

# OUR COMRADES RELEASED!

## SOCIALIST APPEAL

Organ of the Revolutionary Communist Party, Fourth International.

VOL. 6. No. 5. SEPTEMBER, 1944. TWOPENCE

# GREAT VICTORY FOR THE WORKING CLASS

## Three Judges Quash Convictions in Appeal Court

# CAPITALISTS FEAR ARMED PARIS WORKERS

By Ted Grant

THE NAZIS HAVE BEEN ROUTED IN FRANCE. BUT MOST SIGNIFICANT HAS BEEN THE MASS MOVEMENT OF THE FRENCH WORKERS IN PARIS AND THROUGHOUT FRANCE, IN TAKING UP ARMS AGAINST THE NAZI OPPRESSOR.

It has been this mass movement of the French workers, peasants and middle class which has forced the retreat of the German army. The culminating point which has marked the entry of the French masses once again onto the arena of history, was the insurrection of the workers of Paris.

Despite the capitalist censorship of the news from Europe and the meagre reports that have been allowed to come through, it is possible to piece together the chain of events. As the Allied armies marched towards Paris, on August 13th the workers in the industrial suburbs began demonstrations which rapidly developed into armed insurrection despite the little equipment possessed by the workers, completely to a stand-still. The strike broke out throughout the Paris area which brought the life of the capital completely to a stand-still. The strike involved the French railwaymen, thus preventing the Nazis from moving troops and supplies to and from the capital. So powerful was the movement and so intense the feeling of the masses that two days after the insurrection had broken out, even the Paris police came out on strike and joined the insurrectionaries. Barricades were set up in all the working class districts of Paris and tens of thousands, armed with revolvers, sticks and rifles were joined on the barricade by hundreds of thousands without arms.

Thus, within a few days, despite the fact that the Nazis possessed many tanks and other heavy equipment, they were completely defeated. It is noteworthy that the capitalist de Gaullists, who had placed themselves at the head of the movement with the assistance of the Stalinists and reformists, quickly made a truce with the Nazi generals at a time when the movement was developing successfully. The Nazi troops were to be allowed to withdraw from Paris within 48 hours of the agreement which had been signed. The reason for this is not hard to find. It was not tender humanitarianism but fear for their property which

might be destroyed in the fighting. Thus the Nazis were enabled to gain time, draw in reserves, and continue the struggle for several more days at the cost of many more workers' lives. In 1940 the French capitalists sold Paris to Hitler without a struggle for the same reason—fear of the destruction of their property. But also because of their fear of an armed working class which could see their degeneration and corruption clearly, and which might take control of Paris and then the whole of France. The nightmare of a new and more permanent occupation of the factories as in the great stay-in strikes of 1936 obsessed them. Then they had been saved by the workers' leaders through the policy of Popular Frontism. But they were not sure it would suffice them now!

### CAPITALISTS FEAR ARMED WORKERS

The de Gaullist leadership was compelled to place itself at the head of the present uprising for fear that the movement would get out of control and also to demonstrate to Anglo-American imperialism that they were the only force in France with whom the Allies could deal. Thus they issued the call to insurrection.

But immediately the Nazis were driven from Paris, the main pre-occupation of the capitalist forces has been the disarming of the Parisian workers. The entire capitalist press has reported this as one of the "major" problems with which the de Gaullist government is faced. The "Herald" of 29th August says:

"But another problem facing General Koenig, new commandant of Paris, will be to get the Maquis underground and demobilised soldiers of the French Force of the Interior to lay down their arms.

To wean the high-spirited youths, who are still racing through the city in their small cars, waving flags and brandishing weapons, back to the hum-drum existence of labour and

rebuilding, will be one of his weightiest problems. The "News Chronicle" of August 30th reports an even more far-fetched excuse for the disarming of the workers who freed Paris.

"To organise the legions of armed French youths now wearing the arm-bands of the F.F.I. and training them into a disciplined force, General Koenig will first of all disarm those not at the moment authorised to carry arms.

In this way the attempts of Darnand's militia and German soldiers

Continued on page 4.

COMRADES ROY TEARSE, HEATON LEE AND JOCK HASTON HAVE BEEN RELEASED. THE CONVICTION AGAINST THEM THAT THEY EACH DID ACTS "IN FURTHERANCE" OF THE TYNESIDE APPRENTICES' STRIKE, AND THAT THEY EACH AIDED AND ABETTED COMRADE BILL DAVY "IN FURTHERANCE" OF AN ILLEGAL STRIKE—HAS BEEN QUASHED BY THE COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEAL.

The organised working class has thus gained one of the most important legal victories in the struggle against anti-labour legislation. The ruling class has suffered a severe defeat in its first attempt to use the Tory Trade Disputes Act of 1927.

We are very proud of the fact that it was our Party—the Revolutionary Communist Party—aided by the Anti-Labour Laws Victims Defence Committee together with its legal advisers, which has been responsible for this great labour victory.

The Defence Committee was inaugurated under the chairmanship of Jimmy Maxton, M.P. and the legal advisers were energetically and ably represented by Ernest Silverman, brother of Sidney Silverman, M.P.

The prosecution of our comrades was the most important anti-labour criminal prosecution to be undertaken by the ruling class for many years. It was closely followed by workers—not only in all parts of Britain, but in other parts of the world. Preceded and accompanied as it was by a reactionary press campaign of unprecedented ferocity, the arrest and prosecution of our comrades was obviously carried out as the result of direct instructions from the Cabinet. It was not only a pro-

The Judges who quashed the conviction:  
Humphreys, Wrottesley, and Tucker.  
Counsel for the Director of Public Prosecutions:  
H. Paley Scott, K.C., and Dr. J. Charlesworth.  
Counsel for the Defence:  
James Burge—briefed by Smithdale, Rutledge & Co.

spection of the arrested comrades, it was in reality a prosecution of our party the Revolutionary Communist Party. Apart from striking a blow at the Revolutionary Communist Party, which alone among the organised comrades were: that they had conspired to further and had each furthered a strike declared illegal under the Trade Disputes Act.

Later, the prosecution added further charges of aiding and abetting, "inciting, and conspiracy to incite." It was the conspiracy and incitement charges parties of the working class fights with and for the militant workers at every step, the purpose of the arrests was to intimidate organised labour. The Trotskyists were to be the scapegoats for the introduction of the anti-labour Regulation 1A(a).

which afterwards became the real basis of the attempted frame-up in the Court of Assizes. From the outset of the trial we stamped it as a political frame-up and anti-labour conspiracy on the part of the state. In a written statement handed to the police when the charge was made, Comrade Haston branded the arrests as a frame-up and as the victimisation of our Party by the State.

On every possible occasion, this was publicly repeated from the dock by our comrades. And whatever doubts may have existed in the minds of the weaklings in the Labour and Communist Parties, the deliberations at the Appeal Court have established with absolute clarity

that the arrests and trial at Newcastle was an attempted frame-up.

On behalf of our comrades, Counsel James Burge, instructed by the firm of Solicitors Messrs. Smithdale, Rutledge & Co., put up a magnificent fight. Even had the Judgment gone against him, the weight of his arguments would undoubtedly have forced the Court of Criminal Appeal to explain the terms of Section 1 (2) of the Trade Disputes Act and thus for the first time, would have established the rights—more accurately, lack of rights—which organised labour has within the limits of the Trade Disputes Act.

### WHAT THE APPEAL ESTABLISHED

In stating the argument for the defence, Mr. Burge said that his case would hinge around the clear definition of the terms and words of section 1, (2) of the Trade Disputes Act. This reads as follows:

"If any person declares, instigates, incites others to take part in or otherwise acts in furtherance of a strike or lock-out, declared by this Act to be illegal, he shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding ten pounds or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months, or on conviction on indictment to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years."

In the submission of the defence, Judge Cassels had misdirected the Jury when he gave the following direction:

"It is not necessary that an act in furtherance of an illegal strike should be during the actual time of the strike; it may be an act which could reasonably be regarded upon the evidence, as an act in preparation for the strike and that that strike was an illegal one."

"To declare," said Mr. Burge, is an act that begins the actual strike; "to incite others to take part in" can be acts before or after the commencement of the strike; "to instigate" was an act committed before the strike, at the beginning of its preparation. But a strike must be in existence before an act can take place in "furtherance" of it.

The whole case of the prosecution at Newcastle, said Counsel, was based on

Continued on back page.



JOCK HASTON

ROY TEARSE



HEATON LEE

ANN KEEN

## £500 STILL NEEDED

The defeat of the first prosecution under the Trade Disputes Act is an historic victory for organised Labour. Labour's rights were defended. The ruling class have been forced to halt, and explain the terms of this reactionary Act.

Apart from a few outstanding workers' leaders who formed the Defence Committee and appealed for funds and support, the official leadership of the Labour and Trade Union movement supported the prosecution and the use of the Trade Disputes Act in the Tyne strike case.

But all over the country the rank and file sprang into the breach. Local defence committees were set up and funds collected to carry on the fight. Thanks to the national and local committees it was possible to raise the cost of the original hearing of the

trial at Newcastle, and go ahead with the appeal. The funds collected came exclusively from the pockets of organised workers.

This splendid response showed that class solidarity still lives and only needs stoking to bring out the dull glow into bright flames.

Once again we appeal to trade union branches, shop stewards' committees and factory collectors: the cost of the defence has not been covered; another £500 at least is needed. Make sure that your union contributes and that your factory adds its quota.

Send all donations to:  
W. G. COVE,  
Treasurer,  
Anti-Labour Laws' Victims' Defence Committee,  
318, Regents Park Road,  
London, N.3.

## ALBION STRIKE 1,600 Workers Out Supported by Glasgow A.E.U. District Committee

BY BOB ALLEN

On Tuesday, August 29th, Albion Works on the Clyde downed tools in a strike which may have great significance for all engineering workers.

At a meeting the following day, the Glasgow District Committee of the A.E.U., whose members form the overwhelming majority of the affected works, formally supported the demands of the strikers, and endorsed the strike.

The Shop Committee is leading the strike. The immediate cause of the strike was the employment of a man at a skilled trade who was incapable of supplying any evidence as to his skill. Whereas in the past the Management have agreed to accept the decision of the stewards on such matters, they now have attempted to force the employment of a man unsatisfactory to the workers and the stewards.

The "evidence" as to the man's level of skill was a scrap of paper signed by some individual out of the district.

The stewards demanded the removal of the man. This was apparently agreed to by the Management, but the next day the man was found to be still at work in the Repair Shop. On that day, Tuesday 29th August, the Repair Shop men downed tools. A mass meeting of the whole factory decided to follow suit at the midday break, the same day.

WAGE DEMAND ADDED TO STRIKE AIM—  
4d. per Hour ON BONUS RATE AND BONUS FOR TIMWORKERS

On the next day, Wednesday 30th August, a further mass meeting was called, which demanded a settlement of the wage negotiations started with the Albion Management on May 26th this year. The demand thus added to the strike aims was for 4d. per hour all round increase in bonus rate, and a timeworkers bonus equal to the average shop percentage.

Although the demand for the removal of the unskilled man formed the immediate cause of the strike, there is no doubt that the wage demand forms the main issue. The negotiations with the Management on this question over the last few months have exhausted the patience of the Shop Committee and workers alike, and led to an explosive situation in the factory. Four months ago an application for a Works Conference was made, the subject being the wage increases which are now in dispute. The Works Conference was held on the 26th May after weeks of delaying tactics on the part of the Management. At the Conference the Shop Stewards based their wage demand on Sir Alex-

Continued on page 4.

## RUMANIA CHANGES SIDES

Rumania has changed sides and declared war on Germany! As King Michael, with unconscious humour broadcast, she has remained true to her national traditions! In the last war, too Rumania began as an ally of Germany, then declared war upon her. Thus history has repeated itself.

In yet another graphic incident is revealed the mockery and pretence that this war is a "war against fascism" on the part of the capitalist "democracies" any more than the last war was a crusade to defend democracy. The small powers are only counters to be played with by the giants. Their choice in the struggle is only: which great power is to be their master. It is not a question of "democracy" or "fascism", but spheres of interests, markets, raw materials for which all the capitalist powers are fighting.

After the deal with the fascist Badoglio and the royal sponsor of fascism in Italy, comes the deal with King Michael. The same ruling class is in power in Rumania which began the war as an ally of Britain and France, turned towards Germany when Hitler was winning, and participated with Hitler in the invasion of the Soviet Union. Michael was king while the gangster dictatorship persecuted the Jews, murdered trade unionists and smashed all the workers' organisations, and cruelly exploited the workers and peasants of Rumania for the benefit of the landowners and capitalists.

The war on the Soviet Union has cost the lives of 500,000 Rumanian peasants, three times that number of casualties probably, and an equal number of deaths and casualties on

the Russian side. The atrocities of the Rumanian generals and the Rumanian fascists on Soviet soil have been denounced by Stalin's mouthpieces as being as barbarous and criminal as those of the S.S. and Gestapo. Yet we notice that while pretending the ordinary German workers and peasants are responsible for the crimes of the Nazis, and holding them responsible for their misdeeds, Stalin is quite prepared to come to terms with the Rumanian gentry genuinely responsible for atrocities and crimes.

Antonescu was not removed because Stalin refused to come to an agreement with him but because Antonescu refused to come to an agreement with Stalin! If it suited the policy of the Kremlin, it is clear that Stalin would be quite prepared to come to an agreement with the Nazis themselves, as he has done in the past. Through the so-called Free German Committee, Stalin has already collaborated with Nazi generals and junkers responsible for the crimes and atrocities in Russia.

The allies and the Kremlin are trying to persuade all the Balkan satellites of Hitler to follow the example of Rumania and do a Badoglio or a Darlan, and in Churchill's elegant phrase "work their passage home." The fact that the rulers of these countries are guilty of crimes as barbarous and foul as Hitler's, weighs no more than air on the elastic consciences of these gentlemen. Here in its nakedness is revealed the aims and methods of capitalist diplomacy, which has now been adopted by Stalin as well.

To the Rumanian workers and peasants Stalin has nothing to offer except the continuation of their slavery. The Soviet Government has guaranteed that there will be no "interference" with the social and political conditions

Continued on page 4.