

## LABOUR MUST REBUFF TORY RACE SCARE

ANNOYED THAT THE Government have stolen their economic policies, the Tories are trying to outbid them on immigration controls. First a report drafted by Keith Speed, the Tory Junior Home Affairs Spokesperson demands a cut in the rate of immigration. This is to be achieved by removing automatic right of entry to any category of immigrant and by limiting the entry of dependents of immigrants already here.

Speed explained that the Conservative commitment was to work towards an end to (black) immigration altogether. This, however, could not be achieved overnight. Rather, the Tories would "in a decent humane and sensitive way carry out the policy over a number of years."

Next to enter the fray has been Tory leader Mrs Thatcher herself. In a scaremongering tone, an eye on elections and the cheap vote, Thatcher warns that by the end of the century Britain "might be swamped by people of different culture". "We are a British nation with British characteristics" she exclaimed in a TV interview with all the characteristic

nationalist pomposity. The bigotry and high moral tone of Thatcher's comment is calculated to stir up the very fears and racial hatred she claims to want to stop by halting immigration.

Callaghan has attacked the Tories for trying to win votes on a racist basis. Yet when he was Home Secretary he introduced the 1968 Immigration Act to limit the entry of Kenyan Asians. Far from implementing a 1976 Conference decision to repeal the 1968 and 1971 Immigration Acts, the Government are preparing a 'Nationalities Bill' which tightens up these laws.

The police lock up blacks they suspect of being illegal immigrants and harass black youth. Fascist marches get maximum protection from the police who seem unable to prevent hundreds of racial assaults on black people, particularly in East London. Race Relations Acts cannot prevent discrimination against blacks in housing and jobs, while fascists are acquitted in the courts.

With this record, it isn't surprising that Callaghan recently told Bangladeshi reporters: "Immigration is a problem for us and not for you". Asked about racism and the rise of the National Front, he said: "These are domestic questions and I will deal with them in the British Parliament, not in Bangladesh."

The National Executive Committee of the Labour Party have launched an anti-racism campaign, featuring



Mr Callaghan at the Taj Mahal

so far, an interesting party political broadcast and a 4-page pull-out in Labour Weekly. Unfortunately the record of the Government does not get a mention. The campaign contents itself with calling the NF - "Nazi".

This label encourages opposition to fascism based on memories of World War II and Hitler's atrocities. Its appeal is more to British nationalism and anti-German feeling than any thought-out anti-fascist sentiment. It does not help fight racial discrimination much. Nor does it answer NF charges that blacks are responsible for a decline in educational standards, high unemployment and petty crime, and explain who is responsible.

An effective anti-racist campaign must go further. It must support black self-defence against racists AND the police. Socialists must argue that far from blacks being the cause of economic and social problems they are often the biggest victims. We also have to convince young

blacks that it is worth fighting alongside the Labour movement against the racist practices it condones and against the Labour Government.

The campaign is an improvement on the old attitude (still common) of "ignore the fascists and they'll go away." But will the NEC mobilise Constituency Labour Parties and Trade Unions to stop the NF from marching through black areas again? Will they push the Labour Government to repeal racist legislation and risk losing votes?

The launching of the campaign makes it easier for socialists to initiate a serious discussion on racialism in the Labour Party. Local parties might now be more willing to participate in anti-racist committees and encourage their members to attend counter-demos. Socialists must take this opportunity to extend the debate beyond NF-bashing to areas that the Labour leadership and many local Labour Party members might find uncomfortable.

KS FRONT  
DIAN WORKERS' FRONT  
Labour cannot  
FRONT emancipate itself  
in the white skin  
CUTE where  
n the black  
is branded"  
Marx  
WELL  
LISTS



A lesson in internationalism

IT MIGHT be comforting to believe that Judge McKinnon's summing up was exceptional. He had directed a jury to acquit Kingsley Read, the leader of the fascist National Party, because he did not consider that Read's speech was an incitement to racial hatred, and hence illegal. Some believe that if this judge were sacked, and if Race Relations legislation were tightened up a bit, then racists could be prosecuted in the courts.

But McKinnon was not the first judge to direct a jury to acquit racists. Judges have ruled that social clubs could exclude blacks. Ealing Council's right to exclude Mr Zesko, a Pole, from the housing list was upheld because the judges ruled that while 'discrimination on grounds of national origin' was illegal, 'discrimination on grounds of nationality' was not. Judges will always find loopholes to allow racists the freedom to practise their racism. Closer examination of McKinnon's speech suggests he is not a fascist. He also interpreted the evidence in his summing up in the same way that most judges do.

He claimed that, "... such was the respect and affection engendered that no sooner had the white man granted independence... to the black man than he wanted to follow the white man to England." A touching example of the colonialist mentality which treats blacks as

## McKinnon and the Fascist WHAT DO YOU EXPECT?

BY BERNARD MISRAHI

childish servants needing protection rather than as enemies to be expelled. But he believes that Read's views are reasonable and fervently supports his right to utter them, "I wish you well", he said to Read.

"He is a man who has had the guts to come forward in the past and stand up publicly for things that he believed in." And, "We still, even today, have the right of free speech... If we do not like people we are entitled to say so, but, of course, we must use the language of moderation."

Judges may be unwilling to grant the same freedom to anti-fascists, Irish Republicans or 'blasphemous' gays. But the defence of 'freedom of speech' for everyone else is hardly new.

Judges claim to be non-political. They lift the incident that is being judged out of its particular context and 'judge' it in isolation to events connected with it before or after. The politics of those involved are dismissed as

irrelevant, even when they are crucial. By depoliticising their cases, judges help preserve the myth that they too are non-political and neutral. McKinnon is an excellent example of this philosophy in action.

He instructed the jury that they would have to prove that Read's remarks at a fascist rally in Newham in June 1976 were an 'incitement to racial hatred' to convict him. In the dock, Read denied that he was expressing joy at the murder when he had greeted the death of Gurdip Singh the week before as "One down one million to go", "I meant that was only one incident and that we had a million more to go" McKinnon believed him. He also insisted that the term 'nigger' was no more insulting than 'taffy'. "I was called 'nigger' at school" he confided.

If how insulting the term 'nigger' is does depend on the context in which it is used, then it is difficult to believe how it could be

CONTD. ON BACK PAGE

### IRELAND—TROOPS OUT NOW!



THE FIRST FEW weeks of 1978 have seen an increasing interest in the Press and Parliament in the crisis facing the nationalised industries in Britain. This interest has centred on the British Steel Corporation and British Leyland (see article on Leyland, facing page) and their respective "answers" to the problem of manning levels, productivity and, in the case of BSC, projects 1977/78 losses of nearly £500 million.

An examination of the origins of these problems (and the sort of "solutions" being peddled by Left and Right MPs) tells us a lot about the nature of "public" ownership and the effect of the profits/inflation crisis on the nationalised sector.

### PRODUCTIVITY

We have described in previous issues of the CHARTIST how capitalists world-wide are facing the consequences of a crisis of declining rates of profit - having its origin in the trend towards a rising proportion of capital investment being swallowed up in fixed capital (i.e. factories, machinery, computers etc.) in an attempt to increase productivity and reduce the amount of investment in variable capital (i.e. labour). Unfortunately for the capitalists, this drive to reduce expenditure on "labour" contains the seeds of the contradiction they must always face - labour power ALONE is the source of profits - hence the constant trend towards a decline in the rate of profit. These features of the capital accumulation process, together with the problem of the realisation of profits in the market are certainly not absent from "state capitalist" enterprises.

The British Steel Corporation and British Leyland are perfect examples to increase the productivity of labour through reductions in manpower, speed-ups and increasingly heavy

investment in new technology, plant and machinery. "But what's this", we hear you ask, "I thought these bastions of private enterprise had been won for the people"?

In one sense, the answer is quite simple - nationalisations such as these have proved essential to post-war capitalism. They ensure a flow of public funds to relieve private capital from the burden of investment in areas of production which are either vital to the infrastructure of manufacturing (steel, electricity generation, coal, etc.) and/or so large and politically sensitive that to allow them to go to the wall is unthinkable (BLMC, Rolls Royce). Certainly, it is clear that the levels of investment required to maintain production on an acceptably "profitable" level in such enterprises as steel and British Leyland is not going to be forthcoming from the private sector at the present rate of profitability and in sufficient quantities to enable the required technological progress to be made.

### BRITISH STEEL

So at this time of crisis in the nationalised sector, what solutions are our leaders in the labour movement advancing. Take Steel as an example.

Once we get beyond the discussion in the bourgeois press about the rights and wrongs of disclosing financial information about BSC to a Commons Select Committee (itself an indictment of the so-called pub-

lic accountability of the 'public' sector!), the sorry tale of the British Steel industry emerges.

From October 1976 when new BSC chief Villiers took over from Sir Monty Finniston forecasts of 1977/78 performance have slumped from a 'break-even' prediction to a possible £466 m. loss.

### MANPOWER REDUCTIONS

'Firebrand' Tribune MP Neil Kinnock is a member of the Commons Committee examining the Steel industry. In 'Tribune', January 27th, he assesses the future of British Steel: "We therefore need a comprehensive and systematic programme of investment expenditure where it will be most effective and manpower REDUCTION where it will be most sensible in the achievement of better quality and lower costs". "our sub-committee did not want an 'unsatisfactory compromise' on jobs, investment and financial assistance which would leave steel back at square one. It is for that reason that we did not avoid the responsibility of acknowledging the unavoidable need for manpower reductions".

That will go down well with Kinnock's South Wales voters whose jobs may well be affected by these "manpower reductions". But comrade Kinnock feels it necessary to defend the role of state intervention in the productive sector with the qualification, "obviously, the industry has a community responsibility."

But before we heave a sigh of relief that, despite the inexorable pressures of the capitalist crisis, comrade Kinnock is about to advance a socialist perspective for the steel industry, he goes on: "But that has now been distended to unsupportable proportions".

Kinnock's acceptance of the capitalist solution to the crisis in the steel industry means that he is forced to accept run-downs and closures in such plants as Ebbw Vale, Shotton, Scunthorpe, Teeside, Port Talbot, Llanwern, and Ravenscraig. Kinnock is well assisted by arch-manoeuvrer Bill Sirs, leader of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation, whose negotiations with the BSC have produced such gems as the "Steel Contract" - a participation scheme which ties steel workers to the logic of speed-up and redundancy for up to 40,000 in return for a pay rise of 10.9%.

### STATE CAPITALIST

Such shameful deals illustrate the fact that these nationalisations are state capitalist corporations and serve only to discredit genuine socialist planning. Until workers take power and are in a position to exercise control over the economy the role of such state expenditure will be merely to oil the wheels of capitalism.

The tasks facing the movement are to support steel workers in their resistance to the sell-out by Sirs and co. and for a reduction in the working week with no loss of pay. We must demand of the government -- No sackings in the nationalised industries - Guarantee a job or full pay. Steel workers, like other workers, must not be made to pay for the crisis of a system over which they have no control and which, while it exists, obstructs any rational planning of production.

## Race and immigration

"This tiny island of ours is not much more than a dot on the map and the time has come to face the problem (i.e. immigration). It won't go away. . . We're bulging with more than a million unemployed, there's a shortage of housing, and every family in the land, just about, is battling to maintain standards. . . I am opposed to the floodgates being opened, so that everyone can come crowding in."

These infamous words are those of Labour MP Bob Mellish, uttered in May 1976 during the so-called "Malawian Asian crisis." when the bourgeois press was whipping-up an hysterical anti-immigration campaign aimed not only at the newly-arrived Malawians, but immigrants in general.

The summer of '76 represented a watershed in the development of racialism and fascism in British society. Since the beginning of the world economic crisis, the British ruling class has increasingly played the racist card as a means of confusing and dividing the working class facing mass unemployment and cuts in living standards. During that summer racialism exploded onto the streets of Britain in the form of fascist marches and escalating racist attacks on immigrants, including the murder of three Asian youths.

### harassment

At the same time the police began to step-up their harassment of immigrants, particularly black youth.

Mellish's remarks, of course, directly contributed to the development of such an atmosphere and Mellish was rightly denounced in the Labour movement at the time as a racist. Nevertheless, no substantial campaign was launched demanding his removal from positions in the Labour Party. That Mellish was, and still is, able to get away with such statements is not merely a product of the Left's numerical weakness within the Labour Party. More importantly, it stems from the Left's own failure to adopt a consistent and principled anti-racist position, particularly on the question of immigration.

Indeed Mellish could also claim, with some justification, in May 1976;

"I am not a racist, but I am not a humbug. . . my views are not really different from



Labour's immigration laws make a mockery of such slogans.

Mellish

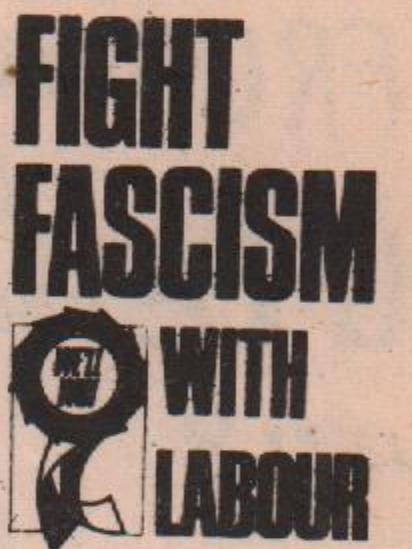
Labour's policy over the years".

Mellish's position of "enough is enough" is, in fact, well in keeping with the Labour leaders' bogus "anti-racist" tradition, and represents little more than a logical extension of it. This tradition consists of tub-thumping denunciations of the "evils of race hatred" combined with a cowardly capitulation to the chauvinist argument that there is a 'need' for immigration controls as a 'necessary' means of protecting the jobs and living standards of British workers and British 'people' in general (including the ruling class!)

In terms of Labour's policy, this reactionary, nationalist tradition, has taken the form of tacit support for and outright promotion of increasingly stringent immigration laws. (Labour has even failed to repeal the overtly racist 1971 Immigration Act). On the other side of the coin, Labour has introduced Race Relations Laws which are supposed to combat racialism within Britain and protect immigrants from racial discrimination. In other words, they have sown the illusion that the capitalist state, (which they, of course, characterise as a 'neutral state') can be used to suppress the growth of racialism. The McKinnon judgement in acquitting fascist Kingsley Read, massive police protection for fascist marches and escalating police attacks on blacks, demonstrate the uselessness of this policy. Far from 'combatting' racialism the institutions of the British capitalist state are busy promoting it!

By conceding that immigration is a 'problem' for the British working class, the Labour leaders have helped fuel the growth of fascism, by reinforcing existing racial and

## Labour leaders play racists' game



By Frank Hansen

cisely workers from the colonial world who are forced to emigrate as a result of the stranglehold which imperialism imposes on their own national economic development.

If the fight against fascism and racialism is successful, it must begin from a clear recognition of the need to challenge the reactionary chauvinist tradition which is entrenched in the British Labour movement and the British working class in general.

This means (1) adopting the Communist policy of the united front, ie demanding that the Labour leaders mobilise the mass organisations of the working class, in every locality, against the fascist threat, and demanding that the Labour Government ends police protection of fascist marches, (II) arguing within such a united front for a clear proletarian internationalist position on the question of immigration based on (a) the repeal of all immigration Acts, and (b) Labour movement support for immigrant groups who organise independently to fight their own special oppression.

During the coming months the *Chartist* will attempt to put forward such a position by examining the historical relationship between immigration and the development of capitalism, and by focussing on the various immigrant communities in Britain.

We will explore how various ethnic communities came to this country and why they were forced to migrate initially. We will concentrate particularly on the West Indians, the Cypriots, East African Asians and migrants from Pakistan and India.

Inevitably, this will involve a brief look at the process of British colonisation of various parts of the world, ie the growth of the British Empire, the development of an ideology which rationalised and justified these conquests, and the effects of this colonisation on the native peoples, their culture, identity and outlook.

national divisions in the working class. The fascist slogan 'One million unemployed. One million immigrants. Send them back!' assumes real meaning when the Labour leaders are themselves arguing that 'opening the floodgates' will 'damage' the interests of the British working class. At the same time the policy of 'leave it to the law and the police', has disarmed those advanced sections of the working class attempting to grapple with the fascist menace.

The left-reformist perspective advocated by the Tribune/CP 'axis' also stands in this tradition. They put forward the idea of a 'non-class' popular front to fight racialism, which includes liberals, vicars and 'progressive' Tories, under the slogan: 'One Race the Human Race.' For them, racialism is a 'social disease', which threatens 'the nation', not a bourgeois ideology that divides the working class. They see fascism as a 'threat to democracy', not as a movement of imperialist reaction, whose prime aim is the destruction of all independent organisations of the working class in the interests of monopoly capitalism.

Thus they believe, contrary to all historical evidence, that the bourgeois state can be mobilised to fight fascism, and therefore advocate 'more effective' Race Relations Acts, (to be enforced by the police and courts!) as a means of stopping the growth of the National Front.

On the question of immigration they also capitulate to nationalist sentiment by calling for 'non-racist immigration Acts'. Immigration Acts are necessary (i.e. immigration is a 'problem' for the working class) but they must not be openly racist! But since the whole purpose of immigration control is to divide the working class on national and racial lines, such controls are by very definition 'racist'. Even if they did not contain openly racist clauses, controls would still discriminate against black workers, because it is pre-



# VARLEY BACKS CARVE-UP AT LEYLAND

EMERGING FROM the present wave of publicity on British Leyland is the clear message that the promises embodied in the Ryder Report are *not* going to be implemented. Promises such as higher capital investment to update plant and machinery, centralisation of Leyland's structure and job security for its workforce are now to be ignored.

The reality is more to be found in the present proposals being mooted by Leyland's new figure head Michael Edwards. According to him "Leyland's health is to be restored by shedding 12,000 jobs this year and carving Leyland cars into two separate companies." (Times Jan.23)

While the Labour Cabinet may not be entirely in unison over these proposals, the Industry Secretary Eric Varley at least is expressing his support. In the same article Varley is quoted as saying "we have to have a strategy for British Leyland which will arrest the decline and put it on a sound footing. I support Michael Edwards in his approach." This particular part of Leyland's history can only be understood in the context of both its own development as the major British Motor Manufacturer, and the wider economic forces which operate in the Western Capitalist Market.

## HAPHAZARDLY

Leyland itself grew haphazardly, and by all accounts reluctantly to its present shape and size, (an understanding of which will help in considering the likely and necessary workers' response). The Austin and Morris motor companies merged in 1952 to form the British Motor Corporation. In 1955, 1965 and 1966 BMC acquired Fisher and Cudlow (car bodies), Pressed Steel and Jaguar Cars respectively to form British Motor Holdings. Leyland Motors brought out Albion Motors in 1951, Scammell Lorries in 1955, Standard - Triumph in 1962, Associated Commercial Vehicles (buses) in 1963, the Rover Car Company and Aveling-Barford (earth moving heavy vehicles) in 1967.

In 1968 these two bodies formed the British Leyland Motor Corporation. It is worth noting that all the major subsidiaries had a long history of autocratic rule - Nuffield at Morris, Leanord Lord at Austin, Stokes at Leyland - and unco-ordinated investment decisions meant BLMC was an even larger collection of Motor Manufacturers largely disintegrated and with problems much greater due to its size. As the Counter Information Services Journal points out, "Stokes continued a fairly autocratic style of running BLMC because of pressure to make immediate decisions to stave off disaster." Until the Government bailed out the company with 'Ryder' and the National Enterprise Board collapse was indeed a possibility.

## POST WORKERS' DEFENCE CAMPAIGN

AS WE ANNOUNCED last month in the Chartist, the Union of Post Office Workers (UPW) leadership presented some of its members with an Xmas present of fines totalling £1400. We stated that two members of Cricklewood UPW had been fined. In fact, all those fined were members of the UPW LDC 3 - the London District Council.

They were fined for a circular they issued in the summer calling for a blacking of Grunwick's mail. Following this circular the Cricklewood branch blacked the mail which led to a noose tightening rapidly around the neck of George Ward. The mail was as important to Ward's firm as the air he breathes. It still is!

A Defence Fund is being organised which is seeking the endorsement of the full London District Council of the UPW. If the campaign is not supported by the LDC then it will go ahead with a basis of support from many London branches. Please send donations to Room 922, Faraday Building, Queen Victoria Street, London EC 4.

by STEVE YORKE

Behind the usual bourgeois 'clap trap' about low productivity and losses incurred through industrial disputes lie the real reasons for Leyland's decline. Even the Ryder Report for example points to a gross underinvestment of capital expenditure. The capitalist press fails to state that even though Leyland was suffering a rapid decline in profits it still persisted in paying out dividends totally out of proportion to the actual situation. The following table illustrates this:

TABLE

Deducations and Appropriations from Profits.

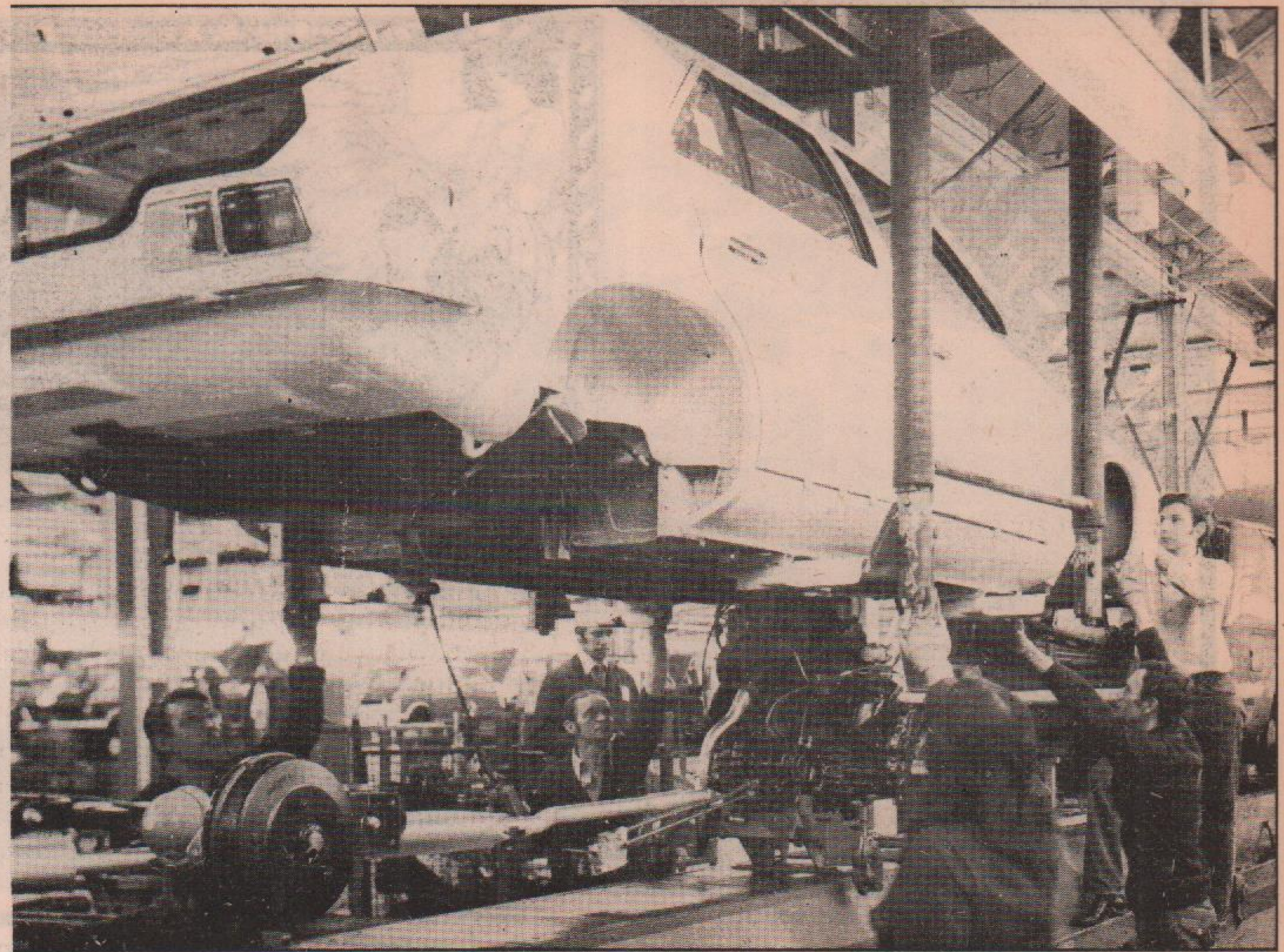
	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	Total.
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£ m
Profit/ (loss) after all items.	19	18	(6)	16	24	27	(24)	74
Dividends.	15	15	5	11	12	9	3	70
Retentions.	4	3	(11)	5	12	18	27	4

Source: 'Leyland: The next Decade.'

However for Leyland this underinvestment was more a result of a more fundamental problem. That is the difficulty of realising surplus value over and above the initial capital investment. Considering the massive scale of Leyland's operations this indeed was a problem. Without of course stating it in these terms (Lord) Ryder none the less recognised the situation, as he stated, "Even if all the profits of 74m had been returned together with the 49m of new funds raised by a rights issues in 1972, this would have been adequate to meet BL capital needs."

Related to this has been Leylands declining share of the market, particularly in the volume cars section. Multi-nationals such as VW, Renault and the Japanese car manufacturers have continued to increase their share of the home and international markets. In the UK for example, Leyland's car sales as a % of the total market share fell from 33% in 1972 to 24% in 1977. Foreign car sales in Britain are now well over 50%.

The result of all this is that the government it seems, is no longer prepared to inject the



The Princess line at Cowley

'necessary' capital to continue Leyland's production at its present scale, even considering the possibility of 'sacrificing' the volume cars division on the altar of international competition. Thus massive redundancies, and a contracting of its operations appear to be possibilities under consideration. Already the plant at Speke employing 5,500 is being singled out as the first victim.

Such a situation illustrates all too tragically the totally false nature of 'socialist' nationalisation within the overall framework of a competition market system, on an international scale. Indeed Eric Varley to his credit seems to accept this view. Complaining that others did not see just this he stated, "... We aren't talking about water boards or electricity supply, but manufacturing industry in the most fiercely competitive market. I am sure that this is not fully grasped on the shop floor."

Of course we need not rely on such an honest pro-capitalist as Eric Varley to tell us this. Engels in *Anti-Dubring* foresaw such developments. Those who see nationalisation

leading inevitably to socialism would do well to consider the following lines. "The modern state, no matter what its form is essentially a capitalist machine, the state of the capitalist the ideal personification of the total national capital. The more it proceeds to the taking over of the productive forces the more does it actually become the national capitalist, the more citizens does it exploit."

What of those exploited workers of British Leyland? What is their likely response? Initial reaction appears to be one of united rejection of any attempt to reduce the Labour force. This should continue. However with individual company consciousness still playing a significant role in the minds of union officials and the rank and file, such a position could soon collapse. The fear of redundancy may bring about the acquiescence of the larger plants, thus enabling the isolation and subsequent closure of the smaller divisions of the Leyland Empire, such as Speke. Confined within 'national solutions' and narrow plant chauvinism this will undoubtedly be the case.

In opposition to such possibilities a national plan for the whole motor industry is required. Alternative products must be considered, especially an expansion of the public transport system, by trade unionist's in Leyland and elsewhere. In the interim, the crisis in Leyland must be seen as capitalism's responsibility, and for which capitalism, not Leyland workers must pay.

The Labour leaders must guarantee a job for all, no redundancies, and no pay cuts. If this means cutting the work week, then so be it. Ultimately the profitability and sales crisis can only be solved with the destruction of the entire market system which has produced this disastrous situation.

## Tribune's 'foreign wolves' threat

by Mike Davis



Mr Michael Edwards

UNDER A HEADLINE "Leyland to be thrown to foreign wolves?", Tribune of January 20th vented its red-white-and-blue spleen at what it saw as an even greater threat to British Leyland workers than the Edwardes/Varley plan to create 30,000 redundancies in the near future. It was, of course, the nasty foreign demon that is strangling good-old home-grown cars production.

"Leyland plans for a foreign link-up pose an even greater threat to the British car industry than other parts of the Michael Edwardes 'rationalisation programme, outlined to the unions this week. The projected deal—believed to be with Renault—will see Leyland mass-producing foreign cars here (sic!)."

If the logic of Tribune's position is followed it seems that it would prefer workers signing dole clips to producing cars with foreign names. Tribune's touching concern for the 'British' in British Leyland is totally misplaced. It reflects a wholly false view of the crisis weighing

placed by machines. Partly, because of the relative strength of the car unions British capitalists have been unable to rationalise (cut jobs) to the extent of their German, Japanese and U. S. rivals. But even car production in these countries is contracting under the hammer-blows of global recession. The problem is that in any country, the higher the organic composition of capital, the more difficult it is to maintain profit rates.

The answer to this capitalist anarchy is not to fall into the nationalist trap but to develop a strategy for saving jobs based socialist internationalist principles. What is immediately needed is a reduction of the work-week, ending all dividend hand-outs, a guaranteed job for all at Leyland and a campaign by union and Labour leaders amongst all workers to show that the crisis is not their responsibility. Alternative production of socially useful goods needs to be urgently investigated by trade unionists given the saturation of the capitalist market with cars.

## Conference needed

Meanwhile as the toll of-defendants convicted for "Grunwick offenses" mounts and the Grunwick strike itself enters its seventeenth

month the strikers are keen to organise a conference to assess the fate and future of the strike.

It is clear there is no legal way to victory - especially after a Bradford student not only lost an appeal against a £75 fine but was

given 21 days imprisonment instead. APEX, the strikers' union, must be made to state its position on what action it will campaign for to win the strike. A national delegate conference would be the best forum to discuss this.



Mid-East focus



# THE MYTHS OF ZIONISM

by Jon Taylor

What are the Palestinians? When I came here there were 250,000 non-Jews, mainly Arabs and Bedonins. It was desert. More than underdeveloped. Nothing. It was only after we made the desert bloom that they became interested in taking it from us.

Levi Eshkol, *Jerusalem Post*, 17.2.69.

There was no such thing as Palestinians. . . It was not as though there was a Palestinian people. . . and we came and threw them out and took their country from them. It did not exist.

Golda Meir, *Sunday Times*, 15.6.69.

BUT THEY did. And you did. They had existed and worked the land, successfully, for over thirteen hundred years until the Zionists, supported by capitalist and imperialist requirements, came and threw them out. By that action they created a situation whose validity the Palestinian Arabs question and will continue to question until it is brought home to the Zionist and the world powers supporting them that it cannot remain so forever.

In order to establish itself in world opinion, Zionism created a number of important fictions, myths about Palestine and about the Arabs who lived there. The aim of this article, not a detailed historical account of Zionism, is rather to examine these myths in order to see what reality they conceal. The Palestine Liberation Organisation has fought a more successful fight in recent years; it is useful to look at the distortions and lies they have had to counter in that battle.

## HISTORY OF PALESTINE

The history of Palestine is long and includes many conflicts and conquests not of relevance here. The Palestinian people can trace their ancestry back at least to the 12th century BC — the time of the Philistines, or Peoples of the Sea. This area was invaded many times by many groups, among whom were the Hebrews. The ancient 'Kingdom of Israel' arose from this invasion, lasted a mere two hundred years, and came to an end 2698 years ago. If the Zionist claim rested upon territorial rights, then these rights lasted for a very short period against the thirteen hundred years of occupation, maintenance and enjoyment of that land by the Palestinians since the establishment of Arab Palestine in the seventh century. However, that is not the basis of the claim. With the end of the 'Kingdom of Israel', the Jews moved increasingly out of the area. Well before the Roman conquest of Judea, three quarters of the Jewish population lived outside Palestine. The nearest area of dense Jewish population was in what is now Lebanon and eastern Turkey. Abram Leon in 'The Jewish Question' observed,

It is probable, ironically, that there are more physical descendants of the Palestine Jews of Bar Cochbar's time in the Arab refugee camps than among the 'returning' Jews of Israel.

Jewish historians (H H Bar-Esson, for example) makes it clear that the 'historical

right' of the Jews to return is not to be justified by the material possession of a piece of land, but by "the privilege granted by Divine Will, which determines the boundaries of nations, bequeathing lands to some and uprooting others from their abode, all as part of a master plan based on moral considerations." This is in fact the moral or religious basis of Zionism: God's command to Abraham to lead his people out of the lands they were living in then to a land God would show them. Unfortunately he forgot to do so, thus leaving the Jews free to descend upon any piece of land they fancied. This then is the fictitious nature of the 'historical right' of the Jews to return, anywhere, without regard to the rights of any indigenous peoples. It makes this claim all the more ludicrous when we recall that Theodore Herzl, the founder of the Zionist movement, considered not Palestine but *Uganda* as the most suitable place for Jewish colonisation. He was defeated by the majority of Jews who insisted on the religious sentiment towards 'Palestine'.

## LITTLE PERSECUTION

There was little persecution of Jews in the Moslem world. Those Jews (about 12,000 in the mid-1800s) who remained in Palestine spoke Arabic only and suffered along with the Moslem and Christian peasants among whom they lived from the marauding tribesmen from Lebanon and Jordan. In the Christian world, however, things were very different. Jews who had migrated to England, France and Germany were massacred and finally expelled. York and Norwich, both at the time centres of Christianity, saw the massacre of several hundred Jews. Already the Jew was seen as scapegoat, for these mass killings and expulsions increased as the feudal economy declined and the peasants struggled against their deteriorating situation.

The Spanish Inquisition expelled all Jews who would not convert to Christianity. Jewish families moved north-eastwards across Europe, leaving more than half the world's Jews in Lithuania, Poland and Hungary. By the mid-seventeenth century this was Russian territory. Many managed to remain in Western Europe, where the French Revolution and the Napoleonic era brought some degree of emancipation.

In 1840, Lord Shaftesbury, anxious to ensure the overland route to India (by now fully part of the Empire; the Suez Canal came 40 years later), proposed a scheme of Jewish colonisation as a means of utilizing the "wealth and industry of the Jewish people for the economic development of a backward area." Although this scheme was not taken up by the British Government, the connection had been established for them. This later became important for Herzl's propaganda machine.

In the 1880s Anti-Semitic leagues were formed in Germany, fed by the growth of nationalism and by extreme right-wing Catholicism. In the 1890s came the Dreyfus case; an assimilated French Jew in the general staff of the Army was accused of treason; the accusation was followed by a widespread outburst of anti-semitism. By this time also, pogroms were taking place throughout the Russian Empire, again of course in response to a serious decline in the economy.

In fact the first step in the modern Jewish colonisation of Palestine came in 1870 when Rothschild of France, combining his Jewish sentiments with his support for the French Government's interest in colonising Palestine as they had Algeria, acquired some land near Jaffa for an agricultural school. By 1900 Rothschild had invested about £2 million in Palestine. From the very outset, then, the colonisation of Palestine was an expression of imperialism, British and later of the Americans. At no time did Rothschild envisage the establishment of an independent Jewish state — he was concerned only to use his financial power in the Ottoman treasury in order to expand the influence of French interests in a new direction.

Zionism itself was founded in 1897 at a congress held in Basle, Switzerland. It differed significantly from the Rothschild plan in that its intention was to solve the Jewish problem by the creation of a national Jewish state. Originally advocated by Herzl as Uganda, the state chosen by the congress was Palestine. In founding the congress, Herzl was reacting strongly against two events: the attempts by Moses Mendelssohn (a Jewish philosopher) earlier in the century to persuade Jews to assimilate completely (retaining Judaism as a religious denomination), and by the Dreyfus case.

## BRITISH IMPERIALISM

From the beginning Herzl sought to achieve his aim by means of a deal with one imperialist power or another. Initially, he courted the Turkish Sultan and the German Kaiser. With the outbreak of World War One, Zionism orientated towards British imperialism, with the latter's renewed interest in the Middle East.

Jews themselves, however, did not wait for a definite outcome. Indeed it was part of the Zionist plan, though of course never publicly stated, that by an apparently spontaneous migration of Jews to Palestine, the imperialist powers would be persuaded sentimentally, as

well as being persuaded economically by the value of the investment in an eastward extension of capitalism and imperialism which the settlers were making. The fact that this land, contrary to two more of the myths of Zionism, was both well populated and thoroughly cultivated, though it came as a shock to the migrants who had swallowed the Zionist propaganda, did not in any way hinder the movement. Despite the claims of Meir and Eshkol (quoted at the head of this article), there were more than 600,000 Arabs in Palestine at this time. In 1915 Viscount Samuel sent a note to the British Government warning that the control of such a large population by the 80,000 Jewish settlers and residents there was not feasible; Samuel thought the time was far from ripe for the establishment of the new state.

## PALESTINE ROYAL COMMISSION

In 1891/92, the much respected Jewish philosopher visited Palestine. He wrote that far from Palestine being "entirely desolate; a barren desert where anyone can buy land to his heart's content. . . it is hard to find arable land that is not cultivated. . . Many of our brethren. . . toured it extensively, yet failed to find what they came for." The 1937 British Palestine Royal Commission Report supports this view, adding that the difficulties of expansion of farming methods by the Arabs "does not justify the expropriation of the Arab to make room for the richer and more enterprising colonist." As is the way with so many Royal Commission Reports whose findings are not convenient to the needs of capitalism, this one was ignored.

Zionism, supported by the needs of international and local capital, rolled on. Although there were difficulties with Rothschild over the use of Arab labour — the Zionist wanted to create their *own* working class and did not

# DEADLOCK IN

by Geoff Bender

AFTER THE OLIVE branch-waving, after the plaudits of the world's press, after the storms of rumours and speculations which accompanied Sadat's trip to Jerusalem and Begin's to Cairo, their discussions, as we go to press have ground to an early and inevitable halt. As we predicted in *Chartist* No. 61, despite Sadat's conciliatory approach and Begin's eagerness to talk, neither could offer the other the goods they required.

The stumbling blocks to the progress of talks was two fold. There are two sets of facts which refuse to be ignored; two groups of people who refuse to go away. These are, on one hand, the exiled and dispersed Palestinian people who will not rest content unless it be in a state of their own — the 'democratic secular state' demanded by the Palestine Liberation Organisation. On the other hand, there are the thousands of Jewish settlers — from the US, from Eastern Europe, from elsewhere in the world who have settled in the lands under Israeli military occupation since the June War of 1967.

Despite the treacherous defeats inflicted on the Palestinians by Jordan and Syria some degree of support for Palestinian aspirations is still required from most Arab leaders who would remain in power. This is especially so for Sadat who claims the mantle of the radical nationalist traditions of Nasserism and whose position in Egypt is far from secure. This time last year his regime was shaken by massive workers' demonstrations.

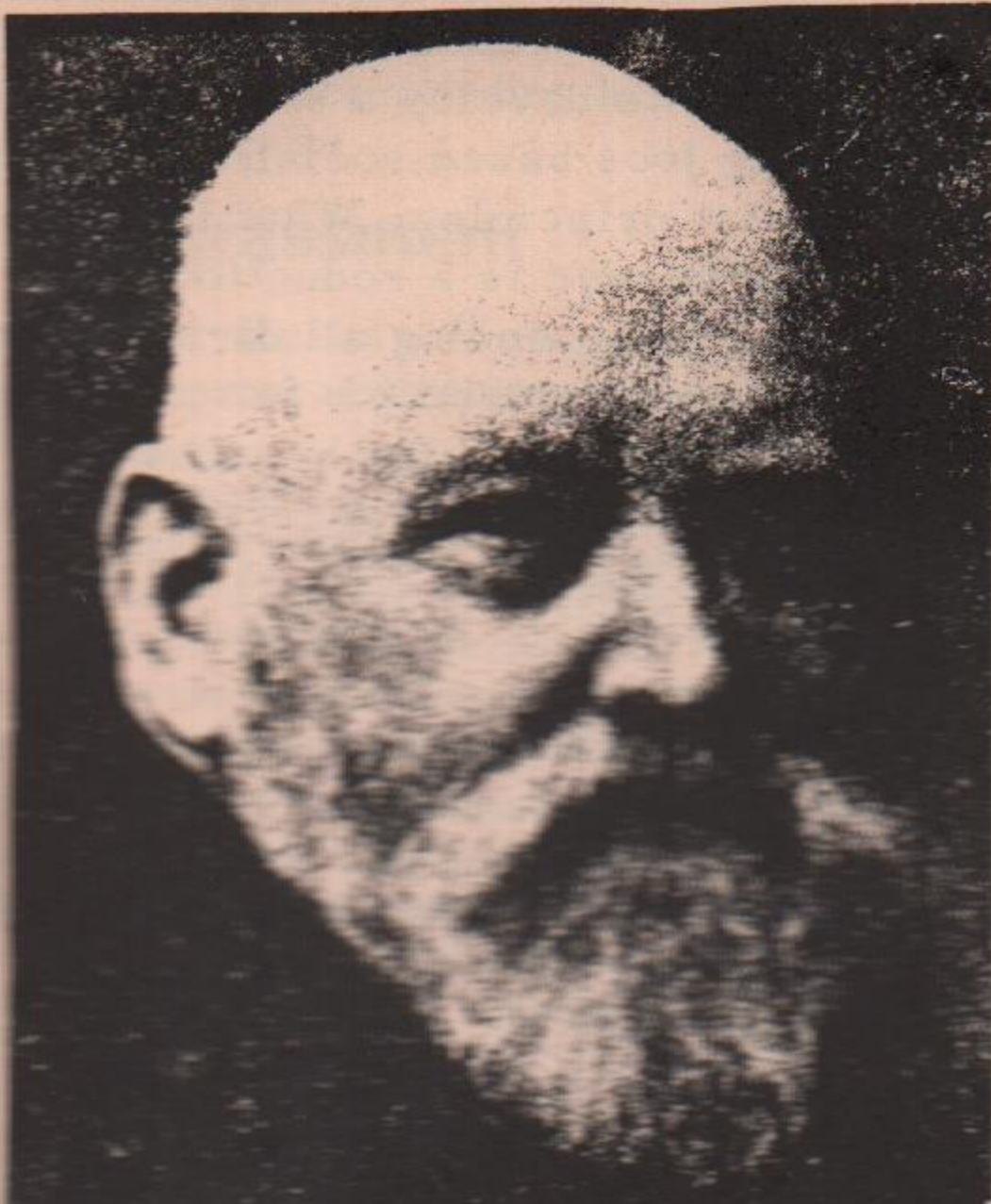
As for Begin's position here the other group referred to above, are his constituency and principle concern. In the last ten years, Zionist settlements have appeared from the Golan Heights on Israel's northern border with Syria, on the West Bank of the Jordan, in the Gaza



Aerial view of Yamit, one of 20 Israeli settlements in the Sinai that have been evacuated.

strip and in the desert lands of Sinai. In the words of Menachem Begin himself, "Any Israeli Premier who compromises on the settlements would have to resign. . .". The colonisation of Arab lands is no mere policy of this or that wing of the Zionist movement: it is inherent, integral to the very nature of Zionism and the state of Israel founded on it. As right-wing Zionists will point out in opposition to any Israeli withdrawal from occupied territory the colonisation of the last ten years has only been a continuation of the way in which the Israeli state was founded.

The settlers, often recent immigrants, 'returned to Israel' from all parts of the world see themselves as pioneers, carving out a place for themselves in the surrounding wilderness — be it the mountains of Golan or the desert of Sinai. What this pioneering spirit tends to overlook is at least, in Golan and on the West Bank, is firstly the rights of the original inhabitants of these areas and secondly the fact that until torn from them by military conquest



Lord Rothschild, a leading British Zionist. The Balfour declaration took the form of a letter addressed to him.



Bust of Herzl, the founder of the bourgeois Zionist movement's 'Zionist Congress'





Left: Early Jewish settlers in a camp.

Above: Displaced Palestinian refugees in their camps today.

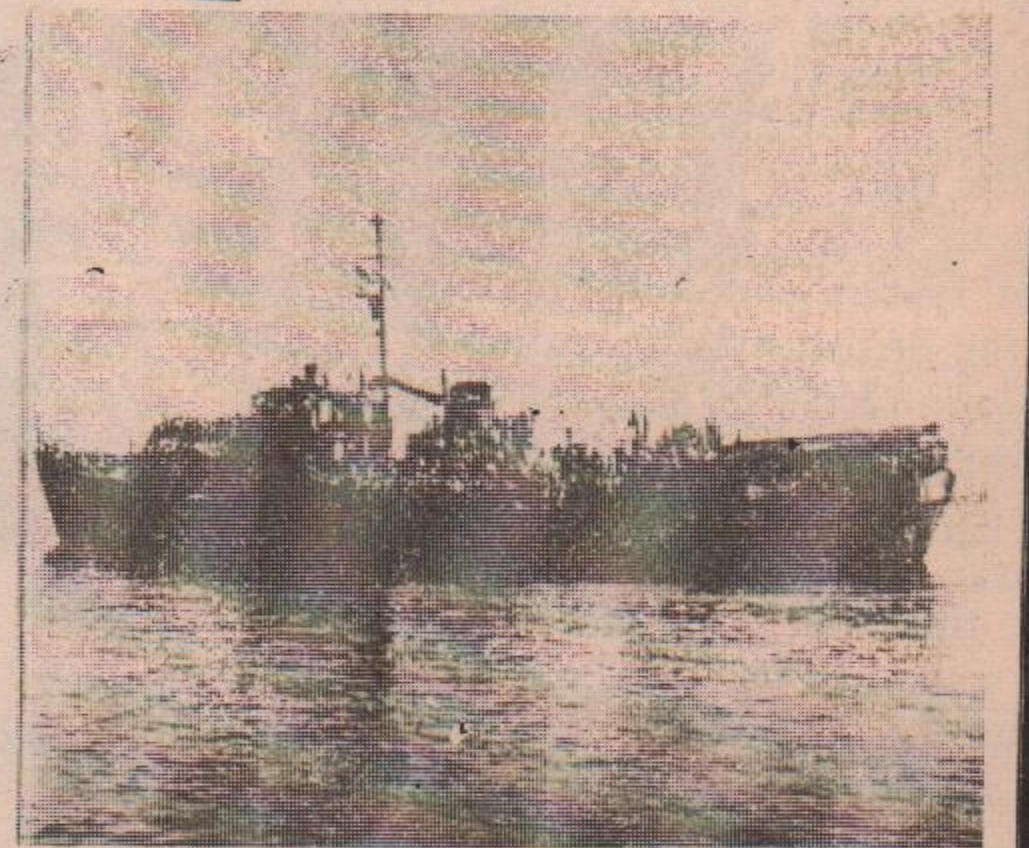
the faith that the Jewish genius, restored to its old home, could do things comparable with the things it had done in ancient days." Joseph Weitz, then Head of the Jewish Agency's Colonisation Programme, wrote in his diary in 1940:

Between ourselves it must be clear that there is no room for both peoples together in this country. . . The only solution is Palestine without Arabs.

**JUSTIFICATION**

It remained only to provide a legal justification for this rejection of the Arab right to live in what we now call Israel. In 1969, after a ruling by the Supreme Court that individuals whom the religious authorities considered to be non-Jewish could still be registered as nationals, the Knesset (Israeli parliament) reversed this by passing a motion modifying the definition of nationality so as to conform with religious law. This ruling illuminates the unique and extraordinarily arrogant nature of Zionism. Each and every Jew in the world (the law of Return) is entitled to settle in Israel and to become an Israeli citizen. Not one single member of the indigenous Arab community, whether physically residing in Israel or in the occupied territories, or whether among the expropriated and expelled Arab communities in exile is equally entitled to this citizenship. This is a crime which the Palestinian Arabs will not forget.

Israel, today bears all the hallmarks of an imperialist settler and racist state. It is



Zionist immigrants throng to Palestine by millions to establish the state of Israel according to "Balfour declaration".

largely financed by U.S. Imperialism and maintained by huge amounts of internal expenditure on armaments and militarism. The influx of capital by 1968 amounted to 10% of world foreign aid to all underdeveloped countries, or in proportion 20 times as much as any state of the 'Third World'. Such is the price world imperialism is prepared to pay for the "services" of the Zionist state.

The *Chartist* does not accept the vulgar equating of anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism. We remain implacably opposed to the Zionist occupation of the lands of the Arabs and offer our full support to those inside as well as outside Israel fighting for the cause of the Palestinian Arabs.

want the Arabs there at all — the political leadership of the Arabs proved much more amenable to reason — and hard cash. This leadership, firmly in the hands of the landowning class, sold their land to the Zionists to make enormous financial gains, even though as a class they liquidated themselves in the process. Publicly, of course, they never admitted such cooperation with the Zionist and the British, even condemning as treason the sale of

land in this way. The first success of the Zionist movement was the issuing of the Balfour Declaration (stating sympathy for the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine) on 2 November 1917. The immediate and principal purpose of this Declaration, issued in the critical days of World War I, was to ensure Jewish support, particularly in the United States, for the allies. In 1919, the British faced with support for Germany from the Ottoman empire, committed themselves to recognising Arab independence in the entire Middle East area then ruled by the Ottoman (except Lebanon and two other small areas); this included Palestine. In exchange, the Arabs revolted against Ottoman rule and assisted the British military effort in the middle east. Once again the hypocritical interests of the British ruling class had led them to promise the same thing to two different groups.

The Zionists have never had anything but contempt for the Palestinians. Viscount Samuel wrote (1915):

The dream of a Jewish State, prosperous, progressive and the home of a brilliant civilisation, might vanish in a series of squalid conflicts with the Arab population.

The 1937 Commission Report writes that the willingness of the Jews "to fuse their life and culture with Arab life and culture, to accept the language of the majority. . . would have been the direct negation of Zionism. The Zionists came back to Palestine inspired with



Golda Meir

# PEACE TALKS



become a critical issue in the Israeli-Egyptian negotiations

these lands were part of the sovereign territory of existing states. The attitude of successive Israeli governments has been to grant aid and military protection for these settlements and where settlements have been started against government instructions by religious organisations and other Zionist bodies they have rapidly been legitimised by the government authorities.

The Begin 'peace' proposals conceded nothing on this question despite accusations from the Labour Alignment and the Bloc of the Faithful that he was "selling out our homeland". He scarcely seemed to acknowledge the blow suffered by Sadat to his standing in the Arab world which his trip to Jerusalem and his offered concessions had brought. What he could not swallow was the following point plan offered by Begin:

Security and public order in the occupied territories of Gaza and the West Bank to be left in Israeli hands, continued Israeli military occupation;

- Arab administration in these areas for internal affairs only;
  - Regulation of Palestinian immigration into these areas by a committee agreed between Israel, Jordan and the local administration with Israeli veto over the entry of "politically undesirable Palestinians", and unrestricted rights for Israeli Jews to settle.
- Clearly, these proposals clashed head-on with Sadat's five points put forward in his speech in the Knesset Last November (see *Chartist No. 61*) the first two points of which were Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 borders and the recognition of the rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to form a state. There is little possibility of conciliation between these positions. Where then has the pressure towards peace talks come?

## dangerous

While it would be dangerous to underestimate the genuine desires of the Egyptian and Israeli people for peace and security it has become increasingly clear that the main force pushing towards a Middle East settlement from a position which can scarcely be described as 'behind-the-scenes' is US imperialism. As we go to press, it is Carter himself who has intervened to get the talks renewed. While, in general backing the position put forward by Begin on the West Bank and the Palestinians, the Americans would doubtless like to see more flexibility on Begin's part regarding the Sinai settlements. There can be no doubt that Washington is seeking a 'pax Americana' in the area and are no longer prepared to give any support to the possibility of the establishment of a Palestinian statelet which might prove radical and amenable to Soviet influence.

With Sadat unable to make further concessions, with the opposition to Begin in Israel coming from the right the possibilities of a



An Israeli soldier drags away an Arab girl demonstrating for the freedom of the occupied West Bank

settlement seems further off than ever. While the situation remains thus deadlocked there can at least be no further betrayal of the rights and interests of the Palestinian people so often abandoned by their erstwhile supporters in the Arab camp. Their tragedy and their impasse remains that not one Arab government can, in the last analysis be relied on to defend their interests consistently, yet they lack the human and material forces to regain the rights they have lost. Yet still they remain the key to progress or reaction in the Middle East. Those genuinely committed to a 'just and lasting peace' — to use the well-worn phrase — in the area must continue to fight for Israeli withdrawal from all occupied territory and right of the Palestinian people to self-determination in a state of their own as the *minimum* pre-conditions for a peace settlement.



Menachem Begin

# Mid-East Focus



# RHODESIA—THE FOUNDATION OF

# WHITE RACISM

This is the first article of a two-part series examining the origins of the British conquest of Rhodesia and the development of the racist state. The second article will look at the origins of Zimbabwean resistance to the state and the nature of the various national liberation movements.

The colony of Rhodesia was founded in the early 1890's. As the name implies, the moving agent in this particular episode of imperialist rape and pillage was Cecil Rhodes, then prime minister of what is now the southern part of the Republic of South Africa, and was at that time the Cape Colony. Rhodes, and through him the British government in London, was concerned about three things: Firstly, massive deposits of diamonds, later to be supplemented by gold discoveries, had been found north of the Cape. Unfortunately for British imperialism, these valuable mineral deposits were not in colonial territory but in the independent Boer republics of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State.

The Boers, the white colonists who had occupied the Cape at the end of the 17th century as employees of the Dutch East India Company had set up a tyrannical system of society based on the reduction of the African population to the status of slaves. The coming of British colonialism and the influence of the movement for the abolition of slavery had forced the Boers to migrate north (in 1836) to preserve their slave economies against the more 'modern' system of colonial oppression practised by the British Administration at the Cape.

Rhodes understood that the discovery of minerals in the Boer republics in the long run threatened the stability of British colonialism in the area. He was to militarily defeat the Boers in the 'Boer Wars' of 1899 - 1902. But first he sought to surround the Boer republics by colonising the areas to their north.

Two additional reasons for seizing the land from its African inhabitants in this area were; in the short run to prevent the Germans and Portuguese from linking up their colonies on the east and west coasts of Africa by taking the area themselves, and in the long run, by the destruction of African agriculture, to force Africans to work for starvation wages in the mines and growing industries of South Africa. Rhodes also believed he would find rich mineral deposits in Rhodesia. Accordingly, Rhodes' British South Africa Company marched into the African kingdoms of Mashonaland and Matabeleland.

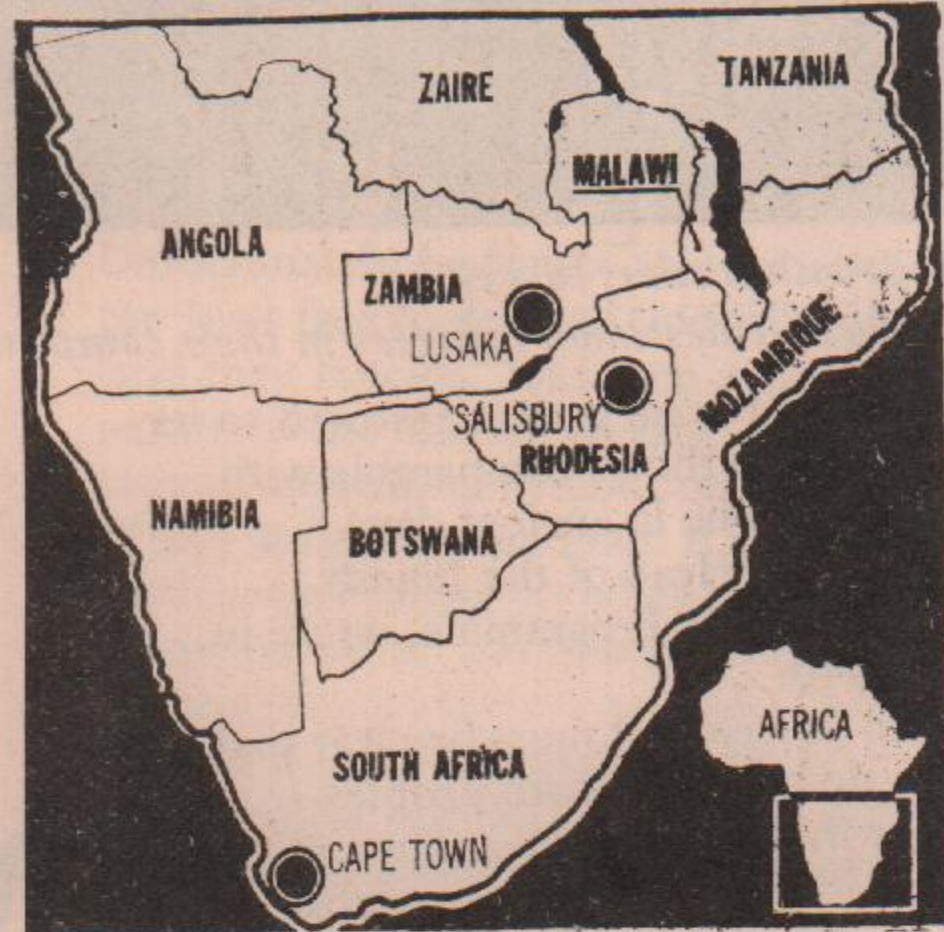
## SETTLER COLONIALISTS

Rich mineral deposits were however not to be found. So the British South Africa Company sold the land it had robbed from the Africans to settler colonialists from England. Later however rich deposits of coal, asbestos, lead, chrome and tungsten, were found. The British South Africa Company, which administered the territory until 1923, lost no time in setting up the framework to compell African forced labour in these mines and on the white-owned farms.

First, all the richest agricultural and mineral land was seized from the Africans. They were forced to move to 'Native Reserves' now called 'tribal trust lands'. Today, four million Africans eke out an existence on half the farming land of Rhodesia. The other half, the most fertile areas, is owned by 6,000 capitalist white settler farms. To force Africans to go and work in the mines and on the white farms the Company levied a hut tax in 1894 (a tax on each hut in African villages) changed in 1904 to a poll tax (a tax on each African male) this tax had to be paid in money. This forced Africans to leave their villages in search of paid labour in the White farms and mines.

## LABOUR SYSTEM

This system has remained the basis of the labour system in Rhodesia right up to the pre-



sent, being consolidated by the 1931 Land Apportionment Act. Deterioration in the fertility of African land, due to forced overcrowding had led to massive migrations to the towns in search of work. Over the period 1965 - 1975 the labour force grew by 485,000 while wage employment grew by only 209,000. In such a situation of massive unemployment, trade union organisation is difficult even in a capitalist democracy.

But in Rhodesia, African workers had to suffer in addition, the lack of the vote, and consequently no political organisation, and the anti-labour legislation in the form of the Master and Servant Act of 1901 which specifically outlaws trade unionism among agricultural workers and domestic servants. The Act is still in force today, supplemented by the 1959 Industrial Conciliation Act under which it is virtually impossible for African trade unions to strike.

The growth of mining and the development of railways in the early years of this century supplemented the white settler farmers and capitalists with a white working class of immigrant skilled and semi-skilled workers. As in South Africa where the white working class was far larger, class conflict between white workers and employers intensified during the 1900-1930 period. There were militant railway workers strikes in 1916, 1919 and 1929. Miners struck in 1919. As a result of these actions some gains were won such as the railway workers 9-hour day in 1920.

But the white workers were weakened in two crucial respects. First they were effectively denied political representation. From 1923, when the Company handed over Rhodesia as a self-governing British Colony, until 1933 the Rhodesia Party monopolised government.

Attempts at Labour Party representation were smashed by the drawing of electoral boundaries and the device of two member constituencies which eliminated the effect of large working class constituencies. The employers, politically supported by the Rhodesia Party government, were able to smash the miners union and the Engineering workers union by 1926.

The second and crucial weakness of the

white workers was their racism, which in the African context was simply the form taken by their desire, as skilled workers, to remain a labour aristocracy. Little effort at unity with African workers was attempted. The employers could seize on that division to threaten white workers with cheap African labour competition. However some whites understood a policy of class confrontation with white workers could one day lead to unity with Africans, the latter being encouraged by divisions among the whites in their own efforts at organisation. The white politician who understood this most acutely was Godfrey Huggins, a surgeon from Bexleyheath in Surrey, who swept into power in 1933 with his Reform Party on a programme of 'Two Pyramids' an explicit racial policy akin to apartheid.

White capitalists, said Huggins, had to make some concessions to white workers to preserve racial unity in the face of the African. Accordingly Huggins' government enacted the 1934 Industrial Conciliation Act which protected white workers against African competition. Huggins coalition absorbed elements of the employers Rhodesia Party who saw the wisdom of his views and remained firmly entrenched in power until Ian Smith and his Rhodesia Front emerged in 1962. Huggins was given a lordship for his services to colonialism, becoming Lord Malvern. He retired in 1953 and was succeeded by Garfield Todd the 'liberal' so hated by Smith.

So from the mid 1930's the history of class struggle in Rhodesia is the history of African struggle for emancipation from colonialism and for the African republic of Zimbabwe.

## TRIBAL ELITES

The initial African political response to white colonisation was led by the tribal elites - chiefs who were concerned mainly to come to terms with colonialism and secure some concessions in their own interests. This was the aim of organisations like the Rhodesia Bantu Voters Association which had little to offer the voteless African peasants and wage workers. The impotence of African elite politics was illustrated with the passing of the Land Apportionment Act in 1931. The RBVA lobbied for an enlargement of the Native Reserves, and the right of Africans to purchase Land outside the reserves. Both of these demands were refused by the Government in the Bill formulated in 1929. Needless to say the Labour Government in Britain (1929-31) which had final authority, made no charges.

Early African trade union action was encouraged in the 1920's and 30's by independent African Churches which had broken away from the hypocrisy of missionary christianity. Churches were instrumental in support for the African workers strike at the Shamva mine in 1927. But by far the most important political experience for Africans in the inter-war years was the Rhodesian Indus-



Woman liberation fighter in training.

trial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU).

## CLASS APPEAL

Begun in South Africa by a black worker, Clemens Kadalie, the South African ICU reached a membership of several thousands. Its Rhodesian branch was set up in 1927 by Robert Sambo, sent to Rhodesia by Kadalie. The political importance of the ICU, though it it never reached the numerical support of the African churches, was its break from tribalism and explicit appeal to African workers as a class.

The ICU was defeated by a concerted attack by the employers and the government both in Rhodesia and South Africa. They were ably assisted in this task by the British TUC who advised Kadalie to break off all alliances with the South African Communist Party, who despite the pressure of the rise of the Stalin faction in the Comintern, has provided a vital element of political experience for the ICU in South Africa. Conflict in the leadership of the South African ICU coupled with the mass imprisonments and rural deportations of union organisers brought the ICU to a standstill by 1930.

However the most important cause of its rapid collapse lay in its conception. Kadalie and Sambo taking their ideas from the American 'Wobblies' of one big syndicalist union for all workers omitted to see the important, if not crucial role, in a country like Rhodesia, of the peasantry and the land question.

The land question was crucial in two respects: first, colonialist land policies guaranteed that any strike could be smashed from the start by scab labour brought in from the countryside areas where trade unionism meant nothing. Thus politicising the peasantry was vital. Second, even the urban workers themselves were often temporary migrants, aiming to earn enough to support their families and pay the poll tax and then return to the country countryside.

The failure to link up the land question with the urban wage struggles, under these circumstances, sealed the fate of the ICU rapidly. Nevertheless it made the vital political contribution of establishing the concept of a movement beyond tribal loyalties and established the forming experience for many members of the next generation of anti-colonialist fighters.



The face of white Rhodesia





# ART REVIEW "Dada and Surrealism Reviewed" at Hayward Gallery

"Today's authentic art goes hand in hand with revolutionary social activity" Like the latter, it leads to the confusion and destruction of capitalist society". (André Breton, theoretician of international Surrealism).

Surrealism, a romantic but also 'modern' movement was always optimistic. The activities of the surrealist writers, poets and painters of the 1920s and '30s renewed a faith in the human imagination as much as the Russian Revolution renewed faith in the social progress.

The decline of truly revolutionary art like that of the surrealists and dada-ists went hand in hand with the decline of revolutionary hopes in the Europe of Fascism and social reaction leading up to the Second World War.

Forty years on there is hope that the fate of both movements has not been lost. The current exhibition at the Hayward Gallery on the Thames South Bank should be welcomed for reviving the optimism and audacity of the '20s and early '30s.

Set out on five levels, the exhibition, sponsored by the Arts Council, took four months to prepare and will take any visitor to it around four hours to fully appreciate. It has been prepared on a grand scale. In a total of 17 sections the visual and literary production of European artists has been collected under national and artistic trends.

The dadaists were a mixed group of German, Swiss, French and later, American artists which began in 1916. Their objects, paintings and journals expressed a militant, anarchic response to the First World War and the collapse of imperialist empires. This 'poem' expresses the mood of their action:

Dada alone does not smell; it is nothing, nothing, nothing.  
It is like your hopes: nothing.  
Like your Paradise: nothing.  
Like your politicians: nothing.  
Like your heroes: nothing.  
Like your artists: nothing.  
Like your religions: nothing. . .  
(Picabia: *Manifeste Cannibale dada*)

Dadaists held exhibitions at which ordinary objects were 'abused'. Duchamp's 'urinal/sculpture' is on show at the Hayward. Like any to be seen today except elevated onto an

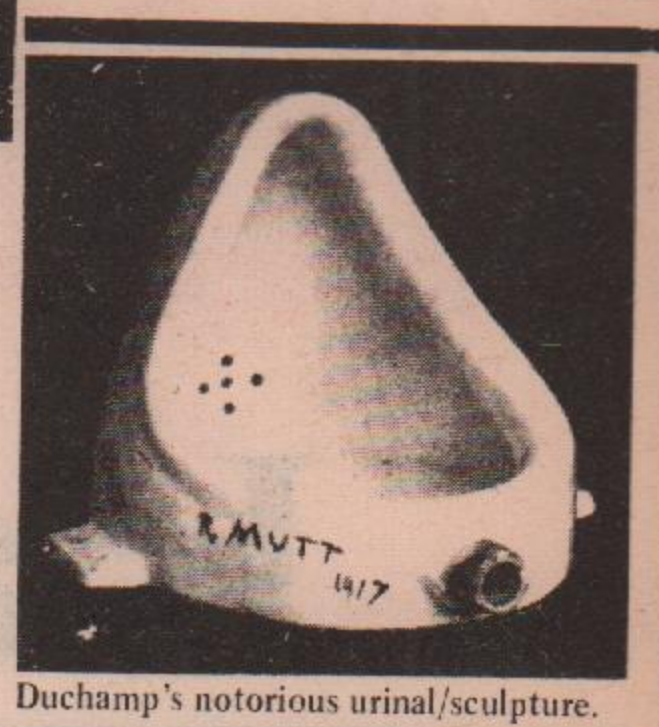
## 'INSPIRED FRENZY'

by  
**MARK DOUGLAS**

'artistic platform' and duly signed: 'R. Mutt 1917'! Another — one bicycle wheel upside down and fixed on a plinth. Two of the early dadaists, John Heartfield (Herzfeld) and George Grosz were members of the German Communist Party who went on to create political photo-montage for many Socialist papers. Their critical and satirical style is copied today in many illustrations in Germany and elsewhere.

sits above the left eye. The meaning is clear — its title is the 'Spirit of our times'.

The fact that Surrealism was such a 'political' movement is not very evident in the exhibition. Nearly all their productions had political, social and moral forms. Salvador Dali, who inaugurated his own 'paranoic criticism' method produced quite incredible imagery in his paintings. He was expelled by the Surrealists in the early '30s and he gravitated towards mysticism, Catholicism and eventually Fascism.



Duchamp's notorious urinal/sculpture.

But the vast majority of surrealists were communists. Breton and many close to him went along with Trotsky in the 1930s. They were anti-Stalinists and with good cause. The Stalinist Communist Parties had vilified them over the years, accusing them of being 'petit-bourgeois dilettantes', 'cliques of literateurs' 'irrelevant to the class struggle'. The fact that they interpreted their communism through their art was considered irrelevant. The fact that many were communists did not prevent them getting expelled from their Parties, like the many Left Oppositionists of the early thirties.

The political history has been left out all together in the Hayward exhibition and in the guides and accompanying texts. It is difficult, of course. The Arts Council is a 'quango', as a quasi-autonomous Government organisation, it cannot be accused of promoting 'Communism', even if it is through the art of the 1930s!

Today, the surrealists are treated in cult fashion. The images they created have lived on through a thousand commercial forms. The social origin and impulse of their art has been ignored. And in ignorance it cannot be understood.

(Hayward Gallery, South Bank, London SW1  
Open: Mondays 1pm — 8pm, 25p entrance,  
other days: £1 entrance, all day. Until March  
27th 1978).

(Next month: Review of Pluto Press's two new titles: 'What is Surrealism', the writings of André Breton and, 'André Breton and the First Principles of Surrealism' by Franklin Rosemont. £5 and £1:80 from the Hayward Gallery or the publishers)



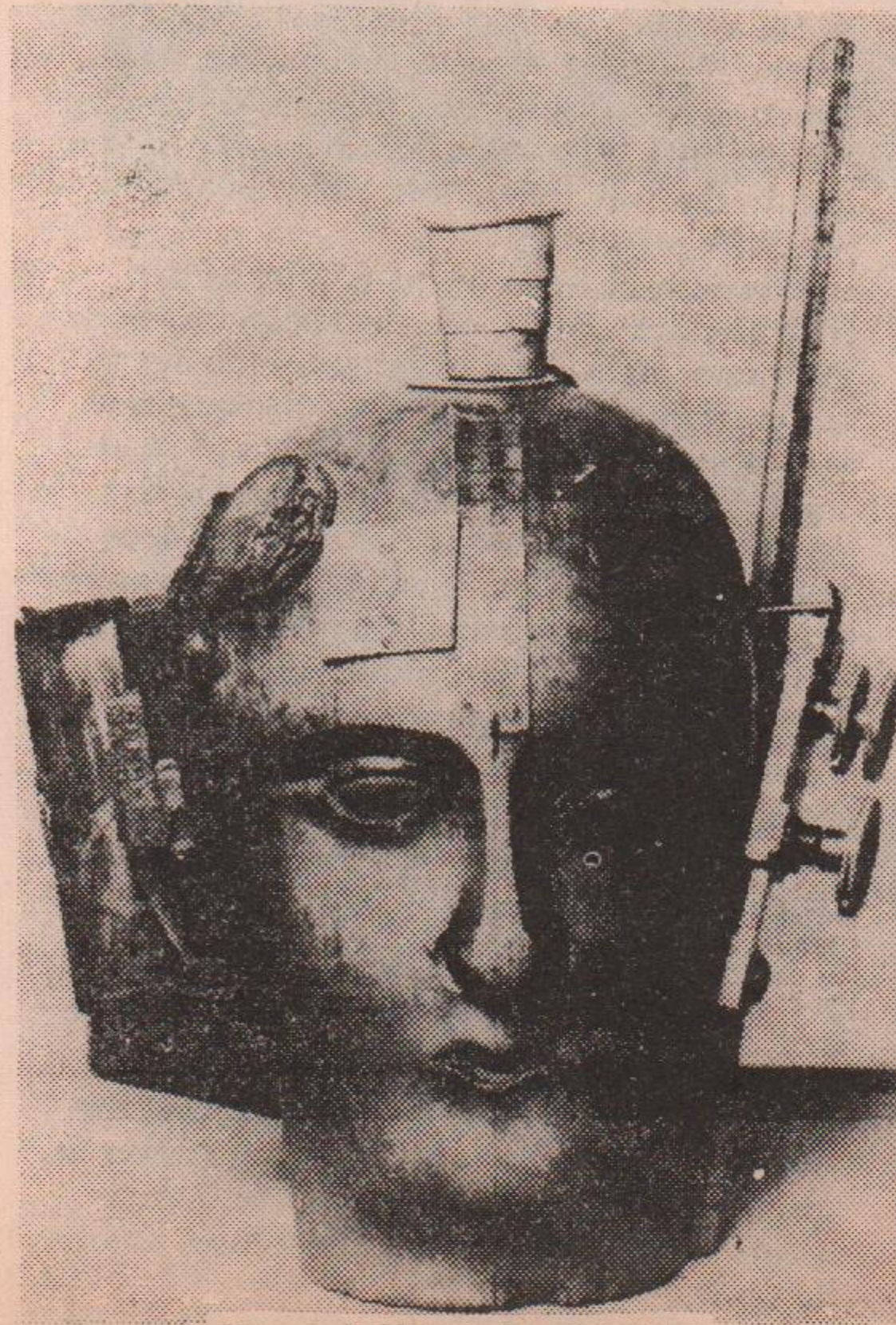
Dada Tank, a typical Dada periodical.

The dada movement came to a close in 1921; it had burned itself out in frenzied activity against the hypocrisy of European bourgeois society. Many of these early innovators became surrealists; Picabia, Duchamp, Man Ray (inventor of the 'rayograph') de Chirico and Arp.

Surrealism began as an artistic adventure. The term implied that of surprise, the marvelous, the obscure, the delightful. Many of the great paintings of Dali, Max Ernst, Joan Miro, Yves Tanguy and René Magritte are on show.

Objects like the head construction of Raoul Hausman express their political stand.

The head has a wallet strapped to its back, a tape measure running down its nose and a crumpled plastic cup on top. A number plate



Hausman's L'esprit de notre temps

## Whose Welfare State?

THE ANNUAL uprating of state benefits takes place amidst a welter of controversy. Do claimants get too much or too little? It is particularly significant that the recent increase in benefits took place in a climate of strong feeling that claimants get too many handouts. Justifying the increases to the Scottish TUC in December of last year, Stanley Orme, Minister of Social Security found himself vociferously defending the level of state benefits: "Sweeping allegations that many people were better off receiving social security benefits than in work were 'grossly misleading'", starts a DHSS press release on Mr Orme's speech.

Allowing the arguments about state benefits to revolve around the issue of keeping payments down to the level of low wages is a neat device for avoiding the REAL issues: It is no coincidence that indignation about 'being better off on the dole' takes place at a time when vast numbers of workers are struggling to exist on wages the real value of which has been drastically cut in the last few years.

In the face of declining profits in many industries, capitalism has been unable to provide sufficient jobs and decent wages. Cut backs have been forced onto a demoralised work force so a scapegoat is sought, and the unemployed are readily seized upon by the Tory press to add fuel to the frustration of working people, and to detract attention from the ailing economy.

As always, it is a question of divide and rule. Instead of asking, why can't wages keep up even with the minimal level of state benefits, the rallying cry is heard so often, why can't benefits be kept down. It is precisely this climate of opinion which is favourable to capitalism in this period, as it paves the way for over-all cuts in welfare services.

### MEANS TESTS

One of the lynch-pins of state benefits, whether administered by the local councils or by central government, is a reliance on means-tested benefits. Which in effect asks the individual or individual family to 'prove' that their circumstances are such that they deserve extra help. A recent study showed that local councils administer as many as 44 different means tests.

Nationally, the most widely known 'means test' is the Supplementary Benefits System. One of the worst features of this system is the arbitrary administration of various discretionary benefits, where individual claimants 'compete' for extra cash by trying to show that they are worse off than someone else.

## WHOSE BENEFIT

LIZ ADAMS Part 2

Decisions are made by officials on a totally arbitrary basis — they are asked to decide the competing claims basically on their own value judgement. As many of the officers making these decisions are themselves low paid, such a task is reduced to the level of individual conflict — the claimants seeing the official as the block to more money, the official comparing his own pay with the claimants' money and refusing to budge. Other judgements about 'who is deserving' are brought to bear, as well and if it is not seen to be the claimant's 'fault' that benefit is being claimed, then attitudes vary.

A powerful example of this system in operation was shown on a BBC play at the end of January (see below). Ironically titled 'The Spongers', it showed a lone parent pleading at a Supplementary Benefits Appeal Tribunal for more money — but the Tribunal was unmoved by the argument that she simply did not have

enough to live on. The operation of this scheme and other means tested benefits like it are a direct extension of the 'self interest' principle which is at the root of capitalist ideology. Individuals are seen, and encouraged to see themselves, as free floating persons whose destinies stand and fall by their own efforts. Poverty is seen as a residual problem, rather than central to inequalities between classes. Therefore it's your own fault if you're poor.

"POVERTY DOESN'T JUST HAPPEN TO ANYONE".

It has long been recognised by capitalism that some form of relief to 'the poor' is necessary to prevent social unrest and to hide the 'unacceptable' face of capitalism. Long before the Welfare State as we know it today was

set up, local relief was provided in parishes to prevent total destitution. Interestingly enough, this form of help would always discourage helping 'outsiders': you had to go back to your own parish for that. It is not so very different now: local authorities are loathe to house homeless families who have not lived in their area, for instance. One of the ironies of the founding of the modern benefit system is that Beveridge founded it on two principles which are totally exploded today. One was that in order to operate, the system was dependent on the 'insurance' principle, that is, that most workers paid in to a scheme to cover them in contingencies such as unemployment, sickness and old age. The second premise was that there would be full employment.

The scheme did not envisage the massive long term unemployment and the heavy dependency on supplementary benefits which exists today. The welfare system is just totally unable to substitute for the failures of the capitalist economy.

### TV Review:

## WHO ARE THE REAL SPONGERS? BY DINAH MORLEY

ON TUESDAY 25th BBC 1 screened "The Spongers" a play by Jim Allen and produced by Tony Garnett. This was a documentary-like slice of what life is like for many working people, who for reasons beyond their control are forced to live on social security, but who are seen by some as spongers on the state. The action takes place amidst the Jubilee celebrations with the effigies of the real spongers in the background.

The story is the life and struggles of a mother on her own with four children — one of whom is a mongol. As the bailiffs remove most of her furniture to cover for rent arrears, the handicapped child is moved from a 'good' voluntary home to an institution for people of all age groups. A disaster for the child, and as it turns out—for the whole family, and all in the name of public expenditure cuts.

The agents of social control figure prominently. The social worker trying to make the decisions of the state palatable and her senior caut-

ioning her against any real understanding of the mother's difficulties, thereby justifying the suspicions working people have of social work.

The peoples' representatives, in the guise of the social services committee, are seen in action. They administer the cuts and entirely accept their role as managers of the capitalist system, with the 'mandatory' leftie capable only of verbal dissent. Perhaps it is significant that they can only manage badly. The bureaucrats are middle-class and inaccessible both physically and emotionally. They are quite unable to grasp the predicament of the mother.

In the end, having been deprived of her furniture by the bailiffs, having brought her handicapped child home as the only viable alternative to the cabbage-like existence being offered to her by the local authority and having failed to get help with rent arrears (it was not suggested in the play that as these were incurred by her husband she could have rid herself

of this burden by getting the tenancy in her own name), she takes an uncommon but understandable way out. One evening, amid happy family scenes, she put a fatal dose of the drugs prescribed for her daughter and for her own depression into the bedtime drink. All the family go to sleep in one bedroom, at peace with the world and one another. They never wake up.

As the bodies are carried out a neighbour remarks that they should have stayed and faced it like everybody else. It is this line that tells us that this situation is not untypical. This ending does not often happen in real life. Instead people struggle on in poverty and misery.

It is significant that the play was screened at all, as it clearly asks, 'who are the real spongers?' Perhaps because it ended in a family suicide it will be dismissed as unlikely in reality. But for working class people, who are forced into unemployment and subsequent poverty, it will have borne some painful home truths.



## Is a bloodbath inevitable?

by Colin Kennedy

ONE OF THE most consistent arguments raised against the demand for the immediate withdrawal of the British army from Ireland has been that this could lead to a 'blood-bath'. The sections of the labour movement who raise this objection to withdrawal see the majority Protestant population using armed violence to hold subject the Catholic minority and ensure the maintenance of the partition.

Arguments which utilise this theme of the "blood-bath" are widespread throughout the left in Britain. Sections of the Labour left around the 'Tribune' explicitly state that only the presence of the British army in the six counties prevents the two communities from tearing each other apart in a Sectarian civil war. Other sections of the Tribune left, notably the British Peace Committee and Joan Maynard (Labour MP for Sheffield Brightside) adopt a more sophisticated attitude to the role played by the security forces. They recognise that the army has a strategic task of smashing the Catholic resistance to sectarian rule by the Protestant majority (which has emerged since 1969). They see also that this strategic task necessarily involves extremely repressive measures such as internment, harassment, army raids on the Catholic areas, torture and brutalisation of Republican political prisoners etc. Nevertheless, Maynard and the BPC fall short of a call for immediate withdrawal in the belief that the two sections of the population of the North should have time to acclimatise themselves to the fact that they will have to get together to 'sort things out'. Similarly, the Communist Party of Great Britain and its peripheral groups have called for conferences on the theme of 'creating the conditions for withdrawal' ie defusing the potential blood-bath situation before the British army withdraws.

### Labour left

Indeed, in groups normally counted as being amongst the far left, such as the Labour Party Young Socialists and the *Militant* Groups, there are constant references to the dangers of a "Lebanese-type situation" should the army be withdrawn before the Irish Labour Movement has united the working class on a socialist programme. Thus, both sections of the tradition Labour left and would-be Marxist left describe a situation in which the revolutionary movement in Ireland is expected to campaign on a whole variety of issues *except* the one upon which they are most frequently questioned about by Irish workers — "what is your position on the struggle in the North?"

The viewpoint of the British left is that the Irish movement should side-track this issue: it

should say neither "yes" or "no" to the presence of the British army because that would only drive workers back into their entrenched sectarian positions. Instead, "conditions" should be created whereby the sectarian division in the working class in the North are overcome (conditions which involve around the fight for better housing, welfare facilities, more jobs higher pay etc) and having achieved this unity *then* fighting to get Britain out. In this way we are told a blood-bath would be prevented.

However, in terms of the politics of the Irish working class, the project of uniting both Protestant and Catholic without reference to the great questions which have divided them is an unrealistic schema. The notion of creating a "better life" for all workers in the six counties is not a new one; it certainly does not challenge any traditionally held viewpoints on either side of the divide. The difference between Protestant and Catholic, are Loyalist and Nationalist is that the Loyalist sees this "better life" being secured basically through the maintenance of the economic and political link with Britain, while the Nationalist sees it being realised through the creation of a united Irish republic.

### logic

The logic of the different traditions in the Irish working class demands that an answer be given to these questions before bland statements about the need for more houses or jobs be made.

The schemes and pet projects of the traditional British Left and its 'Marxist' element hold out no hope of 'uniting' workers or 'creating conditions' for withdrawal and thereby preventing a bloodbath. On the contrary, they ignore precisely the reasons why the NI working class has been divided both economically and politically. These schemes, in themselves, cannot prevent a blood-bath in Ireland, with or without the withdrawal of the army.

But does this mean that a "blood-bath" will be inevitable in Ireland in the event of a British withdrawal? The Irish Nationalist and Socialist movement has answered this question in the past by saying that there has *already* been a blood-bath since 1969. Over two thousand people have been killed and many more injured *since* the British army arrived nearly nine years ago. At a fringe meeting of the annual Conference of the British Labour Party in 1976, Bernadette McAliskey (formerly Independent Socialist MP for Mid-Ulster) stated that the deaths of this mountain of people over a relatively prolonged period of time was clearly acceptable to the Westminster Govern-



'Peace-keeping' in Northern Ireland: the truth is rather different

ment provided that British imperial rule remained intact at the end. But she went on to point out that the prospect of a flare-up of violence as the last ditch gesture of a defeated Loyalist movement was characterised as the prospect of an unacceptable "blood-bath" by the British Government. The conclusion is simply that the troops must stay; rule from Britain must continue; and the real "blood-bath" if institutionalised sectarian politics be drawn out for another generation. This is the "civilised" British alternative to immediate withdrawal.

But the full argument in favour of immediate withdrawal and against the view that this would lead to an inevitable blood-bath of a Lebanese scale, means understanding that the British army is not in the six counties to keep an impartial peace between the two communities. Rather, it is there to defeat the Nationalist Movement which emerged after 1969 in response to the sectarian state's attempt to totally repress the civil right campaigns that were developing in the Catholic ghettos. As this popular movement grew from strength to strength in the Six Counties, the traditionally monolithic Unionist movement was in deep crisis.

The Stormont Governments of Chichester-Clarke, O'Neil and Faulkner fell in rapid succession. The Unionist Party fell into a dozen quarreling fragments. The Protestant paramilitary "B Special" police force was defeated in the respective Battles of the Bogside and Belfast and the British Government was forced to disband this discredited body. In short, under the pressure of a risen mass, popular Nationalist movement in the Six Counties, the capacity of the Protestant die-hards to launch a blood-bath civil war was increasingly restricted. Had there not been the interference of Westminster and the army then Unionism and Loyalism would have been shattered into a thousand fragments and the pro-imperialist hold over Protestant workers effectively weakened.

However, the British army did intervene. The re-emergence of radical Nationalism was confined to the Catholic ghettos by the army, preventing roots developing amongst sections of the Protestant oppressed. The collapse of the Loyalist monolith was to some extent checked as Westminster provided "assemblies" and "Conventions" for the demagogic, fundamentalist politicians to reassert their influence.

Britain reformed the B Specials into the Ulster Defense Regiment and opened a campaign to present the thug-police force, the RUC, back into the streets of the Catholic ghettos. In other words, the major force capable of unleashing a sectarian blood-bath against the Catholic minority population has been slowly pieced back together again in the conniving schemes of politicians of the stamp of Whitelaw, Rees, Mason et al.

### front-line

But the Nationalist Movement has still retained, in large part, its potential for throwing all the schemes of imperialism into the melting pot again. In recent months throughout Ireland evidence of a new radical mood amongst the oppressed classes has become apparent. Its outward forms are the defeat of the Fine Gael-Labour Coalition in the general election of last year and the pressure placed on conservative bourgeois politicians like Jack Lynch to make semi-Nationalist speeches about the reunification of Ireland. Its hidden form at the present time is the gradual reawakening of the Irish Labour movement to political debate on a wide range of issues, from unemployment to partition — as witnessed by the split in the Irish Labour Party last year.

The key to the prevention of a blood-bath lies in the development of these forces into a united movement which can take on British imperialism in a new stage of the Irish national revolution. The shattering blow delivered to the self-confidence of moribund Loyalism would sweep it a side as a serious obstacle to the creation of a united Irish republic. The British Labour movement can make its own contribution to these events by abandoning its present support for the presence of the British army and the policies of Roy Mason, and by urging support for those forces in the front-line of the struggle against imperialism in Ireland: the Republican movement.

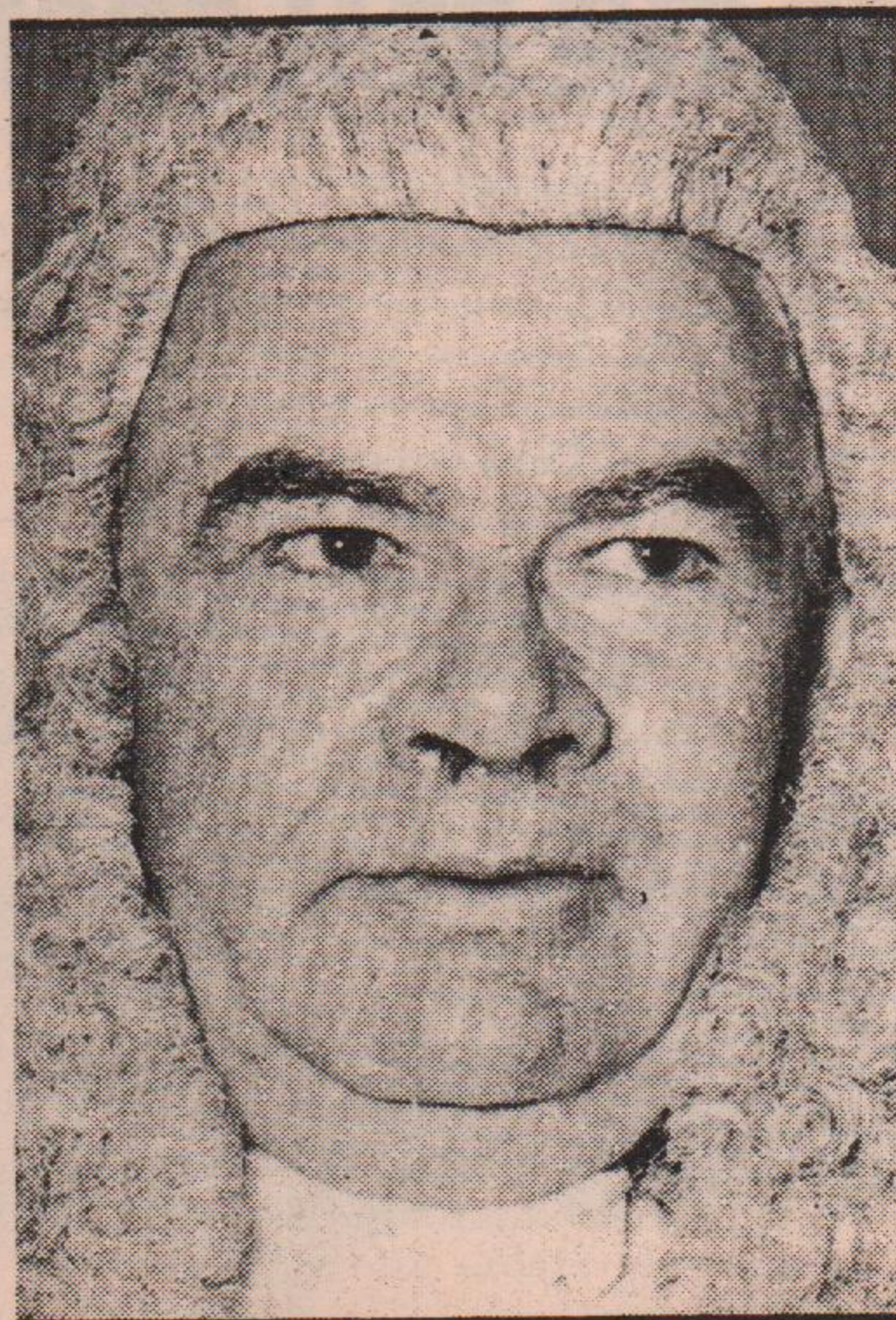
## McKinnon: continued from front page

more insulting coming from the mouth of a fascist leader, whose members are just as violent as the National Front and who have just stomped through an area with a large Asian community.

Far from drawing the jury's attention to this, McKinnon insisted that Read led a 'democratic' party and was a peaceful chappie. Unfortunately for those who believe that courts can prosecute racists, such word-twisting is the stuff that legal procedures are made of. Such judges can prove that Hitler liked Jews.

Read spoke after a wave of racial murders, assaults and damage to property, particularly against Asians, and particularly in East London where the rally was held. McKinnon, however, was only interested in proving that his words incited his listeners to immediately attack Asians. (In fact, some did, but he didn't mention that either.) Conclusive proof that Read did not incite racial hatred was the fact that no-one felt sufficiently insulted to stop him leaving Newham peacefully. We wonder how McKinnon would have dealt with an Asian who had assaulted Read after hearing his speech. Under the new Race Relations Act, it is sufficient to prove that racial hatred was incited, regardless to intent. Using McKinnon's criteria it is virtually impossible even to prove this.

It is useless to call for the law to be strengthened when judges will always find loopholes in it. Read was not even brought to trial for 18 months. Reliance on the courts removes



THE JUDGE

the initiative from black people, and others threatened by the fascists, to deal with the menace themselves. If the anti-racist march through East London that day had been

directed to stop the National Party march, in the same way the NF were confronted at Lewisham, then his words would have not sounded like the gloating of a victor but consolation to beaten troops.

Asian youth in East London, Southall and Blackburn did not wait for Read to be convicted but organised their own self-defence. After their debacle in Lewisham, the NF are not planning any marches through West Indian areas. McKinnon's speech should not demoralise anti-racists but remove any lingering illusions that legislation can gag racists.

Not surprisingly, the Lord Chancellor who appoints judges (a Labour cabinet member) rejected the demands of 111 Labour MPs to sack McKinnon. He agreed with the Tories that the independence of the judiciary to make whatever decisions they liked should prevail. How could the judiciary perform its 'balancing' role of emasculating Labour legislation (and occasionally restraining Tory reactionary zeal) if the same politicians could sack judges? Sack McKinnon by all means, but don't expect the judiciary to be less reactionary afterwards. McKinnon's summing up was only an extreme example of the views of the judiciary, whose role is generally to maintain the capitalist class as the ruling class and keep the system running smoothly. How could the judges in a racist society not be racist? It is vain, therefore for socialists to call for a change in personnel rather than for the destruction of the state itself.

### Out Now

IRELAND SOCIALIST REVIEW NO. 1.

Arguing support for the struggle of the Irish people for national self-determination, this journal contains articles on the 1969 Labour Party Conference debates on Ireland, the nationalist movement, the process of decolonisation, Irish political prisoners and the United Troops Out Movement.

Price 20p + 15p p&p. (5 or more copies post free).

Available from:  
Ireland Socialist Review,  
c/o 60 Loughborough Road, London SW9.

### Subscribe!

12 COPIES Only £2.00  
from: CHARTIST PUBLICATIONS  
(address below)



## LABOUR MUST REBUFF TORY RACE SCARE

ANNOYED THAT THE Government have stolen their economic policies, the Tories are trying to outbid them on immigration controls. First a report drafted by Keith Speed, the Tory Junior Home Affairs Spokesperson demands a cut in the rate of immigration. This is to be achieved by removing automatic right of entry to any category of immigrant and by limiting the entry of dependents of immigrants already here.

Speed explained that the Conservative commitment was to work towards an end to (black) immigration altogether. This, however, could not be achieved overnight. Rather, the Tories would "in a decent humane and sensitive way carry out the policy over a number of years."

Next to enter the fray has been Tory leader Mrs Thatcher herself. In a scaremongering tone, an eye on elections and the cheap vote, Thatcher warns that by the end of the century Britain "might be swamped by people of different culture". "We are a British nation with British characteristics" she exclaimed in a TV interview with all the characteristic

nationalist pomposity. The bigotry and high moral tone of Thatcher's comment is calculated to stir up the very fears and racial hatred she claims to want to stop by halting immigration.

Callaghan has attacked the Tories for trying to win votes on a racist basis. Yet when he was Home Secretary he introduced the 1968 Immigration Act to limit the entry of Kenyan Asians. Far from implementing a 1976 Conference decision to repeal the 1968 and 1971 Immigration Acts, the Government are preparing a 'Nationalities Bill' which tightens up these laws.

The police lock up blacks they suspect of being illegal immigrants and harass black youth. Fascist marches get maximum protection from the police who seem unable to prevent hundreds of racial assaults on black people, particularly in East London. Race Relations Acts cannot prevent discrimination against blacks in housing and jobs, while fascists are acquitted in the courts.

With this record, it isn't surprising that Callaghan recently told Bangladeshi reporters: "Immigration is a problem for us and not for you". Asked about racism and the rise of the National Front, he said: "These are domestic questions and I will deal with them in the British Parliament, not in Bangladesh."

The National Executive Committee of the Labour Party have launched an anti-racialism campaign, featuring



Mr Callaghan at the Taj Mahal

so far, an interesting party political broadcast and a 4-page pull-out in Labour Weekly. Unfortunately the record of the Government does not get a mention. The campaign contents itself with calling the NF - "Nazi".

This label encourages opposition to fascism based on memories of World War II and Hitler's atrocities. Its appeal is more to British nationalism and anti-German feeling than any thought-out anti-fascist sentiment. It does not help fight racial discrimination much. Nor does it answer NF charges that blacks are responsible for a decline in educational standards, high unemployment and petty crime, and explain who is responsible.

An effective anti-racist campaign must go further. It must support black self-defence against racists AND the police. Socialists must argue that far from blacks being the cause of economic and social problems they are often the biggest victims. We also have to convince young

blacks that it is worth fighting alongside the Labour movement against the racist practices it condones and against the Labour Government.

The campaign is an improvement on the old attitude (still common) of "ignore the fascists and they'll go away." But will the NEC mobilise Constituency Labour Parties and Trade Unions to stop the NF from marching through black areas again? Will they push the Labour Government to repeal racist legislation and risk losing votes?

The launching of the campaign makes it easier for socialists to initiate a serious discussion on racialism in the Labour Party. Local parties might now be more willing to participate in anti-racist committees and encourage their members to attend counter-demos. Socialists must take this opportunity to extend the debate beyond NF-bashing to areas that the Labour leadership and many local Labour Party members might find uncomfortable.

RS FRONT  
DIAN WORKERS' FRONT  
Labour cannot  
FRONT emancipate itself  
in the white skin  
CUTE where  
WELL & n the black  
is branded  
LISTS Marx



A lesson in internationalism

IT MIGHT be comforting to believe that Judge McKinnon's summing up was exceptional. He had directed a jury to acquit Kingsley Read, the leader of the fascist National Party, because he did not consider that Read's speech was an incitement to racial hatred, and hence illegal. Some believe that if this judge were sacked, and if Race Relations legislation were tightened up a bit, then racists could be prosecuted in the courts.

But McKinnon was not the first judge to direct a jury to acquit racists. Judges have ruled that social clubs could exclude blacks. Ealing Council's right to exclude Mr Zesko, a Pole, from the housing list was upheld because the judges ruled that while 'discrimination on grounds of national origin' was illegal, 'discrimination on grounds of nationality' was not. Judges will always find loopholes to allow racists the freedom to practise their racism. Closer examination of McKinnon's speech suggests he is not a fascist. He also interpreted the evidence in his summing up in the same way that most judges do.

He claimed that, "... such was the respect and affection engendered that no sooner had the white man granted independence... to the black man than he wanted to follow the white man to England." A touching example of the colonialist mentality which treats blacks as

## McKinnon and the Fascist WHAT DO YOU EXPECT?

BY BERNARD MISRAHI

childish servants needing protection rather than as enemies to be expelled. But he believes that Read's views are reasonable and fervently supports his right to utter them, "I wish you well", he said to Read.

"He is a man who has had the guts to come forward in the past and stand up publicly for things that he believed in." And, "We still, even today, have the right of free speech. . . If we do not like people we are entitled to say so, but, of course, we must use the language of moderation."

Judges may be unwilling to grant the same freedom to anti-fascists, Irish Republicans or 'blasphemous' gays. But the defence of 'freedom of speech' for everyone else is hardly new.

Judges claim to be non-political. They lift the incident that is being judged out of its particular context and 'judge' it in isolation to events connected with it before or after. The politics of those involved are dismissed as

irrelevant, even when they are crucial. By depoliticising their cases, judges help preserve the myth that they too are non-political and neutral. McKinnon is an excellent example of this philosophy in action.

He instructed the jury that they would have to prove that Read's remarks at a fascist rally in Newham in June 1976 were an 'incitement to racial hatred' to convict him. In the dock, Read denied that he was expressing joy at the murder when he had greeted the death of Gurdip Singh the week before as "One down one million to go", "I meant that was only one incident and that we had a million more to go" McKinnon believed him. He also insisted that the term 'nigger' was no more insulting than 'taffy'. "I was called 'nigger' at school" he confided.

If how insulting the term 'nigger' is does depend on the context in which it is used, then it is difficult to believe how it could be

CONTD. ON BACK PAGE