to all forms of chauvinism.

In this context, Enoch Powell's anti-immigrant hysteria gives a sinister warning of what might happen if the present panicking minority stampede the majority of the ruling class.

In a situation of both danger and opportunity, the need for a united revolutionary Left becomes of crucial importance, to give a massive, total alternative to the present writhings and wriggings of the small group who control our society.

SORRY...

... we're late in appearing this week. A major mechanical breakdown put us badly behind schedule and has resulted in some of our typesetting being below standard. We hope to be back to normal next week.

Craig sacking is red herring

ULSTER'S hard-line Home Affairs Minister 'Adolf' Craig has been chopped from the government by Premier O'Neill—but his removal is not the signal to call off the civil rights campaign in Britain's backyard police state.

O'Neill sacked Craig

because the Home Affairs man wanted Ulster to break with British capitalism and go it alone like Rhodesia. It was not distaste for his strong-arm methods

Some middle-of-the-road leaders of the civil rights movement have praised O'Neill this week for his

'moderation' and willingness to deal with the religious bigotry, heavy unemployment and rigged elections in Ulster.

But behind the mask of smooth respectability stands the architect of present conditions in the Six Counties. The more dangerous

enemies remain in power, backed by the City of London

Militant socialists in Ulster now have a fight on their hands to rescue the civil rights movement from the hands of the flabby moderates who seem ready to prostrate themselves before O'Neill.

NEWS

McCANN

UR

ay—Eamonn

50 for 'leading

ed on October 5.

ed on the

a member

e that

emonstration.

cialists

nts of the

t Organisation

rested in

October for

auvinist

ts, received

ines at the

pealed

nd much

es have

sed.

offman were

y Francis each

suspended one

ences. Cohen

NF with

suspended

two Arab

IZPEN,

(recently

rison) and

ve been

e villages

e born.

strike

Ribble bus-

e-day stoppage

50/- back pay

n by the gov-

LETTERS

HOW SOCIALIST WORKER 'BLINDFOLDS THE WORKING CLASS'

THE NATURE of the present period holds tremendous implications for marxists and aspirant revolutionary parties. Not least of the implications are those concerning revolutionary newspapers, whose task it is to be a 'political organiser' and to raise the level of political consciousness among the most advanced sections of the working class.

Yet Socialist Worker is falling short in this task. Where demands are raised they are economist demands, e.g. on a par with the most advanced level of union consciousness.

This subconscious pandering to syndicalism leads (or has led) us to a situation where we merely voice rank-and-file feeling in the unions, but do not develop this feeling, or canalise it, into a higher, political level of consciousness and activity. Hence we blindfold the class and do not prepare it for the massive political struggles in which it will be engaged.

The paper's criticism of the trade union bureaucrats is syndicalist criticism, not political criticism, and does not analyse the political role of fake-lefts like Scanlon, and right-wingers like Cannon. The result of this failure to criticise politically is that we become prostrated before the class.

Surely what must be pointed out is that a revolutionary political leadership must be developed inside the unions in order to throw out the bureaucracy, which is the 'chief instrument of oppression by the bourgeois state'. That we even suggest this means a principled struggle against the left-labourites and Stalinists in the trade unions, who will, given the opportunity, derail the class in action.

However, by kow-towing to a mere trade-union consciousness we do not fight the Stalinists, and lessen our chances to win over politically the better elements around the Communist Party, which utterly fails to politically educate its members in the trade unions.

Similarly, in articles on mergers, redundancy etc., we must raise demands which pose the question of state power. In the articles on the GEC-AEI merger, there was not one demand for nationalisation under workers' control and no real analysis of the political issues involved in

the mergers.

May we suggest that instead of Socialist Worker being a mere commentary on events, it should seek to develop into an agitational journal around which campaigns can be waged on the basis of sharp political demands.

The struggle for political leadership of the class, the struggle to transform trade union militants into revolutionary cadres, is a difficult one and is above all a political struggle, in which we fight sharply for political policies against all bourgeois and petit-bourgeois trends in the trade unions. To neglect this task now will serve to make it difficult—even impossible—to fulfill it later: Graeme Atkinson, Keith Coulston, Barrie Biddulph, Ruth Biddulph, Manchester readers.

A reply to Alan Plater

DEAR MR. PLATER,

I think you've misinterpreted my piece on Softly, Softly (December 7). I know some very nice policemen, and when I produce some, I'm sure they will be very nice to my children.

But they will remain policemen; cogs in the machine of state repression. I'm not arguing against the accuracy of Softly, Softly (although I maintain it occasionally doesn't deal with things it might deal with), but what I do see in cops on the box is what being a policeman means, irrespective of whether you're a nice bloke or not.

I'm getting at the idea that nice blokes have to play whist at the conservative club, because they're coppers, and all they can do about it is wear a red tie.

The fact that Softly, Softly exposes this sickening dialectic is a compliment to writers like yourself; and there is nobody who admires more than I do the way that you and John Hopkins have used the serial format to create great television drama outside the Softly Softly/Z Cars syndrome.

So I think we're on the same side, really.

Yours Fraternally,
DAVE EDGAR

RUSSIA and the MEANING

Socialist Worker has often put forward the view that Russia, Eastern Europe and the rest of the so-called 'communist bloc' are not socialist countries, as both they and their capitalist opponents claim, but are varieties of bureaucratic state capitalism. This description of the stalinist regimes is not new and was put forward and widely discussed by members of the Left Opposition to Stalin in Russia in the 1920s. The question of how to define the Stalinist regimes is more than obscure discussion between marxists. It is a vital issue for the working class because it asks 'what is the basis of socialism?' Some questions arising from the standpoint that Russia is a state capitalist country are answered by MIKE HEYM

WHO REALLY runs a 'communist' country?

The Russian ruling class is a bureaucracy, that is the top state officials, factory managers, army officers etc. organised through their own exclusive organisation the Communist Party.

This tightly organised group has absolute control over every aspect of life in the country. The state machine, the economy, army, police and mass media are tightly controlled by them.

The slightest threat or criticism is met with fierce repression. The recent events in Czechoslovakia and the violent persecution of critical literary opposition in Russia are ample evidence of this and are only the tip of the iceberg of tyranny.

NO CONTROL

The working class have no control whatsoever over the state or the economy. There are no democratic workers' councils. There is no right of democratic discussion either in the trade unions or the Communist Party.

There is no freedom of working-class parties or newspapers; in short, there is no WORKERS DEMOCRACY.

But how can Russia be capitalist when the economy is completely nationalised, there are no capitalists and no right of inheritance?

Nationalisation of property alone is not the basis of socialism. The question is not that the state owns property but who owns the state.

In post-war Britain, the railways and the mines were nationalised. Many socialists hailed this as a great victory



STALIN
Opposition destroyed

for the workers. But in these industries there were no fundamental changes because the workers had no control of the industry or the state which controlled the industry.

The form of property had changed but the property relations remained the same. In the state capitalist countries the state owns all industry, land, etc., and the state machine is owned and under the complete control of the bureaucracy.

They control industry as a collective group and not as individuals.

The absence of the right of individual inheritance does

not make the bureaucracy any less of an oppressive class group than the hierarchy of the Catholic church in the Middle Ages, who also did not have the right of individual inheritance.

This might show that Russia has a ruling class but why call them capitalist?

The basis of capitalism is that it subordinates living labour (the working class) to the accumulation of capital (dead labour).

SAME TASK

Historically the capitalist ruling classes have carried out the task of building up the productive forces at the expense of the working class. The ruling bureaucratic class in the state capitalist countries has carried out exactly this task and subordinated the consumption of the working class to the building up of heavy industry.

But if the dynamic of capitalism is competition how can this apply to a fully state-owned economy? And surely the absence of boom, slump and unemployment show the economy of Russia is socialist?

The dynamic for a state

capitalist bureaucracy to accumulate stems not from competition on a national scale but through international competition.

The units of capitalist competition get bigger and can be whole nations. The competition between national economies on a military and economic level drive the bureaucracies to accumulate and reinvest capital at the expense of the working class.

True, the state capitalist economies do not express their crisis in exactly the same way as in the west but the crisis none the less exists.

Unemployment certainly exists in some state capitalist countries, and the general economic crisis shows itself in, among other fields, the continuing agricultural and consumer goods crises in Russia.

The Czechoslovak political crisis was brought about largely by a severe economic crisis which demanded radical political changes.

The fabulous rates of growth of the Russian and Eastern European economies have also slowed down considerably in the last few years. At one time these

The Czech invasion —proof that Russia is a brutal imperialist power

rates were quoted as 'proof' that they were socialist.

Do you think that the Russian was not a socialist?

October 1917 successful seizure by the working class the foundation of socialist revolution remained mainly due to the German revolution Social Democracy

The working class in Russia was surrounded by the peasantry. All cut away the

UNDER THE HOT CALIFORNIA SUN, A GRIP

Why the British labour should boycott US grapes and end the West Coast

by ELAINE ELINS

THE END OF ANOTHER harvest of California grapes means the fourth year of continuous efforts by the United Farm Workers Organising Committee (UFWOC) to gain union recognition for the more than one million farm workers of America.

Under the leadership of Mr. Cesar Chavez, himself a migrant farm worker, and with the complete support of the AFL-CIO (the American TUC), they are seeking the dignity and economic freedom of a union contract.

Excluded

At the present time there is no established national union for farm workers. This is because the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), the federal law which guarantees the right to unionise to every other American worker, specifically excludes agricultural labourers.

Because of the large rural representation in Congress, farm workers have been excluded from this law since its passage in 1935. They subsequently have been excluded from all major pieces of labour legislation, including health and pension plans, unemployment insurance workman's compensation for injury on the job, and most minimum wage and child labour laws.

Without the advantage of a union, farm workers are subject to the arbitrary exploitation of their employers.

This has become increasingly true as the agricultural industry has evolved from small and medium sized farms employing a small number of workers, to the present huge 'agribusinesses', operating on multi-million dollar budgets, occupying thousands of acres of farmlands, and employing thousands of workers at peak season.

It is these 'factories in the fields', located mainly in the southwest of the United States, which maintain the social and economic bondage of the farm worker.

Farm workers earn a yearly wage which falls well below the national minimum poverty level income. Most farm workers live, at best, in prison-like compounds and at worst, in crumbling rural shanties, and have little voice in community affairs.

They may work 10 to 12 hours a day, six and seven days a week, in the scorching fields, often without the simple amenities of toilets and drinking water. Their children are forced to drop out of school to supplement the family income by working in the fields.

The UFWOC fight for union recognition has been twofold:

1. They are attempting the slow process of amending the NLRA to include farm workers.
2. They are trying to deal directly with the growers, in an effort to bring them to the bargaining table.

The effort of the past two years to persuade Congress finally to cover the agricultural labourer has been met with widespread support.

But a Bill in Congress is blocked in the rules committee by the filibuster techniques of Senator George Murphy, the showbusiness senator from California. Richard Nixon has spoken out against the efforts of the union and has declared his solidarity with the California growers.

It seems that counterpressures from the White House, now that Mr. Nixon has been elected, will probably be strong enough to keep Congress from acting, at least in the near future.

Early in the struggle, the union sought direct meeting with the growers. Their request for union representation elections were flatly

refused, and often ignored.

Therefore, in 1967, workers went on strike. Because of opposition from the state government, however, the strike met with varying success.

The farm workers' many of their strikes have been 'stabilised' by the State of Employment through the direction of reactionary Ronald Reagan.

The companies are able to recruit Mexican workers and break the strike by driving down wages and hiring workers, informing them of the strike.

When the workers of California learn and perhaps decide to work at the farm, they are told that they must owe the company transportation.

When this has been worked out, now owe the company room and board, vicious cycle of

Socialist Worker

Paxton Works Paxton Road London N17 telephone 01-808 4847

Editor Roger Protz
Editorial Committee Paul Foot Richard Kuper Peter Osborne
Business Manager Jim Nichol

WHERE WE STAND

SOCIALIST WORKER is the paper of International Socialism, a movement of revolutionary socialists who believe that the present form of society, with its blatant inequalities, its periodic crises, wars and racialist hysteria must be replaced by one based on a planned economy under full workers' control; those who produce the wealth should own and control the means of production. International Socialism is opposed to any incomes policy that seeks to restrict the wages of the workers in order to boost the profits of the employers. We unconditionally support all shop stewards and rank and file trade union members in their struggles for better wages and conditions and oppose all reactionary laws that threaten the liberties of the labour movement. We support all strikes in defence of workers' interests with the de-

mand of no victimisation of trade unionists. Redundancy should be opposed with the demand: five days work or five days pay. Shop stewards organisations should strengthen and extend their in-

fluence by linking up on an industrial and ultimately a national basis.

We are opposed to racial discrimination, a weapon used by the ruling class to divide the labour movement. Immigration control must be ended, ensuring the free movement of peoples regardless of race and colour. Black and white workers must unite and form their own defence organisations to fight fascism and racialism. The labour movement must demand the immediate recall of British troops from abroad as the first step towards ending colonial exploitation.

The task of revolutionary socialists is to join workers in their struggles with socialist ideas that will link up the various sections of the labour movement and help create a force that will lead on to workers' power and international socialism.

ING of SOCIALISM



supporting the imperialist bloc.

Since Stalin's death in 1953 he has been denounced by his successors for having committed crimes against socialism. But those who denounce him were parties to these crimes and remained strangely silent at the time.

While they have denounced Stalin these men have carried on exactly the same sort of policies.

The brutal suppression of the Hungarian revolution in 1956 and the invasion of Czechoslovakia this year were carried out by a Russian leadership which denounced Stalin but fully deserve the title Stalinist.

Inside Russia the basic inequalities still remain. The working class have in no way increased their rights or powers and although materially better off they still remain an exploited class.

To oppose the Stalinist system is the duty of every revolutionary socialist and marxist.

NO DIFFERENT

Most workers reject the system they see in Russia since it offers them no basic difference..

The capitalist mass media gladly identify this with socialism. They do not wish workers to see a real alternative to capitalism and Stalinism..

This alternative does exist in a socialist system based on WORKERS CONTROL and WORKERS DEMOCRACY.

This is in no way support for imperialism. Indeed we cannot fight imperialism in the West without fighting it in the East.

Oppression and tyranny are worldwide and must be fought internationally.

To the tyrants and oppressors throughout the world all workers must say NEITHER WASHINGTON nor MOSCOW but INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM.

The Big Bum Corporation trots out Uncle Enoch, the people's friend...

'THE SMALL-TIME bum who has been allowed by our rulers to become a big-time bum deserves no place of honour in the annals either of bumming or of history.'

Brecht said it of Hitler; but the attitude to our own home-grown bum, Uncle Enoch, the people's friend, is no less a matter of historical hyperbole.

If the Panorama rags-to-riches' epic of the Rise of Powell (Monday December 2) set out with any firm purpose, it was to attempt to fill out the baggy suit of this sad little man into some sort of shape.

For which Ace Reporter Robert MacNeill needed a pretty sizeable bladder. He found it in his own mealy-mouthed interrogation.

With Robin Day, we might have had a fight on our hands. But although Mr. MacNeill put all the wishy-washy points (do you think you might be exacerbating racial tension, Mr. Powell, please, Sir?) he allowed Powell's 'I'm the greatest safety valve this country has got' to go by without so much as a murmur.

DUBIOUS

The only bite against Powell was provided in the dubious shape of Ray Gunter, who, although he expressed one or two doubts about the 'safety valve' theory, did claim unanimously that our Enoch is 'a man of great principles, a man of great honour'.

Mr. MacNeill, in his turn, began his exhibition of aggressive interviewing with the deathless stipulation:



POWELL: Big battalions

'Let's leave aside your evidence, Mr. Powell...'

He even admitted that the pollsters commissioned had expressed doubts about the representativeness of their sample. This, plus the odd student demo and a lonely 'Indian's comment, was the sum total of the Other Side that the BBC graced us with.

But on Powell's side, we had the big battalions.

From a contented cradle, we followed this man, old school-friend by old school-friend, through King Edward's Birmingham to Cambridge, to a professorship in Australia, a meteoric rise in the army and into politics; ladled out with liberal helpings of the Powell 'self-help' philosophy of 'so be it'.

Eager, we hear, to pursue the career of a concert clarinetist at school, when a Cambridge scholarship beckoned, Powell philosophised: 'If this is the way up, so be it.'

While keen to enter the diplomatic service, a fellowship presented itself: 'If I can take off the shelf a fellowship at Trinity, then so be it'.

And when, having resigned from Macmillan's Cabinet, he

was re-offered the Ministry of Health (himself a life-long opponent of the Health Service), Powell cuts his losses. 'Life goes on', he muses. 'One makes one's point, and life goes on'.

The man who went from Army Private to Brigadier in five years 'enjoyed best of all being a private soldier'.

Even this gem didn't raise so much as a flicker in Mr. MacNeill's somnolent eyebrow.

And when at the end of this orgy of self-publicity we are told that Mr. Powell 'lays himself open to the accusation of demagoguery', we feel that perhaps Mr. MacNeill has gone too far.

Interesting to compare MacNeill's impotent interviewing of this media-man with 24 Hours' Michael Barrett's barrage at half a dozen AEF militants from Girlings.

Sarcasm ('you're all members of the happy brotherhood of the trades union movement') was combined with droll punnery (before the discussion he'd amusingly refer to them as 'turning the screw') to make a reasoned case from the workers impossible.

It seems a bit odd that trendy BBC Current Affairs should so barrack a group of television amateurs, while touching their forelocks so deferentially to an expert.

Perhaps they reckon that although we've got the numbers, they've got the big bums.

DAVID EDGAR

noted as the economies

Therefore think an Revolution

was the first

of 'socialism', that is—the dictatorial rule of Stalin and his bosses.

The rise of Stalin and the bureaucracy from 1923 onwards involved the destruction of every socialist element in the revolution and the elimination of every socialist tradition from the Bolshevik Party which had led the revolution of 1917.

MOCK TRIALS

This was achieved largely through the physical extermination of thousands of 'old Bolsheviks' after mock trials or without trial.

Trotsky, Bukharin, Zinoviev, Kamenev were slandered and persecuted as enemies

The internationalism which inspired Lenin and the Bolsheviks in 1917 was replaced by the slogan 'socialism in one country'.

In reality this meant the destruction of socialism.

Stalin's counter-revolution was not a peaceful affair but involved the destruction of all working-class and peasant opposition by physical force.

But isn't Russia the only hope for socialist advance? Things are not as bad as under Stalin and getting better. If you oppose the Soviet Union you are really

STRUGGLE FOR TRADE UNION RIGHTS

rape movement

scandal

ON

often the Mexican workers need the work they are offered by the American companies.

After all, an American dollar is worth 12 Mexican pesos. This process has been described as 'using the poorest of the poor of another country to defeat the poorest of the poor of this country...'

These actions, coupled with injunctions drastically limiting the right to picket, have left the workers with no recourse but to seek public support for a boycott of the growers' produce.

Though complete support and extensive funds (such as \$5000 per month from the United Auto Workers) have been provided by the AFL-CIO, the Teamsters, and the Union of Stevedores and Longshoremen, these unions are forced to transport the grapes or risk the penalty of violating an unfair labour practice legislation.

In New York, a \$25 million suit was filed against unions of butchers and retail clerks who refused to work in stores which carried California table grapes. Individual lorry drivers and dockers who have refused to cross UFWOC picket lines, have been fired for breach of contract.

TRADE UNION RIGHTS

UFWOC therefore has had to rely on the American consumer for the success of the boycott.

The first boycott was directed against the wine grape growers of California. In 1966, the union put out publicity asking stores and consumers to buy other brands of wines, and farm workers travelled from California to leaflet and picket at wine-shops all over the nation.

These efforts were not without success. At present, there are 10 very solid, fair contracts with companies that grow wine grapes.

The national boycott is presently directed against California table grape growers, the largest agribusiness in the state. Originally the boycott was only of grapes of the Giumarra Corporation, a huge California farm covering 12,000 acres.

Illegal

Sales at Giumarra dipped sharply after the start of the boycott, but rather than recognise and bargain with the union, they chose to retaliate with illegal measures. Giumarra grapes began to be shipped with the labels of a hundred other grape companies pasted on the crates.

This dodge was confirmed and criticised by the National Food and Drug Administration, but not stopped. The industry also guaranteed Giumarra economic protection against the strike loss.

As a result of this collusion, the union had to take on the entire California table grape industry at one.

This has led to the present activity: a nation-wide consumer boycott of all

California fresh table grapes, until the growers negotiate.

The boycott has met with widespread success. Major cities such as Boston, New York and Kansas City are almost completely clear of the grapes. Many major national chainstores have cancelled their orders for table grapes this year.

Again the growers are attempting to wipe out the efforts of the union. Last year, almost one-third of the grapes were sold on the export market. This year, more have been put in cold storage, presumably for the same fate.

England is the largest importer of American table grapes in Europe, having imported about 3,000,000 pounds in 1967. Efforts are presently being made to see what role English trade unions, political leaders and the public might play in internationalising the boycott.

American unions cannot detain the grape cargo as they are bound by strict federal law. Therefore, UFWOC is calling on brother English trade unions, who are not bound by such severe limitations, to support the strike and boycott by not handling scab grapes.

A refusal to handle these shipments would be quite valuable in strengthening the union's position, in bringing the growers to the bargaining table, and in ending once and for all the injustice which for decades has made the farm worker the symbol of the forgotten man in America.

Elaine Elinson is in Britain to organise the UFWOC European campaign.

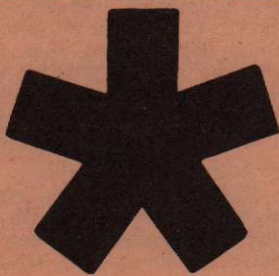
Join the International Socialists

- ABERDEEN Janet Kennedy
94 Bankhead Road Bucksburn
- ACTON John Deason
148 Rusthall Avenue W4
- BECKENHAM Mervyn Smith
9 Alton Gardens Copers Cope Rd
01 658 6552
- BIRMINGHAM Godfrey Webster
128 Yardley Wood Rd B'ham 13
- BRADFORD Bob Kornreich
Flat 1 7 Oak Avenue Bradford 8
- BRIGHTON Micky Adams
Flat 4 85 St. Aubyns Hove
- BOLTON F Canavan
11 Sutton Rd Sutton Estate
Deane Bolton
- CAMBRIDGE Peter Smith
65 Glisson Road
- CAMDEN Chris Barker
36 Gilden Road NW5
- CHERTSEY Nick Humphrey
83 New Haw Rd Adlestone Surrey
- COLCHESTER Ian Noble
12 Coach Rd Arlesford
Wivenhoe 272
- COVENTRY Dave Edwards
53 Palmerston Rd Earlsdon
- CRAWLEY Deborah Ward
2 Weddell Rd Tilgate
- CROYDON Jenny Woodhams
26 Braemar Avenue
South Croydon
- DURHAM A Beard
35 Hallgarth Durham
- EAST LONDON John Metcalfe
61 Wolsey Avenue E17
- EDINBURGH Jim Smith
25 Pitt St (Leith) Edinburgh 6
- ENFIELD Gill Pressman
34 The Chine London N21
- FULHAM Nicki Landau
1a Phillimore Terrace Allan St W8
- FOLKESTONE Dave Cowell
c/o 18 Station Rd
- GLASGOW Ian Mooney
4 Dalcross Passage W1
- HAVERING Dave Rugg
8a Elm Parade Hornchurch Essex
- HORNSEY Valerie Clark
18 Dickinson Rd N8
- HULL Paul Gerhardt
52 Freehold Street
- ILFORD Lionel Sims
99 Belgrave Road 01 SEV 6991
- IPSWICH Malcolm Bezant
45 Melbourne Road
- ISLINGTON/ANGEL D Phillips
2 Chapel Mkt Grant St N1
01 BRU 1026
- DALSTON/SHOREDITCH
B Hugill 154 Downham Rd N1
- HIGHBURY Martin Tomkinson
4 Martineau Road N5
- KENTON Kevin Simms
56 Salisbury Road Harrow
- KILBURN Sean Dunne
18 Lithos Road NW3
- KINGSTON Roger Crossley
Flat 2 6 The Avenue Surbiton
- LAMBETH Andy Smith
Flat 6 126 Streatham Hill SW2
- LEEDS Vince Hall
Flat 3 25 Bagby Road Leeds 2
- LOWESTOFT Ron Mallett
30 Cotmore Road
- MANCHESTER Jack Sutton
11a Rowan Avenue
Walley Range M16
- MERSEYSIDE Ross Hill
5 Lother Rd Anfield Liverpool 4
- MERTON Malcolm Roe
22 Elmhurst Avenue
Mitcham Surrey
- MIDDLESBROUGH Hilary Cave
133 Borough Road Yorks
- NEWCASTLE Tony Corcoran
26 Lesbury Road
- NORTHAMPTON Alan Druker
21 Ardington Road
- NORWICH Gerald Crompton
220 College Rd Norwich NOR 54F
- NOTTINGHAM
Robert Abrahamson
15 Wellington Square Derby Rd
- OXFORD Steve Bolchover
181 Iffley Road
- POTTERIES John Whitfield
5 Grosvenor Rd Newcastle U Lyme
- RICHMOND Peter Glatter
3 Burlington Ave Kew
- RIPLEY & ILKESTON C Burnett
75 Heage Road Ripley Derbys
- SELBY John Charlton
12 Thatch Close Selby Yorks
- SHEFFIELD J Wilkin
15 Raven Road Sheffield S7 1SB
- SOUTHAMPTON Mel Doyle
13 Livingstone Rd Portswood
- STEVENAGE Michael Downing
57 Trumper Road Trots Hill
- STOCKPORT Barry Biddulph
10 Foliage Crescent Brinnington
- STOKE NEWINGTON
Mike McGrath 28 Manor Road N16
- SWANSEA Pete Branston
33a Uplands Crescent
- TOTTENHAM Laurie Flynn
374 High Road N17
- TOWER HAMLETS M Renn
58 Merchant St Bow E3
- WATFORD Paul Russell
61 Carpenders Avenue
Carpenders Park
- WIGAN Ray Challinor
34 Whiteside Avenue Hindley
- WOLVERHAMPTON
Dave Spilsbury 274 Penn Road
YORK Bob Looker 22 Hobgate

Please send further details of the meetings and activities of the international socialists to

Name

Address



Derry: first round to McCann

From SEAN REED

EAMONN McCANN, militant Irish socialist and Socialist Worker reporter, was cleared by Derry magistrates last week of a charge of unlawful assembly arising from the police riot on October 5.

Loud cheers greeted the news and McCann was carried shoulder high from the court to a mass meeting on the dockside.

Market men back grapes ban

From NIGEL COWARD

COVENT GARDEN fruit porters have declared they will not handle California grapes, if the dockers follow suit.

Moves are under way in the docks to win support for the campaign (see centre pages.)

Whether official Transport Workers Union support or sanction is forthcoming is not clear at present. But whether the union machine grinds fast or slow, successful blacking must ultimately depend on the workers themselves.

Small ports

Success cannot be guaranteed. The employers can use smaller ports such as Felixstowe and Shoreham and avoid the well-organised docks.

The fruit porters have agreed to black such re-routed goods. But the large supermarket employers could probably get around the problem when they whiff the chance of above-average profits on the dumped grapes.

Californian agricultural labourers have approached London porters and dockers, hoping for solidarity in their struggle for union recognition. The campaign to black the grapes must spread to every section of the labour movement who, as consumers, can boycott the produce in the shops.

MEETINGS

IRELAND: Civil Rights and after. Spkrs: Gery Lawless (Irish Workers' Group) and Paul Gillespie (IS). Angel IS, Monday, Dec. 18, 8 pm, The George, Liverpool Road, N1.

MEETING to honour 8th anniversary of founding of NLF, S. Vietnam, Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, 7.30 Friday, Dec. 20. Spkrs: Malcolm Caldwell, Martin Bernal, Ernie Roberts (AEF, personal capacity).

Small Ads

ROSA LUXEMBURG 1919-1969 poster. Black on Red 5s. Black on White 4s. Prices inc. post. Socialist Worker, Paxton Works, Paxton Road N17.

IS badges (slogan: workers' control). 1s each, 10s doz. Cash with orders. Judi Barker, 148 Princes Road, Liverpool 8.

McCann told the crowd that the court decision was not victory in a war for the civil rights movement, but only a victory in a skirmish.

The tactics of the O'Neill faction in Northern Ireland's Tory government are clear. They had meant to bring only militants before the courts.

But Craig, the police minister, who wants more extreme policies, charged 40 others, including Leader of the Opposition Eddie McAteer and two other MPs, Gerry Fitt and Austin Currie.

To imprison such respectable figures would mean committing the government to a policy of mass repression. This would lead to a break with Westminster and Rhodesia-style UDI—which Craig favours.

O'Neill, imperialism's representative in Ulster, was unwilling to follow in Ian Smith's footsteps. Fighting back against Craig's ultra-right threat, he is using the courts to get himself off the hook.

The second set of charges, which are minor ones, have been heard first in Derry. McCann has been acquitted, and so will many of the other defendants, including the MPs.

Then, when the dust settles and the press turns its attention from Ulster, McCann and other hard-line militants will be back in court on charges under the South Africa-style Special Powers Act.

Solidarity

DUBLIN: 250 Young Socialists and Left-wing students marched on the British embassy last week to declare their solidarity with the militants on trial in Derry. Their path was blocked by 200 riot police.

Kitty O'Kane of Derry YS told the marchers that the police action was an example of the Dublin government's support for the Ulster police state.

'The southern establishment are just as opposed to workers on the streets demanding their rights as are the Northern Tories,' she declared.

Long march

BELFAST: The People's Democracy, a non-sectarian civil rights movement, is organising a 'long march' from Belfast to Derry (73 miles) from December 19 to 22. British socialists are invited to take part. Full details from Mike Farrell, 8 Strandview Street, Belfast 9 Tel. Belfast 669685.



Press blackout on sit-in strike at Fords

From SABBY SAGALL

A THOUSAND ASSEMBLY line workers at Ford's main Dagenham plant occupied the administrative block for an hour on Thursday November 28.

They were protesting at the company's decision to lay off workers as a result of the Girling brake strike in Cheshire.

The admin offices were paralysed, with the workers blocking all access to the building. The management was clearly shaken by this massive demonstration of collective strength by the assembly men.

And the national press declared its solidarity with the bosses by not printing a word of the event.

CLIMAX

The occupation was the climax to a 10-week overtime ban by the assembly workers. They were determined to end a system of casual labour under which they had been laid off three times this year.

At the start of the struggle the men had the support of trade union officials on the Ford negotiating committee. But the officials succumbed to company pressure and recommended that the overtime ban should be lifted so that negotiations could start.

The men refused as the management had made no real concessions. But the severity of the economic pressure on Fords caused by the overtime ban forced the manage-

ment to concede the principle of guaranteed weekly payments for loss of work caused by lay-offs.

The offer was rejected as totally inadequate. Now in the tenth week of the dispute, the company gave way again and conceded larger guaranteed payments.

EXPLODED

The management sent a letter to all workers announcing their willingness to concede the principle and to make it effective from December 1st. Details of the concession remained to be worked out. The ban was lifted a day later.

But the next day, November 28, further lay-offs were announced as a result of the Girling dispute. The assembly men exploded, marched into the admin block and demanded full payment for the period when they would not be working.

They threatened to break up the machinery unless the demand was accepted. The management held out without conceding and the men dispersed after an hour.

The concession by the company of guaranteed payments during lay-offs marks the second major defeat for the Ford bosses this year after the successful women's strike.

Ford workers are showing a growing awareness of their collective strength in a key export industry and an increasing willingness to use that strength.

MOTHERS PRIDE PICKETS ARRESTED

From PETE MOTTERSHEAD COVENTRY: Following complaints last Saturday by the Mothers Pride management of intimidation by pickets of its workers, two members of the strike committee were arrested on Monday on several charges.

Gurdit Singh and Kudlit Singh are both charged with using violence with intent to force a worker to stay away from the bakery, with actual bodily harm, possessing an offensive weapon (a hockey stick) and wilful damage.

Gurdit Singh is separately charged with intimidation and possessing an offensive weapon (a penknife). They have been remanded on bail.

Picketers claim that the two men were attacked first, but police have declined to comment on the possibility of counter charges.

The background to the charges is a three-week lock-out of 92 workers who struck in support of a victimised fellow worker. A small number of men have returned to work, supplemented by scab labour sent by the Ministry of Employment and Productivity.

Refused

The Bakers' Union has washed its hands of the dispute. It has even refused to stop bread from other Mothers Pride (Enterprise) Bakeries from being brought into the factory for redistribution.

Picketing at the bakery has become extremely dangerous. Vans race into the factory at 30 mph. One student picket was hit and thrown 10 feet.

On management instructions vans are often driven continuously in and out of the factory to break the picket. Police harassment has been frequent.

The strike committee has attempted to gain support in the engineering factories in Coventry by collections and the backing of Mothers Pride bread. Support is starting to grow.

Financial support is badly needed. Donations should be sent to Dave Edwards, 53 Palmerston Road, Earlsdon, Coventry.

Equal pay strike

Socialist Worker Reporter TWO HUNDRED women workers from the CAV Lucas factories in Acton, North London went on a 24 hour token strike last week. The stoppage was in support of a claim for equal pay.

The women have shown that they are no longer prepared to accept low pay and skill gradings.

A few scabs came in but their 'loyalty' to the bosses was not exactly rewarded—they were sent home.

Students fight privilege

Socialist Worker Reporter

BRISTOL: 1,000 university students are occupying the administration building. They are protesting against the barrier of special privileges which has walled them off from the 'second class citizens' of the technical and teachers' training colleges.

Hundreds from the colleges have joined their sit-in.

The students' union decided to extend membership to students in other colleges, so that they can use the facilit-

ies of the luxurious £34m union building.

The students' decision has been blocked by the union finance committee which is dominated by the staff and vice-chancellor.

FEAR

The authorities fear the students' desire to control their own affairs and are horrified at their attempts to break down the privilege which separates them from the community.

Writs have been served on

student 'leaders' but they were received with laughter and a loud chorus of 'one man one writ'. Six leaders left the building to cheers, leaving greater solidarity behind them.

The press has underestimated the support and exaggerated the size of the opposition to the sit-in.

Support has come from all parts of the country and in Bristol the Redlands Teachers Training College and the College of Commerce have backed the aims of the sit-in.

ITALY

From page one

only incidentally coincided with the protests over the deaths at Avola.

Last week's protests were, however, an important step forward. They united, for the first time, students and workers in demonstrations all over the country.

The biggest was in Rome, where 50,000 students and workers took part in the second demonstration, on Thursday and the university was occupied.

There were similar protests in most big cities. The unions' tactic of calling only a few hours' general strike outside Rome was defied by workers in Pavia.

In Milan and Bologna students and workers marched together, while in Genoa the police used tear-gas against demonstrators said to have been mainly students. The wealthy audience at a premiere at La Scala, the Milan opera house, was pelted with fruit and ink.

FARCE

Parliamentary politics have reached a high point of farce and irrelevance. The centre-left coalition of Socialists, Christian Democrats and Republicans is back in office.

Months of argument between the veteran right-wing Nenni (who never wanted to leave the government) and the other four factions of the Socialist Party culminated in a fist-fight at the close of the party congress in October.

The Christian Democrats, also split several ways, refused to carry on with a minority government. So the coalition has been re-formed and the promises begin all over again.

The Communist Party, which holds 27 per cent of the seats in the Chamber and 30 per cent in the Senate, cannot win power by negotiation in a country where the Vatican does not hesitate to intervene to keep it out.

The party is nevertheless devoted to its parliamentary perspective, and even now appears to be reluctant to use its large working-class support in any form of direct action apart from one-day or half-day strikes.

PROVOKED

There are other disappointments and frustrations in Italian society. The Church has provoked protest demonstrations not only over birth control, but also its immense wealth, the Vatican's refusal to pay investment tax, and its interference in national and local politics.

Disastrous floods have again caused death and unemployment in northern Italy this autumn—while two-thirds of the money allotted to flood prevention measures remains in the Treasury.

Italy is in crisis, but it is a long-term crisis. It seems unlikely that events will follow the course they took in May.

There is no single political focus for protest, such as de Gaulle provided in France. In fact, last week there was no actual government to protest against.

The Communist Party, itself divided, is unwilling to play even the role that its sister party played at the start of the general strike in France—perhaps by the very force of the French example, which struck fear into the hearts of party bureaucrats hoping for a peaceful access to power.

The Left is weak and disunited. Students and workers have come together in action (it is interesting to note that the 'detonator' in this case was a workers' and not a students' clash with police), and this may be a valuable beginning, but where it will lead remains to be seen.

Printed and published by Socialist Review Publishing Co. Ltd. (TU), Paxton Works Paxton Road London N17. Registered with the GPC for transmission as a newspaper.

LATE M

EAMONN M FINED

SEE PAGE FO DERRY: Thurs McCann fined for the procession. He was acquitted charge of being of the committee organised the d

Israeli so fined

Three milit Israeli Social (MATZPEN) an Israel early in painting anti-c slogans on wal relatively light time. Police a successfully a heavier senten now been impo

Bober and E fined 2,500 Ne together with s year prison ser was fined 1.25 a five month s prison senten

In addition, members of MA Khalih Touame released from Nabil Saad, ha restricted to th where they we

Bus

MERSEYSIDE: men plan a or on Saturday if is not unfroze emment.

SUBSCRIBE TO SW

Name _____

Address _____

Organisation _____

I enclose 27s for one year's subscription
13s 6d for 6 months

Send me: _____ copies each week and invoice
(delete where necessary)

SOCIALIST WORKER Paxton Works Paxton Rd
London N17