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S.B. No. 1 (Flimsy)

METROPOLITAN POLICE

Special Report

SPECIAL BRANCH

14 day of January 19

SUBJECT

'Shrewsbury 24'

rally - 17.12.73

Reference to Papers

400/73/181

3 pages

[redacted]

1. The following information has been received from a reliable source:-

2. "On Monday, 17 December 1973, International Socialists held a 'Socialist Worker' Rally in benefit of the 'Shrewsbury 24' and their families, at Seymour Hall, Seymour Place, London W1. Some 900 persons attended.

[redacted]

3. The rally was opened by Jim NICHOL, National Treasurer of IS at 8.30 pm. He gave a brief introduction on the events leading up to the trial of John CARPENTER, John McKINISIE JONES, John LLYWARCH, Ken O'SHEA, Eric TOMLINSON and Des WARREN; the six members of the 'Shrewsbury 24' then on trial. He pointed out that these men and their families were fighting for the rights of all trade unionists.

4. NICHOL then introduced the 'Combine', a group of eight players who then performed a sketch on the Shrewsbury building workers dispute which depicted the events and the 'conspiracy' of the ruling class which had led to the arrest of the 'Shrewsbury 24'. After this they sang a number of political pieces in support of these building workers and other oppressed sections of the working class movement.

5. This was followed by speeches from Gerry KELLY, Tony CLIFF and Laurie FLYNN. KELLY who was introduced as one of the 'Birmingham 5', recently acquitted on charges of illegal picketing in the Midlands, said he was overwhelmed by the numbers present and felt that if the men on trial in Shrewsbury would only see the size of their support it would greatly boost their morale. The working class was now facing a vicious attack on the basic rights of trade unionists and if any of the six were imprisoned it would be the responsibility of the trade union movement to organise to free them from jail as they had for the 'Pentonville 5'. KELLY stated that after his acquittal in Birmingham he, and some of the jurors, had gone for a celebration drink and he had been told by one 'This will show those Tory bastards we mean business". This comment, he felt, summed-up the working class attitude to the present government and called on the audience to organise to bring down the government.

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M.P.-73-53226/15M (2) L133-3

6. Tony CLIFF, in a poor and rather over-excited speech, quoted from Brigadier KITSON that the army should be trained to infiltrate soldiers into trades union organisations in order to challenge the left-wing wherever it was encountered. Other views recently expressed by the right wing, CLIFF claimed, included workers producing wealth under a system of military conscription so as to overcome Britain's economic crisis. The 'Shrewsbury 24' was one issue of fantastic importance to the organised working class movement, in view of the precedent it would set. It was a challenge to the trade union movement and although far more difficult to organise around than the Pentonville 5, the challenge would have to be taken up and the Government defeated.

7. Laurie FLYNN, a member of the 'Socialist Worker' editorial board said that, as a journalist, he had had much involvement with the Shrewsbury 24 and had met many of the accused and their families. Those now on trial were suffering immense financial hardships. An attack on the Tories had resurrected an 100 year old conspiracy law to smash the organised working class. He then appealed to those present to give as large a financial donation as possible in support of an issue fundamental to the survival of the trades union movement.

8. Jim NICHOL endorsed this financial appeal and a collection raised £406. This amount, added to the tickets sold at 50p per head for the Rally realised a grand total of £940 for the benefit of the 'Shrewsbury 24'. As the amount of money raised was in excess of expectation, NICHOL announced that £50 would be donated to the industrial dispute taking place at 'PERIVALE GUTTERMAN' in West London, a factory employing mainly Asian workers.

9. Entertainment was then provided by Jake THACKERAY and the "Combine". This brought the proceedings to a conclusion.

10. Amongst those present were:-

Privacy

[redacted]

Privacy

11. Special Branch references are given in the attached Appendix.

1 [redacted] HN343 [redacted]
Constable

Submitted

2 [redacted] HN294 [redacted]
Chief Inspector

3 [redacted]

for CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT

[redacted]

[redacted]

APPENDIX

To special Branch report of 14.1.74 concerning
IS 'Shrewsbury 24' Rally held on 17.12.73

Privacy

Tony CLIFF

Privacy

Roger COX

Privacy

Nigel HARRIS

Privacy

Privacy

Privacy

[redacted]

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APPENDIX

To special Branch report of 14.1.74 concerning an IS 'Shrewsbury 24' Rally held on 17.12.73

Privacy

Tony CLIFF

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Roger COX

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