

workers' ACTION

10p

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WORKERS IN Britain face hundreds of problems. Immigration is not one of them. In fact immigration is not a problem at all. Racism is not a problem.

BUT RACISM IS.

The politicians say they want to cut immigration because of "people's fears". "People are going to be rather hostile to those coming in", said Margaret Thatcher.

In other words: there are a lot of racists, and the politicians are pandering to them.

What are these fears?

Fears about housing! — when it is the cuts and the big building employers' insistence on profits (nothing to do with race or immigration) which have led to less and less houses being built.

Fears about jobs? — when it is the Government's cuts and the employers' drive to squeeze more profit out of fewer workers which are throwing people onto the dole.

Hostility to immigrants and black people isn't a matter of fears. It is a matter of blind, bigoted scapegoating — blaming a section of our fellow workers for problems which have nothing to do with the colour of anyone's skin, and everything to do with the ruthless profiteering of the small wealthy minority which runs this country.

The Tories, and the Labour Ministers who tag along behind them, encourage this scapegoating: they build it up, while all the time pretending to do no more than respond sympathetically to "people's fears".

Where are the real problems? Where are the real causes for fear?

In parts of East London it is not safe for black people to walk the streets alone after dark. Two Asians were killed there by racist thugs in the summer of 1976.

In North London over recent weeks at least 39 shops and other premises have been subject to racist attacks.

The black bookshops in London have been attacked again and again, with firebombs and racist daubings.

In Wolverhampton, a dossier recently prepared by the anti-racist committee quotes twelve cases of racist violence, with police turning a blind eye.

One example: an Asian was beaten up, losing a good deal of blood, but (so the dossier reports) the

RACISM IS THE PROBLEM, NOT RACE

police refused to arrest the white attacker. They said the injured man must start a civil prosecution.

There is the problem: racism. That is the cause of the blood on the streets. But the politicians say with one voice: the victims are to blame!

And racism breeds on victims. Racism grows and flourishes where people are too blind or too cowardly to fight against the real cause of their exploitation, and find someone 'beneath them' to vent their frustration on.

Those 'above' spur it on, while all the time piously saying 'we only want to limit immigration to ensure good race relations'.

Governments, both Tory and Labour, have set up black people as victims with their immigration laws.

Under the immigration laws, black people are here in insecurity, on sufferance, with no full citizens' rights. They are branded by the State with a label, "Here is the 'race problem'".

These laws do not breed 'good race relations'; they breed racism.

We must make sure that black people aren't allowed to be victims any longer.



Leyland: It's jobs versus 'viability'

"THERE IS no doubt that both in the short and the long term we have excess capacity, the question is not whether we should demand but by how much".

That was the nub of Michael Edwardes' message to the assembled managers and union leaders last Wednesday.

He brushed aside the 'alternative strategy' proposed by the Communist Party and others, of increasing production to 1.2 million cars per year with the existing workforce. Leyland can't sell the cars it produces at the moment, and the estimated maximum sale for 1978 is 819,000 units.

Even then Leyland would have to increase its market share from 21% to 27% in Britain

Contrary to what the union bureaucrats are now saying, Edwardes did not rule out forced redundancies or plant closures. His actual words were, "the problem must be tackled by natural wastage, redundancy programmes, plant closures, or by some combination of these".

Edwardes' plan to divide the cars division into three separate 'profit centres' is not in itself a matter of crucial concern for Leyland workers. No effective combine organisation exists, and the separation of Austin-Morris, Rover-Jaguar-Triumph, and Components need not stand in the way of creating one.

It could however be a first move towards hiving off profitable areas to private

enterprise; and, more likely, Edwardes will use the separation to put more effective pressure on the workforce in the loss-making Austin-Morris plants.

Significantly, Edwardes is retaining an umbrella organisation to oversee the one aspect of Ryder-inspired centralisation that suits his purposes — corporate wage bargaining.

Rumours that Edwardes was going to pull Leyland out of volume car production altogether proved to be mistaken. Edwardes obviously listened to those who warned him against following the British motor-bike industry out of volume production... and into extinction.

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THE CURRENT round of wage negotiations in West Germany has seen a considerable upsurge in working class militancy.

With a government target of 5.5% for wage increases and employers often offering 3 or 4%, the trade union leaders have often been unable to come to any agreement that they could 'sell' to their members.

Most important has been the docks strike called by OTV, the union which covers most workers in transport industries. The union had originally made a claim for 9% and a rise in shift allowances. Negotiations broke down when the union was demanding 7% (and arguing for anything above 6%) and the employers offered 5.7% (of which only 5% was a straight rise).

The strike, solidly supported by 20,000 dockers, was the first official docks strike since 1895. On the first day the bureaucrats were forced to return to the original 9%. As Mahlstedt, an OTV leader, put it, "because of the dockers' high preparedness to strike anything with a six in front of the decimal point" (ie. 6-7%) "appears insufficient".

The employers eventually made a compromise offer of 6.4-7%. This was rejected by the dockers in a ballot in which 57.8% voted against. A major grievance was that the rise was not backdated to when the previous contract had expired.

However, the union had already sent the dockers

German workers on the move



These young men are among 20,000 West German youth who marched through Essen in protest against youth unemployment. Meanwhile in Hamburg a 5,000-strong demonstration marched in protest against the 'Berufsverbote', the West German laws which declare many leftists and radicals to be politically suspect and bar them from work in public services. Those laws had their sixth anniversary last week.

back to work, and to start the strike again, according to the union rules, there has to be another ballot, with a three-to-one majority.

Negotiations have started again with the dockers back at work.

There will probably also be strikes in other areas. The printers' union has rejected proposals on wages and new technology, and in the steel industry the fifth round of negotiations for the Ruhr and Bremen have broken down with the metalworkers' union saying that a strike is hardly avoidable.

In the engineering industry in both the Ruhr 1 Rhineland and the South West, negotiations are also going on. The employers are offering 3½% and the unions are demanding about 8%; and they seem unable to produce a 'compromise' that can be 'sold' to the workers.

With the highly centralised and bureaucratised unions and the laws that

bind them to the state, a real strike wave is still a long way off. There are, however, signs of fight in the rank and file.

In the Stuttgart area there were short 'warning strikes' by the engineers when the third round of negotiations began, and over 300 demonstrated outside the building where they were taking place.

BRUCE ROBINSON

MORE TRIALS FOR JOAN LITTLE

JOAN LITTLE, the black woman from North Carolina who was acquitted in 1975 on the charge of murdering a prison guard who sexually assaulted her, is again fighting the courts.

After winning in the murder charge in 1975, Little went back to the women's prison in Raleigh, North Carolina, to serve out the rest of the seven to ten year housebreaking sentence she was originally jailed for in 1974. She claims she was treated there by the prison guards as if she had been convicted of the murder, that she was denied the usual privileges and not allowed treatment when she was ill.

Last October she escaped to New York but was re-arrested as a fugitive. After two months in a city jail she claims is like a hotel compared with Raleigh prison, she was released on bail last week.

Joan Little's lawyer is fighting the North Carolina Governor's extradition order, which will return her to jail, on the grounds that her life won't be worth living if she goes back to North Carolina. (Because of the large degree of autonomy of the different states in the USA, the extradition is not automatic).

The lawyer had to scrape together the \$51,000 bail money and Joan Little can't understand what happened to all of the \$300,000 fund raised before her legal expenses.

Her earlier supporters appear to have lost interest. A spokeswoman from a coalition of New York feminist groups told the 'Observer', "Frankly, we haven't been following Joan Little's case lately. At the time it was a clear case of sexual and racial discrimination. But there are other issues now".

And an official at the Southern Poverty Law Centre, the civil rights organisation that first supported Little, said, "We haven't been involved since her acquittal. We feel she is adequately represented by her own counsel".

LINDA COLLINS

TUNISIA Massacre and round up of trade unionists

FOR THE first time since independence 22 years ago, Tunisians have taken to the street to show their hatred of the Bourguiba government. Three hundred people were killed in Tunis and 29 in Gabes when troops, police and right-wing gangs attacked strikers during Tunisia's 24-hour general strike.

In an attempt to provoke a confrontation, the leaders of the ruling party, the Destour Socialist Party, organised gangs to terrorise workers' meetings and shopkeepers. On 24th a number of militant trade unionists were arrested. In this atmosphere the executive of the country's only union, the UGTT (General Union of

Tunisian Workers), decided to call a general strike for 26th January.

The general strike gave vent to the sense of rage felt by masses of Tunisians at the government's economic policies which include a wage freeze while prices are allowed to rise. That wage freeze — it is due to last for five years! — is the result of a pact between the UGTT and the government agreed a year ago.

Hostility to the political system, with its lack of democratic rights and its growing attacks on trade union rights, also fuelled the prairie fire of the general strike.

While the UGTT by no

means represents the workers' interests, the appearance at its January conference of younger, more militant delegates has made the union more responsive to the huge pressure from the rank and file.

The general strike of 26th January was soon followed by a wave of arrests. Habib Achour, the leader of the UGTT, was arrested after the Prime Minister successfully called on parliament to remove his parliamentary immunity. Almost the entire executive of the UGTT was then arrested only to be replaced later by a new team handpicked by the government. Some of the executive were arrested along with

another 100 people when troops and police seized the union's headquarters.

This anti-union crackdown was preceded by the closing down of the UGTT newspaper, 'The People', whose circulation had increased greatly as it became more critical of the government during the union's anti-wage freeze campaign.

The Nouria-Bourguiba regime will certainly use the present situation to consolidate the DSP's old right wing and ensure Nouria's safe succession to the ageing Bourguiba. The UGTT's now arrested leadership had formed an alternative faction in the party.

ROS MAKIN



International Notes



Evading the 10 per cent rule - or breaking it

GOVERNMENTS have imposed wage curbs one way or another for most of the last twenty years. Still it was a new sight when a number of employers, backed up by the Confederation of British Industry and the Tories, denounced the Labour Government because it had penalised them for paying higher wages.

The quarrel between the bosses and the Government does not go very deep. The employers appreciate the benefits of the 10% rule. Only, if there is going to be a flexible pay limit, they want to control the flexibility themselves rather than find some of their number arbitrarily penalised by loss of Government contracts and export credits.

But the dispute does tell us a lot about the current Government pay policy. As far as the Government is concerned:

You can get over 10% if you work for a private firm which doesn't need Government contracts and credits, or which is willing to do without them, or which is so important (like Ford) that the Government dare not penalise it, or which avoids getting penalised for one or another reason. According to the CBI's figures, only 19 out of 150 firms which have paid over the 10% limit have been penalised. The Government won't say how those 19 were chosen.

You can't get over 10% if you work in the public sector, or if you work for a private firm which the Government will penalise heavily.

This system makes nonsense of all the old excuses for wage restraint. It has nothing to do with being fair. It has nothing to do with stopping inflation. Its only concern is to keep wages down and let profits go up, by whatever means are possible.

The trade union leaders are doing nothing about it, although it is obvious that any generalised, concerted offensive for over-10% increases would rip this ramshackle system of penalties and sanctions to pieces.

The TUC and all the major unions are committed by conference votes to reject the 10% limit. What should they do? They should take the biggest increases won recently - about £15 to £20 - as a starting point, add a demand for wages to be protected against rises in the cost of living, by automatic increases, and launch a campaign for maximum mobilisation to win those demands.

That would cut a big slice out of profits, and worry the bosses far, far more than the Government's penalties. Yet it is the only way to get an 'incomes policy' to safeguard our living standards.

No United Front against Nazis, says L.P.Y.S.

THE LONDON Regional Labour Party Young Socialists Conference held on February 4th gave evidence that "Militant" claim that the YS is going from strength to strength is a complete fraud.

There were far fewer delegates this year than at last year's conference, despite the Regional Committee's claim that several new branches have been started in London. There were only 27 resolutions to conference this year, as against 40 last year. Clearly there must have been a collapse in quite a few branches.

One of the most important debates was on racialism, which the YS seems poised to make its main focus this year. Summing up the debate for the Regional Committee, Chris Hill recommended rejection of an amendment from Tottenham YS calling for the YS to initiate united action with all labour movement, socialist, and minority groups willing to kick the Nazis off the streets.

He said this would mean an unacceptable alliance with forces outside the labour movement. To further insult the intelligence of the conference, he added that united front action didn't require any agreement among the groups concerned, and so the YS could not participate in any real united-front action because it would mean campaigning on a different basis from the 'bold socialist programme' cooked up in the 'Militant' editorial offices.

It was as good a way as any of justifying non-activity in the face of fascist violence, I suppose.

NEIL COBBETT

Leyland: It's jobs versus 'viability'

Continued from front page

The Mini replacement will go ahead in a slightly enlarged form, and the LC10 medium-range project for Cowley appears to be unaffected. The old Mini will continue in production indefinitely.

The Edwardes proposals make some sense - if you are a capitalist. From that point of view, manning levels and production capacity do indeed "need to be lined up with market needs". From that point of view, plants like Speke, producing unsuccessful models, and outside the Midlands Leyland heartland, ought to be closed down.

But even then Leyland's heritage of under-investment and its lack of significant European operations mean that its prospects of surviving against competitors like Volkswagen, Fiat and Ford - all of whom produce well over two million cars a year - are poor.

Those who want to fight the jobs carve-up must realise this: there is no capitalist 'solution' for Leyland. The CP's strategy of building a "viable British motor industry", like the Tribuneite 'alternative economic strategy' to which it is closely linked, neither makes sense in capitalist terms nor is in the interests of the workers. It depends on the workforce giving a commitment to speed-up and continuous production, to produce cars that Leyland simply can't sell.

The only way round this problem for the CP is to demand import controls. Quite apart from the reactionary, nationalist nature of such a demand, it would

in no way help Leyland over its major problem - uncompetitiveness in Europe.

Longbridge convenor Derek Robinson revealed the embarrassing situation that the Edwardes plan has put him in, in last Wednesday's Morning Star. "It will jeopardise the painstaking work over the past 18 months of senior shop stewards, who have spent much time convincing the Leyland labour force that we are in the volume car league to stay and need sufficient output".

In other words, after 18 months of trying to sell the shop floor participation and continuous production in the name of the Ryder

plan (which itself would have involved shedding 9,000 jobs this year) Robinson and his fellow convenors have had the sand kicked in their face by Edwardes - and the shop-floor organisation has been disastrously weakened.

Even the Socialist Workers Party are pushing a version of the 'back to Ryder' argument. In their Longbridge bulletin they say, "The Ryder report and all the top economists have warned that the only way Leyland can survive in the face of tough international competition was to invest massively and expand production... immediately we have to demand

that there is massive investment in order to save jobs in Leyland".

Only a strategy that puts jobs before considerations of 'viability' will stop Edwardes.

First, we must pull out of participation at every level. Instead we need to demand access to the company's books and correspondence, between Leyland, the NEB, and Varley, so that we can get the facts about their plans and about where the money is really going.

We should insist upon a 35-hour week with no loss of pay immediately.

When the cut-backs begin we have to reply by sharing the work and fighting for full pay as well.

Any plant closed must be occupied, every sectional struggle on manning must be generalised throughout the plant, and the plant struggles must be coordinated by a democratic, recallable combine stewards organisation.

JIM DENHAM



'Dole Mole' goes into action

LAST WEDNESDAY, 1st, supporters of 'Dole Mole' occupied an Edinburgh Job Centre.

'Dole Mole' is the fortnightly bulletin produced by the Edinburgh Youth Campaign against Unemployment, which has a circulation of 1500. The protest occupation had three main aims:

- To condemn the recent rise in unemployment levels;
- To publicise the existence of Edinburgh Youth Campaign against Unemployment;
- To call on the labour movement to fight in workplaces, trade unions and political parties for the following demands:

- 35-hour week with no loss of pay;
- Work-sharing with no loss of pay;
- A ban on overtime with no loss of pay;
- Reduction of the retirement age to 60 for all.

'Dole Mole' is following up the occupation by contacting trade union branches, tenants groups, etc, calling on them for support, offering them speakers for their meetings, and inviting them to send delegates to a meeting called by Edinburgh YCAU for next month.

CALLUM McCRAE

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with Workers'
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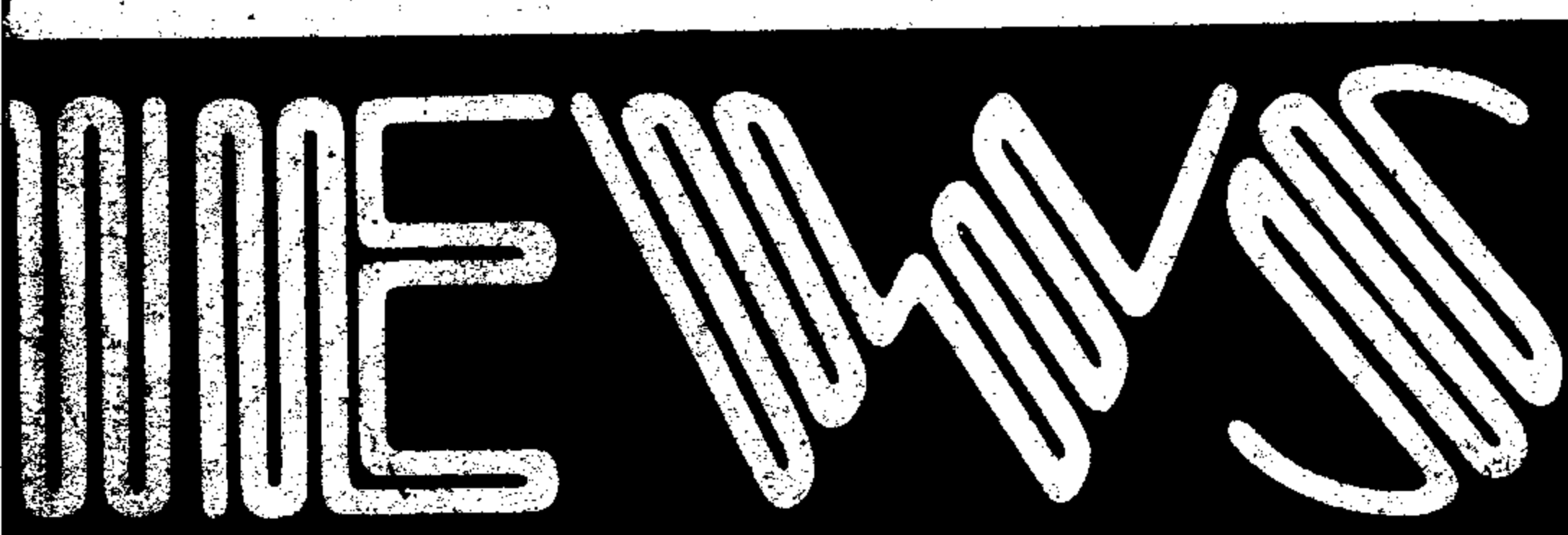
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ence of International Socialists on Revolutionary
Unity'.

The secretary for the conference is Martin
Shaw, an ex-ISer who is now working closely
with the IMG's Socialist Challenge and Social-
ist Unity.

There must be hundreds, at least, of ex-
SWP/IS members who are still willing to be
active as revolutionaries. They could be very
important — if they can be recrystallised into
an active force on principled politics.

Here we give two views of the conference.
One from the I-CL; and one from John Bell,
a well-known militant in the building workers'
union UCATT, and a former member of the
IS National Committee.



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ORGANISERS' STATEMENT

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volutionary left (in rank and
trade union activity, among
ialist feminists and gay lib-
ionists, and around Social
Challenge and Socialist Un-
) have brought together
ople of different political org-
isations and backgrounds.
me of us, former members
the International Socialists
WP), have been involved in
ese moves, and we all feel that
ey could be important for the
ure of revolutionary socialism
this country.

There must be many people
to like us still identify to some
tent with the ideas and ex-
periences of IS. Although we
ve gone in different direc-
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inger, John Whitfield, Harry
cks, Granville Williams.

Cheung Siu Ming talked to John Bell

■ ■ When did you leave the
SWP?

□ □ I left with a dozen others
around two specific disagree-
ments with the leadership. We
left rather than got expelled:
the two incidents were the last
straws on a camel's back,
although many of us had dif-
ferent political disagreements
as well.

The first incident was the
disciplinary action the build-
ing workers' fraction EC took
over one of the comrades; the
leadership intervened against
the decision and took a hostile
attitude to the fraction EC.

The second incident was
more important. There had
been pressure on us to start a
rank and file building workers'
paper in opposition to the
Building Workers' Charter.
We said that the time was
not ripe.

Previously, during the 1972
building workers' strike, the
Building Workers' Charter
was not brought out. The CP's
attitude was that they didn't
want to embarrass the trade
union leaders at a time of
conflict with the employers.
Instead, George Smith was
writing articles in the Morn-
ing Star.

A Socialist Worker build-
ers' special was brought out,
but we did not have the re-
sources and contacts to sustain
it, so we went back afterwards
to the Building Workers'
Charter.

The EC accused us of
conservatism, and wanted us
to do what the other rank and
file papers were doing. At
that time there were more
rank and file teachers in Lam-
beth alone than all IS building
workers nationally.

We saw the need to build up
over the years, with no short
cuts and gimmicks.

The crunch came in the
1976 UCATT ballot. Despite
the conference decision ag-
ainst wage restraint, George
Smith balloted members on
the same question. Build-
ing Workers' Charter brought
out only a statement in the
Morning Star.

The IS leadership insisted
that this was the time to
launch "Building Workers for
the Right to Work". We refus-
ed to give out this glossy leaf-
let produced by the EC and
brought out our own Socialist
Worker Building Workers'
leaflet against the ballot.

We felt that there was no
such organisation as the
"Building Workers for the
Right to Work", and that it
was hiding our politics.

■ ■ Why didn't the EC expel
you over this?

□ □ They felt embarrassed
about this (and the previous

incident. Although opposition
tendencies are expelled, rarely
does the EC expel individuals
for indiscipline.

We drifted into a state
where we felt we were in the
best position to sum up what
needed to be done, because
the leadership never took
much interest in the building
industry. Only when there is
a dispute do they do anything,
which is usually too late.

■ ■ What other disagree-
ments with IS have you had?

□ □ The NC's decision to
change the policy on the EEC
was wrong. I maintained that
the previous position of ab-
stention was correct, and I
resigned from the NC over this
issue. I felt that the ground
was taken from under my feet,
as I had been arguing against
CP building workers in the
union branch about the EEC
and things like the CP's Save
Mr Cube campaign.

Secondly, the Right to Work
campaign was set up without
properly consulting the mem-

bership.

Thirdly, their present line
on fascism is what they have
previously accused the IMG
of — a 'crash helmet'
mentality.

■ ■ What do you hope to
see come out of this con-
ference?

□ □ Quite likely, a tempo-
rary 'looser organisation'
would come into being, and
make moves towards Social-
ist Unity.

Socialist Unity's campaign
was more serious than the
SWP's: for example, Applby
was chopped [as candidate
in the Stechford by-election]
in favour of Paul Foot after
posters etc were all done.
Even a lot of SWPers were
impressed by the Socialist
Unity result at Stechford and
at Spitalfield.

■ ■ But Socialist Unity is
just an electoral pact and not
an ongoing regroupment with
a clear revolutionary pro-
gramme.

□ □ A conference of exper-
ienced ex-IS members can
spot any IMG rigging. Revo-
lutionary Unity would be a
good thing — hopefully it
would one day even include
the SWP. The conference
cannot overnight turn into a
cadre organisation, hopefully
it can evolve towards that.

■ ■ An important element of
the IS tradition is the orienta-
tion towards the rank and file
of the working class move-
ment. What is your impress-
ion of the IMG's record in
this field, and what do you
think this conference will set
up in this direction?

□ □ Any joint industrial work
should already be under way
in areas like the Midlands,
and this conference probably
won't initiate anything in
this field.

But if the Workers' League
and Big Flame go in, it will
be a different organisation
from the old IMG. We
shouldn't use the old IMG as a
reason to avoid unity.

E. STANTON (WA79) complains
that I uncritically endorsed the ideas
of Wilhelm Reich in my article
'Women under the Jackboot'.

In fact my article draws only on
certain aspects of Reich's work,
mainly his earlier writings, in which
he explained the role of morality
in upholding the traditional values
under capitalism: the family, law
and order, life-long monogamy,
sexual abstinence for children and
adolescents.

As my article explained, repression
of the natural sexual instincts
creates a lack of confidence and a
longing for an omniscient guiding
father figure. The significance
of this is that Hitler understood this
effect of traditional morality and
the role of the family in policing
the masses, and he used the fears and
frustrations of the masses to his own
ends: for instance, in the large
rallies where through his speeches
he was able to bring thousands to a
state of hysteria.

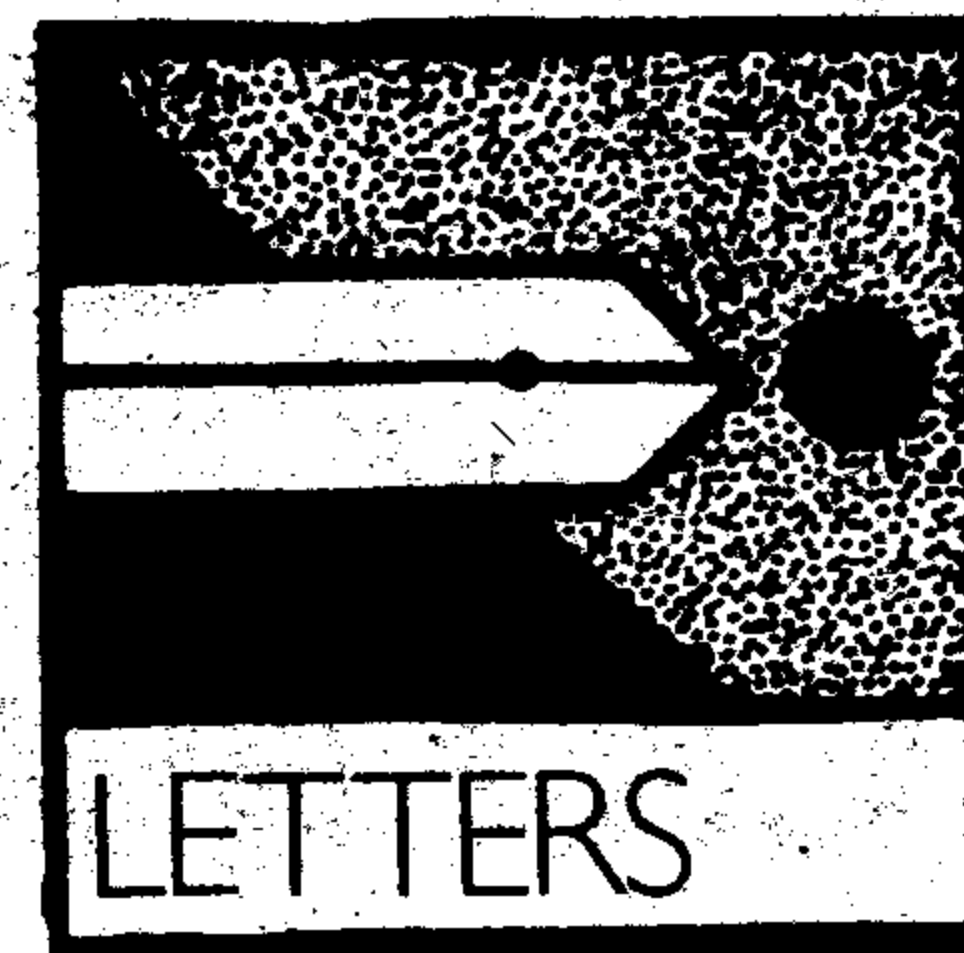
Hitler appealed to people's irrat-
ional fears to increase support for
the Nazis, and he also did his utmost
to strengthen the family institution,
understanding that it acts as a cen-
tral prop to the State.

We can learn from Reich's obser-
vations and research into the effects
of reactionary ideology on the
family, noting in particular the even
greater oppression of women within
it.

Reich, in his best period a mem-
ber of the German CP, later turned
his back completely on Marxism.
In 'The Mass Psychology of Fascism'
he wrote that German Fascism
"was born of the biologic rigidity
and deformity of the preceding Ger-
man generation", i.e. it was a
product of mechanical discipline
and goose-stepping.

He ignored the political errors of
the German CP and the resulting
demoralisation of the German work-
ing class, he ignored the responsi-

REICH NOT ALL WRONG



crisis which squeezed the middle
class shopkeepers, small business-
men, and the like, and he does not
talk of the support which big finance
capital gave to the fascists.

Reich's solution — in that book —
was to pass laws to allow the free
development of the individual, to
protect the child's and adolescent's
natural love of life, and to establish
rational work relationships.

This solution is utopian and re-
formist. It is nonsense to suggest —
as Stanton seems to — that my
approval of Reich's observations on
the relation between the authoritar-
ian family and the fascist state leads
to an agreement with his political
conclusions, or with the later, wilder
developments of his thought.

Stanton also argues that I fall into
the trap of accepting Reich's simplis-
tic views on sexuality.

I do agree with Reich that there
are obstacles to men and women's
ability to react spontaneously and in
a rational way; I do not agree with
the later Reich that the obstacles
to this ability are biological and that
our fight must be for social hygiene
and social legislation to overcome
the biologic rigidity of the old gener-
ation. Even where Reich may pro-
pose useful measures of social
hygiene, he places the cart before
the horse, who is to implement these
measures?

The working class is the only class
that can free humanity, and this
means the seizure of state power
and the organisation of working-
class democracy.

It is true that it is foolish to
jump to conclusions — as Reich
tended to do — on what is a rational,
unrepressed love or sex relation-
ship — or what 'natural' sexuality
may be. But Reich is right to this
extent: "What has to be eliminated
is the disgusting moralisation which
thwarts natural morality and then
points to the criminal impulses
which it itself has brought into
being". ('Mass Psychology...')

The same society that stifles sex-
uality produces rapists and murder-
ers, and under fascism the relation
between sexual repression and
social repression becomes more
stark. But in a society where 'human
nature' is moulded by competition,
aggression, and the fetishism of
private property, it is impossible to
anticipate in any detail the nature
of sexual relationships in a future
more rational society.

Finally, if we are to treat Reich's
ideas with care, it is important not
to telescope all his ideas together,
as Stanton has done, and to note the
degeneration of Reich's views in
his later writings. He did not start
out as a biological determinist.

LINDA COLLINS

UNEMPLOYED people who spend their dole money on drink should have their ears cut off, said Judge Ian Starforth-Hill last Friday, 3rd.

Like Judge McKinnon's notorious concluding remark to fascist Kingsley Read — "I wish you well" — it was a startling proof that judges do not just "administer the law" in a politically impartial way.

Equally striking were the High Court's decisions in late 1976 that the National Union of Mineworkers' rules asserting the sovereignty of union conference did not apply to area incentive schemes.

Why and in what ways are judges biased? And what should we do about it? A recently published book — 'The Politics of the Judiciary', by J. A. G. Griffith [Fontana, £1.25] — concisely presents many of the facts needed to answer at least the first of these questions.

If judges were impartial, they would not exist. Why does the State need "to recruit highly trained and intellectually able men and women to serve as judges and pay them handsome salaries" [as Griffith puts it]? Only because clashes arise which are covered by the law unclearly or not at all, and where there is more than one, "reasonable" interpretation of justice.

Change

The State has to be partial in these disputes while — if it wants to keep its citizens convinced that they have equality before the law — appearing impartial. That is what judges are for.

New legal offences can be created by judges without any Act of Parliament at all. Griffith shows how the offence of 'conspiracy to corrupt public morals' was created by a 1961 case and later used against the 'underground' papers 'Oz' and 'IT'.

More commonly, judges can change the law substantially by their interpretations of Acts of Parliament — interpretations which sometimes run completely counter to what most citizens would suppose to be the meaning of the law. Trade union law is full of examples of this. Another example is housing:

"The present statutory provision, originally enacted in 1909, requires that... the

Guardians of the bosses' Law and Order

Colin Foster reviews 'The Politics of the Judiciary' by J A G Griffith [Fontana, £1.25].

[rented] house will be kept by the landlord... fit for human habitation.

"Over the years, the courts have imposed a series of restrictions, by way of interpretation... the condition applied only to the tenant and not to his family... [it] did not extend to... parts of the premises such as a common staircase... [it] was restricted to cases where the house was capable of being made fit for human habitation at reasonable expense... [and] restrictions were imposed by the courts concerning notice from the tenant of the defects".

Almost always — as Griffith shows — the guiding principles of this judge-made law are the defence of the established order and of private property.

On Inquiries or Royal Commissions, too — dealing with matters from trade unions to the 'Bloody Sunday' shootings, from miners' pay to abortion law — judges are used as a way for the State to make a 'partial' decision in an 'impartial' way.

In one sense, however, judges are independent. Their security of tenure, their narrow recruitment, their high salaries, and the advanced age of senior judges (most of them over 60) make them more or less independent of particular interests within the ruling class — so that they can

all the better act as arbiters of the general interests of the ruling class.

For the bourgeoisie, the predictable (and in that sense impartial) nature of judges' bias is a crucial advantage. For his industrial or commercial operations, the capitalist needs a stable framework of law. Arbitrary feudal law — on the model of the recent execution of a Princess in Saudi Arabia — is anathema to him.

Rights

For the working class, too, established bourgeois law, with its entrenched rights — even though they are whittled away both by judges and by governments — has great advantages over the arbitrary rule of feudalism or modern dictatorships. But in no way are judges independent in relation to the class struggle between workers and capitalists.

"In broad terms, four out of five full-time professional judges are products of public schools, and of Oxford or Cambridge". About 89% of judges come from the 'upper' or 'upper middle' classes; the percentage is higher than it was in 1820-1875 (84%).

This is the background which — according to the



official theory — gives judges a special insight into the 'universal' standards of justice and fair dealing which ordinary people so often fail to recognise!

It is mainly in times of sharp class struggle — around the turn of the century, with the rise of trade union militancy among unskilled workers, and since the late '60s — that the law-making function of judges comes to the fore. And as Lord Justice Scrutton put it in 1920: "It is very difficult to be sure that you have put yourself into a thoroughly impartial position between two disputants, one of your own class and one not of your class".

After a careful and informative survey of the British judiciary, Griffith adds a few summary remarks about the 'communist' countries and reaches the sweeping conclusion: "... the judiciary in any modern industrial society, however composed, under whatever economic system, is an essential part of the system of government... underpinning the stability of that system and... protecting that system from attack...".

Yet the legal system exists only because of the particular economic system, and not as an inevitable feature of any modern industrial society. Judges, policemen, prison wardens and all the rest of them come into their own, not to impose generally-agreed standards of behaviour, but to act as arbiters where there are irreconcilable differences in standards of behaviour, of such a nature that one standard has to prevail over another by force.

Such differences result, directly or indirectly, from the class division of society: they are differences over the

rights of property, the rights of trade unions, the rights of landlords and tenants, the right to challenge authority, the rights of minority groups, and so on.

When communism abolishes the class division of society, then, as Lenin put it: "We are not utopians, and we do not in the least deny the possibility and inevitability of excesses by individual persons, and equally the need to suppress such excesses. But, in the first place, for this no special machine, no special instrument of repression is needed. This will be done by the armed nation itself, as simply and as readily as any crowd of civilized people, even in modern society, parts a pair of combatants or does not allow a woman to be outraged."

"And, secondly, we know that the fundamental social cause of excesses which violate the rules of social life is the exploitation of the masses, their want and their poverty. With the removal of this chief cause, excesses will inevitably begin to 'wither away'."

Stripped

The working class will not be able to abolish class divisions immediately on taking power: equality, therefore, will not be able to abolish 'law enforcement'. We can, however, change its nature fundamentally, as the Paris Commune did:

"... The police, until then merely an instrument of the Government, was immediately stripped of all its political functions, and turned into the responsible and at any time replaceable organ of the Commune..."

"... The judicial functionaries lost their sham independence... in future they were to be elected openly and to be responsible and revocable... paid at the same rate as ordinary working men..."

A workers' state, therefore, can ensure cheap, simple and popular justice. It is the needs and interests of the ruling class which make bourgeois justice expensive, complex, and often an overt political weapon of conservatism. It is against those interests that we fight when we demand the sacking of Judge McKinnon or the election of judges.

Interpol's panorama

PHILIP JAMES reviews 'Terror International', BBC Panorama Special, 30th January.

THIS was a remarkable programme. Remarkable in its comprehensive coverage and cool-headed approach to a most explosive subject. Remarkable, too, in its complete inability to explain what it was showing.

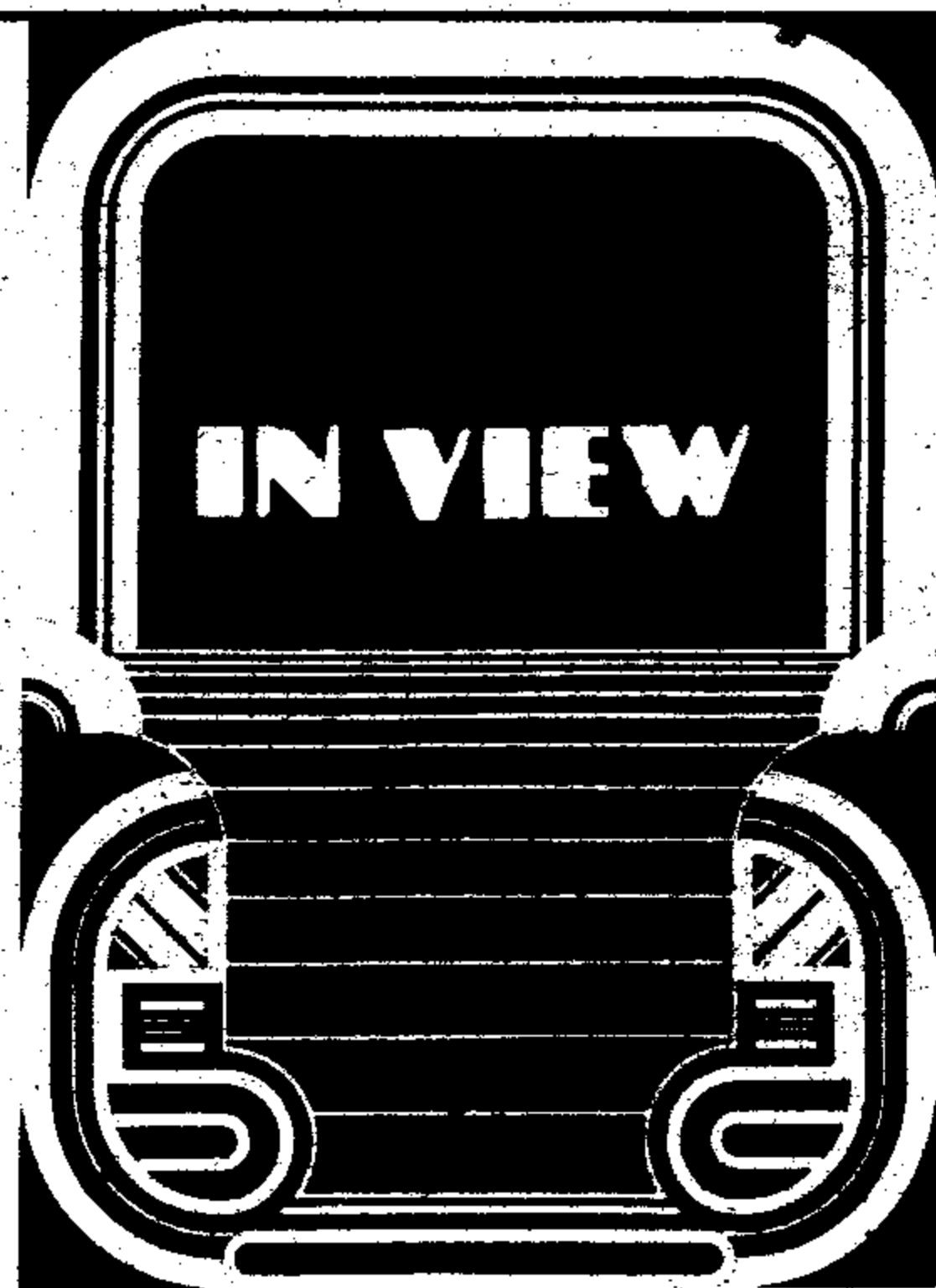
After two hours we were left with a kaleidoscope of interviews, supposedly reflecting various strands of an international 'network' of conspirators, bent on world liberation, and inspired by a mysterious, shadowy figure, of whom only one photograph, nearly ten years old, is known. The whole exercise bordered continually on the melodramatic, and left one at the end with an enormous why?

The makers of the programme were at great pains to do two things. One, to avoid

any mention of the IRA (not because they recognised the falsity of describing the IRA as terrorist, but because it was 'too hot to handle'.) Two, to prove the existence of links between the 'Red Army Fraction', the 'Japanese Red Army', the 'Carlos Network', and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

The interviewer was at great pains to cast doubt on PFLP leader George Habash's contention that, after the despair of 'Black September', which led to acts like the Japanese Red Army's massacre at Lodd airport, the PFLP no longer supported the tactic of aircraft hi-jackings as at Mogadishu. No, it was necessary to brand the Palestinian organisation as a terrorist group, cut off from the mass of Palestinians.

The assertion that members of the Baader-Meinhof group committed collective suicide at Stammheim jail went unchallenged, almost as an aside, showing scant critical conscientiousness.



Although the existence of Irish freedom fighters at Palestinian training camps was mentioned by one young Palestinian guerilla, this was glossed over by the programme. Maybe there was a danger that the IRA would begin to appear as what it is, an army, rather than a collection of localised petty criminals as the media normally likes to see them.

All the programme managed to do was take us on a trip round the world, as seen by the 'policeman's conception of history', leaving anyone who genuinely wanted to understand with nothing more than an impression of a world gone mad.

Destination Fascism?

IAN HOLLINGWORTH reviews 'Destiny', by David Edgar, shown on BBC television on 31st January.

DAVID EDGAR's play sets out to portray the forces at work behind the current rise of fascist groups such as the National Front.

Playing down the personal situations of the individuals involved, it spares us the all-too-common psychological interpretations. However, by putting the rise of fascism at centre-stage, with little challenge from the representatives of the Left in the play, it tended towards defeatism.

The left was utterly weak. To be fair, the play was conceived and largely written four years ago, when the general level of anti-fascist mobilisation was much lower than it is today; but even the possibility of organised militant resistance to fascism was lacking.

Instead, the struggle of the left was presented as an argument between the Labour Party careerist ("Be brave enough to compromise", his wife tells him), and the local 'militant', who, although he ended up on the picket line, was preoccupied with manoeuvring on the local GMC. This left him unprepared when face-to-face with a committed fascist: all he could do was denounce him with moral outrage as a Nazi. Which left the Nazi unmoved.

The aggro on the picket line at the local factory which landed both the fascist and the Labour man in jail was a swift result of swift direct action taken by Asian workers when faced with discrimination by the management and sell-out by their union. The readiness of the black workers, unawed by the ponderous weight of the British trade union machine, to take direct action, was the one breach in the play's fatalism.

83 OUT OF 93 BOSSES IGNORE A.C.A.S.

WHEN A.C.A.S. — the Advisory, Conciliation, and Arbitration Service — has asked employers to grant union recognition, ONLY 10% have done so.

This is reported in a survey published in the journal 'Industrial Relations Review and Report' last week.

In only ten cases out of 93 so far have employers granted recognition: many employers have asked ACAS to reverse its finding, some have challenged ACAS in the courts, and others have just ignored the findings — which there is no way of enforcing.

Under the Employment Protection Act, workers cannot seek enforcement of union recognition, but can only wade on to the Central Arbitration Committee for what is known as a terms-and-conditions award as if they had collective representation.

Following Grunwicks and other less well-publicised challenges to the procedures of ACAS, ACAS has had to admit its chances of winning employer co-operation are seriously damaged. Two Labour MPs are attempting to amend the legislation, but the fact of the matter is that the strength and actions of the workers involved will determine whether or not an employer is going to recognise the union.

LINDA COLLINS

THE TANKER drivers' overtime ban and work-to-rule is now entering its second week. So far fuel supplies have been cut by up to two-thirds, and filling stations and other premises are beginning to run out.

The work to rule is planned to last about four weeks, by which time even the largest consumers' reserves will have run down, and a strike can have an immediate effect.

Drivers from Esso, Shell, BP, and Texaco — four out of the five major oil companies — are involved.

The Mobil drivers have agreed to accept the employers' present offer plus anything else the other drivers may win. However, some of the larger Mobil depots, such as Kingsbury in Birmingham, have supported the work-to-rule.

In Scotland they have been joined by men working for the smaller companies and sub-contractors, who recognise that they will get the same increase that is won by the big companies, and no more. Shell drivers are strengthening their action by refusing to carry full loads in the largest tankers.

PROFITEERS

Meanwhile the drivers have warned petrol-station owners that any who take advantage of the strike to increase their prices will have all supplies blacked.

In Germany the army are reported to be training soldiers to drive tankers, and a driver at the Texaco depot in Hemel Hempstead received a letter from his T.A. unit warning him that he might be called up for 'emergency duties'. Jim Craig, secretary of the Texaco shop stewards, told the 'Sunday Times': 'if they bring the army in, I can see

TANKER DRIVERS

'We'll stop refineries if army comes in'

trouble. We will stop everything, including the refineries'.

The dispute comes at a time when the drivers living standards are coming under attack from three directions. Over the past few years the large wage increases that resulted from productivity deals in the 1960s have been entirely eaten away by inflation and successive pay freezes. At the same time, the opportunity to make up earnings through overtime working is being cut by the new laws restricting drivers' hours which come into force over the next two years, and by attempts by the oil companies to rationalise their distribution networks.

For example, Shell want to end their contract with a quarter of the garages they supply over the next few years, because the volume they sell makes it unprofitable to deliver to them.

The tanker drivers' so-called "30%" claim consists of the consolidation of the previous two years' rises into the basic wage, plus about 10% of the consolidated figure and various 'fringe benefits' such as cheap petrol. At present the last two years' increases are paid as supplements so that overtime and shift work allowances (which are calculated

as a percentage of basic pay and make up about one-third of gross pay, have not risen over the past couple of years.

However, winning the claim would be the first step in a campaign to gain a basic which would make the complete elimination of overtime from the industry possible. In this way jobs could be protected effectively from the 'rationalisers'.

To do this a fight is required to

make the T&G national officials lead a struggle for the full claim, rather than do some shady deal on the margins of the 10% limit.

It will also need the systematic blacking by other workers of all fuel moved by military scabs. A valuable lead could be given by the firemen if they announced they would not accept supplies from the army.

SIMON TEMPLE
JOHN COSBY

SACKING THREAT FOR SOLIDARITY ACTION

IN SOUTH WALES last week the T&G lorry drivers accepted the Road Haulage Association pay offer and returned to work.

The strike had been official since Thursday 2nd, for an increase in the basic pay rate. The drivers wanted consolidation of Phase 1 and 2 rises plus 10%, to bring their basic pay up to £53.35. Details of the settlement have not been published.

The strike, involving 2,000 workers, was well supported, with blacking of supplies in and out of factories.

In one particular factory, Nipa Laboratories Ltd, the GMWU shop stewards complied with requests from the T&G to refuse to load or unload any supplies coming in or going out. The crunch came when a valuable export order was to go out.

The workers refused to load up a van driven by a T&G driver not involved in the dispute. So the managing director and company secretary decided to load the van themselves.

One of the GMWU shop stewards, Steve Leharne, spoke to the driver, explaining the T&G's instructions, and told the driver that if he allowed management to load up he would be reported to the strike committee.

The driver refused permission to management to load up, and immediately Leharne was threatened with the sack. The response was immediate: the workers said that if Leharne was sacked they would strike.

The T&G, believing Leharne to have been sacked, put a picket on the factory, though they had no members there. Various T&G pickets offered to see Nipa management to 'read them the Riot Act'.

The strike committee chairman promised that if any action were taken against the steward, the factory would be completely blacked. It now remains to be seen if management will back down or cut their own throats.

ROVER SOLIHULL

Stewards urge action for SA carworkers

BRITISH LEYLAND South Africa is Leyland's biggest operation in the world outside the UK. Leyland has 41 subsidiaries in south Africa, and makes five times as much profit from each of its workers in South Africa as it does from its workers in Britain.

In 1975, as the Labour Government prepared to step in and rescue Leyland, BLSA announced expansion plans to the tune of over £20 million. After the Soweto struggles, the managing director of BLSA commented 'Despite short-term uncertainty, we have long-term confidence in our invest-

ments here' (S.A. Financial Mail, 4th March 1977).

BLSA refused to recognise the black workers' union MAWU.

The low wages and lack of trade union organisation in BLSA are a scandal. Both the British Labour Party and the British TUC have a policy of opposition to apartheid, but they turn a blind eye to BLSA, a British government-owned firm.

It is up to Leyland workers to black the supply of vehicles and parts to South Africa until such time as MAWU is recognised and can fight for better wages and conditions in South

Africa.

Rover Confederated Shop Stewards Committee, Solihull, have taken the initiative in producing a broadsheet with the cooperation of the Coventry Anti-Apartheid group. This exposes the activities of Leyland in South Africa, and explains what should be done.

Calling on Leyland workers to support the international trade union week of action against South Africa from March 13-20, it advocates the blacking of goods to South Africa, including, at Solihull, the Land Rovers which are used by South African police.

The Rover stewards' motion along these lines was passed at the Leyland stewards' combine meeting on February 3rd. The meeting was addressed by a speaker from SACTU (the South African Congress of Trade Unions) and 200 of the Rover stewards' leaflets were given to each delegate.

Rank and file Leyland workers must now see that this motion is put into practice!

A pamphlet has been produced on British Leyland South Africa by the 'Coventry Workshop', sponsored by Coventry Trades Council and Coventry Anti-Apartheid, and printed by the Lanchester Poly Students Union. It is packed with information and well worth 20p. Supplies of this pamphlet and the Rover stewards' leaflets can be obtained from Dave Spencer, 17 Winifred Ave, Earlsdon,

Coventry. (Please add a contribution for postage).

Anti-Apartheid Emergency Action Conference is on Saturday 11th February, from 10am at Friends House, Euston Rd, London NW1. Open to delegates from all organisations supporting the aims of the AAM.

Coventry Anti-Apartheid group is hold a report-back meeting for the Midlands area from the February 11th Conference. 2pm to 6pm, Saturday 18th February, at 'F' block, Lanchester Poly, Coventry.

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*, 49 Carnac St, London SE27, to arrive by Friday for inclusion in the following week's paper.

SATURDAY 11 FEBRUARY. 'Conference of International Socialists on Revolutionary Unity': 10am, Africa Centre, King St, London WC2.

SATURDAY 11 FEBRUARY. Anti-Apartheid Emergency Action Conference. 10am, Friends House, Euston Rd, London NW1.

SATURDAY 18 FEBRUARY. Midlands Anti-Apartheid Action Conference. 2pm, 'F' block, Lanchester Polytechnic, Coventry. Details: D. Spencer, 17 Winifred Ave, Earlsdon, Coventry.

WEDNESDAY 22 FEBRUARY. NUT Executive Elections — extra-Metropolitan area. Meeting with all left wing candidates invited. 7.30pm, 'Eagle & Child', Woodgrange Rd, near Forest Gate BR station (trains from Liverpool Street).

SATURDAY 4 MARCH. Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions conference. 11am to 3pm, Beaver Hall, Garlick Hill, London EC4. Credentials for trade union delegates 75p from J. Hiles, 137 Wanstead Park Rd, Ilford, Essex.

THURSDAY 16 MARCH. All London Teachers against Racism and Fascism rally. 5.45pm at Central Hall, Westminster. Adm. 50p.

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WORKERS IN ACTION

LEYLAND: THE CARVE-UP BEGINS

The union men cheer

LAST WEDNESDAY, 1st, Leyland chairman Michael Edwardes told a roomful of union officials, convenors and senior stewards that he planned to chop 12,500 of their members' jobs this year. The response was enthusiastic applause.

"Mr Edwardes has clicked. It's go-go-go for British Leyland", trilled Terry Duffy. Eddie McGarry [shop stewards committee vice-chairman and convenor of Canley] called for "all hands to the pump". Toolroom leader Roy Frazer said it was a 'triumph'.

Only Bob Fryer from Cowley marred the euphoria. He had protested when a resolution accepting "the need to line up manning levels and production capacity with market needs" was presented to the meeting.

Fryer pointed out that those present had no mandate to vote at all. "We were there to hear Edwardes' plans so we could report back to our members", he said. "We should have a chance to discuss the Edwardes report before any vote is taken... this resolution gives them the full go-ahead".

Less than a dozen voted against.

That day's Morning Star carried an article written by Longbridge convenor and Leyland shop stewards' chairman Derek Robinson. The article concluded by calling upon "all on the left" to "close ranks, unite and fight the plan to carve up Leyland".

Derek Robinson was the main AUEW speaker recommending acceptance. Thurs-

day's Morning Star offered the following explanation:

"No shop stewards or staff representatives had any chance to consult on its terms and to have voted against would have appeared irresponsible..."

JIM DENHAM



Edwardes

No strikes ... or else

ANOTHER INSTALMENT of Leyland's corporate bargaining package was endorsed by stewards last Monday, 6th.

It was a deal on lay-off pay — exactly the same, in essence, as the old 'security of earnings' document which has already been rejected by the workforce.

The reason for rejection is clear: under the deal, workers lose all rights to lay-off pay if they strike for as much as one complete shift in a quarter. 'In return' lay-off pay entitlement is extended to 15

days (on basic pay) for external disputes and 7 days (on 80% earnings) for internal.

This deal was supposed to be part of the Ryder plan utopia where the workers were to give 'continuous production' in order to get a bustling, prosperous British Leyland. Now the bosses are set on drastic cuts in Leyland: yet they still reckon to get the 'continuous production'.

Speke in danger

THE LEYLAND combine stewards' meeting which accepted the Edwardes proposals also voted full support for the Speke [Merseyside] strikers.

But the strikers are still faced with a back-to-the-wall struggle against the Leyland bosses' drive to impose speed up and abolish any element of shop steward control over manning levels in the plant.

The Edwardes proposals — on which the Speke stewards abstained — say nothing definite about Speke. But it was clearly "a deliberate decision" by the bosses, as the Speke stewards' bulletin states, to provoke a strike at Speke. The aim: to beat the Speke workers down to total servility, or to pave the way for closing the plant — or both.

"The whole emphasis of the press", as the stewards' bulletin says, has favoured "the total abandonment of our present struggle with the company and in consequence unconditional surrender of the protected earnings plan agreement in its present form..."

A mass meeting is scheduled for Thursday 8th.

...AND FORD GOES FOR SPEEDUP

A MASS MEETING last week of 1,000 striking Press Shop workers at Fords Halewood voted overwhelmingly to continue their four week strike. Halewood is now closed down.

660 have been laid off at Southampton because of shortage of body panels. Further lay-offs, including at Dagenham, are threatened with the shutting of the Transmission Plant.

The E.G.A. stays

THE ELIZABETH Garrett Anderson hospital may be relieved. Camden and Islington Area Health Authority has recommended that the unique women-only hospital should continue in operation on its present site in Euston Road.

The hospital was due to be merged with Whittington hospital in 1976, but the staff have carried out a 'work-in' and refused to allow patients or beds to be moved.

Swan Hunter

ANOTHER BLACKMAIL

"THE ROYAL Navy", reported the 'Financial Times' on 7th February, "is known to be anxious to place a contract for its third through-deck cruiser on Tyneside".

Yet the Tyneside shipyard of Swan Hunter has just given 90 days redundancy notice to 1152 workers — because of lack of orders. There is 9.4% unemployment on Tyneside.

It is blackmail. As the 'Financial Times' explains it, "There is no chance of (Swan Hunter) getting orders through British Shipbuilders or for defence contracts as long as normal working is being interrupted..."

In any case normal working is not being interrupted. The blackmail started with the withdrawal of seven vessels from a Polish order when the Swan Hunter outfitters imposed an overtime ban. Four out of the seven were given back when the overtime ban ended — and then taken away again when the boilermakers said they would no longer work a 'flexibility' agreement.

Neither outfitters, nor boilermakers, have done more than refuse to do extra work above the normal working week.

The shipyard bosses' aim is to stamp out any departure from total servility in the yards. Only the blind can fail to see that this is a threat to all shipyard workers. Yet the union's sights appear to be limited to getting the best possible deal for the redundancies and maybe reducing them.

United action by all shipyard workers could save the jobs on Tyneside — and throughout the industry.

P.R.

The strike is over management's attempts to impose new conditions and speed-ups. While the workers want to change this every hour, the management insist it should instead be every four hours. They also want to base productivity targets on an hourly quota system, instead of the present shift quota system.

The existing practices give some small chance of a change in the monotony and heavy work, and also of working a bit at your own pace. Management don't like that. The more like robots workers are, the more production they think they can get.

In the event of a lay-off, Dagenham workers must be on guard against management trying to push the blame on the lads at Halewood. The best reply would be a clear declaration of our support for the Halewood strikers.

[Adapted from Workers' Action Ford Dagenham bulletin].

CONFED TALKS STALL

ENGINEERING UNION leaders have so far failed to get the employers to agree to a very modest claim from the Confed.

The Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions — the umbrella organisation that negotiates basic minimum weekly rates in the industry — is demanding £70 for craftsmen and £55 for labourers.

The present minimum rates are £42 for craftsmen and £33.60 for labourers. The Engineering Employers' Federation is prepared to add £15 and £6.40 (for actual pay is always above these minimum rates, especially since there was no national pay agreement last year). The employers have refused to make any offer on the questions of the shorter working week and longer holidays.

There are strings attached even to this derisory offer. EEF Chairman Astley Whittall said that a condition of the EEF offer was that member firms should not be forced to breach the 10% rule.

According to the Morning Star "the union negotiators had been ready to recommend a £60 minimum!" But without a very substantial rise the increase will hardly add to the workers' pay packets, for the time rate is almost solely used for calculating holiday pay, overtime and shift premia, and as a basis for incentive schemes.

For the vast majority of engineers, the time rate claim is a purely "toy-town" affair barely affecting their incomes. This attitude makes a sharp struggle over the claim most unlikely. Indeed the union leaders are anxious to clinch an agreement to help them avoid leading any really coordinated struggle for higher pay.

PAUL ADAMS

STANTON: NOW WE MUST FIGHT TO SAVE JOBS

AFTER THE defeat last December of our five-week strike for higher wages, the imposition of a productivity deal at BSC Stanton Ironworks was more or less inevitable.

We struck for £15 increase and a cost-of-living clause, but the GMWU refused to make the dispute official and we failed to force management to go beyond their offer of 5%. Only through productivity dealing would we get more, they insisted.

The deal was finally accepted on Sunday 29th January, covering the 18' and Dale Spun Plants. Some shifts had already accepted it in the course of the previous week. About one in four to one in six of us voted against.

The deal does not openly include any loss of jobs. But it opens

big dangers in that direction.

The money paid will be based on the proportion of good tonnage produced to man hours worked. Thus the deal gives a direct financial incentive to cut jobs.



Two years ago the bosses managed to push down manning levels by about 10%, but then they were forced to restore the previous levels. No doubt they are hoping to try again, and to make the cuts stick this time because restoration of manning levels would mean a drop in wages.

Like any productivity deal, the agreement also threatens safety. Already unsafe machines have been worked at the 18' Spun Plant

for the sake of higher productivity.

In detail, good tonnage per man hour worked will be calculated weekly for each plant, shift and major operating group. A level of production at which we currently get about £12 bonus has been fixed as the base-line (100%) and that amount of bonus has been consolidated. We then get additional increases up to £10.50 for 120% productivity.

There is no guarantee of average earnings in case of material shortages or breakdowns.

It is still possible to mount a fight to make sure no jobs are lost through this productivity deal. And with 1½ million unemployed, we cannot afford to do otherwise.