

workers' ACTION

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10p

SOCIALIST CAMPAIGN FOR A LABOUR VICTORY

All-London Rally

Speakers: Ernie Roberts [prospective parliamentary candidate for Hackney North, retired assistant secretary of the AUEW], Ted Knight [PPC, Hornsey; leader of Lambeth Council]; Ken Livingstone [PPC, Hampstead], Pat Longman [SCLV Steering Cttee.]

FRIDAY 22 SEPTEMBER, 7.30, FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE, EUSTON ROAD.

Zimbabwe

The last days of white rule

"WE FACE the greatest crisis of our lives", Ian Smith told the white community of Rhodesia last week. The racist rulers of the settler states are facing the end of a system where 250,000 whites lord it over five million Africans.

The newly imposed martial law, the 200 arrests of nationalist leaders, are only desperate holding operations. Emigration is speeding up, and more and more whites are losing confidence in Smith.

As the collapse of the stooge 'transitional government' draws nearer, divisions among the black nationalist leaders are sharpening.

Each of the leaders wants to get himself the top position in a new black capitalist Zimbabwe. They vie with each other in getting the backing of Britain, the

US, African states, and the USSR. They look out for the best positions for negotiation with Smith.

The black nationalist fighters should get our support whatever the sordid manoeuvres of their leaders. It would be reactionary nonsense to deny support to the fight against capitalism with racist rule on the grounds that the outcome will only be capitalism without racist rule.

But — if and in so far as we can — it is also our duty to support the black workers and peasants who have borne the brunt of the struggle, against their leaders, in their battle for a more equal society in place of the gross racist inequality of Rhodesia's settler state.

The Shah's troops kill 240

ONLY TWO hours after the imposition of martial law in Iran, the Shah's troops fired on a demonstration of 5,000 people at Tehran's Jaleh Square, killing about 240.

The bloody massacre is the latest measure in the Shah's 'liberalisation programme', aimed at mollifying religious leaders while stepping up the brutal re-

pression of all militant demonstrations. The demonstration had taken place in defiance of the Shi'a clergy, who had advocated only the closing of the bazaar.

According to reports, the march to Jaleh Square was led by teenagers and veiled women. They called for the overthrow of the Shah and called on troops to support the people's protests. The troops opened up with machine guns, though there have been reports of some troops committing suicide rather than fire on demonstrators.

The new martial law imposes full censorship on the press and a curfew between 9pm and 5am. Troops and tanks can be seen at major intersections and outside public buildings.

Hundreds of lawyers, clergymen, merchants and businessmen have been arrested.

◆◆◆
The declaration of martial law testifies to the failure of the Shah's cabinet reshuffle. Following the lull after the wave of protests that came with the funeral of the 600 victims of the Abadan cinema fire (August 19th), the Shah made Jaafar Sharif-Emami Prime Minister in the hope of buying favour with leaders of the clergy. This move have obviously failed.

In fact, the talk of "liberalisation" and "free elections for

'legitimate' parties", far from buying a period of peace, has encouraged more and more open opposition.

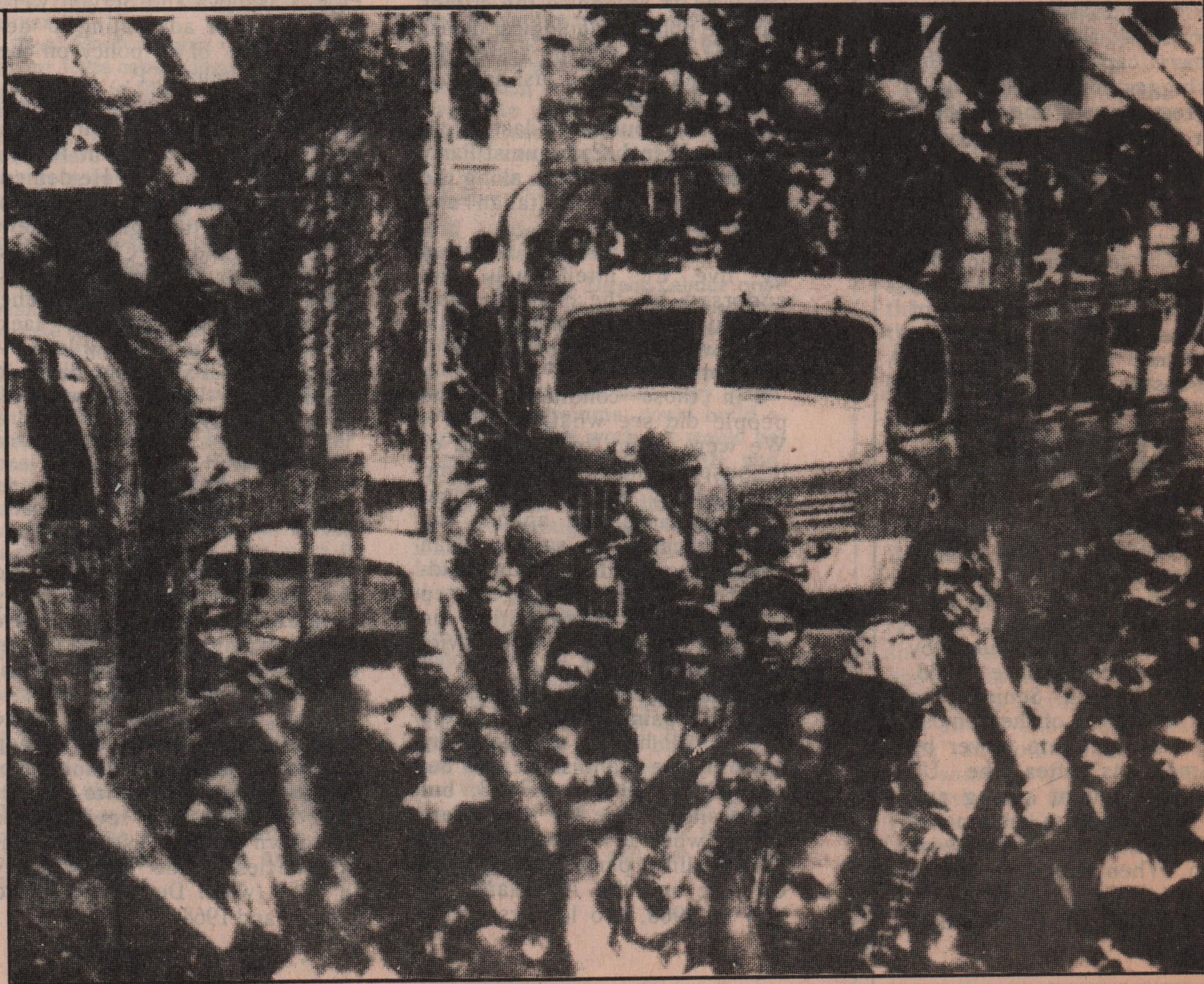
Apart from the numerous demonstrations taking place in all the main cities and religious centres, several big strikes have taken place. And in Tehran the students and

staff have won a victory over the regime by forcing the Shah to keep the Aryamehr Technical University in the capital.

This latest upsurge has compelled the Shah to call off his planned visit to Eastern Europe. Not surprisingly, these so-called socialist states were perfectly prepared to

have the butcher as a guest at the very height of the crisis in Iran.

President Carter once again revealed his democratic credentials by phoning the Shah to say that he "deeply regretted the anti-government riots", and re-affirm the close alliance of the US and Iran.



NEXT WEEK
SOCIALIST ORGANISER will be out: special newspaper edition of the bulletin of the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory. A paper to be used by all socialists in the labour movement who want to counter the Tories and also the right-wing record and policies of the Labour leaders. 15p a copy, bundles at 10 for £1 post free from SCLV, Box 127, Rising Free, 182 Upper St, London N1.

As the Workers' Action staff will be helping to produce **Socialist Organiser**, WA no. 118 will be dated Sep. 30th.

WHY BOSSES IN NICARAGUA ARE BACKING THE STRIKERS

THE SPECTACULAR kidnapping of two ministers, 46 MPs and 15 journalists by leftist guerrillas in Nicaragua on August 22nd has stimulated a wave of opposition against the corrupt and brutal regime of the Somoza family.

Two days after the raid on the Chamber of Deputies in the capital city of Managua by members of the Sandinist NLF (FSLN), the government was forced to give in to the guerrilla demands: release of political prisoners, the payment of half a million dollars ransom, and a safe exit from the country for those who carried out the operation.

The departure of the guerrillas at the airport turned into a victory parade, as tens of thousands of Nicaraguans, shouting *Down with Somoza*, came to cheer them.

Nicaragua's main opposition groups called for an indefinite general strike "to deal the final blow to the regime". The strike got almost total support from workers, shopkeepers, and even employers, throughout the country.

In certain towns, however, opposition to Somoza has gone beyond strikes and demonstrations. In Matagalpa, the third largest city, and some smaller towns, virtual insurrection has taken place. In Matagalpa, 500 or so school students, some as young as twelve, have fought the national guard with pistols, home made bombs and machetes. "Los Niños" [The Kids] have received active encouragement in their rebellion from the older population.

Fighting has also been renewed between FSLN troops and government forces on the border of Costa Rica, and latest unconfirmed reports say that the Sandinistas have captured Leon, the second biggest town in Nicaragua.

The response of the isolated dictator Somoza has been to increase state repression. His latest measures have included the arrest of 700 "broad front" opposition leaders — ranging from pro-Moscow CP to members of the Conservative Party — and the banning of the Chamber of Commerce and the Nicaraguan Development Institute, the two biggest bosses' organisations!

BLOODY

Given that everyone from the poorest peasant to the wealthiest industrialist wants to see Somoza go, the regime's days must indeed be numbered.

Nicaragua has been ruled by the Somoza clan since 1933. Anastasio Somoza Senior, the political Godfather of the Somoza dynasty, was put into power by the Americans after the US Marines had fought a long and bloody war against nationalist guerrillas led by Augusto Cesar Sandino. When American troops withdrew, Somoza tricked Sandino into meeting him for negotiat-

ions, then had him ambushed and killed on orders from the US Embassy.

Somoza, as head of the National Guard, was now unchallenged US puppet ruler of Nicaragua. Before his own assassination in 1956, he had accumulated a 200 million dollar fortune that included a sugar mill, cement plant and cotton gin, sugar, cotton and coffee plantations, thousands of acres of top farm land, cattle ranches, newspapers, the country's only TV and radio stations, an airline and a steamship company.

After his death his sons, Luis and Anastasio Junior, went on running Nicaragua like a family firm.

CLAN

The rise of the Somoza family's fortune brought contradictory responses from the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie. There was advantage in business association with the Somozas and their cronies. Yet the growth of the Somoza business monopoly and state corruption damaged some sectors of the wealthy classes. And the unpopularity of the Somozas, reflected in almost annual outbursts of popular discontent throughout the sixties and seventies, was bad for business.

The major fear about removing the Somoza clan lay in the danger

Somoza

of popular mobilisations going beyond the limits of the bosses' opposition and leading to the elimination of private property altogether. The employers who supported strikes in 1972 against the regime quickly backed down because of this. Today they seem prepared to latch on to the protests in an attempt to lead them in a safe direction, because they can see that whatever they do, Somoza is finished. At least they can hope to stop rebellion from turning into revolution.

What spokesmen for big business interests are demanding is the institution of a "government of national salvation". Clearly

Guerilla leader makes his victorious exit at the airport

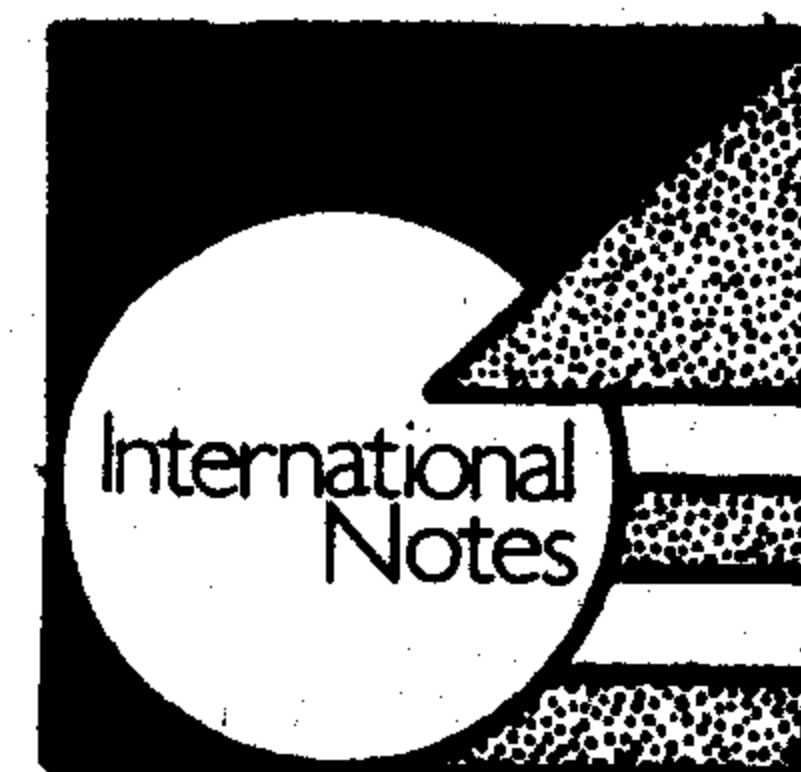
the salvation they have in mind is their own! For their part the bulk of 'the nation' are of a different mind.

As some workers told one reporter, "Nobody here says 'Viva the broad front' or 'viva the conservative party'. What we say is 'Viva el Frente Sandinista'".

Yet the Sandinistas seem unclear as to what political solution is needed when Somoza goes. Their main demand is for a national democratic government. But they do not set out what social measures this government should carry out. Their preoccupation with 'armed struggle' has caused them to exclude the possibility of building a mass party. And this has meant that when the masses have not been passive spectators to FSLN armed actions, they have been forced to rely for political leadership on bourgeois or reformist forces.

The Nicaraguan masses, however, are aiming for a more radical path. The destruction of the 45-year-old dictatorship is certain to have profound repercussions for Nicaragua, and the Caribbean area as a whole.

BAS HARDY



CAMPAIGN TO FREE JAILED ARGENTINIAN TROTSKYISTS

A WORLD-WIDE campaign is being organised to save the Argentine socialist leader Hugo Bressano (Nahuel Moreno) and his wife Rita Strasberg, also a member of the PST (Socialist Workers Party) of Argentina.

Moreno and Strasberg were arrested by the Brazilian police on 22nd August in Sao Paulo, together with 19 Brazilian socialists, members of the 'Socialist Convergence', and a member of the Portuguese PRT (Revolutionary Workers Party). A highly 'respectable' Sao Paulo newspaper commented that the 22 were arrested 'for no other reason than their political positions'.

The Portuguese socialist and several of the Brazilians have since been released, but not Moreno and Strasberg. If they are sent back to Argentina, their lives are in danger: since the military coup in 1976, thousands of people have 'disappeared' without trace in Argentina.

The French Socialist Party, the Spanish PSOE, and 60 members of the Portuguese Parliament, have sent protests to the Brazilian government. In Britain a petition of protest is being prepared, and a picket is being called at the Brazilian embassy.

**Free Moreno & Strasberg!
PICKET OF THE BRAZILIAN
EMBASSY**

32 Green St, W1; from 6pm on
Monday September 18th.

'STALIN'S CRIMES - WE KNEW ALL ABOUT THEM'

"WE NOW recognise the crimes and the politico-ideological deviations of Stalin and the system he led... [and] we can't just say that we didn't know about it".

In a book published last weekend, the French Communist Party has taken further steps along the road traced by the Italian and Spanish CPs.

"The USSR and Us", written by five CP intellectuals and endorsed by the party's politbureau, concludes that external pressures explained the 'blindness' of the French CP.

"In those conditions, some people did see what we didn't. We were wrong to disregard or to suspect their intentions and their lucidity. But... we were deaf to every argument against the USSR because we saw it as an addition to the distressing build-up of world forces aiming to step up their scope for exploiting the workers by smashing the Soviet stronghold through war".

Even this feeble analysis touches some painful spots. For the French CP has to explain away not only the Stalinist ice-age between the 1930s and 1953, but the stance of the CP in the late 1950s, when it ranked as a die-hard Stalinist party alongside the Chinese and the Albanians. As late as 1960, two leaders of the

PCF, Casanova and Servin, were kicked out for advocating a 'de-Stalinisation' of its policy on the lines of the Italian-CP.

The new book does not examine these episodes, but it does mention Thorez' reaction to the 20th Congress in 1956. He denied the existence of Khrushchev's secret report (though he knew all about it) and at PCF meetings on the 20th Congress Stalin's name was still acclaimed. The PCF now puts this down to "lack of confidence in the new leadership of the CPSU" and difficult conditions in France because of the Algerian War.

Lies

So cynical peddling of lies (and the CP leaders, unlike many rank-and-filers, knew they were lies) is explained away as a matter of 'hesitations' under the influence of various pressures.

And this prudently vague self-criticism is extended to mop up the maximum number of issues. The 'refusal to undertake the necessary revisions' is put down as the cause of any inadequacies in the PCF's policy in 1958 (when De Gaulle seized power) and 1968.

The PCF puts great stress on the national character of their party and its policies, implying that Stalinism was an external evil, stuck onto it, which it is now freeing itself from.

The argument explains nothing. If there were external pressures, why were the French CP leaders so spineless that they gave in to them? After all, a supposedly communist party is no use unless it can withstand the very powerful 'external pressures' of the capitalist society in which it lives.

Stalinism was no more purely external to the French CP than its present search for bourgeois-democratic respectability is purely French. The crimes of Stalinism did not just take place in the USSR.

It was in France that the French communists who refused to bow to the 'external pressures' of Stalinism were hounded out of the PCF, and the party was turned into a tame bureaucratic machine.

It was in France that Trotsky's son Leon Sedov was murdered by the GPU, and in France that the Stalinists, during World War 2, killed the Trotskyist leader Pietro Tresso and several of his comrades.

It was in France that it was normal practice, up to 1968, for

the PCF to kick Trotskyists out of unions they controlled and to set about Trotskyist leafletters at factory gates with iron bars.

It was in France that the PCF sold out or diverted potential revolutionary movements of the working class in 1936, 1944, and 1968; in France, that the PCF abandoned revolutionary ideas and started looking instead for bureaucratic niches in the existing system. It was in France that the PCF turned to the servile pursuit of bourgeois-democratic and nationalist politics which leads it, in this new book, to discard even the label 'Marxist-Leninist'.

Image

The 'liberalisation' that goes along with the CP's new social-democratic image may make it easier for some CPers to find their way to genuine communism; in the new book, the PCF says that the ideas of Trotsky and Bukharin should not be rejected out of hand. But for the CP leaders there is no way out through the rewriting of history. Their retreat has been cut by their own crimes.

Rhodri Evans



Editorial

Callaghan banks on another year with the lid on

WHATEVER THE ifs and buts of Jim Callaghan's estimation of voting trends, one thing is certain about his decision to put off elections to next year. It is based on the calculation that the TUC will keep the lid firmly on wages struggles over the autumn and winter.

Ford workers, Leyland workers, miners, and many others have 20%-plus claims coming up over the next few months. The Labour government, having nailed its colours to the mast of wage controls, will

want to make sure its 5% limit holds — and holds without damaging strikes. Indeed, the Government must intend to do nothing much between now and the election except try to hold the 5% line.

So the coming months will see the Labour Government trying to face down workers' wage demands, saying: hold back, or you'll help the Tories!

Evidently Callaghan must be pretty confident of TUC support in this effort. But no worker should fall for this despicable swindle. If the Tories gain, it's the Government which is to blame! a Labour Government which holds down wages to let profits rise deserves no working class support.

It does not even deserve the support of local Labour Parties. They should support workers' struggles against the Government. That is the only way to beat the Tories, and to strengthen the forces of socialism within the labour movement.

In this respect there is something to be gained from the election date being put off.

It will give more scope for rank and file demands about the Labour manifesto to make themselves heard.

And it gives us a 'pre-election' period of several months,

in which politics will be more in people's minds than usual. The clashes over the 5% limit will pose the three alternatives even more clearly: for the Tories; for a Labour vote and for the Government's policies; or for a Labour vote and for working-class interests, therefore against the Government's policies and record.

It gives us a few more months to build support for the third alternative: that is, for the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory.

But the TUC get 60 per cent

IN CASE you've forgotten what a big pay rise looks like after years of Government-devised and TUC-backed wage controls, the TUC has just voted its top staff rises of up to 60%.

The bottom of the heads of department scale goes up from £6,448 a year to £9,017. Len Murray's salary is expected to rise from around £10,000 to around £16,000.

When it comes to their own pay, the TUC officials also understand the value of index-

linked rises. Every grade will have its pay rise further boosted by the inclusion of a cost-of-living rise to cover price rises since last September.

As for blue-collar workers at the TUC — caretakers, porters, canteen staff, cleaners — they're not included in the rise. No doubt they will have to crawl under the government's new 5% wage limit.

This rise comes only a week after the miners' union leaders voted themselves a whacking rise. As we said then, trade union leaders should be paid no more than the average wage of their members. Otherwise they are sucked more and more into bureaucratism and careerism.



Murray — up to £16,000

KEEPING THE TRUTH HIDDEN FROM VIEW

AS THE Aubrey-Berry-Campbell 'Official Secrets' trial proceeds at the Old Bailey, the TUC has been playing its part in protecting British State security.

TUC president David Basnett refused to take a resolution from the National Union of Journalists dealing with the case (where two journalists and an ex-soldier are charged with breaking Signals Intelligence security) on the grounds that it was 'sub judice'.

The NUJ delegates walked out of the conference hall.

In the speech he was not allowed to deliver, NUJ President Denis MacShane declared:

"The Government has... created a climate in which journalists are afraid to investigate the murkier corners of Government behaviour, worried that the heavy hand of the Special Branch will come to arrest them.

Power

"And why are they so concerned. Because... *knowledge is power*. The fight to get employers to open their books has been one the movement has struggled for for many years. We ought to open the books of what the Government is doing in our name.

"Forget defence. This is about the secrecy of planning decisions, secrecy over hospital closures, secrecy over social security provisions, secrecy over Bank of England operations...

"And the tragedy of all this is that the Government, partly as a result of pressure from the trades unions, was elected with a solemn manifesto pledge to replace the Official Secrets Act with a law which would provide a window through which we could examine what was being down in our name..."

The 'official secrecy' is supposedly needed to protect British 'intelligence' services. Yet during the same week the politicians were claiming daily that those 'intelligence' services were not up to the task of watching oil tankers roll into Rhodesia and noticing that it was Shell-BP oil, breaching sanctions. And over the years 'official secrecy' helped keep the sanctions-busting well hidden!

The sanctions-busting is *still* going on. According to the *Sunday Times*, Shell and BP are still supplying Rhodesia through a 'swap' agreement with SASOL, the South African state-owned oil company.

Cynical

No enormous 'intelligence' apparatus was needed to unearth this fact — just a little lifting of the curtain of 'official secrecy'. A BP spokesman is reported in the *Sunday Times* as saying: "It is generally assumed that we sell more oil to South Africa than South Africa consumes".

We have a Labour government. Tom Jackson, the new chairman of the TUC, is a member of the Board of BP. The best they can say is, "We didn't know!" If that is not just a cynical excuse (and it seems it is), then they should tell us: what does this show about official 'intelligence' and official secrecy?

It shows this: official 'intelligence' and official secrecy fulfill the same purpose, to keep information in the hands of the bosses and the bureaucrats, and to keep it out of the hands of the people.

NIK BARSTOW interviews JENNY MORRIS, an Islington Councillor, about the campaign that is being started there to press for a build-up of the Direct Labour force.

THE FIGHT FOR DIRECT LABOUR

□□ Jenny Morris — The main impetus for the campaign for direct labour is from within the Labour Party and from the tenants. In the Arthur Road Housing Action Area in Islington there is an active residents' association, whose members have had experience of the work done by private contractors. Their view is that the council should employ its own direct labour force instead of failing to solve the problems caused by contractors' shoddy work and high prices.

The fact that tenants actually want direct labour is an important political point.

Pressure is building up to get a direct labour force for rehabilitating property and doing new buildings; and also to expand the existing force doing repairs and maintenance. At the moment the council only deals directly with part of the repair work — Islington only employs one glazier, for example.

Part of the prejudice against direct labour comes from the fact that many people don't realise that the "council workmen" doing poor work are often outside private contractors.

■ ■ Nik Barstow — The building employers argue that their competition means better and cheaper work. Is that true?

□ □ Not at all. At the moment our Architect's Department can ask five firms to tender for a job and only two actually will. There is a shortage of firms who will take on our contracts. This makes it difficult for council departments to impose strict conditions because there isn't any room to pick and choose. And there are problems with building firms going bust. The prime example is a council housing project at Stock Orchard Crescent in Islington where a large firm, Headway Construction Ltd., was in financial difficulties and walked off the site after the council refused to give them an ex-gratia payment of £¼ million to keep them afloat.

It cost the council double the original estimate to get the building completed by another contractor.

The smaller firms are going broke all the time and they have enormous over-runs on costs and the length of time they take. Prices of tenders have gone up by about 30% in the last year alone.

■ ■ What are the advantages of building with direct labour?

□ □ It would tackle the apparent



shortage of skilled labour. This 'shortage' is the fault of the private contractors. Most firms don't have any permanent force of skilled workers such as carpenters or bricklayers — they just have a foreman who employs a gang of workmen as they're needed, so there's no idea of training.

It should also improve the standard of work. At present it just doesn't pay private contractors to do a good job. Most of the money they get goes to them at the start of a contract and a lot of them just pack up and go, leaving the sites unfinished. One contractor in the Arthur Road area completed about six jobs, of which only one was alright the first time he left it.

One contractor did work on the show house of a housing action area and within two weeks there was damp coming through the wall-paper. The number of complaints made by tenants only months after moving into rehabilitated houses is very large.

■ ■ What do you think are the implications of the recent Whitehall report on Direct Labour, which argued that it should show a profit and compete for tenders with private contractors?

□ □ Obviously the pseudo-profits that a council made would be ploughed back and it would give a tight control and make it 'efficient'. But the unions wouldn't want a bonus system, which is most people's idea of how to get efficiency. There shouldn't be such a

system because it would be divisive — there should just be a decent basic rate of pay for council employees.

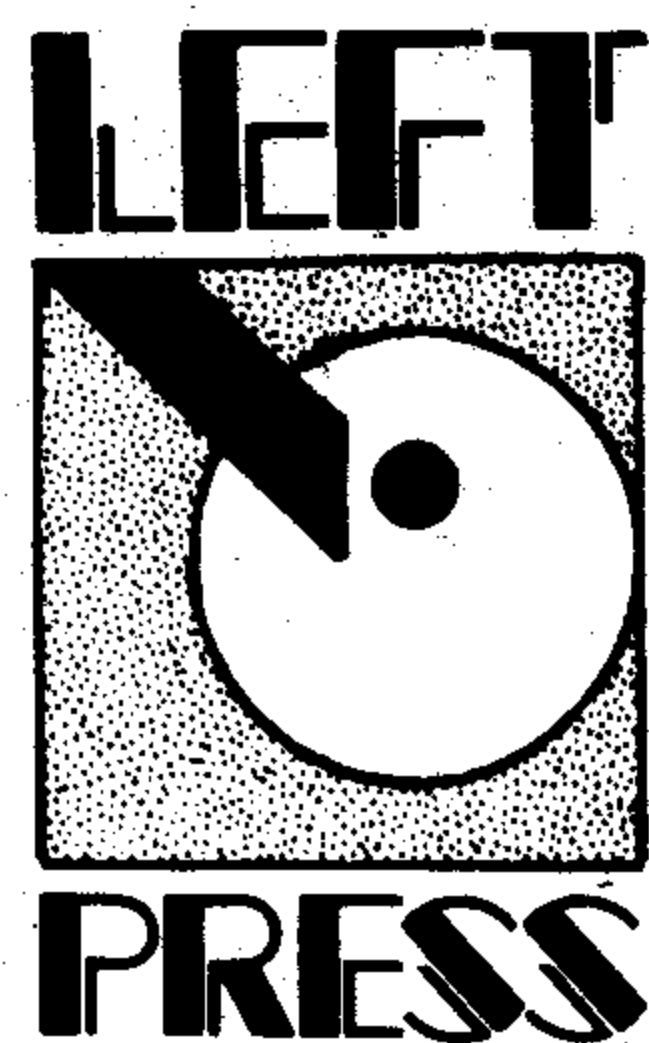
The disadvantages of a direct labour force competing with private contractors is that in order to cope with the enormous problems the building industry has landed us with, there would need to be a lot of money spent on training. It would be very short-sighted to expect a direct labour force to compete with private contractors without taking this into account or the need to provide decent pay and fulfill the health and safety regulations that private contractors usually ignore.

The other idea in the report is that direct labour forces should do other work too. That's a good idea. But at present in London the organisations don't exist even to cover local authority work. Because direct labour is better unionised, pays union rates, produces a skilled workforce and observes the health and safety regulations, the more it can expand and take work away from the private contractors the better.

■ ■ How does this tie in to the Labour Party conference call to nationalise the building industry?

□ □ There should be a commitment in Labour's election manifesto to carry out the promised nationalisation of the building industry. It should be said very strongly whose interests this would be in — the workers in the industry and also tenants.

ALL THUMBS OVER CHRYSLER MERGER



IN *SOCIALIST WORKER* of 9th September, Paul Rinaldi, a shop steward at Linwood, explains the SWP's answer to the Peugeot-Citroen takeover bid for Chrysler-Europe, and the probable resulting threat to jobs.

He calls for Chrysler UK to be nationalised. Fine. But experience of mines, steel, and the car industry itself — with Leyland — shows that more needs to be said. And *SW* says more.

Chrysler has to be nationalised under certain conditions. Workers' control? With no compensation? Not a word of that. For *SW* the issue is: "Chrysler should be nationalised independently of British Leyland".

Restating the issue, *SW* declares that "nationalisation independent of big business is the only way forward". But *SW* can't really believe that Leyland is big business and the State which would nationalise Chrysler isn't!

So what is *SW*'s argument? After all, having two nationalised car firms competing against each other, with the workers in each being played off against the other by the State, doesn't make much sense in socialist terms (or even in capitalist terms). What *WA* argues for is the nationalisation of the whole car and car components industry, without compensation, and a fight for workers' control over its running.

SW's reasoning seems to be: keep away from Leyland because they've got Michael Edwardes and Derek Robinson! "Edwardes has as much interest in saving jobs as Margaret Thatcher has in promoting socialism", and: "Another reason against cooperation with Leyland is the structure of their stewards' committee".

So Chrysler workers are to press for nationalisation in the hope that they will get a kinder State boss than Michael Edwardes. And as for the Leyland workers... serve them right!

The idea that the Chrysler and Leyland workers should get together to kick out the Robinsons and their equivalents in Chrysler, and to deal with Edwardes and his like, seems to be beyond *SW*'s ken: as also is the idea of international workers' cooperation.



Indeed, a major part of the objection to Leyland seems to be that Leyland manager Michael Edwardes is a foreigner. Three pictures across the top of the *SW* article show "Detroit gangster" Riccardo (chief of the Chrysler US mother company), "South African axeman" Edwardes, and "French hatchetman" Parayre of Peugeot.

Underneath, a picture of Chrysler workers is captioned, "Not a multi-nationalist in sight".

SW's contrast between 'foreign' bosses and solidly British workers reads like a sick and very dangerous joke. The workforce in car factories, in Britain and even more so elsewhere in Western Europe, is as "multi-national" as any capitalist corporation: Turkish, Yugoslav, Portuguese, Spanish, Moroccan, Algerian, Indian, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, West Indian and Irish immigrant workers probably make up the majority.

One of the main tasks for socialists in the car factories is to create real multi-national unity among workers in the car industry. This is all the more vital because competition in the car industry is international competition, and, given the scale of the industry, any socialist programme for it must include international planning and workers' control.

Yet *SW* thinks "Not a multi-nationalist in sight" is a good caption! At a time when even the trade union bureaucrats are talking about an international strike throughout

Peugeot-Citroen-Chrysler for job security, *SW* makes no mention of links with Peugeot or Chrysler workers outside Britain. What its answer for the French Chrysler workers is, we can only guess. Nationalisation separate from Renault, perhaps?

Is it all just a bad article, something that slipped past in a busy week with another change of editor? The basic political line is there, exactly the same, in an equally long feature in *SW* of 19th August.

A call for nationalising Chrysler on its own. No mention of workers' control or denying compensation to the bosses. No mention of international link-ups. A lot of stress on the especially evil nature of the French bosses.



In *Socialist Review* (the SWP's monthly magazine) there is a slightly more 'refined' version of the same line. Chris Harman calls for nationalisation (of what, he doesn't say) under workers' control, and argues against the Communist Party line of 'building up the British car industry'. But even in this version, presumably tidied up for the SWP's more politically educated members, there is not a word about international workers' links.

Why does *SW* end up with this nonsensical nationalist rubbish? They have the idea that transitional demands — that is, political demands which aim to link up



Riccardo, Edwardes, Parayre

partial struggles with overall socialist objectives, like nationalisation without compensation, workers' control, opening the books, the sliding scale of wages and hours, and so on — are best avoided because they can lead the struggle into the toils of bureaucratic negotiations or bourgeois politics. Better, in their view, to stick to militant sectional demands topped off by general explanations about socialism.

At the best of times, this means that the SWP gives its members no education on how to deal with mainstream social-democratic politics — other than proclaiming how super-militant the SWP is. At times like this, when wider political answers are unavoidable, it is even worse. The SWP is all thumbs, trying to package demands borrowed from the Trotskyist transitional programme into their usual format of 'realistic' militant sectional demands.

MARCUS GARVEY AND THE BIRTH OF BLACK POWER

TO MANY Jamaicans today, Marcus Mosiah Garvey is the prophet of Rastafarianism. Records like Burning Spear's "No One Remembers Old Marcus Garvey", Big Youth's "Marcus Garvey Dread" and Tapper Zukie's "Marcus" have made of him an almost legendary hero of black redemption, the John the Baptist to Haile Selassie's Christ.

How does this connect with the 'little, sawed-off hammered-down black man' who died in Kensington in 1940?

Born in St. Ann's Bay, Jamaica, in 1887, Garvey had ten brothers and sisters, nine of whom died as children. His father had owned several small pieces of land but lost them in lawsuits, and at the age of fourteen Marcus was apprenticed to a printer.

Moving to Kingston, he became a foreman — but soon sided with the workers in a strike, and moved on to a variety of jobs in a number of Latin American countries.

He was still only 24 when, in 1911, he founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), the movement that in the next dozen years was to gather millions of black members. Two years later, after involvement with Africans during a visit to London, he added the words "and African Communities' League".

In 1916 he went to the USA to meet Booker T. Washington, the celebrated American negro leader. But Washington died just before Garvey's arrival and, like many other West Indians, he moved to Harlem.

Pride

This was the time of huge drift of Southern rural blacks to the north — some directly, and many others after army service. Their expectations, and even more their disappointments, generated a number of black movements ranging from friendly societies to the militant UNIA.

By the time the early twenties brought a reaction against all radical groups (black and white) Garvey and his followers had built the UNIA into an organisation whose supporters ran into many millions with branches throughout the Americas and Africa, and in England and India.

The movement was held together by its paper *The Negro World* (a paper banned on pain of imprisonment in many countries), by speaking tours and by a host of preacher-organisers. Huge month-long conventions drew up to 20,000 people to Madison Square Garden in New York.

The conventions involved much hard debate, but also much marching, celebrating and conferring of titles like "Supreme Potentate" or, on Garvey himself, "Provisional President of Africa".

It's easy now to smile at the faded photos of Garveyites in plumed hats or mortar-boards. And it is easy to mistake his references to his role as like that of Christ, or Napoleon or Rockefeller, as being the ravings of a millenarian demagogue. Some might even be tempted to compare Garvey with Amin... But all this had the important function of making black workers and sharecroppers ask themselves why it should only be white



Above: Marcus Garvey in a UNIA protest in 1924. Lower: parade, 1921

people who were famous or were held in such awe that people didn't laugh when they paraded in uniforms or quaint regalia.

Garvey was perfectly clear on this point: he stood for black pride as an essential precondition for all other action.

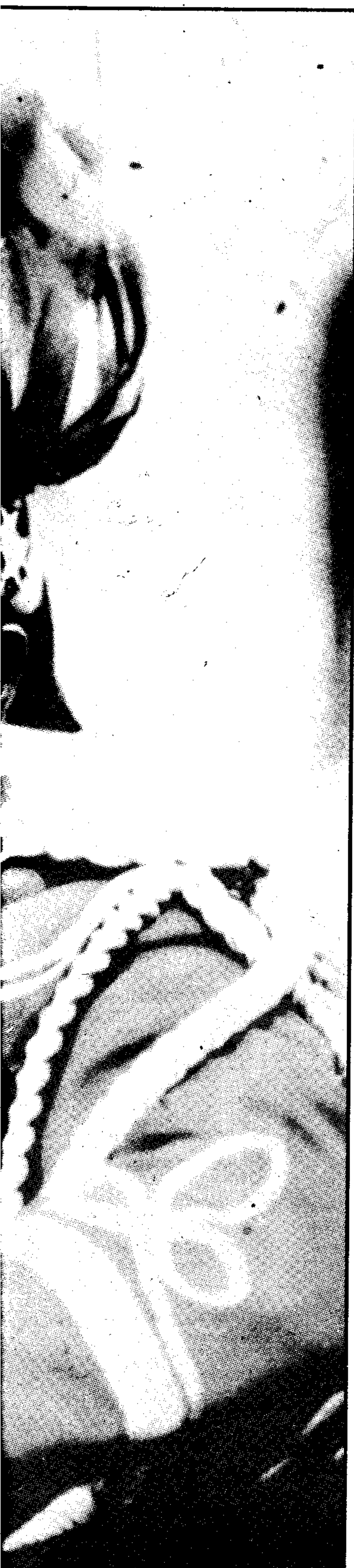
Much of the flavour of the smaller meetings of UNIA groups is conveyed by this description in Malcolm X's autobiography: "My father was a Baptist minister, a dedicated organiser for Marcus Garvey's UNIA. With the help of such disciples as my father, Garvey, from his headquarters in New York City's Harlem, was raising the banner of black-race purity and exhorting the Negro masses to return to their ancestral African homeland — a cause which made Garvey the most controversial black man on earth..."

The teaching of Marcus Garvey stressed becoming independent the white man...

"[At the UNIA meetings] which were held quietly in different people's homes, there were never more than a few people at any time — twenty at most. But it was a lot, packed into someone's living room. I noticed how differently they all acted although sometimes they were the same people that jumped and shouted in church. But in these meetings both the men and my father were more intelligent and down to earth. It made me feel the same way.

"I can remember hearing 'Adam driven out of the garden into the caves of Europe', 'Afr

GARVEY OF OVER



out 1922. Upper right: A
right: The Garvey militia on

took to these meetings. The pictures showed what seemed to me millions of Negroes thronged in parade behind Garvey riding in a fine car, a big black man dressed in a dazzling uniform with gold braid on it, and he was wearing a thrilling hat with tall plumes.

Garvey chose the title 'Universal Negro Improvement Association' in the context of the Jamaican class structure, in which a majority of black workers was ruled by a tiny group of whites through the agency of a small light skinned caste. (In addition, Chinese traders owned most groceries, and Syrians and Lebanese dominated the clothing trade.) To Garvey, then, the word 'coloured' was not just a euphemism for black (as it was in the USA), and to choose the word 'negro' was in effect to issue a class manifesto.

Not surprisingly, he saw the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People), as a collaborationist clique of bourgeois blacks, the political equivalent of the advertisements for skin lighteners and hair straighteners that infested the pages of papers and magazines directed at blacks in the USA.

Racist

But Garvey was not against all collaboration with non-blacks: "I am not saying that the Negro must not be a radical if he wants to, but he should be a radical on a programme of his own... Sometimes he may have to cooperate with other people and other movements, but this should be done only to the extent of his winning his cause..."

When he urged blacks in the USA to distrust unions he did so because he knew just how racist these bodies were.

Such a position was understandable: his assessment of the racist character of the AF of L trade unions was perfectly correct. But the anti-integrationist tactic had disastrous consequences for the UNIA.

Like the early Zionists (with whom he saw himself as having a strong affinity) Garvey negotiated with declared racists.

In 1922, leaving his bodyguard in New York, he went to Atlanta to confer with the assistant Grand Wizard of the Klan, which was then growing fast.

In 1925, a speaker from the Anglo-Saxon Clubs of America gave an address to the UNIA which was reprinted in *The Negro World*. And in 1929, the Southern racist Senator Bilbo sponsored a bill for the repatriation of blacks to Africa on behalf of the UNIA.

In each case, Garvey's position was that the UNIA opposed the mingling of blacks with whites until the creation of a black sovereign state in Africa could permit it on an equal basis. In each case, he might have defended his action by reference to the vulnerable situation of UNIA branches in the South. And in each case his enemies, both in the NAACP and on the Left, used the incident to build up an image of him as a megalomaniac, obsessed with the vision of a mass exodus to Africa, and thus as an obstacle to the struggle for civil rights in America.

However mistaken Garvey's tactic of negotiating with these racists, it must be understood that most of those who attacked him did so from an Uncle Tom integrationist point of view (the NAACP) or from a point of view which wanted more emphasis on the struggle in the Southern states at the expense of Garvey's internationalist vision.

As for the charge of megalomania, it must be said that the UNIA was an extremely democratic organisation. It certainly was not the mindless, holy-roller crusade that some of Garvey's detractors have tried to make out. Indeed, quite the contrary: for all their faults, his ideas were sober, rational and consistent.

Far from neglecting the immediate needs of blacks, the UNIA developed its own welfare services, and itself provided at least a thousand jobs in cooperatively-run businesses. It also ran its own militia. (Amy Jacques, Garvey's second wife, has written of a journey from a Southern town in a heavily armed car.)

Finally, although repatriation on

black-run ships has taken on a mystical meaning in such records as Fred Locks' 'Seven Miles of Black Star Liners', it was once a practical scheme which collapsed because powerful interests combined to crush it, and not because of any inherent absurdity.

Africa

Garvey stressed: "It does not mean that all Negroes must leave America and the West Indies, and go to Africa to establish a government. It did not take all the white people of Europe to come over to America to lay the foundation of the great republic. ... the UNIA is not teaching Negroes to discard and throw away opportunities that may be beneficial to them locally ... to the contrary, we say ... seize all opportunities that come to you, but remember that our success, educationally, industrially and politically, is ultimately based upon the protection of a nation formed by ourselves. And that nation can be nowhere else but in Africa."

At one time, Garveyites pinned their hopes on the German colonies in Africa, which were taken under League of Nations control after World War One. The Persian delegate conveyed their request to the League, but eventually it was ruled that national minorities could only approach the League through



their own country's (i.e. the USA's) delegate.

Then, in 1924, Garvey made a deal with the president of Liberia, a state set up by the American Colonisation Society in 1817 for the repatriation of freed slaves. UNIA already had a strong branch there, and an area of about 500 square miles was designated for 'colonisation' by Garveyites from the USA and West Indies.

Meanwhile, 35,000 blacks had bought stock in the UNIA's Black Star steamship line.

At almost this moment Garvey — in a blatantly political trial — was sentenced to five years' imprisonment for using the US mails to defraud stockholders. His conviction rested on one envelope, posted years before, by someone else, with UNIA rubber-stamped on it, whose contents had mysteriously vanished.

Actually, Garvey's publicity for the Liberian scheme had drawn the attention of the Firestone Tyre Corporation to the potential richness of Liberia as a rubber-producer, all other such areas being then under British control. Fire-

stone made a deal with the Liberian president for the very land promised to Garvey.

Garvey's insight into imperialism was confirmed: "If you want to see the poor, go to Africa; if you want to see the poor, go to India, go to the West Indies and the Southern States of America, where men's souls are driven out of them, where their bodies are harassed beyond the physical condition of the brute, to add to the wealth of the great capitalists who stand behind your statement and say: A bigger navy, a bigger army, for the protection of the Empire. But it is not for the protection of the Empire; it is for the purpose of keeping down these unhappy millions in India and Africa and elsewhere so that these few capitalists can continue to grind the last bit of sweat and the last drop of blood out of other human beings"

On his release from prison at Leavenworth he was deported. Some of those leading the pack baying for his deportation were prominent negroes like WEB DuBois. They never lost an opportunity to ridicule and slander the UNIA and Garvey. Tales were spread about his dishonesty. Others accused him of being a magician.

The UNIA by no means collapsed while Garvey was in prison. But his deportation immediately after release (which was almost cert-

why it did not have the success in negotiating with the imperialists that Zionism did — it was not prepared to be an instrument in the suppression of Africa.

Garvey's race-consciousness was a naive one: he did not distinguish between the race-pride of oppressed blacks and the race-hate of the KKK. The centrality of this issue pushed out any consistent conscious class attitude, and he was openly anti-Communist

Above all, what makes him a giant — and what makes establishment historians want to ignore him — was his internationalist vision, his emphasis on black pride, his opposition to imperialism and his organisation of millions of oppressed blacks.

Robert Minor, an American Communist, wrote this tribute to Garvey in the *Daily Worker* in 1924, in response to the abuse being heaped on him by DuBois and others connected with the NAACP:

"I am obliged to look beyond the details [of DuBois' criticisms] at the apparent fact that a government that hates and despises the Negro masses, a government that hates the working classes, and which has never been unforgiving to grafting schemes, that such a government does not find a friend in Garvey."

"And above it all towers the fact that the Universal Negro Improvement Association, the largest organisation of Negroes in the world, is made up almost entirely of the working class."

Militant

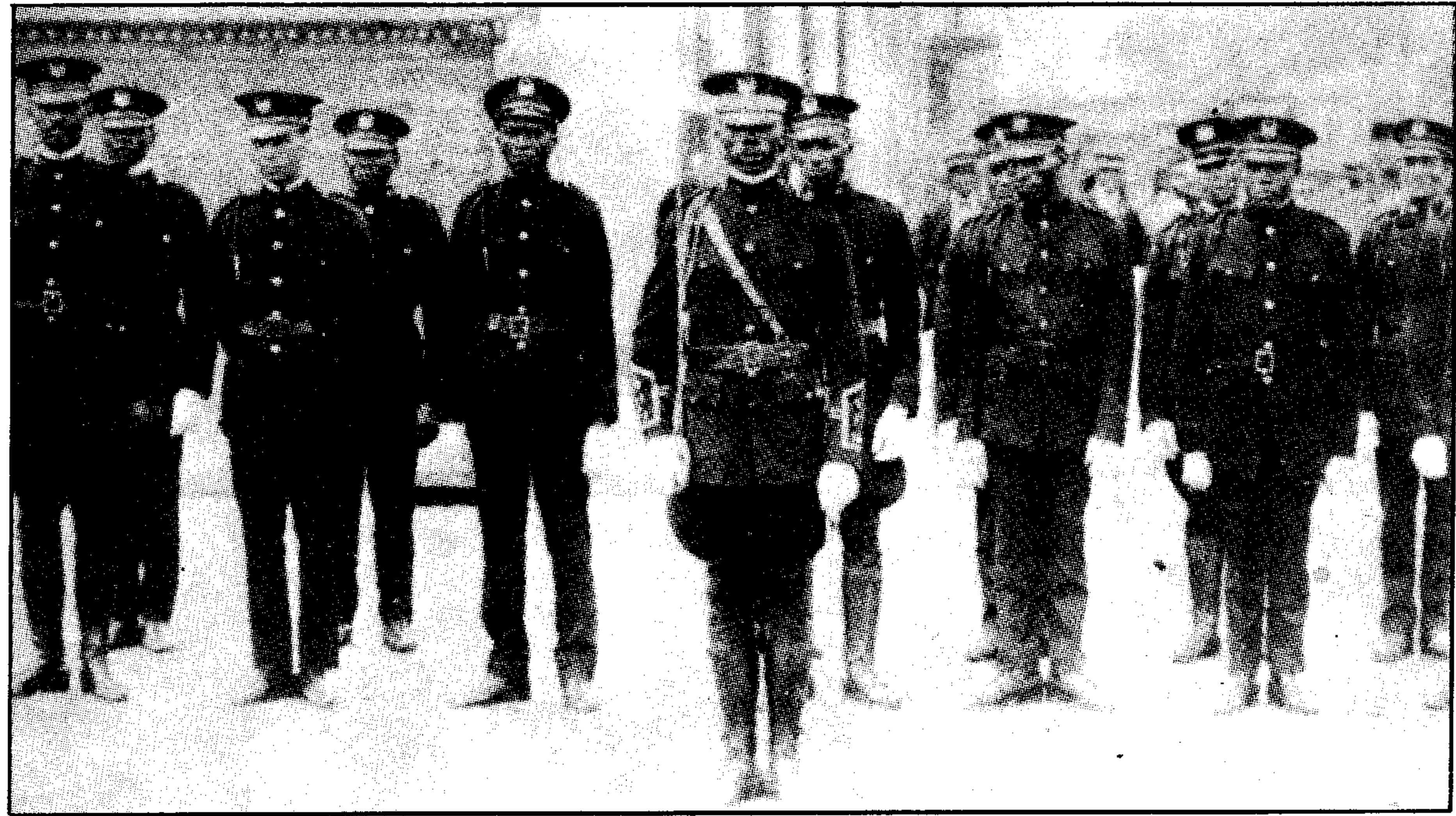
"I am waiting for some Negro leader who has organised more Negroes than Marcus Garvey has organised, to criticise Garvey, and I frankly confess that if such a leader is given a longer term in Leavenworth than Garvey received, I will listen to him more attentively."

"The lickspittles of capitalism in Washington do not love Marcus Garvey. This alone ought to make the working class think twice about condemning the man. His enemies say the government condemns Garvey for using questionable financial methods for the purpose of fleecing the masses of uneducated Negro workers. But I don't think the Teapot Domers at Washington have any objection to fleecing the Negro masses."

"I think their solicitude is based on something else: the fact that Garvey is organised many thousands of Negroes of the class that is destined to take over the earth, and make a militant demand for a sweeping international liberation of colonial peoples."

"I heard Garvey speak last night. He is one of the most powerful personalities that I have ever seen on the platform. He is of the rare type that history finds rising in every unsettled period to express new currents among the masses of men... who are called uncouth, who are jeered as misfits, and yet who may form the heads of the battering rams which smash down the walls of their environments"

COLIN WAUGH



for the Africans', 'Ethiopians, Awake!' And my father would talk about how it would not be much longer before Africa would be completely run by Negroes — 'by black men' was the phrase he always used. 'No one knows when the hour of Africa's redemption cometh. It is in the wind. It is coming. One day, like a storm, it will be there'.

Negro

"I remember seeing the big, shiny photographs of Marcus Garvey that were passed from hand to hand. My father had a big envelope of them that he always

"You can be perfectly sure we don't and won't encourage strikes"

"ALL Foreign Office and CIA" was how one T&G National Officer described the international work of the British and American unions. The TUC spends over one third of its budget on this international work, mainly on financing the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions [ICFTU]. Yet two researchers* trying to find out exactly how the money is spent met a virtual wall of silence.

The ICFTU (and thus the TUC), together with the American unions, carry out a "foreign policy" more in line with the interests of the British and US governments than with workers' interests.

Trade union activity in the service of imperialism really got underway after World War Two. The initial spearhead was the American Federation of Labour (AFL), which in 1945 refused to join the World Federation of Trade Unions because, as well as the TUC and the American CIO, it included the Soviet and other Stalinist unions. Meanwhile, the AFL played a large part in the post-war reconstruction of the trade union movement in Germany, Italy and France to ensure US influence.

A report by the European Director of the CIA in the early 1950s confirmed that CIA money was behind the AFL's activities, particularly in France. There they helped to split the CGT, the main union federation, in 1947, and in the same year helped to hire Mafia gangsters to break a dockers' strike aimed against Marshall Aid.

After the WFTU split in 1949, the AFL took the lead in the ICFTU which was set up by the western non-Stalinist unions.

There was at that time a strong rivalry in the ICFTU between the AFL and the European unions, particularly the TUC. It centred on two issues: influence over (and ability to mould) Third World unions, especially those in the

British colonies and ex-colonies; and what the AFL considered to be insufficient anti-communist zeal on the part of the other ICFTU unions.

The AFL-CIO (unified in 1955) was usually able to dominate the ICFTU. And then, in 1967, they left it.

But ever since they quit, the possibility of an AFL-CIO return to the ICFTU has been used to prevent criticism of their activities and their CIA links.

The philosophy of the AFL-CIO was summed up by John Dunlop, an American economist, speaking in 1958: "When we go to a country like Iraq, or Ghana maybe, the best advice we can give them is not to have any trade unions, at least for a time, or have a controlled union..."

Trade union officials are often debriefed by Foreign Office officials when they return from trips abroad...

On the one hand, I am in favour of free and independent unions, while on the other hand I recognise that in the face of the Communist threat there may be good reasons for these unions to be kept unions. In this argument our traditional view of the trade unions is an impediment.

The AFL-CIO is the sponsor of these "kept unions". In the late '40s they set up a regional trade union federation in Latin America, ORIT. It became (and remains to this day) the regional wing of the ICFTU and is funded by them.

Ex-CIA agent Philip Agee described ORIT as the principal mechanism for CIA labour operations in Latin America. It works by splitting unions, and setting up and financing stooge organisations.

A US Senate inquiry stated: "ORIT endorsed the overthrow of the Arbenz regime in Guatemala and of the Goulart regime in Brazil. It supported Burnham over Cheddi

Jagan in Guyana and it approved the US intervention in the Dominican Republic. To many Latin Americans this looks like ORIT is an instrument of the US!"

Yet TUC International Secretary Allan Hargreaves said: "We can't disaffiliate from ORIT because it contains so many of our affiliates..."

ORIT is paralleled by and appears to have a close relationship with a body called the American Institute for Free Labour Development (AIFLD). American government aid funds have gone to ORIT through AIFLD. The President of AIFLD is AFL-CIO leader George Meany, and the Board is made up of both union officials and business executives from multi-national firms, many of which finance the AFL-CIO's international work.

In 1972 AIFLD admitted that 92% of its money came from the government. Its activities are largely training trusty trade union officials and running a housing programme for which applicants are strictly vetted politically.

AIFLD played a part in organising the overthrow of Allende in Chile, closely cooperating with ORIT. Unable to make a viable split from the major trade union federation CUT (though the AFL-CIO tried for 10 years), the AIFLD concentrated on building up professional associations financed by multinationals such as IIT and Anaconda Copper.

These 'unions' were behind the strikes of a section of the copper miners and of the truck drivers and merchants, which formed the prelude to the military takeover. Similarly, the AIFLD director said about the coup in Brazil in 1964: "What happened in Brazil did not just happen, it was planned, and months in advance. Many of the trade union leaders, some of whom were trained in our own institute, were involved."

...one of the AFL's leading international anti-communists was seen at one conference in Africa openly handing out money in the corridors to trade union leaders...

The same happened in other continents. Irving Brown, one of the AFL's leading international anti-communists, was seen at one conference in Africa openly handing out money in the corridors to trade union leaders.

The War on Want report points out that the pattern of AFL-CIO involvement closely matches the pattern of investment by US multinational firms: "...there is a direct correlation between the timing and intensity of AFL-CIO country programmes, and the impact and timing of US-based multinational company direct capital investment."

How different is the TUC-funded ICFTU?

In Nigeria, the United Labour Congress was aided both by an AFL-CIO agency and by the ICFTU. A government inquiry in 1977 revealed that the ICFTU and

the AFL-CIO agency "had a free hand in the running of the affairs of the Congress" with representatives of both taking part in policy-making meetings. There was so much foreign money coming in that none of the affiliated unions felt the need to pay their dues and officials were bribed on a large scale.

The ICFTU also funded the Angolan General League of Workers, though officials of the ICFTU knew it was a Zaire-based front for the US-supported FNLA.

In Rhodesia, according to an African trade unionist "...indiscriminate financial handouts to individual trade union leaders outside the control of their unions by the ICFTU are reasons for dividing and retarding the growth of the African labour movement... It is appalling to watch African trade union leaders being tossed around from one union to another by international aid, without providing any meaningful trade union representation to African workers..."

...the TUC discusses foreign matters with the CBI, with a Foreign Office official in the chair...

The TUC's international activities are closely linked with British state policy. The TUC receives £75,000p.a. from the British government for its programmes in the underdeveloped countries. Trade union officials are often debriefed by Foreign Office officials when they return from trips abroad, and the TUC discusses foreign matters with the CBI, with a Foreign Office official in the chair.

But while the Government is kept well briefed, there is no information for rank and file trade unionists.

The TUC's International Secretary claims that the TUC's work is 'non-political'. When challenged on the ICFTU's activities, they plead ignorance. The TUC's role in South Africa, where Britain has a special interest, shows up these claims.

Although in 1969 the ICFTU broke off links with TUCSA, the all-white union federation, the TUC still maintains informal links because "it is, after all, the national centre". In 1973 the TUC sent a delegation to South Africa which met only the white unions, industrialists and ministers.

The South African *Financial Mail* then published an interview with a TUC representative, commenting: "South Africa has an unlikely new friend in Britain — the TUC". Asked about the effect of new repressive legislation, the TUC man said: "We are assuming that this Act is not directed against bona fide organisations such as yours, but at people who are taking a

"South Africa has an unlikely new friend in Britain — the TUC"

direct and uncompromising line on organisations which prejudice the security of South Africa: trade unions tend to be stabilising influences." And later "You can be perfectly sure that we don't and won't encourage strikes."

The TUC voted in 1975 for recognition of the black trade union movement SACTU, but has done nothing about it.

And with all the TUC's international efforts, when did you ever hear of the TUC organising international strike action? Or international blacking? Or even international shop stewards' meetings?

As the 'War on Want' authors ask, "Who spoke up for the Egyptian workers and city poor when they were attacked by Sadat? Or for the Rumanian miners when they came out on strike? Or for the unionists in Thailand when the military returned?"

BRUCE ROBINSON

There was so much foreign money coming in that none of the affiliated unions felt the need to pay their dues...

EVENTS

Small ads are free for labour movement events. Paid ads (including ads for publications) 8p per word, £5 per column inch — payment in advance. Send copy to Events, Box 1960, Rising Free, 182 Upper St, London N1, to arrive by Friday for inclusion in the following week's paper.

Sunday 17 September. London Workers' Action meeting: "Why the Unions are Clamping Down on Strikers". Speaker: Jim Denham (TGWU, Longbridge). 7.45pm at the 'General Picton', Wharfdale Rd/Caledonian Rd, near Kings X.

Saturday 23 September. Picket of Winson Green Prison, Birmingham, from 2pm. Organised by Committee Against the Immigration Laws, sponsored by Moseley ANL, SCLV, and IMG.

Sunday 24 September. Anti-Nazi League Carnival. Meet 11am in Hyde Park. Carnival in Brockwell Park.

Sunday 8 October. London Workers Action meeting. "Socialists and the next government". 7.45pm, 'General Picton', Wharfdale Rd/Caledonian Rd, Kings Cross.

SCLV MEETINGS

Monday 18 September. Coventry. "W(h)ither the car industry?" Speaker: Jim Denham (TGWU, Longbridge). 7.30pm, Swanswell pub.

Wednesday 20 September. Edinburgh. "Vote Labour, but prepare the fightback". Speaker: John O'Mahony. 7.30pm, Trades Council, Picardy Place.

Thursday 21 September. Manchester. "No to wage control, no to the 5% limit". 7.30pm, Star and Garter, Fairfield St, Manchester.

Friday 22 September. All-London SCLV Rally. 7.30pm, Friends Meeting House, Euston Road.

Sunday 24 September. Islington. Debate between Socialist Unity, Communist Party, and SCLV. 7.30 at the Hemingford Arms, Offord Rd/Hemingford Rd, N1.

Wednesday 27 September. Islington. "Defend Direct Labour". Speakers: Paul Lowenburg (an author of the pamphlet 'Building with Direct Labour'), Cllr Jenny Morris, and a UCATT member. 7.30pm, Caxton House, St Johns Way, Archway, N19.

Friday 29 September. Nottingham. Carlton East Branch Labour Party meeting with SCLV speaker. Burton Rd Community Centre, Burton Rd, Carlton. All Labour Party members and trade unionists welcome.

Monday 2 October. Coventry. "Ireland: Brits out!" Speaker: Richard Chessum. 7.30pm, Swanswell pub.

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COMBINE AND RULE



Frank Chapple

The right wing leadership of the EPTU, led by veteran witch-hunter Frank Chapple, is about to strike yet another blow against rank and file democracy. It will take the form of a 'reorganisation' of the Plumbing section.

A militant and secretary of one of the London plumbing lodges talked to WORKERS' ACTION about what it will mean.

Before the amalgamation with the Electricians, the Plumbers' union had 40 lodges in London and 400 nationally. The PTU was a democratic union: all officials were elected and anyone could join regardless of their political affiliations. All the secretaries in the lodges had a list of other secretaries whom they could circulate with information.

Since the amalgamation with the ETU, we're not allowed to know who the other secretaries are, and we certainly can't circulate information. Everything has to go through Head Office.

The PTU also had a District Committee which was made up of delegates from all the lodges. At the annual conference in 1970 after the amalgamation, the General Secretary tried to do away with the District Committees. He failed. His argument for disbanding them was that they were all under left wing influence!

At the next Annual Conference 4 years later, he won, and they were disbanded. It was a big blow for the organisation of plumbers. We have now only one full time official where we used to have six — and he

is appointed and not elected.

And of course, as soon as the amalgamation went through, bans were binding on the PTU.

Now we are down to 17 lodges in London, and we have just received information — though not officially — that Chapple intends to reduce the number of plumbing lodges down to 5.

The only lodge that has been left untouched by the reorganisation is Eltham Lodge; it happens to be the General Secretary's lodge, and it was the only one that supported National Secretary Lovell.

The reorganisation will seriously weaken the organisation of plumbers. You can't expect someone to spend over £1 in fares going from one side of London to another. In North London you'll have people as far apart as Tottenham and Fulham going to one Lodge! And in the South as far apart as Croydon and Camberwell.

They also intend to disband the industrial lodges. At Fords, in the print, shipbuilding, steel — they will all be disbanded and amalgamated with the electricians. This will mean that the number of plumbers' delegates to the negotiating committee will go down, as there are

more electricians than plumbers. There is some fear that plumbers' demands will not be fully represented.

They have done this because the plumbers have a history of being far more militant than the electricians, especially in the hospitals and in the print.

There are still work-based cells, but they have no political power. They can't send reps. to Trades Councils or Labour Parties. Only the lodges can do that. The dismantling of so many lodges will mean a drastic decline in the political involvement of the membership.

We are planning to hold unofficial meetings. However, it's very difficult. We haven't even been officially notified yet that the reorganisation is to take place. The EC can carry it out without reference to the membership in a ballot or conference.

Even the so-called progressives voted for the reorganisation on the EC. Their excuse was that the lodges included a lot of dead wood and were badly attended. The real reason is that Chapple wants to put his house in order and the plumbers are the last base of resistance.

THE UNIONS



HUMAN CONTROL OR TRUSTING IN GOD

COLIN FOSTER REPLIES TO THE CORRESPONDENCE ON 'TEST TUBE BABIES'

Dear comrades,

Where Rachel Lever (WA 114) got the idea that I think blood-ties should be abolished "as a short-cut to getting rid of the family", I do not know. In any case, logically, 'test-tube' incubation and 'birth' would not abolish blood-ties; babies might still have identifiable parents. And the family could exist without blood-ties.

I brought in the question of the family to show that if the usual complaints about 'genetic engineering' have any force, they should apply even more to the 'human engineering' in children's upbringing and education. And indeed, if Rachel Lever thinks the women and men of socialist society won't have enough "wisdom, knowledge and foresight" to be trusted with making babies as healthy, well-knit and talented as 'genetic engineering' can make them, then how can she suppose that anyone has enough "wisdom, knowledge and foresight" to be trusted with the moral, emotional and intellectual shaping of human beings? Why not abolish schools and trust in God instead?

Leonora Massey's arguments on children's upbringing would lead even more directly to obscurantist conclusions. Even in the most primitive societies children "master speech and basic physical skills" (though not necessarily from their parents). In modern schools some children are not adequately taught to read and write. Conclusion? I would say: we need better schools. But Leonora Massey contrasts "the relationship of children to parents and other relatives" to teaching by "bourgeois-bureaucratic professional experts", preferring the former.

The conclusion seems to be: abolish schools, expertise, professionalism (but why are these supposed to be necessarily 'bourgeois-bureaucratic?') and return to nature.

The question: "A future society may be... benevolent... but will it have, in sufficient degree, wisdom, knowledge, and foresight?... Will it have the good sense to breed for us an Edward Lear as well as an Aristotle?" owes all its force to intellectual sleight-of-hand.

First, 'society' is supposed to be a 'person' apart from its members and 'benevolent' or malevolent towards them — that is, a state. The state can indeed be more foolish or vicious than almost any individual citizen. But one of the main aims of socialist transformation is to do away with the state as a force standing above men and women. And if you ask: will the women and men of the future have enough good sense...? then the answer is clear: Yes, of course they will!

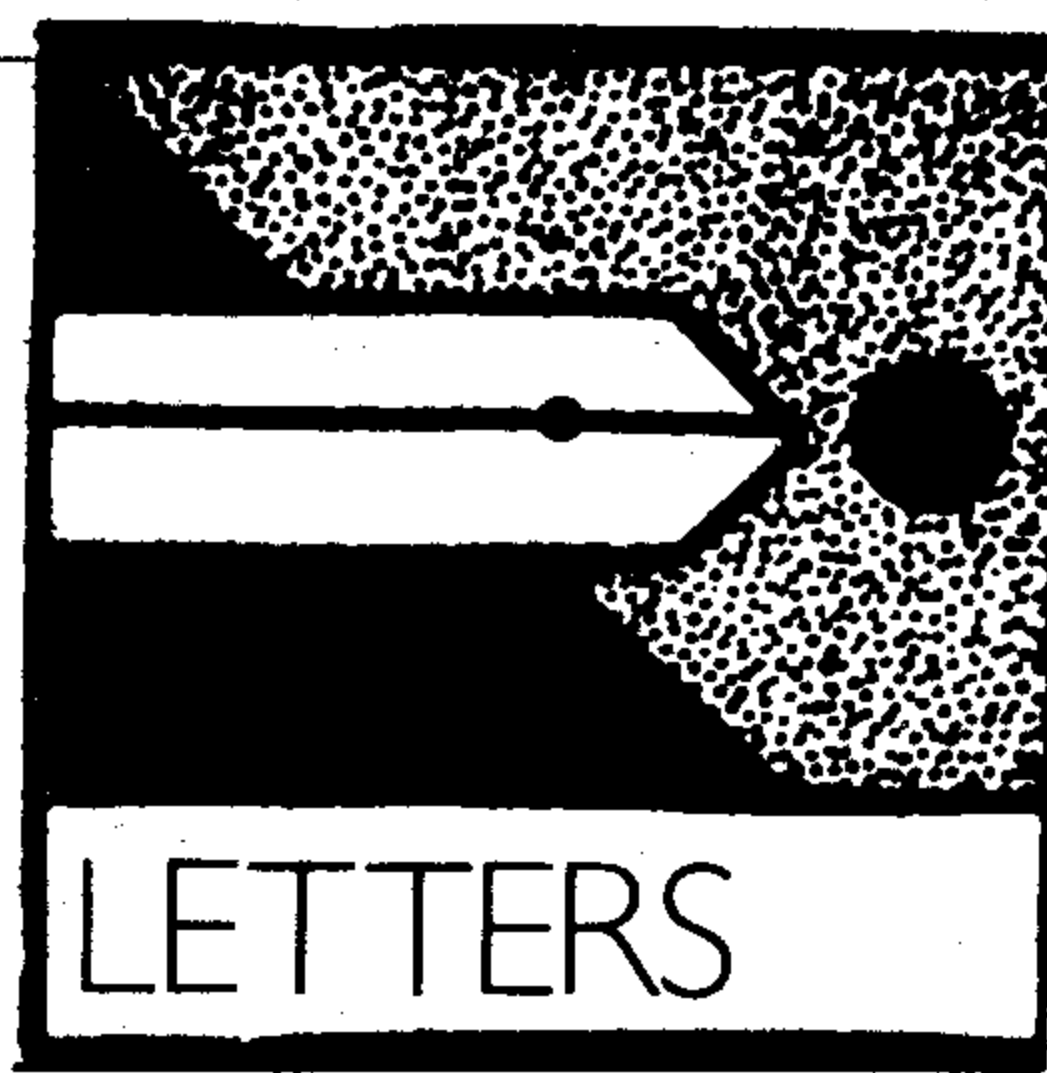
(And if they don't, how can Rachel Lever hope that her recommended ban on scientific and technical development in the field of reproduction will be observed? What police will enforce the ban?)

In any case, Aristotles and Edward Lear are not born: they are formed by upbringing. And yes, socialism will create a far broader variety of individual development than any previous society.

As for Leonora Massey's argument that I want to eliminate the "subjectivity and control of the parents": parents have no conscious control over reproduction other than the ability (within limits) to decide whether to have a child or not. How that child turns out at birth is beyond human control. Far from taking away conscious control, 'test tube' techniques could open the possibility of control.

This brings us to another point of Rachel Lever's. Wouldn't the laboratory products form a social élite, lording it over the 'naturally'-born?

Yes, they would — if socialism continues to have the same status



conscious, rat-race psychology as capitalism! But if that happens the dim-witted and awkward are likely to form a new proletariat anyway. In the more favourable environment of socialist society, people will develop their various potential talents more broadly than today: thus the differences in realised talents will be far wider than today. Moreover, with relative equality of opportunity, hereditary factors in determining talent will weigh more heavily than today.

Yet we believe that in socialist society there will be a generous, cooperative spirit — such as has existed, in various degrees, in most pre-capitalist societies, and can exist within the family, at its best, in capitalist society. If not — then socialism will either have to junk technology, or

end up as a 'technocracy' or 'meritocracy', test-tube births or no test-tube births.

It is because the family (despite everything) is almost the only place in today's society where we can find giving without demanding an equivalent in return, and esteem irrespective of a 'valuation' of the other person, that people cherish blood ties. Socialism, surely, will generalise those human relations as human relations, not 'blood' relations. Socialism means the brotherhood (and sisterhood) of all men (and women).

I can see no reason — other than religious or mystical prejudice — to suppose that people related biologically are innately more able to have human rather than commercial, rat-race relations with each other. Thus I am not worried about the prospect of socialism doing away with blood ties.

Rachel Lever says that women don't want to be rid of pregnancy and childbirth: they welcome and value it. And Leonora Massey goes further: she thinks I just abhor pregnant women!

My argument was not that a socialist society would ban natural pregnancies, but that the development of scientific techniques would give the men and women of that society (not just a few 'experts') the possibility

of some conscious control. It might then turn out that the women of the future would almost unanimously prefer to take advantage of those laboratory techniques. Personally, I think that is probable. But in any case I am not trying to legislate for the future, but rather to point out that it will be progress when scientific advance gives the women and men of the future a choice.

Finally: Leonora Massey says my "attitude owes much to the technocracy and statism of the Second International, and indeed of Stalinism, and nothing to Marx or Trotsky". Now, for better or for worse, my view on this question is the same as Trotsky's. In his speech 'In Defence of the October Revolution', Trotsky even spoke of "putting humanity into the retort of the chemist".

For myself, I am sure that Marx, and all revolutionary Marxists up to the Second World War, would find the idea that the present methods of reproducing the human species are sacrosanct completely superstitious. Only after fascism, Stalinism, World War 2 and the atom bomb, has Marxism acquired the streak of pessimism and fear of technology expressed in the letters of comrades Lever and Massey.

TEST-TUBE PROGRESS?

Comrades,

The two letters on 'test-tube pregnancy' by Colin Foster and Rachel Lever raised several questions that need further consideration.

Colin's pleasure at contemplating the arrival of test-tube pregnancies is in my view premature. Not only for the reasons mentioned by Rachel, but because I feel that we know too little of the importance to the developing foetus of the environment of the womb. A test-tube new-born, deprived of the experience of the womb, might turn out pretty unsocial.

Moreover, Colin Foster supports the modern methods of hospital interference in childbirth and pregnancy as being progressive, yet many women do not see it entirely in that light.

Of course procedures which minimise pain and danger are progressive, but some of today's techniques actually increase the pain (induction), and the running down of the domiciliary midwife system in favour of more hospital births may increase the danger as well as the pain for many women.

Many women feel that childbirth is a sensitive process which can be enjoyable and exhilarating and that some hospital interference not only destroys this aspect but may harm the

baby too. Hence the fashion for the Leboyer method of birth.

More control by the mother and more choice for her will often cut across hospital 'progress'.

Then there is the whole battery of tests which can now be done to ascertain the health of the foetus, leading to the possibility of late abortions of damaged foetuses. As incubation techniques improve alongside such methods, might we soon find that a foetus is reckoned viable at precisely the time such abortions are carried out, and are we then in the same position as killing deformed children at birth?

If we look at the problem of those who are childless against their will, then probably we will refute Rachel's argument, and say that the biological link to the younger generation is not vital. It is only the nuclear family which has 'privatised' children, made them the possession of their blood relatives, and so excluded childless people from participation in the caring bond with children.

Whilst I sympathise with all those thousands of women queuing for a test-tube conception, I feel that childbirth is just one of the joyful experiences in life, and not by any means the only one. It's the way

women are forced to see their mother role as supreme that distorts our appreciation of its values.

If test-tube pregnancies would not produce socially deprived babies, where then does the right to choose rest? That's Rachel's concern and it should be ours.

At present we demand that the woman should chose, because it's her body that's involved. But this does not rationally deal with the question of reproducing the species. Men who donate to sperm banks at present have absolutely no say in the number of children they sire. Would women donating to ovum banks be the same?

In conclusion, we need to strive for human-care of babies and children, for human incubation of foetuses, with all the joy retained, the suffering minimised, and the control firmly in the hands of the participants, not the medical staff. If such human care were shared, maybe the mother-role would be available to both sexes and to infertile people, without the expense and tension of artificial aids, and it would also lessen the strain of caring for children which is now felt by blood relatives formed into nuclear families.

SUE ARNALL

WORKERS IN ACTION

The SU Carburettors tool-makers: they stood their ground and forced the AUEW's new right wing leadership into a humiliating climbdown. Now the AUEW Executive is being more cautious with the other workers challenging its 'anti-strike law', at Bathgate: it looks as if credentials may be restored to the 51 shop stewards there. But the union behind the Leyland workers' backs.



Cosmo boosts the Front

'COSMOPOLITAN' is billed as a magazine for the liberated woman. How liberated can be judged from the current issue: 51 pages of ads for make-up and perfume, but not a single job advertisement.

Set among the *Essence Rare*, *Eau Jeune*, *Wood Nymph* and *Givenchy* is something with a nastier Smell. This one's called *National Front*.

The feature is called "What's a nice girl like you doing in politics?" Among the nice girls is one Rocky Woodbridge: "stunning grey eyes and a dusting of freckles. ... She gives the impression she'd be a good nurse: dedicated, reassuring and concerned".

In large black type at the head of the write-up Brocky is quoted: "I think they are betraying Britain by encouraging immigration, encouraging the breakdown of our race, our culture, our morals."

It would be bad enough if this free publicity for fascism was set down on the page with a critical or disapproving comment. But, in line with the rest of the bland, trivialised, treats of 'girls' in politics, there's not even a hint of disapproval as young Rocky airs her views. "We respect the different races. We feel we ought to keep them different..." she says, and the lie is left to sit on the page unchallenged. *Cosmopolitan* interviewer Sally Adams doesn't care to warn readers that for the *National Front* the only good black is a dead black. And the leafy Hertfordshire estate where Rocky lives with her husband Michael, "tall and blond" (and a fascist since 1968) seems a thousand miles away from the dingy backstreets of East London where lone Bengalis get set upon in the night by Rocky's comrades.

Socialists cannot turn a blind eye to such a public relations plug for fascists in a major national magazine. Join the protest picket of *Cosmopolitan* Magazine this Friday (15th) at Chestergate House, Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1. Bring placards to tell Sally Adams what you think of the *National Front*.

SEVEN YEARS JAIL FOR SELF-DEFENCE

A PETITION with 10,000 signatures protesting at heavy sentences imposed on East London Asians who defended themselves against a racist attack has recently been presented to the Home Office.

The Virk brothers — Joginder, Mohinder, Balvinder and Sukvinder — were arrested following a fight with five white racists outside their house in Newham, East London. Three of the brothers had been working on their car when the whites approached and began hurling abuse at them.

One of the whites grabbed a spanner which was lying on the car and struck out with it. Joginder saw the attack from the house and rushed out with a kitchen knife to defend his brothers. One white was stabbed and another cracked on the head before they were driven back.

At this point the youngest brother, Sukvinder, ran and telephoned the police. When the police arrived, it was the Asians and not their assailants who were arrested.

Joginder was sentenced to seven years jail, in a judgment which has enraged the Asian population of East London. Mohinder and Balvinder got three and two years, while Sukvinder was given three months for 'threatening behaviour'. This last sentence was last week overturned on appeal, and a £15 fine was substituted. The campaign is continuing.

Behind the noise, the sell-outs

THE EXPULSION of 32 strikers at SU Carburettors, Birmingham, has been called off. Yet the bosses' and top trade union officials' clampdown on militancy is still going ahead.

The AUEW has taken their credentials away from 51 shop stewards at the Bathgate plant of British Leyland because they refused to order the 1500 machine operators whom they represent to end their strike for higher pay.

With the union officials lamely begging him to postpone it a bit, British Leyland boss Michael Edwardes has sent out a letter threatening further plant closures if there is a toolmakers' strike. (The BL unofficial toolroom committee had resolved to strike if the SU strikers were expelled from the AUEW).

In a move which can scarcely be just coincidence, the charges against the "Cowley 9" — Transport and General Workers' Union militants at the British Leyland Assembly Plant in Oxford — have been reactivated.

On July 19th the Region no.5 Committee of the TGWU voted to refer back to the Oxford District Committee the trumped-up charges of 'disruption' and re-

commendations for penalties up to and including exclusion from union office and expulsion from the union. Now the District Committee has voted to continue to press the charges. The Regional Committee will consider them again at its October meeting.

Behind all these moves is the bosses' and the Government's drive for a new regime in Leyland which will push up the rate of exploitation sufficiently to make profits in the cut-throat international competition of the car industry.



It looks now as if the SUs toolmakers may be offered some 'special case' arrangement for the £7 parity pay increase which they are claiming. But behind all the noise and threats, union leaders and Leyland bosses are negotiating over the shape of things to come. The workers' interests are the last consideration in these negotiations.

The most 'left-wing' of the trade union leaders' policies is the "alternative to Edwardes" put forward this summer by the



white collar union AUEW-TASS. Their chief aim is expanding British Leyland, "in the national interest". They want increased investment and import controls. The British Leyland convenors

and senior stewards are also seeking a re-jigging of the "workers' participation" scheme. A document by Jack Adams, from Longbridge, complains about the humiliating treatment the union representatives on the 'participation' committees got over the Speke closure. "They were told that the decision was irreversible. The company were prepared to answer questions, however, that 'led to a greater understanding of the problem'."



There is some talk of withdrawing from 'participation', but the immediate objectives are greater consultation and recognition by BL of the BL Trade Union Combine Committee (of convenors and senior stewards) "as an official and authoritative body".

The convenors and senior stewards are also pressing for pay parity throughout BL Cars as from November 1st, 1978 (rather than November 1979, as promised), with a uniform rate of £100 a week for track workers.

BL are not in principle unwilling to concede parity this year. They may even be willing to offer big pay increases, as long as they are linked to an incentive scheme, and to give the toolmakers the bigger differentials that they have been demanding. The 5% limit means that these increases will be put forward as 'financed by increased productivity' — and that's what they will be! For what BL will insist on is: *drastic speed-ups; heavy redundancies; and no strikes [at least, no wildcat strikes]*.

At Longbridge the Works Committee has put forward a scheme offering the bosses pretty much what they want; and now, it seems, the convenors and senior stewards are trying to get the same deal nationally.

All this may succeed in saving "the only major British motor company" — for a while. What it certainly won't do is save the BL workers from speed-up, redundancies, and the destruction of all shop-floor vetos on manning and working conditions.

The first principle of any workers plan for British Leyland must be total rejection of the idea that the profitability of the British car industry is our concern.

THE WHEELS COME OFF? THEN GLUE THEM ON!

Last week, Scotland's ambulance fleet went back on the road, their wheels held together by glue and wire.

And it's no joke: it really is meant to be a solution to a design fault which has resulted in at least 66 instances of wheels either coming off completely, or working themselves dangerously loose, on Scottish ambulances in the last eighteen months or so.

Five weeks ago, after yet another incident when a wheel came off a vehicle while it was in motion, Scottish ambulance men — members of the T&GWU — refused to continue operating the vans.

Management then borrowed ambulances from Leicester, Bradford and Middlesbrough, and service was maintained using these vehicles.

Vauxhalls, who supply the Bedford chassis for ambulances, denied that they were to be blamed for the fault. And after tests had been conducted by the Department of Transport and the National Engineering Laboratories (NEL), the Dept. of Transport came up with the bright idea of gluing the nuts on the wheels, and linking them together with bits of wire!

Some tests were conducted with this system, both by the Dept. of Transport and stewards from different depots. When no wheels came off in these tests, the management held a meeting with Scottish stewards and issued an ultimatum: "Work with these ambulances or get paid off".

Faced with this blackmail, the stewards voted by a large majority to recommend a return to work; this was accepted by a depot ballot.

WORKERS ACTION spoke to a militant from one of the depots. We asked him how he felt about the decision to work with the vehicles:

"Very bitter. It's crazy, you've got a major emergency service going round in vehicles held together by glue and bits of wire. I was out in one yesterday and the wheels were getting red-hot."

"Management also refused to release the NEL report to the stewards, though they say they will eventually. Apparently this is because they want to take legal action against Vauxhall, but if that is true then there is a major fault and we should be told about it."

"Management have an axe over

our heads. Men with families could not risk their jobs, though I was not happy about a ballot vote — I would like to have seen a show of hands at depot meetings."

"There is a lot of dissatisfaction in the ambulance service, about this and other things; shortage of stores, inadequate cover and so on. For example in Edinburgh there are only 3 ambulances on duty between 11pm and 7am."

"If there is any more trouble with the vehicles I think the men will be straight out again."

A SHORTER WEEK — AND SWEEPING CUTS

FIREMEN in the West Midlands are likely to get the 42 hour week promised by the employers by 7th November — but only at the price of large cuts.

The employers, wanting the local hour week without recruiting extra firemen. This would mean reducing the pressure of work.

They plan to cut the number of machines by half at five fire stations, at Aston, Harbourne, Kings Norton, Sutton Coldfield and Canley. A further 41 stations will lose one fire engine and a total of 10 special rescue appliances including five turntable ladders and a hydraulic platform will be withdrawn.

The most militant brigade Committee of the Fire Brigades Union has called for its members to be on 'demonstration', answering emergency calls only. But a wider response is needed throughout the labour movement — cutting back on fire cover affects every working man and woman.

The Aston station, whose area covers the large IMI chemical works at Witton, an extremely high risk plant, will have, if the local authorities' plans go ahead, only one machine. In order to introduce the shorter working week for firemen at no cost to themselves, the local authorities are prepared to risk peoples' lives.

DOUG MACKAY

FUND DRIVE

for

workers' ACTION

With £50 from a Manchester reader, £25 from an East London reader, and many smaller contributions, our Fund — which has helped to pay for our new typefaces — is up to £1463.60.

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