

S.B. No. 1 (Plain)

METROPOLITAN POLICE

Special Report

SPECIAL BRANCH

2nd day of July 1975

SUBJECT

Workers

Revolutionary

Party.

Reference to Papers

400/75/82

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

"On Sunday 29.6.75 a conference organised by the Workers Revolutionary Party's 'Shrewsbury Two Action Committee' was held at the Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool from 3.p.m. to 8.30.p.m. Between 450 and 500 people listened to speeches by Mike BANDA, [Privacy] and Gerry HEALEY, which followed the often used W.R.P. themes of criticising the Labour Government and the Trade Union Movement for failing to secure the release from prison of the 'Shrewsbury Two' and the police and judiciary for putting them there in the first place. There were numerous questions and suggestions from the floor, none of particular interest.

The attached documents were handed out at the entrance to the hall, A and B list W.R.P.'s views concerning the jailing of the 'Shrewsbury Two', whilst C contains a criticism by Croydon Trades Council of the way W.R.P. have conducted their campaign, in particular their attitude towards the other major Trotskyist groups who have offered assistance. The persons distributing leaflet C were not identified, but surprisingly enough were thought to be International Socialists.

Two coachloads of W.R.P. and Young Socialists members and supporters travelled from London to the conference, one, which left from Southall, was organised by [Privacy]

2. Persons mentioned in this report have the following references in Special Branch Records-

MIKE BANDA

RF 405/52/11

Privacy

Gerry HEALY

RF 402/41/455

M. D. Rodger
Deputy Assistant Commissioner

Shrewsbury Two Action Committee

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Sunday 29 June, 3 p.m.

The Adelphi
Liverpool

Instead of directly fighting the ruling class let this be a fight between different groups of marxists amongst themselves.

DRAFT RESOLUTION

CONTINUE THE STRUGGLE to release the Shrewsbury Two by General Strike Action!

Fight the betrayals of Stalinism!

The Conference resolves to continue the struggle to free the jailed building workers pickets, Eric Tomlinson and Des Warren, by fighting to mobilize the entire working class in general strike action.

It is now two-and-a-half years since the two brothers were jailed under the notorious 'Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act' of 1875. Since that date the working class has been assailed by a series of judgements handed down by the High Court which have seriously undermined basic rights, and persecuted members of the working class.

The law of conspiracy itself is now an essential weapon in the armoury of the capitalist state. It has been used in many cases - most recently against the Iranian students protesting against the Shah of Iran's barbaric ICA regime.

This sinister police state power takes its place alongside a series of legal precedents handed down by Tory judges to attack the working class.

We have the continued scourge of the anti-Terror Act, used already against Irish Trade Unionists and now supplemented by vicious attacks against the right to picket.

In the case of the Islington squatters the Appeal Court abolished the right to picket in non-industrial situations - thus fundamentally undermining the right to protest, to demonstrate and the right of free speech. One dissenting judge, Lord Denning, warned that the courts were now undermining the very rights for which the demonstrators were massacred in Peterloo Fields, Manchester in 1819.

In addition the Labour government tries to bring back a tribunal which will be staffed by a high court judge to adjudicate in matters arising from the Employment Protection Bill, now on its way through parliament complete with several anti-working class amendments moved by the Tory Party.

Finally we have the intervention of the High Court into the affairs of the UELW engineering section in order to aid the right-wing in its attempt to split the union and put forward policies in the interests of the capitalist class.

This widespread use of judicial decree, the strengthening of the police, the intensification of Special Branch surveillance of the trades unions, the penetration of the CIA into the labour movement are unmistakable expressions of the necessity of the capitalist class to use its state machine to smash all basic democratic rights of the working class.

The fact that the jailing of the Shrewsbury Two had been possible is undoubtedly a source of great encouragement to the arrogant ruling class and the political lackeys in the Labour government.

This conference therefore sees the struggle to free the two brothers from jail as inseparable from a campaign to wipe out all this reactionary legislation and to create the conditions for the overthrow of the capitalist state.

To fail to recognize this basic principle of the class struggle would be to open up the entire movement to the greatest danger of all - the development of a police-military dictatorship behind the facade of some reactionary coalition of Labourites, Tories and big businessmen.

This perspective is the highest point of the struggle to maintain the independence of the trades unions and the right of the working class to take the action it requires to meet the challenge of the capitalist economic crisis. It is this crisis - now expressed in the form of a deep and irreversible slump - that is behind the frenzied mobilization of the forces of 'law and order' against the working class. It is therefore no coincidence that pickets are jailed precisely at a time when the bankruptcy of the capitalist system is expressed in uncontrollable inflation, mass unemployment, declining essential services and a total inability to compete with its international capitalist rivals.

From the start the ruling class, through the judicial and prison machinery, intended to make these two trade unionists pay the full price and serve out their entire sentences.

But this brutal victimization has been possible only because the trade union leadership in this country has consistently opposed every attempt to get Warren and Tomlinson out and return them to their families.

Privacy of the TUC declared 'the law must take its course.'
Privacy of UCU, with the approval of his executive, sent circulars found his branches instructing the membership to have nothing to do with the defence of these men. **Privacy** of the T&GWU stood by and was silent. Now these bureaucrats enact the farce of protest and appeal which encourages Roy Jenkins and the Labour right-wing coalitionists to continue with the imprisonment and strengthen the repressive apparatus of the State.

The record of this TUC is one of outright treachery. This treacherous policy was facilitated and encouraged by the Communist Party principally. After a determined campaign to confine all actions to protests, to separate the struggle from a fight to expose the politics of the UCATT and T&GWU leaders, these Stalinists came to the aid of the TUC, with the lying assurance that the TUC was 'leading the campaign'. But at two general council meetings of the TUC, resolutions for even one-day strikes were withdrawn or 'left on the table'. What is more the Communist Party and so-called left members of the general council agreed with this. Not one Stalinist has ever denounced the TUC leaders for their shameful betrayal. The Communist Party leaders are at the centre of the betrayal.

It was **Privacy** the CP national industrial organizer who persuaded WARREN to call off his courageous protests for political prisoner status on the ground that Jenkins now could not refuse parole. But parole was refused. The Stalinists then accused Jenkins of deception! This conscious deception and cynicism was resorted to principally in order to divert the campaign of the BTU for a general strike to release the pickets.

The Stalinists themselves have their protectors in the revisionist groups. These groups have always opposed any principled fight to expose the trades union bureaucracy and demand General Strike action. Their main concern has been to make a 'single issue' of the Shrewsbury Two, to give political credibility to the Stalinist controlled Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trades Unions and prevent militant workers from gaining a clear understanding of the State and its relations with the bureaucracy.

This conference condemns unequivocally the method and policy of these groups. It declares that unless the working class are broken from the influence of the trade union bureaucrats, the Stalinists and the revisionist hangers-on, the working class cannot defend its basic rights. The struggle for the release of the Shrewsbury Two is therefore completely bound up with the fight for a revolutionary leadership in the working class.

The most significant struggles waged to free Warren and Tomlinson have been organized by the Wigan Builders Action Committee - Wigan to London, and the Shrewsbury Two Action Committee - Hull to Liverpool. These marches took the campaign for a general strike to free the two through all the important industrial areas in Britain. Everywhere we found that workers were prepared to fight if the leadership was given.

It was only the Workers Revolutionary Party, the All Trades Unions Alliance, the Young Socialists and the 'Workers Press' who supported these two campaigns for General Strike action to Free the Two.

This was because every other tendency opposed the demand of the two Action Committees for a revolutionary leadership in Britain.

This conference declares that the struggle to free the two, to smash the capitalist state, to remove the coalitionists from the Labour movement, to replace the present right-wing Labour government with an administration pledged to socialist policies, requires above all the building of such a leadership.

We say:

- * Free Warren and Tomlinson by General Strike action.
- * Demand the 'left' MPs, who claim to support the pickets, vote against the Wilson government over the continued jailings and the austerity measures in the coming budget.
- * Kick out the traitors in the trade union leadership who refuse to fight to mobilize their membership in strike action.
- * Scrap the judiciary - Dishand the army and police.
- * Expose Stalinism and revisionism.
- * Build the Workers Revolutionary Party, and its industrial arm, the All Trades Unions Alliance to lead the struggle to smash the capitalist state and repeal all anti-working class laws.

Must remain behind bars.

B.

SHREWSBURY TWO ACTION COMMITTEE

CALLS ON ALL TRADE UNIONISTS TO ATTEND THE

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

For a General Strike to release
the two jailed pickets!

Sunday June 29
Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool
Starts 3 p.m.



LABOUR Home Secretary Roy Jenkins has cynically announced that the parole board has turned down appeals for the early release of the Shrewsbury Two, Dennis Warren and Eric Tomlinson.

Jenkins speaks for the Labour right wing coalitionists, the Tories, the police and the building bosses who want to see these two trade unionists rot in jail for the full duration of their savage sentences.

Warren and Tomlinson were imprisoned by the Tories in 1973 under the notorious Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act (1875) for being among the flying pickets during the national builders' strike of 1972.

They have been kept in jail under the Labour government and their cause has been abandoned by the leaders of the TUC, their own union — UCATT — and the Communist Party, who have refused to mobilise the strength of the working class in a general strike to secure their release.

They have left the two pickets at the mercy of the right-wing Home Secretary who is now arrogantly demanding that they improve their behaviour before they can even be considered for parole.

This is a calculated betrayal. The TUC has dropped all plans for any form of industrial action against the imprisonment of the Shrewsbury Two. A proposal for a one-day strike was abandoned at the March General Council meeting with the full agreement of the Stalinist Ken Gill.

The Communist Party then wound up their own rank-and-file defence body, the North Wales Defence Campaign, on the grounds that the TUC were now 'leading the campaign'.

The trade union leaders and the Communist Party did everything in their power to isolate the Wigan-London march for the release of the Two organised by the Wigan Builders Action Committee and the Hull-Liverpool march organised by our committee.

But the most cynical betrayal was still to come. At the end of March, Communist Party industrial organiser Bert Ramelson was dispatched to Lincoln Jail to persuade Dennis Warren to stop demanding political prisoner status and end his courageous stand of non-co-operation with the prison regime.

According to the *Morning Star* of April 1, the two men decided on Ramelson's advice to begin full co-operation with the prison authorities 'so as to deprive Mr. Jenkins and the right wing of any excuses and remove any obstacles in the way of the movement for their release'.

But instead of appeasing Jenkins, this action has strengthened his hand. He wants them to grovel to the capitalist state and its prison system. The trade union leaders

and the Stalinists are already grovelling and they have consistently refused to challenge the state machine which keeps Warren and Tomlinson behind bars.

So long as the Shrewsbury Two remain in jail, the rights of all trade unionists are in the greatest danger. Sir John Donaldson, the former head of the National Industrial Relations Court, has pointed out that Labour's Trade Union and Industrial Relations Bill will reintroduce the hated NIRC under another label.

The High Court judgement in the Prebble picketing case has effectively abolished the ancient right of assembly fought for at Peterloo. More and more conspiracy trials are being prepared against trade unionists and political protesters.

The latest example is the charge of conspiracy to trespass brought against 21 Iranian students who occupied the Shah's London Embassy.

In addition, Jenkins is planning to make an order extending the operation of the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act for a further six months. The Act has already been used to deport Republican sympathisers and trade unionists and to hold Irish workers without charge for extended periods.

The fight for the release of the Shrewsbury Two is inseparable from the fight for the repeal of the conspiracy laws and all anti-working class legislation and for the disbandment of the judiciary, the standing army and the police which are an open threat to all the basic democratic rights of the working class.

The Shrewsbury Two Action Committee says that only the mobilisation of the working class in a general strike can force the release of the Shrewsbury Two, secure the repeal of the conspiracy laws and safeguard the basic rights of the working class.

The committee calls on all trade union branches, shop stewards committees, factories and construction sites to send delegates to the national conference on June 29.

Come to the national conference that will discuss the next stage of the fight!

Write at once for details to:

Privacy Secretary, Shrewsbury Two Action Committee.
Credits 25p each.

Privacy

Name

Address

Factory

Trade Union

Amount enclosed

Published by Shrewsbury Two Action Committee
Printed by News Press (UK)

Privacy

11/5 were discussed / C
free at the 7-11-68
Brothers and Sisters

Croydon Trades Council supports this campaign to free the Shrewsbury pickets, but we have been mandated by the Trades Council to express to this conference our concern at the sectarian attitudes of the organisers of the marches. Any genuine campaign to free the Two must be as broad as possible, mobilising the maximum support. We think that in turning away people who want to participate in the campaign you have greatly reduced its effectiveness.

What good did it do, for example, to turn away the International Marxist Group member who had failed to secure adequate support from his factory? He showed good will towards the campaign by turning up, and you had the opportunity to convince him that he should do more than just march a few miles. How many other such opportunities have you thrown away?

Turning away the General Secretary of International Socialists was even worse. He made an attempt to unify the various campaigns in support of the Two, and you rejected it on the grounds that IS had betrayed them by printing the magazine 'Private Eye' which attacked them. You should know well enough that every socialist printworks faces at times the dilemma of either printing articles with which they disagree or suffering crippling breach of contract charges - the WRP for instance, until recently printed ASTMS magazine which has carried attacks on socialist militants and which has a much more significant trade union audience than Private Eye. The fact is that IS has an excellent record of activity in defence of the Pickets, going back to even before they were jailed. They have collected several thousand pounds for the defence fund and dependents, and the same man that you throw off the march is the only leading socialist that both Bros Tomlinson and Warren are prepared to have visit them in jail.

We think this sectarianism is a serious deficiency in the campaign. Firstly because there is still a lot that we must do - to seize any chance to establish the general strike that is needed to free the two, to maintain their families and to prepare the socialist and trade union movements to act more effectively next time trade unionists are imprisoned. Sectarianism is irresponsible and reactionary in the face of such tasks. Secondly we think that the tactics and slogans of this campaign have suffered from this self-imposed isolation from the rest of the movement. We hope to put this view more fully in the conference, but it is not good enough to rely solely on the demand "General Strike to Free the Two"; We need intermediary aims to push for IGY, while we are working for such a strike. For instance, we have to ensure, by building the Rank and File Dependents Fund, that the families of the imprisoned men do not suffer financial hardship. We have also to commit our workplaces to strike immediately if trade unionists are imprisoned in future.

What we hope to see come out of today's conference is the adoption of such immediate aims in addition to the demand for a general strike, and the rejection of sectarianism and the opening of your ranks to all socialists and trade unionists.

This document was written and approved by the Croydon Trades Council delegation, as the best way of carrying out our mandate from the Trades Council. c/o Cornwall Rd, Croydon.