

FREE

NO. 5

THE RED MENACE

JANUARY 1990

As we go to press the ambulance dispute is in its 4th month. Having escalated their action from an overtime ban to answering only 999 and emergency calls, some crews (notably those in London) are now refusing to answer any calls from central control. They are dealing only with emergency calls made directly to stations by the public or hospitals. In various parts of the country crews have been suspended and the army and the police are running a limited ambulance service.

Clearly it is necessary for ambulance workers to escalate their own action. Support is growing for an all out strike: at Isleworth, Twickenham, and Feltham stations in West London crews are already on virtual strike, refusing to answer any calls official or unofficial. With management cutting off phones to stations (as they have done in Dorset and Birmingham), other stations may have little choice but to follow suit.

The real key to winning this dispute though is all out action by other groups of workers too.

The potential for this has been shown already. On December 6th, council workers (in Hackney and Hammersmith), construction workers (including 300 steel erectors on the Canary Wharf site) and hospital workers (at the Elizabeth Garret Anderson in Soho) were among those in London who took unofficial strike action for the day in support of the ambulance crews. Previously bus workers at Hanwell garage (West London) and workers at Homerton and St Bartholomew's hospitals took token action. In addition many other workers have been involved in demonstrating, collecting money and organising ambulance support groups. Ambulance people have also made links with strikers elsewhere - in Luton they joined car workers' picket lines at Vauxhall.

The main obstacle to any escalation of the dispute are the unions. Having originally recommended acceptance of the initial 6.5% pay offer, their main tactic has been to focus activity around useless petitions and calls for arbitration (i.e. a negotiated deal falling well short of the 11.4% rise demanded). Already they have publicly abandoned demands for a cut in the working week and longer holidays.

Roger Poole, chief union negotiator, has bluntly stated: "*we don't want solidarity strikes from other workers*". In November NUPE even refused to allow any non-ambulance workers on a demonstration in Manchester, and they are hoping to do the same on the TUC-sponsored march on January 13th. At all



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sorts of union meetings workers have been told that solidarity can't be discussed as it constitutes illegal secondary action. For instance at the London Hospital (Whitechapel), NUPE branch officials refused to allow an ambulance worker to speak at a meeting of other health workers.

Those who still believe that they can rely on the unions for support should remember what happened when ambulance workers tried to speak to NUPE leader Rodney Bickerstaffe at the TUC headquarters: he called security guards to throw them out. Not daring to be seen to do nothing however NUPE have called a 'day of action' to coincide with the January 13th demo - on a Saturday! And union leaders are also considering asking other workers to stage periods of silence (lasting between 5 and 15 minutes) to show their support!

Ambulance crews and their supporters need to talk *directly* to other workers and argue that they should strike, not just out of sympathy but in their own interests. At Canary Wharf, ambulance workers not only spoke to steel erectors before December 6th but also turned up on the day to make sure they stood by their decision to strike; for construction workers the lack of a decent ambulance service on the streets is a clear threat to their health and safety. On the same day Hammersmith council workers linked up support for the ambulance crews with support for the council's own striking nursery workers. It is this sort of activity that could lay the groundwork for a united strike movement around all our needs.

AFTER THE GUILDFORD FOUR...

"Wrongfully convicted prisoners should stay in jail rather than be freed and risk a loss of public confidence in the law." (Lord Denning, 21/2/88)

"Prison is a killer- everything about it is designed to kill and destroy the human being." (Johnny Walker, one of the Birmingham 6)

The welcome release from prison in October of the Guildford Four does not signify any change of heart by the British state. Despite having quashed their convictions for the 1974 pub bombings in Guildford and Woolwich, the state still hasn't even admitted that Paul Hill, Gerrard Conlon, Patrick Armstrong and Carole Richardson are innocent.

Freeing the Guildford 4 has an immediate political impact, in that the release of the Four strengthens the Anglo-Irish agreement, making it easier for Britain to have people like Patrick Ryan extradited from the 26 Counties i.e. hostage trading. It was also partly an exercise in damage limitation. It is already clear that the conspiracy that led to four Irish people being framed and spending

nearly 15 years in prison involved various leading figures in the legal profession and the police (including Sir Peter Imbert, now commissioner of the Metropolitan Police). No doubt it is hoped that a 'small scandal' now will prevent a bigger scandal later on, as further information comes to light. Liberal lawyers have been expressing concern about the extension of police powers, particularly in the police station. This is more out of a desire to maintain their own power base and the illusion of "justice".

Attention is now shifting to the case of the Birmingham 6, jailed in similar circumstances to the Four in the same period. But we are not talking about tidying up a few

HULL '76 PRISONERS R

The years the Guildford Four spent in jail were not simply wasted time in which they sat and waited in the hope of eventual release. Every day in prison they faced a struggle to maintain their humanity against a system that denies it. Here we reproduce an account by Paul Hill of one moment in this struggle- the Hull prison riot of 1976.

For four days in September 1976 prisoners took over 3 of the 4 wings of Hull prison. As well as Paul Hill, participants in the riot included Irish Republicans (such as Martin Brady), Jake Prescott (in prison for his activities with the Angry Brigade) and various 'ordinary criminals': in struggles such as these it becomes clear that all prisoners are political.

The immediate cause of the riot was the beating up by screws of a prisoner in the segregation unit. Other grievances included the widespread and indiscriminate use of 'Rule 43' (allowing for solitary confinement), and slave labour conditions in the prison workshops, where furniture was made for prisons in Iran. The latter explains why during the riot prisoners on the roof shouted "Fuck the Shah of Iran! Fuck the Shah of Iran!"

After taking control of the buildings and freeing those held in the segregation unit, the prisoners found files held on them by the authorities. Furious at the contents of these files (Paul Hill's for instance included the remark "Never to be released"), "everyone decided to begin demolishing the prison with their bare hands" (Jake

Prescott). As well as causing extensive damage, the prisoners held a roof top protest during which they talked to a crowd of 400 school children who gathered on the other side of the wall, throwing them sweets, toys and money 'liberated' from the prison canteen.

The protest was called off in return for a promise of no brutality and no damage to prisoners' property. Once they surrendered however their possessions were smashed and they were severely beaten up by prison officers. Irish prisoners were forced onto their hands and knees and told to sing 'God save the Queen', black prisoners were racially abused.

A prisoner described one of the beatings he witnessed: "I then heard another being dragged down the stairs, this was a boy of 23 named Paul Hill. He had shoulder length hair and it was by this that he was being pulled down the stairs helped by full blooded kicks to his stomach, chest and back, he was literally thrown down the last few stairs with the words 'Remember Hull '76'".

(This account is taken from "Don't Mark His Face - Hull Prison Riot '76" published by the National Prisoners Movement).



I was involved in the protest at Hull. The events that led to this protest are already known by you, so I will start from after the thing was over, and when we were put in strip cells in B wing. After being in my cell for about two hours, six screws came in led by a screw called Nobby Clark, they asked me for my medal around my neck. As it was of sentimental value I refused. I was then pushed into a corner and held down while Clark ripped it from my neck. They gave me a few petty slaps and then left. That night we were each (I think) given a mattress, no blankets, anyway the screws made it impossible for sleep as they roamed like little armies around the landings (in the total darkness) banging doors, screaming in their usual lunatic ways, only some cons got more than verbal, on my landing I know of at least one con who they set about in his cell, and throughout most of the night, I heard others getting the by now 'normal treatment'. I was very lucky on the Friday night because apart from the verbal I was left alone. By Sat. morning most cons I measure felt as I did, cold, tired and hungry and most of all afraid of what was to come.

'The beatings'- not a feeling of fear as such, but a feeling of despair knowing each of us were totally helpless, I heard the screws work their way along my landing one at a time, cons were battered to breakfast and battered back again, when they got to me I was opened up, grabbed by the hair and dragged along the landing. I was kicked and punched about the body the whole way up the landing by screws who screamed and yelled as if they hated me more than anything in this world. I was in a ball to protect my face, head and privates so they lifted me by the hair and dipped my face in a tray of jam, I was then beaten back

legal loose ends from the 1970s. Only last year Martina Shanahan, Finbar Cullen and John McCann (the Winchester 3) were jailed for 25 years for conspiracy to murder with little more evidence against them than they had Irish accents in the vicinity of a government minister's (Tom King's) home. It remains the case, as Gerrard Conlon said on the day of his release, that "If you're Irish and you're arrested on a terrorist, political type of offence you don't stand a chance". Significantly, it is in Northern Ireland that "the right to silence" has been abolished first.

It would be a mistake to think however that this is just a matter of how the British state treats Irish people. Repressive measures are

often tested in Ireland, before being applied in Britain: snatch squads, plastic bullets, road blocks etc. And witness the case of Winston Silcott, Engin Raghupathi and Mark Braithwaite, jailed for life (for the murder of P.C. Blakelock during the 1985 Tottenham riot) on the basis of 'confessions' extracted under duress. Meanwhile in the Irish 'Free' State, Noel and Marie Murray (two anarchists convicted of shooting a cop in a 1975 bank raid) are still in prison.

For us therefore, it is not a question of changing the colour of the flags flying over the prisons (as envisaged by nationalists of all persuasions) but of destroying them absolutely, and freeing not only those innocent of

their supposed 'crimes' but also all those criminalized in the course of fighting to meet their needs.

For more information on the cases mentioned here contact:

Winchester 3 Campaign,
c/o Grassroots,
1 Newton Street,
Manchester 1

Tottenham 3 Campaign,
c/o Box 1, 124 Vassall Road,
London SW9

National Birmingham 6 Campaign,
21 Hatchard Road,
London N19 4NG

EVOLT: Paul Hill's story

down to my cell and dumped on the floor, a few mins later they came back again and said 'bye'. I was again beaten along the landing and down two flights of stairs, I was lucky enough to have a prisoner who was battered down in front of me witness my beating at the bottom of the stairs. He has said he will back me up in any court proceedings that I may take. This con is B. Coster who I am with at present. We then saw another con P. Rajah (also here) receiving the same treatment that we had. We were then handcuffed and taken to the police wagon and taken here. We each petitioned for access to a brief. This has been refused us, as they want us to tell them our full story first, which we won't do, as whoever beat us up will be paid in advance to say they was elsewhere. While at Hull I got my small record (file) and some of the lines about me are as follows: That in Albany Prison I spoke of my willingness to take hostages, they said I might kill them.

That at all times I am moody and show my hate for the screws by being unco-operative. That anyone who has ever spoken to me has said I express a desire to escape. And no. 4 is the one that frightens me. They said I am *totally suicidal*. I am of sound mind and anyone who knows me says I'm happy and lucky. The reason I worry over this is why would they say this and not be untrue? They also state other matters, some of which I don't want to reveal to anyone other than my lawyer as they were to do so in my case and they are presenting me to have me deported and sent to another section. The one that disturbed me most of all was the fact that they had an intimate bit on each of the main witnesses at my trial and the part that angers me most of all is that they have a section in it about my girl (who has a child by me). They underlined in red *This relationship must be*

ended. Not content with their efforts to wreck us they also wish to wreck our families. My record finished by stating again underlined in red - *must be treated with strict discipline at all times*.

We are bit by bit becoming more frustrated here as we are here and suffering over a prisoner who was beaten up at Hull, yet since coming here we have heard of guys being beaten and put in the 'strong box' naked. I fear that if these things are not brought to light then *someone will be killed* as it's all too easy.

These people (screws) are their own law, and that is the law of the boot and the fist, all this is sanctioned by their lords (the govs.). I've been in 9 prisons in two years and I thought I'd seen the lot. But I ain't seen as much brutality towards cons as I've seen at *Hull* and *Here* (Leicester). All we can do is protest verbally over these beatings here, but I might as well talk to the bog roll than do that, cause all we get in return is shit. If any of us were to raise our hands we would be battered, so what do we do? *Listen to shit, get battered or hide in our cells like cowards and go insane listening to cons screaming?* We are human beings and we want to tell the world we're human because if we don't, after more of this we won't be human very long, we'll be shells or dead. Some people may say I read too many violent books but I know in my soul that if they came into this cell and started me to beat, that not one of them would leave me alone. Remember **THEY ARE THE LAW IN OUR WORLD...**

In Hull I was one of the four cons who busted those in the seg unit out and I witnessed A. Clifford and I say now that the side of his face was marked, no one could ever tell me otherwise, as I seen with my own eyes. I also

felt and adored the feeling of how the cons on the block hugged us as if we had just broke them from hell, some were so happy they had tears in their eyes, and I didn't even know these 'crazy happy guys'. But to me it felt like they were my brothers (and they are) as I'm one of them, a con. I suppose people see us on the box looking like some kind of Cambridge rapist all masked up only what they saw was human beings, that's what we are. (We all got balls and brains but some got balls and chains). We only want to live like human beings. I'm doing recommended natural life, and I fear for my sanity and safety with what I see around me every day. From what I've seen of those who look after our health - at Hull the MOs (Medical Officers) ran alongside the screws yelling "Don't mark their faces". These people are medical officers yet they are breaching the laws of the Red Cross on the treatment of prisoners passed by the Council of Human Rights. I would die of an illness before I would have them anywhere near me with their mind eating drugs.

As far as protesting to the 'guv' about beatings and our treatment I will tell you how much they care - at Hull while B. Coster, myself and P. Rajah were being beaten downstairs the AG (Assistant Governor) there, a dog called Manning, watched in the middle of 20 screws and grinned to himself. I'm not saying he was grinning at the pain we were in. No, he was no doubt grinning at the good (wonderful) job that his staff (army?) were doing! So who do we protest to. We each feel as helpless as new born babies we only wish our minds felt as light as theirs, as we each know what we have (*and still are*) experienced will never be erased from our minds.

We are acutely aware that the contents of this issue of the Red Menace do not reflect the importance of the current events that are shaping the contours of the world for the 1990s. The movements in Eastern Europe (particularly in Romania), the US invasion of Panama and the mass looting that accompanied it, the violent resistance in Hong Kong to the forcible repatriation of Vietnamese refugees—all these and more require the fullest discussion, and like everybody else we are discussing them. However we do not claim (or indeed aim) to 'represent' the entire international class struggle in the four pages of the Red Menace. And rather than throw together superficial articles based on a few slogans and newspaper cuttings, we would prefer to wait until we have some more detailed information about what is going on. If you have any such information, opinions, etc. we would be very glad to hear from you.

Included with this issue of the Red Menace is copy of a leaflet, "The Struggle against Islamic Fascism begins with the Struggle against Iranian Bolshevism".

Send all comments or criticisms, death threats or donations

RED MENACE

THERE'S A RIOT GOIN' ON

The recent wave of media nostalgia for the late 1960s in the USA and elsewhere (exemplified by the re-release of the film of the Woodstock festival) gives the impression that the most important preoccupations of the period were smoking dope and listening to Jimi Hendrix—which of course were not *unimportant*. The subversive movements of the time however are either ignored or treated as outbursts of youthful exuberance, with superstar radicals like Jerry Rubin wheeled out to prove that "they've all grown up now". Recent events in Berkeley, California have shown that not only have the struggles of the 60s not been completely forgotten, but that twenty years later some of them still continue.

In 1969 people in Berkeley turned a vacant allotment into a park; trees were planted and a playground built. The University of California, who owned the land, responded by putting an eight foot barbed wire fence around "People's Park". In the resulting repression and resistance demonstrators faced 2500 National Guardsmen with fixed bayonets, tanks and helicopters. 700 people were arrested and over a thousand injured; one person (James Rector) was shot dead.

20 years after a group of People's Park supporters declared "they cannot stand our Life resisting their Expansion of Commerce", a similar battle is being fought in Berkeley. This time the focus of the struggle has been gentrification and "the attempt by the University, real estate developers, the merchants, and the city to clear the area of black youth, homeless and poor, and others who disturb the smooth production of an elite student body, its consumption from local merchants, and the accumulation of real estate and other profit".

On 19th May 1989 (the 20th anniversary of the death of James Rector) 200 people gathered to watch a film about the original People's Park movement, after which they marched up Telegraph Avenue behind a banner saying "UC out of People's Park". Bonfires were built in the road and as police intervened they were attacked with bottles, cans and anything else that could be thrown. By this time a crowd of 1000 people had gathered, and the police line

was driven back down Telegraph Avenue. Homeless people, punks, black, latin, asian and white kids all joined in as a full scale riot developed. The local Bank of America was attacked and chain stores were looted. As one participant described it: "The whole atmosphere is very friendly, festive and wild. Strangers hug each other and pass out the loot to those who want it."

The police were unable to obtain reinforcements, as they were involved in another riot in nearby Hayward where cops had tried to shut down a heavy metal concert. One sergeant complained: "They won. They proved they can take the streets by force. Basically there is nothing we can do do". Similar lessons have been learnt by some of the rioters themselves: "On May 19th we learned that all is not set in stone, that the capitalist power structure has its vulnerable spots, that an insurrection could start spontaneously as a result of pent-up social tension, that the cops don't always have to win, that clothes and food can be free, that burning cars make great barricades, and that by fighting together we can be very, very strong".

All the quotes come from a "special riot issue" of SLINGSHOT, 700 Eshelman Hall, Berkeley, CA 94720, USA.

also worth a read is COLLIDE-O-SCOPE, 2140 Shattuck Ave., Box 2200, Berkeley, CA 94794, USA.

for an account of some recent strikes in the US, see the November issue of WORKERS INFO RAG, PM, c/o Zamisdat Press, GPO Box 1255, Gracie Station, New York, NY 10028, USA.

Finally we have received another interesting magazine from North America: AGAINST SLEEP AND NIGHTMARE, P.O. Box 3305, Oakland, CA 94609, USA

OTHER PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

Industrialism and Domestication by John and Paula Zerzan available free from: Box 1, Red & Green Books, 144 Churchfield Road, London W3 (please send SAE).

Open Letter to Comrade Lenin (A Reply to "Left Wing Communism: an Infantile Disorder") by Herman Gorter: £3 from, BM CAT, London WC1N 3XX

A.K. Distribution Catalogue (Books & Pamphlets etc.), send SAE to 3 Balmoral Place, Stirling, Scotland, FK8 2RD.

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