

# THE MASS STRIKE IN FRANCE MAY-JUNE 1968



**ROOT & BRANCH PAMPHLET 3**





## Introduction

The pamphlet which follows is an analysis of events which happened in France two years ago. What is the point of publishing today yet another work on this subject? The Mass Strike in France is unique among the mass of print devoted to its subject. It is neither a chronology of events, nor a record of the "leadership" role of one or another political sect, nor yet the discovery of some fashionable new dynamic of revolt in "neo-" or even "post-capitalism". Instead, it looks at the activities of the workers and students in May and June 1968 to discover in what way they were a response to the conditions of capitalist life today; what were their strengths and limitations; and in what way they point to the possibilities of a new kind of society.

French capitalism is of course different from the American version. The oldfashioned nature of the French university system is just one aspect of a general backwardness. Yet the May-June strike holds lessons for us as well as for our comrades in France. Capitalism today, despite national rivalries and unevenness of development, is more of a world system than ever before. This is true not only on the level of economic ties—the dollar-dominated money system, the world market, the multinational corporations—but in the necessity for each national economy to develop the most modern forms and structures of social



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*Informations Correspondance Ouvrière* (ICO) is a group of workers who meet to compare their experiences in the shops and to discuss larger problems with the end of a clarification of ideas. This pamphlet is the result of one such collective discussion: written by a number of manual and intellectual workers, it was discussed by all those who took part in ICO's meetings in Paris during May and June, 1968.

ICO publishes a monthly bulletin of information on labor struggles all over France, as well as articles of a more general and theoretical nature. They may be obtained through P. Blachier, 13bis, rue Labois-Rouillon, Paris 19e, France.

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