

workers' ACTION

No.88

Jan.28-Feb.4, 1978

10p



DEMONSTRATION
1.30pm. SUNDAY JANUARY 29
Assemble SHEPHERDS BUSH GREEN. W.12.

BRITAIN OUT OF IRELAND NOW!



At the massive — though officially banned — protest rally in Newry after Bloody Sunday, coffin badges commemorated the Derry dead.

FOR THOSE who want to see Britain 'great' again there was consolation last week. Britain proved it still had enough influence to stop the European Court of Human Rights saying two plus two added up to four.

The Court overthrew a previous unanimous verdict by the European Commission for Human Rights that Britain was guilty of torture in Northern Ireland in 1971, as charged by the Southern Irish government.

The Court did not deny any facts found by the Commission. It confirmed that deprivation of food and water, deprivation of sleep, bombardment with high-pitched 'white noise', hooding, and making people stand for long periods with arms stretched to just touch a wall, were all used. It confirmed that these were 'degrading and inhuman treatment'. It only refused to apply the word: torture.

The Court also refused to

order Britain to prosecute those responsible for the ill-treatment.

In truth it does not belong to the European Court or the British Government to make the condemnations and the punishments. The ill-treatment was not the responsibility of this or that soldier or policeman. As the Court recognised, it was a systematic policy.

Like the torture, coercion, bludgeoning, and reigns of terror organised against the Irish people over hundreds of years, it was the responsibility of the British ruling class.

Republicans and civil rights workers have cited repeatedly and in detail cases of 'inhuman and degrading' techniques still being used in Northern Ireland. The Court's white-wash will give an extra licence to continue.

The job of ending that brutality belongs to the Irish people and the British working class.

In the heyday of the British Empire it was truly said that for every democrat in London there were nine slaves in the colonies. Britain's relative democracy still rests on its ability to plunder wealth from the oppressed peoples of the world.

Thus British workers have been better-fed wage slaves than workers in India, in Africa, in the West Indies — or in Ireland. For that miserable bribe, the British working class has allowed itself to be rallied in support of the British bosses' drive to plunder the world. We have allowed ourselves to be dragged through two world wars and to leave the private-profit system standing in Britain.

And we have allowed ourselves to go along with Britain's crimes against the Irish people, and especially against the Irish working class, a class which should be our closest fraternal ally.

The crimes go on. And they amount to more than individual cases of torture.

The part of Ireland which Britain has no longer been able to keep from independence is a foreshortened, truncated fragment of a nation — and, because of that, dominated by the green Tories and clerical reaction.

Inside the artificial Northern Ireland state, created and maintained by Britain, the Protestant workers are brought to believe that their interests lie with clinging onto a still more miserable version of the British worker's imperial privileges. They are divided from the Catholic workers by a feeling that they have a superiority over them which must be protected.

Northern Ireland has been used as a military training-ground for the British army, and as a starting-point and pretext for attacks on civil rights in

Britain.

And the Catholic minority in Northern Ireland is bludgeoned, discriminated against, and held down under what they consider a foreign power.

That Catholic minority, with heroism and determination, and fighting against tremendous odds, has taken the lead in striking back. This Sunday, 29th, we will be commemorating Britain's reaction to their struggle — the shooting dead of thirteen people on a civil rights demonstration in Derry in 1972.

We need not only to commemorate, but to end forever these crimes. The responsibility of the British working class in this matter is to throw off our role as the domestic servants of the international exploiters, to ally ourselves openly with the Nationalists of Ireland in their struggle to end Britain's grip on their country, and to force the British government to get out of Ireland now!



PROTESTANT JOBS IN A PROTESTANT STATE

Sirocco 400 0
Orneau 300 1.33%
bakery

The official figures confirm this picture. Catholics in Northern Ireland are two and a half times as likely to be unemployed as Protestants; and if they do have a job, it is likely to be less skilled and lower-paid.

According to the 1971 figures, the unemployment rate for Catholics was 13.9% of the economically active population: 17.3% for men, 7.0% for women. For Protestants, the rate was 5.6% (6.6% for men, 3.6% for women).

Many industries are almost monopolised by Protestants. In shipbuilding and marine engineering, only 4.8% of the workers were Catholics. In other branches of engineering, in vehicles, in paper, printing & publishing, in gas, electricity, & water, and in banks, insurance, etc., less than 20% of those employed were Catholics.

Average pay in engineering (in 1971) was £29.14 a week (for adult male manual workers). In the other Protestant-dominated industries pay was as high or higher.

In contrast, average male wages in the industry employing most Catholic men — construction — were £24.71 a week. The major industry for Catholic women — clothing and footwear — paid an average £13.28 a week, for women workers. The other major sectors employing more than 30% Catholics were agriculture, forestry, & fishing, and 'miscellaneous services'.

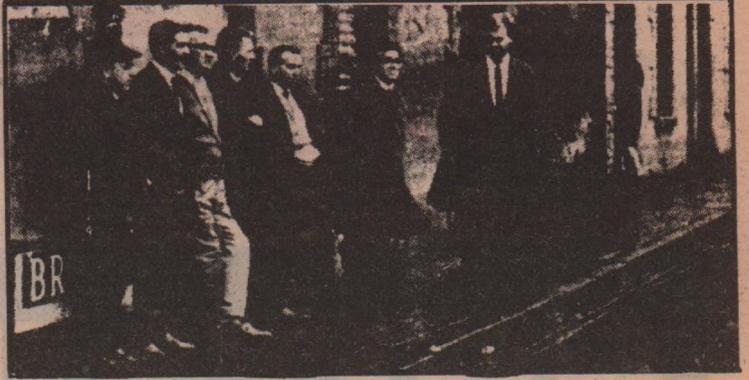
Catholics were 37% of those employed in the construction industry. But only 18% of the managers in that industry were Catholics, while 55% of the labourers were.

At first sight there seems to be little sectarian bias in the 'professional or managerial' sector generally. 12% of Catholic employees fall into this category, and 15% of Protestants.

Closer analysis, however, shows a different picture. The majority of 'professional or managerial' Catholics were schoolteachers, priests, or nurses; among Protestants there was a much higher proportion of managers and officials.

As the report points out, "In part the fact that such a Catholic middle class exists at all may be attributed to the high level of segregation in Northern Irish society; this segregation creates the conditions which support the existence of a professional and business class whose role is specifically to satisfy the needs of their own religious group".

These facts demolish the arguments of those who say that the answer is to call on Protestant and Catholic workers to unite within the framework of the Northern Ireland state, and to forget for now about Partition and the role of British imperialism. The sectarian bias of the state raises itself as an obstacle



Unemployment hits Catholics 2½ times as hard as Protestants

even at the level of finding a job. This official report piously deplores 'inequality of opportunity'. But its own figures show that the area of state employment itself (police, 'public administration and defence', gas, water & electricity) and of heavy state involvement (for example, the shipyards) are among the worst for inequality. Sectarianism, and the consequent divisions in the working class, cannot be destroyed without destroying the Northern Ireland state.

CHRIS GRAY

LIST 1: Publicans, Innkeepers; waiters, waitresses; hairdressers, manicurists; domestic housekeepers; nurses; school teachers.

LIST 2: Company secretaries; police officers and men; chemists, biologists; engineers; managers; senior government officials.

The jobs in List 1 are 'Catholic' occupations in Northern Ireland; those in the second list are 'Protestant'. Between 39% and 73% of those in List 1 jobs are Catholics; for the jobs in List 2, the percentage of Catholics varies between 7% and 13%.

This is one of the tables in a report issued recently by the official Fair Employment Agency. Based on 1971 census figures, the report documents the continuing sectarian bias of the Six County state.

In 1971 Kathleen Boehringer carried out a survey for the Belfast periodical 'Fortnight', and got the following figures for four of the largest firms in Belfast:

	Work-force	% Catholics
Harland & Wolff	9,000	5.56%
Mackies	8,500	1.41%

A LAW THAT SAYS: The State is always right

WITH THE introduction of a Bill into the House of Lords on 17th January, the Labour Government closed ranks with the other Governments of Western Europe against 'terrorism'.

The Suppression of Terrorism Bill is to put into effect Britain's support for the European Convention against Terrorism, launched by the Council of Europe in January last year. The Convention and the Bill provide for easier extradition of 'terrorists'; that is, if they flee from one country to another, it makes it easier for them to be sent back.

The way the Bill does this is essentially as follows. The existing law on extradition, the Extradition Act of 1870, says that "A fugitive criminal shall not be surrendered if the offence in respect of which his surrender is demanded is one of a political character, or if he proves to the satisfaction of the police magistrate or the court before whom he is brought on habeas corpus, or to the Secretary of State [Home Secretary], that the requisition for his surrender has in fact been made with a view to try or punish him for an offence of a political character". The new Bill says that no 'terrorist' offence can — under any circumstances — be regarded as "of a political character".

The Bill also provides a definition of terrorist offences: major violence against persons, hi-jacking, or 'possession of firearms with intent to injure'. This wide definition

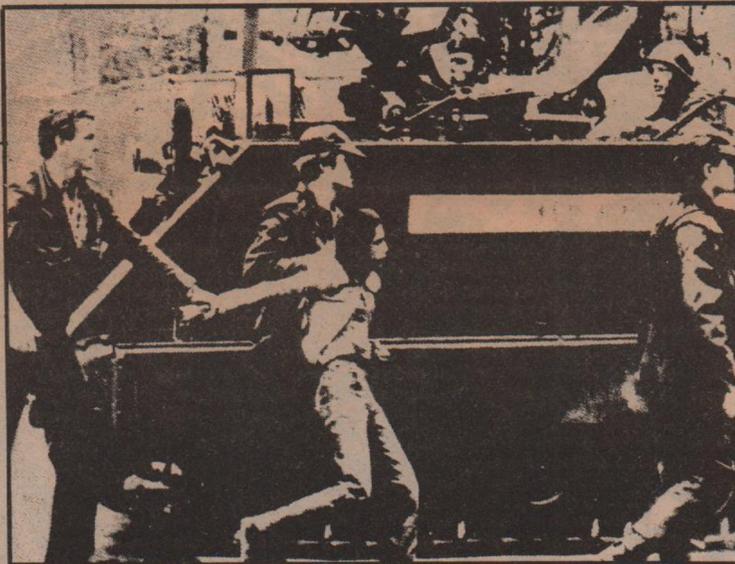
would include not only the 'Red Army Faction' militants, but also anti-fascist militants engaged in serious battles with fascists, workers facing up to company-financed thugs or scabs, and demonstrators or pickets resisting police attacks.

The principle of the Bill, of course, is supposed to be the protection of democracy against terrorism. In fact the Bill denies — in several ways — rights which are basic to the sort of democracy represented by countries like France, the USA, and Britain.

In essence, the Bill says that any violence against the State in the countries signing the Convention must be criminal, not political. In other words, violence is not political even when it is political.

If the right of resistance against tyranny is recognised as a basic principle — as it is in all the classical Declarations of Human Rights — then the Bill is trying to make it an unbreakable assumption of the British law that none of the States signing the Convention can be tyrannical. If citizens of those States feel driven to take up arms against the State — or to defend themselves against that State arms in hand — then the State must be right and the citizens wrong.

Yet the countries include Turkey (where 15 people have been shot down by fascist gangs over recent months), Greece (which remained in the Council of Europe under



Above: a South Moluccan terrorist under arrest in Holland. Right: Irmgard Möller.

the military regime from 1967 to 1969), and Spain, as well as West Germany which is currently in the midst of an intense anti-'red' witch-hunt. And despite the fact that the European Court of Human Rights has found Britain effectively guilty of torture in Northern Ireland, the Convention commits all the other countries signing it to extradite Republicans and Socialists 'guilty' of armed resistance to British imperialism.

There is a democratic saving clause in the Bill. Extradition can be denied if the prisoner is liable to be persecuted on account of his 'race, religion, nationality, or political opinions'. Yet here the basic democratic principle of 'innocent until proved guilty' is denied.

It is not up to the State demanding extradition to prove that the prisoner will be fairly treated. It is up to the prisoner to prove that he will be unfairly treated — just as under the 1870 Act it was up to him to prove that the offence he was charged with was political.



To benefit from the saving clause, a prisoner would have to prove to the satisfaction of the court that undemocratic persecution existed in the country asking for him to be extradited. A difficult task — given that the other clauses of the Bill effectively assume the opposite, and given that the Council of Europe is supposed to be open only to democratic states.

It remains to be seen how many of the supporters of democratic socialism among the Parliamentary Labour Party will oppose this Bill.

CLARE RUSSELL

STAMMHEIM 'It wasn't suicide'

IRMGARD Möller, the sole survivor of the four 'Red Army Faction' prisoners in Stammheim jail, declared last Monday (16th) that she had not attempted to kill herself. She was testifying at a Baden-Württemberg parliamentary investigation.

According to the official story, Möller seriously wounded herself by attempting suicide on 18th October, while her comrades Andreas Baader and Jan-Carl Raspe shot themselves and Gudrun Ensslin hung herself. Repeating statements made as soon as she was able to see a lawyer last October, Möller insisted that none of the four had any intention of suicide.

"We discussed suicide extensively after Ulrike Meinhof's death [in May 1976]. We came to the conclusion that suicide was not part of the Red Army Faction tactics".

Being held in isolation, the four prisoners had — declared Möller — no news of the Mogadishu raid, nor any chance to communicate with each other. She herself had woken about 5am on October 18th, heard noises and voices, and then lost consciousness again. When she recovered consciousness, she was lying on a stretcher, wounded.

Möller also denied the latest official story of how Baader and Raspe got the guns to kill themselves. Federal prosecutor Rebman had asserted, on Wednesday 11th, that the guns were brought in by two RAF defence lawyers, Newerla and Müller, in their briefcases, during legal hearings in the prison grounds.

Möller pointed out that the prisoners were thoroughly searched before and after the hearings. Rebman's story has also been contradicted by three policemen who testified that they had thoroughly searched the lawyers before they entered the courtroom.

FREEDOM FIGHTERS GO ON TRIAL

Last Monday, 16th, the trial of the Pretoria 12 was reconvened.

The Pretoria 12 were first brought to trial in March 1977 on charges under the Terrorism Act, mainly that they "wrongfully and unlawfully conspired to overthrow the Government of South Africa by violent means or means which envisage violence and in furtherance of the said conspiracy the accused committed certain acts", such as being members of the African National Congress, the South African Communist Party, or the ANC's armed wing Umkhonto We Sizwe. Some are also accused of recruiting or training people for guerrilla warfare.

The 12 have on many occasions been brought into court in leg irons. They were detained for one year before the trial started, they have been detained for almost one year during the trial, and it appears most likely that the trial will continue for another year. The 12 will have been in prison for three years before they are even sentenced.

During the trial the 12 and their witnesses have been subjected to horrific tortures. It appears likely that they will receive the maximum penalty — death — for this is the most important political trial in South Africa since the Rivonia Trial in 1964, when Nelson Mandela and other leaders of the ANC were sentenced to life imprisonment.

News is meanwhile awaited of the verdict in the trial of Winnie Mandela, wife of Nelson Mandela, who has

pleaded not guilty on five charges of breaking a Government order exiling her from her home in Soweto township to Brandfort in the Orange Free State and banning her from political activity. Winnie Mandela has been detained on a number of occasions in the past. If found guilty she could face sentences of up to three years on each charge.

On Wednesday 18th, also, the largest terrorism trial in South African history opened in a small country village, Bethal. Armed police stood guard outside the court. The defendants face charges of being members of the banned Pan-Africanist Congress and having recruited people to the PAC and trained them for the overthrow of the Government.



Winnie Mandela

Under questioning the prosecutor admitted that a 'substantial number' of the 165 State witnesses had been in 'solitary' confinement under the Terrorism Act. Most of the accused were in detention for one year before their first formal appearance as prisoners awaiting trial last month.

Defence cited this as a reason for postponing the trial for 2½ months. Other reasons cited were to do with the extent of the State indictment, which covers a fourteen year period and extends beyond South Africa's borders (to Libya). The charges include revival of the banned PAC organisation when the defendants were imprisoned on Robben Island 15 years ago.

The 18 all face a maximum death penalty if convicted, and a minimum of five years in jail.

NEIL COBBETT



HOW TORTURE PROPS UP APARTHEID

AMNESTY International, in a report produced last week, has accused the South African government of condoning torture of detainees by the South African security police on a routine basis.

The report says that political prisoners are treated in a 'vindictive and uncompromising manner'. They are denied rights and privileges allowed to other prisoners, such as parole or remission of sentence, and they are not allowed to receive news.

The report cites numerous allegations of torture during interrogation by security police, attempting to gain false confessions or statements incriminating others whom the authorities intend to prosecute.

Beatings, electric shock, sleep deprivation, being made to stand for long periods, wearing shoes containing small stones, and having to 'sit' on thin air for hours on end [the 'invisible chair'] — these are some of South Africa's methods. Many former detainees have also said that they were subjected to murder threats, threats against their

families, non-stop interrogations, and the psychological torture of long spells in solitary confinement.

Mrs Oshadi Jane Phakathi tells how she was blindfolded and then assaulted, while electric shocks were applied to her waist and breasts. "I was also put in an electric frozen bag and suspended in the air by means of a heavy iron until I was suffocating. The policemen then remarked that I could go on struggling. Nobody would heed me, because they were going to expose that I co-operated with them".

REPORT

The report says: "Both the security police and the Department of Justice failed to provide adequate explanations of how certain detainees' bodies bore marks and abrasions. Nor have they explained satisfactorily what it is about incommunicado detention that apparently causes so many detainees to commit suicide".

The report details the rising death toll which in-

cludes 47 deaths in detention over the recent period.

Mapetla Mohapi, a leading member of the Black Consciousness movement, died in detention, according to the police "by hanging himself by his trousers". At the inquest, one witness, a former detainee, described how security police had tied a wet towel round her head during interrogation, causing partial asphyxiation, and said: "Now you see how Mapetla died".

After the Soweto uprising detainees died with "unprecedented frequency". At least 20 are known to have died in security police custody recently.

The report describes the legal structure created by the South African government "to consolidate white political power and social and economic privileges and to prevent the formation of effective black political opposition".

The report, 'Political Imprisonment in South Africa', is available, price £1, from Amnesty International, 10 Southampton St, London WC2.



Left: Nomkhayo Ethel Mafuna, held under the Terrorism Act for over a year. Right: Siva Lingam Moodley, charged under the same Act but released after 5 months. Photo: Newsline.

WHY THERE ARE TWO MARCHES FOR BLOODY SUNDAY

TWO DEMONSTRATIONS have been called to commemorate Bloody Sunday this weekend, on 29th January. Workers' Action is supporting the demonstration called by the Bloody Sunday Commemoration Committee, also supported by the Socialist Workers' Party and the International Marxist Group, which leaves from Shepherd's Bush Green at 1.30pm. The other, called by the London branch of Provisional Sinn Fein, leaves from Hyde Park at the same time.

We think it unfortunate that there are two demonstrations on Bloody Sunday. A larger, united demonstration would have a greater impact. The dispute did not arise out of matters of principle, Sinn Fein initially participated in the Bloody Sunday Commemoration Demonstration Committee, and left to organise a separate demonstration over minor tactical differences.

A few people argue that revolutionaries must support the Sinn Fein demonstration because it is called by a section of an Irish organisation fighting imperialism. This is incorrect, and fundamentally moralistic. Solidarity does not mean lining up with every political or tactical choice of the Republican organisations in Ireland, or, still less, in Britain. More emphatically so, when the question is at the level of tactics in organising a particular demonstr-

ation.

The fact that most of the British left has a bad record on Ireland does not alter this. Nor does the fact that the IMG have replied badly to Sinn Fein on this issue.

In a letter to Socialist Challenge, Sinn Fein say "It has become clear since the inception of TOM [the Troops Out Movement] that a troops out position is meaningless without taking a position of solidarity with the forces actually fighting the British state in Northern Ireland".

The problem is that this political point was not the issue on which Sinn Fein split from the Bloody Sunday Committee, nor can solidarity mean that British labour movement organisations forfeit our independent political and tactical judgment.

But the IMG, in reply, counterpose, against a solidarity position, "involving as many people as possible in an active opposition to the British presence in Ireland" on the basis of Troops Out Now and Self-Determination for the Irish people.

They state: "The key issue for socialists in this country is the oppression by 'their' government of the Irish people, and the means of that oppression — the British troops". (Note how by sleight of hand British oppression in Ireland is reduced to the question of troops).

Certainly only pedants would prefer a tiny demonstration on our slogans to a larger demonstration on the limited basis of 'troops out now' in which we participate with our slogans. But if the troops out demonstration will be bigger than a solidarity demonstration could be, it is mainly because the IMG (and SWP) do not include solidarity in their own slogans and their own propaganda, except very occasionally. (The IMG starts its reply to Sinn Fein by saying a solidarity position is desirable, but immediately goes on to say that it is not very relevant).

Yet how can we explain the 'troops out' slogan without explaining the meaning of the struggle in Ireland — that is, without explaining our solidarity position? Only by basing ourselves on chauvinism ('let the Irish kill each other') or pure pacifism.

Workers' Action stands by its position of solidarity with those fighting British imperialism. We retain our own independent judgment on the best forms of solidarity action. Effective solidarity action in Britain requires the maximum united mobilisation of the British left, not the striking of rhetorical attitudes, and for that reason we support the Bloody Sunday Committee demonstration.

Zionism was always about land. Although minor currents within Zionism did develop which rejected the idea of setting up an exclusively Jewish state, Zionism was always inseparable from the project of colonising part or all of Palestine.

Arthur Rupin, who has often been called the architect of Zionist colonisation, used to belong to that minority. But as he delicately put it himself, "It became clear how difficult it is to realise Zionism and still bring it continually into line with the demands of general ethics".

Later he spelt out what he meant. "On every site where we purchase land and where we settle people, the present cultivators will inevitably be dispossessed... The Arabs do not agree to our venture. If we want to continue our work in Israel against their desires, there is no alternative but that lives should be lost. It is our destiny to be in a state of continual warfare with the Arabs. This situation may well be undesirable, but such is the reality".

Today those millions who had invested their hopes for

peace in the talks between Egypt and Israel are learning that reality. They are learning that Israel is inseparable from Zionism, the political creed that brought the state into being. And they are learning that Zionism is inseparable from military conquest, annexation, settlement and the dispossession of the Palestinian people.

Israel's Law of Return welcomes (and the Zionist state urges) any Jew from anywhere in the world to 'Return' to automatic citizenship and settle the land.

That is why the Sadat-Begin talks broke down. The Israeli government would not recognise what are referred to as 'the legitimate rights of the Palestinians' and would not even withdraw completely from the Sinai peninsula.

Begin, in a statement to the Israeli Cabinet, made his position clear on the question of Israeli settlements in Sinai — and in other areas occupied by Israel since 1967. The settlements were there to stay. "We do not destroy Jewish settlements; we defend them".

In other words, even if the pre-1967 lines, the settlement, there would be a military control between them and control.

At the same time the C on the West Bank a

In the war of 1967 Israel single success. It took part the West Bank from Jordan Gaza strip from Egypt.

This huge expansion establishment of various time expropriations with going on, most notably in the The official Israeli attitude

Early years

THE ZIONISTS' drive was to find 'a land without a people for a people without a land'. Yet there were people — Arabs — in the British mandate territory of Palestine, their chosen land. So, under British protection, they set about clearing the Arabs off the land.

Dr Arthur Rupin of the Jewish Agency declared in 1930: "Land is the most necessary thing for our establishing roots in Palestine. Since there are hardly any more arable unsettled lands in Palestine, we are bound in each case of purchase of land and its settlement to remove the peasants who cultivated the land thus far, both owners of the land and tenants".

For example: the Jezreel Valley was the first large-scale Zionist purchase of lands. It was bought in 1925 from the Sursuk family. It is an area of approximately 100,000 acres of which 93,000 were fertile and arable. One of the most fertile areas in Palestine, it constituted an important wheat granary of the country.

1270 Palestinian-Arab families lived in the Jezreel Valley divided among 13 villages. They were serfs and tenants.

To avoid public scandal over the liquidation of 13 villages, the Zionist movement paid each family about \$50 by way of 'compensation'.

In many cases, however, it paid nothing and for example, after the purchase of the Hefer Valley, about 2000 Arab peasants were dispossessed.

The dispossession generated bloody conflicts between the serfs and the tenants and the Jewish settlers. British police intervention followed. This intervention ultimately facilitated dispossession of the Arabs rather than preventing it.

1948

In 1948 this gradual process of dispossession of the Palestinian Arabs became very sudden.

On November 29, 1947, the



UN General Assembly adopted its resolution for the partition of Palestine. When the British Mandate ended the next May, the Zionists declared the establishment of the State of Israel, and the Arab states invaded Palestine to forcibly annul the partition.

Out of over 700,000 Palestinian Arabs, there were only 170,000 to 180,000 left within the enlarged borders of Israel after 1948.

Erskine Childers sets out the facts behind the Zionist version of these events:

"Examining every official Israeli statement about the Arab exodus I was struck by the fact that no primary evidence of evacuation orders was ever produced... There had allegedly been Arab radio broadcasts ordering evacuation... I next decided to test the undocumented charge... which could be done thoroughly because the BBC monitored all Middle Eastern broadcasts through 1948.

"The records, and companion ones by US monitoring unit can be seen at the British Museum. There was not a single order, or appeal, or suggestion about evacuation from Palestine from any Arab radio station inside or outside Palestine in 1948. There is repeated monitored record of Arab appeals, even flat orders, to the civilians of Palestine to stay put".

It was armed terror that drove out the Arabs.

At the beginning of April 1948, the Haganah, the 'official' armed forces of the Zionist movement, went over to the offensive. Thirteen military campaigns were waged in this offensive, eight of them outside the area assigned to the Jewish state.

On April 1 Haganah forces started down the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem road. Along the way they attacked Arab vill-

ages, driving the population out and dynamiting their houses to ensure that they would not return. Within one week, between 10,000 and 15,000 Arabs had become refugees.

On April 9th, the Irgun, another Zionist armed force, attacked the village of Deir Yassin. International Red Cross delegate Jacques de Reynier reported:

"There had been 400 people in this village; about fifty of them had escaped, and were still alive.

"All the rest had been deliberately massacred in cold blood for, as I observed for myself, this gang [the Irgun] was admirably disciplined and only acted under orders..."

For Menachem Begin, then leader of the Irgun, now Israeli Prime Minister:

"The legend of Deir Yassin helped us in particular in the saving of Tiberias and the conquest of Haifa... All the Jewish forces proceeded to advance through Haifa like a knife through butter. The Arabs began fleeing in panic, shouting 'Deir Yassin!'"

A similar massacre was

ROBBED WITH VIOLENCE

committed on April 29 in Katamon, a section of Jerusalem. Meanwhile the Haganah command was using all possible propaganda means of terrorising the Arabs into flight.

In Galilee, a heavily Arab area, the Haganah dropped leaflets signed by the district commander warning that "all people who do not want this war must leave together with their women and children in order to be safe. This is going to be a cruel war with no mercy or compassion".

On May 14 the independence of the State of Israel was proclaimed. By that time more than 250,000 Palestinian Arabs had become refugees:

The flight of the Palestin-

ians increased twofold in July to November. An estimated 400,000 to 500,000 Palestinian Arabs were driven from their homes as the Israeli army bulldozed its way through Galilee and parts of the West Bank of the Jordan.

More than 700,000 Palestinians left their homes between April and December 1948.

The peasants who had fled their villages to avoid the war found that they could never go home. Their fields had become the property of the Land of Israel, their houses were occupied by foreign settlers, they had been declared 'absentee landlords' and expropriated.

As the left-Zionist Don



ISRAEL — AS RACIST AS APARTHEID

ISRAEL is a racist state. The Law of Return states that "Every Jew has the right to emigrate to the country"; and on this basis there is a ceaseless drive to bring more Jews to Israel, to settle more lands — and to drive off more Arabs.

As former Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres has written: "The use of Regulation 125... is a direct continuation of the struggle for Jewish settlement and Jewish immigration".

Regulation 125 permits the military to declare any area 'closed', and thus to bar Arabs

from entering their fields to cultivate them. The fields are then declared fallow and handed over for Jewish settlement.

Israel Shahak, chairman of the Israel League for Human and Civil Rights, writes: "The 'Salvation of the Land'... is instilled into the brains of all Jewish schoolchildren in Israel from kindergarten onwards.

"What is this? The meaning of the term, according to the teaching of the Israeli Ministry of Education, is that any land which has been 'saved' was transferred to Jewish ownership...

"I want to emphasize that this is a form of racism which has no limit as far as the Zionists are concerned because it is aimed at the 'salvation' of all the lands in the Land of Israel and therefore at the expulsion of all the non-Jews from the land which is 'saved' in this way".

(Since Zionism takes its ideological justification from the Old Testament, Israel for these people could 'legally' stretch as far east as the Persian gulf, as far north as Syria and Lebanon).

In this respect Zionism is worse than the apartheid re-

gime in South Africa.

"This has 'divided' the country and forbidden the whites to buy land in a 'black' area [the Bantustans] and the blacks to buy land in a 'white' area. Zionism wants to 'save' as much land as it can without any limit, in all areas of the 'Land of Israel', and it turns the land it 'saves' into a single large apartheid area in which human beings who were born of non-Jewish mothers have no right to live. I see no difference whether the apartheid area was created by confiscation or by purchase".

Shahak quotes from the Is-

raeli newspaper 'Maariv':

"The Ministry of Agriculture and the Settlement Department of the Jewish Agency have recently launched a vehement campaign to eradicate the epidemic of leasing of lands and orchards to Bedouin and Arab farmers in Western Galilee.

"The Director of the Galilee area for the Jewish Agency, Mr Aharon Nahmani, said that his office had circulated all settlements with a warning that the leasing of national lands for cultivation by Arab sharecroppers, as well as the renting of orchards for har-

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ere were a general withdrawal to ements would remain Israeli territory presence on them, and move- Israel would be under Israeli cabinet agreed to form new settle- and enlarge those in the Sinai.

's land grab achieved its biggest of the Golan heights from Syria, an, the Sinai peninsula and the was soon consolidated by the types of settlement. At the same n the old boundaries were still e Galilee area. ide was well expressed by Golda

Meir's top advisor, Israel Galili, when he attacked those protesting at the expulsion of 6,000 Palestinians from the Gaza strip in spring 1972. "Our right in Gaza is exactly like our right to Tel-Aviv. We are colonising Gaza exactly in the same manner as we colonised Jaffa: Those who doubt our right in Gaza should doubt our right to Tel-Aviv as well". And naturally Galili thinks that only a madman could doubt Israel's right to Tel-Aviv.

Begin himself comes from that trend in Zionism that has always declared its aim as being to establish a Jewish nation from the Nile to the Euphrates. He insists: "We have a perfect unqualified right to settle in any part of the land", and "our right to sovereignty in these areas [Judea and Samaria, i.e. the West Bank] of the land of Israel is obvious. It is our land. It belongs to the Jewish people".

But his Zionism is not so remote from the Zionism of Golda Meir, of Rabin, and of the state itself, with the built-in expansionism of the Law of Return, whose inevitable result is

"to be in a state of continuous warfare with the Arabs".

Despite the plain facts, Israel's annexations, expropriations, and assaults have in recent years been explained as "necessary to Israel's defence". The quest, it was said, had once been for "a land without people for a people without a land"; now that the state had been established, the quest was for "safe borders so that Israel could live in peace".

The breakdown of the recent talks, however, has nothing to do with a failure to find "safe borders" — even if that were a legitimate objective. It shows clearly that Israel is not prepared to act in any way other than as a land-grabber, whose appetite for plunder is only whetted by success.

Israel does not want 'peace' — unless what is meant by that is recognition of its conquests, of the expulsion of the Palestinians, and of its racist and colonialist regime. In other words, 'peace' is identical with the 'pacification' all oppressors seek. It has nothing to do with desire for peace, and flows from a political strategy based on the 'fait accompli'.

PROPERTY H EVIDENCE

Peretz describes: "Even before the status of the abandoned Arab areas was determined, the Jewish Agency was directing the flow of immigrants toward the vacant Arab settlements. The military also participated in this unauthorised mass-requisitioning. In one instance, a group of army officers supported by tanks seized large areas of absentee [Arab] property in Jaffa..."

"When the first Custodian of Abandoned Property was appointed, in July 1948, all of Jaffa had been occupied..."

"In one of his early reports the Custodian claimed that nearly all absentee houses had been occupied and that their seizure by the Jewish Agency for the use of new im-

migrants would be recognised. Nearly all movables in these houses, which had not been looted or destroyed, were sold to the army before the Custodian arrived".

Legal theft

Peretz also shows how important the 'absentee' or 'abandoned' property was to the Zionists.

"Of the 370 new Jewish settlements established between 1948 and the beginning of 1953, 350 were on absentee property. In 1954 more than one-third of Israel's Jewish population lived on absentee property and nearly a third of the new immigrants [250,000 people] settled in urban areas abandoned by Arabs..."

"Most of the Arab groves were taken over by the Custodian of Absentee Property..."

"In 1951-52, former Arab groves produced one and a quarter million boxes of fruit, of which 400,000 were exported. Arab fruit sent abroad provided nearly 10% of the country's foreign currency earnings from exports in 1951. In 1949 the olive produce from abandoned Arab groves was Israel's third largest export ranking after citrus and diamonds..."

"[A UN body] estimated that the amount of Israel's cultivable abandoned Arab land was nearly two and a half times the total area of Jewish-owned property at the end of the Mandate..."

"In 1951 abandoned cultivable land included nearly 95% of all Israel's olive groves..."

The drive against the Arabs continued. In 1954 building by Arabs was totally forbidden. In 1958, a law was enacted which required the authenticity of land ownership to be proved with official documents going back at least 15 years: otherwise the land would be confiscated by the State.

This law was aimed at village common lands, which



SUBDUING THE WEST BANK

were not entered in the official registers.

As a result of the expropriations which followed, the average cultivated area in the Arab villages in Israel dropped from 2 acres per person in 1948 to half an acre in 1965. Over 160,000 acres (most of it under cultivation) was purloined one way or another between 1948 and 1967.

In 1967, the Arabs formed 11% of the population of Israel: yet they constituted only 1% of the students, 2% of the state employees, and got only 2.5% of the housing credits.

1967

When Israel occupied further territories after the 1967 war, the pattern of 1948 was repeated exactly, this time using more modern methods.

The massacre of Deir Yassin was repeated on a vastly bigger scale — with napalm.

On only the second day of the war the refugee camps of Jericho (housing some 60,000 victims of earlier aggression) were bombed with napalm.

In Jordan, according to informed estimates, between 14,000 and 18,000 were killed, of whom maybe half were civilians. The main cause of death was napalm bombing. Eye-witness reports from Lebanese doctors spoke of continuous bombing of roads where civilians were fleeing from the West Bank. Ambulances and medical units were destroyed.

Some 200,000 refugees were driven out. Israel claimed it would let them back in. But 170,000 wanted to return — and only 14,000 managed to cross back into Israel, less than the number that left during the same period.

Refugees attempting to return faced a series of obstacles. First, they had to prove they left the West Bank between 5th June and 4th July.

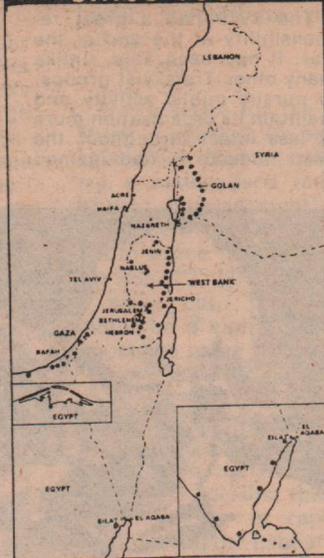
Their form had to be examined by the Israeli Minister of the Interior. If permission were granted, each refugee had to await notification of the exact time and place of his

crossing. The Jordan authorities had to search the temporary camps to find the applicants again.

The forms were processed by individuals, not by families — so many who got permits stayed behind because others in the family didn't.

All youths of 18 to 24 years were barred, and an arbitrary time limit was set.

• Settlements since 1967



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: Passages and quotations have been taken or adapted from:

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ZIONISM VERSUS THE JEWS

ZIONISM is not even a solution for the Jews. It was not even the solution in the period of the Nazi persecution of Jews.

In the USA the Zionists actually opposed an open door for Jewish refugees. Their thinking was that expressed in a letter by David Ben Gurion in 1938.

"Britain is trying to separate the issue of the refugees from that of Palestine. It is assisted by anti-Zionist Jews.

"The dimensions of the refugee problem demand an immediate, territorial solution; if Palestine will not absorb them another territory will.

"Zionism is endangered.

"All other territorial solutions, certain to fail, will demand enormous sums of money. If Jews will have to choose between the refugees, saving Jews from the concentration camps, and assisting a national museum in Palestine, mercy will have the upper hand and the whole energy of the people will be channelled into saving Jews from various countries. Zionism will be struck off the agenda not only in world public opinion, in Britain and the United States, but elsewhere in Jewish public opinion.

"If we allow a separation between the refugee problem and the Palestine problem, we are risking the existence of Zionism".

Since 1948 Zionism has merely trapped the Jews in permanent armed confrontation with the Arabs. It has nourished, rather than countered, anti-semitism.

The Palestinians do not deny the rights of the Israeli Jews. They propose, not the driving out of the Jews, but a secular, democratic state in which Jews and Arabs can live together.

That is also — despite the fact they think otherwise — the only way out for the Israeli Jews. And a lasting solution to the problems of the Middle East lies in the hands of the Jewish and Arab workers: a socialist federation, breaking with imperialism, overthrowing both Zionism and the bourgeois Arab regimes, placing the resources of the area in the hands of the working people, and assuring equal rights for all.



Arabs were driven as refugees from hundreds of villages. One of these villages, Beit Nuba, was described like this by an Israeli soldier on the scene. "Beit Nuba is built of fine quarry stones. Some of the houses are magnificent. Every house is surrounded by an orchard, olive trees, apricots, vines, and presses. They are well kept. Among the trees there are carefully tended vegetable beds... At noon the first bulldozer arrived and pulled down the first house at the edge of the village. Within 10 minutes the house was turned into rubble, including its entire contents; the olive tree, cypresses were all uprooted..."

EVID

and marketing by Ar-avenes the law and the settlement... Minister of Agriculture... said that 'the... of Jewish agri- Arab workers is a... our body'. Minister actually re- man belongs as a... there a worse form... than this? Can you... a French minister... French textile... France to 'a cancer'... ing with them in a... ay?"

WE KNOW about World War I. Even many bourgeois historians now see it as an imperialist war, a robbers' war on all sides. As socialists we have learnt about the treachery of the Second International capitulating to nationalism, and the magnificent struggle of the genuine internationalists to support the Russian Revolution and build new, communist parties.

James P. Cannon was one of those internationalists active in the USA. From the start he opposed World War I, and then fought to build the Communist Party of the USA in solidarity with the Russian Revolution.

He was elected as a CPUSA delegate to the Sixth Congress of the Communist International in Moscow in 1928. There he read the critique of the draft programme of the Communist International written by Trotsky in exile in Alma Ata.

TRUE

From then on Cannon broke with the Stalinists and set about the long battle to build a Trotskyist Opposition.

"When I read Trotsky's criticism of the draft programme at the Sixth Congress of the Comintern in 1928, I was convinced at once — and for good — that the theory of 'Socialism in One Country' was basically anti-revolutionary and that Trotsky and the Russian Opposition represented the true programme of the revolution — the original Marxist programme. What else could I do but support them?"

Cannon's unwavering internationalism led him and the American Trotskyists (the Socialist Workers' Party) to declare World War 2 an imperialist war. At issue was not democracy versus fascism, but how the plunder of the world's exploited peoples should be divided up between the hungry ruling class of Germany and the older-established great capitalist powers of Britain and the USA.

As a result of their stand, Cannon and seventeen other comrades were jailed for sedition at the famous Minneapolis trial. They were sentenced on the very day the USA declared war on Japan.

The CP(USA) applauded the government's prosecution of the SWP. After mid-1941, the Stalinists throughout the world, true to the policy of 'Socialism in One Country', devoted themselves to all-out support for the imperialist governments allied with the USSR. In Britain, the Trotskyists dubbed the CPGB, 'His Majesty's Loyal Communist Party'.

STIFLED

Ironically, the CP(USA) was to suffer later, during the Cold War period, under the same legislation as was used against the SWP. Then, however, the SWP gave them support. Together with analysis of the war and the post-war situation, this volume contains the pamphlet 'American Stalinism and Anti-Stalinism', which formulated the basis of the SWP's policy in that respect.

World war II is more difficult to understand than world war I. It is not just the horrifying death and injury rates, equalling all previous wars added together, it is that the voice expressing the genuine interests of the world working class was stifled. Out of World War I we had the clarion call of the Russian Revolution, and its international repercussions. Out of World War II we had Stalin's order to all CPs to lay down arms and enter 'progressive coalition governments'. In Yugoslavia and China, the CPs at the head of

The American century of blood, mud and death



DAVE SPENCER reviews "The Struggle for Socialism in the American Century": Writings and Speeches by James P. Cannon, 1945-47. [Pathfinder Press, 47 The Cut, London SE1: £3.15].

mass armed rebellions went beyond Stalin's orders, but they did not break from the disorienting theory of 'Socialism in One Country'.

The Trotskyists maintained the internationalist position against terrible odds. Time and again in this book Cannon pays tribute to individuals or whole groups who fell in the cause. Those not killed by the fascists were often shot by the Stalinists, in France, in Greece, in Vietnam, and in China. Whole Trotskyist parties were wiped out for keeping the revolutionary line.

VICTOR

The SWP had a great responsibility at the end of the war. It had been able, unlike many other Trotskyist groups, to pursue public activity and maintain its organisation more or less intact throughout the War; indeed it had gained

many new members. At the same time the SWP was based in the home of the victor of the war — American imperialism.

In his first speech after leaving jail — on May Day 1945 — Cannon reiterated the optimistic Marxist view that capitalism is doomed because of its own contradictions.

"Out of the imperialist war that lasted six years, the people of the whole world are the victims. And they are the victims not of a mistake of this or that statesman or general and not of this or that bad will of some maniac in power. They are fundamentally the victims of the capitalist system, which is in its death agony, and which is incapable of maintaining peace or prosperity in the world and cannot but continue to plunge the world into one holocaust after another until the masters of the future take control of society and institute a rational system".

The victor of the war was American imperialism. Its propagandists now talked of the 'American Century' ahead.

"What can they show, the masters of the world, but ruined cities, mounds of corpses, and millions of starving people? That is the auspices under which American imperialism enters its day of glory as the master of the world. Look what we are standing on. Blood and mud and death and destruction and starvation and oppression and despair which they are chief architects of. That is the credential they bring before mankind as warrant of their right to rule the world for one hundred years".

Cannon goes on to say that American imperialism is not invincible, it too was subject to all the contradictions of capitalism in its death agony.

The American working class too had grown up quickly, with 15 million workers organised in trade unions. With an adequate leadership the American working class could take power. The SWP had to build that leadership.

It is this optimistic perspective that Cannon put forward in the 'Theses on the American Revolution' passed by the SWP 1946 Convention.

In 1943 there were workers' uprisings in Italy after the toppling of Mussolini. In 1944 civil war broke out in Greece and there was an uprising in Paris. The USA itself saw a huge strike wave in 1945-46, with four times as many man-days lost in strikes during 1946 as in the peak year of the pre-war CIO strike wave, 1937. There were two mass strike waves in France — in May and November 1947, involving more workers than in 1936.

But capitalism survived. The SWP majority had to contend with pessimists almost paralysed by the problems of the strengthening of Stalinism, the strengthening of American imperialism, and the pitifully weak forces of Trotskyism. This tendency in the SWP, represented by Felix Morrow and Albert Goldman, moved by 1946 to a position of defeatist resignation in face of the post-war world order, and argued that socialists could do little more than agitate energetically for democracy. They called for unity with the petty bourgeois Shachtmanites ('Workers Party') who had split from the SWP in 1940.

BROKEN

Much of this book concerns the question of unity with the WP, "a windbag's paradise", as Cannon called it. (For this, it is useful reading for supporters of 'Socialist Challenge').

The SWP majority did not reject unity out of hand — indeed, in early 1947 they

briefly concluded an agreement for unity, soon broken by the WP — but Cannon stressed throughout:

"When we Trotskyists make unity with another group we do it only on a rigidly principled basis and no other... For us the program is decisive and by program we mean the whole program and not 50% of it and 50% of its opposite".

Most of all Cannon insisted that to answer the question of unity you had first to answer the question: what party, and what type of party, are we trying to build? Morrow and Goldman wanted to unite with the WP as it was moving to the right; they regarded themselves less as SWP militants than as WPs inside the SWP. What the Shachtmanites wanted was the SWP as an arena. Cannon stressed the proletarianisation of the party to pursue the revolutionary perspectives of the 1946 Theses.

STORM

With hindsight, Cannon's perspectives can be described as over-optimistic (as could Marx and Engels' in 1850, or Lenin and Trotsky's in 1917). As perspectives for revolutionary action, they necessarily estimated the revolutionary possibilities at the maximum. They provided a basis for building a party which could change the perspectives if events proved that necessary.

The Shachtmanites, Morrow, Goldman, and their co-thinkers, used their pessimistic perspectives to abandon the fight altogether and thus to move rapidly to the right. Shachtman, Morrow, and Goldman all ended up as cold warriors.

As Cannon puts it: "We have been listening to this snivelling for three years and we didn't say too much in answer. It is a hard job, comrades, to build a revolutionary party. As a matter of fact, it is the hardest job in the world. The building of a revolutionary party of the workers on a mass scale is nothing less than the unsolved problem of humanity".

Later Cannon quotes Trotsky's teaching on the party:

"He said the party takes us each of us, in our individual weakness and helplessness, and combines us with others in the party, and thereby the talents of one are added to the talents of others, hundreds of thousands, and become a gigantic collective intelligence that can deal with every problem. Without the party in this epoch we are nothing, but with the party we are all and with the party we can storm earth and heaven".



Cannon [above]. Right: Minneapolis defendants Albert Goldman, Oscar Coover, V.R. Dunne and Harry De Boer in Minneapolis SWP office before going to prison [Rose Smith at the piano].



FRENCH LEFT FACES THE POLLS



Last week we published an article from Lutte Ouvrière on revolutionaries and the coming French elections. This week: extracts from the LCR's reply, and our comments.

REPLYING to LO, the LCR wrote:

That serious differences exist between the LCR and LO on the attitude to have in relation to the Union of the Left is a fact which we have never hidden.

The difference is not (as Morand pretends to believe, foisting the PSU's positions on us) between 'critical support' for the Union of the Left (LCR) and 'resolute opposition' (LO). Nor are they about the characterisation of a Left government: it would not be a workers' government, but a bourgeois government, since it would preserve bourgeois institutions and the capitalist economy...

[The difference is that] We think that it is politically counter-productive to limit oneself to repeating: 'The Left is no better than the Right...'

We should, on the contrary, say [to reformist workers] ... we are ready to struggle with you for the SP and the CP to break all alliances with bourgeois parties, to kick out Giscard, to nationalise all the key sectors without compensation, to generalise workers' control over the economy, to recognise soldiers' right to political and trade union organisation and kick out the reactionary officers. We as revolutionaries tell you openly that this policy is the opposite of the CP's and SP's, and that we have no confidence in them to carry it through. But you,

the workers who trust them, you believe that you will be able to push them into adopting this class policy. We say to you: let us make the experience together'...

[As to the passage from LO's pamphlet] Morand replies that the sentence is in fact "ambiguous because it seems to say the same thing as you", and corrects it: "We fight so that, if the working class sends its representatives to government..."

That is not serious. Capriciously adding a conjunction has never been a substitute for a re-affirmation or a self-criticism. Either Lutte Ouvrière has changed since the publication of that pamphlet. Let it say so, then. That will clarify the debate. Or in fact it expresses itself differently in its electoral campaigns, talking to the workers, and when it polemicalises with the far left...

We have said, and we repeat: we have just as many differences, so far, with Lutte Ouvrière as with the OCT on the attitude to have in relation to the traditional organisations. The type of electoral agreement which we propose both allows each organisation to set forth its programme, and gives the workers the means to express their mistrust of the Union of the Left. The presence of one single candidate per constituency, on the basis of a political agreement, is essential from this point of view...

ernment of the Right, would certainly be different because of the working-class base of the CP and SP. To deny this in the name of combatting reformist illusions can only nourish a different variety of reformist illusions — syndicalist illusions that 'all governments are the same' and only day-to-day trade union struggle is worthwhile.

As the LCR points out, LO does not find formulas like 'Left and Right are just the same' useful in the pamphlets and posters designed for wide distribution in the election campaign. And LO does not square the circle very well with formulas like: "... If you want to send a Left majority to Parliament, we, as revolutionaries, say to you: go ahead" [Ariette Lagullier on television, 4th January].

It remains a fact that the LCR's attitude to the CP and the SP is opportunist and becoming more so. More and more the LCR tends to say: 'the only way forward for the working class is a CP-SP government which will break with the bourgeoisie'.

Certainly revolutionaries can agitate for the reformist parties to break with the bourgeoisie on concrete issues. But it must be done without formulas like the LCR's, which inevitably nourish illusions that Parliamentary action is more important than direct action, and can lead to socialism.

The steel swindle

TWO SETS of facts and figures which have just become available neatly sum up the situation which the working class faces.

Registered unemployment is now 1,548,544, or 6.5% of the working population — 67,722 higher than December, and the highest January figure since world war 2. Neither the Government nor the TUC proposes to do anything about this situation in the foreseeable future.

The British Steel Corporation has given the steel workers' unions an ultimatum: agree in principle to the loss of 25,000 jobs, or BSC will not go above its existing offer of a 6% rise in wages.

With the current rate of inflation at 12% that means steel workers would take a 6% wage cut.

BSC wants to close the so-called 'high cost' steel plants which were listed in a 1975 report. It refuses to say which plants, though East Moors, Cardiff, and Ebbw Vale, both in high-unemployment areas, are said to top the list.

The most important shop-floor response so far to BSC's ultimatum has been the mass meeting at which 8,000 Corby (Northamptonshire) steelworkers pledged their support for any industrial action called by the steel union leaders.

At that meeting John Cowley, executive member of the Iron & Steel Trades Confederation, declared: "As far as we are concerned, this means clearing the decks ready for a fight. It is not the business of the national executive to negotiate closures and sackings". He said, according to the Morning Star, "The workers in the individual plants will decide this. It would be useless for us to come back with a 10% offer and announce closure in two years".

He wasn't kidding. Local steel plants are negotiating redundancies.

One of the strongest threats steel union leaders have been uttering in private (according to the Financial Times) is to suspend their agreement to local negotiations on early closures.

If the leaders of the ISTC and other steel unions respond to the declared willingness to fight of the Corby (and other) steelworkers, they will be going against their own grain, and much against their record, which is one of conniving against the interests of their own members with old (private capitalist) and new (state capitalist) 'management' alike.

In the House of Commons the Tories growl at the fact that over £500 million a year, or £1 million a day, goes to subsidise BSC, a nationalis-

ed industry (with payments to former owners as a millstone round its neck) which the Tories profess to consider 'socialist'.

This is the dialogue.

Mr Ian Gow (Con., Farnborough): "It is scandalous that the steel industry should be losing £520 million a year and that the action which needs to be taken is being deferred because so many steel mills are in Labour majority seats".

Mr Callaghan (prime minister) responded sharply to the Tories. "What is interesting — and it should be put down to BSC's credit — is that, according to figures I have been given, the loss per tonne by BSC is lower than the loss per tonne in some of these other countries (France, Italy, Belgium, and the USA)... That seems to me to be important because it does show that in the midst of world depression it is not inefficiency on the part of BSC which has led to these figures".

Up jumps Ron Thomas (Lab., Bristol NW) to urge that attention be paid to the massive sums provided for private industry by the government, which he estimated at £11 million per day. Without such money the capitalist system in Britain would have collapsed long ago. That was meant to even the score and stand up for 'socialist steel'.

But Mr Callaghan reminded him that there was 'pretty general acceptance' that a 'mixed economy' demanded public support for private industry.

Not a script for the Goon Show — political life under a Labour Government concerning a nationalised industry where 'management' has given the workers an ultimatum to agree immediately to the loss of 25,000 jobs or take a wage cut. The figures might be a nightmare version of the game 'Monopoly': "Lose 25,000 jobs to gain a wage cut of less than 6%".

It is the nightmare of capitalist chaos and disruption.

In fact nationalised steel is no more socialist than any other industry in capitalist Britain. And the Labour Government which is running this system for the bosses is not a socialist, nor a working class, government.

At all levels of the official labour movement — from Callaghan's Cabinet to the TUC to the steel union leadership — it has been made clear beyond contradiction that the leaders will not defend the interests of the working class. The rank and file needs to organise to defend our interests.

The only way to stop the dole queues getting longer — in steel and throughout industry generally — is to divide existing jobs without loss of pay.



Photo Minda

AS PART of a major drive to establish a presence in West London, twenty National Front members turned out in King Street market, Hammersmith, for a mass paper sale on Saturday 21st.

Toting a couple of spiked union jack flags and heavily protected by police, they treated local residents to a combination of verbal and physical violence.

For two hours they chanted racist, anti-communist and anti-semitic obscenities. Twice they attacked passers-by who took exception to their propaganda. A woman was assaulted with a walking stick by one fascist, who afterwards explained to reporters that he was an ex-Mosleyite who had joined the NF because he 'wanted some action'; and a young man pushing his baby in a pram was roughed up by a number of Fronters before the police dragged him off and warned him not to 'cause trouble'. [He had torn up a handful of fascist leaflets].

The police did make one arrest: a member of the Socialist Workers' Party was charged with a breach of the peace for speaking through a loud-hailer. About 50 anti-fascists had arrived to oppose the Front, from a local anti-racist group, SWP and IMG as well as Workers' Action, but throughout the morning they were effectively contained by the police.

Lack of coordination as well as the poor turn-out prevented anything but the feeblest form of protest. In future a far more serious mobilisation will be needed to drive off the fascists.

J.R.

EVENTS

SATURDAY 4 FEBRUARY. Demonstration against Racism and Fascism, for Workers' Unity and Socialism, called by Manchester District Labour Party. Assemble 12.30, Crowcroft Park, Stockport Road, Levenshulme. Speakers to include Nick Bradley, Gerald Kaufman MP and Frank Hutton MP.

WEDNESDAY 8 FEBRUARY. Workers Action public meeting: Ian Hollingworth on 'Marxism and Terrorism'. 8pm, 'Roe-buck', 108a Tottenham Court Rd, London Wc1.

SATURDAY 11 FEBRUARY. Anti-Apartheid Emergency Action Conference. 10am, Friends Meeting House, Euston Road, London NW1. Open to delegates from all organisations supporting the aims of the AAM. Further details: AAM, 89 Charlotte St, London W1P 2DQ.

SATURDAY 4 MARCH. Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions conference. Credentials for trade union delegates 75p from J.Hiles, 137 Wanstead Park Road, Ilford, Essex.

WORKERS IN ACTION

BRITISH SHIPBUILDERS brought out the big stick again last week — this time against the boilermakers at Swan Hunter, Tyneside.

The shipbuilding bosses announced on Friday 20th that the Swan Hunter yard will lose the remaining four of its seven-ship share of a Polish contract for 24 vessels. They threatened 800 redundancies.

The reason, they said, was the boilermakers' decision on 6th January to end certain 'flexibility' agreements and revert to 'one man, one job'.

More and more it is clear that British Shipbuilders' threats have nothing to do with getting the work on the Polish order done properly, and everything to do with smashing any departure from complete servility among the shipyard workers.

The four ships have been re-allocated, three to the Govan yard in Glasgow and one to Smiths Dock in Teesside. Yet Govan is not even in a position to start work on the ships! It is still completing four larger vessels on an Arab order. If anything the shift will make the Polish order slower, not quicker, to complete.

The blackmail started before Christmas. Then the bosses said the yard would lose

SHIPYARDS

Stop the blackmail!

all seven ships because of an overtime ban by the outfitters. There would be 700 redundancies. That this was in no way a matter of getting the work done properly was shown by the fact that the outfitters were not due to work on the Polish order for another five months yet!

The outfitters accepted an increase recommended by the Central Arbitration Council and ended the overtime ban. The bosses said the Swan Hunter yard could have four ships after all (not the other three, though the outfitters' overtime ban had not meant one minute's delay to the Polish order). Now they are browbeating the boilermakers.

The boilermakers say that when the outfitters get a

further 10% increase, due soon, they will then be getting more than the boilermakers. That means the boilermakers will be gaining nothing in extra pay for their 'flexibility' agreements. So they do not see why they should carry on working those agreements.

The worst blackmail of all is that British Shipbuilders are saying that for them normal working is not enough. Only if the shipyard workers allow themselves to be exploited over the odds — by overtime working or by special flexibility agreements — will they be satisfied.

And this is in an industry, and in areas, where there is specially high unemployment; in an industry where the

Clydeside workers had to seize their yard, six years ago, to try to save their jobs. One of the leaders of that Clyde 'work-in', Jimmy Airlie, is now convenor at Govan; but this Communist Party stalwart has turned his back on the fight to save shipyard jobs. He has already persuaded Govan workers to accept one ship transferred from Swan Hunter, and he has said nothing about refusing the newly transferred three.

Yet a fighting unity of all shipyard workers is possible: to block all redundancies, to refuse to sign the degrading 'full cooperation' pledges which British Shipbuilders are demanding as a condition for allocating ships from the Polish order to each yard, and to impose workers' control on this nationalised industry now being run on purely capitalist lines.

Shipyard workers fighting yard by yard will always, in the end, be defeated, in the conditions of a declining industry. Shipyard workers united across the industry, and showing the courage and refusal to be cowed of the Swan Hunter men, would have the power to impose their demands.

RAY SAUNDERS

CPSA:

a struggle or just sabre-rattling?

LAST WEEK the Civil Service Executive Committee of the civil servants' union CPSA decided on its pay claim for April 1978. They came up: consolidation of the stage 1 and stage 2 increases, a 'new money' increase of between 14 and 24% (£6 to £12), and an underpinning minimum increase of £6.

The claim had been prepared by the full-time officials, after the Left on the CSEC had been defeated on its proposal for a pay claim of £25 across the board.

A 30-page document sets out the details of how the claim was made up. It estimates the claim will meet cost of living increases until April 1978, assuming that the government's figures and expectations are correct. There is nothing about price rises from April 1978 to 1979, and how we should meet those!

But the biggest problem about the claim is: what fight will there be for it? Union leaders Ken Thomas and Kate Losinska are playing a two-faced game. On the one hand they do not intend to mobilise to break the 10% limit. The bitter struggle of the firemen confirmed their dislike of such mobilisations. On the other hand they hope that a bit of sabre rattling will 'persuade' the Government not to penalise the civil service workers, and thus to pay out a full 10% rise.

Militants in the CPSA will have to fight to make the battle for the official claim a reality.

S.C.

Journalists strike after 9½p offer

FACED with a 'first and final offer' of 9½p a week for their lowest grade, 110 journalists at the magazine and book publishing company of Marshall-Cavendish struck on Friday 20th.

The union's claim, for £1,000 a year increase across the board, plus automatic compensation for inflation at the rate of £1 a week for each percentage rise in the Retail Price Index, met with blan-

ket rejection from the first negotiating session in October last year.

The company has consistently tried to obscure the issue by 'offering' as part of the settlement for this year a payment of £500 — which was due to the chapel anyway under a break clause in the 1976-7 agreement! On top of that the highly profitable firm could only find between £5 and £250 a year for 1978.

From the middle of last November the chapel had been imposing sanctions and staging lightning walk-outs, for which they had official sanction from the NUJ Executive.

Last week management made a concession: sticking to their original offer, they suggested more money might be available if the chapel were to 'sell back' half a

day's work a week — a reduction in hours the union had won the previous year. Faced with this insulting offer, the members decided on immediate all-out action. Their dispute is official, and print-union cooperation is being sought.

The company are obviously prepared for the battle, so the chapel looks like having a difficult struggle ahead of them. But with hard work they should be able to bring home to other workers in publishing the importance of their fight.

Many other chapels are in the process of negotiating their 1978 agreements now. While a number have already won increases as high as 20% plus (mostly under a heavy veil of secrecy), others are being confronted with offers well below 10%.

While the Marshall-Cavendish chapel, in openly striking for their claim, will no doubt be attracting the attention of the Phase 3 watchdogs of the Department of Employment, their example could help spark off a rash of other disputes in the industry.

JAMES RYAN

FORDS: CPers HELP BOSSES KICK OUT STEWARDS



The lay-offs battle last year

COMMUNIST Party leaders of the Joint Works Committee have helped management to kick out three shop stewards in the Ford Dagenham Body Plant.

Against Tommy Birmingham it was charged that he had 'sabotaged a Fiesta underbody and urinated in an air duct'. Five witnesses stated that Birmingham had been nowhere near the scene of the damage. He was still sacked. Another worker said that he had been responsible for the damage. He was sacked too!

The second sacked worker is a member of the Communist Party. But CPers Lanny Connors and Sid Haraway, leading members of the Joint Works Committee, made no effort to fight the

sackings. When the majority of the workers in Birmingham's department struck, the Joint Works Committee called them to a meeting and Connors recommended a return to work.

Dave Wray was then threatened with sacking for calling a shop meeting to discuss Birmingham's sacking. And the company announced they would not recognise Mick Hurd, elected as a shop steward before Christmas.

T&G and AUEW officials, with Haraway's backing, persuaded the workers to agree to Wray and Hurd losing their stewards' credentials. Wray would keep his job.

It seems that Ford management and the CP union leadership

are trying to get their own back on militants in Dagenham for the struggle over lay-off pay last year.

Meanwhile 1,000 press shop workers at Ford Halewood will meet again on Tuesday 9th January to discuss their strike, which started on 9th January.

The strike is in pursuit of demands for new work schedules. The workers want to be able to change jobs every hour; Fords will only concede changes every four hours.

The Halewood factory has been closed since 11th January, with 8,000 workers laid off.

HOMES BUILT ON KILLER ASBESTOS DUMP

DEADLY 'blue' asbestos has been confirmed on a Barking, East London, council estate.

The discovery was made last September, but it took until last week for official tests to 'confirm' the presence of this killer material in the gardens of over 20 houses.

The estate was built close to the site of an old Cape Asbestos factory and the factory dump, abandoned in 1956.

Since the factory was built in 1913, Cape Asbestos had been well known locally for the very high number of deaths from cancer and asbestosis. Very few families of workers who worked at, or lived near, the old factory, escaped the blue killer. Ventilation fans blew the dust over houses, and it circulated freely inside the factory.

Now it is back again. Investigations have found the blue asbest-

os in a local field often used by children. The council has issued instructions not to eat home-grown vegetables and to forbid children to play in the gardens.

The slow investigations must be followed up by immediate Council action to remove this killer. And the cost must be borne by Cape Asbestos. Action must be taken very soon, and especially before summer, when dry dusty weather will release blue asbestos fibres into the air.

And the issue cannot be closed without a full enquiry into how the council came to start building on this land without first dealing with the asbestos danger.

STEPHEN CORBISHLEY

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