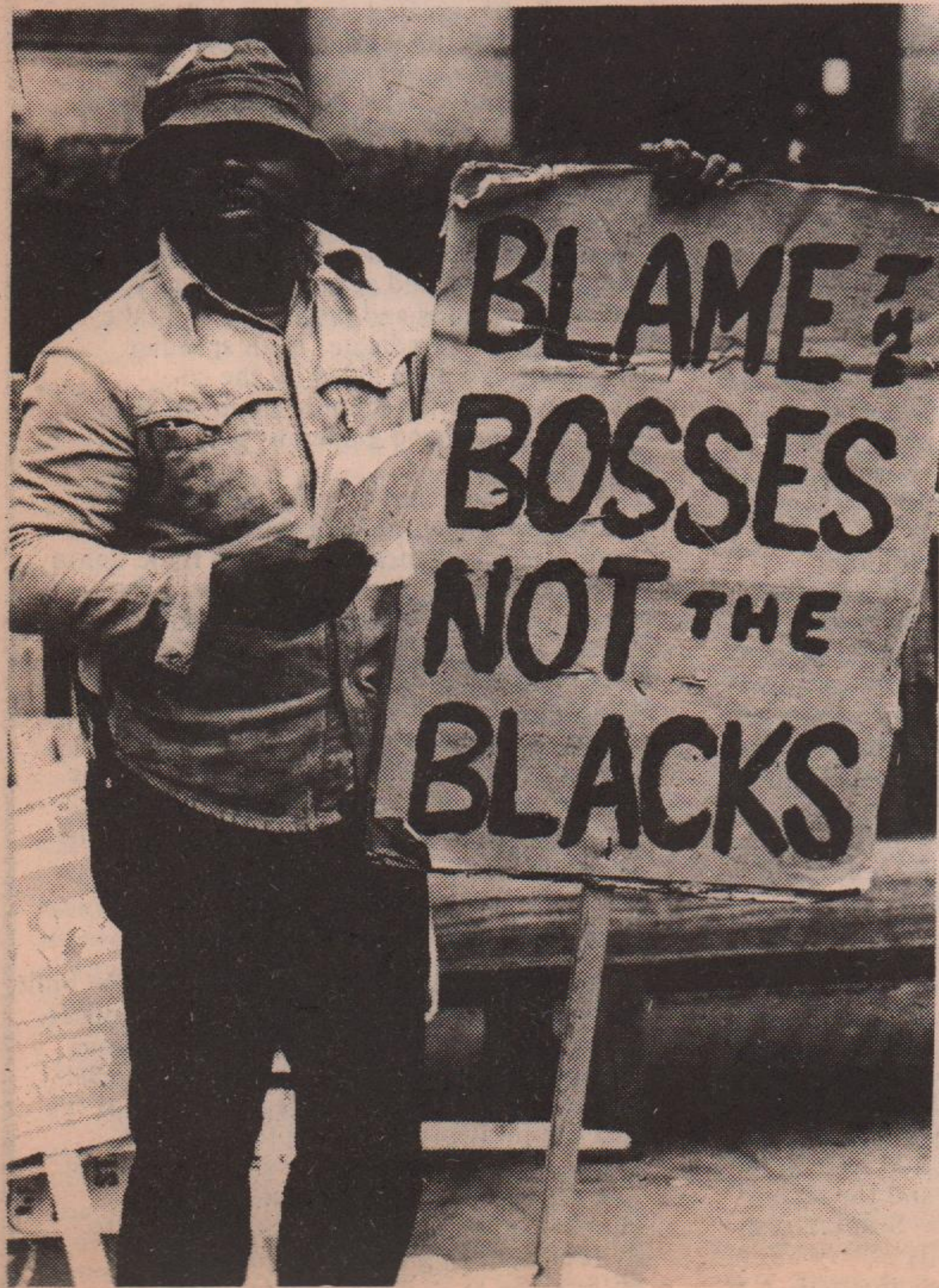


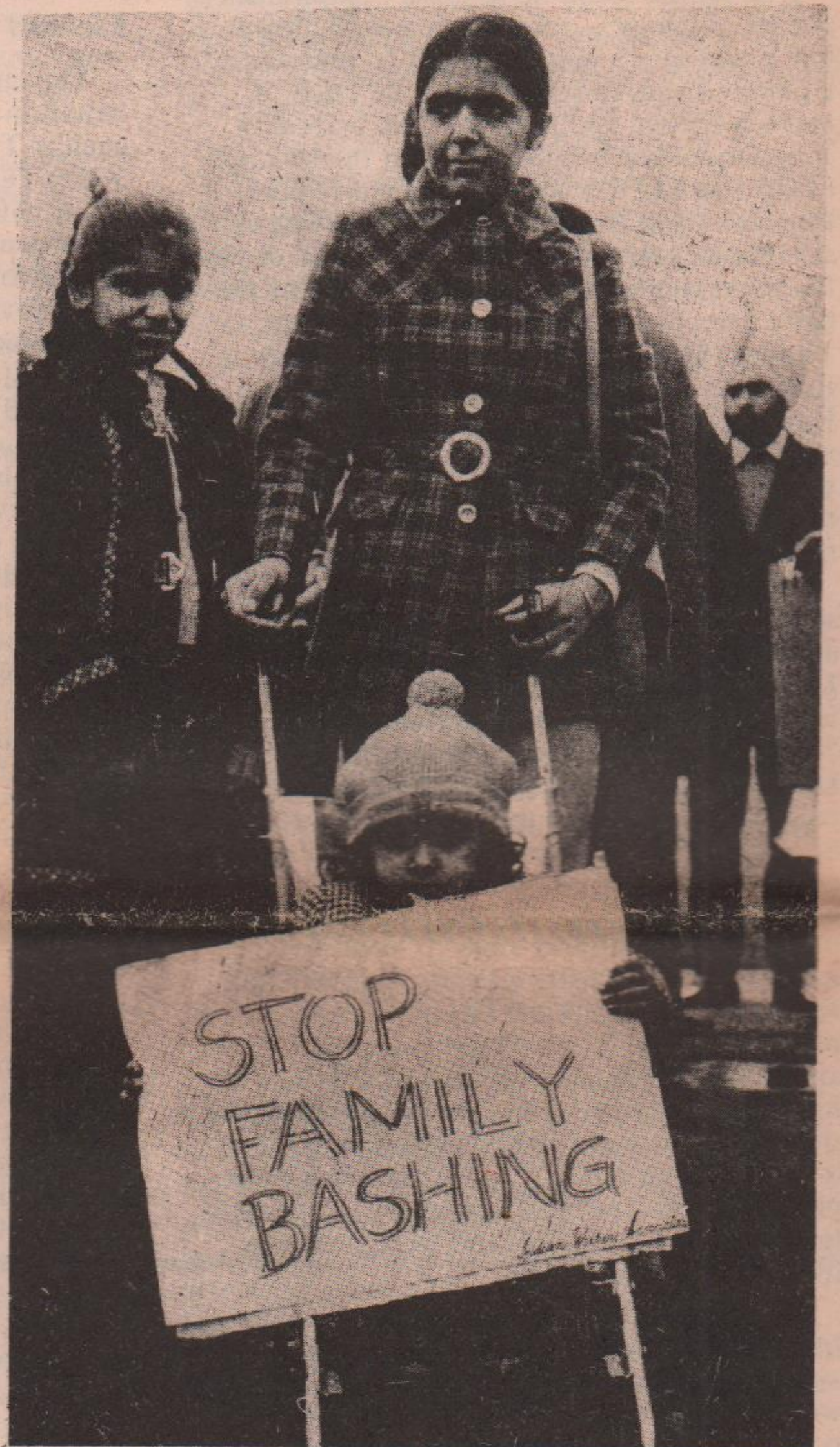
CHARTIST

LABOUR'S REVOLUTIONARY VOICE No.65 APRIL 1978 10p



Select Committee Race Report

DOCUMENT OF SHAME



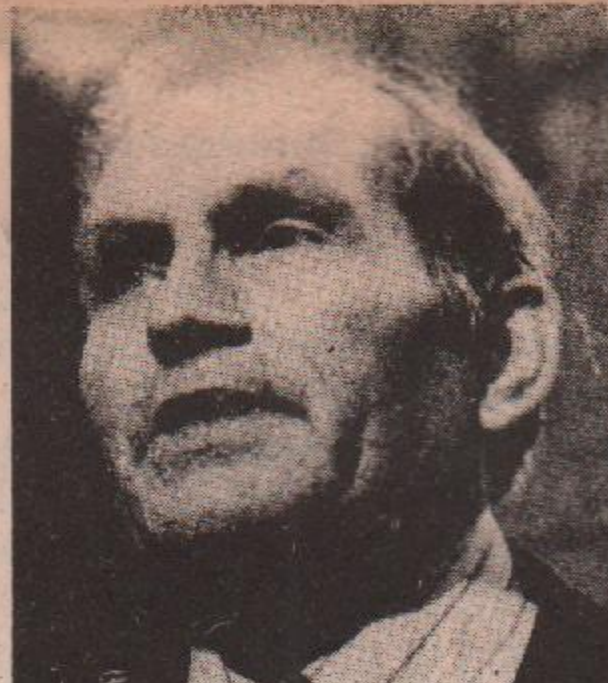
Powell & Thatcher



**RACE
REPORT
UNITES
THEM**



Rees & Bidwell



THE REPORT OF the Select Committee on immigration must have gladdened Tory hearts, cheered Enoch Powell and brought a smile to the lips of many National Front supporters. It gives Margaret Thatcher all the ammunition she needs in her attempt to play the race card in the coming general election. It offers a white flag of surrender to the racists in the coming battles against the Tories and the National Front. It is an indication of where the logic of the view that coloured immigration into Britain is itself a problem leads and frightening indication of how far the pendulum has swung to the right on the issue.

The Select Committee supposedly inquiring into all immigration into Britain confined its attention almost wholly to immigrants from the Indian sub-continent starting from the racist premise that coloured immigration was a 'problem'. Its conclusions were clear: it called on the Government to make "unequivocally clear" that in the foreseeable future there will be no further major primary immigration into Britain and that such immigration should only take place in "exceptional circumstances".

CHILDREN

It also proposes that children of settlers in Britain should only be admitted if under 12 years of age, the introduction of a quota system for British passport holders and the speeding-up their admission and that of their dependants to be followed by an absolute deadline on all immigration for purposes of settlement.

The report also recommends changes in the work permit schemes. Quotas for catering and domestic workers and nursing auxiliaries should be reduced and eventually phased out and long-term permits granted only in 'excep-

tional circumstances'. In addition it calls for more resources to be devoted to tracking down illegal immigrants and work permit overstayers and some unspecified system of 'internal control' of the immigrant community, it attacks the 1973 amnesty for illegal immigrants and calls for new nationalities and citizenship regulations.

Committee chairperson Fred Willey was proud of the fact that the report was signed by all 10 MPs (5 Labour and 5 Tory). This included Tory right-winger Dudley Smith and Syd Bidwell, Tribuneite and supporter of the Anti-Nazi League. Bidwell's signature gives a gloss of acceptability to an unacceptable racist report. As a former chairperson of the Tribune group and MP for Southall where one of the largest Asian communities in Britain provide a considerable portion of his electorate Bidwell has long been regarded as a spokesperson for the Labour Left on the race question. He was at Red Lion Square in 1974 when Kevin Gately was killed, as a leader of the Movement for Colonial Freedom (now Liberation) and now a signatory to the founding statement of the Anti-Nazi League he has frequently appeared on anti-fascist and anti-racist platforms. His signature on this shameful report indicates the complete contempt for the most elementary socialist principles that informs the politics of Labour's left.

NATIONALISTIC

We have often pointed out in the *Chartist* the nationalistic implications of Tribuneite politics and the way in which their acceptance of immigration controls ceded the victory to the racists before any fight has begun. Surely if proof were needed Bidwell's support for this wretched document is it. Thatcher and her mentor, Keith Speed have every right to gloat that this report confirms their own vote-

seeking arguments. So blatant is the shameful racism of this report that it has even been attacked in the journals of the capitalist class themselves. Both the *Guardian* and the *Economist* have criticised it severely. Yet Fred Willey is so pleased with having reached unanimity on a bi-partisan approach on the question.

The immigrant population has long been a solid bastion of Labour voters. Despite the record of the Labour leaders of over ten years of appeasement of racism on the issue of immigration controls their support has remained unwavering. Ten years ago, James Callaghan as Home Secretary rushed through the racist Kenyan Asian Act in response to racist pressures to stop a handful of British citizens suffering political persecution from entering the country. This report is a fitting and equally sordid commemoration of that event. Like the Kenyan Asian Act the five signatures of Labour MPs on this report are five more knives in the back of the black and Asian population in this country.

APPEASEMENT

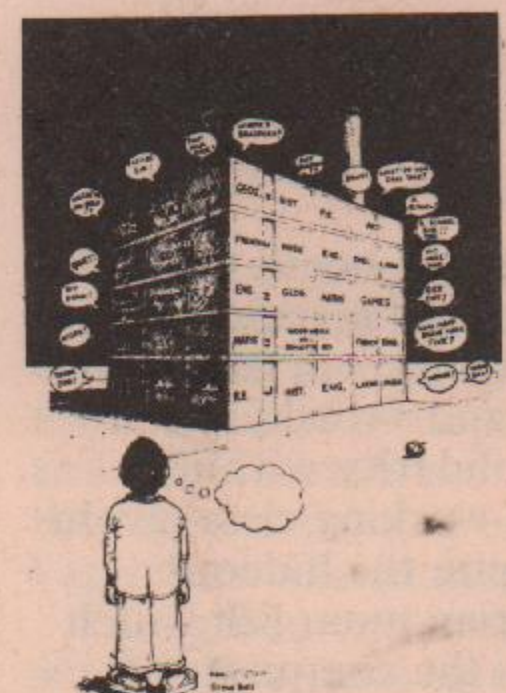
If the ever-increasing slide to appeasement of the racists is to be halted then it is vital that this report is discussed and condemned in all Labour movement bodies and any attempt to translate its proposals into legislation thwarted.

If this is not done and the current rate of appeasement of racism in the Labour Party — an appeasement that began in 1963 with the acceptance of immigration controls — continues, it will be only a matter of time before both parties are outbidding each other in fixing quotas and eventually in repatriation proposals. It is time to call a halt now.

- No bi-partisanship on immigration and race.
- Repeal of all immigration laws.

LABOUR PARTY
YOUNG SOCIALISTS

1978



Youth
&
Class
Struggle

A CHARTIST PUBLICATION 10p

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JUST OUT

THE CHARTIST

Monthly Journal of the Socialist Charter Movement.

Editor: M. Davis, 60 Longbridge Road, London SW9 (01-733-8953).



SOCIALIST CHARTER— SUMMARY OF TASKS

On the weekend of March 11th and 12th, Socialist Charter held its Sixth National Conference. Throughout the wide-ranging debates many fundamental problems of the struggle for socialism were touched upon. This extended editorial is a summary of the perspectives and tasks drawn up at the conference.

The Socialist Charter started life as a revolutionary communist organisation in 1972, although the nucleus which composed its backbone was launched in 1970. The guiding political tasks of the organisation had been the necessity to build a revolutionary socialist opposition to the policies of the reformist social democratic mis-leaders of the working class in Britain and internationally. We saw the arena for our work as the CLPs and trade unions in particular — though not exclusively. In the early days we tended to accept that the programme for working class political power already existed, the task being to implement it against all brands of class compromise and vacillation. Although we recognised the degeneration of the international Marxist movement, and our own political heritage Trotskyism, we were slow to appreciate the full extent of the crisis of revolutionary marxism.

Orthodox Trotskyism and Post-War World

Everything could be in crisis — capitalism and its ideology — reformism and Stalinism, but it was much more difficult to understand, let alone come to terms with, the crisis of Marxist theory and practice. The orthodox Trotskyists had become stuck in the swamps of cultism and a crude schematism. Where they had tried to break out of the religious straight jacket, (you need a 'rev. party' etc.), the movement often abandoned some of the basic precepts of revolutionary marxism. This was shown in the analyses of Eastern Europe and the expansion of the Soviet Union, the Chinese revolution, the post-war boom, the 'colonial revolution', working class consciousness, the development of the capitalist state and methods of revolutionary organisation.

Any honest socialist and communist would admit that the post-1974 period has opened up immense problems. The last four years of Labour Government have unearthed to the full glare of daylight the weaknesses of "orthodox Trotskyism" — and indeed any brand of would-be Marxism. No longer is it possible to content ourselves with a repetition of many of the hallowed formulas and analyses of Third International Marxism, "text-book Leninism" and Trotskyism. The meaning of "capitalist crisis", "crisis of leadership", "Transitional Programme" and so on, are up for discussion. So too the nature of a revolutionary organisation appropriate to this period of capitalism, what kind of programme, what strategy and tactics, the nature of the capitalist state today, what is "Euro-communism?", have all emerged as problems unanswerable simply by a regurgitation of Marxist schemas and slogans drawn from the pre-war period.

In other words, the current situation of impasse and downturn of the working class struggle in Britain and the inability of the working class to take its opportunities in countries where revolutionary or near-revolutionary situations have been on the agenda — Portugal, Italy and perhaps Greece and Spain — has highlighted the lamentable state of revolutionary Marxist politics and organisation. No Marxist tradition, even resembling that of the Third International, has been able to establish itself in any working class movement or its advanced sections. Rather the politics of social democracy and Stalinism/Maoism have ruled the roost in most countries or the little-analysed politics of the nationalist regimes of the colonial and semi-colonial world.

Revolutionary Traditions

Socialist Charter rejects the bogus notions of continuity of revolutionary marxist organisation and tradition. Certainly, our traditions are those of Bolshevism, and Trotskyism in the 1930s. We stand in solidarity with the greatest and undefeatable working class revolution in Russia 1917. Despite the hideous bureaucratic and totalitarian monolith which now distorts and mangles the conquests of October, we can still see through the deformities the future planned economy of a socialist world. The richest tradition for scientific socialists and class conscious workers to look to is still that of the Russian Revolution, the early days of the Third International, and the theoretical conquests of Trotsky in the fight against the degeneration of the isolated Soviet state, Stalinism, fascism and the elaboration of an internationalist proletarian policy. This is not to say it is the only tradition socialists today should examine.

But having accepted the Bolshevik tradition and Trotsky's struggle to defend it against Stalinist degeneration and falsification, as our own, we nonetheless do not accept the rigid or uncritical identification with the Bolshevik model of revolution. A comparison of the situation facing socialists

in Britain in 1978 and the one which faced Lenin and the Bolsheviks highlights the problems.

East and West

The chief disadvantage of the Bolsheviks' situation was the fact that they were up against Tsarist autocracy, the Okrana, the White Terror and exile to Siberia or abroad. Their chief advantage was a politically virgin, homogenous working class receptive to revolutionary ideas. In contradistinction, the chief advantage of our situation is a formal bourgeois democracy, freedom of assembly, universal franchise, a powerful labour movement, all of which make the task of propagating our ideas much easier than it was for the Bolsheviks.

However, our chief disadvantage is a working class steeped for centuries in class collaboration, class conciliation, imperialism, reformist traditions, conservatism, gradualistic and peaceful notions of change and powerful bourgeois institutions like the police, the courts and parliament. A working class, in short, almost impervious to revolutionary ideas. This profound difference between East and West has been almost universally ignored by the revolutionary left — though not of late by the various Western Communist Parties.

Lenin, one of the leading theoreticians of the Russian Revolution, often made the point that it would be a hundred times easier to make a revolution in the East, where capitalism was weak, than in the industrialised West, where the workers' movement faced and were themselves shaped by bourgeois democratic traditions and opportunist parties like the British Labour Party. The construction of socialism would be a relatively easy task after the conquest of state power in the West, but contrarily, pose immense problems in the semi-feudal and under-developed East. It is in interpreting the "dead hand of these past traditions" and their ideological and political expressions today that the socialist movement has fallen foul. Although Marx said the task was to change the world, not purely to interpret it, without an analysis, interpretation and theoretical understanding of modern capitalism and class relations, there will be no socialist change or even as Lenin put it, "no revolutionary movement".

Clarifying Theory

It is to the task of clarifying revolutionary socialist theory and analysis that the Socialist Charter turns with our monthly news Review, *Chartist*, and International Discussion Journal, as the number one priority.

The growth of so-called "Euro-communist" stalinist parties in France, Italy and Spain, in particular, with their nationalistic, peaceful and parliamentary roads to socialism, whilst heightening the class struggle, nonetheless provides new obstacles to successful revolutionary developments. The recent spectacle of several European CPs abandoning the concept of working class power (dictatorship of the proletariat), the Spanish CP dropping its "Leninist line" (distancing itself not only from the model but also the *method* and *leader* of the Russian Revolution) is nothing new in one sense. But in another sense, Stalinism is changing. No longer is it the monolithic bloc with all eyes trained on Moscow. European revolutionaries like Antonio Gramsci have been adopted, with their work on the importance of the ideological and cultural struggle given an opportunist perspective.

The growing closeness of social democracy and the capitalist state and the Euro-communist trends provide new problems for Marxists today. The Socialist Charter intends to continue and open up the dialogue of struggle around the ideas of the left trends in these movements whilst trying to develop a united front with them against any openly bourgeois attacks.

Role of Labour Lefts

In Britain, our characterisation of the strategy of the Labour left as one of "permanent retreat" is continually borne out. Because of their commitment to "parliamentarianism" and British interests, the Tribunes are condemned to impotent protest in opposition to the Labour leaders, vacillation over every consistently anti-capitalist struggle which goes beyond their limited horizons and finally, co-option and political emasculation by the right-wing when the time comes — Michael Foot, Stan Orme, Albert Booth, and increasingly Tony Benn being typical examples. In the pages of *Chartist* and elsewhere, we will develop our criticisms of the programme and policies of the Tribune in an effort to clarify the direction the left should take.

The Communist Party

In the trade unions, where the Communist Party occupies the leading position on the left, the retreat has been similarly marked. The right-wing have scored successes in elections in the TGWU, NUM and AUEW and in several white-collar unions and the trail-blazers of the social contract — Scanlon and Jones — have been conveniently ignored by the CP. As always industrial strategy is subordinated to parliamentary strategy, and this is intensified in times of crisis, in an effort to maintain a "respectable" image to present in elections. Recently we have witnessed leading CP members accepting capitalist solutions to the crisis: McGahey told miners to accept the NCB productivity schemes and "work harder"; UCS convenor Airlie scabbed on the shipbuilders of the Tyne in urging acceptance of the Polish order during their industrial action and in British Leyland leading CP members have endorsed the management plan for thousands of redundancies.

Revolutionary Left

The response of the revolutionary left has tended to substitute organisational (Rank and File Movement, Socialist Unity) for political solutions, frenzied activity in place of a re-examination of the adequacy of Marxist theory and narrow economic or opportunist-eclectic responses standing in for a unified counter-offensive on the political, social, cultural, ideological and economic fronts of class struggle. In the same way that vulgar materialist trends distorted the Marxism of the Second and Stalinist Third International, so too have such trends caricatured the much weaker revolutionary movement of today.

These distortions of contemporary Marxism express themselves as 1) a gross-underestimation of ideological questions and the ideological struggle; 2) economism and workerism — a neglect of those struggles of the oppressed outside the direct framework of worker-capitalist relations; 3) a passive fatalism on one hand or moralism and voluntarism on the other; 4) a tearing apart of analysis and action and the severing of Marxism into a number of discrete sciences. In future issues of the *Chartist* and in our Discussion Journal we hope to show in greater depth how these trends have damaged the effectiveness of marxist currents whilst providing an alternative scientific and many-sided revolutionary communist alternative.

Revolutionary Organisation Today

What kind of organisation do we require? In the absence of any revolutionary parties or an adequate Marxist theory, but rather an ocean of confusion, a propaganda group existence is the most appropriate form of organisation in the current situation. Through the course of combined struggle on all fronts of class struggle — with the ideological being prioritised we aim to train ourselves and many serious socialists and class conscious workers in the methods and ideas of Marxism which can provide the key to the achievement of socialist revolution in our time.

We don't pretend to have all the answers

and are prepared to learn not simply from books and written discussion but also from debate and polemic with socialist currents within the Labour Party and trade unions, the anti-imperialist, anti-racist movements, and women's and gay movements.

Organisation of the Oppressed

We defend the rights of all the oppressed to organise against their oppression. In the case of women, blacks and Asians, gays and national liberation movements, we support their separate organisation. The inability of many far left groups — as well as left-reformist currents, to develop correct relations and attitudes to the women's movement, for example, has created suspicion sullyng the name of Marxism with either opportunist (who can we recruit) or sectarian (women will be liberated after the revolution, meanwhile it's a diversion) practices. Whilst we aim to fashion a revolutionary socialist organisation which provides a unified critique of capitalist society, as a weapon capable of leading the rising of the working class and oppressed against this society, reactionary ideas and prejudices will take many years to eradicate. Their speedier termination will be aided by the co-existence of powerful movements of the specially oppressed guided by socialist politics.

We seek to maintain our fraction work within the trade unions to build socialist oppositional alliances against the trade union bureaucracy. Similarly in the Labour Party we will attempt to sharpen our political presence. But both these tasks can best be accomplished at this stage by an emphasis on clarifying, on a scientific basis, our analysis of the current stage of capitalist crisis, the state of working class consciousness and the state of the world-wide struggle of the oppressed both in the Stalinist states and the capitalist West.

Regroupment

A revolutionary organisation will not be built in ones and twos alone, but also in the longer-term through a process of splits and fusions of other revolutionary tendencies and socialist groups. We stand for a regroupment of the left but on firm and lasting foundations, rather than the unclear and shifting sands of the present efforts being launched by a number of groups around "Socialist Unity". Without drawing clear lines on political differences as well as finding common ground, a pin-pointing of fundamental problems and a fraternal openness in political discussions, unity of existing revolutionary groups will fall apart like a broken watch at the first great test of events.

Today we cannot base ourselves on any widespread political (ostensibly Marxist) consciousness. Not that we ever could in Britain. Illusions in capitalism, the "mixed economy", parliament, the neutrality of the state have been strengthened by twenty-five years of relative class stability — not withstanding the austerity and militancy of the early seventies. Whilst our strategic task as revolutionary communists is still organising for the conquest of state power, it is a much richer and more complex process than existed in the pre-Second World War world period. And at this stage Marxists are in no position to make much advance on implementing this strategy. Hence tactical and propagandist questions assume primacy in this situation.

Alternative Ideological Pole

The fundamental *problem* with Lenin and Trotsky, the Third International and early Fourth International was that their whole perspective was based on a *short-term*, war of manoeuvre, blitz-krieg-type of struggle for power. Capitalism was seen in permanent crisis, Communist Parties and the FI were seen as coming to a majority position in the working class rapidly, reformism and bourgeois ideology were seen as wilting and decaying. In the 1930s Trotsky modified this perspective, but in its fundamentals it remained unchanged.

Today, we, on the contrary, are faced with a much longer-term perspective of painstaking preparation of a nucleus of communist militants capable of building britcheads into every flank of the capitalist system and opening the pores of socialist democracy in the stultifying and bureaucratic workers' states.

Our current tasks involve assembling that alternative ideological pole against the totality of bourgeois ideas which in one way or another reside and are expressed in the minds and behaviour of millions of working people. Our *common understanding* is a recognition of where we are and the beginnings of both the theoretical, tactical and strategic answers to the fundamental problems which have fragmented the revolutionary movement and chained the working class to capital.

We appeal to all revolutionaries and those serious about socialist politics to take whatever initiatives they can in the spirit of fraternal, honest, non-sectarian discussion and polemic in furthering the tasks we have outlined.

Socialism now but no strategy

by PETER CHALK HORNSEY LPYS.

SOCIALISTS IN the Labour Party look to the Young Socialists to respond to the growing rebelliousness of youth and, ultimately, to channel this into a politically conscious anti-capitalist movement. Yet, at this year's LPYS conference, only half a dozen of the 155 resolutions were devoted specifically to youth affairs and, despite a twelve per cent increase in branches and delegates, over a third of the branches were not represented.

A pamphlet published by the Socialist Charter specifically for this year's conference called 'Youth and Class Struggle' explained how these problems are due to the LPYS leadership seeing a socialist youth movement as basically 'a junior replica of, and pressure group on, the Labour Party and trade unions'.

It argued instead that 'young people should channel their energies into a struggle to solve some of the most basic forms of oppression and restrictions that they have to endure.'

Whereas the majority 'Militant' group tend to see the central problems of youth as unemployment, trade union rights and low pay, i.e. because they are working class, our pamphlet argued that it is as youth that young people first confront the oppression of the capitalist system, whether it be authority in the family and school or denial of sexual rights by legal and 'moral' restrictions.

If the LPYS is to be really successful in drawing in youth to the Labour Party, to 'strain every muscle to mobilise young people against the Tories' (resolution 11 on the general election) then it must demonstrate, in practice, that it is campaigning on all the problems that youth face, not just those involving young workers. The recent leafletting of schools (subsequently banned by the Party Youth Committee) should be seen as a welcome step in this direction.

Similarly, on other aspects of special oppression, such as sexual and national, the majority reduce all problems to the immediate need for the socialist transformation of society. By rejecting the right to autonomous organisation of women and blacks and the struggle for self-determination in Ireland and Palestine (led by the Republican movement and the PLO respectively), any attempt to devise a strategy for socialism is denounced as 'petit-bourgeois'. Yet the oppressed will always struggle against capitalism and, until a revolutionary party exists and leads that struggle, it is the unconditional duty of every socialist to support it, no matter what form it takes. It is ironic that the LPYS majority, objecting to every other form of self-organisation for the specially oppressed, inexorably defends the existence of a youth section!

Since 1973 Britain has been a pretty bleak place for workers fighting to hold onto living standards and jobs, similarly for those waiting for the economy to burst out of stagnation into a shining and prosperous future.

The current issue of the *Midland Bank Review* sums the situation up: "Since 1973 real output has been falling or stagnant, and recovery from the bottom of the recession was much weaker than in any other of the major industrial countries. The percentage of unemployment has been one of the highest in the OECD area; as has the rate at which prices have increased. The UK deficit on current account for the 3 years 1974-76 amounted in total to some 15 Billion dollars; in absolute terms this was the biggest for any OECD country, and as a percentage of GDP it was the worst (with Italy) of the major countries. In this combining stagnant output, rapid inflation and a huge balance of payments deficit, the UK record could hardly have been more dismal."

Since 1977 the *Review* says things have been getting a little brighter but the situation is still an unsatisfactory one for British capitalists. In response we have seen the chorus of demands on the Right for slashing real wages, social services and public expenditure getting a sympathetic hearing — and real response — from the Labour Government.

Off to stage Left an alternative strategy has been developed in the stables of the Institute for Workers Control and the pages of *Tribune*.

Put crudely the strategy is one of stalking and pinning down capitalism from within and without, using the unions, using the National Enterprise Board and community groups.

The adherents of the alternative strategy will use a battery of weapons including the National Enterprise Board and Planning Agreements starting from a base of existing and future nationalised areas of production. These will then encircle and eventually overwhelm Capital in an organically expanding wave of Socialist consciousness and physical intervention.

The type of planning seen in the strategy is summed up in the Charter of Demands issued by the Institute for Workers Control in July 1977: "Demand as a condition for all government aid and tax concessions the signing of planning agreements, involving national unions, joint union committees in companies, the Government and the large companies, to control company investment and trade policies."

Planning is a word which, in the British context, arouses pretty hostile reaction.

WORLD STEEL SLUMP

FOLLOWING the decision of the Labour Government to back the British Steel Corporation's plans to slash investment by 50% (£1 billion) over the next two years, it becomes a task of some urgency to develop an adequate analysis of the world steel crisis. Here PETER TOWEY examines the fundamental contradictions at the root of capitalist steel production which are leading to thousands of redundancies.

STEEL, THE most basic and heaviest of heavy industries, is rapidly becoming one of British capitalism's heaviest headaches. The steel industry presents the capitalist class with a problem it cannot solve — they can't live with it and they can't live without it. What they can't live with are losses running at £10,000,000 per week, obsolete equipment and a lower rate of productivity than British capitalism's overseas rivals.

What they can't live without is steel itself — one of the strongest, most versatile materials known to humanity — and one of the basic materials for almost all industries.

The problem with a heavy, but highly technical industry such as steel is that in order to compete on the world market huge amounts must be invested in the latest plant and equipment so that steel can be produced with less and less human labour — and therefore at lower cost — per ton. But, of course, capitalists are reluctant to invest a single penny unless they are guaranteed a return on that investment — that is unless they can produce profit.

But the enormous amounts which must be invested to secure even a small increase in production means that, unless the absolute maximum of extra productivity is screwed out of new equipment (and therefore out of workers!) then the rate of return on investment will naturally be lower. In other words the greater the degree to which the industry is obliged to develop technically the greater the tendency for the rate of profit to decline.

This, of course is the basic dilemma facing all industries in the developed capitalist world but it is felt at its most acute in an industry like steel where there is a very high ratio of expensive capital equipment (Plant, machinery etc.) to workers employed. In efforts to offset the declining profitability managements are obliged to squeeze every ounce of productivity out of workers and machines.

All over the industrial world steelworkers are being sacked by the thousand and old and inefficient plants are being closed down. In almost every western country the state has been obliged to step in to prop up the decaying steel industry — whether through state ownership as in Britain or through massive subsidies as is the case in most EEC countries.

Those in the Labour movement who in some muddled way equate such state intervention as "Socialism" would do well to examine the condition of the British steel industry — nationalised in 1967. Since then thousands of millions of taxpayers' money has been poured into new modern

plants such as Llanwern and Scunthorpe and into writing off losses.

This has represented a huge subsidy in the form of cheap steel to the rest of British capitalist industry, and the brunt of the cost has been borne by the workers. Since nationalisation 54,000 jobs have disappeared in the industry, and now Industry Secretary, Varley, is giving the green light to axing 40,000 more.

At the same time up to 40% of UK steelmaking capacity is lying idle and the threatened closure of plants such as East Moors, Shotton and Shelton Bar are casting a grim shadow over whole communities. So much for those who advocate more investment as the cure for unemployment!

Given the antique state of the British steel industry massive further redundancies would be required to achieve the production per worker levels of other capitalist countries. But even if the UK industry were to achieve the level of production of the United States and Japanese industries its problems would not be over. Production worldwide is running at some 30% below capacity.

As the massive capital investment required in the steel industry can only be justified by operation at maximum capacity, each national steel industry has tried to make up for the shortfall in domestic demand by capturing export markets — often by "dumping" steel on foreign markets at below the cost of production — at the same time seeking to defend their "own" markets against penetration by calling for protectionist import controls.

TABLE OF BRITISH STEEL PRODUCTIVITY COMPARISONS

	tonnes per man — year	Productivity index
British Steel	131	100
FRANCE	164	125
GERMANY	225	172
ITALY	232	177
NETHERLANDS	243	185
USA	274	209
JAPAN	372	284
ECSC 1973 figures.		



Steelworks under demolition in Scotland

Capitalism is, of course, a "dog eat dog" world — and it is ironic that at the same time as the EEC are seeking to restrict imports of steel from Japan, US steel companies are wailing loudly about cheap European competition! Needless to say the response of trade union bureaucrats round the world has been to "rally round the flag" and endeavour to outdo the capitalists in protectionist fervour — preferring to call for workers in other countries to be put on the dole rather than wage a real fight to preserve jobs.

In Britain steelworkers' leaders have not even attempted to fight redundancies. They content themselves with negotiating redundancy payments, which although having the Tories and their press foaming at the mouth because of their supposed "generosity", are in fact a wretched betrayal of the interests of their members.

A highly advanced industry such as steel offers other less developed industries a vision of their own future. The problem of the industry are those of capitalism in a nutshell: — A deepening world crisis, falling rates of profit, massive under-utilisation of plant and equipment, the necessity for huge and costly state intervention, the headlong rush to national protectionism.

The response of the social democratic or stalinist leaders of the working class throughout the world is likely to be as ineffective as that of British, US, and ECC steelworkers leaders. Having no political strategy which can challenge capitalism all they can do is bury their heads in the sand and hope for good redundancy payments.

Planning agreements — for whose benefit?

BY JIM BARROW

Unlike France, where there has been an extensive history of large scale planning by the state, planning in Britain has been opposed bitterly by the supporters of "business freedom" and those Social Democrats worried about planning being a step on the way to a "totalitarian bureaucracy".

The alternative strategy is summed up by Stuart Holland in his book *Socialist Challenge*: "Essentially a strategy for revolutionary reforms means transforming the basis on which economic, social and political power is organised within society. It also means an irreversible reversal of this power. It would extend and reinforce democratic processes both at the national and regional level, and in the enterprise itself. In other words it would be a revolution within a democratic framework and not an undermining or overthrow of democratic processes."

The supporters of the alternative strategy have been thoroughly disillusioned by the failure of the Labour Government to use sanctions against firms to force them into planning agreements guaranteeing investment, future employment, pollution controls etc.

However, this disillusionment with the Labour Government's respect for business secrets and decisions does not extend to concept of planning agreements in themselves.

What is required is not only Government sanctions and legislation against companies but also the building up of support for planning agreements amongst workers. The IWC see shop stewards combine committees (made up of all unions in a plant) as being the dynamo inside industry for planning.

At the same time as they twist the arm of the TUC and the Labour Party the

supporters of the alternative strategy see it as vital that rank and file (by which they mean shop stewards committees) groups should make time and develop the expertise to work out planning proposals.

In this they should be helped by legislation and finance from the Government. Extensive and up to date information would also be supplied by companies to these committees, the Government and the upper structures of the trade union movement.

Community groups would also be involved in drawing up planning blueprints. As only about one third of industry has joint shop stewards committees they must fight to build these up. Social auditing of industry and a co-ordinated national plan for Labour would be necessary along with the rest of the armoury — import controls, increased public investment etc.

Gradually as the strategy advanced the impact of giant firms on the economy would be brought under control and an overall plan would suck the more socialised private sector into the public sector — with workers participation/control being extended on both sides.

The strategy offers the apparent prospect of a march towards socialism, involvement and control from below and the absence of bloody confrontation associated with "extremists" of the Left.

It is a strategy which conceals a deadly threat to the workers' movement. It totally ignores the role of the state, a Capitalist state which acts in the interests of Capital.

It assumes that the state, through extended democracy inside and outside state structures, can be moulded into an instrument for increased socialisation and social control on behalf of the working class.

The other side of the coin is given very little

attention. This is the objective nature of Capitalism — a system in which the Capitalist must increasingly move against the working class (via speed-ups, rationalisation, redundancies etc.) in order to raise the rate of profit.

Here the need for the Capitalist to realise high profit rates comes into sharp conflict with the desire of the supporters of the alternative strategy to increase social welfare.

And it is here that the move for democratisation can be turned into its opposite — incorporation in the interests of Capital and increased profits.

The interests of the workforce, the union, the community, the Capitalist, the nation become one and the same — increased productivity, increased labour discipline, increased profits, increased misery for the working class as a whole.

The supporters of the strategy reject this argument and say that theirs is one based on Socialist principles which they would fight tooth and nail to implement. Their sincerity and seriousness is not to be doubted but they are confronted by a Capitalist state and Capitalists who must maximise profits.

Any group with a strategy such as theirs who made serious inroads into the capacity for making profits would present the state and Capital with a crisis. Historically the ways in which Capitalists have removed obstacles to profitability and accumulation have proved to be exceedingly bloody. In this failure to recognise the nature of a Capitalist state armed to the teeth with the most sophisticated and co-ercive weapons in history the supporters of the alternative strategy are sowing deadly illusions.

While they are correct to call for greater democracy and involvement of working people in the abstract they are incorrect in the context of their call for a gradual change of society in which any serious challenge to the ruling order brings forth bloody opposition.

It is a challenge which could undermine the independence of the workers movement even further and de-fuse the possibilities of a Revolutionary transformation of society.

THE APRIL BUDGET —

WHAT PROSPECTS FOR REFLATION?

Against the backcloth of a generalised global recession Chancellor Healey's forthcoming budget would appear to be a spectacular non-event. However, from predictable quarters come the by now familiar demands for a reflationary budget, a boost for consumer spending, state injection of money and credit into the economy through tax cuts, increased public spending and so forth.

Such measures, it is argued, will stimulate the British economy out of recession, and in so doing will overcome Britain's chronic industrial stagnation, make British industry more competitive on the world market and reduce the present high level of unemployment. An audacious enough 'dash for growth' safeguarded by protectionist measures (import controls) will bring about Britain's economic recovery.



This familiar line of argument is most usually associated with the Tribune Group in the Labour Party and is voiced in the *Tribune* newspaper. It is also a view shared by the British Communist Party. (CP).

Central to the Tribune/CP view of the crisis is the antique Keynesian notion of 'lack of effective demand' being the casual factor. In fact cause and effect are inverted willy-nilly so that cause becomes effect and effect becomes cause. For example, in the March 10 issue of *Tribune* we have a headline which reads "Deflationary measures have pushed the world to the edge of disaster".

Now here is a clear example of cause-effect inversion: deflation is seen as the determining (that is, casual) factor in the world crisis; whereas in actual fact deflationary measures have been undertaken by governments in response to the conjoint crisis of falling profit rates and inflation. Deflation has been an effect of the crisis, not the cause.

CAUSAL FACTORS

The *Chartist* has consistently argued (see Nos. 48, 57, for example) that the casual factors in the present crisis are the historic tendency for the rate of profit to fall and the growing difficulties of realisation (of surplus value).

Similarly 'lack of effective demand' should be seen as being a result of the crisis rather than a casual factor. The present crisis of stagnation is primarily the result of the growing ratio of machinery (constant capital or dead, stored up labour) to manpower (variable capital or living labour). This increasing ratio — the rise in the organic composition of capital — will result in 1) A tendential decline in the rate of profit, and 2) The creation of an industrial reserve army of unemployed. (For fuller explanation see abovementioned issues of *Chartist*.)

Of course the lack of effective demand which will be brought about by the creation of this industrial reserve army will tend to compound an already existing crisis, adding to it a secondary problem of market contraction. In this sense the effect of the crisis will have a repercussive and exacerbating influence on the crisis.

DEMAND

But lack of effective demand — by which is meant lack of consumer demand cannot explain the prior phenomenon of the downturn in investment in both sections of industry: namely, in DEPT. I (capital goods) and DEPT. II (consumer goods). This investment downturn can in fact be directly attributed to those tendencies already mentioned.

Returning to *Tribune*, it is interesting to note that in the aforementioned copy, reference was made to an article by Harold Lever, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, in the *Sunday Times* of March 5. Apparently Lever has become a late convert to demand management. It is worthwhile examining some of Lever's statements, which *Tribune* took up with such alacrity, since they enjoy a certain degree of credence in the movement.

Lever's article itself contains a number of truths, half-truths, and ignorant assertions. He

begins his article with the wholly correct statement: "Britain cannot prosper unless the world prospers. [*Tribune* please note] But the world recession is worse than anything known since 1933. We have mass unemployment and currency instability greater than anything known in the post-war world. A remarkable period of advance in prosperity and world-trade, which marked the first decades of the post-war system has clearly ended."

Very perspicacious Mr Lever. He then goes on to attribute the present world depression to 1) The fivefold increase in oil prices brought about by the OPEC cartel. These price rises have led to a siphoning off of demand in the advanced countries thus bringing about depression, and 2) The deflationary policies pursued by western governments in this recessionary crisis.

Little wonder that *Tribune* joyfully quoted Lever as follows: "... there was no way deflation round the world could remove the aggregate deficit (created by the oil price-rise). All it could do — and it did it with a vengeance — was to shift the deficit from stronger countries to weaker countries. Instead therefore of replacing the demand siphoned off by OPEC, we actually reduced it. We made things worse. Instead of coping with the price-inflation (sic) effect of the oil-price explosion we added to it by tax increases involved in deflation. Whipped by the OPEC debt, we chastised ourselves with scorpions." (Lever — *Sunday Times*, quoted in *Tribune* March 10).



No wonder Lever is quoted with such alacrity in *Tribune*! The problem of world recession is (in the best Keynesian traditions) reduced to one of effective demand, or rather the siphoning off of such demand by the OPEC cartel. In the same front page article Richard Clements endorses this view.

"Deflationary policies, far from pulling the world back from the crisis created (sic!!) by the five-fold oil increase imposed by the OPEC countries, have pushed the world to the brink of a disastrous slump".

Now quite apart from the disgusting chauvinistic undertones of such statements, the whole notion that the oil-price rises 'imposed' by the OPEC cartel are responsible for the present recession is yet another cause-effect inversion. Let us examine the assertions of Messrs: Clements and Lever.

PETRODOLLARS

Firstly effective demand would only be siphoned off if these petrodollars were hoarded. In the instance of hoarding a liquidity crisis would certainly ensue. However, if these petrodollars are spent on goods and services in the imperialist countries (which they most certainly are — massively in the case of arms buying and banking) they can have a stimulating effect on those economies, in addition to providing a large pool of liquidity in those countries. In fact petrodollars for the most part exist as holdings in western currencies in western banks and as deposits and treasury notes of western governments. Far from creating a liquidity crisis, petrodollars provide additional liquidity — from which incidentally both US and European banks take their tribute in the form of interest. Additionally there is occurring petrodollar investment (albeit on a quite modest scale)—in long-term stocks. Iran's 100 million dollar investment in the German company Krupp being an example of this.

If this 'recycling' of petrodollars is not taking

by Frank Lee

place at a sufficient level to satisfy Clements and Lever it is hardly the fault of the OPEC countries. For if the indigenous capitalists of the imperialist metropolises won't invest in their own stagnant economies why should the OPEC countries be expected to? The unspendable claims on the rest of the world (petrodollars reserves) that Lever and Clements complain about are unspendable because, among other reasons, profit rates, stock and bond markets offer little attraction. So the pile-up of OPEC moneys in reserves rather than in productive investment is not a cause of the crisis of capitalism but a direct result of it. Both petrodollars reserves and the liquidity crisis are effects of the world slowdown of capitalist industrial production.

As to the oil price rises themselves: OPEC spokesmen have justified these on the grounds of the long-term price differentials between raw materials, their main export, and the food and finished products that the semi-colonial world must buy back from the imperialists. In this they are wholly correct.

COMIC

Finally Lever's suggestions as to how the crisis should be overcome have a slightly comic ring about them. He puts forward the view that those countries in surplus (Germany, Japan) should invest these surpluses in deficit countries (US, Italy, Britain).

"The surplus countries have an obligation (says who? FL) to see to it that these surpluses are swiftly and securely made available to the deficit countries at the right time in the right amounts and on the right terms so that, even during the protracted period of structural imbalance they can avoid inflicting on their trading partners the injuries of inflation and mass unemployment. It is our failure to redeploy the surpluses to replace lost demand which is at the heart of the world recession." (*Sunday Times* March 5).

This is such indescribable drivel that it is difficult to comment seriously upon it. Firstly, as with OPEC, why should foreign capitalists invest in countries where indigenous capitalists are not investing? And secondly, why should both Germany and Japan hand over their competitively earned surpluses to their trading rivals. Does Lever seriously expect such a policy of fiscal largesse from Germany and Japan. In the present cut-throat atmosphere of world trade such a policy would be madness. Not surprisingly Germany and Japan are not exactly falling over each other to distribute their trade surpluses to the needy.



This being said we may now turn our attention to the more pertinent question. Namely, what are the prospects of a reflationary budget. ... and what would be the effect (if any) of such a budget? According to *Tribune*: "The alternative policy — of getting free from IMF control, reflating at the rate of £4000 million for a full year with tax concessions, child benefit increases and more spending on housing, health, education, et cetera — will succeed only if it exposes these manoeuvrings (of banking and City circles — FL) for what they are. Only then will it be properly understood that there is much more room for boosting the real economy than has been officially admitted." (*Tribune* p5).

This is of course the orthodox Keynesian response to the crisis. It suffers from the paralytically parochial notion that Britain can undertake a 'national' solution to what is in fact a global problem. We have consistently argued in past editions of *Chartist* that Britain forms a component part of the world economy and rises and falls with it. There can be no 'British' recovery amidst a scenario of global stagnation; and the more astute representatives of the ruling class are fully aware of this:

"We have been suggesting in our forecasts for the past year that there was a serious possibility that world output growth would be distinctly below trend this year. The poor performance in Europe has become increasingly obvious as the months have gone by and it is now common to see estimates of continuing world stagnation with an expected deflationary effect upon UK output." (*Sunday Times* — *Business News*).

STAGNATION

It is for precisely this reason (ie. global stagnation) that the April budget is to be seen as a forthcoming non-event. The *Sunday Times* article correctly concludes:

"It is becoming increasingly clear that individual countries have little power to reduce unemployment until the whole world is expanding rapidly."

And global expansion has to be ruled out for the foreseeable future. The world economy has reached a position of stagnant equilibrium. Output in OECD countries has been in steady decline since 1976. 5.25% in that year, 4% in 1977, and an expected further contraction in the coming year. Even the mighty W. German economy doesn't expect to grow at more than 3% (maximum) during 1978; this being similar to France's expected growth rate. As for the US economy. ... here is a serious cause for concern. The weakness of the Dollar on the world money markets, and the alarming slump on the Dow Jones industrial index — from a bull market high of 1,014.79 in September 1976 to just over 700 today — allied to a large and seemingly chronic balance of payments deficit has prompted the hard-headed business periodical *Management Today* to comment:

"The crisis of capitalism may have been exaggerated. But the crisis of Wall Street the citadel of capitalism, is all too real. The alarming loss of the private investor is only one aspect of a deep change which now seems most unlikely to be reversed. The effect on the nation will be far reaching."

NO RECOVERY

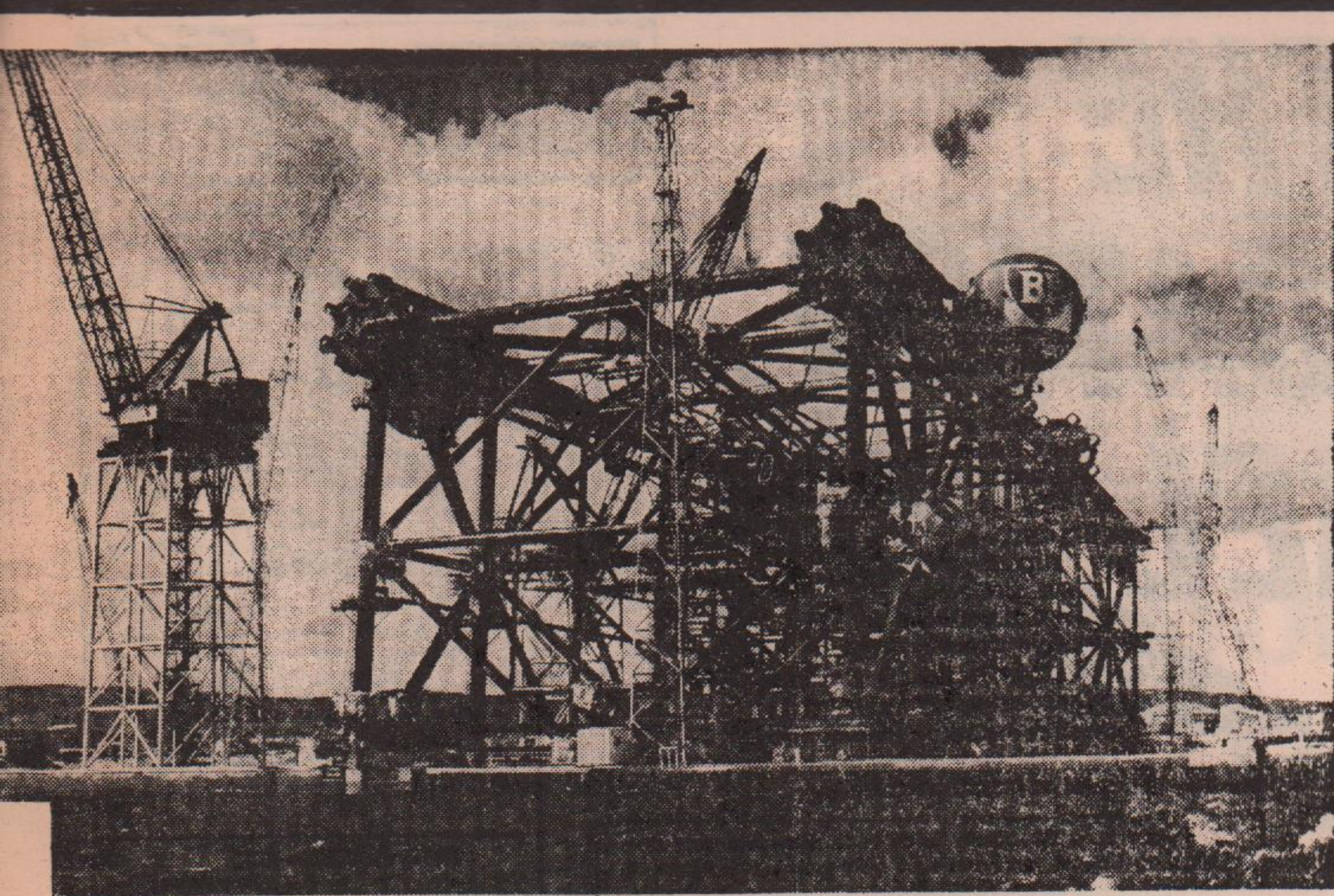
In fact this situation of global stagnation effectively and definitively rules out any 'British' recovery. However let us consider the *Tribune* case for reflation as it stands. Firstly the initial premise, namely, that the crisis is due to lack of effective demand, is false. The crisis as we have argued is one of declining profit rates. (For empirical verification see *Chartist* editions 48, 57, *Lloyds Bank Review*, *Bank of England Quarterly Bulletin*, etc). Both the *Sunday Times* and *Bank of England Quarterly Bulletin* make this point respectively:

"It is still difficult to see us making up any of the ground lost between 1973-75: Falling rates of return on capital caused by the low level of capacity utilisation make an investment boom unlikely (to say the least — FL) and it could be many years before we resume (if ever — FL) the



Harold Lever





path of steady and rapid growth that was taken for granted during the late 50's and 60's." (Sunday Times).

In fact the low level of capacity utilisation is an effect rather than a cause of the crisis: profits are not low because capacity is underutilised rather, capacity is underutilised because profits are low. In other respects however the statement is quite accurate. In a similar vein the Bank of England Quarterly Bulletin comments:

"... company profitability remains historically low, and the share of net profits in net domestic income, although rising from about 4.5% in 1976 to 5.5% in the first half of 1977 (this can be largely attributed to the Labour government's wage-cutting social-contact. — FL) is still little more than half what it was in the early 1970's."

Even if the sum proposed by *Tribune* (£4000m) were injected into the economy, it would by no means follow that this would lead to an increase in the aggregate level of investment. The most probable outcome of such a course of action would be a short-lived (and highly inflationary, we might add) consumer boom lasting 18 months at the most. Similar in fact to the Heath-Barber inflationary boom of 1972-73.



Essential to any long-term economic recovery are profit rates conducive to large-scale investment in both capital goods (DEPT.I) and consumer goods (DEPT.II). A boost to consumer spending will not affect the profit rates in DEPT. I one iota. It is essential to bear in mind that the crisis in this sector (DEPT.I) steel, shipbuilding, heavy engineering, etc was not the result of lack of effective consumer demand, but the result of declining profit rates.

If anything DEPT.I is overcapitalised relative to its profitability — hence the existence of spare capacity; this is one reason why new investment is unlikely to transpire, consumer boom notwithstanding. Secondly, any significant investment in DEPT.I (disregarding for a moment the prohibitive profit rates) must be based upon an extrapolation of long-term consumer demand. Industrialists are hardly likely to invest massively in new factories, new machinery, plant and equipment et cetera on the strength of an 18 month inflationary soap-bubble. The *Sunday Times* is perceptive enough to note this:

"Industry has often been accused of undertaking an 'investment strike'. We would not be surprised to see accusations of an 'output strike' later this year if the higher consumer demand has little impact upon the level of production. And yet this is the inevitable result of manufacturing a consumer boom when demand is relatively depressed elsewhere. The prospect of a boom lasting a year or 18 months carries greater risks

for industry: there is the lurking fear of costly errors through expanding output on the back of a spending spree only to find that demand is sharply cut back as a balance of payments crisis emerges." (Sunday Times.)

And an inflation crisis to boot. The sort of anti-cyclic financing (reflation) advocated by *Tribune* cannot be carried out as generalised policy) during periods of capitalist crisis. In a period where the mass of social surplus value is diminishing, government initiated deficit-financing will inevitably result in 1) An exacerbation in the decline of the rate of profit by the state making increasing claims on the existing mass of social surplus value, or 2) Stoke up inflation by excessive credit expansion, or 3) (And this is most likely) result in a combination of both.

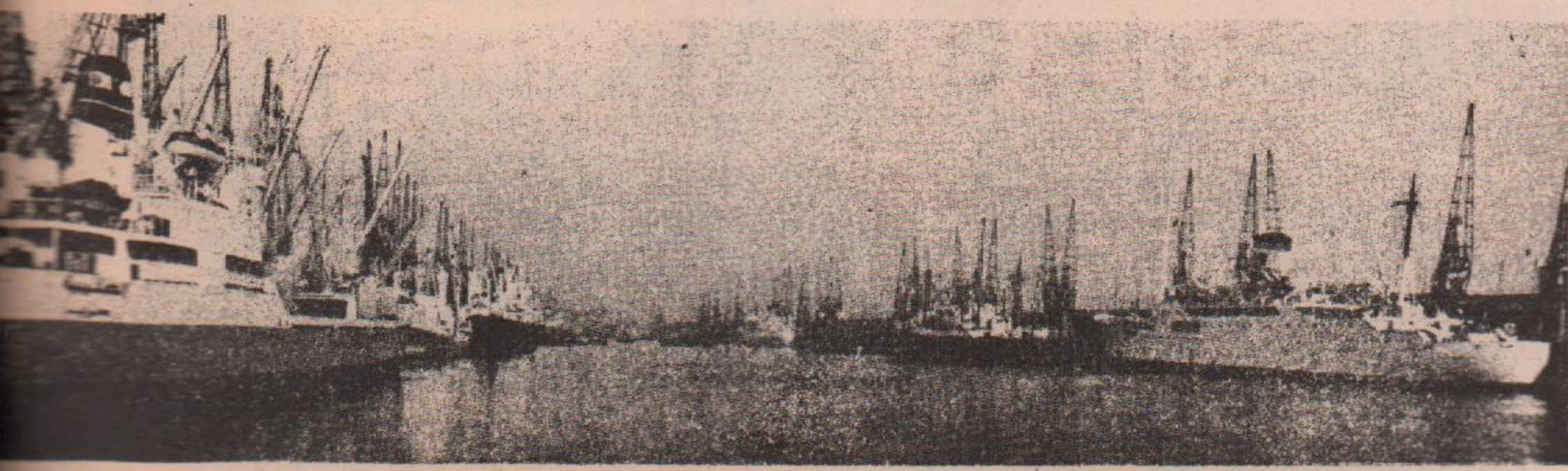
Anti-cyclic financing, deficit-financing, demand-management etc, in fact the whole Keynesian package can in fact only be implemented with any success during a period of capitalist expansion — such as the post-war period for example. The state is only able to make claims on the existing mass of social surplus value while that mass is expanding: such claims will not have any significant effect on corporate profitability. However the prerequisites for such expansions are the wholesale devalorisation and destruction of capital and capital values, and a lowering of the organic composition of capital through such devalorisation.

CONCENTRATION

This will give rise to a greater degree of centralisation and a greater concentration of capital, which is to say a generalised re-structuring of capital will take place. Now only if these prerequisites are met may a fresh round of accumulation (a period of expansion) take place.

In fact the whole *Tribune* case for reflation is ultimately utopian (and in certain respects reactionary like import controls) precisely because it is applicable only after capitalism has gone through and emerged on the other side of the crises and is ready to recommence the accumulation process. (In fact *Tribune*'s reflationary notions are predicted on the central idea that British industry is suffering from underinvestment and undercapitalisation; the obverse if the case. Capitalism is stagnant due to overcapitalisation; this is to say that capital has been overproduced relative to its profitability.

What capitalism needs is precisely a decapitalisation and a lowering of the organic composition — through the mechanism of crisis — in order to raise profit rates and recommence accumulation). It should hardly need adding that at present we are only at the beginning of the crisis, and that therefore deflationary policies will (correctly from capitalism's viewpoint) be the order of the day. The world faces an indefinite period of economic stagnation. Precisely how this long-term crisis will be resolved will be contingent on the balance and preparedness of class forces. It is in this context that demands for 'reflationary' budgets must be seen as both utopian and irrelevant.



The Quigley Report on Six-County Economic Reform Deepening the Divisions

by Colin Adams



A major feature of the Better Life for All campaign is the demand for social and economic reform of Northern Ireland. The Communist Party in its pamphlet — "Northern Ireland — a programme for action", published in 1975, said, "Much government assistance is required to give aid to the development of local industry", and "it is imperative that there should be massive state investment in Northern Ireland industry".

The Labour Party NEC, in its 1977 report, also talked of the need for increased state aid, whilst shamelessly defending British rule in the North. In this context, it is necessary to examine a report of 1976, produced by a team of civil servants under Dr. Quigley, whose brief was to carry out a survey of economic and industrial strategy in Northern Ireland.

In the Preface to the report, Roy Mason points out that Northern Ireland's economic problems are not merely cyclical, but reflect long term structural weaknesses. He is also shrewd enough to point out that Ministers are in no way committed to the policies proposed in the document. In fact, almost two years later very little has been implemented and the problems here become worse. The report looks at three particular problems: high unemployment, loss of production capacity due to past closures, and loss of the North's competitive edge vis-a-vis the South.

HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT

The unemployment figures for Northern Ireland have always been proportionately much higher than for Great Britain. In 1975 the rate for Northern Ireland was 7.4% while that for Great Britain was 3.9%. Within the statelet itself there are areas of extremely high unemployment. For example, the figures for April 1976 show that in Strabane male unemployment was 34.1%. The sheer size of the problem is indicated in the report when it said that merely to reduce unemployment to 5% by 1980, 61,000 new jobs would have to be created. (This figure assumes an annual net emigration of 7,000).

The figure is obviously now out of date. The extent to which Mason has approached the problem can be gauged from his announcement on March 8th this year to spend an extra £13.5 million on public services in the next year to create 3,500 new jobs and preserve a further 1,800.

It is clear that with the closures of past years, there is a lack of productive capacity to expand and thus provide employment. Quigley would like to see the State take a lead in directly providing employment but even then can only see a maximum of 1,500 jobs per annum being so created. Quigley also admits that, "However successful the Province may be in generating investment from within, it will continue to be dependent on a large inflow of capital, since only 22% of firms employing over 250 are locally controlled."

Quigley looks to the multinationals but is immediately faced with problems posed by the very nature of the partition of Ireland. It cites as one of the greatest disincentives to foreign investors the competitive edge which the South has over the North. The 26-county government has devised a series of measures to attract investment and Quigley basically proposes "out-bribing" the South. Measures proposed include 60% capital grants and "tax-holidays" on profits.

On labour costs the report suggests and then discounts subsidies to employers and prefers "to leave it to employers and unions to work out whatever measures are needed to ensure that pay levels do not outstrip industry's ability to compete in UK and world markets."

The proposals in the report are therefore

paradoxical. On the one hand the State cannot provide all the jobs necessary to eradicate chronic unemployment and so has to look to overseas investors. On the other hand, these investors are only interested in low-cost, high-profit projects. Quigley as much as says this: "Changes in technology reduce the number of jobs produced by every £1 invested and, in some cases, new investment in existing plants will have the specific object of improving efficiency and reducing employment."

Throughout the report, Quigley relies on two assumptions which make the implementation of the proposals at present unrealistic. Firstly, it was assumed that the UK economy was at the beginning of an upswing which was not evident then and is still not so. Secondly, to implement the proposals would need a massive increase in public expenditure to a level far above that expended in the past by the British Government in its so-called regional policy. The report was written at a time when the cuts in public expenditure were just taking effect and rather than a massive increase there has been a contraction.

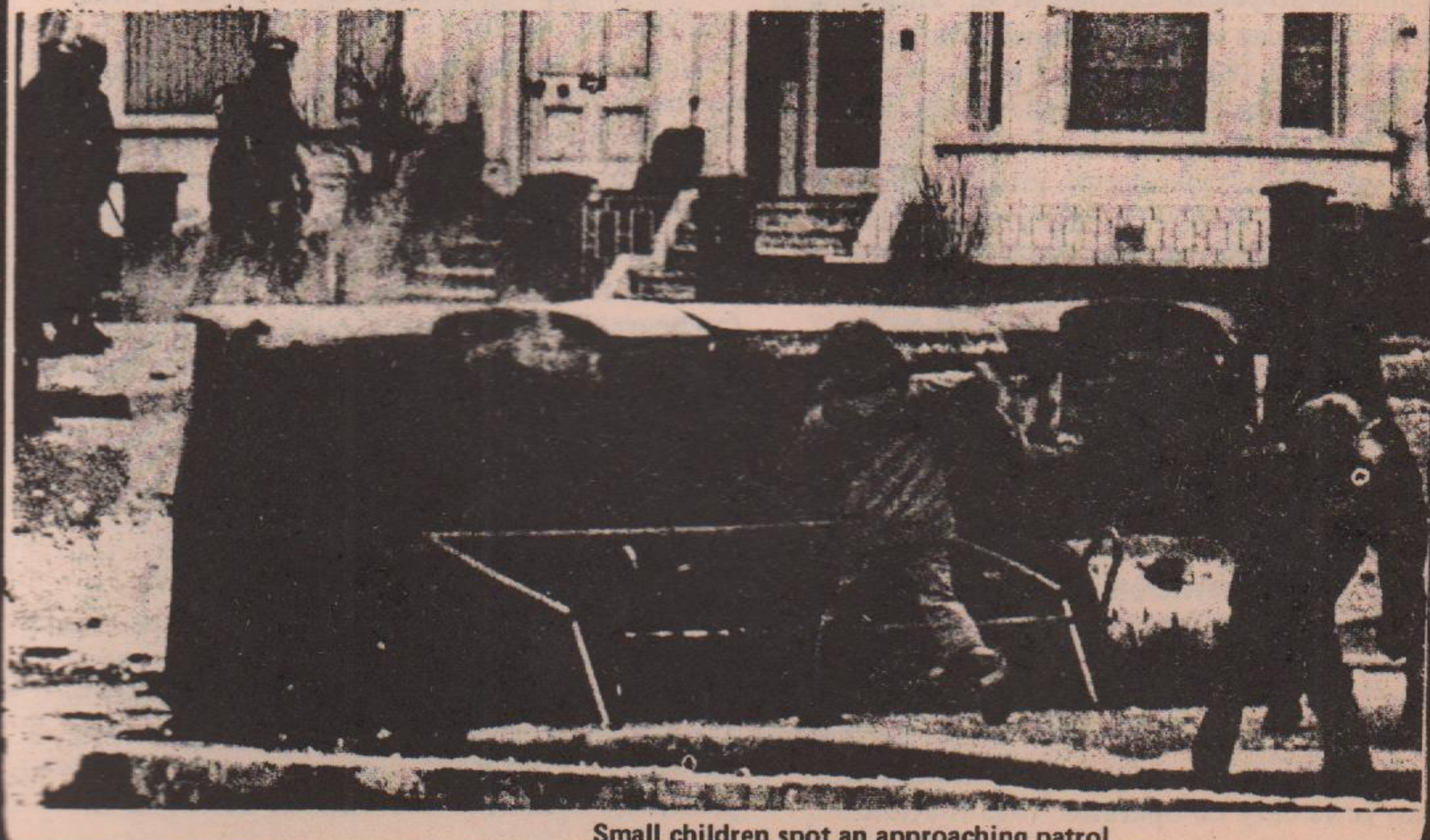
Furthermore, the theme which crops up constantly in the report is violence. In the Introduction the report has this to say: "This report is written against a background of continuing violence in the Province, which in our view can only have the most severely negating effect on the economic well-being of Northern Ireland and in particular upon the future prospects for inward investment."

Later it says that the primary condition for development in Northern Ireland is "a swift return to the kind of environment which creates business confidence."

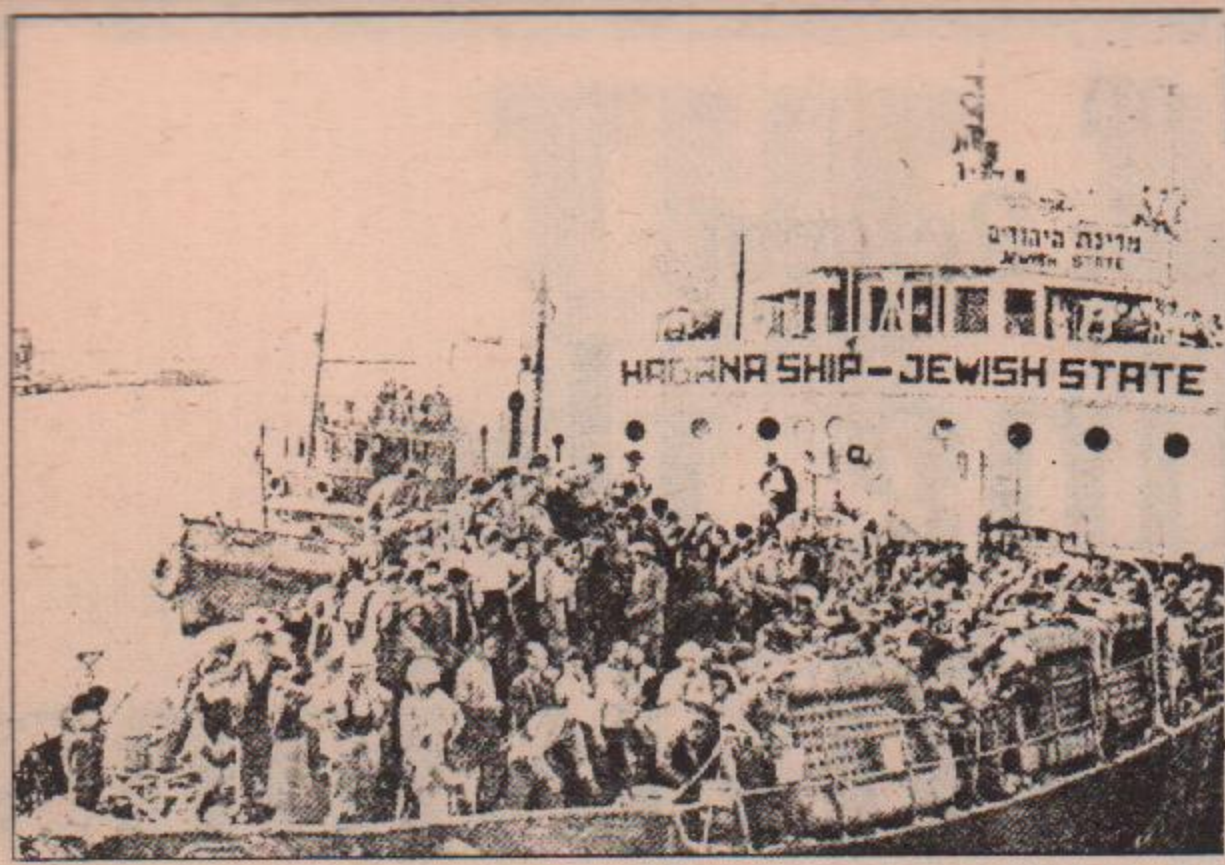
Thus the focal point of the Government's strategy remains the smashing of all nationalistic resistance. In fact, the main increase in public expenditure in the Six Counties has been to the security forces, to fund the growth of state repression.

In conclusion, to call for the economic reform of the North is to call for something far beyond the size and resources of the British Government. To follow such a strategy, as outlined in Quigley, would be to expect the two parts of Ireland, so divided by Britain, to cut each others' throats in an effort to secure foreign investment. Far from leading to unity, it would ensure that Ireland remained divided and even more under the control of British and US imperialism.

Those who call for such reform of the Six County statelet and condemn the nationalists who fight back against British domination only identify themselves with the interests of the British state. The economic and social problems of Ireland as a whole cannot begin to be solved until Ireland is rid of British domination.



Small children spot an approaching patrol



Mid-East focus

THE FOUNDATION OF ISRAEL

Mid-East Focus

Hagana ships brought Jews to Palestine in the 1930's and 1940's.

WHILE THE *Chartist* condemns the recent Israeli invasion of Lebanon, we recognise that such aggressive acts are necessary for Israel to survive. As long as the Palestinians refuse to accept their expulsion from Palestine, then the Arab states will not be able to make concessions that are acceptable to Israel, and war will continue, on and off, in the Middle East.

So those who believe that Israel should not protect itself (and for a state as small as Israel, attack is the only form of defence) must agree with the *Chartist* that this Jewish state should be overthrown and replaced by a democratic secular state. This is what the Palestinian Liberation Organisation are fighting for.

Such a view isn't popular in the British Labour movement. From the right to the Tribune Group, from Eric Heffer to Merlyn Rees, Labour leaders express their support for Israel. They admire the kibbutzim — the small, mainly agricultural, communes which are democratically run by the members. They point to the Histadrut — the mighty trade union federation which organises most of the workers. They admire the parliamentary democracy which they contrast to the Arab military dictatorship and feudal oligarchies. They accuse all anti-zionists of being anti-semitic.

EXCLUSION

Most anti-zionists are not anti-semitic. But when they call Israel a racist society, they miss the point. What distinguishes the Israeli state is not its racism towards the Arabs living within its borders but its exclusion of these Arabs from Israeli society. Unlike the Rhodesians or South Africans the Israelis are not concerned with exploiting Arab Labour but only giving jobs to Jews. To establish this state for Jews alone they had to 'encourage' half a million of its original inhabitants to leave and not let them back.

Their claim to Palestine because Jews lived there two thousand years ago is rather ridiculous and was dealt with in 'Myths of Zionism' in February's *Chartist*. For 1900 years they had sung 'Next year in Jerusalem' every Passover. Few had bothered to make the journey. Even up till the 1930's Zionism was very weak and unattractive to most Jews. The Nazi holocaust changed this. Nearly a million survivors of the extermination camps didn't want to remain in Central Europe. Britain and the US didn't let them in. They had nowhere to go but Israel. There they found a Jewish state apparatus — the Yishuv — ready to receive them, even though Palestine was still governed by Britain. How was the Yishuv established?

ANTI-SEMITISM

The wave of anti-semitism that ripped through France at the turn of the century shocked Herzl, one of the founders of Zionism. He expected pogroms in Russia but not in civilised France which had done so much to liberate Jews. If anti-semitism could erupt in France, then immigration from Eastern Europe to America or Western Europe would not solve the 'Jewish Problem'. The anti-semites and the Zionists agreed that Jews were the cause of anti-semitism. That is, the presence of a mass of aliens who looked different and had a different culture to the indigenous population — the Jews. These Jews weren't like expatriate English or Germans because they had no state to protect them. They were different to other peoples. There were few Jewish soldiers and almost no Jewish farmers at all. They had a further handicap in being so heavily involved in moneylending. If the Jews had their own state — as Jewish as France was French — then even those Jews who remained outside it would be more respected. Assimilation into Gentile society was doomed to failure. Zionists believe they were vindicated by the Nazi experience. The German Jews insisted they were German, but the Nazis still identified and murdered them.

The Zionist Congress, held in Basle in 1897, decided to try to found a Jewish state in Palestine. They planned to raise money from rich western Jews to buy land to settle Jews mainly from eastern Europe. The Jewish National Front Fund bought land from wealthy Arabs and only allowed Jews to settle on it. They sometimes evicted the Arab tillers and sometimes paid them compensation.

The Histadrut was established as a specifically Jewish labour organisation that would persuade Jewish employers to only employ Jews. It also set up Jews only co-operative organisations.

BY BERNARD MISRAHI

In this second article in our occasional series about the roots of the present Middle East situation Bernard Misrahi examines the events leading up to the foundation of the Israeli state in 1948

Many Zionists, mainly Russian, wanted to build a socialist society. They saw the task of Jewish socialists was neither to work in the Social Democratic (Bolshevik or Menshevik wing) Party nor in the Jewish Bund but to pioneer a socialist society in Palestine. They established communes, often on drained land, where all the property was shared, where decisions were taken at meetings of all the members. In fact the founders of the Kibbutzim and the Histadrut were to lead the Jewish state from the 1920s to this year when Labour lost the elections.

ONLY PEOPLE

Don't think that the Jews only Histadrut was a labour aristocracy on the lines of the white South African movement. They wanted to do ALL the jobs. In fact many of the socialist Zionists venerated manual labour. They wanted to get their hands mucky. One of the tragedies of the Jewish people, according to them, was that since the Jews had been expelled from Palestine 2,000 years ago Jews had never got their hands mucky.

Nor did Jewish capitalists want to exploit cheap Arab labour. Life was made very difficult for those who did. The Jews did not want to be the top people in Palestine they wanted to be the ONLY people there.

All the Zionists, socialists or otherwise, wanted "A land without people for a people without a land". Socialist Zionists like Borochoff got themselves into knots trying to reconcile Zionism with marxism. What was the problem in Jews colonising Palestine if no-one else lived there? After they'd evicted about half a million of the inhabitants of this land without a people, the Zionists still didn't know what the fuss was all about. They never recognised the Palestinians as a separate people. They were Arabs — like Iraqis, Egyptians or Algerians. These Arabs had about fifteen states covering about two million square miles. Why couldn't they let the Jews have ONE state which covered less than ten thousand square miles? Surely these states could resettle a few hundred thousands of their compatriots?

BRITISH IN PALESTINE

Turkey lost its Middle-Eastern empire during the First World War. Britain and France carved up the area between them, the British grabbing Palestine. The area was designated a mandate. Britain was to control it for a limited period before handing over control to the people living there. But which people? The Arabs or the Jews? The British offered Palestine to both.

The Arabs were quite prepared to share Palestine with whoever was living there at the time. They feared the unlimited immigration that the Zionists were encouraging would eventually give them a majority. They didn't fancy being kicked off the land when it was bought by the Jewish National Fund either.

Not that Palestine was a popular destination for emigrating Jews before 1945. Of the millions of Jews who left the Russian Empire before 1914, only a few thousand went to Israel, and most of these didn't stay. Immigration didn't increase much between the wars either. For the Zionists, immigration was 'aliyah' or 'going-up'. (to heaven?) Just as emigration was 'going-down'. Most Jewish emigrants gave heaven a miss if they could get to New York. But after the holocaust they had no choice. There was nowhere to go but Palestine. But even after hundreds of thousands of refugees from fascism came in, the Jews were still outnumbered two to one by the Arab Palestinians.

The United Nations, amongst others, proposed numerous schemes to partition Palestine and avoid the inevitable conflict. Hashomer Hatzair, a left Zionist, even proposed a bi-national state. But this idea got no support whatsoever. The UN plan was to partition Palestine so as to give the

maximum area, where the Jews were in a bare majority, to a Jewish state. (see map below).

The Zionists thought that this partition would be enough to start with. The opportunity would surely present itself to take more. The Arabs were opposed to any Jewish state. The problem for the Zionists was that 40% of the people in their state were Arab. Okay, this percentage would be reduced by the massive immigration of Jews that was expected. But where could they settle these Jews while the Arabs still occupied so much of the land. How could the Zionist armies persuade them to leave?

The extreme right-wing Irgun Zvai Leumi (People's Armed Organisation) led by Menachem Begin, murdered two hundred and fifty unarmed men, women, and children in the village of Deir Yassin. The villagers had been FRIENDLY to the Zionists. The message was clear "We don't care whether you Arabs are friendly or not — clear out!" The leaders of the official army, the Haganah (Defence) condemned this atrocity. But they were happy to reap the results of the panicked evacuation it helped cause and their protestations of horror cut little ice with the Palestinians fleeing from the war, though the Haifa council were persuading their townfolk to stay, they couldn't compete with the Haganah who were bullying Arabs in other areas to leave.

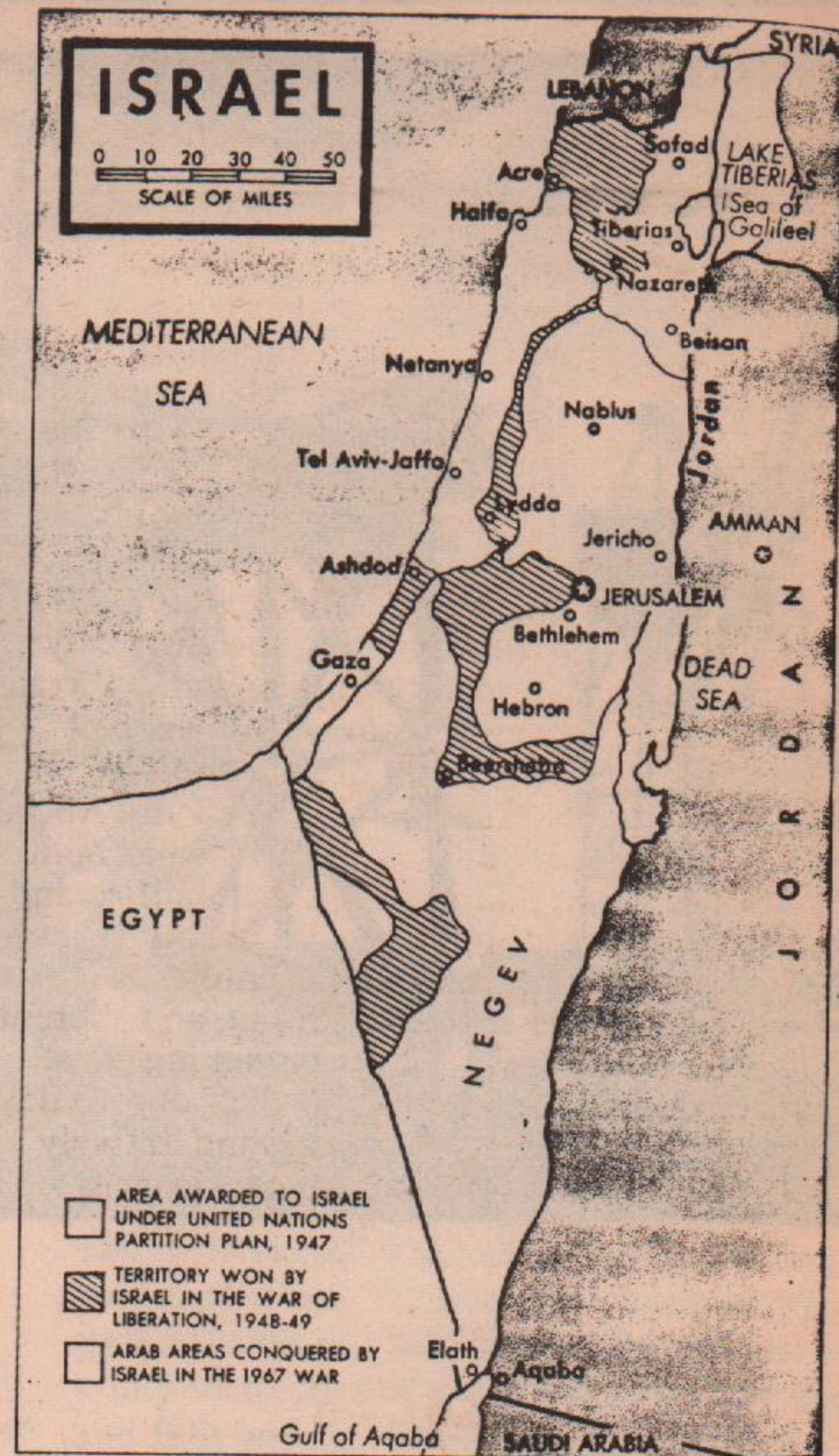
TERRIFIED

The Zionists deny that they built their state at the expense of the original inhabitants. These people left voluntarily, they claim. The reality is that they left because they were terrified of what would happen to them if they didn't. They also hoped to be returning soon. But the Israelis never allowed them back. They settled Jews on the land that they vacated. The first law the Israeli state passed gave every Jew, anywhere in the world, the right to live in Israel. But those Arabs born in Haifa could never return.

If the Israelis won that war the Palestinians certainly lost it. The Israelis took Western Galilee (still predominantly Arab): the Jordanians took the West Bank and the Egyptians took the Gaza strip. The Palestinians were reluctant to even build permanent shelters.

The Israeli state not only had sophisticated military equipment but the skilled personnel to operate it. Massive donations from Jews abroad helped pay for this material. Despite being outnumbered by the Arab armies, they easily beat them in 1956 and 1967 and, not so easily, in 1973. But they had to maintain a constant state of mobilisation for war. Every man and woman had to serve four years in the army. Every man had to return to the reserves twice a year. There were few draft-dodgers as most Israelis believed that the Arabs wanted to throw them into the sea. Ahmed Shukairy, the PLO leader in 1967 had threatened a worse fate.

But every time the Israelis won a war, the Palestinians were still there, defiant. The PLO suffered smashing defeats in Jordan in 1970 and in Lebanon in 1976 (and perhaps 1978). But they could still unsettle the whole Middle Eastern situation by insisting on concessions that the Israelis could not afford to give and making it



Homeless Jews Pour into Israel

impossible for the Arab leaders to completely ignore them.

The Israelis were elated by their victory in 1967. They conquered the Golan Heights from which the Syrians had bombarded kibbutzim by the Sea of Galilee. They put several hundred miles of desert between Tel Aviv and Egypt. No longer was Israel only ten miles wide near Netanya. To cap it all, they now had East Jerusalem with all its sacred sites.

The religious Jews thought it was a miracle. But God had thrown in a few bigger problems. Namely, several hundred thousand refugees who had been glowering over the border for nineteen years. They hadn't fled this time. With the pitifully low level of Jewish immigration they couldn't be integrated into the Jewish state. Despite massive financial inducements from the government, few but fanatical Zionists could be persuaded to settle in these recently occupied territories. Yet how could they cede the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to the PLO? Why should they be satisfied with that and not push for more as they, the Zionists had done?

Despite Begin's occasional rantings about a Greater Israel from Damascus to the Nile, the logic of Zionism is not expansion for its own sake. More territory usually means more Arabs, and they don't always leave as conveniently as they did in 1948-9. But Israel has to invade its neighbours to maintain the security of its borders, and sometimes it has to hold on to territory.

NO PEACE

Nor is Israel a particularly religious state, despite certain concessions to orthodox Jews. It is certainly not as dominated by religion as Pakistan or Saudi Arabia or some Catholic countries in Europe. The Zionists didn't care whether Jews went to synagogue every day, kept their heads covered or ate kosher. They granted religious freedom to Christians and Moslems. For them, the Jews were a Nationality not just a Religion.

Israel was to be a refuge from anti-semitism. Yet Jews are in more danger in Israel than anywhere else. Hostility to Jews has increased in the Moslem world where hitherto it was much less common than in Christian Europe. Yet the Zionists insist that anti-semitism cannot be effectively fought in gentile societies. The conditions in which their state was created has made in a lasting peace impossible as long as that exclusively Jewish state remains. In the next article in this series we will concentrate on how all the negotiations since 1967 have brought this peace, desired by all, so they say, no nearer.

The Zionists have succeeded in one respect. They wanted to construct a Jewish state that was like any other state. They now have Jewish police, Jewish soldiers, Jewish torturers, and Jewish oppressors of another people.



Soon after those new-comers settled down in Palestine, they joined the terrorist organizations in



order to disperse Arab inhabitants from their own land. (Massacre of Deir Yassin)... Arab Resistance.

IT IS A common belief that the welfare provisions introduced by the 1945 Labour Government for the working class brought socialism many steps nearer and even laid the foundations of a classless society.

Indeed Labour politicians, notably Anthony Crosland, claimed that we now live in a 'post-capitalist' society that has abolished the evils of capitalism. Many believe, in addition, that if anything is wrong with the welfare state today, it is that there is too little of everything, too few hospitals, schools, clinics, benefits and so on.

A close examination of the welfare state, reveals that far from bringing socialism any nearer, it in fact operates in many and various subtle ways to preserve the existing social relations of a class society. If we look carefully at the National Insurance and Social Security systems, at who receives what and how much, we find not only inequalities and anomalies but also much more deeply ingrained assumptions about families, marriage and parenthood that are an inherent part of a capitalist society. In making these assumptions, the schemes, in their day to day operations tie labels on people and actively encourage the perpetuation, in a specific bourgeois form, of the nuclear family.

FAMILY

Though this affects all of us, children, women and men, the part played by the State through its welfare policies can most clearly be seen by a study of the position of women in particular. This is because of the role in the family that is assigned to women by the State.

The Welfare State regards a woman's primary roles to be those of wife and mother; it assumes that she is married and economically dependent on her husband, and that any work she undertakes is a secondary function and temporary. The National Insurance scheme has changed little since the Act setting it up in 1946, itself based on the findings of the Beveridge Report of 1942. At that time the Labour Government were anxious to promote full male employment, and one means to this end was the reduction of the female labour force from the unprecedented heights it had reached during the war. The TUC was in full support of this. Beveridge's attitude to the part played by women in society was this: "In the next thirty years housewives as mothers have vital work to do in ensuring the adequate continuance of the British race and of British ideals in the world. . . . The attitude of the housewife to gainful employment outside the home should not be the same as that of a single woman. She has other duties." Thus Beveridge built into the scheme several major inequalities in the treatment of women which

WHOSE WELFARE STATE?



A woman's place in the Welfare State

BY LIZ MUIR

have persisted for over a quarter of a century in spite of actual changes in their social and economic position.

Single women were to be treated the same way as single men except that their contributions to the National Insurance scheme were to be lower. This was justified on the grounds that a man, unlike a woman, was making contributions "on behalf of himself and his wife, as for a team".

The treatment of married women revealed bigger differences based on the assumption that married women were not normally in paid employment, an out-of-date assumption even in 1946. So a married woman to this day receives lower rates of unemployment and sickness benefit.

If the National Insurance Act assumes that married women, especially those with dependent children, do not work, likewise it assumes that the man is the 'head of the household', the breadwinner, that he ought to work if capable of it. A man left on his own with dependent children will have great difficulty in obtaining supplementary benefits in order to stay at home to look after his children even temporarily.

Similarly, a man receiving unemployment or sickness benefit gets an additional allowance for his wife if she is not working. She only has to prove she is not working, she does not have to prove that she cannot work. In contrast, a married woman while unemployed or sick does not get an allowance for her husband added to her basic benefit (which is anyway only three-quarters the full rate) unless he is incapable of working. In these ways the State makes it difficult and

disadvantageous for men and women to reverse roles, while the growth of any other social groupings than the female dependent variety is inhibited.

The high premium placed on marriage is also revealed if we look at the different ways the social security system treats women without husbands. The system discriminates not according to need but according to legal status. Widows are treated more generously than divorced women. For example, a wife who is deserted or divorced by her husband has no claims on the National Insurance scheme if he remarries unless she has contributed in her own right. A widow, however, can inherit an old age pension based on her husband's contribution and can also receive a widow's pension. Since 1961 a widow no longer loses her pension if she cohabits. Separated, divorced or unmarried mothers dependent on supplementary benefit immediately lose all their benefit if they cohabit.

The cohabitation ruling remains the most notorious of all welfare provisions affecting women. It is the most glaring embodiment of the basic assumption of marriage which is still that a man should pay for the sexual and housekeeping services of his wife. For the majority of women, already discriminated against in the labour market despite the Equal Pay Act, marriage is the only viable economic option open to them.

It is on the question of the cohabitation ruling that the State has refused to budge an inch, despite attacks from all quarters and a rumpus in the Press about 'sex snoopers'.

Indeed the Tory Government in 1962 increased the number of special investigators, while the new instructions to investigators in 1976 did nothing to change the ruling, but simply suggested that it should be administered more tactfully.

It might be thought that now we have a Sex Discrimination Act on the statute books there is no longer any discrimination on grounds of sex in our society. This is manifestly not the case. The Sex Discrimination Act specifically excluded all matters relating to National Insurance and Social Security, and there has been no hint of this being considered for reform in the future.

In any case the Act implicitly assumes that discrimination on grounds of sex is merely a matter of an individual's attitudes and therefore cannot exist in a structural or institutional form. So there is provision for the individual to be taken to task for his or her sexist attitudes, but there is no provision for the bias which is built into the very structure of the institutions of our society and which affect everyone, to be even questioned. We cannot deny that the Sex Discrimination Act is a set in the right direction, but we must be aware of its limitations and consequences.

The Welfare State has undoubtedly brought the working class many advantages but only alongside an ever greater degree of social control. Only by clearly understanding the ways in which the State perpetuates particular forms of social relations, even relations such as sexual ones that we consider to be our own private and separate domain, can we begin to struggle for our self-determination and a free society.

FRENCH ELECTIONS

by MARTIN COOK

THE UNEXPECTED DEFEAT of the Union of the Left in the Second Round of the French parliamentary elections on March 19 must represent the most crushing setback to the European left since the November 1975 debacle in Portugal. Unstable Southern Europe now has a new stalemate situation to add to those in Spain and Italy, while Northern Europe moves inexorably to the Right for now. The scope of the defeat is not mitigated by the outrageously undemocratic French electoral system, which denied the left victory after their First Round lead and gave the Right a majority of 90-odd in the 491-seat National Assembly on the basis of a one per cent lead! (50½% - 49½%).

The major loser must be the French Socialist Party (PS) led by Francois Mitterrand. Having postured as the "largest" party in France with showings of 28% or more in opinion polls, they got only 22.5% of the First Round (which gives a more accurate index of voters' preferences). The Communists (PCF) got also slightly less than expected (20.5%) but their relative strength in the Left is far more now in electoral terms (in industrial 'clout' they have always been the dominant partner). In fact, there is little doubt that the abrasive tactics of PCF leader Georges Marchais are what have torpedoed the Left's first serious chance at electoral victory since the mid-40s.

If they have knifed the Socialists in the back through their unseemly bickering over the details (not the substance) of the Left's reformist Common Programme, this is hardly some sinister Moscow Plot. It flows from a well-founded suspicion that once Mitterrand had made himself Prime Minister with Communist votes, he would seek the first opportunity to ditch his allies and go into a bloc with the liberal Giscardian wing of the governing majority (both he and Giscard have made little secret of their temptations in this direction). This is just what happened when the USA cracked the whip in 1947 (Carter met Mitterrand on a recent flying visit).

The PCF were determined to have a fair share of the cabinet seats and deputies as well as a guaranteed voice in policy before writing the PS leadership any blank cheque. The former are also in a better position to shrug off this set-back - as a neo-Stalinist party of activists and T.U. militants, their horizons are not so dominated by parliamentary aims as the social democrats are

Nonetheless, Mitterrand's resurrection of the PS as an effective force remains an impressive feat. His own background is odd. He was a minister in most of the "revolving door" short-lived ministries of the Fourth Republic (1946-58) as a member of a small liberal group, then ran against De Gaulle for President in 1965 with PS/PCF support but no official party ties (this put him really on the map).

Meanwhile the Socialists (then known as SFIO) were in a long period of decline from their former status as the leading workers' party. Their participation in the Fourth Republic's governments: suppressing workers' struggles, butchering Vietnamese and Algerian freedom fighters, plus stalwart anti-communism - helped discredit them. Many of the most active and able sections left, leaving a rump of party hacks and notables (local dignitaries) presided over by ex-P.M. Guy Mollet. In the 1969 presidential elections, SFIO candidate Gaston Deferre received a pathetic 5% vote.

VICTORY

Mitterrand and his caucus of followers moved in on the party, attracting support from all those disgusted with Mollet's old guard (including the "Marxist" CERES grouping). Victory was achieved at the 1971 Epinay Congress. As the first stage of the smooth-sell marketing operation, the party's name was changed to the PS. Soon links were cut with the moribund Force Ouvriere union federation in favour of the trendy and dynamic (ex-Catholic) CFDT grouping. The PS attracted such luminaries as ex-guerilla warfare fan Regis Debray and ex-leaders of the Leftist PSU such as Michel Rocard. By 1973 the party vote was nearly up to the PCF's, and in 1974 Mitterrand gave Giscard a close battle for the Presidency itself (this remains his ambition for 1981!).

The 'new' PS sought to fill a vacuum by appealing to more affluent and educated voters (teachers, technicians, civil servants etc.) fed up with the paternalist authoritarianism of the Gaullists, yet suspicious of the allegedly de-Stalinised Communist Party. 'Self-management', ecology, women's equality and other issues were seized on. In order to compete with the Communists for industrial influence, radical democracy

Mitterrand's Dream in Ruins?



Mitterrand: Trapped; Marchais: Surprised

about nationalisations, minimum wages and social welfare has not been lacking. However, we (and the French ruling class) need not doubt that any Mitterrand-headed Government would be no more "socialist" than Callaghan or Schmidt's in essentials (unless forced further by a mass movement as in 1936). He has made it clear that Socialist influences would always be used to stop the workers or the PCF going "too far".

The only serious left opposition to Mitterrand in the PS is the CERES group of left social democrats led by J.P. Chevenement. He calls for a rapprochement with the "Euro-communist" PCF on the basis of a gradualist "democratic" road to Socialism in Southern Europe (without upsetting the global equilibrium between the USA and USSR, it is envisaged).

CERES defence of its "strategy of rupture" against the blatant opportunism of Mitterrand

et al. assumes that consistent implementation of the moderate "Common Programme" can bring about a fundamental break with capitalism; nevertheless its attempts to pin down the leadership have brought about conflict. At last year's Congress of the PS the scent of victory in the air allowed Mitterrand to unite all the other factions against CERES with a 76% majority and maintain their exclusion from the national secretariat. Already, in the wake of defeat, CERES is refusing to endorse the official line of blaming everything on the Communists.

It remains to be seen whether the left's defeat will provoke new dissension in the PS or a big outbreak of industrial militancy. The lack of credible political alternatives to the leadership of the left (the far left's vote was generally derisory) suggests barriers to this. One thing is sure - Mitterrand's sights are still on the 1981 Presidential Elections

Smith's internal settlement fraud

THE INTERNAL settlement worked out by Premier Ian Smith and black leaders Bishop Abel Muzorewa, Chief Jeremiah Chirau and the Reverend Ndababingi Sithole in Salisbury last month is a grotesque mockery of the hopes of the Zimbabwean people for majority rule in a free Zimbabwe. The combination of cynicism and servility with which these self-appointed leaders of the black population have rushed to conclude this deal might well have given Smith cause to wonder what he had done to deserve such good fortune if his entire life experience as a white colonial male had accustomed him to the assumption of black servility and white dominance. These mutual relations—the legacy of 100 years of colonialism—are, it seems, to have their last inglorious fling in this charade of a settlement.

But the settlement has other causes than the legacy of colonialism: other aims than a glorification of colonial attitudes. Its aim is to split the black resistance to Smith's white supremacist regime and to isolate the guerilla armies of Zimbabwe's frontiers. As we explained in last month's *Chartist* it is the divorce between the guerilla armies and the African urban masses which has given Muzorewa, Sithole and tribal chiefs like Chirau a chance to play a historical role out of all proportion to the forces they represent. They thus have a direct interest in maintaining the split between the guerilla forces and the urban masses.

The settlement concedes virtually nothing to the black masses. At a time when the Smith regime had been driven into a corner by the guerilla struggle and international pressure for some sort of a settlement the three African leaders have given him all the help he required. Even his position as head of state has not been challenged. He has secured already a tighter rein on the armed forces and war effort through the National War Council, taking these measures only hours before the swearing-in of Muzorewa, Chirau and Sithole as ministers in the new Government.

What then are the terms of the settlement, what the price that these three have tendered

BY GEOFF BENDER

for their services? The settlement offers universal suffrage from 18 on a common electoral role for an assembly of 100 representatives. This Legislative Assembly will have 28 seats reserved for Zimbabwe's 260,000 whites and the remaining 72 for representatives of 6 million blacks. 20 of the white representatives will be elected by a preferential voting system by white voters, 8 will be elected by voters on the common role from 16 candidates nominated for the first Parliament by white members of the present Parliament and in future elections by the 28 white representatives themselves.

The 'whites only' reserved seats will be kept for at least 2 Parliaments or 10 years after which the situation will be reviewed by a commission under a (white) High Court judge. Should such a commission advise any constitutional changes such changes must include provisions for the 72 seats not to be reserved for blacks and must receive at least 51 affirmative votes in the Legislative Assembly. The members filling the 28 seats will be prohibited from forming a coalition with any minority party to form a government.

GUARANTEES

The settlement also includes guarantees for the 'protection from deprivation of property unless adequate compensation is paid'. The 'independence' of the judiciary will be 'entrenched' and judges will have 'security of tenure'—that is the same white judges who have been responsible for sending Africans to the gallows at a rate of two a week over recent years will be kept on. All the apparatus of state—civil service, police, army and prison service—will be maintained in a high state of efficiency and free from political interference—the fact that their role is the defence of the rights of the white minority—a highly political role—seems to have been overlooked by Smith's three stooges. All the constitutional proposals require a 78% vote in the Legislative Assembly. Such proposals



Mr Smith, with (from left) Bishop Muzorewa, Chief Chirau, and the Rev Ndababingi Sithole sign the agreement

are supposed to take effect from December 31st this year.

The second half of the settlement proposals deal with the transitional regime which has already been established. The functions of this regime are to bring about a ceasefire and to deal with the question of the composition of the armed forces and the rehabilitation of those affected by the war. Other tasks involve the review of sentences for offences, of a political nature, the release of detainees and the preparations for elections, the drafting of a constitution based on the settlement.

Its structure includes an Executive composed of Smith and his three new-found black friends. This will be responsible for the implementation of the settlement proposals deciding issues by consensus. A Ministerial Council will also be set up consisting of equal numbers of black and white members and operating on a Cabinet basis with one black and one white minister for each portfolio. The existing Parliament will continue until the end of the year to deal with matters such as the budget, to enact legislation put forward by the Executive Committee, to enact the new Constitution and to nominate the 16 white candidates.

The response to the settlement has scarcely been ecstatic. Muzorewa addressing a crowd of 150,000 supporters raised only a lukewarm response when in a classic display of the mentality of dependence he justified the reserved 'whites only' seats in the new Assembly thus: "We want to retain white confidence because we want roads, bridges and employment. The so-called revolutionaries make a lot of noise, but many are starving. We have suffered enough. The surest way to ensure food in our stomachs is to encourage the whites to stay to build this country for the benefit of all." The idea that Africans themselves are quite capable of building roads

and bridges, ensuring employment and food in their stomachs without carrying white settlers on their backs does not seem to have occurred to this black 'leader'. As if to emphasise his dependence he was heavily escorted by police, including Special Branch and offered a bullet-proof vest by the security officials.

The white population too are unhappy with what they see as yet another compromise by the pragmatic Smith. Hardline minister Pieter Van der Byl was shocked at the reduction of the voting age to 18 for both men and women. It is likely that he and Bill Irvine will resign their ministerial positions rather than serve in the bi-racial Ministerial Council. The fact that the concessions which the whites see Smith as making on their behalf in secret will not end the guerilla war will increase their feeling of being sold out. It is possible that when elections do occur that an intransigent 28 white representatives could with the support of the security forces, civil service and judiciary render powerless the black majority.

Meanwhile, the guerilla struggle continues. Mugabe and Nkomo have correctly rejected the internal settlement talks as fraudulent. However, their demands for talks under British, or Anglo-American chairmanship offer no solution. Any settlement which leaves the military and judicial apparatus of the racist state intact should be unacceptable to the black masses. Any settlement which dissolves this racist apparatus will be opposed by the white population and their politicians and British and American imperialism. Any settlement which like the present one gives 3 1/3% of the population 28% of political representation guaranteed for ten years makes a mockery of the democratic demand for one person, one vote. The effects of this face-saving settlement can only be to weaken the guerilla struggle temporarily and thus prolong Zimbabwe's long struggle for freedom.

Mention the Anti-Nazi League in left wing circles and the usual comment is "just another SWP front". Given the entrenched sectarianism of the British revolutionary left, plus the SWP's past history of tactical manoeuvring, such cynicism is hardly surprising. However as far as the SWP is concerned the ANL does represent a genuine attempt to forge a broad based, "non-sectarian" movement against racialism and fascism. In the light of the Leninist conception of the united front, FRANK HANSEN examines whether the ANL can live up to the tasks it has set itself.

In the wake of the events in Lewisham last August when the National Front were routed by a mass mobilisation of anti-fascists and black youth, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) — an organisation which had played an important role in those events — set up the Anti-Nazi League. The League, whose declared aim was to "unite all those who oppose the growth of the Nazis in Britain, irrespective of other political differences", was launched in a wave of spectacular publicity. Its sponsors included many left-wing Labour MPs and Trade Union leaders as well as a variety of well-known public figures ranging from playwrights to professional footballers.

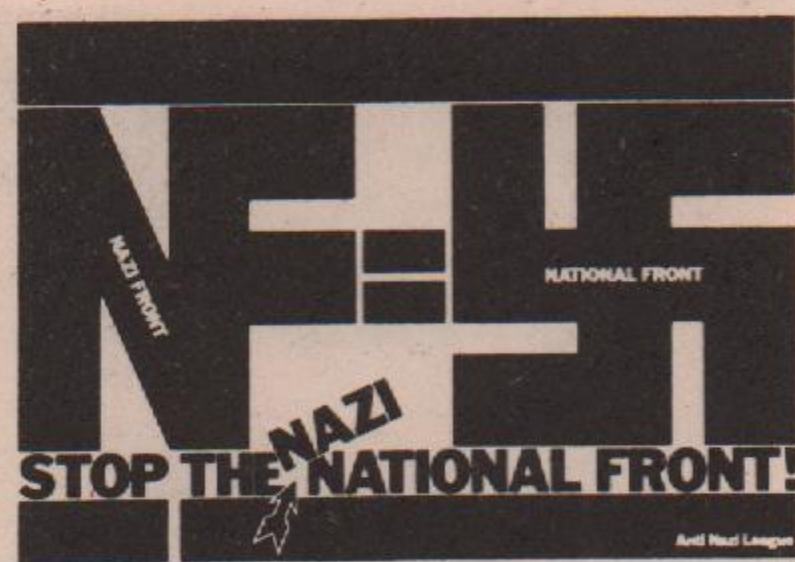
exposing

Since then the main role of the ANL has been to publish a series of well-produced leaflets exposing the Nazi nature of the National Front. However, their activities have not merely been confined to propaganda. At Ilford they played a leading role in organising the anti-NF picket. Within the ANL the SWP has been the leading organisational force.

Compared with their previous policy, the ANL certainly represented a dramatic change of tactics on the part of the SWP. Hitherto their attitude to united action against racialism and fascism was essentially: "We lead, you follow". They demanded that the movement should "unite" on the basis of their programme, their tactics, and under their leadership.

In defence of the SWP, it did fight on a hard policy of "No Platform for Fascists" and "End All Immigration Controls". Nevertheless, their refusal to fight for united action with the mass organisations of the working class — primarily the Labour Party and the trade unions — represented a block, no

ANTI-NAZI LEAGUE IN PERSPECTIVE



matter how small, to effective united action against fascism.

The Leninist conception of the united front, adopted in the early years of the Communist International (CI) was symbolised by the slogan "March separately, strike together". It was not conceived as a manoeuvre to woo the reformist-led workers away from their leaders, nor as a simple alliance with social democracy. It was based on the deep-seated desire for class unity in the face of capitalist attacks and bourgeois reaction, including fascism, throughout Europe.

The CI proposed a united front of all workers' organisations based on two essential principles: (a) the greatest possible unity in action of all workers' organisations against the class enemy, (b) complete freedom of all tendencies to put forward their own views and to criticise its allies/opponents at all times.

The precise form the united front tactic assumes of course depends on many factors. During the 1920s the parties of the Third International, although in a minority in the workers' movement, organised millions of workers. Today revolutionary socialism is dwarfed by the mass Stalinist and Social Democratic parties of W. Europe. In Britain the *Chartist* has consistently argued that the only way Marxists can demonstrate their commitment to class unity and begin to

effectively challenge reformism is to work inside the mass organisations of the working class, including the Labour Party.

By running candidates against Labour and by crudely counter-posing themselves to the Labour Party, the SWP have clearly rejected this overall approach. Nevertheless, on the question of fighting racialism and fascism, they have established some credibility in the movement, and are in a position to propose a limited united front campaign on this issue. Unfortunately the ANL, as yet, does not fulfill this role.

Firstly, the League does not even involve — or seek to involve — all those groups and organisations who have been active in fighting fascism (e.g. anti-fascist committees, black groups, women's groups, gay groups, etc.), let alone the main organisations of the working class.

Not only are the CP and the revolutionary left excluded, but also the rank-and-file of the Labour Party itself. What emerges is an alliance between the SWP, certain reformist leaders, the Jewish Board of Deputies and various "liberal" notables. The League was established in a thoroughly bureaucratic manner, presumably by behind-the-scenes negotiations between the SWP leaders and left-wing Labour MPs. Instead of a "united front from below" we now have a "united front from above", hardly the right way to establish the greatest possible unity.

Secondly, the political basis of the ANL is extremely ambiguous. The League seeks to unite all those who oppose the National Front, yet the key question of how the NF is to be opposed is left unanswered. This has led to much confusion. On the one hand, Labour MPs like Neil Kinnock claim that the ANL is merely a propaganda organisation, an "alternative to street-fighting".

If this is the case, then the political basis of the ANL is presumably "no confrontations"

with the NF. On the other hand, the ANL has actually organised anti-NF actions. Clearly any anti-fascist united front cannot compromise on the question of "No Platform for Fascists" versus "Leave it to the Police, the Courts and the bourgeois state". That the SWP have done so is reflected by the fact that Paul Holborow — an ANL leader and SWP member — described the Ilford ban as a "victory" for anti-fascism, yet at the same time launched a campaign against it! To fail to raise this vital question within the ANL represents nothing less than a capitulation to the liberalism of left-wing reformism!

Finally, if the ANL is to seriously challenge the propaganda of the National Front it must not restrict itself to "Nazi" exposes. Apart from pointing out that the NF has got its facts wrong, the League has virtually nothing to say on the question of immigration. In other words, it does not address itself to the very political basis on which the NF is gaining support.

Despite these criticisms, the *Chartist* welcomes the decision of the SWP to work with the reformist organisations. However, this must be placed on the firm basis of the communist policy of the united front, around the slogan "No Platform for Fascists". To this end, the ANL should organise a democratic national conference to which all labour movement organisations and anti-fascist groups are invited. Such a conference should demand that the Labour leaders mobilise the working class in every locality against the fascist threat, and that the Labour Government ends police protection of fascist marches. Within such a united front, revolutionaries must continue to argue for a clear proletarian internationalist position based on (a) repeal of all immigration Acts, and (b) Labour movement support for immigrant groups who organise independently to fight their own special oppression.

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