

CHARTIST

4p

BRITISH ARMY:

Out of Ireland!



ABOVE: Moments after this picture was taken, 13 un-armed 'rioters' were dead.

SINCE THE DERRY massacre, the Irish movement has risen to a new and altogether higher plane. Now—as in the "Civil Rights Movement's" early days—there is once again an overwhelming mass movement confronting Unionist and Tory authority in the streets. The difference is that this time—unlike in the pre-1970 period—the "Catholic" masses have few if any illusions that ruling class Britain will help them.

THIS BRITAIN, THROUGH its Army, has terrorized them: invaded their 'liberated' areas, interned them without trial, smashed time after time into their houses along whole streets and—finally—opened fire on their un-armed men and boys in an afternoon of blood-letting unusual even by its own bestial standards of colonial rule. It has turned the heroic resistance of the IRA into a mass working-class upheaval against all that imperialism stands for.

HERE IN BRITAIN, THERE is a growing awareness that we too are under threat. Labour MP John Cronin was saying nothing new when he warned, in an address to his mining constituents in Loughborough, that "Ulster-style violence" would flare in the Midlands if troops were brought in

power stations. In the period ahead, the thirteen murdered in Derry will be joined, we may be sure, by many more of our class-brothers brought down by "our" Army's bullets. And the Irish cry for vengeance will be joined by our own.

BUT OUR MOVEMENT'S vengeance must find its target. To strike out blindly at the British soldiers in general would be insane. Precisely because—in Ireland as in England—our movement is a mass movement of the working class, it has within itself the power ultimately to win over (or at least make waver) the Army ranks themselves. This most precious potential must be guarded with care. It is a suicidal gift to our class enemy to throw it away—by acting on the principle that "all soldiers are scabs".

THE OFFICER CASTE, THE Special Air Services, the "Paras" and the Military Police are one thing. They are in fact heartily detested by the bulk of ordinary soldiers. But these soldiers themselves are another. Only days before the Derry events, troops in Belfast were complaining about the conduct of "Paras" in their areas, and demanding their withdrawal. A member of the Catering Corps attached to the "Paras" defected and sought asylum in the Republic

when he heard of the firing orders for what was to become "Bloody Sunday". The overwhelming mass of the Army are more or less class-conscious supporters of the Labour Party. However "backward" in respects many may be, they will become "un-reliable" in Tory eyes given time.

THE IDEA OF WINNING THE soldiers may seem ludicrous at present to many Republicans, shot at or roughed up by the Army day after day. But it is not only Irish events which are moving fast. On our side of the water it will not be long before soldiers are ordered to aim at students, miners, dockers and others of us in a General Strike and revolutionary upheaval of un-precedented dimensions and power. It is then—when the Irish and the British struggles have finally combined—that the breaking-point in the soldiers' 'loyalty' will come. And when it does, our class-brothers in uniform will be among the most resolute in fighting with us, arms in hand, against their detested officers, the hated symbol of the Crown and the ruling class as a whole. This will be our real 'vengeance'. Not random attacks on ordinary soldiers, but a thrust to the heart of our opponent—the overthrow of the real Derry murderers, the Army officer caste, the Tory Government and the rest of the British ruling class.

MINERS LEAD LABOUR

DESPITE FRANK CHAPPELL'S criminal sell-out of the power-workers and black-legging on the NUM, the miners are demonstrating they mean to win. As their grip on the power stations tightens and coal stocks dwindle away, manufacturers have begun clamoring for a settlement. And reports multiply that Government Ministers are wondering just how they can avoid defeat. Far from confidently applying the "Industrial Relations Act"—as urged by Sir Gerald Nabarro—Carr is said to be looking for a way of putting the best face on a climb-down: e.g. by treating the miners as a "special case". Needless to say, there are Tory hard-liners urging a show-down. But what is certain is that the miners' determination not to break is leading the whole trade union movement on to a new plane of struggle which the Tories have reason to fear.

POLICE LINES HAVE BEEN swept aside. Picketing has been on an absolutely unprecedented scale and harder and more audacious from day to day. So fierce has become the miners' fury that their "leaders" have withered before it, surrendering—as well as their duties of leadership—even (for the time being) the very nerve to confront their members with a sell-out.

IT IS THIS UNCONTROLLED energy and the unpredictability of the storm before it—with the distant but growing threat of "Ulster-style violence" and a General Strike in England—which is draining the Tories' confidence and making them think twice. It is precisely at this moment that we must hit hard. National action is required above all of the TUC. It should instruct its affiliates to black all fuel movements. That would finish the strike victoriously within a few days. Why doesn't Daly make this demand? After the miners' march on February 6, he told our reporter it was in order not to "stir up dissension" among TUC General Council members. "The left wing", he explained, "are only a minority of 4 or 5." Political cretinism on this scale amounts objectively to betrayal. It is only by making a clear call on the TUC that mass pressure can force it to act. T&G workers transporting fuel must be brought out. The whole power of our movement must be mobilized behind the miners. They can win—and make their victory a turning-point for the British labour movement. A victory now would be a victory for us all, the smashing of the Tory pay "norm" and the beginning of the end not only for this Government but for capitalism in Britain as well.

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WE MARXISTS WANT A WORKING-CLASS TAKE-OVER of all land, industry and power in Britain. But in the Labour Party it is often objected "What about opposition from other countries? How could we survive—a socialist Britain in a hostile capitalist world?"

TO HELP ANSWER SUCH OBJECTIONS, EVERY issue of the Chartist contains articles on the struggles of our international comrades. Without them, the idea of social revolution in this country would indeed be madness. Even if we were initially successful, we could not retain power as a class in Britain for long. We would quickly be blockaded and politically crushed by the global dominance of capitalist America and her allies. But with our international comrades, the picture is very different. The struggles of our class-brothers in Africa, Asia, Australasia, Europe and America mean that in no part of the world are we without potentially powerful allies. The miners' strike has again reminded us of this in one way—as dockers, seamen and miners throughout Europe and America have come to "our" miners' support. Were we not merely to strike, but to occupy our factories, win over the army and actually take power as workers in this country—then the world working class' support would make our conquests indestructible.

JUST HOW WEAK AMERICAN AND WORLD IMPERIALISM really is can be seen, firstly by an analysis of what is happening inside the "advanced" industrialized countries themselves, where mounting unemployment and "wage-freezes" of various kinds are arousing the anger not only of the youth but of all layers of the working class. Secondly, it can be seen in the mighty movements (such as in Poland last year and in Czechoslovakia 1968) for workers' control and real communism in the so-called "communist" countries. And thirdly it can be seen in the struggles taking place in the formerly "colonial" areas of the world, where imperialism is retreating on all fronts. In this issue of the "Chartist" we turn particularly to the example of Africa.

1. OVAMBOS STRIKE!

THE AFRICAN WORKING-class is standing up. It was not peasant guerrillas but striking miners who sparked off the present black upheaval in Rhodesia against the racist Smith regime. And in South-West Africa, which is "illegally" (according to the United Nations) occupied by the South African Government, the African workers have expressed their resistance by an unprecedented General Strike.

"THE OVAMBO FREELY accept the contract labour system". The words were those of Mr de Wet, South Africa's appointed Commissioner-General of the Ovambo, the largest tribe in South West Africa. Scarcely had they been reported over the local radio stations when 3,000 fish-factory workers, railwaymen and dockers in Walvis Bay (the territory's main port—see map) determined to show their Commissioner just where he was wrong. Although all strikes in South Africa are illegal, they announced they would strike in two days' time.

THE GOVERNMENT threatened mass arrests. But by the appointed date—December 13 1971—not only was the strike solid, but almost the entire labour-force of Windhoek (South-West Africa's main industrial centre and capital) had joined in too. In swift response, the Government in Pretoria rushed in extra armed police, sacked half the local police force (for supporting the strikers) surrounded the black suburb of Katatura with armed

trucks and jeeps, arrested 15 strike leaders and told the striking masses "Either get back to work, or be sent back to your reserves." The strikers stayed out and began being deported in thousands to their tribal territory (see map) in buses guarded by armed police.

BUT MEANWHILE, THE strike kept spreading. By the end of the week about 15,000 Ovambos—half the total labour-force in the white-occupied territory—were out, bringing virtually all mining, industry and services to a standstill. The solidarity shown was extraordinary. All attempts to find scab labour failed. White school-boys had to be used (at £60 a month—Ovambos doing the same job had got £17) in an attempt to keep the railways running. White scabs were unable to keep a single smelter going at the giant Tsumeb copper mines (where all 3,700 black workers had struck). The Windhoek Town Clerk told reporters "We've tried to recruit labourers in the east, west, south and north—but all we have found so far is 13".

ONCE BACK IN OVAMBO-land, far from dispersing as they were supposed to do, the strikers began organizing in earnest. A 24-man committee was elected. A leaflet—described by whites as "very articulate"—was widely distributed. It called for:

1. Freedom to choose between jobs
2. The right to change employer

3. The right to live and work with one's family
4. Abolition of the Central Employment Agency
5. Pay increases
6. Abolition of the Pass System

All of these demands conflict irreconcilably with the 40 year-old Contract Labour system—denounced by the strikers as "the system of selling people" and termed by the International Commission of Jurists "a form of slavery". The strikers declared they would remain in Ovamboland until their full demands were met. So powerful was the strike and the movement behind it, that even the Government-appointed body of "headmen"—the Ovambo Legislative Council—declared its full solidarity with the strikers.

PRETORIA HAD NEVER faced anything like this before. It saw that if the strike could reach mines such as the Oranjemund diamond diggings next the very border of

2. REVOC R

IN MID-JANUARY, IN THE Rhodesian asbestos-mining town of Shabani (where the mine is owned by a subsidiary of Turner and Newall, the big asbestos and mining firm with headquarters in Manchester) twelve miners were sacked. Despite being attacked by armed police (with tracker dogs) who shot dead one African worker and wounded nine others, the whole labour force came out in sympathy. Then in Rhodesia's third largest city, Gwelo, more than 70 per cent of the African work-force struck. Taking advantage of the presence in Rhodesia of Sir Alec Douglas-Home's fraudulent "opinion-testing" Pearce Commission, the

BLACK AFRICA IN FLAMES

Chris Knight.

South Africa itself (as was being reported)—then it could infect the mines on the Rand. "This", as the British Guardian wrote "is exactly what the South Africans seem most afraid of". Suddenly—as if it had glimpsed its hour of truth—the Pretoria regime announced concessions. "The contract labour system", it announced to a stunned world, "is to be revized". No African "rioters" had ever forced so conciliatory a statement from the apartheid regime before. Whatever the outcome now, the strikers' sense of moral victory was total.

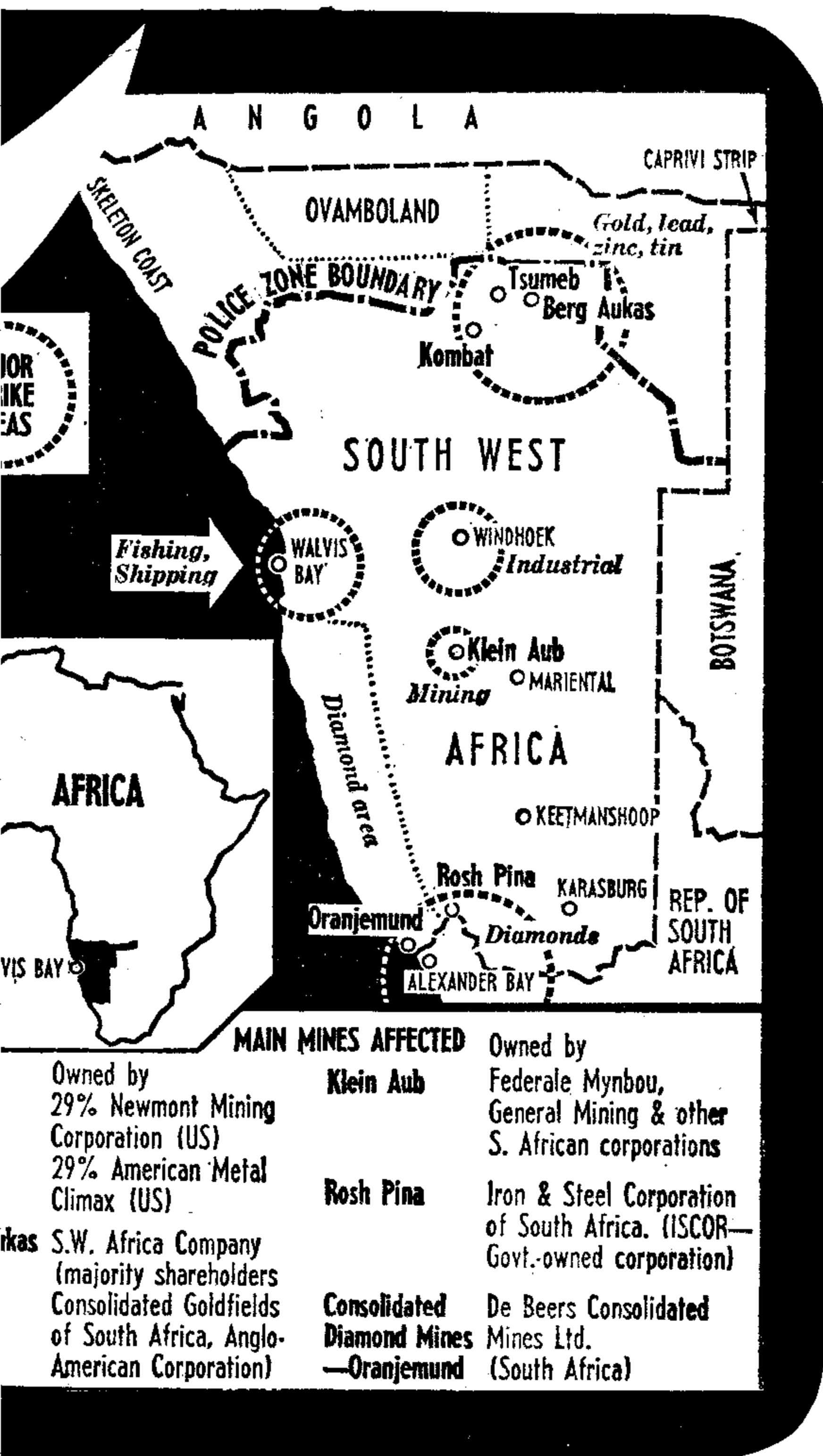
AS WE GO TO PRESS, the strike, now in its third month, is still solid. Ignoring their headmen, the strikers have all but unanimously refused to accept the "concessions" offered by the Government and agreed to by the Legislative Council. Those who have returned to work—less than 1,000—will find the 'new' system remarkably like the old (with only slightly better facilities for changing employment and none of the basic strike-demands met). Although news is scarce owing to a state of emergency which has been declared, it seems that the strike is developing into something more. To the Observer's correspondent, it "looks suspiciously like outright insurrection".

population of one town after another downed tools and took to the streets. Even household servants deserted their white masters and mistresses. And as the news of the "riots" spread, not only the towns but the most isolated tribal areas too became involved. For all these people (whom Smith had liked to call "the happiest Africans in the world") it was not only a chance to shout "No!" to the Tories' proposed "settlement"—designed to transfer a certain amount of power after a long period of time from the white capitalists to a black bourgeoisie. Far more importantly, it was their chance to express their burning anger at their class-situation—which condemns them to rampant unemployment, increasing landlessness and the perpetual fear of being deprived of what little they still have by a predatory white bourgeoisie. In apparent panic, the Smith regime struck out in all directions. It not only shot dead 14 Africans (while injuring 49 and detaining hundreds without trial) but even went so far as to arrest "moderate" white liberals Judy and Garfield (former Prime Minister) Todd, as if they (of all people!) had been ringleaders of the demonstrations!

AT THAT POINT, EVEN the stooge black MPs and Government-paid tribal chiefs thought they'd better

LT IN HODESIA

make a squeak. Scared stiff of the unleashed anger of their own people (and eating mouthfuls of their former words) they pronounced "No!" to Sir Alec's cherished settlement. The Tories' entire strategy was now in ruins. Unable even to procure a few headmen or black MPs ("educated and responsible Africans") to say "yes" before the microphones, the whole white-washing object of the Pearce Commission was destroyed. On the other hand, to have ordered the Commission back home would have looked bad. So the embarrassing charade of "opinion-testing" had to be persisted in as planned—much to the consternation of Ian Smith and his mates, anxious to "restore law and order"



to their "happy Africans" under conditions of less glaring publicity.

NOW THE CRISIS FOR imperialism is steadily worsening. Instead of "peaceful" conditions for exploitation, the British and American companies investing in Rhodesia are faced with the prospect of chaos. Desperate for a "settlement", many companies have been threatening their African workers with the sack unless they say "Yes" to Britain's plans. Workers at Fort Victoria and Umtali, whose employers normally provide their housing, have been locked out of their homes for saying "No". But methods such as these can no longer work. Bishop Musorewa, chairman of the "African National Council" (set up to campaign against the settlement terms) has warned of "bloody revolution" unless major reforms are undertaken soon. His anxieties are well-placed. The Rhodesian black workers have found their voice, their pride and their strength. From now on, there will be no holding them back. While as yet they have no really revolutionary leadership, its formation can only be a matter of time. As they realize clearly that they—as workers and as a class—can alone

BANGLADESH UNDER THREAT

Bill Thompson.

"IF SHEIKH MUJIB IS A REALIST as well as a visionary he must see that foreign aid will come only if he respects foreign assets.

His immediate task must be to re-staff the administration and police and to suppress the banditry".

Thus spoke the Daily Telegraph, while Heath was no doubt putting it just as plainly to Mujib himself after he had flown in from Pakistan a few weeks ago. And Mujib's actions since his return to Bangla Desh show him to be a willing puppet of imperialism.

His henchmen in the Awami League, for the most part representatives of small businessmen and

landlords, no doubt entertain visions of ruling Bangla Desh themselves. But they can't do it on their own. They need help. And that's where Uncle Ted and other philanthropic representatives of capitalism step in with fistfuls of so-called "aid".

The most dangerous of Bangla Desh's "friends" is the Indian bourgeoisie. West Pakistan's army may be defeated. Bangla Desh may have been "freed"—but that's no reason for India to leave! Indian capitalism has long wished to gain the profitable jute and tea industries, not to mention rich agricultural land in the area—and now's its chance.

Another officer, a brigadier, and a man of influence and eminence in the Indian Army, is of the opinion that the British Army in some ways is growing slack through lack of proper wars. They could learn ruthless efficiency from the Indians now. This officer is also impatient of those who like to think of the Bangladesh operation as some co-operative liberation rather than a simple conquest.

"We are taking territory, and are not ashamed of it," he says: "Bangladesh must simply be ours if it is to remain stable. Some semblance of democracy can be created but no one of any honesty in Delhi or elsewhere pretends that is the real reason we are here. Bangladesh will be like Calcutta, which we keep firmly under our thumb from Delhi, with no nonsense of local autonomy."

SUNDAY TIMES, DECEMBER 19 1971

But there is one obstacle. The East Bengali masses took to arms to fight their West Pakistani masters and they will not be satisfied with a mere change of exploiters. They want an end to the insufferable misery, starvation and oppression which has always been their lot. They want the land without the landlords. Mujib and his imperialist backers need the Indian Army to protect their property. The disarmament of the Bengali guerrillas has been their main preoccupation. And a holding on to all arms and a ruthless struggle against capitalism, landlordism and the Indian Army is the only way forward for the Bengali masses.

BACKGROUND TO THE

DOLLAR CRISIS

John Echolls.

THE TALK OF FINANCIAL crisis and trade war which followed President Nixon's new financial policy announcements last August has given way to new sounds. The capitalist ministers of the world now applaud their new-found 'agreement', while in reality the basis for any agreement between them has gone.

Nixon had to smash the Bretton Woods currency system—which was

an essential component of the worldwide trade boom of the 1950s and 1960s—for a simple reason. America no longer held the dominant position over her main economic rivals which was that system's starting-point.

Faced with a stupendous deficit in the United States' balance of payments and an un-stoppable out-flow of dollars, the President showed that contempt which all national capitalist leaders have for "gentlemanly" agreements which have out-lived their value. He abruptly told foreign banks they could no longer exchange their dollar-holdings for gold (Fort Knox would otherwise suddenly have drained empty!) and insisted that America's main rivals should up-value their currencies in relation to the dollar.

On December 18 came the Washington agreement of the "Group of Ten" (i.e. the main imperialist powers who dominate the world economy). Initially hailed as a breakthrough, this is now seen by everyone to have been, in the words of German Finance Minister Schiller, merely a "fragile ceasefire"—in the early stages of a long war of attrition. The re-alignment of exchange-rates has solved nobody's problems. On the one hand, the once-healthy economies of Germany and Japan are being dragged down into the whirlpool. On the other, most "experts" see that America's own problems are as bad as ever—one indication of this being that speculators still have no faith whatsoever in the dollar.

In this climate, rumours abound that new re-valuations (e.g. of the yen) will soon be forced. Meanwhile the U.S. Congress refuses to raise the gold price (still far below a realistic value) until Canada, the

Common Market and other countries have been forced to make satisfactory trade concessions. In these conditions, all talk of setting up a new and stable international monetary system to regulate trade and currency is simply Utopian.

In the face of world-wide and raging inflation combined with industrial stagnation, the total bankruptcy of Keynes-style economic management stands out plain for all to see. The Keynesian methods—state intervention and arms spending etc.—have for decades been billed by "left-wing" theorists as a miracle-cure for the ills of capitalism. Now those very methods are being blamed as the cause of capitalism's ills!

Coming on top of these world problems are Britain's own peculiar ones. Central among these is the antiquated nature of much of Britain's industry. Attempts to remedy this—by automation, speed-ups and so on—have not only lost hundreds of thousands of jobs, but by increasing the proportion of capital to labour have further decreased the rate of profit. As for the "solution" in the Common Market—even this has itself now caught the so-called "English disease", giving the lie to the Tories' glowing forecasts of life on the European gravy-train.

The figure for unemployment in Britain, now well over the million-mark, is only a reflection of the world sickness of capitalism. The fight to keep our jobs brings us up against the international dominance of capital. If we are to win, we must work through our Labour and trade union organizations to build a new workers' international organization pledged to end the capitalist system once and for all.

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Labour and TUC—Give Full Military Support to the IRA!